CHANGES IN CUBAN SOCIETY SINCE THE NINETIES

edited by

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Lilian Bobea
Mayra P. Espina Prieto
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with

Elizabeth Bryan

Woodrow Wilson
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Woodrow Wilson Center Report on the Americas #15

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ABOUT THE CENTER

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JOSEPH S. TULCHIN, MAYRA P. ESPINA PRIETO,
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This volume has a two-fold purpose. First, it seeks to present and assess critically the changes that have taken place in Cuban society, economy, politics, and culture as Cuba emerges from the crisis of the 1990s. Second, this volume brings together contrasting perspectives marked by occasionally opposing views, ranging from theoretical discourses to empirical studies that bring together quite different experiences, from both within and outside the island. The pursuit of these objectives must begin with an understanding of the crisis unleashed in the 1990s, which was accelerated by the fall of the Soviet Union. The crisis precipitated the process of change in Cuba that continues to unfold yet remains poorly understood beyond Cuban borders. More difficult, these goals necessitate a critical dialogue among dissonant interpretations that span a broad range of approaches and are not reducible to a single line of conclusions and predictions about the future—a diversity of thought that characterizes both the state of knowledge about Cuban society on the island and that of Cuban studies abroad.

From this diversity emerges a constellation of problems describing a new and changing face of Cuban society. Who constitute the new social actors? How have existing actors been transformed and how do these existing actors interact with the emerging ones? What new methods do these actors implement and what internal and external factors have facilitated the transformations of Cuban civil society? How have these processes influenced the redefinition of race, class, and gender within Cuba? What implications have these processes had in reshaping the relations between Cuban citizens and the state? To what extent do these internal changes affect the relations between Cubans and North Americans?

In the majority of the experiences collected in this volume, there is a significant evident shift in the relations between civil society and the state. Among the salient factors are: the impact of economic reforms imple-

mented to confront the crisis, changes in public agendas, and the reconfiguration of Cuban contacts with the rest of the world—including the shift in how various sectors, entities, and institutions that have contact with Cuba perceive the Cuban people and the Cuban system. Above all, this new situation allows for the emergence of new social actors and the transformation of the traditional roles of existing actors and established institutions. The change in the relations between the state and civil society is also reflected in survival strategies, especially those employed by local agencies and by the provision of services—previously public or state provided—outside the state sphere.

The new dynamic between state and society is shaped by the characteristics of Cuba's national history, as well as the interactions between exogenous and endogenous factors. Among the primary external factors affecting Cuba's domestic context is United States' policy of commercial and financial embargo—on which Cuban-American interest groups have had a large influence—and its continuous provocation of the Cuban government in diplomatic and security terms. This external factor has also played a significant role in the formation of Cuban defense policy for more than four decades and has affected its economic and commercial access to the international market.

The crisis caused the decentralization of what was traditionally a very centralized and vertical system. During the "Special Period," local and municipal governments were forced to rely on their own resources and solutions, rather than depend on centralized resources and traditional procedures. Projects such as La Habana Vieja—the renovation of the historic district of "Old Havana"—have become paradigmatic in indicating how to manage successfully a decentralized public entity. Social and cultural institutions have had to invent means of self-financing and take measures to provide themselves with a broad range of material necessities once provided by the state.

The economic reforms implemented to confront the crisis have served to diversify and complicate Cuban civil society, creating new social actors and new relations and interactions, such as the members of the Basic Units of Cooperative Production (UBPC), self-employed workers, those employed by foreign capital, and Cuban and foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—among these Oxfam, Norwegian People's Aid, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the

Couchiching Institute on Public Affairs (CIPA) of Canada, the Spanish Institute of Iberoamerican Cooperation, and U.S. foundations such as MacArthur, Christopher Reynolds, ARCA, and Ford. New relationships have been woven among the foreign institutions that sponsor social development projects and Cuban social organizations, government bodies, and academic and cultural institutions.

The new dynamics of the transformed Cuban civil society constitute a challenge to empirical research and conceptual and methodological theories. Such challenges make it necessary to compare the Cuban case to others in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and the Third World. The present changes in Cuban society delineate a novel relationship with the state that is visible in the emergence of civil society in areas traditionally occupied by the state, especially in the supplementary provision of services. This creates new modes of citizen creation not determined solely by the state, while in other areas, such as social control and national security, the state maintains exclusive control. Although some of these exercises in the construction of citizenship diverge from the official line, the vast majority of the social dynamics arising during the decade of the '90s developed in accordance with the historical objectives of the Cuban revolution. And, more interesting to students of society and politics, some of these developments have demonstrated similarities to certain characteristics of the transitional processes undergone several years ago in Latin America, Asia, and Eastern Europe.

Throughout the past decade, Cuban social organizations have been exploring new courses of action and establishing new affiliations both within and outside the island. One example of this is the radical change experienced by religious organizations with regard to the diversification of sects or movements and the expansion of social bases and parishes, including in some cases an extended range of intervention such as the provision of services (see Raimundo García, Chapter 15). Although these actions and interactions take place within the prevailing political regime, and not in opposition to it, they have become a source of transformation, creating additional tensions within Cuban society and between the society and the state. The editors of this volume consider the present dynamics of Cuban civil society worthy of an in-depth comparative analysis that allows for a re-assessment of the very concept of civil society in Cuba.

A great portion of the current literature on Cuba tends to focus on the precipitating factors of an anticipated political transition in Cuba, and consequently, on the nature of U.S., European, or Latin American policy toward this new state, whatever form it should take. The relevant issue for international observers is whether and to what extent the new relationship between state and civil society reflects real changes in Cuban civil society, and consequently, what effects—if any—these changes produce in the political regime.

One problem to consider, as noted by Ariel Armony in this volume, is that the analysis of the Cuban political system presents a dilemma in regards to whether it is more appropriate to emphasize "the representative character of democracy and the protection of the minorities, or its participatory nature and majority rule."[1] Some U.S. observers of Cuban matters question the very existence of civil society within a state structure that they describe as totalitarian; but such an approach ignores the wealth of literature that discusses the complex and continuous interactions between social and state actors in places like the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, or current socialist countries such as China and Vietnam. The question posed by Armony, as to "whether or not civil society exists in Cuba," takes into account this conceptual and pragmatic complexity, referring to dynamics of social change that create a new public sphere as well as the pressures of these changes on the state making the official homogenized message more flexible (see chapter by Bobes). Others propose the need to consider the capacity of elements of civil society to catalyze change in government policies through their actions, interactions, and other dynamics (see the chapters by Haroldo Dilla and Javier Corrales in this volume).

The question of strengthening the condition of citizens in Cuba, in the sense of extending the exercise of social, political, and civil rights, signifies a process of highly complex changes. In this respect, the period of the 1990s constituted a watershed, beginning with changes induced by the state, and later assisted by the dynamics generated by civil society, the economy, culture, and daily life. Bobes discusses this phenomenon, calling attention to the pluralization of civil society and making the nation through the incorporation of previously excluded actors. This produces what Dilla calls a "recycling of nationalism" combined with a new tolerance by the state "by omission" rather than through explicit policies.

The new questions, spheres, and actors emerging in Cuban society, as well as the debate that surrounds these changes, incorporate elements of social and cultural development, political and community decentralization, popular participation in decision-making, the creation of new channels of communication to express opposing visions and points of view, new modes of articulating necessities and demands, the distribution of resources, new agendas toward questions of race, gender, and aging, the organization of social movements and a religious sphere with an increasingly broad social and international reach, all of which play a significant role in the reformulation of both domestic and transnational relations. The presence of new NGOs, both in Cuba and abroad, and the new roles that they assume also have an impact on the reformulation of social policies and the management of these matters in a society that, for a number of reasons, has become less egalitarian and homogenous than ever before.

These transformative processes and the challenges they represent continue to evolve in their impact on emerging agencies and socio-economic actors. The current Cuban reality projects a dynamic without precedents, which can be considered a second social, cultural, and political revolution. Cuba today manifests itself both as a product of the destratification of social classes promoted by the socialist model of the Cuban state, and as part of the process of repartitioning of various intra-social and social-state interactions (see chapter by Rafael Hernández in this book; also Espina, 2003; Perera and Perez Cruz 2003), as well as new territorial identities based on local experiences (see chapter by Armando Fernández). These changes have been accompanied by a proliferation of intellectual movements, academic institutions, modes and spaces of reflection, exchanges with external actors and the formation of opinion through specialized magazines, all of which have served to heighten the profile of critical debate in the social sciences as well as expand the civil privilege of freedom of expression.

Another aspect of the steady transformation taking place in Cuban society is the process of growing internationalization. Indicators of this change are discussed by various analysts (Jorge I. Domínguez, Omar Everleny P. Villanueva and Lorena Barberia, 2004), and include the increasingly salient role of remittances in the formal and informal economy, the fundamental importance of tourism as a substitute for traditional sources of generating income, foreign investment in nearly every sector of the economy and the exportation of goods and cultural prod-

ucts (music and art).[2] These developments affect the economic and social micro-dynamics of everyday life. In the United States and elsewhere, these phenomena tend to escape notice, as they do not fit within the established categories of analysis normally applied to the study of Cuba and its international relations.

One significant feature of the changes taking place on the island is the influence of the generalized decentralization of government services taking place throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. This evolutionary trend has created new spheres of involvement for multiple civil societies and to a large extent has altered the traditional relationship between citizens and the state. Until recently, civil society and government sectors throughout Latin America and the Caribbean operated in separate spheres, if not in opposition. In the context of decentralization, many groups in civil society are finding themselves in a position in which they must now cooperate with the state.

In these countries, just as in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, NGOs are assuming roles as mediators between citizens and the state, unheard of during the previous authoritarian systems. Their success as mediators and as interlocutors is especially important in situations in which no formal institutions exist to perform these roles, or where existing institutions are unable to execute such a role. In Latin America and elsewhere, the presence of NGO's has been closely linked to processes of transition from authoritarian rule to more democratic forms of government.[3]

The case of Cuba sheds light on the processes of decentralization that are taking place in the rest of the region. Certainly, in terms of government-society relations, Cuba differs from other Latin American countries in that its civil society has traditionally been tightly bound to state mechanisms in such a way that unions, neighborhood committees, and women's organizations have all demonstrated shared interests with state institutions. However, the current Cuban experience corresponds to the experiences of other Latin American countries in that the island has experienced the creation of new spaces and opportunities for social interaction both for social and state actors.

In this repositioning and creation of new spaces of participation, it is plausible to question whether the emerging social actors and new social activity face the risk of generating tensions with the state, despite the fact

that for the most part they emerged from within the system itself and in accordance with it. With respect to the competition for resources, it is necessary to consider how different the Cuban experience is in comparison to other countries, such as Argentina, that have passed through a process of change.

In fact, throughout the region these newly emerging actors have created transnational networks that communicate over vast distances and link rural communities in remote and inaccessible parts of Latin America and the Caribbean with large modern cities in the United States, Canada, and Europe. These channels articulate not only strategies for the survival of families, but also cultural products, religious beliefs, and social conduct.

The currency that arrives through remittances represents an increasingly significant portion of the regional economies of Mexico, El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic.[4] In many cases, these flows have displaced foreign investment, other capital flows, or the exportation of goods and services.[5] The growing importance of remittances sent by Cuban residents abroad, especially from the United States, has brought the Cuban case into line with the rest of the region.

These questions emphasize the importance of academic study and the systematic investigation of the Cuban reality, as evidenced by the ambitious articles that make up this volume. Along with understanding the implications that the stated changes have for relations between Cuba, the United States and the rest of Latin America, the greatest challenge lies in how to best understand the changes taking place in Cuban society.

This book aims to make a modest contribution to the understanding of this and other challenging issues. It is the result of a seminar held in the Dominican Republic in December 2003 under the auspices of the Latin American Program of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and the Facultad Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales, with the generous contribution of The Ford Foundation, represented by our dear colleague and collaborator, Cristina Eguizábal. Special thanks also goes to Elizabeth Bryan of the Latin American Program for her valued contribution to the successful completion of both the seminar and this text.

The primary objective of this volume is to provide academics, policymakers, NGOs and the media in Cuba, Latin America and North America, a better understanding of the changes in Cuban civil society and their implications in the areas of research, academic and literary produc-

tion, and public policy. This volume also aspires to contribute in a meaningful way to the political debate in the United States and to the dialogue between the United States and Cuba.

ABOUT THE CONTENT OF THE ESSAYS

The present volume explores four thematic areas and relevant scenarios for change by those who have been in contact with Cuban society throughout the past decade. The first section explores the trajectory and tendencies of civil society in Cuba over the past two decades: its emergence, transformations, and its characterization in the context of simultaneous changes in the economic, cultural, social, and state spheres.

In this context, Ariel Armony analyzes the dialectic of power between the state and civil society. He proposes an unorthodox approach to the very concept of civil society that transcends the operating space of NGOs to include the social space in which interactions between actors (including state actors) and groups take place. In examining this notion of civil society, Armony proposes an analytical model to evaluate its various components including tensions between the state and civil society; the institutionalized processes of opening and closing; of differentiation, adjustment, and adaptation; as well as tendencies toward social cohesion and fragmentation. From Armony's perspective, a better understanding of Cuba's social, political, economic, and cultural diversity is attained through an examination of civil society—working through its economic, organizational, and networking bases—as well as an assessment of the capacity of the state to exercise its authority through administrative, coercive, and symbolic resources. This approach provides a better picture of the Cuban reality than does a perspective that tends to homogenize or particularize ("exceptionalize") Cuban complexity.

The chapter by Haroldo Dilla, "Where is Cuban Society Headed?" provides an equally critical approach to the limits that Cuban civil society faces in terms of what has been an endogenous model of institutional development and increasing bureaucratization, through which the social project of the socialist system was conceptualized as a homogenizing system based on political and ideological loyalties. Dilla's taxonomic description of the actors, stages, and processes evident in Cuban society explores the mechanisms of control and cooptation that have accompanied the process of opening and increasing autonomy. In terms of the future, Dilla cautiously

predicts an uncertain transition, conditioned primarily by the level of maturity and commitment of the relevant actors, actors now confronted with tensions and limits that could generate their own initiatives for change.

For Javier Corrales, the emergence of Cuban society epitomizes a relatively passive process of resistance that expresses itself as an "internal exile." While important in and of itself it is "insufficient to democratize the country." Utilizing a variety of perspectives, Corrales analyzes the associative dynamics in Cuba and how these dynamics have been interpreted with respect to their capacity for transformation. As a catalyst for change, associations have limitations in not relying on institutional allies or interlocutors to facilitate their negotiating capacity, and, therefore, their influence on state policies. However, Corrales recognizes that they represent a force for the construction of a mode of citizenship alternative to instrumentalized or estranged citizenship.

Cecilia Bobes contributes an account of how the concept of citizenship in Cuba has evolved from the colonial period to the present. Her analysis of the changing patterns of inclusion and exclusion of Cuban citizenship is central to her evaluation of contemporary Cuban society. Bobes discusses the institutional and economic reforms that took place in the periods leading up to and following the revolution of 1959, highlighting their impact on the construction of the nation under "new procedural codes and symbols," as well as in the redefinition of citizenship on the basis of new trends of inclusion and exclusion. In this new context, democracy as a discursive practice acquires a new significance through citizen participation and, as the author states, "income distribution and government-led revolutionary tasks." This translates into an inclusive entity that counterposes electoral competition, diversified representation, and values including individuality, apathy, and passivity. The process of the homogenization of values such as the promotion of austerity, solidarity, responsibility, honor, and the drive to succeed has had two effects: on one hand, it has dichotomized Cuban society into external and internal parts, the pro–Cuban and the anti–Cuban. On the other hand, it has equalized Cuban citizens by confronting seminal antagonisms such as racial and sexual exclusion. The socio-economic crisis of the '90s marks a new level in the reformulation of the inclusion/exclusion equation and in the ascription of the social narrative to the political discourse. At the same time, it presents a challenge for Cuban state

and society in terms of increasing social and political diversity and multiple identities that fly in the face of the ethical–political content that has historically defined it.

Juan Valdés Paz presents a concise yet panoramic vision of the sociopolitical transformations in Cuban society affected by the crisis as well as the economic and institutional reforms of the '90s. Both processes form the foundation of his hypothesis of replacing "a model of egalitarian socialist transition with one based on equitable relations." Valdés Paz contends that owing to the persistent nature of the problems of inequality and the diversification of social groups—a matter that Mayra Espina also addresses in this volume—values of patriotism, solidarity, and social justice persist complementarily with the strengthening of policy directed at the development of a socialist democracy. The author attributes the disruptive factors primarily to the economic sphere and to a lesser extent, the social sphere beyond the bureaucratic control of the state. He integrates additional exogenous factors into his frame of analysis, particularly the impact of the global recession, the termination of Soviet subsidies, and the U.S. embargo.

The second section of the book, "Society, Culture, and the Production of Thought in Present Day Cuba," takes up unfamiliar themes and those that are seen from an internal lens. The theme of the production of ideas as both a reflection and catalyst for social and cultural change is coupled with the exploration of attitudes and expectations of present day Cuban youth.

In her chapter, "Structural Changes since the Nineties and New Research Topics on Cuban Society," Mayra Espina Prieto discusses in pragmatic and epistemological terms the impact of the destratification and re-stratification processes in Cuban society in the period leading up to and following the crisis of the 1990's. Espina evaluates how these processes reshape the research agendas for both social scientists and public policy scholars. Beginning with a review of the homogenizing approaches of social science in Cuba, Espina explores the structural changes of the 1990's resulting from the economic crisis and consequent reforms, identifying the problems that these actions created. At the core of her analysis, Espina raises questions about the traditional understanding of the socialist transition and revaluing the process of social recomposition. Espina's chapter suggests how the tendency to equate complex-

ity and social conflict in Cuba has oversimplified social problems, and she proposes a more complex and realistic interpretation of Cuba's economic and social reality. The concept of social recomposition combined with the idea of expanding the sphere of inclusion is of particular importance to the internal debate over citizenship. Espina's interpretation of this phenomenon serves as a solid counter-argument to the political tendency to use these problems as an excuse to rescind various reforms. The author also presents an interesting perspective on the limits presented by this new stage of converging actors and modes of action.

Jorge Luis Acanda questions the extent to which changes in civil society have propelled the democratization of Cuban society. In this chapter, the author presents a theoretical review of the concept of civil society in the Cuban context. He asseses various interpretations of social and political thought that are being revisited and expanded upon at the national level, as well as problems associated with the concept of civil society due to the U.S. political sector's use of the term and the connections made with respect to political and social transformations in Cuba. For Acanda, the evolution of the concept of civil society and of the social subject was derived from a relation of opposites: state control that is vertical and social organization that promote horizontal ties. Acanda's chapter discusses the extent to which the developments that have taken place since the 90's have managed to reduce verticality and strengthen horizontal ties.

Rafael Hernández's essay, "Mirror of Patience: Notes on Cuban Studies, Social Sciences, and Contemporary Thought," provides a systematic criticism both of social science in Cuba and Cuban studies outside the island (particularly in the United States) focusing on the sociocultural and political changes that Cuban society has experienced in the past two decades. Hernández discusses the theoretical paradigms that have attempted to explain Cuban social reality from the frameworks of Soviet studies and studies of democratic transition, arguing for a more comprehensive understanding of the social, cultural, political, and economic processes of the island. His chapter offers a critical categorization of the current agenda of Cuban social thought in thematic and methodological terms. Hernández highlights the advances that have been made in Cuban social science in the past two decades, and notes their insufficiencies and omissions, including the divorce of social science from cultural studies. He notes the importance of art and literature in opening public debate

over emerging social problems and policies in the period of the crisis. At the same time, he emphasizes the role of social research and lauds publications that disseminate this research as catalysts of change and "an essential for the self-transformation of society."

María Isabel Domínguez assesses the impact of socio-demographic changes and the economic crisis of the 1990s on Cuban youth. She notes the effects of these phenomena in the areas of justice and social integration among youth, a segment of the population that has been largely neglected by both domestic and especially foreign scholars. According to Domínguez, the increase in unemployment and underemployment among youth has created the need for an array of social programs focusing on labor and education. The author claims that the diversification of the strategies for economic and social integration and the increasing heterogeneity of Cuban society have had the greatest impact in the areas of social perceptions, expectations, and values of the youth. An even more marked display of individualism is reflected in the emphasis on individual satisfaction over collective interests or building solidarity. In this context, the alternative to emigrate, according to Domínguez, has become part of the Cuban youth's repertoire of survival strategies. At the same time, her research notes a certain level of de-politicization of emigration, reinforced by a strengthening sense of national identity among youth, and characterized by the motivation to travel (not necessarily leaving the country definitely), as well as other factors that the author also explores in greater depth in this chapter.

The third section, "Transnationalism and Community: New Modes of Economic and Social Survival," highlights internal and transborder dynamics as two main pillars of transformation, marking a departure from past tendencies.

Armando Fernández presents a picture of the limits of citizen participation in the design and implementation of local public policy, especially those policies regarding the management of urban areas and the processes of decentralization. Fernández discusses a number of municipal experiences, some more successful than others, in which the capacity of local management and the interactions between community and administrative agencies have been put to the test. His narrative depicts the culture of recycling, full of symbolism and pragmatism. Recycling provides a means of survival for diverse social groups; it serves as an enterprise

through which they exercise their capacities for invention and creativity in response to crisis and everyday scarcity of resources.

If the local dynamics of the past two decades have forced a rethinking of collective identities, of individual perceptions and of the interaction of both with various public and private agencies, a parallel transformation has occurred among the trans-located citizens. The work of Susan Eckstein in this volume reconsiders the traditional counterposition of the national and transnational, going beyond the dichotomous division between "internal" and "external" that has long defined and stigmatized the process of uprooting for Cuban emigrants. Eckstein assesses the impact that the Cuban diaspora in the United States has had on the transformation of Cuba and the city of Miami, the primary recipient of Cuban migrants. Based on primary and secondary sources, this essay establishes the class differences between what the author defines as the "privileged cohort," made up of professionals and members of the upper class that emigrated before the Cuban revolution, and the "proletarianized cohort," which represents the antithesis of the first and is made up of the most recent generation of immigrants. The author analyzes the changes in the labor market of the receiving society, as well as the unequal distribution of access to government and community support that allowed the first wave of immigrants to integrate themselves into the fields of politics and business as productive members and citizens, and has allowed them to achieve great influence over the international policy of the United States. In short, Eckstein's article sheds new light on how to reconstruct the Cuban diaspora, a critical step for the political, socio-economic, and cultural future of Cubans both on and outside the island.

Alejandro Portes offers an introspective analysis of the "Cuban-American political machine," the socio-political component of the Cuban community living in Miami. Portes summarizes the complexity of the discourse and the reality of Cubans in exile, which he refers to as "paradoxes of assimilation, intransigence, and legitimacy." His argument demonstrates the complex web of interactions that has characterized migrants as political subjects that have fled toward the United States since 1959, as well as the widespread perpetuation of the discourse among later generations of migrants and their descendants. The author describes the process of social mobility of the second generation of the first cohort of Cuban immigrants, and calls attention to the fact that "these Cubans had effectively traded suppression of their rights to free expression under communism for a similar

suppression under capitalism, Miami style." The reciprocity of these extremes is the strongest link between the Cuban transborder community's perspective of change and the national reality in Cuba, in the sense that "it is impossible to produce a political transformation in Cuba that does not affect Miami to the same extent."

The fourth and final section of the book, "Religion, Culture and Society," recapitulates many of the subjects addressed in the preceding sections, especially with respect to the reconstitution of a multi-faceted citizenship and the reiteration—on a more existential plane—of the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. To a certain extent, the coexistence of liturgical forms and expressions of popular religion replicates at the spiritual level the transformation that Cuban society is experiencing in its process of self-discovery and in its search for new forms of economic, social, and even participatory-political insertion.

In her chapter, "Civil Society and Religion in Cuba," Margaret Crahan explores the role that religion has historically played in the conception of politics and society in Cuba, despite its evident institutional weaknesses. She suggests the existence of common interests between religion and Marxism, and gives an historical account of the considerable role of the Catholic church, churches, and religious belief as catalysts and even promoters of expressions of resistance and the movements of confrontation against the oppressive power of conquistadors, of imperialism, and of authoritarian and corrupt governments of the past. In her analysis of the current and future conditions in which the religious community at large seeks to influence the political and social spheres of contemporary Cuban society, institutional shortcomings are identified as creating limitations for a project of mobilization within civil society, especially the scarcity of human and material resources along with the restrictions emanating from the governmental sphere. Although the author recognizes the potential role of religious agents in the field of social justice, ethical values and rights, she also raises questions as to the ability of the church to mediate between state and society, as well as the process of reconciliation between domestic and international actors in Cuba.

In his chapter "Relations Between the Catholic Church and the Cuban State Since 2003," Aurelio Alonso describes the development of the Catholic Church as an institution in Cuba and the tense relations between the Church and the Cuban state due to their struggle to main-

tain a preeminent position in society. In his critique, Alonso notes that the vertical and rigid nature of the traditional structure of the Cuban state is to a large extent reproduced by the religious institution of the Catholic Church, as if it were attempting a parallel agenda of homogenization and ideological hegemonization. The author notes additional tensions between the clerical hierarchy of the Catholic Church and other denominations present in Cuba, including Protestant churches and traditional African religions.

Raimundo García Franco discusses the involvement of Protestant churches in the provision of social services in Cuba. This phenomenon has occurred through both welfare or social assistance and developmental approaches, with the developmental fueling community participation. García contributes a detailed list of the ecumenical and lay organizations that work together with churches of various denominations in community development activities throughout the island, in some cases independently while in others in conjunction with the government.

The work of Lázara Menéndez, the final piece in this volume, addresses the subject of popular religion in Cuba, regarding its syncretic expressions, which include the political arena. Menéndez emphasizes the popular religious imaginary as a means of contestation, in which the secularization of powers constitute a certain form of subversion of the established order, a breaking from the monochromatic vision that is usually given of the Cuban socio-cultural and political reality. The author's central argument refers to the deterioration of the quality of life of the Cuban citizen. The author captures various expressions of contestation/metamorphosis, as if they were specific religious images that seem to suggest the catalyzing potential for change of cultural and symbolic expressions, as Rafael Hernández similarly refers to in his work.

In general, the significance of Afro-Cuban religions for Cuban culture lies in their inclusive nature and their promotion of solidarity at the community level. To a certain extent, these expressions of everyday life counterbalance the new asymmetries and inequalities resulting from the economic crisis and unequal access to international currency entering from outside the island.

As stated at the beginning, this volume constitutes a single contribution to the understanding of contemporary Cuban society, its trends and contradictions. The essays included here, as well as the discussion generated in

the workshop from which this book developed, reveal how much remains to be explored from the perspective of empirical investigation and the construction of new models of sociological and cultural interpretation. These essays also will shed light on the real dynamics of contemporary Cuban society, its complexities and transnational expressions. It is necessary to study the social changes in Cuba in quotidian and local dynamics, in their regional impacts and in the mechanics of negotiation among social actors as well as between social actors and state institutions at various levels. This myriad of dialogues and transactions, exchanges, cooperation and conflict, discourses and changing codes surely captures the essence of the Cuban transition, one which is already in progress and whose state and social actors, as well as their interactions are already in place.

Notes

1. Ariel Armony, "Theoretical and Comparative Reflections on the Study of Civil Society in Cuba," in this volume.
2. Jorge I. Domínguez et al, *The Cuban Economy at the Start of the Twenty-First Century*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.
3. Guillermo O'Donnell, et. al, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*. 4 Buenos Aires: Paidos, 1988. For a more recent perspective, see Guillermo O'Donnell, et al, *The Quality of Democracy: Theory and Applications* South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004. On decentralization, see Philip Oxhorn, Joseph S. Tulchin and Andrew D. Selee, editors, *Decentralization, Democratic Governance, and Civil Society in Comparative Perspective*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004; and Joseph S. Tulchin y Andrew Selee, editors, *Decentralization and Democratic Governance in Latin America*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Reports on the Americas #12 (2004).
4. In its recent report *Panorama Social 2003–2004*, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) establishes the weight of remittances on national economies, revealing that 20.6% of Dominican households receive remittances, as do 19% of Nicaraguans (19.0%), 17.2% of Salvadorans, 13% of households in Uruguay, 11.4% in Guatemala, 11.1% in Honduras, 5.9% in Ecuador, 5.7% in México, 5.1% in Paraguay, 3.4% in Bolivia, and 3.2% in Perú.
5. For countries like the Dominican Republic, the volume of remittances (reaching an annual $2.7 billion) represents 15% of the GDP, according to the Interamerican Development Bank and the Earth Institute of Columbia University.

CONTEXTUALIZING THE CHANGES: THE EMERGENCE OF CUBAN CIVIL SOCIETY

Theoretical and Comparative Reflections on the Study of Civil Society in Cuba

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T he analysis of civil society in Cuba poses a series of complex challenges. In this chapter I will go beyond the traditional debates on the subject to present an analytical framework in which to examine this phenomenon and, at the same time, establish some points of comparison between the Cuban case and the situation in other regions of the world. Specifically, the dialectic of power between the state and civil society will be examined, disaggregating the different dimensions of the state as well as the diverse structures that make up civil society. This interaction brings a different perspective to the study of social participation in Cuba.

I begin with the premise that the Cuban political regime is nondemocratic. Although this assertion might seem trivial to political analysts in the United States and other countries, that is not the case for most of their counterparts in Cuba. From the standpoint of political procedures, Cuba does not meet the minimum requirement of a political society featuring free and pluralistic competition for the right to exert control over the state apparatus. This is central to the definition of a democratic regime and its absence, in my view, determines the way in which we must characterize the Cuban regime. It is also important to keep in mind that, from the standpoint of participation and representation, the Cuban system incorporates a number of characteristics associated with certain democratic ideals. These include the notion that achieving the common good takes priority over an aggregation of majorities and the notion that there are some sources of government legitimacy, such as an institutionalized system of grass-roots participation, that are not necessarily present in the electoral system of western democracies. In synthesis, an analysis of the Cuban political regime situates us at the junction of placing the emphasis on the representative nature of democracy and minority protection or its participatory nature and majority rule.

Second, it is necessary to refer directly to the long-standing question of whether civil society exists in Cuba. From a legal standpoint, there are no "independent" nongovernmental organizations in Cuba. By law, citizens' organizations must exist under the auspices of certain government institutions and must maintain an ongoing relationship with government supervisory agencies (Quiroz 2003). If we adopt a definition of civil society as an autonomous space (particularly with respect to the state) for citizen association—and we focus on the world of formal associations—then the answer is that civil society does not exist in Cuba *stricto sensu*. But as I have pointed out elsewhere (Armony 2004), to define civil society only in terms of formal organization is to limit the vast scope of this concept. In other words, what happens when we observe civil society beyond the confines of formal organizations? For example, what happens if we take into account the public sphere—that is, the social space in which collective debates among different "publics" take place? Obviously, this approach poses even more complex challenges for the analysis of civil society than do purely legalistic approaches and/or those focused exclusively on formal associations. If we wish to understand civil society in Cuba, we cannot do so by adopting a restrictive approach. Cubans' constant questioning, political debates over socialist models and economic reform, nonpolitical youth movements (the Rasta movement for example), and social networks organized around religious activity (such as the Afro-Cuban religions) clearly are spaces that can be described as "civil society."[1] These spaces define a public sphere made up of numerous autonomous niches vis-à-vis the state.

Accountability in state-civil society relations is typically a core issue in analyses of civil society's capacity to influence the government. Some analysts maintain that if civil society is unable to influence the public sphere, then it is impossible to speak of an autonomous space and, therefore, of civil society per se. This raises an interesting dilemma: what good is a heterogeneous civil society in the absence of government accountability mechanisms? Drawing from the experience of western democracies, Cuba does not offer mechanisms through which civil society can demand accountability, which many regard as one of its main purposes. This vision is not shared by many Cuban academics who assert that such mechanisms actually do exist. The rationale for this ranges from those who say that the Communist Party is part of civil society to those who argue that the forms

of grass-roots democracy found in Cuba allow for a much more effective kind of accountability than that found in liberal democratic models.

Third, it is important to mention the debate on the utility of comparing Cuba to other countries. Some social scientists on the island analyze their country from the standpoint of "exceptionalism" and therefore reject any attempt at comparison with other nations. This perspective tends to be based on purely ideological considerations rather than analytical precepts. For those who are willing to take off this "straitjacket," the problem becomes much more complex: compare yes, but to whom? One possibility is to resort to a typology of political regimes, in other words, to compare Cuba to other nondemocratic systems, whether in Asia, Africa, or the Middle East. Although such comparisons may present limitations, they could bear more valuable fruit than studies that treat Cuba as a unique case, in other words, "without comparison." No matter what one's position, it is very difficult to reach consensus on this subject.

This brief glance at issues concerning the political regime, civil society autonomy vis-à-vis the state, and comparative analysis reveals, in my opinion, a self-evident truth: it does not make much sense to focus exclusively on these debates, since the position one takes depends primarily on the theoretical or ideological framework to which one subscribes. That is to say, as illustrated by many studies on civil society in Cuba, it is impossible to engage in a fruitful dialogue when the discussion is confined to just how democratic or nondemocratic the Cuban system is; whether civil society is defined as voluntary associations or more broadly; or whether the Cuban case is unique versus the possibility of comparing it with others. What is the benefit of studying civil society in Cuba by focusing on a typology of associations based on which the subject of autonomy is debated ad infinitum? What is the point of restricting the analysis of Cuban civil society to an orthodox Gramscian model that disregards the multiplicity of ties between the state and society and the complexity of building hegemony? My interest in presenting these debates up front lies in my conviction that they propose an analytical course that is largely immaterial. On the other hand, little attention has been paid to the development of alternative analytical models that enable us to examine the Cuban case without becoming ensnared in irresolvable disputes. Let us see, then, whether it is possible to build such an analytical model—one with greater conceptual and empirical poten-

tial—that simultaneously will enable us to create an intellectual meeting point among Cuban and non-Cuban academics.

STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

The analytical approach that I take seeks to integrate five key issues: (1) multicentrism, contradictions, and tensions in state-civil society relations; (2) the dynamics through which social spaces open up and close based on state policies; (3) the process of differentiation and interpenetration in state-civil society relations; (4) trends toward cohesion and fragmentation in civil society; and (5) changes inside the government and in the types of power within civil society.

In order to study the reciprocal relationship between the power of the state and that of civil society, it is necessary to consider the various dimensions of the government apparatus, namely its administrative, coercive, and symbolic resources. These aspects of the government apparatus define its "vertical stateness" (see Schamis 2002). In other words, state power is not uniform and must be examined in function of its capacity in each of these dimensions. We must also examine the structure of civil society. This means distinguishing its social and economic bases, its organizing and mobilizing capacity, and its horizontal structure (i.e., the nature of ties within civil society).

Rather than focusing on a vision of civil society vis-à-vis the state—a dominant perspective in the study of transitions in communist countries—I propose that we examine the reciprocal interaction and interpenetration between civil society and the state. The capacity of civil society to take concerted action in favor of opening up or reforming the current system (even in the context of socialism, I should clarify) is associated with the following aspects of the state. First, the internal unity of the state apparatus, specifically in terms of its administrative capacity; in other words, its capacity to generate and implement public policy. Second, the level of coercion that the state is capable of using and willing to impose to discipline its citizens and control the opposition. Third, the symbolic resources that the state is able to deploy, which refers mainly to the government's capacity to promote and sustain a national project.[2]

This last point merits some further discussion. In general, the state project can be broken down into two categories: a "defensive" project and an "offensive" project. In the Cuban case, the defensive project consists of

defending itself against constant threat from the United States. This involves an ongoing confrontation that justifies, for example, the repression of groups viewed as counterrevolutionary. The offensive project, in turn, is defined by economic transformation: the introduction of market forces and undertaking a privatization process without forsaking the socialist project. It is common knowledge that the profound changes implemented following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European communist bloc have altered radically the Cuban government's capacity to control the distribution of resources and the production of ideological discourse. This dramatic reduction in government capacity has created opportunities for other actors to move into spaces previously dominated by the state (Dilla 1999, 30). In this context, the use of symbolic resources to sustain the national project is crucial because it directly impacts not only the support the state apparatus obtains from its allies in civil society, but also its ability to sustain its hegemony in the Gramscian sense.[3]

Significantly, the coordinates of the Cuban government's defensive project have changed substantially in recent years. For example, countries such as Canada, Sweden, and Norway have replaced their "constructive engagement" policy with one emphasizing democracy and human rights—a reflection of changes in the international paradigm. In the case of the U.S. embargo, for example, the U.S. groups spearheading calls for an end to the embargo include corporations and business groups motivated by exclusively commercial interests. Because of this, Republican members of Congress have supported an end to the embargo in response to the interests of their local constituencies (see Brenner, Haney, and Vanderbush 2002). Moreover, although it is handled in a very low-profile way, the collaboration between the United States and Cuba in a number of different arenas (from commercial to drug-trafficking control efforts) indicates that the "permanent confrontation" between the two countries has more to do with rhetoric useful to both governments than with a concrete reality.

Interactions

The state–civil society power dialectic is defined by the interaction of the state apparatus (i.e., its administrative, coercive, and symbolic components) with the following dimensions of civil society: (1) its structural base

(i.e., the socioeconomic base that sustains civil society), (2) its organizational nature (i.e., its organizing and mobilizing capacity, which is contingent upon civil society's available material and symbolic resources, as well as its transnational links), and (3) the density of civil society's horizontal fabric (i.e., its degree of ideological, political, and class cohesion or fragmentation).

Figure 1. State Civil Society Dialectic of Powers

		STATE APPARATUS		
		Administrative	Coercive	Symbolic
CIVIL SOCIETY	Structural Base	**0**		
	Organization		**–**	
	Horizontal Structure			**+**

0 = Zero Sum   – = Negative Sum   + = Positive Sum

Figure 1 shows the different spheres of the state apparatus and the dimensions of civil society in my model. The chart highlights the principal state–civil society interactions, that is, the dialectic of power between the state's administrative apparatus and civil society's structural base, between the state's coercive apparatus and civil society's organizational capacity, and between the state's symbolic apparatus and civil society's horizontal fabric. While these interactions can produce a variety of different outcomes, I will offer a pattern of potential outcomes for the sole purpose of illustrating this conceptual analysis. I will focus the discussion on the three types of interactions highlighted in the chart and propose three possible outcomes: zero sum, negative sum, and positive sum.[4]

Administrative Power and Structural Base. In the Cuban case, one possibility is that the interaction between the state's administrative power and civil society's structural base produces a zero-sum outcome. In this relationship, state power increases while that of civil society decreases. Administrative concentration (for example, centralization of power in the executive) and particularly economic policies (the state's capacity to define the terms of economic relations in society, to extract resources, and to define and regulate property rights) have a critical impact on the structural composition of the social sphere. The socioeconomic changes resulting from state policies affect the capacity of different sectors of civil society to access resources, which obviously determines the potential for citizen action.

For example, economic reforms in Cuba have contributed to a general fragmentation of working-class sectors, while simultaneously strengthening groups associated with more vigorous sectors of the Cuban economy. This has left the latter better situated to promote their own interests (particularly relative to those positioned in areas linked to the traditional socialist model). The zero-sum dynamic could result from the process through which the state's economic policy harms working-class sectors traditionally loyal to the revolution; these sectors lose their capacity to operate as a reform movement based on the principles of equality espoused by the socialist system. This type of dynamic limits the possibilities of generating a broad-based and diverse public sphere. What is more, one of the major risks of this economic policy is that the public sphere will become increasingly exclusive, curtailing the opportunities available to groups with fewer resources to transmit their positions and defend their rights.

One possible outcome of this zero-sum scenario would be a regime propped up by new social blocs with substantial economic power (for example, the new technocratic-business sector). To what extent are these sectors willing to give up the chance to govern in exchange for the opportunity to make money? In other words, it is necessary to look at whether new economic power groups are willing to forfeit their right to take over the government machinery in exchange for the protection of a powerful state that ensures a continued accumulation of capital that is to their benefit. State concessions to the market can help civil society—by opening up new sources of access to resources that foster citizen capacity

to organize—but this dynamic also runs the risk of weakening civil society (or at least certain sectors of it) because maximizing profits is not the binding principle in the associative world (Dilla and Oxhorn 2002).

Coercive Power and Organization. The interaction between the state's coercive dimension and civil society's organizing and mobilizing capacity can be described as a negative sum. State repression weakens the capacity for civil society mobilization and protest, but also ends up weakening the state. This is true because when domination relies mainly on disciplining citizens through the coercive apparatus, the state's ability to sustain its national project will be weakened sooner or later.

It is important to consider that prior to the reforms, the Cuban government was very effective in its ability to regulate virtually all aspects of social life. In contrast, the transformations of the 1990s left the state incapable of effectively regulating and controlling society. With state legitimacy and capacity to exercise control undermined (by the economic crisis), coercion has become a resort for an increasingly weaker government (at least in terms of building consensus). And since civil society (in its social, political, and cultural expressions) also functions as a source of consensus, the weakening of consensus in civil society leads the state to employ increasingly coercive tactics to keep society in check. This coercion tends to suffocate civic action, leading to a negative sum that is very hard to escape. In these circumstances, one of the main questions that must be asked in the Cuban case is whether it is possible to recreate socialist hegemony without resorting to harsher social control measures. In this sense, the possibility of maintaining and developing citizens' rights (social as well as political and civil rights) is a path well worth exploring.[5]

Symbolic Power and Horizontal Structure. The interaction between the state's symbolic resources and the horizontal ties within civil society can yield a positive sum. Although the Cuban state's capacity to create legitimacy through consensus is very weak, its symbolic apparatus still accords it a significant degree of power. First, the state's defensive project in response to U.S. aggression continues to be an important source of consensus. Moreover, the revolution's enormous advances in the area of social rights (compared to the rest of Latin America, even after the dramatic post-1991 crisis) continue to nourish the symbolic socialist apparatus in Cuban society.[6]

In this context, state power is expanded based on its symbolic resources, both real and potential. The symbolic power of the defensive project reinforces state power. At the same time, it is the justification for the use of coercive methods to castigate the opposition, which paradoxically tends to weaken the state's hegemonic project in the long term. Meanwhile, the fear of the U.S. threat translates into the population's tacit support of the defensive project, which lends a certain degree of cohesion to civil society. The positive-sum dynamic lies in the fact that civil society can use the state's symbolic resources to its own benefit, transforming them into a consensus around reform without rejecting the basic principles of Cuba's national project. Horizontal cohesion in civil society can be solidified to the extent that it functions as a politically legitimate space for a democratization project that, for example, proposes to recreate socialist hegemony in Cuba. In other words, the connection between the state's symbolic resources and reinforcing social networks willing to exist within the socialist model (albeit critically and working toward democratization) could be a viable path toward strengthening the public sphere in Cuba. For the time being, the evidence seems to suggest that civil society's horizontal ties are mostly fragile and unstable. Furthermore, the state's offensive economic project is contributing to an increasingly atomized civil society by deepening class differences.

RETHINKING CUBAN CIVIL SOCIETY

In function of the analysis presented here, it is possible to offer some basic ideas to guide the study of civil society in Cuba. Civil society must be viewed in light of two key aspects. First, it is imperative to discard the vision of the Cuban model as a social homogenization process. We should adopt instead an approach centered on diversity, difference, and multicentrism. This means understanding the logic of socialism as a creator of differences in order to approach the study of civil society as a conflictive space. For example, rising urban poverty and the emergence of new social classes (such as the urban bourgeoisie) underscore the need to understand how social repertoires and opposing discourses develop within civil society. These factors produce a level of complexity that goes beyond a model of "socialist" civil society (as some Cuban academics and politicians have proposed) or a view of civil society as an exclusive space for building political opposition.[7]

Second, it makes little sense to pursue the debate over whether the new social spaces filled by citizen groups were made available by the state or were conquered by social actors. This type of debate is unproductive in that it cannot be resolved empirically. It is necessary, therefore, to adopt a different perspective. If we approach state-civil society relations as an interaction in which interpenetration and separation occur simultaneously, then we can better understand the disjunctive nature of this relationship. It is useful to approach this analysis from the standpoint of citizenship, particularly when we consider the symbolic dimension of citizenship, that is, citizenship as an ideal of belonging. In this sense, it is interesting to observe the dynamics of the relationship between the state's symbolic apparatus and the cohesion/fragmentation of civil society. What is at stake is the definition of inclusion/exclusion in political society. Based on the notion that "fatherland = socialism," the state's ideological discourse excludes from membership in the political community anyone who does not support the hegemonic socialist project.[8] For its part, civil society can echo this exclusive discourse or it can generate inclusion (i.e., belonging based on race, religion, sexual identity). In the latter case, civil society can generate new cross-cutting spaces that appropriate the symbolic universe of the state ("fatherland = socialism") and redefine it in innovative ways. The opportunity to track this process opens up a fascinating and little explored avenue of analysis. One example is how Santería reformulates the subject of individuality without rejecting the representation of the majorities and the model of participatory democracy found in Cuban socialism.[9]

COMPARISONS

To what extent can observing the experience of other countries enable us to better understand the Cuban situation? In principle, we can look at societies that have confronted a communist regime, such as Poland. Let us consider, for example, the issue of symbolic resources. In the mid-seventies, Polish intellectuals developed a renovative political language and revived cultural and political traditions that contributed to alliances among seemingly irreconcilable social actors (such as the Catholic Church and the democratic Left). Based on a democratic discourse, these actors succeeded in building a much more inclusive common identity (without rejecting their own sectorial identity); they

monopolized the political initiative against the Communist regime and won massive public support. The redefinition of political language (delinking Marxist language from social analysis) made it possible to reassert progressive national traditions and intellectually integrate opposition movements and the church. This was critical for the emergence of a "counterhegemonic public" that helped raise consciousness in favor of radical social change and facilitated the organization and mobilization of civil society (Ekiert 1996, 228–36). This experience is interesting—not because Cuba should take the course of a society that confronts the state as an adversary, but rather because it poses the question of whether it is possible to create a confluence of social actors on and off the island with a discourse that appeals to the Cuban people and is, at the same time, a driving force for democratization of the system. The Cuban intellectual community has a vital role to play in this regard, especially to the extent that it succeeds in recreating its discourse and breaking free of orthodox Marxist-Leninist molds.

As we consider the Cuban case in light of other nondemocratic regimes (such as China and the Middle Eastern autocracies), an empirical question must be posed: to what extent can economic liberalization produce a similar effect, that is, decompression in the political and social spheres, particularly in terms of new spaces that could be occupied by civil society? In other words, is what we are seeing in Cuba a liberalization process that spreads from the economic to the political and social spheres, or is it actually a rigorously supervised aperture that enables the Cuban leadership to buy time without allowing true reform? In the case of China, for example, it has been said that, initially, the real motive behind the economic reform was to try to solve the regime's intrabureaucratic conflicts rather than to foster a link between economic liberalization and gradual political opening.

We must also ask to what extent the re-creation of the state (for example, through changes in its administrative, coercive, and symbolic aspects) creates conflicts within the state apparatus—and to what extent those conflicts open up new spaces for civil society. Let us look again at China, where we see a transition from a totalitarian Communist system to a market-based authoritarian system. The main problem in China is an archaic single-party political system that dominates the political discourse and attempts to control too many social spaces, even as expanded education-

al and economic coverage has created citizens with stronger demands for autonomy. In this context, civil society constantly pressures for more spaces for organization and influence. That said, how do we approach the study of those civil society spaces under a regime such as China's? To try to study civil society following the blueprint of western democracies creates profound distortions—for example, by restricting the study of civil society to organizations "independent" of the state. In China, for example, some Communist Party labor unions have shown signs of having significant democratic potential: they could become sources of demands that respond more to their bases than to the official state apparatus (Johnson 2003). In this sense, it could be a serious mistake to ignore these organizations simply because they do not fit into the traditional mold of autonomous civil society.

What does this say about the Cuban case? It is necessary to examine the ways in which mass organizations offer citizens an opportunity to create autonomous representative spaces. These organizations do not fit the prototype of a civil society independent of the state, but they are much more than transmission belts for state interests. As I pointed out at the beginning, no group is legally independent from government control and therefore we cannot confine ourselves to organizations defined on the basis of their autonomy. Moreover, if we look at other cases, we see that some organizations whose objective is not necessarily political reform play an important role in the construction of civil society and the debate of ideas. Let us take the example of the spiritual group Falun Gong in China. This organization cannot be regarded merely as a religious group opposing the state; rather it is an expression of civil society that operates from the grass-roots and, by virtue of the state's reaction to its activities, ends up criticizing harshly the calcified aspects of the political system (Johnson 2003). Along these same lines, it is important to consider the contribution religious groups (Afro-Cuban cults, Catholic, and Pentecostal groups) have made in Cuba to push the balance of power toward society (Quiroz 2003).

The case of the autocracies of the Arab world is useful in examining how spaces opened up by the state do not necessarily lead to cohesion in civil society (Brumberg 2003). In Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Yemen and, to some extent, Algeria, the governments have created free spaces (i.e., free of state interference) for the activities of labor unions and professional,

civic, and business associations. Shrewdly, the leaders of these autocracies have used such measures to unleash a divide-and-conquer strategy in civil society. Even as they permit certain organized sectors to occupy new spaces, these governments have established short-term alliances with some citizens' groups in order to incite tensions within civil society.[10] Besides this type of manipulation by the political elites, many civil organizations in these countries are compelled to play a political role for which they are not equipped. These circumstances produce a variety of negative outcomes; for example, there is one crisis after another within the organizations themselves, and in many cases, civil society groups end up devoting much of their efforts to resolving conflicts with similar groups.[11]

The experiences of countries such as Egypt and Morocco in the nineties—when their governments permitted the development of thousands of organizations quasi-independent of the state—show that the mere existence of organizations (even when they enjoy a certain degree of autonomy) does not translate automatically into a strong and democratic civil society.[12] Many studies on Cuban civil society fall into the trap of presenting organizational typologies without explaining how those organizations relate among themselves and how they relate to the state at different levels. This has been a common error in many "democratizing" initiatives undertaken by international organizations in postcommunist countries. The notion that civil society can be strengthened by fostering a particular type of association has resulted in the squandering of effort and money—since such programs are carried out without a clear understanding of the way civil society operates in its specific context (see Armony 2004, ch. 1).

CONCLUSION

The analysis presented here is no more than a tentative conceptual approach to the study of the interaction of civil society and the state in Cuba. The description of the possible dynamics emanating from the principal relationships between the state and civil society could be a useful "road map" for research and evaluation of the complex role civil society plays in the Cuban reality. It might also be useful to understand the transformations that will follow a change in the political leadership in Cuba.

We must develop new analytical strategies that enable us to study Cuban civil society through a lens that does not limit our ability to be

alert to the changes and processes taking place in the associative sphere. Often such changes and processes do not follow the same patterns found in civil societies placed in very different contexts. Still a comparative look can be important to avoid the myopia of exceptionalism that often plagues studies on Cuba. What is more, the exercise of looking at the Cuban case not only in, but outside of the Latin American context can be useful in illuminating certain little understood aspects of civil society and its relationship with the state.

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NOTES

1. This assertion corresponds to the definition of civil society as social groups and networks (formal and informal) through which citizens participate in political and community activities. See Skocpol and Fiorina (1999, 2).

2. This analysis is based on Stepan (1985).

3. In other words, the population's noncompulsory consensus around the general direction of society imposed by the dominant social group; see Gramsci (1994).

4. Needless to say, these interactions can produce numerous combinations of outcomes. My focus is mainly by way of illustration. It is inspired by some of the ideas discussed in Stepan (1985).

5. See the chapter by Velia Cecilia Bobes in this volume.

6. It is interesting to observe that even when the socialist model has lost its power of persuasion at the international level, the growing rejection of neoliberal policies in Latin America and other regions in the developing world is a way of validating, by default, alternative models to free-market capitalism.

7. See the chapter by Mayra Paula Espina Prieto in this volume.

8. See Bobes's chapter.

9. This is illustrated by new interpretations of the symbolic appeal of Che Guevara from the standpoint of Regla Ocha-Ifa. See the chapter by Lázara Menéndez in this volume.

10. In the case of Egypt, for example, the existence of numerous nongovernmental organizations characterized by competition and conflict was no threat to the Mubarak government; see Brumberg (2003).

11. For example, it is not uncommon to find profound schisms among human rights, women's, and environmental groups due to ideological, political, or ethnic disputes.

12. A strong civil society is understood as heterogeneous, program-based, and able to generate independent resources and influence institutions. See the chapter by Javier Corrales in this volume.

Larval Actors, Uncertain Scenarios, and Cryptic Scripts: Where is Cuban Society Headed?

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I f we define actors (social, political, economic) as groups having a distinctive public profile and defined interests vis-à-vis the system they seek to preserve, replace, or simply change, then it is extremely difficult to speak of actors in Cuba. Because of the way in which Cuban society has evolved over the past several decades and the unique characteristics of its political system, the emergent actors referred to here (those that have appeared in the past decade as a result of a changing society) are all larval, with little or no organization and scripts so surreptitious as to be incomprehensible to the uninitiated.

As larval actors, these groups cannot be expected to maintain their integrity under different circumstances. Their affinity is always greater when critiquing than when articulating proposals, and the latter, with the exception of strictly trade union affairs, has yet to become the focal point of the public profile of such groups. In a more open political system, these actors would quickly splinter among the infinite number of positions that are possible in today's world, whether in the sphere of the arts, academia, politics, or social action. Although it would be impossible to concur in all these areas, one must acknowledge the advantages of a society that engenders its own actors in a pluralistic context, leaving aside that "unrealistic desire for unanimity" condemned by the Cuban leadership itself at the start of the complicated decade of the nineties.

This chapter presents the historical contingencies that have shaped these actors over the past ten years, offers a description of these emergent actors in civil society, and, finally, discusses prospects for the evolution of Cuban society and the development of new scenarios that will influence the behavior of these actors.

THE CONTEXT FOR EMERGENT ACTORS

The current political system in Cuba is the end result of successive institutional crystallizations of the basic social alliance that brought about the revolution. It has, from the outset, been a markedly asymmetrical alliance between the masses and the political class that emerged from the insurrection. The new political regime established a monopoly over resource allocation and ideological production within a closed institutional framework of sociopolitical control.

This alliance functioned with remarkable effectiveness for decades, consolidating a stable, unique relationship in which the political class ensured national independence and the social mobility of the masses in exchange for absolute loyalty to the programmatic foundations of the revolutionary process and to each and every policy. It was an alliance, however, that was called upon to function under three very specific conditions: a largely unskilled population base, a relative abundance of economic resources, and a unified political class.

These conditions began to change in the mid-eighties. The social mobility fostered by the revolution had created a more educated population—including a professional and intellectual class—while new generations of Cubans entered public life. In the early nineties, external support evaporated, taking with it substantial Soviet economic subsidies and military assistance, along with the teleological paradigms of an irreversible, expansionist socialism that had informed ideological production for decades. Ultimately, the political class was exposed to extraordinarily harsh external conditions at a moment when internal conditions were unusually adverse. This mass of contradictions helps to explain what happened from 1986 to 1996, as well as the rationale behind the counterrevolutionary bureaucratic offensive of March 1996.

Indeed, despite the call for a "rectification process" (1986–90) to unite around the ambitious aim of finding the "correct path" and the liberalizing breeze that swept through Cuba from 1990 to 1995, there was no indication that the government planned to open up its political system to accommodate the diverse opinions incubating in society or to offer everyday Cubans the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes affecting the future of their national community. What occurred was simply a relaxing of controls, which I call "tolerance by omission," that paved the way for certain legal-political and economic reforms[1] and for the emer-

gence of diverse actors who enjoyed a five-year window in which to act in a brief but attractive context of political opportunity (McAdam 1998).

Bemused by this new state of affairs, the political class had no choice but to retreat, opening up less restricted spaces that were occupied by other actors, in some cases as part of existing policies, and in others simply by omission. Internal fractures were manifest in an unusual instability in the composition of the political elite, uncharacteristic public disagreements over the best course of action, and the removal of prominent members of the party and state apparatus. But the political elite instinctively did not retreat past the boundaries of its blueprint for power, thereby reserving the possibility, at least mathematically speaking, to reconquer lost terrain.

The point of no return was 1996 when, spurred by scant economic recovery and the internal adjustments emanating from the Fifth Party Congress of 1997, the political class launched an offensive against the political aperture of the preceding five years. For our purposes, this translated into the dissolution of influential opinion-making groups in society, the suspension of registrations of new nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the imposition of additional controls on existing ones, public condemnation of external funding sources, and the presumptuous creation, by decree, of a "socialist civil society" strictly aligned with the political status quo.

Fortunately for Cuban society and the legacy of its spirited revolution, it was impossible for the situation to regress to the dismal levels of the eighties. Vigorous intellectual groups inside the country introduced courageous and incisive ideas and critiques into the panorama. Some NGOs have managed to survive; they have paid the price of invisibility, but they exist. The communities that organized in the nineties produced leaders and activists who represent a valuable resource for the country's future and for the defense of grass-roots interests. It is just that the 1996 bureaucratic offensive shut down a process in which emerging leaders were beginning to network and to influence public opinion.

Diverse Actors in Search of Their Identities

As I mentioned earlier, the emergent actors in Cuban civil society are fragmented and have limited ability to create public opinion. Attempts to catalog these actors are always controversial; in any event, the list presented here is far from exhaustive, as that would require much more sustained research.[2]

Social and Grass-Roots Organizations

This category includes numerous organizations whose common denominator is their role as the government's "transmission belts" in a classic centralized, top-down system. They largely comprise what the Cuban government refers to as "socialist civil society." Although none of these organizations can be considered emergent, some of them underwent significant transformations in the nineties. They are, one way or another, protagonists in defining Cuba's present and future.

These associations constitute an indistinct threshold between civil society and the state, not because of their common political objectives but rather due to the scant autonomy they have demonstrated in their public profiles. To their credit, these organizations occasionally have adopted autonomous positions on specific problems affecting their spheres of action. And while they regularly blend into the government or party decision-making bodies where they have representation, they also exhibit a certain degree of dynamic autonomy particularly at the grass-roots level where their capacity for leadership and collective action has matured.

This autonomous trend was accentuated during the first half of the nineties, as evidenced by the activities of trade unions[3] and certain professional associations, particularly the National Writers and Artists Union of Cuba (UNEAC). It is likely that official adjustment policies and economic reforms will affect the constituencies of these organizations in the future. Therefore, the extent to which they are able to represent effectively the interests of grass-roots sectors under these new circumstances—even when it entails substantial differences with specific policies—may turn into a test-case scenario they will have to confront in the future.

Intellectual Sectors

As in the rest of the world, the intellectual (and professional in a more general sense) sector in Cuba is a heterogeneous class comprising myriad lifestyles, ideologies, and political opinions. Nonetheless, during the first half of the nineties, intellectuals played a crucial role in attempts to generate autonomous political communication and develop proposals for change.

Particularly interesting are the developments in the artistic sector, which has produced the most sustained and influential criticism, as well as early attempts at autonomous organization. Noteworthy projects include Padeia, Artecalle, Hacer, and Castillo de la Fuerza (incisively ana

lyzed by Bobes [2000]); these were efforts to engage the public in a new type of relationship by desanctifying revolutionary symbolism. Such efforts were also the result of the emergence of a new generation that, unlike its predecessors, was unwilling to automatically fulfill obligatory political quotas.

Official intolerance of these projects, none of which was antiestablishment, stemmed from their attempts to adopt autonomous organization structures and offer politically sensitive proposals regarding state-society relations. None of them survived the decade of their birth, and their members either emigrated or joined official institutions. This was the first sign of failure of a political system that had begun to suffer the effects of its own accomplishments.

Since then, the Cuban government has followed a peculiar policy line in response to the criticisms from the arts world that permeated theater and film in the nineties. Although these sectors clearly have more latitude to criticize than other intellectual groups, they have had to respect the strict organizational limits of the parastate UNEAC and confine their messages to the traditional function of art, once defined by Carpentier as the technique of showing without revealing. Conversely, intellectuals and artists associated with UNEAC have found it to be sensitive to their demands and a progressive force in terms of cultural policy and opportunities for professional and economic fulfillment. It has served as an effective mechanism of cooptation in the short term, similar in substance to the way in which the Cuban government administers the civil and political rights of its citizens.

Apart from the art world, the Cuban professional and intellectual sphere is organized into various associations, which cannot be compared to UNEAC in terms of scope, autonomy, or privileges. In the social sciences in particular—the other area from which one might expect a critical posture—the situation has been less promising. This is largely because the field is subject to harsh scrutiny by the ideological apparatus, which is inextricably linked to the fact that, unlike artists, social scientists have the professional obligation to demonstrate, as well as the temptation to solve.

If it were possible to single out particular actors in this field, one would have to look for research and academic institutions that have played a significant role in the production of ideas, usually thanks to their connections with some political sector. This is the case, for example, with the

Superior School of the Party, which has served consistently as an academic sounding board for the most conservative sectors of the party and state apparatus and played a prominent role in laying the foundations for the 1996 bureaucratic offensive against the emerging civil society. Another example is the ousted Center for American Studies, the chief advocate of taking advantage of the political opportunities in the first half of the nineties and net producer of proposals for socialist renewal.

Nongovernmental Organizations

From 1989 to 1995, nonstate entities proliferated in the country at unprecedented levels, numbering over two thousand by 1993. Most were small, individual associations with no public profile whatsoever, while others were fronts for government agencies seeking international funding. Still others—and these are the ones I wish to discuss more in depth—were public action NGOs that efficiently took advantage of the political opportunities presented by "tolerance by omission."

Cuban NGOs had their moment of glory from 1992 to 1996. Inspired (and well funded) by their hemispheric and European counterparts, these organizations tried to build a civil society based on a new relationship between the state and society, but with a strong dose of elitism due to legal limitations on their relationships with emergent community movements as well as to the social backgrounds and ideological beliefs of their protagonists.

Although NGOs report the existence of around fifty such organizations, the actual number is probably no more than twenty. In the three-year period from 1990 to 1992, these organizations received and channeled about 7 million dollars; this figure rose to 42 million dollars for the subsequent three-year period. In 1994, 108 development projects were registered based on agreements with 66 foreign NGOs. Approximately half of these projects were administered by Cuban NGOs, only three of which administered most of the projects and funding. These projects were implemented in six priority areas: alternative energy, community development, environment, popular education, promotion of women, and institution building.

In meetings with their European counterparts held between 1993 and 1995 (Center for European Studies 1994, 1995), Cuban NGOs displayed an uncharacteristic belligerence in response to the bureaucratic red tape and political controls imposed by the Cuban government that hampered

their activities. They explicitly criticized the restrictions placed on the creation of new NGOs and excessive state supervision of their actions, and advocated greater autonomy in project administration and coordination. The Cuban NGOs also expressed the need for improved coordination with foreign NGOs and additional training. At the same time, they unanimously declared their opposition to the imposition of any foreign projects that would buttress U.S. policy against Cuba.

Neither the latter position nor their adherence to socialism saved the Cuban NGOs from the 1996 bureaucratic offensive. Most of them were reduced to very discreet, virtually expendable roles (the case of the Felix Varela Center), while others were shut down with the justification that their functions would be taken over directly by the state (as was the case with the interesting Cuba Habitat project). NGO registrations were frozen and several that were in the formation process (such as the feminist project Magín) were informed that they were not relevant. Currently, it would be very difficult to find an NGO with a public profile and discernable position, except for a few institutions that enjoy special political protection whether because of their intra–elite connections or the importance of their international contacts.

Community–Based Organizations

The community-based organizations that emerged during this five-year period deserve special mention; they have been widely documented (see, for example, Fernández and Otazo 1996; Dilla et al. 1997; Morales 2002; and the excellent collections of articles by Dávalos 2000; and Dávalos and Hernández 2000). These groups are unique in that they grew out of community programs implemented by technical entities (extended neighborhood transformation workshops in the capital); local professionals or officials developing more comprehensive leadership roles (community doctors, agricultural technicians, cultural activists); or submunicipal government entities moving toward more participatory processes outside of their official purviews (*circunscripciones*, popular councils).

From such origins, these organizations succeeded in broadening their leadership base and agendas to have a considerable impact at the neighborhood and community levels. Around 1996, an empirical survey (conducted by the author and limited to the central and western provinces) indicated the existence of 74 community projects, 25 of which had

matured into formal organizations. Beginning in 1997, the government tendency clearly was to assimilate such projects into official municipal and submunicipal structures. Thus, while many of these projects still exist and have an impact, they have become bogged down in the bureaucratic structure of control, further limiting their initiatives.

Market–Based Actors

Economic reforms have led to the emergence of new actors operating primarily in the marketplace, even though they may have government affiliations. The most prominent of these is the new technocratic-business sector, particularly the foreign business sector (considered internal because of their involvement in actions that affect national society) and their national partners, which have entrenched themselves in the many hundreds of firms established throughout the country. This sector still lacks a distinctive organizational structure. Because of their unique position in the social spectrum, however, actors in this sector maintain very fluid communication among themselves and with their government interlocutors and this is transforming them into actors (albeit incipient) of civil society.

This emergent sector also includes the wealthy elites who have amassed huge fortunes through corruption, illegal business operations, and the provision of goods and services in the chronically lacking Cuban food market. Although the deployment of this sector is limited by current investment restrictions, presumably it will enjoy more operating room in a future small- and medium-sized business sector, an ideal venue for converting its riches into capital.

The technocratic-business sector's relevance in society lies in several of its unique qualities, foremost of which is that it is the only actor capable of ideological production with no political authorization other than that permitting its existence. It need do nothing more than carry out, before the eyes of an impoverished population, a satisfactory daily life in relation to the market. At the same time, it is the only emergent actor with a certain guarantee of longevity, since it is essential for economic growth. This also means it will be favorably situated in future economic negotiations with international capital and business sectors from the Cuban diaspora.

This sector's main weaknesses lie in the political fragmentation of markets, which acts as an effective barrier between its components. Although there are individuals and institutions in the political arena who favor

increased market liberalization, the emerging business sector does not have direct political representation. Its growth as a sector, therefore, depends on the political class' willingness to collaborate with them. More than one negative situation is the direct result of a pact-in-the-making that obliges the political class to guarantee the conditions necessary for accumulation and a host of economic and legal privileges in exchange for an economic surplus and total political abstention.

The Organized Opposition

Another distinct actor is the myriad of organizations espousing diverse creeds, issues, and positions that comprises the opposition to the Cuban political regime and, in contrast to the antiestablishment groups of the sixties, is characterized by its nonviolent positions. This actor is also extremely fragmented (Álvarez [2002] estimates that there are some 450 different organizations), heavily infiltrated by the Cuban state security apparatus, and has an international profile that far surpasses its political influence inside the country.

The organized opposition has achieved indisputable successes including the formation of coalitions and public support in the form of 25,000 signatures for the Varela Project, a petition calling for legal reforms. Nonetheless, as we have already mentioned, its public presence inside the country is extremely limited and it has been incapable of channeling the growing discontent among Cubans.

Foreign and expatriate analysts insist that the opposition remains in a larval state because it is harshly repressed and reviled by the Cuban government, and there is no doubt that repression hampers the public influence of this actor. Yet, at the same time, it could be argued that if the Cuban government is able to successfully repress opposition groups it is because the cost of doing so is lower than the cost of tolerance, even when factoring international repercussions into the cost-benefit analysis.

The Cuban government, for its part, asserts that these groups lack legitimacy because of their international links with countries and organizations hostile not only to the Cuban government, but to the historic process of revolutionary change. And while that argument could be reasonably applied to some of these groups, it hardly explains the repression of other groups and individuals who do not have such ties and whose proposals are more socialist than those of the government itself.

Most importantly, there is no evidence to suggest that this is a fabricated actor, because of these international ties. If these groups exist and are able to survive in a repressive environment, it is because thousands of people, for whatever reason, believe that systemic change is necessary. This is evident in (or at least suggested by) the findings of the few reliable surveys conducted in Cuba and the outcome of the general elections (Dilla 2002).

The Expatriate Community

The Cuban diaspora comprises nearly two million people and has acquired a prominent profile in its host societies. The remittances sent back to Cuba, which economists estimate at between five hundred million and one billion dollars annually, is a cornerstone of governance in Cuba and the primary extragovernmental palliative to the impoverishment of the population. This fact, and the attendant strengthening of ties between the two communities, situates the Cuban expatriate community as a discernable actor on the contemporary national scene. And it is likely that its role will increase if Cuban migration policies are liberalized, if there is continued relaxation of the blockade, and if opportunities for investment in small and medium-sized enterprises are provided. At the same time, it is important to recall that this community is overwhelmingly antiestablishment and will use its power of economic and cultural cooptation in function of political change on the island, although maybe not in the same way that the traditional right-wing sectors and speculators in exile dreamed.

An Uncertain Future

Up to now, we have been describing, implicitly or explicitly, a transition process whose final destination should be discussed with a view toward better understanding the role these actors probably will play in the medium term. Perhaps no other subject reveals so clearly the remarkable polarization that permeates contemporary Cubanology. Prominent academics (Suárez 2000; Hernández 1998; Espina 2000) have described this transition as a passage from the imperfect socialism that flourished in the seventies and the first half of the eighties toward a superior version. This is a frankly attractive interpretation, albeit one that is difficult to confirm empirically. Others, like Álvarez (2002), emphasize a transition model

securely anchored in the Eastern European experiences with a democratic endpoint, which is no easier to verify than the first theory. These hypotheses probably reflect two ideological positions rather than two different perceptions of reality.

In my view, Cuba is moving from a statist, centralized, bureaucratic socialist system toward a peripheral capitalist system. Describing this transition as a move toward democracy is simply naïve. The transition to capitalism will undoubtedly involve the emergence of a liberal political structure, but one that is subject to demands for accumulation of wealth that are hardly in keeping with a democratic system in which everyday people make, rather than simply consume, policy. To believe that this outcome can be altered to obtain a "superior socialism" is no more realistic. The possibility of a socialist alternative is severely curtailed both by an international climate that seems to remind us of the Marxist premise that socialism cannot exist in just one country, and by Cuban government policies that, although they are formulated in the name of socialism, have obliterated any alternative in that direction.

This is not, however, a gratuitous discussion when it comes down to the actors. The potential for this future system to be more democratic and equitable despite the logic of peripheral capitalism, or even the possibility that new socialist alternatives will be proposed in the political arena, will depend in large part on the maturity and vocation of the actors currently emerging (or transforming themselves) in Cuban society.

This discussion, however, may seem excessively sophisticated considering that, despite strident discourse and frequent allusions to the march of history, Cuban policies in recent years have been governed by the political elite's short-term ethological instincts at the expense of strategic long-term considerations. This is an important factor that shapes the context in which the actors must operate. In terms of the issue at hand, these policies can be summarized as follows:

1. Nurturing the basic revolutionary social pact through the conservation of social programs and fixed-rate subsidized consumption.

2. Administration of market-driven processes based on a stringent regulatory framework, including the control/co-optation of emergent technocratic–business sectors.

3. Fragmentation of traditional or emergent social subjects, whether in the economic or political spheres, or in the selective administration of civil and political rights.

4. "Low-cost" prevention and repression of actions to disrupt the status quo, whether political, intellectual, or social in nature, and regardless of their political–ideological orientation.

5. Discourse that appeals to areas of hard-core consensus, and to nationalism in particular, characterizing Cuba as the last remaining bastion of world dignity on subjects ranging from the war in Iraq to the Olympics.

6. Recreating the political class by promoting youth, the military, and technocrats distinguished by their hard-line positions and loyalty to Cuba's highest authority.

Several systemic Gordian knots must be resolved in order to progress toward goals that are inseparable from the functioning of any political system. Paradoxically, unraveling these knots would erode dramatically the foundations of that same political functioning, thereby opening up new spaces for emergent actors.

The first knot is found in the economic sphere. Without significant economic growth, the cumulative deficit in consumption could become explosive, making it very difficult to maintain current social spending levels. This would further exacerbate the gap between growing, and increasingly complicated, demands and diminished resources. While the adverse international context—marked by the U.S. blockade—is an aggravating factor in this regard, in strictly technical terms the Cuban government has at its disposal a considerable stock of domestic actions to shore up the economy that would have a positive effect on production, services, and employment. These actions include further decentralization of large government enterprises based on expansion of the business "streamlining" program designed by the government, legalizing small and medium-sized businesses, and granting genuine autonomy to the rural cooperative system.

Nonetheless, the Cuban government has exhibited a stubborn reticence to implement this type of action. It has argued for ideological con-

siderations (their procapitalist implications) while overlooking the fact that any of these measures could be accompanied by other approaches (such as comanagement and worker-participation models, cooperatives, and so on) that would strengthen socialist spaces and the participating actors and ultimately would be more socialist than its state-centered passions. The Cuban government's hesitation to move in this direction does not stem from anticapitalist sentiment, but rather from its corporate survival instinct, to the extent that any step forward would generate an autonomous social dynamic and a unification of currently fragmented markets, the latter being essential for monitoring the emergent technocratic-business sector. Consequently, the Cuban leadership finds itself at a complex crossroads in which the only path toward increased economic growth implies the weakening of its own power.

A second Gordian knot is found in the international arena. U.S. aggression toward Cuba follows a Monroe-style approach and reflects its interest in bringing down an internal political protagonist. The United States wants surrender, not negotiation. But it is equally clear that the Cuban government has known how to use this variable to consolidate internal support. After four decades of practice in the art of confrontation, it is hard to imagine Cuban policy without it, or consensus on the island absent the perception (real or contrived) of a foreign threat.

Although the White House is currently under the control of an irrationally unilateralist and ultraright sector, the U.S. blockade is continuing its march toward extinction. Here again, the Cuban government has demonstrated its accustomed ability to deal with its obstinate neighbors through a policy of attracting economic interests in a society that always puts the customer first. This is in keeping with the aforementioned tendency, but from the standpoint of commercial motivations that subordinate political dictates.

The key issue here is the extent to which a normalization of relations with the United States, or at least a substantial reduction in tensions, would weaken a political discourse based largely on nationalistic considerations. This is clearly the Cuban regime's strongest and most credible argument, and one that is necessary to keep the broad swath of passive support that characterizes Cuban society today from running to the other side. Or, on the other hand, is it possible, in a more relaxed scenario, to maintain bureaucratic controls over the expression of the various actors,

and particularly over the political opposition? This represents yet another advance that is plainly contradictory for the Cuban leadership.

The third area of contradiction centers on the political leadership itself. The crisis has accentuated markedly the personalized approach to politics revolving around the figure of Fidel Castro. The Cuban president has been a pillar in maintaining the essential stream of active support and preserving the unity of the political class. With his accustomed dexterity, Castro has succeeded in repressing or taming dissent within the postrevolutionary elite, overseeing the recruitment of new members, and simultaneously persuading much of the population that the critical present is better than the panoply of potential futures available in the political market.

Nonetheless, it is easy to see that this extreme centralism will become an unsolvable dilemma when the Cuban president disappears completely or partially from the political scene, particularly since the system lacks internal reconciliation and negotiation mechanisms. This could lead to schisms between active "Fidelists"—people whose political motivations are intimately linked to the figure of the Cuban president—or within a political class whose alleged unanimity is contingent upon the vigilant care of a person of retirement age.

If the assertion regarding an inevitable liberalization of the Cuban political system is not to remain wholly pessimistic, then one would have to believe that new opportunities will open up to these actors and that they will fill the Cuban political system with the many hues required by a liberal political market. Evidence ex post facto of the ideological and cultural strength of the Cuban Revolution will lie precisely in the extent to which socialist values and goals can survive as genuine alternatives rather than just as bitter references by converts or the wistful outpourings of the nostalgic.

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Notes

1. Significant reforms and events of the period include the public debate surrounding the convening of the Fourth Congress of the Cuban Communist Party (PCC), economic liberalization reforms, constitutional reform, the new elections law, new migration provisions, and others that are described in greater depth in Dilla (2002).

2. In particular, religious and church groups, extremely relevant actors in Cuba's present and future, are not discussed here. This omission, however, is due to the inclusion in this volume of essays specifically on this topic, written by authors with substantial experience on the subject.

3. During the months preceding the parliamentary session to approve the economic adjustment measures (May 1994), the trade unions fostered a series of debates among their constituencies that were covered by the trade union press. Ultimately, the unions succeeded in postponing the imposition of a wage tax, which was included in the original plan. For an analysis of this process, see: Dilla (1996a).

Civil Society in Cuba: Internal Exile

JAVIER CORRALES

Can civil society emerge in a country such as Cuba where the right to freedom of association is severely curtailed? Can one speak of civil society—in other words, a sphere of citizen associations with public objectives—given the lack of political and economic freedoms? And, should such a society exist, what repercussions would it have for the political life of the country?

There are at least three different positions vis-à-vis these questions. Some totally refuse to recognize the existence of a civil society in Cuba. Others declare that, to the contrary, civil society in Cuba has achieved impressive levels of vitality, and this is the precursor to impending democratization. Still others recognize the existence of associative life, but far from celebrating it, they consider it an antidemocratic phenomenon.

This chapter examines these positions and identifies the analytical problems posed by each one. There is no question that new citizens groups emerged in Cuba in the nineties. But these groups will not bring the political benefits that some covet; they will not, on their own, garner enough strength to generate and sustain a democratic transition. On the other hand, these associations do not constitute a threat to civic life, as some pessimists might argue.

In my view, the emergence of a new civil society in Cuba plays a role tantamount to an internal exile. Like any exile, associations in Cuba offer refuge, support, and shelter to Cuban dissidents. They also provide an environment—limited but real—from which to speak out. This is healthy in any political system, but insufficient to democratize the country.

THREE POSITIONS CONCERNING THE ALLEGED CIVIL SOCIETY IN CUBA

The first position concerning the question of the emergence of a civil society in Cuba is simply to refuse to believe that this emergence is significant.

In this view, the Cuban government exercises total control over society. Cubans lack the right, *de jure* and *de facto*, to freedom of association. The Cuban Constitution, in its excessively unitary spirit and in Articles 54 and 62, establishes the illegality of institutions independent of the state. Law 88 of February 1999, on the Protection of National Independence and the Economy of Cuba, grants discretionary power to repress activities typical of such associations. Crimes prohibited under penalty of imprisonment or death include collaborating with the foreign press, especially with any U.S. agency; accepting donations unauthorized by the government; possessing or distributing subversive material or independent publications; and disturbing the public order with demonstrations, particularly if the act is "committed with the participation of two or more people" (CubaNet News 1999). And in practice, the state does not hesitate to act against such institutions, using classic autocratic mechanisms: direct repression, the threat of repression (which reduces incentives for forming associations), and co-optation of emerging groups. In this hostile context, only those associations most loyal to the system, or most innocuous, are able to survive in Cuba.

There is no doubt that existing legal and de facto restrictions in Cuba are draconian. But it is also true that there was an impressive level of associative activity in Cuba in the nineties, as many chapters of this book document. The skeptics cannot explain, for example, the fact that over one hundred nongovernmental organizations called on citizens to support the Varela Project (*Encuentro* 2003, 117). While it is true that these organizations were repressed, the indisputable fact is that there were one hundred such organizations. The very existence of repression (in 1994, 1996, and 2003) confirms the repeated irruption of an associative sphere.

The position taken by the skeptics, therefore, fails to recognize the ingenuity and strength of those who form part of civil society, particularly in hostile contexts. It does not recognize that the greater the barriers against civil society, the more tenacious citizens may become in finding mechanisms of solidarity and mutual support. There is no automatic inverse correlation, then, between hostile context and associative activity. On the contrary, citizens in adverse political and economic contexts face greater incentives to create organizations (see Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar 1998). It is true that when government control is absolute—in other words, under a purely Stalinist regime—it is difficult for civil socie-

ty to flourish. Nevertheless, once totalitarianism eases, opportunities for associational life, what Bobes (2004:40) calls "pluralization processes" with the possibility of "counter-discourse," begin to surface. We do not understand exactly what conditions lend themselves to associative activity in hostile circumstances, but we do know that it is possible.

The second position tends to exaggerate the democratic potential of Cuba's nascent civil society. These analysts, whom we could call optimists, argue that all democratic transitions begin with the formation of civil society. At first, these organizations are predictably simple and circumspect, but over time they acquire more followers and raise their demands on the state. The arguments of this camp are based on the reasoning of classical thinkers, such as Alexis de Tocqueville (1848[1969]); the views of political analysts specializing in the emergence of democracies, such as Charles Tilly (1990), Robert Putnam (1993), and Ernest Gellner (1994); and the work of some Latin Americanists who romanticized the transformative power of popular organizations in the seventies and eighties (see Roberts 1997). This current believes that the associative sphere in Cuba, weak as it may be, is a triumph in and of itself. It is the seed of a grand democratic transition. Although this civil society will experience setbacks, it soon will become unstoppable and, eventually, will be the engine of democratization in the country.

If the skeptics err in their fixation on the obstacles against civil society, the enthusiasts err by failing to see them. While the skeptics are hard pressed to explain the one hundred organizations of 2003, the enthusiasts are left dumbfounded by the ease with which the Cuban government repressed these organizations. The enthusiasts are unable to recognize that, in the absence of other political changes, the associative sphere in Cuba has little chance of propelling a democratic transition. For example, without political parties, or at least labor unions or social movements capable of convening diverse sectors and coordinating strategies at the national level, civil associations will remain isolated and therefore incapable of bringing about political change (see Corrales 2001; Encarnación 2000; Carothers 1999–2000). Moreover, without reformers at different levels of government with whom associations can interact and negotiate, it is very difficult for civil associations to successfully introduce democratic reforms (Przeworski 1991). In the end, civil society, in isolation, lacks the capacity to pressure the government to recognize new rights, hold free elections, or surrender its political monopoly.

A third position, even more pessimistic than that of the skeptics, recognizes the existence of new organizations in Cuba but fails to recognize their ability to offer political benefits. In keeping with Sheri Berman's famous study (1997) on the Weimar Republic in Germany (1919–33), this current of thought increasingly views associationism as both a cause and a symptom of political ailments.

Associationism is symptomatic of political ailments, as Berman explains, because it can emerge as a result of deeply rooted malaise in the country. Associationism arises when citizens feel severely alienated and dissatisfied with how institutions are functioning. They turn toward associations in a spirit of defeat. Rather than a sign of the empowerment of society, associations are a symptom of its exhaustion. Associations are filled, not with citizens willing to join hands to address their issues, but with citizens who have given up, learned to distrust institutions, and have chosen to look for an exit route. They are driven by the principle of "any action is fine" ("todo se vale"), rather than by a desire to become integrated into the national life (de Miranda Parrondo 2004:54). Worse still, these cells are vulnerable to co-optation by political caudillos.

Once the tendency to take refuge in organizations is solidified, continues Berman, civil organizations become a cause of political ailment, if they operate without the help of political parties. First, they fragment the country. Second, citizens belonging to associations relate only to others with similar profiles: people who think the same way, who are in the same line of work, who have had the same life experiences, and so forth. Rather than exposing citizens to different points of view and diverse trends, associations only succeed in creating groups of like-minded people. This can be dangerous for democracy since it reduces the frequency of negotiation and possibilities for learning to trust dissenters, a task that must be practiced in any democracy (Putnam 1993, Hardin 1999; Habermas 1996; Fukujama 1995). By associating ourselves with others just like us we have nothing to negotiate. We do not have to face counter arguments. Ultimately, we do not practice democracy.

Berman offers a powerful criticism of associationism in contexts lacking national-level institutions of political representation. The majority of the most threatening tendencies in any democracy—racism, nativism, terrorism, mafias, fundamentalism, nationalistic chauvinism, misogyny, and homophobia—flourish precisely among groups of citizens espousing the

exact same opinions and who fail to integrate with other groups. However, this position is excessively pessimistic. It is true that in a democracy excessive associationism might be a symptom of alienation and a cause of breakdown in social coexistence. But in a country subject to political restrictions, associationism can offer countless political benefits. Perhaps these benefits do not include provoking a regime change, but they are not trivial, as the next section will show.

In sum, there are problems with the three prevailing positions concerning the question of an alleged civil society that are found in literature inside and outside of Cuba. The skeptics are blind to the myriad types of associations that have emerged in Cuba. The enthusiasts are blind to the prevailing severe political restrictions against such groups. The pessimists are blind to the benefits that such associations can contribute in a country lacking basic freedoms. What then, are those benefits?

BETWEEN EXIT AND SILENCE

To better understand the political role of associations in Cuba, it is useful to summarize Albert Hirschman's (1970) celebrated work on exit and voice. According to Hirschman, when users or consumers receive an unacceptable service they have two alternatives: they can leave (exit) or they can protest (voice). Exit occurs when the consumer totally severs the relationship with the service-provider—by buying a different product or moving out of the area. Voice consists of any activity designed to protest the status quo.

In Cuba, voice entails enormous political risks. The state only hears certain voices: those conveying a message of loyalty to the revolution and those transmitted exclusively through official channels. All other voices are disregarded and are frequently repressed. Therefore, since the beginning of the revolution, dissidents of the regime have mostly opted to leave. Leaving, of course, includes political exile, but as Eckstein (1995) points out, it also includes other sorts of activities—most of them illegal—such as corruption, cannibalism in government enterprises, prostitution, work absenteeism, alcoholism, and suicide. Most of these exit strategies contribute little to the good of the country. They represent a loss of human capital.

Those who have left Cuba for the United States, by decade

1961–70	1971–80	1981–90	1991–2000
208,536	264,863	144,578	169,322

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Opting to physically leave Cuba—going into exile—entails profound sacrifices for the person leaving: the sacrifice of leaving behind one's country, family members, and friends; the sacrifice of starting a new life in a different world; and the political risk of declaring, in Cuba, a desire to leave the country, not to mention the financial cost of physically leaving. Exit is, therefore, a costly process.

Exit is costly but not prohibitively so. Persons willing to make the sacrifice can find a way to leave. Fidel Castro has avoided imitating the model adopted by Communist East Germany of impeding departures at all costs. He has limited himself to ensuring that exit carries high costs, so that only those who truly want to leave pay the price. In doing so, he has created an ideal vetting system. Only the most fervent dissidents are willing to incur the cost of leaving. By allowing this group to leave, the government rids itself of its most dangerous foes. And the ever-present possibility of leaving diminishes the extent to which dissidents exercise the voice option in Cuba.

To summarize, making use of one's voice is exceedingly risky and costly in Cuba. The same is true of exiting, although to a lesser degree, which is why exit traditionally has predominated over voice. Because it is costly, leaving is an option exercised only by the most disaffected and adventurous citizens. The government is thus able to survive by ridding itself of the most disloyal groups, but pays the price in terms of the enormous loss of human capital.

CIVIL SOCIETY: INTERNAL EXILE

The purpose of the above discussion is to point out that the emergence of an associative sphere in Cuba represents a new mechanism of voice and exit, but one that is less costly to citizens. It is a sort of internal exile—a cheaper form of exile. In this internal exile, Cubans obtain many of the benefits of external exile without having to face its enormous costs. They are able, for example, to exit, or take refuge, from a difficult system without making the sacrifice of having to leave their country and their loved ones behind. In the associations, as in exile, Cubans find tranquility and solidarity. But unlike external exile, associations do not force Cubans to cut off all ties with the country. Cubans engaged in the associative sphere can come and go. They can work all day and turn to the associative sphere during their off-hours.

In associations, citizens can also make use of their voice in a relatively, albeit not completely, safe environment. As long as they trust that the other members are not informers, they can discover spaces in which to exercise free expression and even discuss possible changes. Despite this, citizens operating in the associative spheres cannot rule out the possibility of repression. They live under the constant threat of a potential government crackdown. The freedoms, resources, and security that Cubans encounter in their associations are not the same as those found in exile, naturally. At the same time, however, they do not have to pay the high cost of leaving forever.

The problem with Cuba's current associationism, as with its exile, is the risk of political isolation. Because there are no national-level opposition entities in Cuba (free press, political parties, broad-based social movements, etc.), associations lack institutional allies who can support them in carrying out forceful political actions. Due to lack of reformers at the government level, associations also lack government interlocutors. Therefore, their capacity to influence the regime—and hence to pressure for a political opening in the regime—is minimal.

Contrary to what the skeptics say, civil society in Cuba is real; there is a strong demand for associations and there is evidence of their emergence. While the hostile context of restricted freedoms makes it hard for associations to flourish, it nonetheless creates incentives for citizens to form associations.

Contrary to the views of the enthusiasts, civil society in Cuba will not democratize the country, precisely because it operates in a context of institutional isolation and because the Cuban government has not softened. This does not mean, however, that associations are a waste of time.

Contrary to the pessimist view, associations in Cuba are playing a laudable role, both for individuals who join them and for the country. Through associations, individuals find a way to use their voice and exit, without paying the high cost associated with traditional means of voice and exit in Cuba: open opposition or exile.

Associations are helping to "change what it means to be a citizen" in Cuba, to quote Philip Oxhorn (2001, 180). Associations are creating a new model of citizenship—individuals more willing to express themselves and to develop strategies to change the status quo. They are, therefore, counteracting two prevalent and pernicious trends concerning the pro-

duction of citizens prevalent in Cuba. One is the government's obstinate desire to continue to produce citizens in the Che Guevara mold, in other words, obsequious to the revolution (the model of the "New Man" of the sixties). The other is the tendency, typical of any period of economic austerity, for predatory citizens to emerge—that is, people who, in order to survive the hard times, turn to informal channels, corruption, criminality, and alienation. Associationism in Cuba is thus a challenge to Guevarism and opportunism, and thus, has the potential to create a different model of citizenship.

On their own, these new citizens alone, and by extension these new associations, will not be able to bring about democracy. Nonetheless, they represent a headache for a government that continues to promote a model of citizenship that does not fit modern Cuba. This is another reason that the government regards the associations as a threat. In the long run, civil society benefits from the new associations, despite their limitations. They offer a vehicle for voice and exit without the onerous costs to individuals and the country.

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Citizenship and Rights in Cuba: Evolution and Current Situation

VELIA CECILIA BOBES

INTRODUCTION

Although citizenship has been examined extensively in the sociology and political science fields, little research has been conducted on the topic in Cuba. This essay seeks to fill the gap through an historical reflection that will aid in interpreting more recent processes. From the theoretical perspective, citizenship is defined as the set of rights and responsibilities that codifies the relationship between the individual and the state. Beyond that, however, citizenship includes an ideal of belonging. In this sense, it is imbued with a semantic content connoting equality, the political community as representing a particular cultural community, and (sole) membership in a state that defines—politically and territorially—the boundaries of the community.

Citizenship, therefore, must be examined from a dual perspective: the *procedural* dimension, having to do with rights, the mechanisms for exercising them, and the specific system of relationships in which they are exercised; and the *symbolic* dimension that connects one to the ideal of belonging to the community of citizens and to the sociocultural sphere in general. Both dimensions imply inclusion, but also exclusion.

In this sense, the symbolic construction of citizenship is intimately linked to notions of nation, national identity, political culture, and public space and through this link it is possible to understand the basic criteria underlying patterns of inclusion/exclusion. Moreover, narratives circulating in the public sphere that define belonging to civil society contribute to the limits placed on civic exercise. The discourses that shape civil society at its core—and establish the basic criterion for binary classification (friend/enemy, good/bad, and so on)—are made up of antino-

mies typifying the positive and negative qualities that delineate and legitimate inclusion and exclusion, and therefore belonging, and the type of people who should be included legitimately in the category of citizen.

BACKGROUND

The constitution of modern citizenship in Cuba can be traced back to the nineteenth century with the founding of the nation as a symbolic institution. It should be noted that this occurred under a colonial regime, which lent it the unique characteristics that would determine the course of subsequent political events. This symbolic constitution occurred first in intellectual and political discourse that presaged an "imagined community" from a nonseparatist position, which was followed by a pro-independence current that ultimately implanted the idea of Cuba as a nation totally separate from the Spanish metropolis.

Leaving aside their differences, both currents of thought envisioned the foundation of a political community based more on the *demos* than the *ethnos.* Symbolically, this meant a nation that, beyond its shared culture and history, found in citizenship and in the establishment of a democratic state the possibility of equality in which racial, class, and political differences could be erased. As we will see later, this legitimated a very broad standard of inclusion that would translate into the adoption of universal suffrage for men as early as 1901 and few restrictions on acquiring Cuban nationality.[1]

The republic founded on 20 May 1902, when President Tomás Estrada Palma took office, featured the emergence of a civic, passive form of citizenship in the framework of democratic institutions. With the establishment of the status of citizenship*,* the political system was able to process the contradiction between the legal regime and the political and social practice of the early years of the republic.

The transition from colonial status to independence unfolded in the context of the North American military intervention on the island, accompanied by a series of reforms that marked the beginning of an economic, social, and political modernization process. In this framework, at the political level, the democratic and liberal Constitution of 1901 upheld the principles of representation and elections, separation of powers, and universal suffrage for men. However, it also included an appendix—the Platt Amendment—which gave the United States the right to

intervene militarily on the island. This undermined sovereignty—an essential principle for citizenship—thereby creating a contradiction between the legal regime and the concrete reality in the country.[2]

Moreover, notwithstanding its democratic institutional structure, Cuban politics followed an oligarchical course. Because of this, in order to understand the type of citizenship that prevailed in Cuba beyond the extension of suffrage and the general principles enshrined in the constitution, one must examine the practices—inclusive in some respects and exclusive in others—adopted by government institutions in their efforts to consolidate the type of social relations they espoused.[3]

An analysis of civil rights reveals the negotiation of diverse symbolic definitions of nation as they were translated into standards of inclusion, of belonging to the political community. Under the 1901 Constitution (Arts. 5 and 6), Cuban nationality encompasses various social groups: children of Cuban parents born in or outside of the national territory, foreigners who had belonged to the Liberation Army, Spaniards who had resided in the country prior to 1899 and had not registered as Spaniards as of 1900 (naturalized Cubans), former or emancipated African slaves, and other foreigners who had resided in the territory for at least two years.

In terms of the exercise of political rights, it is important to consider how the system functioned during those early years. For the first three decades of the century, the Cuban political system was structured around two main forces, liberals and conservatives, who competed in elections using electoral machinery based primarily on political solidarity and patronage.

These characteristics restricted the exercise of citizenship and reduced incentives for electoral competition. The political system's inability to process and incorporate the real social, economic, ethnic,[4] and ideological cleavages in Cuban society was evident throughout the period and led to a profound systemic crisis in the 1920s that would culminate in the Revolution of 1930 and the refounding of the republic.

Under these circumstances, democracy and its mechanisms were more aspirations than fact. Not only was citizenship conceived of as a status,[5] obstacles to its effective exercise were present in the institutional structure as well as the practice of politicians. Representation in the Cuban political system was confined to oligarchs and revolutionary leaders. The working masses, the middle classes, and students in the process of matur-

ing as political subjects began to form their own organizations on the periphery of a system that excluded them politically.

As different groups organized to express their specific interests, they began to disseminate publicly their counterdiscourses and to demand modifications to the binary code underlying the inclusion/exclusion dichotomy codified in the 1901 Constitution. These new discourses began to rewrite the narrative of civil society.

Significantly, these new discourses reflected reforms to the components of the code. Countless explorations of "Cubanism" in the 1920s crystallized into an inventory of vices and virtues (and therefore) legitimately belonging to civil society. These discourses listed Cuban vices— frivolity, hedonism, passivity, lack of civic consciousness and values, indifference toward transcendental endeavors, fondness for disorder and abhorrence of hierarchy, informality, sarcasm, and inquisitiveness— which, they asserted, create individuals fit for tyranny and unfit for patriotism. Further, these defects are considered the underlying cause of the perverse functioning of democratic political institutions (Bobes 1994).

Indeed, this new narrative of civil society stresses a negative definition in that it points to conducts that should be excluded from a democratic civil society. Thus, even as it rejects the national political conduct of the time (nepotism, caudillism, fraud, enrichment), it reverts to the political myth of the revolution and, therefore, the revolutionary versus the politician. Particularly around the time of the 1930 revolution against Machado, the negative image of corruption, dishonesty, and *entreguismo* (the ceding of control over resources to foreign companies) is associated with the political maneuverings of the traditional parties.

The revolution of 1930 can be understood as a struggle to modernize the political system and to pressure for institutional change toward a more effective democracy. Ultimately, it was the result of grass-roots mobilizations by disenfranchised sectors, which explains why it would not end simply with the fall of the dictator, becoming instead a movement to reform the political life of the country. In this sense, it marked the eruption of a class-based citizenry that from below, and independently of the state, pressured and demanded that its rights be respected and expanded.[6]

From 1933 to 1940, Cuba was in a state of legal impermanence; during this period the 1901 Constitution was modified thirteen times by way of various temporary provisions adopted by successive governments.

The political system was reorganized during this crisis. New parties emerged—offspring of the revolutionary organizations—marking the demise of bipartisanship and creating a multiparty system of class representation that can be described as a complete party system (Valenzuela 1985).[7] The Platt Amendment was rescinded and the process of drafting a new constitution began.

For the first time in Cuban history, two large coalitions of political parties participated in the 1939 election of delegates to the Constituent Assembly.[8] The intense negotiations undertaken by these actors representing diverse interests—many of whom had been formed and legitimated through their revolutionary activity and all of whom were caught up in the political effervescence and high expectations of society—explain, at least in part, the broad scope of the Magna Carta and the number of issues contemplated therein.

The 1940 Constitution expanded civil and political rights by upholding women's suffrage (which had been granted in 1934), legalizing all parties and political organizations, and recognizing the right to strike. It provided for social rights such as an eight-hour work day, a minimum wage, collective bargaining, paid vacation, maternity leave, social security, and so forth (Pichardo 1977, 4: 329–418).

In addition to the civil rights established in 1901, the constitution explicitly introduced others prohibiting discrimination based on race, creed, class, political opinion (it did not include gender), and providing for freedom of residence throughout the territory (Art.10[a]), the right to vote, and the right to social security (Art. 10[c]). Duties included voting, adherence to the constitution, and observing appropriate civic conduct (Art. 9). Other important changes concerned limitations on the presidency[9] and reform of the electoral system, minority representation, and a prohibition on presidential reelection.

While this legislation expanded citizen rights and sought to correct longstanding systemic vices, it was not sufficient to ensure the democratic functioning of institutions, which continued to operate based on a culture of violence, cronyism, personalism, and failure to respect the law. Despite the advances of the 1940 Constitution, the refounding of the republic failed to implement (or enforce) the legal mechanisms necessary to fulfill its guiding principles. The virtual absence of legislative oversight of the executive fostered corruption and the personal enrich-

ment of government officials and, notwithstanding a considerably more extensive political party system and more equitable representation, the system remained exclusive. The failure to control violence as a way of doing politics led citizens to continue to question the legitimacy of their leaders and electoral processes, even when the latter were conducted competitively and with a high voter turnout. This was the context that led Cuban civil society in the fifties to accept and mobilize around a struggle against the Batista dictatorship which culminated in a revolution that would radically change the concept and exercise of citizenship.

MILITANT CITIZENSHIP:
SOCIAL RIGHTS VS. POLITICAL RIGHTS?

In 1959, the republican political system and the notion of citizenship as a passive, civil status had demonstrated its inability to build political consensus. The January revolution built a new consensus around the symbolic redefinition of nation and national identity and the semantic revision of the core values underlying the legal framework and political culture of the nation. This symbolic redefinition set the stage for a change—from the top down[10]—toward an active and participatory militant citizenship that sought as its anchor the civic-republican tradition of the patriotic wars of independence.

In the political sphere, the new government spent its first years wiping out democratic institutions and the old organs of state power—the congress, the army, and the police, the republican political parties, and the electoral apparatus. In February 1959, a Fundamental Law was passed replacing the 1940 Constitution[11] so as to expedite the transition to revolutionary law. Although its doctrinal aspects reaffirmed the principles of 1940, this law reformed substantially the system of government and the property structure. It reorganized the government, eliminated the congress, limited the political rights of people who had participated in the dictatorship, and created the Council of Ministers as the supreme government authority with legislative functions. It also eliminated presidential elections by popular vote, empowered the Council of Ministers to reform the constitution, and ratified the laws of the Rebel Army (Chalbaud Zepa 1978). This Fundamental Law was modified more than twenty times prior to the adoption of the 1976 Socialist Constitution.

In the economic sphere, the revolutionary laws (agrarian reform, urban reform, nationalization of education, and nationalization of U.S. corporations) drastically redefined the (liberal) principles enshrined in the former constitution, radically altering the socioeconomic structure. The result was the establishment of a single-party system, the nationalization of the economy, and the creation of social organizations oriented and directed by the state. All of this changed state-society relations so that the two spheres became virtually indistinguishable. It was in the context of this new relationship that the symbolic content of nation was reconstituted, the notion and exercise of citizenship was modified, and the narrative of civil society was transformed, giving shape to a new pattern of inclusion/exclusion.

If the most important changes for civil society were the elimination of pluralism and a narrative that became indistinguishable from the political discourse, in the symbolic realm, from the standpoint of political culture, the most important change for the construction of the nation—and one that had enormous implications for the understanding and exercise of citizenship—was the redefinition of national identity in function of its identification with the socialist project. Basically, this was accomplished by presenting the 1959 revolution as the true realization and embodiment of the nation, rewriting the national history, semantically redefining basic democratic principles, promoting the creation of a new society as a task for "the new man," and stressing unity as necessary for the survival of the fatherland. Each one of these elements played a significant role in legitimating a new imaginary construction of nation and implanting a new model of inclusion in civil society that reframed the notion of citizenship.

Meanwhile, this new discourse portrayed the revolution as enlightened, as the national identity made flesh. The socialist project became synonymous with fatherland, and situated the confrontation with the "enemy," the United States, at the heart of the imaginary constitution of the nation, thereby justifying the exclusion of dissenters. At the same time, a new narration of history emerged in which the era of the republic was considered "non-Cuban" (or anti-Cuban) because of its association with corruption, speculation, violence, abuses, crime, public immorality, theft, and fraud. Along with the debunking of previous political relations came a new catalog of virtues (public and private) that defined legitimate belonging to civil society. The notion of citizen was

replaced by that of "a people" and within it, the category of "workers," and freedom was claimed for this majority group.

In this new narrative, democracy is redefined as "participation," particularly relating to income distribution and government-led revolutionary tasks. In this way, the concepts of representation and electoral competition and procedures became the countercode for perverse relations (identified with the past). The notion of the "new man" as the builder of the new social order incorporated virtues absent from the previous code of civil society. Included among the new behaviors and relationships considered positive was responsible and conscientious participation in the creation of a better society, one that would be attained collectively, in a planned and organized manner. In this sense, a symbolic settlement was sketched in which individualism, apathy, and passivity were negative, while the positive code upheld behaviors guided by collective action and altruism.

The virtues of belonging to civil society also began to include austerity, work, and saving; the new archetype of positive attributes included sanctifying the cause of the revolution, setting aside individual interests in favor of the collective, rejecting money and material wealth, solidarity, responsibility, honor, generosity, self-improvement, and usefulness.

Finally, a crucial element of this discourse is unity in function of the fatherland. This justified the elimination of plurality and the exclusion of those who opposed the socialist project. The latter are defined as enemies (non-Cubans) and Cubanness is determined based on an ethical-political choice.

These revised discourses changed the inclusion/exclusion pattern of citizenship. Not only were foreigners excluded from citizen rights (civil, political, and social), but so were those who chose to emigrate because of their disagreement with the state project. The disqualification of this emigrant opposition was facilitated by their decision to go precisely to the United States, the enemy country par excellence, the force that represented a threat to the Cuban people and their revolution. The opposition, then, appeared to be aligned with a powerful, external adversary and could be accused of being antinationalistic and unpatriotic. Its exclusion from the nation, therefore, was characterized as a decision of its own making. This distinction created the dichotomy underlying the symbolic code of exclusion: on one side there were *Cubans* (those who support and participate actively in the revolution) and on the other, the *anti-Cubans*

(the external aggressor and all who adhere to its designs against the nation, and those who emigrate and disagree with the project). In this narrative, the latter group is codified as *gusanos* (worms).[12]

The new understanding of the "equality of citizens," expanded social rights, and the establishment of effective mechanisms for their exercise contributed to progress in eliminating racial and gender exclusion. Effective steps toward genuine equal opportunity—in the legal sphere and in terms of economic and social benefits-sharing—resulted in unprecedented progress in alleviating this tension (although it has not disappeared entirely).[13] Nonetheless, the redefinition of democracy as emancipation and satisfaction of basic needs also entailed a negation of rules and of representative institutions; legitimization is based on commitment and conviction rather than the law.

The proposed Socialist Constitution, which was debated in grass-roots neighborhood assemblies and then approved by referendum in 1976, created an institutional and legal framework for the moral principles in which Cubans had been educated during twenty years of revolution. Article 1 defines the Cuban state as a socialist state of workers and peasants and other manual and intellectual workers. Based on that, all other constitutional precepts and individual rights—such as individual liberty, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, association, the press, and so on—are subordinated to the construction and defense of a socialist state, the integrity and sovereignty of the nation, and the longevity of the existing government structure.[14] According to Article 61, "None of the freedoms recognized for citizens shall be exercised against that which is established in the constitution and the law, or against the *existence and aims of the socialist state, or against the decision of the Cuban people to build socialism and communism*" (emphasis mine). This means, in fact, that the exercise of rights was restricted and conditioned upon adherence to the socialist project.

The 1976 Constitution enshrines a wide array of social rights, such as the right to work, to education, health care, paid vacation, social security, protection for those unable to work, protection and safety in the workplace, physical education, and so forth. It also includes a large number of duties including to work and maintain a work ethic, take care of public and social property, respect the rights of others, adhere to the norms of socialist coexistence, and fulfill civic and social duties (Art. 63). Another duty is to defend the socialist fatherland—considered the "great-

est honor and supreme duty of every Cuban" (Art. 64) and observe the constitution, the law, and so forth.

With respect to citizenship and nationality, Cuban citizens by birth include "those foreigners who because of their exceptional merits in the struggles for the liberation of Cuba are considered Cubans by birth" (Art. 29[c]), upholding the provisions of the 1940 Constitution. Naturalized Cuban citizenship is also conferred upon "those who have served in the armed struggle against tyranny defeated on January 1, 1959" (Art. 30 [b]). In terms of exclusions, under the constitution, those who acquire foreign citizenship forfeit their Cuban citizenship (it does not permit dual citizenship). Also excluded, however, are those who, without government authorization, serve another nation in a military capacity, or in positions under their own jurisdiction, and "those who in a foreign territory in any way conspire or act against the people of Cuba, and its *socialist and revolutionary institutions* (Art. 32, emphasis added). This is a concrete example of the pattern of inclusion that equates nation with the existing domestic order and fatherland with socialism.

This procedural construct was upheld and legitimated in the political culture, in the symbolic institution of nation, and in the civil society narratives that developed during the first decade of the revolution. It remained virtually unmodified until the second half of the eighties and it was not until after 1989, during the "special period in peacetime," that critical changes were made to the conformation of Cuban citizenship (from the procedural and symbolic perspective).

In the early nineties, the Cuban sate faced the worse economic crisis of its history, a crisis that extended into the realms of political legitimacy and social integration. Certain reforms (by the government) became necessary to ensure the survival of the regime, the most important of these being the economic constitutional reforms of 1992. Together with these reforms, the emergence of new forms of association linked to new models of solidarity and nongovernmental approaches to solving day-to-day problems are changing—institutionally and symbolically—the landscape of Cuban society, the symbolic construction of the nation, and the underlying bases for the inclusion/exclusion pattern.

From the political-institutional standpoint, the main changes include the constitutional reform and the enactment of a new Electoral Law,[15] which, together with the elimination of atheism as a principle of the

Cuban Communist Party, has led to broader consensus and a recycling of mechanisms for preserving political legitimacy.

On this last point, it should be noted that sources of legitimacy are still found in the revolution (of the masses) and its triumphs as the cornerstone of the regime, and the emphasis is on trying to expand (toward previously excluded sectors such as religious groups) the inclusive nature of this ideology. Nonetheless, the crisis has raised the need to restate the triumphs of the revolution in a reduced form that equates them with basic victories in the areas of education, health, and social security.

Changes in the economic sphere, in contrast, point to a genuine reform of the strategy and global model of the project. The adjustment measures have modified the stratification of Cuban society and led to increasing differentiation between subsystems and within the economic subsystem itself. From the institutional standpoint, civil society has become more pluralistic and within it, zones of "relative autonomy" have surfaced. The emergence of nongovernmental organizations (or the conversion of some of the old mass organizations) and the role played by religious associations (humanitarian or charitable) in Cuban society come to mind, in addition to a religious revival in the country and the appearance of community-based movements of various sorts. The government has tolerated and even encouraged these entities as vehicles for obtaining funding or for addressing social problems it can no longer resolve itself (Bobes 2000). Other, smaller organizations also have emerged, which are not recognized by the state but which exist and operate in civil society despite their lack of legal status. This is the case with human rights groups, libraries, and the independent press. Last, it is important not to overlook the informal associations organized around sexual preference or ethnic or cultural group (transvestites, Afro-Cuban societies, and so on) that have proliferated in recent years and are becoming increasingly visible. This panorama, together with the effects of the economic reform, has begun to transform the narrative of civil society. Remarkably, this narrative is beginning to break away from the political discourse and in doing so, to modify the selective pattern of inclusion/exclusion.

The emergence and legalization of semipublic enterprises, foreign capital, and small-scale ownership have changed perceptions about work. New standards of efficiency, productivity, and remuneration are gaining acceptance, altering the egalitarianism-at-all-costs approach to civil soci-

ety organization. This has meant that "successful businessperson" and "non-state worker" can now be considered positive attributes in the binary code. Second, wage differentiation and the decriminalization of possessing U.S. dollars (including the proliferation of remittances from relatives living abroad) have generated enormous differences in consumption (previously regulated by a subsidized rationing system and government distribution of food, basic necessities, home appliances, and vehicles). This has created growing disparities in lifestyle and quality of life and changed significantly individual and social perceptions about work as quality of life becomes dissociated (for the first time in many years) from the relationship with the state.[16]

The breakdown in the values that had helped integrate society has raised the need to consider readjusting the consensus and proposing alternative values to guide a changing national political culture. Something similar appears to be occurring with the flexibilization and expansion of the symbolic definition of nation that has become apparent in the official discourse.[17] This is evidenced by recent contacts with the Cuban exile community leading to proposals to accept émigrés as *Cubans*, constitutional reforms to establish a secular—rather than atheistic—state, and proposals to include clergy from different denominations in the project, the party, and government institutions.

The Cuban state has recycled its nationalistic discourse and at the same time as it has sponsored meetings with the émigré community—to which certain members of the community selected by the Cuban government are invited—it also has begun to distinguish between émigrés and *neoplattists* and *neoannexationists*.[18] In this way, the status of belonging to the nation is recodified and exclusion is targeted more directly toward the opposition to the socialist project and Fidel Castro's leadership. Concurrently, the notion of enemy, while not leaving out the United States, increasingly includes broader, more diffuse concepts such as neoliberalism and globalization. This recycling of nationalism involves changing social perceptions of emigration closely tied to the growing importance of remittances in the national as well as the household economy.

Hence, the discourse has changed; the word *gusano* is no longer used, having been replaced by a more limited, selective brand of exclusion. The "Miami mafia" is an expression that limits exclusion to the most extreme groups among the émigré community. In this sense, the nation has

expanded in symbolic terms as it begins to restrict exclusion to one sub-category of émigrés.

Likewise, the pattern of legitimate belonging has changed in the narrative of civil society. Beyond the official discourse, with the expansion of the black market and underground economy and the proliferation of deviant and criminal behavior as survival strategies, society has stopped excluding beggars and parasites, and perceptions of such behaviors are increasingly lax and tolerant. Moreover, the pattern of inclusion has swelled as groups heretofore excluded from the positive code have become legitimate members of civil society; this has been the case with religious sectors, homosexuals, (some) émigrés, self-employed workers, small business owners, and so forth.

It is therefore possible to speak of the pluralization of civil society, albeit more at the symbolic than the institutional level. For example, while those living outside the country are no longer excluded from the narrative as a group, but rather selectively, at the institutional and procedural level they are still unable to participate in civil society institutions.

Some of this expansion is reflected procedurally in the 1992 constitutional reform. The definition of the Cuban state as a "Workers' State . . . organized by all and for the good of all" (Art. 1) has replaced the previous exclusive language defining a state of workers and peasants. The Cuban Communist Party is defined as rooted in Martí and Marxism-Leninism (Art. 5: 9), as the vanguard of the Cuban *nation*, rather than the working class, and the leading force of society and the state. The principle of atheism has been eliminated, including the reform of Article 54 of the 1976 Constitution, which provided for the education of the people "in the scientific and materialist conception of the universe." The paragraph establishing that it is "illegal and punishable to set faith or religious belief against the revolution, education, or the fulfillment of the duty to work, defense of the fatherland with arms, reverence for its symbols, and the other duties established by the Constitution" has been eliminated. Respect for and guarantees of freedom of religion (Art. 8) and explicit language proscribing and punishing discrimination based on religious beliefs have been incorporated (Arts. 42 and 43).

The new constitution preserves the many social rights and duties enshrined in the 1976 Constitution. At the same time, it modifies Article 32 of the latter on the loss of Cuban citizenship by eliminating clauses b,

c, ch, and d, leaving only the language on the acquisition of foreign citizenship resulting in the loss of Cuban citizenship.

In terms of inclusion/exclusion, it is important to note that the symbolic broadening of the concept of nation has not led to a reflection on the rights of Cuban citizens not residing in Cuba, since the articles on citizenship have not been modified substantially and the electoral law continues to restrict suffrage to Cubans living on the island. Nonetheless, if we consider the magnitude of the Cuban diaspora, its participation in the economy of the country by way of remittances, and the current trend in Latin American countries to grant voting rights to their émigré communities (for example, in Mexico, Peru, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Argentina), future debate over broadening Cuban citizenship will have to take into account the emigrant community.

CONCLUSIONS

The notion and the exercise of Cuban citizenship have been modified significantly since 1959. These modifications were legitimated in the symbolic reconstitution of the nation and in changes in the narratives of belonging to civil society that translated into an expansion of social rights and restrictions on civil and political rights. In this sense, it is possible to refer to a move toward a model of militant, participatory citizenship, but one that is contingent upon adherence to the socialist project, with the attendant expansion and exclusion of citizens' rights.

This change in the citizenship model has had diverse and extremely important consequences. In the first place, the expansion of social rights and their effective implementation through a series of revolutionary laws and practices constitutes unquestionable progress in the achievement of genuine social equality and more equitable distribution of national income.[19]

However, although the emphasis on social rights has contributed to improved material conditions for the exercise of citizenship, it has relegated political and civil rights to second place, with the attendant weakening of civic power. It is important to recall that while civil rights are necessary for freedom of action and the creation of autonomous groups and associations (which strengthen civil society), social rights view the individual as a consumer rather than as an actor, since the state is responsible for providing material needs. They are therefore conducive to the

emergence of a vast government machinery specialized in the distribution of social commodities (Turner 1992).

Achievements in the areas of education, health, sports, and culture have enabled Cubans to live a more dignified life, with enhanced security and stability, and have created the subjective conditions for informed, rational political participation.[20] Clearly, Cuban citizens today are more educated and aware (and therefore have more potential to receive and reasonably assimilate information) and their basic material needs have been ensured; in this sense they are more equipped to participate in politics.

Nonetheless, the new legal framework and the strongly collectivist values that predominate in the revolutionary context stress equality over differences, which has led to restrictions on freedoms: the modification of the liberal principles of equality and liberty and a restricted definition of nation have limited the opportunity for dissent. This has created a paradox in which a project legitimated and supported by the majority has reduced virtually to zero the space for minorities.

Moreover, while the level of participation has increased, channels for autonomous participation have disappeared. Mass organizations have been established and encouraged to channel social and political participation and increase society's involvement in the country's problems. However, these organizations are directed by and strongly identified with the state, which has led to a loss of autonomy in collective action and a weakening of civic power.

Despite these circumstances, in recent years a pluralization process has been observed in Cuban society in the institutional sphere as well as in informal spaces. Symbolically this constitutes a social counterdiscourse in favor of a redefinition of nation that expands legitimate forms of belonging to civil society.

From this standpoint, it is possible to predict, in the medium term, a reframing of the notion of citizenship in Cuban society, which now includes the actors who will be the agents of such changes. One possible course would be an effort to revive its militant, active, and participatory nature, while broadening the pattern of inclusion and radicalizing (Mouffe 1992) some of its historic values.

In order to accomplish this it will be essential, first of all, to extend the principles of equality and freedom to a broader range of social relations. Once the equitable distribution of social benefits is accomplished, it is

necessary to extend citizen freedoms to encompass the specific demands of different identity groups, whether based on race, gender, generation, sexual orientation, and so forth. This means legitimating the diversity and multiplicity of identities that correspond to the diverse ways social subjects insert themselves into different social relationships, and accepting the tensions that go along with that (in other words, recognizing that these tensions are legitimate and necessary).

This new understanding implies reformulating the concepts of equality and justice so that they extend beyond economic equity to include political, cultural, and symbolic equity. This can be achieved through a complex vision of equality (Walzer 1983) conducive to social distribution based on principles that reflect the diversity of goods and their social meaning for different groups and the different options in whose exercise freedom is found. This would lead to a more equitable and at the same time a more heterogeneous society, one in which it is possible to process differences completely and ensure the active engagement of a citizenry that is not just subordinated to the state, but rather a participant in public decision-making.

Second, it is necessary to expand the symbolic definition of nation, eliminating the notion of national identity as an ethical-political choice based on a standard of inclusion/exclusion, and to promote tolerance, dialogue, and pluralism as basic principles of coexistence that inform the construction of a body of citizen rights (civil, political, and social) that can be exercised by all.

Finally, the notion of citizenship is intimately linked to the existence of a public sphere in which members of civil society can debate and solve problems in the community as citizens. Since values do not exist in the absence of subjects, the only means of channeling changes in values lies in the existence of a space for public debate that is independent of the state.

In its current situation, Cuban society could evolve in the direction of a strengthened civil society capable of collective actions engendered from within society rather than the state. This requires greater decentralization of authority and the creation of independent forums. The future of the Cuban political system depends on many different factors, not the least of which will be its ability to adequately address and resolve these tensions.

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NOTES

1. The various traditional concepts of nation affect in some way the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion of citizens' rights; see, for example, Brubaker (1989).

2. This marked Cuban political life from that time on and is the key symbolic element that made it possible for the socialist project to insert itself in the framework of the dominant political culture (Bobes 1994, 2000).

3. As Taylor has pointed out (1994, 144), rights only have meaning if they include the possibility of access to and control over the resources necessary to fulfill human needs for self-development.

4. With regard to ethnic cleavage, the only attempt to found a political force based on race or ethnicity—the Independents of Color—was quickly neutralized by the Morúa Law, which prohibited the creation of race-based parties in the name of the universal nature of rights. This culminated in an armed uprising that was cruelly suppressed by the public security forces. Against this backdrop, one can debate the pattern of exclusion and restriction of political rights that emanated from the imaginary creation of the Cuban nation based on the integration and assimilation of blacks in a Cuba that, while it tried to portray itself as mixed race, was, obviously, still white and, of course, male.

5. This classification is based on an analysis of the balance between rights and duties. In the 1901 Constitution the vote is not mandatory and the only duties (Art. 10) are to serve the fatherland in the situations established by law and to pay taxes. In this case the emphasis is on rights over duties, and participation is an option that citizens can choose to exercise or not.

6. In this case I concur with Marshall (1965) in seeing the expansion of citizens' rights as a consequence of different social groups' struggles for government recognition of their rights.

7. I refer to a complete system because it includes the spectrum of representation ranging from the extreme right (the old oligarchy and its parties and the new ABC) to the nationalist upper and middle classes (Autenticismo, Ortodoxia), to the radical left represented by the Communists.

8. The Governmental Front included the following parties: Partido Liberal, Unión Nacionalista, Conjunto Nacional Democrático, Unión Revolucionaria Comunista, Partido Nacional Revolucionario (Realistas), and Nacional Cubano. The Opposition Bloc comprised the Partido Demócrata Republicano, Partido Revolucionario Cubano (Auténtico), Acción Republicana, and ABC.

9. Art. 138 of the 1940 Constitution created the Council of Ministers and the Prime Minister and prohibited reelection to two consecutive terms.

10. As described below, the expansion of citizens' rights—mainly social rights— occurred from the top down, through the state.

11. On 3 January 1959, the Act of Constitution of the Revolutionary Government decided, "in view of the need to establish the fundamental structure for the rule

of law that will characterize the development of the government and the nation, to reaffirm the applicability of the 1940 Constitution, as it governed on the nefarious date of the usurpation of public authority by the tyrant, *without prejudice to the modifications determined by the Provisional Government to ensure fulfillment of the principles of the Revolution until the enactment of the Fundamental Law*" (Buch 1999, 168; my emphasis).

12. This symbolic operation has as its counterpart the Cuban government's migration policy establishing the category of "permanent departure," through which Cubans who emigrate to a foreign country forfeit their right to Cuban residency, as well as all of their civil, political, and social rights. Although the constitution (1992, Art. 32) stipulates that Cubans cannot be deprived of their citizenship (and may retain a Cuban passport even if they emigrate), for many years this restriction included a prohibition on visiting the country.

13. See discussion in Bobes (1996).

14. Constitution of the Republic of Cuba, official edition, 1976. Although the 1992 reform significantly modified other articles, these general principles were preserved.

15. I will not discuss these changes in depth. For a more detailed discussion, see Azcuy (1994), Rojas (1994) for an analysis of constitutional reform, and Suárez (1995) regarding the new electoral law. Bobes (2000) also includes a reflection on both issues.

16. Although material status symbols (vehicles, houses, consumption) previously indicated a certain status in the nomenclature or bureaucracy (and therefore implied a measure of political commitment), such symbols now may signify a very low position in a foreign company, the success of a small business, the generosity of a relative abroad, or involvement in illegal activities (such as prostitution, to cite just one well-known example).

17. See, for example, the papers presented at the conference entitled "Cuba: Cultura e identidad nacional" (García 1995), which was attended by representatives of the emigrant community as well as academics and politicians on the island. It is important to stress that this symbolic expansion of the concept of nation has not translated into the procedural sphere. While the notion that we are all Cubans is accepted at the level of discourse, there are still restrictions on residency and visits to the country for people living abroad.

18. Both of these terms come from Cuban history: the first refers to the Platt Amendment, a U.S.-imposed appendix to the 1901 Constitution that undermined independence and subordinated national sovereignty. The second refers to a nineteenth-century political current that advocated the annexation of Cuba to the United States.

19. In could be said that this resolves the contradiction pointed out by Marshall (1965) between formal citizen equality that conceals interests and differences that the benefactor state cannot completely resolve.

20. Increased educational levels and access to culture enhance opportunities for communication and participation because they improve individual capacity to develop skills and attitudes conducive to political participation and are an important factor in the creation of public spaces for citizens to debate community issues.

Structural Changes since the Nineties and New Research Topics on Cuban Society

Mayra P. Espina Prieto

Introduction

The issue of social structure, stratification, and inequality has been a long-standing interest of Cuban social sciences, particularly sociology, the structuralist social discipline par excellence. It has become a focal point for understanding (and eventual participation in) the social reality, because of its theoretical ability to describe and explain the characteristics of social reproduction from the standpoint of stability as well as change.

For various reasons—the expansion of Marxism as a scientific paradigm and official doctrine, increased academic exchanges with European socialist countries, proximity to Marxist tradition and criticism of Latin American social thought, the establishment of an extensive system for ongoing compilation of economic and social statistics, the political relevance officially accorded the issue of social equality in Cuban Communist Party documents (see Espina 2000)—this area of study became increasingly important after 1959 (particularly between the second half of the seventies and the end of the eighties) and the one in which most research findings and materials have been collected on different stages of the Cuban socialist transition.

This analytical focus initially was based on the so-called process of "social homogeneity" or "homogenization," influenced by "regularist" Soviet sociology. The latter emphasized the measurement of indicators and of regularity (theoretically predictable laws-trends) associated with leveling and eliminating the differences among social classes and groups based on the understanding that the promotion of equality constituted the basic content of socialist change and that such change was guided by a

progressive, ascending, quasi–linear, and irreversible logic that could be applied to any national context or circumstance. From there it evolved toward a critical problem-based approach that sought to better understand socialist transformation processes from the standpoint of underdevelopment and the tension between the simultaneous, contradictory trends toward equalization and diversification inherent in socialism, and the meaning of heterogenization and inequality within this process.

The problem-based approach reached interesting conclusions that in some ways contradicted or took a more nuanced view of the homogeneity perspective. It took into account, for example, the increasing complexity of social relationships represented in the socialist transition (vs. the simplifying view), the reproduction of social differences during that time not only as a capitalist inheritance, but also as part of an intrinsically socialist diversification pattern, and the potential conflicts arising from these differences. It also looked at the necessity and possibility of creating an extensive repertoire of social ownership not wholly identified with state ownership, the legitimacy of creating space for small urban business ownership within a generally socialist paradigm, and the relevance of designing a distribution policy that would address equality and social integration along with the diverse interests and needs of different social groups (Espina 2000). Seen through this lens, rather than focusing attention on a process of social homogeneity, socialist theory requires understanding the tension between social equality and social diversity, between the need to acknowledge differences and the need to integrate them into a single sociopolitical project.

There have been barriers to accepting this perspective, primarily owing to the dominant generalizing or egalitarian conception underlying social policy and the tendency in the political preaching of Cuban socialism to equate national unity with social homogeneity. These influences create reservations about any proposal that stresses the role and importance of inequalities, emphasizes the study of diversification processes, or points out the conflictive edges in relations between disparate social sectors.

Despite this, it is fair to say that Cuban sociology succeeded in developing a critical discourse regarding the sociostructural changes that accompanied the socialist transition from the standpoint of underdevelopment. It has done this by highlighting potential conflict areas and their ability to generate new differences and by challenging the homogenizing, state-centered model of social stratification based on a renewed understanding of

diversity. This has created a positive precedent for tackling the abrupt and accelerated impact of the recomposition of the Cuban social structure brought about by the crisis and reforms of the nineties, an impact that continues to be felt today.

Based on this critical approach, this chapter describes the most important changes that the crisis and the reform have introduced into the Cuban social class structure and reviews the abundance of new research topics in this area.

DESTRATIFICATION AND EQUALITY

Social class structure is defined here as a framework of positions, social groups, and the relationships established among them, based primarily (but not exclusively) on the social division of labor and the relations of ownership that inform the material reproduction of a particular society over time. This framework describes the degree of primary stratification or inequality, and inclusion or exclusion, in that society, which is linked in turn to other historic-cultural social distinctions (gender, generation, race, ethnic group, and so forth). Without discounting relevant subjective and sociocultural factors in the development of differences and inequalities, the concept of structure is used here from the standpoint of the external constraints it places on the subject. It is a framework created through the actions of specific social actors that can be transformed and informed by them, but that objectively is designed as a system of limitations on their potential repertoire of actions. Expanding or changing this repertoire implies modifying the structure that constrains the action.

The notion of "repertoire of action" refers to the range of possibilities, life choices, directions, and acquisition of material and/or spiritual assets. It likewise has to do with opportunities to exercise socially significant quotas of power, that is, to participate in decision-making processes and influence the distribution of the resources available to individuals and groups in concrete situations in space and time. From this standpoint, one's sociostructural position implies a specific potential repertoire as well as the obstacles to transcending it. Simply put, those positioned at higher, more privileged levels of the stratification pyramid will have potentially broader repertoires, higher quotas of power, and fewer obstacles to mobility.

It is necessary to examine previous periods in order to understand the nature of the recomposition of the social class structure caused by the

crisis and reform in Cuban society in the nineties and the first few years of this century. We can regard the thirty years from 1959 to 1989 as a relatively long period of social destratification. This is not to say that all social inequality disappeared during this period. Rather, the preponderant trend was toward the substitution of a market-centered stratification system—based primarily on antagonistic class relations and featuring relatively large socioeconomic gaps and immense social sectors excluded from access to basic well-being (food, health, employment, income, education)—by a state-centered one. In the latter system, the market played an insignificant role in the distribution of material and spiritual wealth, large-scale private ownership of the principal means of production was eliminated, and the main purpose was to offer high levels of social integration and equal access to well-being. A logic of destratification informs the content of the social changes taking place, in addition to other parallel and interwoven differences.

Since this is a very well-known, documented, and disseminated stage of the Cuban revolutionary experience we will not spend much time on it, except to mention briefly that most of the measures that fundamentally changed the stratification system were implemented in the sixties. They included agrarian reform laws; the nationalization of commercial, industrial, and financial assets; the Urban Reform Law; the literacy effort; the establishment of universal, free public education and most health services; the equal distribution—using ration books—of basic foodstuffs and personal items; and so forth.

At the beginning of this period, central distributive mechanisms of Cuban social policy, called "spaces of equality," were designed. This distribution mechanism is characterized by universality; mass coverage; free or facilitated access; legally-mandated rights; its public nature; a centralized, state-centered design; guaranteed access; priority on collective, rather than individual solutions; homogeneity; increasing quality; and equal opportunity for social integration of all social sectors regardless of income. In this type of model, the state is the only distributor, or is, at least, the hegemonic provider by a wide margin. In other words, there are no alternatives for accessing the good or service that is being distributed, or if there are, they have a very low profile and cannot compete with the government option.

Cuban social policy has pivoted around the progressive expansion of these spaces, particularly in six areas—meeting basic nutritional needs, edu-

cation, health, culture, sports, and social security—signaling a marked incli-
nation toward the homogenization of social class structure. The data illus-
trate the accelerated process of sociostructural change engendered by these
measures, and particularly those altering the structure of ownership. It is
safe to say that during the first three decades of the revolution, socialist
socioeconomic reforms significantly reduced asymmetries in the sources
and distribution of income and in the concentration of wealth, and eased
polarization by eliminating the extremes (exploitative elites, unemployed
and extreme poor) from the stratification pyramid. In 1953, the 10% of the
population with the highest earnings accounted for 38% of total income,
while the lowest 20% on the wage scale accounted for just 2.1% of the total.
By 1978, this ratio had changed substantially; the 20% at the bottom end
of the wage scale accounted for 11% of total income and the 20% in the
highest income brackets accounted for 27% of the total (Brundenius 1984).

This deconcentration and leveling of the income structure was accom-
plished primarily through the nationalization of employment, reinforced
by a full employment policy in which the salary was the main source of
individual and family income. The ratio of government workers to the
total working population grew from 8.8% in 1953 to 86% in 1970 (see
Table 1). "Salarization" left out only a small proportion of self-employed
workers, peasants, pensioners, and the independently wealthy, whose rel-
ative weight in the social class structure was significantly less.
Simultaneously, a uniform, centralized wage system was instituted in
which the state played a central role in establishing salary scales. The 1983
General Wage Reform established a grade scale with thirteen categories
in which the difference between the maximum and minimum salary did
not exceed 4.5 to 1 (Nerey and Brismart 1999).

Table 1. Cuba: Employment Structure by Type of Ownership

	1953	1970
Total	100	100
Government workers	8.8	86
Private salaried employees	63.3	1.3
Self-employed	24.0	1.2
Other nongovernment workers	3.9	10.0

Source: CEE 1981, chart II, p. vi

The Gini coefficient for Cuba in 1986 was 0.24 (Brundenius 1984). This nominal difference between income groups, and especially salary levels, combined with significant social redistribution resulted in homogeneity in many forms of access to general well-being that reached its peak in the mid-eighties. The homogenizing effects of salary-based income were reinforced by a social security and assistance system that guaranteed universal coverage and postemployment income whose minimum levels, combined with social consumption funds, ensured access to adequate consumption by nonworkers and by those receiving assistance. At the same time, the absolute and relative importance of income as a marker of inequality was reduced. This is explained by the expansion, universalization, and homogenization of and mass access to the "spaces of equality," which decreased the correlation between consumption and well-being and family or individual income.

Although destratification policies were clearly successful in promoting equality and reducing social gaps, some social research has developed an interesting critique of the potential and the limitations of an egalitarian social policy and the socioeconomic model adopted by the Cuban socialist transition. Certain trends, beginning around the mid-eighties, belied the effectiveness and appropriateness of implementing a destratification process based on social homogenization and its premises of universal regularity. There was a deceleration in the rhythm of sociostructural transformations, there were delays in the qualitative completion of basic social class components (working class, intellectuals, and peasant farmers), and there appeared powerful "sociostructural distortions" associated with a dominant state-centered model as virtually the only mechanism for defining social structure: excessive growth in administrative staff, executives, and planning and control specialists; bureaucratization; a narrowing ratio between groups directly involved in production and nonproductive groups; an inverse ratio between increased government employment and work productivity; and the declining relative importance of the working class.

There was a progressive increase in the heterogeneity of the social structure and the foreseeable long-term persistence of a certain degree of polarization between groups at either extreme requiring a distribution policy that took into account the real situation of advantage and disadvantage and increasingly diverse demands and interests. There was a weakening of basic social class components—an accelerated overall decline in

the number of workers and farmers in general; a weaker presence of technical–engineering professionals; poor efficiency of farming cooperatives; and low productivity among industrial workers. Social mobility led to a decrease in core components of class structure (particularly agricultural laborers) and was coupled with an increase in nonessential groups (service and nonstate workers). Finally a rapidly growing parallel social structure associated with the informal economy caused a redistribution (or "counterdistribution") of roles and assets that was at odds with the socialist social structure and informally exacerbated inequalities (Espina 2000).

All of this was compounded by the negative effects of salary homogenization as salaries could not act as a "mobilizing/corrective force" in the social structure inherited from underdevelopment. There were growing inequalities between professions and sectors; constant shortages of labor in key, but low-paid, areas of economic activity (e.g., agriculture); a disconnect between salary increases and efficiency; overuse of human resources; and lack of wage incentives (Nerey and Brismart 1999).

Another critical area relates to deficiencies in the economic model adopted and its consequent weakness as the foundation of an ambitious social policy. It was based on extensive growth, low efficiency, and excessive levels of external support that precluded self-sustainability (Monreal and Carranza 2000). Moreover, the high concentration of state-owned property led to low productivity in many areas and poor performance of basic investment funds. Overall economic inefficiency was due to excessively centralized planning, scant entrepreneurial and regional autonomy, and a restricted market. There was little variation in the composition of export commodities (dependence on foreign income from sugar, nickel, citrus fruits, fish, and other scarce raw materials); failure to incorporate state-of-the-art technology in industrial development; and 85% of international trade concentrated in Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) member countries (Álvarez 1997).

Distributive homogenizing egalitarianism, which might be effective in expanding and universalizing the satisfaction of a broad range of needs, is not sensitive to diversity and creates an artificial uniformity among human beings and social groups by standardizing their needs and the means of satisfying them. Contrary to its purposes, then, such a distributive model creates varying degrees of dissatisfaction and, again paradoxically, promotes inequalities because it is incapable of responding to the individual

needs of sectors starting out from positions of greater disadvantage that preclude them from achieving genuine equal opportunity to uniformly distributed benefits. Such sectors require "affirmative action" policies that break the cycle of disadvantage. Likewise, undifferentiated consumption largely delinked from work outcomes and productive endeavors forfeits its effectiveness as an incentive for efficiency (Hernández et al. 2002). Finally, some "participatory deficits" have been observed that limit the ability to respond to sociostructural diversity and effectively engage all actors in the construction of a social agenda (Valdés Paz 2002).

The first thirty years of the Cuban socialist experience, then, were characterized by a powerful destratification process that destroyed the social class structure inherent in dependent capitalism and created a new social order featuring high levels of integration and equality and access to the satisfaction of basic needs for the broadest social sectors. The dark side of this process was a state-centered model as the virtually exclusive mechanism for sociostructural composition, little sensitivity to incorporating diversity and placing it on the social reforms agenda, excessive distributive uniformity with the attendant demobilizing effect on production yield, weakened economic sustainability, centralization, and failure to take full advantage of participatory potential.

CRISIS, REFORM, AND RESTRATIFICATION

The late eighties saw the exhaustion of the economic and social model that had been adopted as the cornerstone of socialist reforms, and it became necessary to find a replacement that could reinvigorate and ensure the sustainability of the economic and productive sphere and its synergistic integration with the social sphere. The abrupt disappearance of the socialist bloc, and with it the channels for international exchange upon which Cuba depended, triggered the crisis and the need to design and implement a strategy to confront it. The nineties, then, were characterized by the impact of these factors, which had a rippling effect on inequalities and social restratification that we will attempt to summarize here.[1]

The principal measures in the reform package of 1993 included opening of the economy to foreign capital. An incentives system in foreign exchange was installed, the circulation of foreign exchange and family remittances was legalized, and key sectors were targeted for acquiring foreign exchange and addressing strategic problems (such as tourism,

biotechnology, and oil production). Agriculture and livestock production were reorganized, which included turning over national lands in usufruct to cooperatives and families and the creation of the agricultural market. The government administration was also reorganized, leading to increased decentralization in economic decision-making, greater opportunities for market-based distribution, and expanded self-employment opportunities (see González 1998).

Regardless of their intent or whether this was an anticipated or relatively spontaneous outcome, these reforms led to a reconfiguration of the social class structure, specifically the emergence of a pattern of social stratification that, given the new objective conditions of economic functioning, required and generated increasing inequality. The following are among the most prominent restratification trends:

Emergence of new class formations and the recomposition of the middle layers. This is observed primarily in the informal sector: owner, boss, and employer have become typical categories in the reconfiguration of the urban petit bourgeoisie. Owners of small businesses, such as restaurants and cafes, automotive repair shops, and small-scale shoemakers, are emblematic of this reconfiguration.

Internal fragmentation of the existing large social class sectors. The major groups typical of the Cuban socialist transition (working class, academics, managers and employees), formerly based on state ownership and with a fairly restricted wage differentiation, are now experiencing an internal diversification process that is linked to new forms of ownership (state workers, those associated with the mixed economy and foreign capital, and those working in the informal economy as salaried employees or self-employed). There is also evidence of a division between those working in emergent and traditional sectors. Conventionally speaking, this classification distinguishes between activities in which new forms of labor incentives have been implemented, including material, monetary, and other types of benefits, usually related to exports or the internal foreign exchange market (emergent), and activities governed by precrisis management and incentive structures (traditional). The division between traditional and emergent sectors has generated significant differences within the working classes, intellectual sectors, and managers and employees by creating a split between favorable and unfavorable positions based on varying degrees of access to material wellbeing in working and living conditions.

Diversification of actors in agricultural and livestock production. This process occurs mainly through the subdivision of government lands and the establishment of cooperatives, the strengthening of small-scale landholdings, and the introduction of market mechanisms, and has resulted in the emergence of new social groups (cooperativists on state-owned lands, and small landholders).

Income polarization. Income distribution is the tangible marker par excellence in stratification systems. The crisis and ensuing reforms have widened the income gap substantially. The most extreme expression of this is a relatively broad band of poverty at the bottom of the pyramid and a smaller band of people with a much higher material standard of living at the top.

Let us examine some empirical evidence that confirms this restratification process. Within a brief period of time, all groups linked to the state-owned sector (except for Cuban trading companies within state entities) were reduced more or less drastically; this trend has been consistent over time and extends into the present. It is characterized by increased unemployment, the displacement of many government workers to the informal sector, the emergence of a semipublic sector, and the denationalization of most agricultural and livestock production.

Income is another area in which this restratification is clearly demonstrated. Several studies conducted in the latter half of the nineties identified a series of characteristics that demonstrate the weakening of income as a homogenizing factor and, conversely, its emergence as a core component of inequality. These characteristics include the impoverishment of vast sectors of the labor force, the emergence of a working elite, the rise in non-employment-related income and lifestyles, and the exclusion of significant population segments from consumption in certain markets or at least reduced access to a very limited group of products distributed in those markets (Togores 1999). Also seen is a diversification of labor incentives; the reduced relevance of salaries in family finances, as a means of meeting the population's basic needs, and as a homogenizing factor in the social structure; a widening income gap among government salaried employees; the redistribution of authority to establish wage-scales in which the state has forfeited absolute centralized authority; and quantitative and qualitative weakening of social services (Nerey and Brismart 1999)

In 1995, income bracket distribution was estimated at ten levels, with monthly per-capita income ranging from under 50 pesos among the

Table 2. Cuba. Employment Structure by Type of Ownership

CATEGORY	1988	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Total employed	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
State entities	94.0	81.1	80.5	79.5	78.0	77.5	76.6
Within state entities: Cuban trading companies	–	2.3	2.9	3.5	3.7	4.2	4.2
Non–State	6.0	18.9	19.5	20.5	22.0	22.5	23.4
Semipublic companies	–	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7
Cooperatives	1.8	9.6	9.1	8.8	8.5	8.4	8.0
National Private	4.2	8.7	9.8	11.1	12.9	13.4	14.7
Within private: self–employed	1.1	3.3	3.5	3.0	4.1	4.0	3.8

Source: ONE 1998, 2002.

lowest income bracket, representing 19.3% of the population, to over 2,000 pesos in the highest income bracket, representing 0.4% of the population. The former had an average monthly income of 40 pesos, compared to an average of 6,000 pesos for the highest group. And while the highest income bracket might seem proportionately insignificant, the five top income groups combined, with a per-capita monthly income of over 600 pesos, accounts for 9.3% of the population (estimates from Quintana et al. 1995).

Individual and family income levels have not remained static since 1995. This has been influenced by the fact that salaries have increased in various sectors and activities of the national economy (e.g., sugar cane farming, health, education, science and technology, public order, and so forth), the number of workers associated with foreign exchange incentive programs has increased, the independent workers sector has become more diversified, and the market's scope of action has increased. A very broad stratification of the income structure seems already to have occurred among the Cuban population by the mid-nineties; a recent estimate of the Gini coefficient places it at 0.38 (Añé 2002).

Moreover, the urban poverty level is estimated at approximately 20% (Ferriol 2002), revealing a unique feature of present-day income inequalities: that they are situated in the area of basic needs. In the new stratification system, some groups are unable to meet their basic needs while those at the opposite end of the spectrum have income levels that far exceed the national mean, thereby producing significant social gaps.

Two additional factors contribute to the increasing complexity of this field of analysis: access to foreign exchange income and the diversification of income sources. At least 50% of the Cuban population is believed to have some form of income in foreign exchange. Likewise, different estimates confirm that the average income of self-employed workers is far superior to that of government salaried employees. This is particularly true of those who rent out houses or rooms, and small restaurant owners (Ferriol, 2002; Espina et al. 2002).

Moreover, several qualitative studies conducted in Havana City have found a strong element of nonstate income in addition to, or instead of, income from the state among high-income families (see Dpto. de Estudios sobre Familia 2001; Iñiguez et al. 2001; Espina et al. 2002). Income from retirement or pensions is insufficient to meet basic needs. The most

important income sources are remittances, semipublic employment, and emergent forms of government employment. It seems, however, that combined income sources are the most effective, encompassing income-boosting strategies including activities considered illegal or illegitimate under the current institutional regime.

This information points to an overall decrease in the importance of work and of government employment as a provider of income and well-being. It is also indicative of the decreased role of salary as an income source; the growing importance of nonemployment-related income and links to private property in the availability of monetary income; efficient illegal income-producing strategies; and a trend toward restratification as a core element of the current sociostructural dynamics in Cuban society. Internal heterogeneity, complexity, and widening gaps within and between classes have become the driving forces underlying social repro-duction in which property and income are the bases for inequality.

A New Agenda for Research on Social Inequalities

As might be expected, the nineties, a time of profound change in Cuban society, also introduced a new stage in the social sciences—which would be impossible to fully describe here—that included research on the struc-tures of inequality. Because growing inequality is a distinctive and appar-ently enduring feature of this new period, the social disciplines have read-justed so as to accord it the attention it deserves. Once under the exclu-sive purview of sociology and philosophy, this topic has spread into the realms of economics, anthropology, geography, and psychology, whether with a single or multidisciplinary focus. It has surfaced in different forms on the agendas of the most important research centers in the country.[2]

In my opinion, it is critical to take a problem-centered rather than a disciplinary approach to differences and all types of social disadvantages and their repercussions in the design of social policy. It is also necessary to recover the relevance of the subjective experience and the potential and need for self-transformation and sustainability in social action. With respect to theoretical influences and preferences, there is a general accept-ance (if not overt at least implicit) of the pluriparadigmatic nature of the social sciences and the need to integrate and synthesize paradigms in order to avoid reductionist and simplistic positions; this has been coupled with a gradual retreat from positions of a priori ideological disqualification.

An emergent and promising area of Cuban social sciences, albeit an incipient one, is an approach to sociostructural analysis from the stand-point of its complexity, diversity, and inequalities. Such an understanding of the complexity of the social structure, similar to a systemic view, includes the study of the propagation of social actors, the links and net-works they create, and the expansion and coexistence of their choices and repertoires for action (not necessarily feasible in the actual situation, but potential choices). All of this includes the growing possibilities for autonomous organization by social actors; the potential emergence of new qualities, processes, and realities not included or foreseeable in the course of history prior to these events; and the random elements that arise from courses of action that ultimately are taken.

The crisis and the reform (explicitly or implicitly, directly or indirect-ly) have produced a diversification and differentiation of actors, increased levels of inequality, and many options for autonomous action in their material and symbolic reproduction as actors, thereby increasing the parameters of complexity. This sociostructural panorama inevitably brings to a close the teleological vision, the vision of the universal mission of historical subjects, and raisees the profile of collective construction, of self-transformation, and of future society.

A New Framework for Research on the Emerging Stratification System

A subject underlying the entire agenda, one that is very current in sociostructural research, is the stratification of contemporary Cuban soci-ety, its classes, groups, and strata. Clearly, research in this area must find a framework upon which to build empirical evidence and document ongo-ing processes. It is, however, a risky exercise since any such framework is based on a particular ideological-theoretical premise. Frameworks are not neutral and are largely informed by the research objectives. It is therefore not our intention to propose a single framework that "really exists" but rather to illustrate here the complexity of this issue and the variety of approaches taken in recent years to address the sociostructural effects of the Cuban reform.

Inverted pyramid—*the process of inversion of the social pyramid*. This inter-pretation is implicitly based on accepting the existence of an already exist-ing pyramidal social structure (Guzmán 1995). In that framework, access

to higher positions on the pyramid was through qualifications; that is, the value placed on credentials or cultural capital, highly complex intellectual work, and productive effectiveness; these were the things that ensured social privilege. The notion of the inverted pyramid is that the stratified structure continues to operate, but that upward mobility is based on higher income levels, regardless of the source, which may include nonemployment-related income. Many who previously were situated high on the pyramid have been displaced to the middle and lower strata not because they changed their social or employment situation, but rather because of the economic devaluation of their position due to the decline in real earnings and the decrease in available options for meeting their material and spiritual needs. The main point of this concept is to highlight the abrupt descent of the previous occupants of the higher echelons, their replacement at the top of the pyramid by new social strata, and the changes in the standards that inform the objective and subjective structure of the pyramid.

The sociostructural system that can be inferred from this proposal is based on the existence of three main groups or strata: privileged positions (high-income groups); intermediate positions (middle-income groups); disadvantaged positions (low-income groups).

Social class recomposition. The main premise of this proposal is that the reform spurred a recomposition in function of an emerging technocratic-entrepreneurial bloc at the expense of grass-roots sectors (Dilla 1998).[3] The former is composed of groups in the area of foreign investment and the associated layer of national businesspeople and managers; executives of state enterprises well-positioned in the world market and featuring relatively high levels of autonomy ("the new national entrepreneurs"); and social groups with substantial power of acquisition, usually through speculation on the black market (e.g., well-off rural farmers, commercial intermediaries, service providers, and so on). The grass-roots (popular) sectors are comprised of the working class and government salaried workers in general; rural agricultural cooperativists and nonsalaried people; and self-employed workers.

From this standpoint, the most important sociostructural processes would be an increased market role in the allocation of resources and in the reshaping of power relations; the reorganization of social power networks; the strengthening of the technocratic-entrepreneurial bloc advantageously linked to the market and potentially situated to become a hege-

monic social bloc; and the fragmentation and weakening of grass-roots sectors. Also significant would be the reduction in absolute terms, economic weakening, and hyperexploitation of salaried government employees; the reshaping of the working class and salaried employees in general by international capital; the proliferation of cooperative and individual producer sectors; and expanded self-employment. It is interesting to note the connection between economic empowerment and the formation of a new hegemonic bloc that excludes grass-roots sectors.

Fragmentation and social regression. This perspective is based on an empirical analysis of income and identifies three new social groups that have emerged from the crisis and the class inequality this has produced (Burchardt 1998). The wealthy group includes segments born of the accumulation of large sums of money through black market and illegal activities; new self-employed producers; private rural farmers with high incomes; some workers in the dollar economy; people who receive foreign exchange remittances from abroad; and officials, technocrats, entrepreneurs, and workers in sectors operating with foreign exchange. There are then vast majorities who have not benefited from the reform: low-income public service and government administration employees; low-paid workers in industry and rural cooperatives; the unemployed; retirees; intellectuals; students; and peasants. Finally, there are the poor. This scenario is less precise in defining social segments but, as the author points out, it is based solely on income. It essentially serves to highlight the fragmented and regressive nature of the sociostructural heterogeneity associated with the crisis.

We concur with these three proposals inasmuch as they include processes that have strongly influenced the stratification system accompanying the Cuban crisis and reform, identifying the inherent distortions that challenge the true socialist nature of social relations. These processes and distortions include increasing inequality and the extreme polarization between the poor (and in some ways excluded) and those in positions of privilege; the abrupt descent of groups that contributed significantly to social well-being from relatively privileged positions to situations of sociostructural disadvantage; the ascent of high-income groups whose earnings are not employment related; and the economic deterioration of salaried government employees and the lower classes in general.

But because these visions are based on an analysis of the here and now, they leave outside their scope the evaluation of certain trends that address

the homogenizing, state-centered weaknesses of the previous social structure. These include increased opportunities for self-management or individual initiative, the diversification (which should move toward complementarity) of forms of ownership, and the emergence of a material incentives system (albeit still imperfect) more closely related to actual performance in some economic areas and activities. By focusing largely on income or economic potential to distinguish between sociostructural blocs and groups, they fail to examine other qualitative, but no less important processes related to social diversification. These include, for example, the reconfiguration of the middle layers; the heterogenization of the intellectual sector and the working class (including the increasing precariousness of some of their strata and a certain "aristocratization" and economic fortification of others); and the expansion of nongovernmental salaried employees accompanied by the strong diversification of social actors and an increasingly complex spectrum of political and economic interests.

Although it is a difficult task to define a stratification system that synthesizes all of the structural forces currently at play, we do offer our own proposal based on social *restratification*. Recognizing that there are countless ways to interpret the reconfiguration of the social structure currently in process, depending on where one places the emphasis, this perspective stresses the growing heterogenization of the internal composition of the large social classes typical of socialist transition, which could take the form of fragmentation and the formation of new social strata. The following is a synthesis of this framework. (a) Working class: strata linked to semipublic ownership and foreign capital, state-owned property in emergent sectors, and state-owned property in traditional sectors; salaried employees of small privately owned urban and rural businesses. (b) Intellectuals: strata linked to semipublic property and foreign capital, state-owned property in emerging sectors, and state-owned property in the traditional public sector; self-employed; employees of small privately-owned endeavors. (c) Management: strata linked to semipublic ownership and foreign capital, state-owned property in the emerging sector, and state-owned property in the traditional sector. (d) Rural farmers: cooperativists; small-scale private farmers; *parceleros* (those working on subdivided state lands); and unpaid relatives who help out. (e) Informal sector: owners-employers; independent self-employed workers; salaried employees; unpaid relatives who help out. (f) Social segments with nonemployment-related incomes:

strata that receive remittances; strata linked to illegal economic activities. (Within each stratum it is necessary to distinguish between high, medium, and low-income groups).

Obviously these categories are not pure, but rather overlapping. The intention here is to establish a research premise that adequately reflects the sociostructural processes accompanying the Cuban reform and, most importantly, its contradictory nature: the tension between conflicting, simultaneous, and interwoven trends toward integration and exclusion, progress and regression, fragmentation and interconnection that alters traditional forms associated with the social hegemony of the grass roots, not necessarily eliminating it but rather offering innovative ways to reconstruct this hegemony.

The potential for this type of hegemony to endure and to remain a viable alternative is largely contingent upon a broader understanding of inequality and social diversity in policy making. This encompasses several key areas:

1. Reconstructing the policy of equality by designing strategic principles and identifying actions that promote equity and social justice, correct unfair inequalities, incorporate necessary differences, ensure that compensation is tied as closely as possible to economic and social contributions, and protect the most at-risk individuals and groups, understanding social unity and integration as the unity and integration of differences. In this sense, the aim of this policy cannot be homogenizing egalitarianism but rather the systematic expansion of the potential margins of equality, accompanied by a quota of appropriate inequality that reflects recognition of differences in contributions and needs as a tool of development.

2. Strengthening the participatory and self-transformative nature of development initiatives taking a social agent-centered approach. In other words, identifying the social groups and sectors within a specific area that are in a position to be proactive in changing their circumstances and relationships.

3. Making sustainability the centerpiece of strategies and processes for change. This is understood as the intensive use of natural, cultural, professional, and historical richness to ensure its systematic regeneration; respect-

ing traditions while fostering innovation; and the installation of durable capacity for self-management and participatory autonomous organization at different levels of society, with an adequate economic productive base.

4. Diversifying the potential repertoire of ownership of small-scale means of production and local services (community-based, urban cooperative, semipublic endeavors including state-cooperative, state-community, state-individual, professional) in a framework of integration, complementarity, and competition, in which all types of ownership directly or indirectly contribute to spaces for commerce and spaces of equality. This would help concentrate state property in essential activities, eliminating those that leave it hypertrophied and reducing the private appropriation of its benefits.

5. Restoring the quality of spaces of equality, particularly those facilities that, due to their location, serve underprivileged sectors. This could mitigate the inequalities produced by income diversification.

6. Enhancing the relationship between planning and market in such a way that it is possible to see the differences that are being created, and to respond to the needs of different social groups. It would be useful to expand the market segment to be able to meet the demands of higher-income groups, which would help finance similar or other demands emanating from lower-income brackets.

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APPENDIX 1
GENERAL AGENDA FOR RESEARCH ON SOCIAL STRUCTURE, INEQUALITY, AND RELATED ISSUES

- Economic, social, political, and cultural aspects of the links between globalization and national society; global interconnectedness of inequalities.
- Reform and the issues relating to a new socialist model; the socialist standard of inequality.
- Links between survival strategies and development at the societal, geographical-community, individual, and family levels.
- Reorganization of the system of ownership and the emergence of new social actors and historical subjects; alternatives for the future they will help build and possibilities for accomplishing it.
- Changes in the organization and functioning of agriculture and its economic and social derivatives.
- Poverty, exclusion, and vulnerable social groups; human development.
- Socioeconomic differences, inequalities, social gaps, and possible quotas of equity and integration.
- New role of the state; relationships between planning-market, centralization-decentralization, uniformity-diversity; social policy and its role in addressing inequality.
- Informal sector; its potential and role in socialism.
- Social and individual subjectivity in the new socioeconomic situation; perceptions, values, social representations of inequality; collective identities, new actors, and new identities.
- Formulas for self-managed grass-roots participation (community-based, cooperative, economic, cultural) as instruments for inclusive diversity.
- Spatiality as a dimension and factor in social inequalities.
- Daily life; family and survival strategies as expressions of inequality.
- Race, social disadvantage, and the propagation of racial prejudice.
- Gender focus: empowerment of women.
- Internal and external migration and its impact on social structure.
- The aging of Cuban society and its consequences.
- Youth, trends toward integration, social disintegration.
- The city and urban life; urban crisis.

Notes

1. What we refer to here as social restratification is a process of change in a given social structure (global, regional, national, territorial, local) characterized by widening economic gaps between the components of that structure; the emergence of new classes, layers, and social groups that produces social differences or increases existing ones; and the diversification and polarization of income sources, which underscores the existence of a socioeconomic hierarchy, of a top and a bottom in the social structure associated with differences in economic availability and opportunities for access to material and spiritual well-being. We use the notion of restratification to underscore a process of increasing inequality that replaces a destratification process (elimination or reduction of inequalities).

2. We reviewed materials produced in the framework of the National Science and Technology Programs (a category used by the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment to formally recognize the highest priorities for specific research issues), particularly the findings of the Cuban Society Programs, International Economic Relations, Internal and Mountain Economy, and research reports and publications by CIPS, the Institute of Philosophy, the Sociology Department of the University of Havana, the Anthropology Center, the Center for Demographic Studies, the National Institute of Cuban Economic Research, the Juan Marinello Center, the Center for the Study of Health and Human Welfare, the Youth Studies Center, the Foundation on Nature and Humanity, the Work Studies Institute, the School of Economics of the University of Havana, and the Center for the Study of the Cuban Economy. A list of thematic areas is given in Appendix 1.

3. Although Dilla offers an interesting analysis of the distribution of power and the future of socialism, the discussion here is limited to the sociostructural system.

Cuba in the "Special Period": From Equality to Equity

JUAN VALDÉS PAZ

INTRODUCTION

The economic crisis of the nineties and the government strategies implemented to overcome it led to changes in Cuban society that required replacing a model of egalitarian socialist transition with one based on equitable relations.[1] Obviously, equality is a formal, abstract notion; an ideal in the social reality of legal constructs and utopian thought. What we actually observe in society are varying degrees of inequality and its tendency to increase or decrease; sociologist Mayra Espina's proposed "patterns of inequality" (2003) would thus seem a more useful tool for measuring such variations. The nineties, then, featured a transition from a pattern of less inequality in Cuban society to one of more real and acceptable inequality, from the mainstream perspective.

The notion of equity implies a moral and social standard concerning the pattern of inequality that is desirable and possible at a given moment. Some of these standards liken equity to equality, while others define it as equal opportunity and equality in the means to achieve it (Ássael 1998). In the latter case, Cuban society is moving from an egalitarian toward an ethical form of equity in which differences can be justified.

These concepts must be evaluated in real society using operational indicators that describe it in all its dimensions, rather than solely economic terms, and that represent the effects of the level of socioeconomic development attained, the circumstances faced, and the resulting public policies (see Appendix A). Both political will and the backing of public opinion are required to maintain the pattern of desirable inequality or to implement a pattern of viable equity. Cuban society during the "spe-

cial period in peacetime" was a reflection of how these patterns evolved and the role of social subjects and political actors in promoting them.

Cuban political discourse has evolved from a platform of an egalitarian society grounded in mechanisms for the equal distribution of all (or nearly all) goods and services, to one of an equitable society based on equal access to basic necessities and equal opportunity of access to scarce goods and services. Both proposals suffer from economisms inasmuch as they do not explicitly include equality or equity in terms of freedom of determination, social position, empowerment, or participation. For the purposes of our discussion, however, we will assume the multidimensionality of all socialist proposals.

The crisis of the nineties hastened reforms that had become necessary in Cuban society of the eighties, which was characterized by an economy based on traditional sectors marked by inefficiency, extensive growth, and a tendency toward severe macroeconomic imbalances. This system was endowed with a high degree of social security. Civil society was structured essentially around occupational profiles, a predominantly young population, and a high degree of equity among social groups. The highly centralized political system offered a great deal of legitimacy, a tremendous capacity for social mobilization, ample opportunity for participation, and consensual restrictions on democracy. The virtually universal cultural system, albeit encumbered by expressions of the official ideology, was endowed with ample resources and exhibited enormous creative potential.

The externally provoked crisis swept over the Cuban society of that time abruptly curtailing its development, altering the terms of its existence, and demanding from the population an enormous effort of resistance and recovery. With the declaration of the special period, the government ushered in a new stage in a society already prepared for the contingencies of a war that, despite its abruptness, quickly began to exhibit its effects in the destruction of social capital, disorganization, and human suffering.

THE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the collapse of European socialism, and the extinction of the Soviet Union abruptly altered the international situation. The bipolar equilibrium was replaced by one based on the unparalleled political and military dominance of the United States and a scenario

defined by a new political and economic world order. For Cuba, these international changes meant the disappearance of its economic integration framework, the loss of its political allies, and the collapse of its line of defense. It is common knowledge that 80% of Cuban trade, 95% of its development aid, and virtually all its defense funding was concentrated in member countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CAME). In a matter of months, revolutionary Cuba was compelled to reinsert itself in the world market, redirect its areas of economic integration, and confront the prevailing conditions of neoliberal globalization; its success in rapidly reinserting itself into the international economy should be noted here (Álvarez 1995).

It was harder for the island to redirect its complex foreign policy, which shared common interests with the European socialist bloc and the non-aligned countries' movement. It meant resisting the isolationist policies of adversaries, both old and new, and broadening its bilateral and multilateral relations. In fact, the Cuban government was able to strengthen its role in the United Nations system and improve considerably its diplomatic relations with countries and organizations in various regions. This is reflected in Cuba's entrance into economic integration systems such as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Asociación Latinoamericana de Integración (ALADI), and its possible association with the Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR).[2]

Cuba–U.S. relations during the special period have remained conflictive, in keeping with the pattern followed by successive U.S. administrations since 1959. During this period (book-ended by the two Bush administrations), U.S. policy was implemented through the 1992 Torricelli Act and the 1996 Helms-Burton Act, which reinforced the blockade, codified all measures and sanctions, and tied in directly to a political plan to restore the country to its pre-1959 circumstances. The failure of the economic blockade has fostered positions in favor of a new strategy for U.S–Cuba relations supported by less ideological sectors of the establishment and certain economic interest groups. Such positions occasionally have been hampered by an administration committed to global strategies of unilateral domination and by the organic role it has assigned to the Cuban extreme right in Miami in the implementation of Cuban and Latin American policy. All in all, although the international scenario poses new challenges and even greater uncertainty for Cuba, the government has succeeded in avoiding political isolation.

The Cuban crisis unfolded concurrently with the international debate over the capitalist "transition" of the socialist countries of Eastern Europe (Taibo 1998; VVAA 1992). The Cuban position at that time was to defend all experiences of a noncapitalist nature; it perceived such "transitions" as a betrayal of national and grass-roots interests politically and as a setback of enormous proportions socially. The Cuban perspective in these new circumstances was captured by the slogan "Save the Fatherland, the Triumphs of the Revolution, and Socialism," which was used to mobilize the population to resistance and struggle within the framework of a strategic proposal that was also a list of priorities in the new scenarios.

The crisis has had a disproportionate effect economically, socially, and politically. Although the economy shows signs of having suffered a real catastrophe, the impact in the social sphere, while significant, has been lighter, and in the political arena has been less still. The degree of recovery observed in the three areas is the reverse: most at the political level, modest in the social sphere, and far less economically. These gradations are indicative of the objective and subjective capacity of a regime like Cuba's to administer a crisis of such proportions. A succinct examination of each of these scenarios reveals changes in preexisting relations, institutions, and actors. At the same time, the regime's increasing inability to prevent and control these changes can be seen.

THE ECONOMIC SCENARIO

The crisis has had a catastrophic impact in the economic sphere and this is where the most relevant changes have occurred. In over a decade of the special period we can distinguish at least three subperiods:

1990 to 1994—Survival. This subperiod began with the free fall of the Cuban economy; in three years, the GDP dropped by 36%, consumption fell by 40%, and the economy suffered unquantifiable losses of social capital. During this period, strategic contingency plans were implemented including urgent measures to counteract the plummeting energy supply and productive capacity and the deteriorating standard of living (ONE 1998).[3]

1994 to 2001—Recovery. During this subperiod, economic recovery strategies consisted of adjustment policies, measures to open up or liberalize the economy, and structural changes (see Appendix B). Changes in the economic structure included a dollar-based monetary system; diver-

sification of the forms and structure of ownership of the means of production; expanded currency trade relations; and the emergence of parallel markets. Other changes were driven by tourism; increased absolute and relative weight of family remittances in foreign income; and an agricultural model based on a new land tenancy structure, reorganized production, and new technologies and incentives (Valdés Paz 2000). Some relevant recovery-oriented institutional changes included administrative decentralization, bank reform, the creation of a commercial sector operating with foreign exchange, the initiation of a "business enhancement" process, legal reform, and the redefinition of the Plan Económico Social para el 2004. Economic recovery strategies resulted in 4.0% average annual growth from 1995 to 2001, the relative modernization of certain sectors, improved food consumption, and the creation of an economic sector featuring semipublic ownership (ONE 2002).

2001 to the present—Recession. The national economy began to show signs of recession in the aftermath of the events of 11 September 2001. They included falling prices of raw materials, increased fuel and food costs, declines in tourism and air transportation, declines in direct investment, increased military spending, and so forth. This situation, compounded by economic liberalization measures that had run their course, marked a turning point and the rhythm of recovery slowed to 2% annually, delaying the goal of restoring the GDP to 1989 levels.[4] Moreover, the sugar sector is being restructured so that its surpluses can be used to support other sectors and to trim current subsidy levels. This is a longer-term economic reform relative to others undertaken during this period, and will have a major impact on Cuban society and culture (MINAZ 2001).

The most salient aspect of the economic scenario has been the revolution's social policy, which constitutes the solid core of recovery strategies and the regime's highest political priority.[5] Indeed, social spending recovered before the rest of the economy—in 1999 it had already surpassed 1989 levels—growing from 20% of the GDP in 1989 to 30% in 2001. The regime has sustained the core of its "revolutionary undertaking" (free health care and education for all, sports and culture, social security, basic food basket, public and community services, social assistance, and so on) by limiting the harm and increasing quality and coverage. This has allowed it to offset the social effects of the economic crisis, ensure a good quality of life, and maintain a majority political consensus

(CEPAL-INIE 2003). The percentage of GDP currently allocated for social spending is increasing in relative terms in a situation of slow economic recovery; this means that it is more a result of political priority than economic development.

During the recession of the early nineties unemployment reached as high as 10%. Gradual economic recovery, coupled with a series of measures—increased middle and high school enrolment, work-study initiatives, and the creation of new social services—reduced the unemployment rate to 5% in 1999 and 2.3% in 2003 (Morales Cartaya 2004). This job recovery was accompanied by a structural change in which the government went from being the employer of 94% of the labor force in the eighties to 76.6% in early 2001, in favor of an emerging private sector (ONE 2002). It is worth noting that much of this recovery is attributable to government employment based on increased budget spending, which enhanced its role as a social provider of opportunities.

Recovery in the foreign sector, excluding tourism, has been slower than for the economy as a whole. Although significant structural changes have occurred here, they have been insufficient to further invigorate the economy (ONE 2002). Accomplishments in foreign trade include rapid reinsertion into the world market, changes in export value structures and destinations, and flexibilization of the government monopoly on foreign trade. The difficulties that have yet to be surmounted include the sharp decline in sugar exports, an essentially traditional export structure, and a growing trade deficit. International finances in general, and the lack of foreign exchange in particular, continue to inhibit recovery. Cuba lacks international credit, has little aid available, and suffers from insufficient foreign investment, while family remittances are a decisive factor in the balance of payments.

The fact that in these economic straits Cuba has been able to improve its human development indicators and elevate its standing among all countries to 52nd place could be considered miraculous (UNDP 2004). Nonetheless, the issue of development and development strategies, since the special period and beyond, is a matter of concern among the country's scientists and politicians. International insertion, sector-based development, the role of the market, economic incentives models, technical-scientific transformations, and so on comprise the still-incipient debate over a new model of accumulation and development. Although arbitrary

factors—such as changes in U.S. policy toward Cuba, the discovery of large oil reserves, and an enhanced foreign sector—could improve conditions for development, it is largely contingent upon a strategy based on internal factors.

THE SOCIAL SCENARIO

The first, and most serious change has been growing social disorder—crime, corruption, prostitution, drug trafficking, illegal migration, and so forth—which has reached levels unheard of before the nineties. The individuals and groups engaged in these activities have also gained advantage vis-à-vis other groups and exercise a certain degree of influence over their social milieus. The diversity of methods and actors associated with these manifestations are a result of circumstances ranging from the impact of the economic crisis, opportunities for extraordinary income due to shortages, the dual currency system, and the demand for tourism to increased expectations in terms of consumption. Although the growing social disorder might be explained or justified by the effects of the crisis, the truth is that this disorder has become a new source of social inequality. Actions to counteract these trends—whether legal, ideological-cultural, by the police, or related to social control—together with economic recovery have helped to reduce disorder to levels approaching normal, although in conditions that could lead to a future resurgence.

This period has also seen the emergence of an impoverished sector, estimated to include nearly 20% of the population in 2003. Other disadvantaged groups have also been created; while not specific to Cuban society, given its level of social attention, social security, education, and so forth, they are symptomatic of the crisis and dependent upon the ability to overcome it. Accelerated changes in the social structure have been driven by powerful trends toward the diversification of social groups and increasing inequality among them. We could briefly describe these changes as follows:

Demographic structure. In 2001, the Cuban population (11.2 million) exhibited little growth, a growing gap between the youth and the elderly, and rapid aging as a result of longer life expectancy. The relative decrease in the economically active population and the absolute growth of the senescent population (14.4% in 2001) have become obstacles to economic development (ONE 2002).

Social class structure. In addition to its general composition,[6] the Cuban social class structure was characterized by an occupational framework featuring 90% government employment, and an income pattern largely dominated by wage earnings. These two features currently play less of a role due to the economic structural changes that have occurred during this period. In fact, economic decisions strongly influenced the social class structure of the nineties, which evolved in the direction of greater diversification of social class components. Inequality grew between and within groups, as a result of differentiation in foreign exchange income among certain sectors. There was more selective upward mobility and a high degree of horizontal social mobility, from the government to private sectors and from traditional to emergent sectors.

Generational structure. In 2000, five distinct generations coexisted in Cuban society, featuring strong filial relationships, low conflict, and a high level of shared activities. But the crisis of the nineties exacerbated the differences, particularly between the three older and the two younger generations. In contrast to the experience of earlier generations, qualifications no longer lead to upward mobility; employment is not guaranteed and may involve a drop in status; and wages do not cover consumption requirements (Domínguez 1998). This increased intergenerational inequality has raised the need for corrective policies to restore the previous equilibrium, to the extent possible, and preserve equity through affirmative action initiatives.

Gender structure. The remarkable decline in inequalities between men and women between the fifties and the eighties was adversely affected in the nineties by the feminization of the crisis and temporary reversals in certain indicators of women's development, such as employment, leisure time, school enrolment, and so forth. These indicators have improved in tempo with the recovery of the economy and services by means of targeted affirmative action measures. Indeed, Cuban women surpass men in indicators on schooling, health, and life expectancy, and have achieved noteworthy levels of social insertion, coupled with weakened patterns of inequality. Nonetheless, gender equity is still far from being fully realized.

Family structure. In 1990 the number of Cuban families grew at a rate of 2.2% as a result of a high marriage rate (6% annually from 1990 to 1998) and a high divorce rate (3.6% for the same period). Although the nuclear family predominates, the number of extended families has risen

due to housing shortages and the working age of family members. There has also been an increase in single-parent families, mostly with female heads of household. During the years of the special period, the family became increasingly important to the population as a source of daily sustenance, solidarity, and resources, and to the state, which finally recognized it as an essential public policy link and an irreplaceable foundation of socialization.

Other relevant social changes are evident in the ideological-cultural sphere. The impact—obviously harder to pinpoint—of events and other transformations has been expressed in contradictory ways. Changes in the dominant Marxist–Leninist ideology, which had begun in the mid-eighties, were accelerated by the effects of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the unanticipated and uncertain scenarios of the nineties. New challenges to and the futility of relying on the state ideology relegated orthodoxy to certain political areans, thereby giving way to a new heterodoxy characterized in part by a return to the revolutionary Marxist tradition and in part by the emergence of Martí-inspired philosophy. International shifts, neoliberal globalization processes, the peaking of imperialism, and the demobilization of the established political left contributed negatively to this process, while positive contributions have include new social movements, the Chinese and Vietnamese experiences, the emergence of a new political left, and the growth of a culture that is at once national and cosmopolitan.

Another facet of ideological-cultural change has to do with increased religious activity and the bankruptcy of the state's "scientific atheism." Policies of openness and recognition of church-based and grass-roots religious activities have lent cohesion to society with their diverse belief systems and have reconciled the political and religious consciousness of the masses.

A new campaign, entitled Battle of Ideas, was launched in the late nineties. It placed renewed emphasis on the subjective aspects of the revolution and instilling in new generations egalitarian, internationalist, and humanistic ideals with which to confront world changes in general (the scientific-technical revolution and the new boom in capitalism) and the continuity of and changes in the Cuban Revolution in particular. Nonetheless, it should be noted that this campaign fails to include a broader examination of the national reality or a free and open debate on the model of socialist transition that should emerge from the special period.

The social attitudes of various groups have changed during this period as a result of many factors, including changes to the social structure itself, the collapse of European socialism, the experience of Cuban socialism, and perceptions of the crisis and the strategies adopted to overcome it. These changes have caused Cuba to evolve from the most egalitarian social structure in the world—other considerations aside—to one governed by patterns of greater inequality. This transformation has been offset by increased equity through affirmative action policies and measures targeting the social structure in general and the generational, gender, and family structures in particular.

THE POLITICAL SCENARIO

The first aspect to highlight in an examination of the political arena is its extremely high and sustained level of governability.[7] This governability is evidenced by the vigorous direction of the social processes of the period, the capacity to manage the crisis, the continuity of all the system's functions, and the durability of the revolutionary regime. The adverse international climate, the economic crisis and its social effects, changes in incentive patterns, erosion of consensus, inability to meet demands, and so forth have not led to a visible decrease in the governability of the political system. Indeed, the so-called "rafters (balseros) crisis," the public protests of the summer of 1994, and illegal emigration have hardly challenged the regime's stability and its absolute control over territory, public order, and the counterrevolutionary opposition. The external threats affect the governability of the political system only by imposing a syndrome of defensiveness and unity.

The evolution of the internal political scenario during the special period is marked by international constraints, the effects of the crisis, the agenda established by public opinion in the national debate of the Fourth Congress of the Cuban Communist Party (PCCC), and the political leadership's perception of the threats to the survival of the revolution posed by the new scenarios. However, the powerful circumstances of the period have not hindered, nor even served as an excuse to stop promoting key reforms in the political system and its democratic development. The constitutional reform of 1992 (which was, in fact, a redrafting of the constitution) paved the way for economic changes and political decentralization. A key institutional reform reduced by half the central agencies of the state,

the armed forces, and the bureaucracy. Local government was strengthened by expanding its powers, establishing separate Administrative Councils, and creating Popular Councils (Consejos Populares) as new coordinating entities in zones, neighborhoods, and other population centers. There has also been an incipient development of community movements.

The crisis of the nineties also has not impeded the ongoing development of Cuban socialist democracy, whether defined from the standpoint of institutions or citizens.[8] There has been expansion and consolidation of human and civil rights with an emphasis on social, cultural, and environmental rights. There has been continuous functioning of political representation through elections held under the new Electoral Law of 1992, which established the universal, direct, and secret vote for all representative government bodies; closed nominations offset by free elections and absolute majority of votes; and the separation of the Cuban Communist Party from the electoral process. During the special period, six elections of the Entities of Popular Power (Órganos del Poder Popular) have been held at the municipal level, and three at the national and provincial levels, with the functioning to varying degrees of the democratic oversight mechanism as an imperative mandate, accountability to voters, and revocability.

There has been a tangible increase in political participation as a result of expanded opportunities—popular councils, community movements, consultations, civic associations, and so forth—and recognizing such entities as a prerequisite for democratic socialism. However, the level of direct participation is still insufficient. Enhanced participation is complicated by the centralized political system, bureaucracy, discrepancies in the opportunities for participation at different levels, particularly in terms of decision-making, and the level of political influence achieved by political leaders and the population in general.

Despite signs of progress, Cuban democracy remains restricted in terms of legal opposition, information, political propaganda, and freedom of movement. As recognized and consensual as they may be, these situations still must be remedied. Cuban civil society grew significantly during the period, in terms of increased numbers of civic groups (grass-roots organizations, associations, church institutions, and a greater social role for the family) and political influence, but the insufficient development of a public sphere limits the role civil society can play in contributing to development and exercising oversight over other systems.

The crisis period reduced the social base of the Cuban revolutionary regime without affecting its majority support or swelling the ranks of the opposition. This has been evident in public opinion polls, elections, and in the mobilizing capacity of the political system. Indeed, the regime's legitimacy—its ability to build consensus—is very high if we consider its historical and legal underpinnings, its accomplishments, its democratic development, and the rise of its leadership. Nonetheless, critical challenges will arise if—as the regime's historical source of legitimacy becomes less influential and a changeover in the historic leadership approaches—it fails to consolidate the rule of law, exhibits limited capacity to fulfill demands and expectations, and upholds restrictions on democratic development,.

PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS

Altogether, diverse processes of change have influenced Cuban society in the nineties and up to the present, altering it in the short and medium term and setting into motion trends toward greater diversification of social relations and actors. Nonetheless, the varying degrees of change in the different scenarios have not fundamentally altered the continuity of the economic, social, and political system established in the country in the name of the revolution.[9] The aim during these years of the special period was to restore levels of activity comparable to the latter half of the eighties, but even then Cuban society was exhibiting critical imbalances, slow growth, new external and internal circumstances, and the need for change. This is to say that Cuban society must evolve in function of its own socialist objectives by creating a more diverse and autonomous civil society, a more participatory political society, a more inclusive legal regime, a more legitimate bureaucracy, and a more efficient and equitable economy.

The situation unleashed in the early nineties has tested the Cuban people's capacity to resist and overcome the crisis and the regime's capacity to manage its effects and the recovery process, particularly by limiting the political and social impact of the economic crisis. The preservation of social equity has in fact relied on public policies to this effect. The prolongation of the special period and its repercussions has sparked a more or less open internal debate on the best course of action to overcome the crisis and minimize its political and social costs. This debate can be summarized in two extreme positions with various nuanced views in between.

On one side, the strategy to recover from the crisis is conceived as the sum total of minimum necessary measures that should be implemented in a gradual and controlled manner. On the other, the alternative strategy envisions emerging from the crisis in the shortest time frame possible, using any and all liberalization measures necessary to do so. In between these two extremes are other proposals that reconcile the need for key changes with the economic and extraeconomic restrictions necessary to maintain the conditions required for the continuation of the socialist system.[10]

Once Cuban society has emerged from the crisis, regardless of the criteria used for that "recovery," it will have undergone enormous changes and it will be called upon to make others. Although any of the strategies adopted will lead to a more unequal society, they must ensure that it is a more equitable one, in other words, basically just.[11] The model will have to be viable in the new national and international order, ensure development, preserve social equity, and above all, ensure the country's independence. By rejecting transition models inconsistent with its terms and objectives, the Cuban regime must envision or create its own model; a version of socialist transition that should be national in its form and content, and universal in its final objectives. The transition currently underway appears to be directed more or less in keeping with these goals, despite conflicting trends and uncertainty about the future.

A final conclusion has to do with social actors. It would appear that regardless of the strategies adopted to recover from the crisis, the social actors that will emerge from the special period will not be the same. In fact, it is possible to observe individual, group, class, and generational changes that will influence these new actors. This poses two main challenges: the capacity of the established model to incorporate into all its systems the enormous human capital created by the revolution, and to instill in new generations a commitment to the socialist project. Both objectives are simultaneously a condition and a component of other longer-term objectives.

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APPENDIX A

SCENARIO	EQUALITY	EQUITY	MEASURE
Economic	Equal financial income Equal consumption Equal standard of living	Equal opportunity and means No exploitation Equal quality of life	Relationship among income groups: • Income structure • Gini Index Level of social allowance Level of economic conflict Human Development Index
Social	Equality among social groups Equality of subjects in social relations.	Nondiscrimination No exclusion Civil society development Individual autonomy	Degree of social differentiation Level of social conflict Crime rates
Political	Equality before the law Equal political rights Equal power among: • government institutions • social groups in the public sphere Equality of representation Equal access to information	Level of democratization • degree of freedom • degree of equality among citizens • degree of participation Access to the public sphere Decentralization Self-government Access to information	Rates of electoral participation Balance among government branches Level of political conflicts Hierarchical entities and differences.

APPENDIX B

TYPE	YEAR	EQUITY
Institutional	1992	• Constitutional Reform: • Decentralization of the state monopoly on foreign trade • Recognition of semipublic ownership and other types of management
	1994	• Reorganization of the central government administration. Reduction in the number and size of government agencies
	1990	• Decree Law reorganizing the banking and financial system.
Foreign Opening Up	1995	• Law on Foreign Investment
	1996	• Decree Law on Foreign Trade Zones • Customs Law Reform
New Forms of Economic Organization	1993	• New Agrarian Reform through the creation on state lands of Basic Units of Cooperative Production, the creation of new farmer-producers, and the distribution of plots for family subsistence farming
	1999	• Spread of self-financing models in foreign currency in companies, branches, and sectors • Initial implementation of the Business Enhancement Program
New Economic Spaces	1993	• Decree Law on self-employment
	1994	• Decree Law creating the Free Market for Industrial and Cottage Industry Products

APPENDIX B *continued*

TYPE	YEAR	EQUITY
Financial Restructuring	1994	• Price increases for essential goods • Elimination of "freebies" • Tax Law
Deregulation	1993	• Decriminalization of possession of foreign currency and the creation of a trade network using these currencies
	1994	• Introduction of a new monetary unit: the convertible peso
	1995	• Opening of exchange houses in foreign currency
Regulation		• Substitution of planning based on material balances for financial planning
Economic Orientation		• Priority on development of the tourist, mining, and biotechnology sectors • Decentralization of foreign trade and geographical diversification • Reorganization of labor based on linking income with production outcomes and establishing material incentives in priority sectors and branches • Preservation of social policies

NOTES

1. Equality implies that the terms of the social relation can be interchanged without altering the "value of the context"; this is the case with equality before the law, moral standards, and so on. Equity, however, refers to the natural justice that accompanies certain relations, of which equality may be one example. Thus, equity in social relations implies certain universal criteria regarding what relations or conditions are equitable. See the concept of "equity" in Abbagnano (1966).

2. Cuba maintains diplomatic relations with 181 of the 192 member states of the United Nations. It is an elected member of different organs of the UN system, including the UN Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Commission for Latin America.

3. For example, factory shutdowns, rationing of all forms of consumption, return to animal traction in agriculture, emergency food production, economizing campaigns, etc.

4. The conventional estimate for growth in 2003 was 2.6% and using new criteria, 3.8%; see Rodríguez (2003).

5. Since 1959, social development policy has been the priority of all the economic strategies implemented by the Cuban government. It has been the centerpiece of the Cuban socialist model—accorded even more weight than in any other socialist experience—and embodies its system of equity. This social policy is egalitarian in that it recognizes the right of every citizen to have his or her social needs met. It is equitable in that it includes affirmative action measures targeting at-risk sectors and people with disabilities.

6. Such as the ownership of the means of production, levels of technological development in different economic activities, professional and vocational training system, occupational structure and employment policy, income structure and salary policy, prices and profits, subjective image of social class structure.

7. By "governability" we mean the definition offered by Antonio Camou (2000): "A state of dynamic equilibrium between the level of social demands and the capacity of the political system to respond to them in a legitimate and effective manner." We also take into account his observations that (a) governability is a relationship between a political system and its surroundings, in other words, other social systems; (b) it is not the state actors who ensure governability, but rather the sum total of all stakeholders; and (c) governability and ungovernability are two extremes on a continuum that in the social reality appears to us as varying degrees of governability.

8. Here we refer to political democracy, although democracy, in the socialist understanding, refers to a greater or lesser degree of democratization achieved in the various systems within a society. At the same time, we define democratization as the degree of liberty, equality, and social participation achieved at any given time.

9. In our opinion, while the current Cuban regime is far from representing its own socialist proposal, at the beginning of the 21st century Cuban society has succeeded in overcoming some of the effects of the crisis of the nineties. It has upheld its noncapitalist orientation and has overcome or improved many of the features of the dominant transition model of the eighties. A comparison by the author of 23 "basic" aspects of the theoretical model of socialism shows that in the scenarios brought about by the crisis, the current regime has advanced in 18, and has become stuck or regressed in 5.

10. In fact, the Cuban state has largely preserved its economic regulatory system based on mechanisms such as central planning, price controls, state subsidies, market restrictions, rationing, the tax system, banking monopoly, and so forth.

11. On 3 January 1959, the Act of Constitution of the Revolutionary Government decided, "in view of the need to establish the fundamental structure for the rule of law that will characterize the development of the government and the nation, to reaffirm the applicability of the 1940 Constitution, as it governed on the nefarious date of the usurpation of public authority by the tyrant, *without prejudice to the modifications determined by the Provisional Government to ensure fulfillment of the principles of the Revolution until the enactment of the Fundamental Law*" (Buch 1999, 168; my emphasis).

12. This symbolic operation has as its counterpart the Cuban government's migration policy establishing the category of "permanent departure," through which Cubans who emigrate to a foreign country forfeit their right to Cuban residency, as well as all of their civil, political, and social rights. Although the constitution (1992, Art. 32) stipulates that Cubans cannot be deprived of their citizenship (and may retain a Cuban passport even if they emigrate), for many years this restriction included a prohibition on visiting the country.

13. See discussion in Bobes (1996).

14. Constitution of the Republic of Cuba, official edition, 1976. Although the 1992 reform significantly modified other articles, these general principles were preserved.

15. I will not discuss these changes in depth. For a more detailed discussion, see Azcuy (1994), Rojas (1994) for an analysis of constitutional reform, and Suárez (1995) regarding the new electoral law. Bobes (2000) also includes a reflection on both issues.

16. Although material status symbols (vehicles, houses, consumption) previously indicated a certain status in the nomenclature or bureaucracy (and therefore implied a measure of political commitment), such symbols now may signify a very low position in a foreign company, the success of a small business, the generosity of a relative abroad, or involvement in illegal activities (such as prostitution, to cite just one well-known example).

17. See, for example, the papers presented at the conference entitled "Cuba: Cultura e identidad nacional" (García 1995), which was attended by representatives of the emigrant community as well as academics and politicians on the island. It is important to stress that this symbolic expansion of the concept of nation has not translated into the procedural sphere. While the notion that we are all Cubans is accepted at the level of discourse, there are still restrictions on residency and visits to the country for people living abroad.

18. Both of these terms come from Cuban history: the first refers to the Platt Amendment, a U.S.-imposed appendix to the 1901 Constitution that undermined independence and subordinated national sovereignty. The second refers to a nineteenth-century political current that advocated the annexation of Cuba to the United States.

19. In could be said that this resolves the contradiction pointed out by Marshall (1965) between formal citizen equality that conceals interests and differences that the benefactor state cannot completely resolve.

20. Increased educational levels and access to culture enhance opportunities for communication and participation because they improve individual capacity to develop skills and attitudes conducive to political participation and are an important factor in the creation of public spaces for citizens to debate community issues.

SOCIETY, CULTURE, AND THE PRODUCTION OF THOUGHT IN PRESENT DAY CUBA

Changes in Cuban Society and their Reflection in Cuban Thought from the Nineties to the Present

JORGE LUIS ACANDA GONZÁLEZ

INTRODUCTION

Any analysis of civil society in Cuba faces two major difficulties, one of a theoretical and the other of a political nature. The theoretical difficulty stems from ambiguities in the way the concept of civil society is used in the contemporary social sciences. The political difficulty arises from the liberal use of the term "civil society" in conflicting political discourse about the Cuban reality. The United States government, the most right-wing sectors in exile, and so-called dissident groups inside the country have raised the battle cry of building and strengthening civil society in Cuba—assuming that none exists—as a means of bringing down the existing political-social system.

In response to this call, some circles identified with the Cuban Revolution adopted a narrow interpretation: Cuba did not need a civil society because it would only lead to the dismantling of socialism and a return to a quasi-colonial dependency on the United States (thereby implicitly accepting their enemy's premise that civil society is incompatible with a socialist state). This posture was followed by affirmations that Cuba had the best civil society in the world made up of grass-roots organizations (recognized under Cuba's Constitution) as well as other nongovernmental organizations, and that there was no reason to discuss the matter further. The subject of civil society frequently has become a battleground of accusations, dogmatism, and suspicions that seems to preclude any need to reflect on its characteristics and how it actually functions and develops.

This chapter is structured around these considerations. First, I offer a critical reflection on how the concept of civil society is used, rejecting

positions I consider theoretically unsustainable and explaining the content I attribute to this category and my meaning when I use it. I then present an historical overview of how the notion of civil society was introduced in Cuba beginning in the nineties. Finally, I offer some hypotheses to describe how civil society functions and develops in Cuba today.

TWO INTERPRETATIONS OF CIVIL SOCIETY

One prevalent reading of the concept of civil society can be outlined as follows:

1. It is defined by exclusion and antithesis vis-à-vis the state and politics.
2. It is exclusively identified with associative activity, voluntarism, and spontaneity.
3. It is regarded as homogeneous and having a strictly positive connotation: "strengthening" civil society implies uprooting authoritarianism, developing civic awareness, and so forth (see Habermas 1998; Keane 1992; Pérez-Diaz 1997).

Many Latin Americans have rejected this pervasive view of civil society, arguing that it is oriented toward strengthening the dominant oligarchy. A simplified state-civil society dichotomy suggests that strengthening everything that is not government-related represents a step toward democratization and emancipation. This could be compared to the neoliberal notion in that it promotes the belief that any sort of privatization would be a step toward a more developed civil society. This use of the concept of civil society tends to mask the real differences present in society so that phenomena such as social class, economic power elites, and so on vanish from social perceptions (Meschkat 1999). Likewise, it dilutes the central role of the capital-labor relation in defining power relations (Dilla 1996, 107).

For all of these reasons, I adopt a second reading or interpretation of the concept of civil society, which I think approximates more closely the essential characteristics of society and its objective processes. This is the interpretation developed by Antonio Gramsci (1999) in *Prison Notebooks,* which can be summarized as follows:

1. The distinction between civil society and political society is methodological, rather than organic.
2. It is based on a relational, nondehumanized approach to social processes and subjects.
3. It therefore assumes a broader (relative to the traditional), relational understanding of the state, power, and politics, expressed in the theory of hegemony.
4. It suggests a relationship of interpenetration and exclusion between civil society and the state; certain state structures form part of civil society and, in turn, certain civil society structures form part of the state.
5. Civil society is understood as the space par excellence for class struggle and, consequently, for obtaining or challenging existing hegemony.

Based on this interpretation, civil society is identified with forums for public socialization, the transmission of codes and values, the development of cultural practices and behaviors, and ideological interactions in which certain types of social relationships are reproduced. Structures such as the capitalist market, institutions like schools and universities, professional and religious associations, community and labor organizations, the mass media, and cultural and academic publications all form part of civil society (although they also may be included in other areas, such as the state and the economy), where cultural and ideological hegemonic relationships are reproduced and transformed on a daily basis.

In *Prison Notebooks,* the concept of civil society does not refer simply to voluntary contractual relationships between people—the production and reproduction of civic life had become much more complicated than that—but rather to the totality of social relationships that produce meaning. This makes it possible to understand how, according to Gramsci, the economy and civil society are connected in the modern world. Obviously the production of commodities (the fundamental purpose of a capitalist economy) involves much more than the creation of an object; it involves the production of a specific type of human subjectivity as the rationale and end result of their existence. The capitalist market is much more complex than the simple process of buying and selling. "It is the generalization of a way of representing subjects, processes, and objects, governed

by the logic of fetishism" (Marinas 1997, 92). The capitalist market is an extremely important agent of individual socialization and, consequently, "public spirit"; the production, dissemination, and reaffirmation of norms and values; and the unique symbolic codes that specifically define the meaning of society, solidarity, and community.

When invoking the idea of civil society, we should avoid simply echoing liberal theoretical constructs or accepting unquestioningly their political structures. It is worthwhile to recall how this term has been employed by leftist movements in Latin America. According to Norbert Lechner, it has been used as an expression of "dissatisfaction with democracy" (1995, 7). It has been invoked to point out the defects, deficiencies, and limitations of the liberal democratic model and to call for a radical review of its premises.

I will use the concept of civil society with the content Gramsci ascribes to it and examine the dynamics of Cuban civil society today in light of the objectives described by Lechner.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN CUBA

The basic notion of civil society, first introduced in Cuba in the nineties, was an introduction shaped by developments at the international and the domestic level. Three of the former were the bankruptcy and disappearance of the socialist state in countries east of the Elba; the dismantling of the "welfare state" associated with neoliberal policies and a new interpretation of the role of the state in countries in the capitalist center; and the crisis in the traditional structures of the Latin American left and its attempts to reorganize by empowering grass-roots movements. In the context of the "rectification process" that began in Cuba in 1986, initiatives for economic, political, and social reorganization were instituted, creating new forums, priorities, tactics, and structures that acquired a new direction with the disappearance of the Soviet Union in 1991. All of this contributed to a widespread perception of the need for reforms that cut across Cuban social strata and sectors. The debate centered on how to interpret the scope, objectives, and direction of the reforms. The concept of civil society was used in the Cuban cultural milieu as a tool for this reflection. The invocation of civil society as a focal point of the U.S. government's political rhetoric and of projects to subvert the political status quo on the island has strongly influenced how this subject is perceived in

Cuba. Because of the mass diffusion of Soviet-style Marxism in the Cuban school system since the early seventies, many people were unaware of the Gramscian interpretation of the concept and simply assumed it had been imposed by antisocialist propaganda.

If we examine the more than ten years in which the term civil society has circulated in our milieu, we can discern an initial stage in which it was widely considered a theoretical instrument useful only for criticizing the strategies of the revolution, past and present, and for proposing solutions to the contemporary crisis that have nothing to do with socialist alternatives. The highlight of this initial stage, which lasted until approximately 1994, was the publication and distribution in Cuba of "Reconstruir la sociedad civil, un proyecto para Cuba" (Valdés and Estrella 1994), which was discussed and approved during the Catholic Social Week II held in December 1994 in Havana. This document is significant because it summarizes one of the three main positions in the Cuban debate over civil society, which I discuss below. It accepts the classic liberal interpretation of civil society, which it describes as no more than the sum total of voluntary associations independent of the government that comprise a sector opposed to official policy and the state. The reconstruction of civil society proposed in this document required the de facto elimination of the principal socialist features of the Cuban political and economic structure.

The first stage, in which this is virtually the only interpretation and use of the concept of civil society found in writings and publications (Valdés 1996a, b), is followed by a second stage in which conflicting positions began to appear in the written press. We might say that this is when the real debate began. Chronologically speaking, this stage overlaps with the preceding one, but then the boundaries separating social processes are often blurred. During this stage, the three main positions were introduced into the public debate.

In conventional terms, we could identify as the point of departure the publication of two articles by Rafael Hernández in *La Gaceta de Cuba*, a magazine of the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (Hernández 1993, 1994). Hernández's articles posed a challenge by explicitly rejecting the antisocialist connotation assigned to the concept of civil society in favor of a Gramscian interpretation. This represented a radically different approach to this concept both theoretically and politi-

cally, transforming it into a key instrument for deepening and improving socialism from the standpoint of its political and democratic development. These two articles launched the debate over this subject in Cuba.

It was during the second stage that representatives of this critical Marxist sector published a series of articles, mainly in *Temas* magazine but also in other written press sources, presenting their views on the theoretical legitimacy and revolutionary imperative of reflecting on the development of Cuban civil society (Acanda 1996; Alonso 1995; Azcuy 1995; Blanco 1995; Dilla 1996; Martínez 1995). Also during this stage of the debate, a few articles were published expressing distrust and rejection of the concept of civil society, as I mentioned earlier (Valdés Vivó 1996; Núñez 1996).

During the period from 1994 to mid-1996, the three sides to the debate were clearly defined. The first is what I term the "liberal" position, which was extremely hostile to the socialist project and unquestioningly adhered to the neoliberal interpretation of the concept of civil society. This position was largely represented inside the country by the so-called dissident groups and lay intellectuals directly connected to the Cuban Catholic Church. The second position was "suspicious Marxism," which rejected outright the use of the concept and any reflection whatsoever on the matter, viewing it as an enemy maneuver (thereby accepting, in fact, their opponents' interpretation of the concept of civil society). The third position, "critical Marxism," rejected the other two positions as based on the same unilateral theoretical premise and offered a view of civil society as the ideal space in which to consolidate socialist political hegemony.

The March 1996 publication of the resolution approved by the Fifth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party (PCC) represented an historical benchmark. It is a contradictory document. On the one hand, its harsh rhetoric seemed to discredit the debate over this and other issues. But equally significantly, it marked the first time that an official document of a Communist Party in power acknowledged and valued the existence of civil society. That year, 1996, Armando Hart, then Minister of Culture and member of the Politburo of the Cuban Communist Party, referred repeatedly to civil society in a series of articles and interviews published in the Cuban press, in which he discussed the importance of its development for the consolidation of the Cuban revolutionary process (Hart 1996 a, b, c).

In my opinion, the positions set forth in the Fifth Plenum of the Central Committee and Armando Hart's statements ushered in a third stage, and this is where we are today. The position of rejecting the term "civil society" as anti-Marxist and antisocialist has been completely discredited and virtually no one supports it anymore. The clash of views now centers fundamentally on two issues: the content of the concept of civil society and what rebuilding Cuban civil society really means. This is particularly evident in how some have used the expression "Cuban socialist society" to identify only those political and/or grass-roots organizations that have been in existence since the sixties. This unilateral and exclusive interpretation can only serve to undermine the development of a civil society that, in order to be "socialist," should genuinely contribute to a socialization of power and property (can socialism do anything less?) that counteracts alienation in all of its forms. Conversely, those who espouse a Gramscian approach conceive of civil society as the breeding ground for ideological production, interconnected and interwoven with political society and with the state. Their reflection is centered on building a Cuban civil society that contributes to the growth of socialism through the development of the structures and institutions of ideological-cultural production: the education system, the mass media, editorial policy, the discovery and improvement of new means of production, and economic relationships that contribute to the effective socialization of property, and so on.

CHANGES IN CUBAN CIVIL SOCIETY

Social thinkers in Cuba have paid scant attention to the construction and evolution of Cuban civil society. Historians have conducted only a few limited studies on the emergence of specific associative spaces. Few sociological studies have focused on the dynamics in Cuban civil society in recent years and most of the studies that have been conducted are not in the public domain.

Prior to 1959, Cuban civil society was characterized by conflicting processes. True, it was denser and more complex than that of most countries in Latin America and the Antilles due to more highly developed capitalist social relations in Cuba. It is important to recall, however, that with an illiteracy rate of 30% (compounded by high levels of functional illiteracy) and an unemployment rate that never dropped below 25% in the best of times, development was fragmented, weak, and uneven. Broad swaths

of the population were barred from any form of inclusion in the social fabric and from any sort of decision-making power or control in public matters at the local, much less the national level, while their interaction with agents of ideological production and reproduction (schools, the press, and so on) was limited or nonexistent.

Nonetheless, the civil society of that period played a significant role in the insurrectional movement against the Batista dictatorship in the fifties and this reveals a long-standing trait of Cuban civil society: its profound and explicit politicization (Recio 1998–99; interview with Berta Álvarez, 158). Cuban civil society underwent a radical transformation in the aftermath of the 1959 revolution and much of it disappeared completely. Most forms of association (political parties, professional institutions, religious groups) disappeared. This was the result of actions taken by the new government as well as of a process of self-dissolution, as most of their membership left the country with the first migratory wave from 1959 to 1962. The new social dynamics at play created new spaces for activism. Existing agents of socialization expanded, new ones emerged, and new types of associations appeared. In the words of María López Vigil, "Cuban society became one large-scale civil society" (1997, 35). Grass-roots participation was profound and pervasive. The capacity for self-management became more significant and relevant than ever before. It is important not to lose sight of an important point: the socialization of power was accomplished at levels that were without precedent in most countries.

The sixties witnessed explosive growth in Cuban civil society. And this was not only or even mainly due to the emergence of new grass-roots organizations such as the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) and the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) or the new social role accorded existing organizations such as trade unions and student organizations. This growth was the result of the reorganization of the entire system of institutions responsible for producing and disseminating the new ideological paradigms that had become the building blocks for the new era (development of the education system, transformation of the media into an instrument of public interest, and so forth). Many social sectors that had previously played a passive role, or because of their marginalized status could not have been considered involved at all, became active participants in this civil society. It was this new civil society that enabled the revolution to achieve hegemony.

With the advent of the "institutionalization process" of the seventies, this panorama experienced gradual, but crucial changes. It was transformed into a paternalistic, top-down political system based on the all-embracing presence of the state. The socialist government's policies essentially benefited low-income sectors. The state held a virtually exclusive monopoly over the allocation of resources as well as values. The central planning system functioned with a relative abundance of resources at its disposal. The state occupied nearly all aspects of social life. People's livelihoods were inextricably linked to the presence of the state. Moreover, the state played a key role in ideological production. The church and the market, relevant institutions in terms of generating values, no longer had a role in this area (the market barely even existed). In this way, the state acquired a monopoly over ideological production, and one that was credible since, at that time, the state ensured economic growth and social mobility, thus creating compatibility between its ideology and the actual benefits it was able to produce (Recio 1998–99, interview with Haroldo Dilla). While civil society expanded at extraordinary levels in the sixties taking on many traditional state-government functions, the opposite was true in the seventies and eighties as state-government institutions took on many of the functions of civil society. It was a compressed, very limited civil society. In fact, the grass-roots organizations (CDR, FMC, the Confederation of Cuban Workers [CTC], and so on) became no more than an extension of the state government.

Cuban society evolved under this system throughout those years, and it achieved extremely high levels of social justice, particularly in the development of human capital. At the same time, however, centralism and paternalism had consequences in terms of spirit and participation. A culture developed of waiting for decisions, inertia, and routine. The culture of debate was lost. Real participation diminished and bureaucracy took center stage (Center for Psychological and Social Research 1991).

The crisis that swept Cuba in the early nineties marked a turning point for all areas of Cuban society, including civil society. One important factor contributed to the changes taking place in this sphere: the state was unable to continue functioning with the same degree of effectiveness as before. While the economy was still based on a socialist model, it was compelled to open up significant space for foreign investment, different forms of ownership, and the emergence of what has been termed "self-

employment." The state was forced to allow other actors to take on certain functions heretofore under its exclusive purview. The emergence of market relations, which have become increasingly significant in the economy and in the daily life of the country, has created certain social distinctions that were unheard of in the previous period.

The state's inability to meet basic needs gave rise to new forms of association. The state was obliged to look for decentralization mechanisms in order to make more efficient use of scarce resources. Political-administrative reforms were carried out (for example, the creation of the Popular Councils of Popular Power) for the express purpose of designating more power at different levels of government administration.

But the economic crisis was not the only cause of these changes. Cuban society has become more diverse and disparate than it was in the seventies, or even in the fifties, owing in part to the revolutionary process itself. The needs and demands of a more educated and culturally advanced population have become increasingly complex, and this places intense pressure on existing mechanisms for participation and representation.

Manifestations of this could be observed beginning in the mid-eighties. With the growth of the professional sector came the need to create (in some cases re-create) professional associations. Several new professional organizations emerged (of economists, for instance.) in the latter half of the eighties, joining existing groups, such as the Union of Cuban Journalists (UPEC), and the Union of Cuban Writers and Artists (UNEAC). It must be acknowledged, however, that most of these professional organizations have had little visibility or impact on Cuban society. UNEAC constitutes the most relevant exception to this. Through its debates and the professional-artistic contributions of its members (paintings, literary works, films, documentaries, periodicals), this organization has played and continues to play an important role in reflecting on the national reality and creating forums for discussion and debate that stand out against the paucity of information and the uniformity exhibited on television, in the written press, and so forth.

During the first half of the nineties, the number of registered organizations grew. This growth came to a halt in 1996 when the government suspended the authorization of new civil society organizations, a measure that remains in effect to date. While the U.S. government's increasingly aggressive stance toward Cuba might explain this measure, it is no less

true that it has curtailed the development of a significant sector of Cuban civil society. The fact is, however, that many illegal, highly political opposition organizations with strong ties to the U.S. government are operating in Cuba. Known as "dissident organizations," they do not represent any significant sector of the population.

In this area, the publications, grass-roots cultural organizations, and associations of the Cuban Catholic Church currently play a more important role. Many of these organizations, as well as the magazines published by the different dioceses on the island, openly advocate a social platform for the country that eschews any socialist option and therefore diverges greatly from the official ideology and the rhetoric found in the state-owned media.

The Cuban political panorama is informed by the contradiction between existing and moderately significant trends toward decentralization on one side, and a system that continues to be characterized by excessive centralization within a pyramidal model on the other. Legal-institutional reforms could play an important role in creating a framework that facilitates citizen action against bureaucratic trends and helps identify new models for civic associations that promote socialist values; clearly, however, legal reforms alone would not constitute a decisive factor.

CHALLENGES FOR CUBAN SOCIETY

The country's political and economic structures must evolve in the direction of implementing new forms of participation and socialization of power. In my opinion, a decisive factor would be to identify and develop new forms of collective ownership in the economy. It is imperative to seek out and experiment with new forms of organizing social property that foster collective values different from the typical egotism of the capitalist market. Cooperatives and other forms of empowerment and self-management must lead to greater socialization of property. Very little has been done in this area in recent years.

Another significant challenge is restructuring the public sphere in the country's new circumstances. Prior to the nineties, the public sphere and the state were interrelated. Now new, nonstate public spaces and expressions have emerged. The autonomy of nongovernmental public life poses an important challenge, the implications of which have yet to be addressed.

An equally important task has to do with the development of a culture of debate. It cannot be said that there is no debate in Cuba. In fact, there is more now than there was in the seventies and eighties and, to a certain extent, a level of diversity that did not exist even in the sixties. But if this is to grow, it is necessary to strengthen the legal and structural mechanisms that expand people's right to receive sufficient information and to debate it; this task is still pending.

Ways must be found to combine the vertical structure that ensures the existence of the state, which for myriad reasons must maintain a certain degree of strength, with the development of the horizontal structures that foster empowerment/self-management and ensure that these new experiences are shared and information is exchanged. This quest has come to a halt and must be resumed.

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Mirror of Patience: Notes on Cuban Studies, Social Sciences, and Contemporary Thought

Rafael Hernández

A 1990s billboard located close to José Martí airport read, "I am Cuban, I Can't be Different." In an essay entitled "Interpretations of National Identity," Fernández and Cámara (2000) interpreted its meaning as follows:

> The message, presumably authorized by a government official . . . might indicate the uniformity imposed by the political system or by the determinism of the "national character"; it suggests a fatalism from which one cannot escape, a useful excuse for all shortcomings and an explanation for all glories.

When I delved into the origins of the phrase, which gave rise to this categorical interpretation, I found that "I am Cuban, I can't be different" is from a song lyric by Grupo Moncada (a popular band that plays a mixture of rock and *son* and has a host of admirers); "everybody"—that is, the followers of Grupo Moncada in Cuba—"knows that."

Fernández and Cámara's approach is typical of certain well-established premises and lines of reasoning found in some areas of Cuban studies whose influence also has extended to the island. These assumptions and analytical constructs are expressed in a paradigm that interprets the most diverse social and cultural phenomena as merely transcriptions of politics and ideology. In keeping with this line of thinking, the key to any problem would lie in political uniformity, determinism, fatalism, and the justification and glorification of the system. Behind every idea, there must be "a government official." Or, put another way, society is the mirror image of the state, so that "socialist civil society" and the state are one and the same. This vision, which lumps the state and civil society into one indis-

tinguishable bloc, has been shared by authors who, interestingly enough, may belong to diametrically opposed political groups.[1] This peculiar bias has been acutely present in Cuban social and cultural studies.

In this essay I will discuss these limitations and compare them with those that have appeared in the social sciences on the island. Finally, I will refer to the changes that have taken place within the social sciences, focusing on the period since the crisis of the nineties to the present.

PROBLEMS IN CUBAN STUDIES: BEFORE AND AFTER

The term Cuban studies has been used since the seventies to designate an area shared by diverse disciplines concerned with economic, social, historical, cultural, and political problems on the island; these studies are generally produced outside the country. As pointed out in an editorial in the academic journal *Cuban Studies*—the main publication that has disseminated such intellectual production over the past three decades—this has reflected the existence of "a committed scholarly community that found Cuba fascinating long before its current post-Cold war kitschy popularity" (Pérez and Aragón 2000). At the same time, this editorial announced its willingness to open up "a new era in the history of Cuban studies with the inclusion of two articles in Spanish written by colleagues residing on the island," and declared that by taking this step, it sought to strengthen "the healthy proliferation of academic contacts with the island in the past few years."

Elsewhere (Hernández 1993) I acknowledge the academic value of Cuban studies—also known as Cubanology or *cubanística* (Zimbalist 1988). These studies, emanating from diverse ideological affiliations, have contributed to the net knowledge of Cuban problems and have stimulated Cuban humanistic and social sciences. The criticism I have expressed in the past—and which I will reiterate here—should not be interpreted as an attempt to discredit Cuban studies conducted outside the country in terms of their genuine intellectual value. I simply point out certain deficiencies that can be observed in much of this production relating to its core approaches.

Among the traditional gaps found in Cuban studies are little conceptual development or clarification of paradigms; lack of critical dialogue with other production within the same field of studies; predominance of empiricism, narrative, and descriptive level; personalization of political

analysis centered on the figure of Fidel Castro and on interpersonal rela-
tionships or conflicts among members of the "elite"; political analysis
confined to the contents of discourse; discontinuity in the Cuban histor-
ical process before and after 1959; and absence of a political sociological
approach, particularly toward political culture and civil society consensus.

In general terms, the paradigms used in the study of Latin America
and the Caribbean were not applied during—or following—the Cold
War to the analysis of Cuban reality. Instead, the analytical models super-
imposed on Cuba were those of Sovietology rather than Latin
Americanism (Duncan 1985; González and Ronfeldt 1986). Although it
is true that the Cuban political system of the seventies and eighties
imported many features of real socialism, its geopolitical sphere, interna-
tional and regional strategy, political thought, Third World convergence,
autonomous vocation, and definition of Cuban national interests clearly
did not correspond to any Soviet province or Eastern European state; its
society and culture even less so.

So despite the progress made in Cuban studies since the seventies and
eighties, such weaknesses have continued to affect the ability of most of
these studies to pass the trial by fire of reliable social science: to be able
to explain changes from a social and cultural perspective, compare this
perspective to that found in other countries, and predict paths and
trends. This is not to disregard, however, the contributions made by such
studies during the Cold War years; for example, the work of Louis Pérez
Jr. (1988) in historiography; Wayne Smith (1987), Jorge Domínguez
(1989) and William LeoGrande (1982) on foreign policy; Andrew
Zimbalist (1989) on economics; and Alejandro Portes and Robert Bach
(1985) on migration studies.

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the demise of the Soviet Union was a
watershed, launching a double-edged and contradictory process in the
area of Cuban studies. The disappearance of the East-West framework as
the *ultima ratio* of the Cuban situation created the opportunity to adopt
an approach that focused more on the nature of the system itself and to
analyze critically the methodological and conceptual premises of Cuban
sociology. Instead, the proliferation of "transitology" or "transition stud-
ies" introduced an approach that was more prescriptive than explanatory.
Based on paradigms culled from Eastern Europe, the postdictatorship
regimes in Latin America, and post-Franco Spain, this brand of transitol-

ogy extrapolated uniformities and inferred outcomes inherent to the pre-
established logic of their models, instead of examining what was really
happening on the island. Most of these studies on the Cuban transition,
which were conducted primarily in the United States, represented a
weakening of interpretative analysis in favor of a teleological approach
based on preconceived notions of where the political process in Cuba is
headed (Falcoff 1992; Baloyra 1993; Gunn 1993; Mesa-Lago 1993;
Cuban Research Institute 1993; Kaufman 2000; Pérez-Stable 2003.)

CUBAN SOCIAL SCIENCES: THE LEGACY AND CHANGE

Over the past fifteen years, social studies in Cuba followed a course marked
by revision and renovation. Beginning in the late eighties, the social sci-
ences field generated criticism of the policies that had informed its evolu-
tion, as well as its own self-critical process. These critiques were manifest
in topics that were present in the public debate (Espina 1995), which
included theoretical sectarianism; compartmentalization of social knowl-
edge; lack of a critical posture toward problems in the social reality, and
most importantly, toward the products of the reflection; little integration
of national and international studies; absence of alternative conceptual
models; and lack of dissemination of the reflections and research findings.[2]

Nonetheless, the nineties were significant not only because of the
negations, but because of what was affirmed. The magnitude of the trans-
formation that began in the midst of the crisis of that decade, in the most
profound sense, reflects a new dynamic in the relationship between
knowledge and society. Culture and thought—as reservoirs of new ideas,
quests, questions, and representations of the real world and to the extent
that they contribute proposals for the interpretation and clarification of
problems—have provided an informative discourse that has created a new
awareness and this has transformed them into vehicles for social change.

One example among many of the renovation of Cuban thought can be
found in cultural and academic publications. In the curve of recovery from
the special period, more magazines emerged (or reemerged) than ever
before, covering aspects of cultural, social, and political thought. *La Gaceta
de Cuba, Temas, Revolución y Cultura, Catauro, Opus Habana, Contracorriente,
Debates Americanos, Marx Ahora, Caminos, Cultura y Desarrollo, Casa de las
Américas, la Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, Unión, *Cúpula, Arte Cubano,* as well
as several others published in various provinces such as *Islas, Del Caribe,*

Cauce, and so on, reflect what could be considered a stage of controversy, revitalization, and diversification in the realm of ideas.

Most of these magazines are not the organs of any particular institution, and even when they are, they usually provide space for a variety of perspectives and problems that do not reflect the institutional point of view. Many of them, therefore, are organs of Cuban civil society, and are essential for following the evolution of thought, the intellectual movement, and debate on the island. They cover numerous topics regularly (E. Hernández 1997). Civil society, gender issues, the surge in religious activity, race relations, new generations, Cuban culture abroad, issues of the new narrative, theater and the visual arts as spaces for comparing ideas, the crisis in values, the role of the mass media, increasing social diversity and inequality, the critical review of Cuban history and Marxism, and the reassessment of the prerevolutionary republics are just some of the controversial topics of today. Indeed, underlying this debate are the foundations and meaning of socialism itself as a social and cultural order in Cuba.

Categorized by some as "magazines of thought," "academic," "cultural," or "social science magazines," these labels do not fully express the interest awakened by some of their articles, nor the diversity of their readership, which transcends academic circles. The most interesting thing about these magazines is not only their content, but their readership: intellectuals and academics, but also politicians; those based in research institutes and universities, but also in educational, technological, and college preparatory institutions; military instruction institutes; public libraries; political training schools; religious seminaries; and government agencies.

A survey on *Temas* magazine, conducted in all Cuban provinces in the second half of 2002 by a social research center specializing in opinion polls, produced the following findings (Boo and García 2002). According to this poll, most Temas readers were teachers (27.5%), researchers (18.9%), and managers (7.2%).[3] From 1995 to 2003, the magazine had published 246 articles on Cuban issues written by authors residing on the island and 50 by academics residing abroad, in addition to other texts unrelated to Cuba. It sponsored and reported on 25 roundtable meetings where Cuban issues were discussed. Among the over thirty topics or fields that were the main subject of published articles, the following rated highest on the readers' list of preferences: the development of social studies in Cuba, identity, exclusion, religion, migration, globalization, civil socie-

ty, values, women, U.S.-Cuba cultural influences, and Cuban-American culture. Among the over 180 subjects that readers proposed should be addressed in future issues of the magazine were migration, exclusion, race, racism, crime, drugs, the family, social and domestic violence, machismo, feminism, alcoholism, social disparities in purchasing power, single mothers, youth, prostitution and pimping, unemployment, Cuban identity, ideology, ethics, gender and religion, homosexuality, eroticism, transexuality, HIV-AIDS, Cuban sexual identity, and communications and the mass media (most of these issues have already been covered in articles or single-subject issues of the magazine).

The reason for this proliferation of subjects lies in the fact that these publications engage the debate in fields such as art, literature, and social theory, but also delve into those other dimensions of culture more broadly related to society, ideology, and politics. The problem-based approach to the topics, the reasoning, the analytical content of their proposals, the divergence from traditional approaches, and the contemporary, controversial nature of the issues discussed offer different readers coherent and interesting ways of looking at the issues they face in their everyday lives.

STUDIES ON CONTEMPORARY CUBAN SOCIETY: FOUR PROBLEMS

A representative sample of what is still being written about "the transition" in Cuba—by Cuban, Spanish, North American, and Polish academics, as well as those of other nationalities—can be found in any issue of *Encuentro* magazine, published in Madrid. However, social research on the Cuban reality extends far beyond that subject, particularly since the late nineties. As was the case in the sixties, the growth of such studies can be attributed to extra-academic factors. Phenomena like the Buena Vista Social Club (1998), the papal visit (1998), and the Elián González case (1999-2000) focused North American and European attention on Cuba and renewed Latin American and Caribbean interest in the country. Increasing communication between Cuban and foreign entrepreneurs, artists, scientists, academics, journalists, churches, and universities, together with the growth in tourism to the island, created a new market for travel and tourism guides, films, literature, musical works, art books, photography, and also academic research on Cuba. This renewed interest led, for example, to the emergence of a new generation of historians—

Ada Ferrer, Aline Helg, Alejandro de la Fuente, Alejandra Bronfman—whose work tackles issues that were sidelined by earlier historiography, such as the race problem.

In this context, however, knowledge of contemporary Cuban society—civil society, culture, and internal politics—remains the weakest area and one that is permeated with ideology. It is precisely in this area that recent intellectual production in Cuba has been most significant, as pointed out in the preceding section on publications. Yet despite these advances, research and the dissemination of research findings remain deficient. I will try to outline some of the most recent advances, as well as some of the deficiencies that I consider fundamental,[4] through a discussion of four problem areas.

The Antinomies of Cuban Society

Sociological research in Cuba has advanced in the identification of issues such as restratification, changing labor relations and participation, the dynamics of family roles the resurgence in religious faith, growing poverty, problems relating to community life, the need to develop fields such as the sociology of organizations, and the environment (CIPS 2003). Recent advances reflect increasing emphasis on contextualization and premises. The identification of critical points and particularly, historical periodization, not as an external reference point but rather as an essential internal qualitative dimension, are central to these approaches. Recent research shows that without a diachronic vision, it is impossible to explain new Cuban society and its patterns of change.

Recent studies reflect certain traits rarely found in earlier works, resulting in an approach to actual Cuban society that is critical, problem-centered, and in motion. Many studies emphasize a vision of social actors not as socioeconomic or demographic aggregates, but rather as groups of subjects interacting with the rest of society, the state, and their own conscience whose image reflects like a mirror on recent history (CIPS 2003). They underscore that the crisis has influenced all areas of reality, inasmuch as changed living conditions also transformed the subjective experience of Cubans (CIPS 2003).

These studies present a Cuban social theater in which different, mutually reinforcing factors converge: the "epochal crisis" of the end of the century, "external factors" already internalized, cumulative sociodemo-

graphic trends, and mutations in social consciousness. Among the antinomies of this Cuban society are the following: a majority of older people and a minority of youth; an extremely complicated ideological panorama and reduced participation; a majority of Cubans have a religious faith yet a minority of those believers are members of a religious organization or institution (a church, a Santeria temple, etc.); more young women who are qualified and in positions of authority and more who are disconnected and not in positions of authority (CIPS 2003). By correlating a wide range of problems and frequently departing from the conventional "thematic" and "disciplinary" track, these more recent studies arrive at a richer and more persuasive explanation of current Cuban society in all its complexity.

Sociological History and Political Sociology: Unfinished Business

The social sciences in Cuba lack a "historical sociology" that facilitates the construction of a "sociological history" of Cuba over the past fifteen years. In a general sense, this problem constitutes one of the main deficiencies of studies on the decades of the society of the revolution. Some authors interpret this gap as a reflection of the inexistence of civil society in precrisis Cuba (1959 to 1989). Be that as it may, it is definitely a reflection of the lack of development of political sociology in Cuba.

What are the issues requiring greater attention? Despite recent advances, there is a dearth of knowledge on the nature of change; the ramifications of heterogeneity; the asymmetries in intergender, intergenerational, intrafamily, and interracial relations; changing values and beliefs; the propagation of social actors; and, the transformations that influence political culture and critical thought in society.

The situation is not much better at the level of ideas. For instance, with regard to Fidel Castro's thinking, Cuba lacks, paradoxically, an appreciable intellectual formulation that goes beyond glossing over him. Most of what has been written with the analytical tools of history and political science has been done by non-Cuban authors. It was not until the nineties that the intellectual work of Che Guevara began to be studied—after more than two decades of very little research and dissemination on the subject—from any perspective other than apologia. Despite the efforts of some institutions working on the analytical recovery of his work, portions of it have yet to be published.

Nonetheless, politics, as an issue and a motivation, have not remained on the margins of Cuban social sciences. The question of whether or not what is found, or sometimes barely glimpsed, represents a conflict for the socialist order, or what that order is, or what it could be is implicitly or explicitly present in this research. This is connected with the problem of change itself—what direction, what values of tradition and renovation, what social relations, what type of society? Even the space occupied by religious faith can be seen through the lens of a path fraught with obstacles, struggle, hope, and trust in change (CIPS 2003). There is, at the same time, a recognition that the crisis has created powerful tensions in the sociopolitical identity of individuals in certain social sectors (for instance, the difference between workplaces where workers may have access to hard currency instead of Cuban pesos) (CIPS 2003).

A more complex, organic understanding of the factors involved in the study of organizations and participation is key. The gap between institutional participation and decision-making (CIPS 2003), formal incorporation and participation in active, decisive roles (CIPS 2003), organizational membership and real meaning in people's lives (CIPS 2003), and a sense of belonging and the distribution/exercise of power (CIPS 2003) shows the dense network of social structures and fissures in which the activity of different groups is—or is not—channeled. The insufficient participation of some groups—workers, youth, women, older adults—reflects in decision-making processes the ineptitude of existing channels to establish workable criteria and to enable these sectors to advocate for their interests as a group and thus become champions of their own socialization.

Moreover, studies on the crisis period could shed light on the early stages of the revolutionary period: the heroic and misunderstood sixties, the apparently homogeneous and balanced social structure that emerged from the institutionalization period (the 1970s). Historical sociology could excavate these earlier stages in search of more profound explanations so that they can be understood as something other than holograms of politics—which is how written history inside Cuba and abroad has characterized them up until now. This excavation is essential to the quest for key antecedents to the critical decade of the nineties, beginning with its dramatic onset in the complex circumstances of 1989. Without a critical review of the preceding stages, it would be difficult to dig deeper

into the chemistry that kept the social pact from being dismantled in civil society despite the brutal decline in economic growth from 1990 to 1993 and the ideological commotion ignited by the implosion of European socialism, as well as other events.

A new, more complex and multifaceted interpretive model of Cuban society could add racial, generational, and spatial elements to the study of mobility and reorganization, in addition to the social class aspects relating inequality and diversity. It could take into account the spokes of radial phenomena whose influences spread in many different directions, for example, emigration. This cardinal phenomenon in present-day Caribbean and Latin American societies, relatively less studied in the case of Cuba, has repercussions for the entire social fabric, cutting across the boundaries of demographic charts or population censuses, brain—and different age group—drain, or the macroeconomic math of remittances. Changing migratory patterns leave an indelible mark on social relations, in the social conscience, and in political culture.

Social Science and Cultural Studies: The Price of Divorce

The separation between social science and culture is not only a reflection of a decrepit way of thinking, but also has impeded cross-fertilization between different forms of knowledge. Interpretations of "sociological history" and the artistic images themselves should be able to integrate *ab ovo*—and not merely as "moments" in a particular work or as "introductions" to an exhibit, like the obligatory Marx, Lenin, or Brezhnev quote at the beginning of doctoral dissertations in Soviet universities. Studies of history and of art and literature are two important forms of knowledge to consider in the development of research hypotheses, problem definition and "field" strategies, reliable collection of "data," and of course, the analysis, interpretation, and organic understanding of the particular "social phenomenon" that is being dissected.

More than interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary, the issue lies in *de-*disciplinizing approaches, which is a difficult task for those who maintain a scholarly attachment to their old professional textbooks and career tracks. Approaches must also be made more complex, in the good sense that this term has reacquired. The notion that art and literature can serve as vehicles for achieving and disseminating critical understanding should be self-evident. Since the eighties, issue-focused visual arts and theater,

or the new narrative, stimulated not only the social sciences, but also political debate in the identification and examination of new problems.

Issues of religious faith, race, sexual orientation, intergenerational differences, the crisis of values, the new social perception of emigrants and their motivations in the nineties, and phenomena associated with the impact of the crisis and capitalist lifestyles—from prostitution to drugs—were addressed publicly in literature, art, the theater, and film long before they were in any of the social sciences. Topics such as postmodernism, critical review of the Marxist tradition, and the search for new paradigms emerged early on in artistic literary culture, in its institutions and publications, since the advent of the nineties crisis, and they continue to serve as a benchmark.

Science and Society: The Dialogic Relationship

Social research on the changes brought about by the unique combination of factors over the past fifteen years reveals the importance of the social sciences as a public asset, as knowledge that becomes an essential vehicle for the self-transformation of society. This is manifest in the contributory role of the social sciences, but is not limited to this function. As stated earlier, an informative discourse that generates states of awareness, such as that emanating from the social sciences today, constitutes a powerful vehicle for social change, in which they can intersect with two hundred years of Cuban thought. Increasing the role of knowledge would help nourish a debate that is already underway in many formal and informal spaces within civil society, where issues such as equality, changing moral and ideological values, the impact of tourism, citizenship, and plurality, among many others are part of the everyday discourse. And although the types of knowledge emanating from the arts and literature have been addressed more freely and widely than those from the social sciences, this has not been done as systematically and with the explanatory power that the social sciences can offer.

The social sciences, like culture in general, can play a more active and effective role in international exchange. In contrast to much of Cuban intellectual production from the seventies and early eighties, social research today does not disregard Latin American and Caribbean social thought. The latter is now recognized as a theoretical and methodological benchmark as well as a valuable tool in terms of its critical capacity

and alternative approaches. The culture of Latin American social sciences should enrich Cuban studies. The application, for more than three decades, of intellectual artifacts imported from very different societies such as those of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union—some of which are still connected despite having outlived their usefulness—should serve as a warning to Cuban social studies regarding the danger of mechanically transferring North American and European social science models.

While in the past the Cuban social sciences have studied issues such as religion, education policy, new forms of agricultural organization, or the need for new forms of employment, particularly self-employment, their findings were never disseminated, not even when they became policy (Hernández et al. 1997). It is of fundamental importance that today they can be disseminated and known, on and off the island, in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as in the First World, where there is both interest and ignorance concerning current Cuban society.

A DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIP: CUBAN STUDIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES ON THE ISLAND

The increase in international academic and other types of exchanges has facilitated communication between Cuban social sciences and Cuban studies outside of the country. Stronger networks have reduced the legacy of distrust and created the opportunity to increase research cooperation. In some disciplines, such as history, outside researchers have gained access to materials in Cuban archives. Although the reverse has also occurred, it is more difficult for a researcher on the island to do the same, often for budgetary reasons, or due to the lack of institutional support or difficulties in obtaining a visa from the respective country. In some areas, such as literature, the knowledge and research of Cuban writers abroad have been disseminated on the island. And some Cuban authors have gained access to certain Spanish-language publishers.

Although it continues to be very difficult for sociologists or anthropologists to conduct field research in Cuba, some institutions—including the University of Havana, the Center for Psychological and Sociological Research (CIPS), and the Juan Marinello Center for Research and Development of Cuban Culture—have increased significantly their collaboration with outside researchers. Numerous foreign student groups visit the island, although the same is not true in the other direction. Universities

have increased and diversified their courses on Cuba—where previously none existed—in the United States, Spain, Mexico, and other countries. The outflow of Cuban professionals, intellectuals, and artists during the crisis of the nineties has contributed to strengthening relations. While in some cases this flow has not helped to de-ideologize visions of Cuba from abroad, in many other instances it has put new intellectual asset abroad, better informed and more balanced, concerning the reality on the island.

Despite this progress, Cuban studies and social sciences in Cuba are still far from constituting an integrated body or an articulated system. At least two core and sometimes overlapping issues are involved: information and paradigms.

Regarding the first, despite the Internet and the growth of contacts, there continues to be little knowledge on the island of research and publications about Cuba in the rest of the world. Cuban editorials, for financial and other reasons, do not reproduce these works. Despite their peak, the academic and cultural magazines-although they have contributed-do not substantially cover the amount of work that has been published on Cuba. At the same time, many of the texts about Cuba published abroad ignore contemporary Cuba social studies.[5]

The second, the more arduous and persistent, is that of the premise under which Cuban reality is observed. In the words of Jorge Domínguez (2003), on the other hand it is the dichotomy "how to 'see' the Cuba that actually has existed since revolutionary victory in 1959 and, specifically, how to understand the nature of its civil society."

As Domínguez points out, however, the concept of civil society that has been spreading in social thought on the island is "far broader, suppler, and subtler than either the foreign or the officialist view would have it" (Dominguez 2003, xii). This knowledge, and acknowledgment, of the intellectual debate generated by Cuban thought is indispensable for reflecting on Cuba's current and future reality.

This and other efforts to find common ground—that transcends nostalgia and contributes to knowledge—will be much more productive than mental exercises based on generalized and mechanical assumptions about the Cuban reality. Such practices and extrapolated models usually evoke those memorable Soviet texts in which one could read that "the practice of the Cuban Revolution evidenced the need for a revolutionary party proletariat in order to carry out the socialist revolution" (Volski 1986, 6).

Rather than this worn out metaphysical exercise, a formula that emphasizes patient cooperation between Cuban studies and the social sciences on the island could strengthen understanding of the real Cuba.

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NOTES

1. See the group interview (Recio 1998) published in *Temas* magazine in which identical views of the state and civil society can be found in opposite political positions.

2. In this section I follow closely the argument outlined in "Sin urna de cristal. Notas al pensamiento cubano contemporáneo," in Hernández (2003b).

3. The vast majority has a university-level education in the following areas: education (teacher-pedagogue) (16.6%); law (5.6%); psychology (5.6%); scientific-tech–

nical information and library sciences (5.2%); history (4.7%); sociology (3.8%); philosophy (3.3%).

4. For a more thorough discussion of these issues, see Hernández (2003a).

5. For example, in the work by Fernández and Cámara (2000) about Cuban cultural identity, a book of 317 pages, not one work published in the nineties by an author in residence in Cuba is cited, despite the high interest suggested by the theme of identity in social sciences and cultural studies en the last decade. On the other hand, the work refers eight times to Gustavo Pérez-Firmat, five times to Ruth Behar, three to Albita Rodríguez, four to La Lupe, five to Desi Arnaz; but not once to Rogelio Martínez Furé, Miguel Barnet, Jesús Guanche, Carolina de la Torre, or Nancy Morejón. Of the fifteen authors that contribute to the inter-pretation of national identity, not one is from Cuba.

Cuban Youth: Aspirations, Social Perceptions, and Identity

MARÍA ISABEL DOMÍNGUEZ

Cuban society in the nineties was marked by the profound economic crisis that swept the country and by the important changes that resulted from the strategy adopted to overcome it. This strategy had to improve economic efficiency while minimizing the effects on the levels of social justice that had been achieved. The social consequences of this have had a harsher or more direct impact on youth.[1] These consequences, however, also resulted from precrisis conditions, particularly the existing level of social integration and the extent to which the population was prepared to face the crisis.

Unquestionably, the most positive elements of the precrisis conditions were the strong consensus around basic values, such as equality and justice, that has sustained most people's commitment to the social project, and the capacity for creativity and resistance inherent in the Cuban identity.[2] The main negative elements were deficiencies in the socialization of youth, with the attendant impact on values and decreased participation, and the development of an egalitarian attitude that caused expectations not related to employment to soar among different social groups as a result of a weakened work ethic (Domínguez 1994).

The magnitude of the economic collapse drastically reduced the Cuban population's standard of living; for example, in just three years (from 1989 to 1992), per-capita household consumption dropped by 18.5% (ONE 1997). But it should also be noted that, in contrast to neoliberal approaches, the readjustment strategy adopted focused on equitably distributing the effects of the crisis. In other words, it avoided imposing strictly economic measures at the expense of particular groups, such as indiscriminate streamlining of labor or commercializing basic social services, while simul-

taneously attempting to compensate the most affected sectors by reinforcing social security. For example, a comparison of the employment rate among the working age population in 1996 with the same rate in 1987 shows a reduction of barely 5% during the worst years of the crisis, even though this population segment grew by 650,000 people (CEE 1987; ONE 1997). Likewise, social security and social assistance spending grew by 40% from 1990 to 1996, representing an increase from 17% to 24% of the total budget (in the noncommercial sector; ONE 1997). This means that even in the worst moments, efforts were made to preserve a level of social justice that would prevent any one group from being crushed.

Factors such as the presence of foreign capital, increased tourism, growth in self-employment, the privatization of some areas of agricultural production, the creation of a dual monetary system, the liberalization of migration laws and policy on religious expression, to name the most important, have all had their impact. It is not the intention here to analyze these changes per se, but rather to evaluate some of their general effects on youth.

SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF YOUTH

The nature of the crisis, and the type of recovery strategy that emerged as feasible, given the domestic and international circumstances in which it occurred, inevitably had a number of effects, some of them structural. These have had implications in terms of social integration, particularly of youth, if integration is understood from the standpoint of three basic elements: employment, education, and sociopolitical participation.

Employment

The diversification of forms of ownership that accompanied the opening up of the economy to foreign capital, the establishment of the Basic Units of Cooperative Production (UBPC) and other forms of cooperative labor, and the growth in self-employment have had major repercussions on the living and working conditions of significant sectors of the population. They have also brought about a reorganization of the social class structure in which the generational aspect has been particularly relevant.

First, there have been changes in the employment structure in the formal sector of the economy. In the second half of the nineties alone there was a notable increase in the total number of workers employed in sec-

tors such as mining, electricity, gas, and water; tourism and trade; financial activities in insurance and business services; and agriculture and livestock production. There was a simultaneous decrease in the number of people working in the construction, transportation, and manufacturing industries (ONE 2001). Precise data are unavailable regarding the age structure involved in these changes, but one can assume that the influence of younger members of the work force is significant.

Second, although it is extremely difficult to estimate underemployment much less to understand the particular characteristics of the groups involved, young workers were most likely strongly affected in this regard during the early years of the crisis, since the industrial sector (which employs the highest proportion of people under thirty) was among the hardest hit. However, given the inherent characteristics of this age group, and its high qualifications, it is likely that young workers have managed to reinsert themselves in more vigorous economic areas featuring lower levels of underemployment more quickly than other groups of workers.

Growth in the informal sector of the economy represents an employment option that accounts for some percentage of youth, and the rise in cooperativism includes youth participation in agricultural work at much higher levels than before.[3] But young people also have less interest in securing stable employment, and more of them are disengaged from the labor market. Since 1991 there has been an observable decline in the economic activity of youth and women (Ferriol 1998); this drop "absorbed 60.4% of the growth in available labor resources, so that little more than a third of newcomers ended up in the labor market" (Nicolau 1999, N.p.).

According to studies conducted in the mid-nineties, 79% of a representative sample of youth disengaged from the labor market reported having someone who could support them and 71% found no economic incentive to work (CESJ 1995). This situation began to change in 1996, at the same time that unemployment rose to between 6% and 7%;[4] 60% of the unemployed were youth, the largest proportion were women, their skill level was average or average-high, and most were of urban origin (Valdés 1997).

The considerable presence of these segments of unemployed and disengaged youth spurred the implementation of a number of social programs to incorporate them into various work and study alternatives. These programs aim to restore the value of education, provide opportunities for

continuing education, and reinsert youth into socially worthwhile jobs. They offer intensive vocational and technical education programs that prepare youth for work as well as for advanced studies at municipal-level university affiliates that facilitate classroom study through specially designed, student-centered programs. These programs, although still incipient, have begun to reverse some of the trends of the preceding decade and have significantly reduced youth unemployment and disengagement.

Education

Education had always been a priority in young people's expectations. It is important to recall that for three decades the education system was a genuine vehicle for the integration of different social classes, racially diverse groups, and especially women.[5] Despite an enormous effort to minimize the impact of the crisis and the readjustment on education and to maintain universal coverage at the primary and secondary levels with fewer resources, there were objective or structural effects, particularly in the internal structure of middle and high school education. These included reductions in college preparatory instruction, expansion of polytechnic education (mostly in the agricultural field), and the strengthening of pre-university vocational programs as a means of access to the universities. At the same time, general enrollment in higher education declined, although unevenly across disciplines.

This was accompanied, in turn, by the subjective impact in terms of the social perception of the role of education. Education suffered a certain decline in stature in the nineties. It was no longer the channel par excellence of social mobility, nor the main route to a higher standard of living, nor an essential mechanism for achieving social status once other paths to higher earnings became available (employment in the emergent sector, self-employment, remittances from abroad, illegal activities, and so forth). This is the case even though these changes did not occur evenly, but rather fluctuated throughout the decade with marked differences among various social groups.

Sociopolitical Participation

Another essential area for evaluating levels of social integration in society is sociopolitical participation. This is particularly important with respect to youth, a generation typically excluded from decision-making process-

es by most existing institutional models and, in recent years, by its own apathy and political withdrawal most everywhere in the world.

In Cuba, macrosocial indicators showed the continued participation of young people in various social and economic activities, including government and political leadership roles, despite declines in some indicators. Membership in youth organizations remained high (all students belong to the Federation of Middle School Students [FEEM] or to the University Students Federation [FEU]). There was a high percentage of activists in political organizations, which had experienced a certain decline throughout the decade due to increased apathy among some youth toward social and political activities, but which has shown signs of renewed growth over the past three years. Except for the initial term, in which youth participation was nearly 30%, the proportion of youth representatives in local government (provincial and municipal) fluctuated between 12% and 23% over the nearly twenty years that the Popular Power system (Poder Popular) has been in existence.[6] Twenty-six youths were elected to the last legislature of the Parliament, accounting for 4.3% of deputies (ANPP 2000).

Data on organizational membership, however, are not the only valid indicators of sociopolitical participation, which has become increasingly heterogeneous in general. Structural heterogeneity and the resulting diversification have led also to diversification at the level of individual attitudes, particularly in terms of social perceptions, expectations, and values.

YOUTH ASPIRATIONS AND CONCERNS

As expressed in recent studies, youth aspirations, satisfactions, and concerns center primarily on four basic areas from the standpoint of the individual: family, social mobility, employment, and material living conditions. Essentially these refer to the satisfaction of basic personal needs.[7]

First, the family is given the highest priority and is central to the subjective experience of youth, as both a determinant and a result of their attitudes. The other three spheres remain in top positions, although the order changes in function of different groups. Second, measured in ten-year periods, youth aspirations reveal an interesting dialectic between stability and change. A past-present comparison (the eighties compared to the nineties) shows increasingly diverse aspirations as new ideas have entered the scene or as notions previously only vaguely sketched for isolated individuals in the preceding period have gained new currency. The

most salient trends over the decade show that aspirations increasingly emphasize the individual-family significance. Socially oriented notions, such as world peace, international solidarity, and the future of humanity, which figured among the aspirations of youth in the late eighties, have declined in importance. Aspirations for the future (around the year 2010) do not differ substantially from the present: priority is placed on family, work, material living conditions, and particularly the ability to have one's own home, although individual spirituality and health are also considered of interest. In this sense, the vision of the future also tends to reinforce the main individual-family aspirations.

The vision of the problems facing society becomes even more interesting when compared to how youth view the specific core objectives of the social system that, if achieved, would provide solutions to their main problems. In this regard, priority is placed on economic development of the country, which is absolutely consistent with the view that all the country's problems are rooted in the economic situation. Indeed there is a tendency toward optimism that the future of Cuban society will be better than the present, but this improvement is contingent upon a series of internal and external economic, political, and social factors. At the same time, there are some more pessimistic viewpoints, albeit in the minority, and a sense of uncertainty expressed not only by those who believe that the future is unpredictable, but also that perspectives for an optimistic future are in the long term.

The search for spirituality emerges for the first time as a significant aspect of the aspirations expressed by youth,[8] perhaps in response to the tensions experienced in society during a protracted crisis period. In addition to this, the perception that religion offers an opportunity for education, culture, and information has led some segments of youth to identify it as an avenue for social integration.

Aspects related to migration, both internal and external, are particularly relevant in terms of social integration, and indicate a strong desire for permanence among young people, not just in the country, but also in their specific place of residence. Of the youth interviewed, 4% reported emigration abroad as an aspiration; most of these were white males from the capital, who were self-employed. The motives behind this aspiration primarily related to finding better opportunities for an improved standard of living and personal development. Those who did not place

high value on the emigration option asserted that they were satisfied with their life in Cuba and with being Cuban, and had no desire to leave their place of origin and family ties. There was, however, more interest in short-term travel to see other countries, to get ahead, or for work-related reasons (mostly among students and professionals).

Besides these trends, other interviewees regarded emigration as something they had considered at one time or another, mainly for family or economic reasons; they had not discarded the idea entirely, but were waiting to see how circumstances evolved. The social image that today's young Cubans have of emigration abroad has become increasingly neutral and depoliticized, and it is accorded a certain amount of space in individual and groups strategies; this is particularly true of temporary migration.

YOUTH SELF-IMAGE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Another important characteristic of Cuban youth today is a strong sense of national identity and its association with historical, social, and political factors. Young Cubans are widely and rapidly able to define themselves and to maintain a positive self-image. The profusion of positive traits described can be grouped into seven categories, in order of importance based on the frequency with which they were mentioned: good character and attitude toward life; amiability, solidarity, and the ability to form good interpersonal relationships; courage; capacity for work, effort, sacrifice, and creativity; revolutionary, patriotic, and ethical principles; intelligence, ability, and education; and deep feelings and emotions.

Negative traits, while comparatively few in number (representing about one fifth of the characteristics described), span the spectrum of adjectives mainly alluding to arrogance and self-importance, informality and lack of responsibility, and lack of formal education (bad manners, rules of respect, courtesy, and civility); these are similar to traits reported in earlier periods. Nonetheless, some responses reflect more recent negative changes, such as "have become self-interested" or "have lost their Cubanness."

Traits characterizing the general population, youth as a social group, and individuals reveal a clear positive self-image, which is consistent over time and based essentially on good character traits and strong human and social values, such as solidarity, healthy interpersonal relations, and the ability to work and face problems with a sense of sacrifice and optimism. This is not to say that a critical assessment is absent (although there is less self-criticism),

which confirms other findings regarding the emergence of a more balanced and less apologetic Cuban self-image (de la Torre 2001). This is expressed in the coexistence of highly positive visions with certain negative features, including at the individual level. This expression of positive and negative traits does not imply antagonistic conflicts; polarized visions were rare (although they did emerge in terms of "workers–vagrants," "responsible–irresponsible," "reliable–unreliable," "aware–unaware"). Instead, positive and negative traits coexisted with a certain degree of harmony, for example "solidarity–showing off" or "intelligent–loudmouthed."

This is complemented by the fact that young people always find at least one reason to be proud of being Cuban. The greatest relevance was assigned to historical and political factors associated with courage, struggles for independence, capacity for resistance, dignity, and Cuba as an example for the world. In second place were mentions of the opportunities offered by the social system, particularly with respect to education and social tranquility, and in third place, the characteristics of the population. One segment of respondents did not identify specific reasons, but claimed to be proud of being from their country, proud that they had been born and lived there, in other words, proud of their nationality.

The generational self-image is consistent with the national image. It is particularly significant that the primary trait defining this self-image is the capacity of youth to confront and solve problems, to work, and to exert themselves, above and beyond those traits relating to good character that are attributed to the Cuban population as a whole.

Significantly, youth perceive more differences than similarities among themselves as a group in terms of social and cultural factors, values, behaviors, and economic and political considerations. These differences complicate the development of a solid and widely shared generational identity, even though a large segment mentions the presence of common traits associated with this age group that are conducive to similar tastes, interests, aspirations, and experiences. This explains why it is difficult to observe a sense of identification between youth belonging to different age subgroups. There is a particularly wide gap between those 25 to 30 years old and the rest, which calls into question the validity—and this dates back to the late eighties—of defining youth so broadly (Domínguez 1991).[9]

These disparities are intensified greatly when one considers the vastly different significance of living through the nineties—the economic crisis

and readjustment period—as a child, or at different stages of young adult-hood. This is corroborated by the fact that the 25 to 30-year-old subgroup stresses the differences between the today's youth (excluding itself from this assessment) and previous generations. They attribute to the former unfa-vorable connotations in areas such as moral values, character traits, culture and formal education, and political values, in that order. This indicates that this subgroup identifies with older age groups and is distanced from the youngest segments, thus reinforcing the hypothesis that a new generation (from the sociological standpoint) emerged in the nineties creating a frac-ture within the social group currently defined as youth.

All of the above, coupled with the recognition of significant differ-ences vis-à-vis youth in other countries and a highly positive, although not absolutist or apologetic, self-image bring interesting perspectives to the interpretation of generational identity among Cuban youth today as a relevant aspect of their subjective experience. A general reading of the subjective experience of youth must not overlook distinctions based on membership in different social groups. Unquestionably, social class and geographical location, in that order, are the two critical distinguishing factors, although there are other significant differences based on gender and age subgroup (particularly between the oldest segment and the rest, as already mentioned) in nearly all areas.

Conclusion

The unique evolution of events in Cuban society in the nineties, in my view, has influenced the subjective experience of today's youth in several major directions:

The rupture of close ties with the former Soviet Union and the rest of Eastern Europe has returned Cuba to a closer relationship with its Latin American context and compelled it to reinsert itself internationally through broadened contacts and interrelationships.

The goal of preserving a socioeconomic model as an alternative to capitalism, following the disappearance of "real socialism" as a reference point, has led to a deeper exploration of Cuba's own historical, national roots and to the modernization of its own social thinking.

Increased tensions with the U.S. government in the context of grow-ing pressure to force a change to a capitalist system have reinforced feel-ings of independence and sovereignty. The impact on the population's

economic, living, and working conditions has fueled contradictory behaviors that coexist in present-day society. On the one hand there is a spirit of resistance and survival under the most severe conditions that reinforces national cohesion and self-esteem; and on the other, there is a competitive spirit and search for alternatives that reinforce individualism and could change that self-image.

The economic situation, the social reorganization strategy, and some of the individual strategies adopted have led to the emergence of heretofore nonexistent social inequalities. This creates a certain heterogeneity in Cuban traits and perceptions that surely will influence national and generational identity. The process will interact with the main strengths and weaknesses of contemporary youth. Their strengths—advanced educational levels and high expectations—could have a galvanizing effect in the direction of a greater effort. The main weakness relates to a certain concentration of those expectations at the individual-family level, at the expense of the social level.

The generation of the nineties features greater structural heterogeneity than preceding generations, stemming from a certain reorganization of the class structure and the strengthening of certain territorial differences associated with the rhythm of economic recovery and the presence of an emergent sector. This has also led to increasing heterogeneity from the subjective standpoint, particularly in terms of social perceptions, expectations, and values, which is expressed in a broad spectrum of interests and in greater diversity with the attendant impact on identity development.

It is not possible to overlook the more global influences of the times, marked by increasing technological and direct human interaction. This has changed and informed today's youth by creating commonalities that transcend national borders. Such processes have contradictory effects in that they simultaneously accentuate fragmentation and facilitate integration within the generation. This in turn has an interesting impact on intergenerational dynamics. The common traits acquired during the socialization of today's young people in the social context that prevailed at a key moment in their formation as a generation, together with the largely similar influences they have experienced, have left their mark and distinguish this generation from previous ones. This has resulted in the integration of a youth identity that is more forcefully manifested than in the preceding decades.

Nonetheless, the diversifying effects of some of the economic reorganization measures, the increasing heterogeneity in cumulative life experiences, and the concentration of a segment of youth in the search for individual alternatives that preclude their participation in collective solutions create gaps among youth as a group that limit the formation of a widely shared generational identity.

In a general sense, there are signs of the emergence of a new generation of the nineties, concerned with what goals—individual and social— it can aspire to with any real hope of achieving them; goals that make it possible to strike a balance between expectations of personal fulfillment and social needs. This in turn requires greater clarification of the avenues available for achieving such a balance. This segment of young people is embarked on a quest and a process of adaptation unlike any faced by previous generations, albeit one that is ill defined and contains contradictory currents. It is a panorama in which the institutions involved in socialization do not have all the answers and one in which the long-standing values of Cuban national identity can be a valuable guidepost.

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NOTES

1. This sector, despite decreasing in the nineties by more than 300,000 people (10%) between the ages of 15 and 29, still accounts for 23% of the total population (ONE 2001).

2. These traits were identified in various studies conducted prior to and during the most intense years of the economic crisis, including Domínguez, Ferrer and Valdés (1990); Domínguez and Ferrer (1993); and De la Torre (2001), among others.

3. There were about 153,000 registered self–employed workers representing 4% of the working population, compared to barely 2% a decade before. The cooperative sector accounted for 8% to 9% of the working population at the end of the decade, compared to only 2% in 1987 (CEE 1987; ONE 2001, 142).

4. Urban unemployment was estimated at 7.7% for all of Latin America, although the rate in many countries was much higher (ECLAC 1997).

5. At the end of the eighties, girls and women accounted for 50.2% of total school enrolment in the country at all levels (ONE 1997). In the late eighties, 43% of university students were women (CEE 1987); this rose to 60% in the second half of the nineties and the start of the present decade (ONE 2001). This is a key area for analysis since it reflects changes in women's social roles and the opportunities for social insertion available to them. At the same time, however, it raises alarm

bells in terms of averting situations that would create disadvantages for other groups, in this case, university enrolment among young men.

6. Youth delegates to the Municipal and Provincial Assemblies of Popular Power.

Source: ANPP (2000).

	1976	1979	1981	1984	1987	1992	1995	1997
Total	11840	11795	11874	12340	14528	13865	–	15726
Youth	3491	2750	2412	2156	3167	2259	–	1914
%	29.5	23.3	20.3	17.5	21.8	16.3	15.6	12.2

7. The findings are compiled in Domínguez, Cristóbal, and Domínguez (2000, 2002).

8. This category of aspirations was not found in research conducted in the late eighties.

9. In Cuba, youth are considered people between 14 and 30 years of age and they are the beneficiaries of social policies targeting youth. Nonetheless, since the late eighties, studies have found significant differences in the older subgroup (25–30 years old) that move it closer to the adult group. This suggests that processes typically associated with youth are concentrated in the social group that the UN defines as youth, that is, people from 14 to 25 years of age.

TRANSNATIONALITY AND COMMUNITY: NEW MODES OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SURVIVAL

The Desirable and the Possible: Community Movements and Local Environmental Management in Cuba

ARMANDO FERNÁNDEZ SORIANO

F or the past decade, "the local level" has been regarded as the ideal venue for creating conditions to implement efficient public policies featuring a high degree of citizen participation. Nonetheless, as we approach the second half of the first decade of the 21st century, some experiences have shown that local is not always synonymous with efficient or participatory. The discussion that follows here illustrates the uneven evolution of the relationship among environmental management, local public policy, and centralization–decentralization processes in Cuba in recent years.

In the early nineties, the local level in Cuba became important for understanding and projecting over time the readjustment policies imposed by the Cuban economic crisis. This was due to internal imperatives for survival and to the international context of the time, which was marked by the disappearance of "real socialism" in Eastern Europe and the 1992 Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro. These two benchmarks reflected the economic and political preeminence of globalized capitalism on the one side and the will of the majority of nations on the planet to move toward a model of sustainable development on the other. And while the latter may not have been very clear conceptually it was, at least, a recognition of the impossibility of continuing to pursue the unfettered development models that had predominated up until that time. Following the Rio Summit, the task worldwide was to implement Agenda 21 to achieve sustainable development at the national level and this inevitably entailed the implantation of a "sustainable" vision at the local level. These perceptions were incorporated quickly into Cuban

political discourse and practice and, in the past five years, have become increasingly important in Cuban policy at all levels.

In terms of "sustainability,"[1] most policy formulations appear to define the local level as the small scale generally associated with municipalities.[2] Ecologically speaking, "local" is defined by natural rather than political or administrative boundaries; in other words, the ecological situation does not relate directly to the political, economic, or historical arenas but rather to the natural sphere that has been transformed, appropriated, and degraded by human activity. In the irrational logic of traditional development, the man-made is superimposed on, and propped up by, the environmental dimension. In more than a few instances, environmental spaces are transformed and appropriated to the point where the artificial overwhelms the natural.

The use of different spatial levels makes it possible to define the reference space in socioenvironmental terms. Obviously, the possibilities for correlation and analysis differ at the "macro" or nation-state level, the "meso" or regional level, and the "micro" or local level. Indeed, there are many variations within each level, including economics, politics, ecosystems, culture, and social demographics, and these create identities associated with each level. Likewise, there is the local in terms of political or municipal scale, the local sphere as defined by the Popular Councils,[3] and the local in the sense of the neighborhood.

In the following discussion, and specifically with regard to the community experiences examined, we leave aside a series of variables relating to scales or levels not present in the "neighborhood." This is particularly true of a concept relating to these dimensions and scales that is perhaps the most difficult to address: the importance of "time" and the disconnection between the different kinds of time present in a given reality. To mention just two examples of this, economic timing may not be in sync with natural rhythms, and political timing—decision-making—is often based on the "rationale" of political economics and fails to take into account natural rhythms for assimilating ecological changes and impacts.

Citizen participation typically relates to myriad aspects of everyday life in which the people are directly involved in decisions concerning a specific area of their lives. For our purposes, we focus on the part of the concept that is directly related to community environmental interests, understanding environmental in the broadest sense of the word as all the con-

ditions that contribute to improved quality of life in the context of a nonaggressive relationship with one's surroundings. It should be noted, however, that participation in Cuba emphasizes the relationship between the grass roots and superior political structures and does not facilitate horizontal relationships within the rich social fabric created by the revolutionary process over the past four decades.

Cuba's evolving legislative framework has consistently included environmental issues. The Cuban Constitution recognizes the right of citizens to live in a healthy environment and their duty to take care of the national ecological patrimony. The 1992 Environmental Law established a Framework Law under which every activity in the area of natural resource and environmental management must be regulated by sector-specific legislation. Successive laws have been enacted regulating such sectors as the mining industry, forests, water resources, tourism, and so on, and to a certain extent this has begun to fill what had previously been a legal vacuum. This legal framework, which regulates the most damaging economic activities, established the Environment Agency (AMA) as a specialized regulatory entity within the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment (CITMA). One can infer, then, that the necessary statutory mechanisms are in place for the effective control and management of the problems posed by economic development. The current challenge, however, lies in enforcing existing laws and educating local actors in order to ensure their implementation.

The 1992 Environmental Law stresses participation as an essential tool for the application and enforcement of sector-specific legislation. Therefore, the Environmental Commissions of the Municipal Assemblies of Popular Power must be apprised of and approve every project to be implemented in the territory. Nonetheless, this legal framework fails to place sufficient emphasis on the need to establish environmental education programs and activities targeting local citizens, and this oversight often leads to their resentment of legal actions. Cuban legislation also lacks a municipal law to regulate the skills and qualifications required at the municipal level in order to protect its environmental patrimony, which ultimately belongs to the entire nation.

There is a direct relationship from different angles between the neighborhoods and the municipalities and provinces, and this network is linked also to the different demands of, and emissions produced by, each com-

munity. These relations, which predate the emergence and development of the community movements and have been strengthened by them, have often been built outside of the formal relationships created for the country as a whole. However, from the environmental perspective, communities, like all social, economic, or other types of entities, are dependent on external energy sources; energy flows to them through different channels of infrastructure, some of which have been affected by the economic crisis and others by structural deficiencies. Environmental management, then, seeks to reduce the gaps between the "inputs" of services and energy and the "outputs" of waste products emitted by the territory.

INPUTS
Energy
The first type of input includes electricity and fuel. Because of the characteristics of the national energy system, which covers more than 90% of the territory, it has been necessary to create a rationing system in which services are periodically interrupted in order to ensure the functioning of essential economic sectors. Energy carriers such as refineries and distributors are also under government jurisdiction because of their industrial requirements. These energy sources (mainly derived from fossil fuels) have, like oil, been affected by world market prices. Shortages have led people in some areas to place additional pressure on other natural energy sources such as firewood. In the case of energy, it is difficult to find alternatives that meet the demands of the territories and their inhabitants, which, because of their particular characteristics will remain largely dependent on the central government's redistribution policies and national energy policy.

Food
The second type of input includes the food supply, whose structure and efficiency are in transition. The government continues to provide subsidies for certain basic products as well as to expand its own supply of products at prices that can compete with the growing private market. All of this has diversified the channels and alternatives for obtaining the basic food basket, which has become a virtual struggle for subsistence for perhaps over 20% of the low-income population. This, in turn, has also led to the emergence of both informal and illegal markets on the outskirts

of cities, altering the flow of food supplies and complicating attempts to analyze the situation.

It is also difficult to find alternatives with respect to food supply due to the diversity of market sectors (subsidized government, liberalized government, private/national currency, government/foreign exchange, and informal—in national and foreign currency) and, most importantly, because of the characteristics of the food supply chain. For example, in Havana City highly perishable products are frequently transported over 400 kilometers. Moreover, eleven provinces supply Havana City with tubers and roots, particularly potatoes, and some fruits are transported in small quantities from such remote territories as Niquero, Yara, and Santiago de Cuba, distances of over 800 kilometers (Interian and Pérez 1996, 203).

All of this speaks clearly to the need to find closer, more efficient food sources so as to minimize the number of links in the food supply chain.[4] In this sense, although Havana Province will continue to supply most agricultural products to the capital, all the provinces of the country and the Special Municipality of the Isle of Youth also supply the capital (Suárez 1996, 218). This complicates the political decision to achieve self-sufficiency in the provinces in most areas of agricultural consumption.

Given local characteristics, it is feasible to create public spaces for community self-management initiatives involving mechanisms for neighborhood solidarity in the marketing of food supplies (Calderón 1991, 136). Although local experiences based on neighborhood initiatives to meet food needs have spread throughout the country, they do not always relate to local society, and their ecological perspective, strength, and effectiveness in the community vary from place to place.

The case of Santa Fe is in many ways paradigmatic.[5] When the 1991 food crisis led to a national appeal for the creation of urban gardens, a group of neighbors and local activists started a collaborative and dialogue process that culminated in the founding of the first garden club there. Various factors converged to strengthen this movement. The first was the need to improve the basic food basket and respond to the government's appeal. The second was the presence of local leadership in the person of the president of the Popular Council and the emergence of a supporter in the person of the advisor to the Ministry of Agriculture. Activists from the horticultural movement in eight of the ten districts (*circunscrip-*

ciones) comprising the local Popular Council and the creation of seventeen garden clubs with two to four members each lent a social base to the experience that gradually expanded.

However, due to its early emergence and the inexperience of local leaders in negotiating with the various equally inexperienced authorities regarding the problems and demands emanating from the movement, the Santa Fe experience ultimately failed. Nonetheless, throughout the rest of the decade, and particularly in recent years, the movement to create productive plots and gardens has become increasingly important in Havana City. Besides helping to meet the fresh produce needs of some city neighborhoods, they invigorate local economies by providing products at a much lower cost, due to proximity to the place of production, and sometimes, to the custom of setting prices at neighborhood solidarity rates.

Materials and Technologies

Another input at the neighborhood level has to do with items essential for individual and family life, ranging from construction materials for building homes—or repairing homes in a deteriorated state—to useful technologies. There have been both abortive and successful attempts in this area. In the former category is the Integral Transformation Workshop in Atarés. This microworkshop for technologically appropriate construction materials featuring reduced production factors, including energy inputs, was an attempt to respond to the need for construction materials by recycling aggregates salvaged from structural collapses and demolitions in the neighborhood. It should have been able to meet some of the most pressing needs for certain materials such as blocks, tiles, plumbing pipes, and so forth. The experiment was thwarted by the bureaucratic approach to construction management, which did not allow the small workshop to establish itself as an adjunct to the Atarés project.

In the latter category is a governmental, multisectorial, and intersectorial project for construction and social development in Condado Sur. It was founded in 1990 by the Municipal Assembly of Popular Power of Santa Clara with the explicit objective of changing the lifestyle and living conditions in this unhealthy, underprivileged neighborhood in the capital of Villa Clara province. It is included as a construction project in the development plans of the Office of Architecture and Urban Development (DAU) and today is considered a priority for the municipality and the

province. Significant progress has been made: 140 houses have been built, preserved, or repaired; a water delivery system has been installed throughout the community and a sewage system in part of it; the main roads and sidewalks have been built; and the entire neighborhood has electricity. Several public works were also completed, such as a primary school, a clinic for the family doctor, a police office, an agricultural market, and a community multipurpose center.

Health Service

Another neighborhood input ia health service. It functions efficiently, due to national public policy, and represents a remarkable source of mobilization and participation. Community health and disease prevention are the cornerstone of national health programs, which significantly influence the local environment in terms of public health and improved quality of life. Indeed, the establishment of the national Family Doctor Program has functioned as a cohesive and influential component of some community projects.[6] Once again, Condado Sur has shown success in this area: health indicators have been exceptional, with a maternal and infant mortality rate of 0, an overall mortality rate of 3.5%, and the elimination five years ago of teenage pregnancy (involving minors).

Incorporation of Environmental Education and Practices

The Condado Sur project also involves a long-absent input of utmost importance in participatory processes associated with environmental issues: environmental education. The National Environmental Education Strategy[7] established in 1997, includes technical support and advisory services for such community actions. Nonetheless, this government program has been largely ineffective and is currently under review. Few community-based entities and projects have incorporated the strategy, which points to the need to review the effectiveness of government–civil society cooperation efforts at these different levels in order to achieve greater synergy between the two sides.

Recent construction and social development have been limited by shortages of essential material resources. Community leaders have sought funding from various agencies that support local initiatives, such as OXFAM-UK. In this context, the project's collective leadership has decided, following a public consultation process, to start with the eco-

logical revival of urban spaces that had been transformed in the early days of the urbanization process. To this end, a community garden has been designed, as has a garden of medicinal plants connected to the family doctor clinic. A collective planning process has been conducted for what will become the "green lungs" of the neighborhood, the restoration of green zones along the streets, such as the Avenue of Mangos, and the ceiba tree park, which receives the offerings of Regla Osha-Ifá (Santería) believers. In addition, an environmental education program has been established that is strongly rooted in neighborhood perceptions and needs. This is an important step from the socioecological and quality-of-life perspective, since it involves the local population in environmental education while recovering green zones that are the habitats of native species that had been adversely affected by years of urban expansion in the area.

Local environmental management remains a challenge par excellence. Various cultural, economic, political, and social factors converge to make this one of the most contentious aspects of community projects, especially as the local economy remains precarious. Management processes continue to attempt to incorporate more environmentally friendly actions. The use of home gardens in the urban agricultural model, particularly the introduction of organic gardening methods and practices constitutes a unique experiment that has created many useful opportunities.

OUTPUTS
Waste Products

The management of outputs emitted by the communities is not really addressed in public policy. Environmental health engineering is a core problem in many neighborhoods, and sewage systems and household waste treatment represent major challenges to local management. As is the case in most of the more developed and densely populated urban areas in Havana City, the solution to this problem has proved elusive despite the efforts and international funding invested. Septic waste is commonly emptied into the street and the sewage system dating only to the end of the last century or the beginning of this one is already incapable of handling the volume of waste produced by neighborhood crowding and deteriorated buildings.

The water delivery and sewage system is deficient in Atarés, as it is in many areas of the city, and this exacerbates health conditions in the

neighborhood. In addition, most of the buildings throughout this area are in extremely poor condition; collapses are common during the rainy season and this means that many families live in precarious circumstances and must be sheltered elsewhere to avoid accidents and loss of life. Condado Sur, however, has adopted an initiative in which no residence can be built unless it has sewage, draining, and water delivery services. This has reduced the incidence of the abovementioned problems and offers an example of how collective action can complement public policy. Building consensus among neighbors is extremely important, so they can decide together to avoid partial solutions to comprehensive problems that might later turn into environmental risks for the population and the neighborhood.

The experience in Santa Fe also pointed to a potential solution for solid and organic waste management featuring the use of urban agriculture. One of the short-term outcomes of the horticultural movement was the clean up of vacant urban lots, where large amounts of solid wasted were deposited, and turning them into productive garden plots. However, in most neighborhoods, such areas remain a principal source of pollution. In Condado Sur, this problem has been addressed through a rudimentary but effective system to remove waste in carts drawn by animals. Such solutions in Atarés might produce short-term results, but a durable sanitation system will be needed to ensure effective waste management. A viable alternative such as recycling, which would reduce by a large percentage the volume of waste produced, requires concrete, feasible proposals and, most importantly, ongoing community participation and oversight.

The Labor Force

Another relevant output at the local level is associated with the labor force. In the current national context, the neighborhood is the main venue for critical commercial, social, and political transactions that ensure the perpetuation of the labor force, and it is the place to which many citizens turn to build their survival networks in hard times. The neighborhood is also the main arena where the deterioration of the labor force occurs and where unemployment manifests in social breakdown, and cultural and family erosion. In other words, the social and environmental impacts of productive relationships and the expansion or contraction of labor markets play out at the neighborhood level.

Community Development: Problems and Recommendations from a Case Study

With regard to the problems caused by Cuba's centralized urban planning model, local community development could function not only as a source for participation, but for shared responsibility among social and political actors in the area of sustainable development. In this sense, experts, politicians, and the population must have a comprehensive understanding of urban issues; and a more integral vision of the social and environmental characteristics of each place from a material and cultural perspective is essential for designing appropriate policies and programs in the territories. In this regard, one of the factors of change that has influenced developments in recent years has clearly been urban transformation and the expansion of human frontiers throughout the national territory.[8]

A case in point is a study done in the early nineties, which examined the urban community of Santiago de Cuba.[9] The city itself was identified as the primary unit of analysis, understood as a constructed ecosystem encompassing several smaller ecosystems, such as neighborhoods. It is emblematic in this case that the political-administrative divisions of Popular Councils were not taken into account, since the ecosystem approach facilitated understanding the relationships and flows among the parties, their autonomy, and their interdependence. The city had grown mainly in terms of single family homes built using local labor; the quality of the construction was poor. "Unhealthy" neighborhoods, unplanned and lacking legal status, proliferated. This created the potential for conflicts between municipal and provincial governments and local residents. The historic district was divided and subdivided into overcrowded rooming houses and lodgings in a deteriorated, barely inhabitable state.

The study looked at a number of factors including limitations on the ability of experts/technical personnel to understand and address the needs of the population. They also examined the creative and problem-solving capacity of urban communities, and the political objective of fostering a sense of ownership in different neighborhoods where deteriorated physical conditions had led to disorder and lack of identification with the urban habitat. The study exposed the need to create a vision of "the city" among policymakers and residents and to establish urban

architectural standards that could address the problems as well as their underlying economic and social causes. It pointed to the need for oversight of project management and implementation to improve order and efficiency, for greater grass-roots participation in urban processes, and for increased capacity for local urban environmental management. Particular emphasis was placed on the local vision complementing the national and provincial vision, as an option for tackling these problems within a general framework of decentralization. This meant scaling the task of renovation and urban growth to the neighborhood level.

In this context, a key role was assigned to constructed ecosystems as part of neighborhood identity to improve the effectiveness of future policy planning. Unfortunately, although the study was disseminated among city policymakers, its recommendations to galvanize local participation in such experiences were ignored, resulting in poor public policy with little impact on local actors and vice versa.

COMMON FEATURES IN THREE COMMUNITIES

Local microeconomic structures are fragile or nonexistent. Most of the established economic entities in any neighborhood come from outside the neighborhood, or the actions and logic that define their existence lack direct local ties. As a result, the population does not recognize these actors in internal community matters and generally views them as having nothing to do with life in the territories. In this sense, only two activities break with this model: the local health services and family doctor in Condado Sur and Atarés, and the social construction microbrigade in Condado Sur.

The neighborhood as a socioenvironmental entity consumes external economic and energy resources. The neighborhood exerts pressure on and consumes, in one way or another, the natural resources upon which it is built; in other words the urban transformation of the soil disturbs the preexisting natural order and rules of interaction, creating a new dynamic in which the artificial-constructed prevails over the natural-ecosystemic. In this regard, the cases mentioned here present a graduated example of the problem.

Santa Fe is somewhat semirural. Its rhythm of relating to its land and water environment and its perception of the importance of these natural spaces in the community's leisure activities have created a local attitude of caring for its surroundings, in which a sense of ownership plays a tangible psychosocial role.

Condado Sur has proposed the comprehensive transformation of its physical–environmental and social conditions, but rural values are still observed in the relationship between the population and its surroundings. Examples of this are gardens in interior courtyards, the residents desire to grow small gardens on neighborhood lots, the use of medicinal plants (which is also common in Santa Fe), and so on. In this sense, the economic, social, and cultural value placed on the neighborhood and the natural environment is growing as part of a new civic paradigm. A plan is underway to recover green spaces in the neighborhood by channeling the Bélico Creek into some of the backyard gardens in an ecological and cultural project to reactivate and integrate nature into the neighborhood.

Due to the urban structure and characteristics of the population in Atarés, it is more difficult to find families that share this particular view. Construction in public areas (formal and informal) is closely related to the street as an open urban space and more recently to the community center because of the activities that take place there. This city culture means that an urban vision of construction takes precedence over coexistence with green zones. Moreover, because of the urgent need to solve the housing problems, citizen priorities in the neighborhood are focused on consolidating a family home at the expense of other projects.

Cultural relations frequently are characterized by a pendulum swing from concertatión-*inclusion to* expulsión-*exclusion.* Elements such as Afro-Cuban cultural expressions and their powerful religious substrata are expressed symbolically in different ways in the three cases. In Santa Fe such expressions are socially concealed, and while practitioners profess their beliefs publicly, they prefer to commune with their deities in open spaces outside of the immediate area. Such cultural expressions are more public in Condado Sur. They can be found in places such as crossroads with ceiba trees, which are considered sacred in Afro-Cuban religions, and even in the recognition of a local santera as a neighborhood leader, a person of high social standing in the community. In Atarés, the Afro-Cuban religious component is extremely powerful. The presence of several priests of Regla Osha–Ifá or Santería and the widespread religiousness of the local inhabitants intimately link cultural and religious expressions to the daily life of the neighborhood. Residents freely express their religious beliefs publicly and celebrate and display it to the extent that the entire system of social hierarchies is plainly visible.

However, all of these expressions, which originated in rural areas and were strongly associated with the natural environment, have been transformed. An emblematic example is the ceiba tree. It is hard to find one in the constructed urban area of Santa Fe. It is frequently found on street corners and in yards in Condado Sur. In Atarés, however, one may find only a tall thin sapling reaching up to the sun from a planter on the narrow patio of a local santero.

The neighborhoods are experiencing the generalized environmental degradation common to other communities. The weakening and transformation of productive capacity provoked by the economic adjustment processes applied at the national level play out in the neighborhoods in diverse ways. This is particularly the case with the deterioration of human capital caused by productive processes from outside the neighborhood and involving the exploitation of the work force. Put another way, productive relationships and the mobility of labor markets increasingly transfer their social and environmental symptoms to the neighborhood, with the attendant impact on local culture, the family, and of course, the individual.

The segmentation and sectorialization of what should be perceived as a local environment hinders local collective or joint action. In other words, the fragmented vision of problems with community services, health, environmental education, and so on impedes a more global, multisectorial vision of community environment.

There is a national deficiency in the area of environmental education. This relates to the various levels and actors operating in the territories and to the population in general. It is difficult to find people in the neighborhoods and even within the leadership of their movements who possess a clear vision of the importance of environmental education.[10] Nonetheless at the time the data were collected there appeared to be a consensus among community movements that although this was one of the most complicated activities to undertake, it was one that was essential to the success of their movements.

CONCLUSION

In Condado Sur, experiments with building houses using fewer materials could serve as innovative proposals for other areas. Expanding this approach to activities relating to environmental recovery and improved quality of life at the neighborhood level based on concepts of participa-

tory planning and community action is an experience worth keeping an eye on in the future, albeit one that is not immune from tensions. In Atarés, the establishment of a crafts workshop as an offshoot of the women's self-esteem workshop and the reactivation of the microwork-shop for producing construction materials using low consumption methods are on the agenda of local activists and residents; they could produce fruitful economic and environmental outcomes. Each one of these activities clearly will create new spaces for relationships and conflicts among local actors, and between local and external actors, but they will undoubtedly be motivating experiences for those movements.

As a social project, Condado Sur is the provincial and national benchmark for neighborhood rehabilitation through housing construction and other physical transformations. Social indicators there have shown a 2.5% drop in unemployment and educational levels have been enhanced through adult education programs and reinforced teacher training at the primary school level. Social and political actors at the municipal and provincial levels consistently have facilitated the work of local actors and fostered neighborhood human resources development in such important areas as culture, sßports, health, education, crime prevention, and environmental education. One of the principle benefits of the Condado Sur project derives from the strong levels of participation it has engendered. The population has moved from being a passive entity to playing an active role in transforming its living environment. This aspect—often absent from technocratic, assistentialist approaches—has been critical to the success of the project and facilitated the design of an action plan based on community participation that will lead to a lasting process of deepening local identity and improving the quality of life.

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NOTES

1. "Sustainability" is the word used in official Cuban legal and political discourse.

2. The current political-administrative division in Cuba is based on municipalities and provinces. However, the former have been subdivided operationally into Popular Councils. This hierarchy often takes into account cultural variables, such as the boundaries of old neighborhoods, which in turn strengthens the sense of ownership among residents and facilitates public management by creating a more "manageable" scale for implementing public policy in the territory.

3. In the early nineties, this new level was created within the local government structure, midway between the smallest district, or *circunscripción*, and the municipal government. In fact, this level has given the Cuban political system a very useful tool in the government-civil society relationship by fostering more active citizen participation in various ways.

4. In a study conducted in 1990, six different types of government supply chains were found (Suárez 1990).

5. Santa Fe is an old northwest neighborhood dating back to the 18th century; it became part of Havana City in the late 1940s.

6. The Family Doctor Program is one of the most interesting health policy initiatives in Cuba. Briefly, a medical clinic covered by a doctor and a nurse is responsible for a certain number of families (120–200 in less populated areas). In addition to handling primary health care services and functioning as the first link in the area of family and community health, the family doctor frequently has become a social promoter in the community as well as a political figure.

7. The National Environmental Education Strategy is an ambitious program involving systematic work with different social sectors from children to the elderly, from manual laborers to scientists, from everyday citizens to government officials. It was developed by various specialized entities within the Ministry of Science, Technology, and the Environment, which conducted a national consultation with public agencies and civil society to gather opinions regarding the project. The program's lead agency is the Center for Environmental Information, Management, and Education (Centro de Información, Gestión y Educación Ambiental—CIGEA) under the Ministry of Science, Technology, and the Environment.

8. Here I am referring to development processes over the past decade including the urban transformation of "unhealthy neighborhoods," the emergence of other such

spaces due to internal migration, and the construction of hotel infrastructure in priority areas, primarily coastal, for tourism.

9. The study was the result of collaboration between the Sociology Department of the Universidad de Oriente, the City Integral Development Group and City Planning experts (neighborhoods Van Van and San Pedrito).

10. For example, in Atarés the team of the Integral Transformation Workshop, and particularly its director, were the most aware of the problem. In Condado Sur, the family doctor had a unique and acute sense of the problem, as did other local leaders and cultural activists in the neighborhood. In Santa Fe environmental awareness was more widespread given the types of activities the population was engaged in and thanks to the work of the movement's promoter, the agricultural engineer in charge of the Agricultural Veterinary Clinic.

The Cuban-American Political Machine: Reflections on its Origins and Perpetuation*

ALEJANDRO PORTES

ORIGINS AND PARADOXES OF CUBAN–AMERICAN POLITICAL POWER

> *In order to appraise Miami's present-day development, it would be convenient to address ourselves to that city in 1959. By keeping the definition as simple as possible, we could say that Miami was a typical southern city, with an important sector of retirees and veterans, whose only interest was the exploitation of tourism during Miami's warm winter months. . . . The growth achieved by Miami constitutes a factor that has no precedent in the history of this nation. That growth occurred within what has been called "The Great Cuban Miracle." Because of this, I believe that those who left the island beginning in 1959 and those who recently arrived with the same faith and hope must feel proud not only of what they achieved for themselves, but also of what they have accomplished for the entire community. (Botifoll 1988, 3, 10)*

These remarks, written almost twenty years ago by one of the most prominent members of Miami's Cuban establishment, were part of the response of Cuban exiles in that city to attempts made by the native Anglo population and its leaders to deal with the newcomers and, as it were, "show them their place" in America's ethnic hierar-

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chy. During the Mariel exodus of 1980, the *Miami Herald*, arguably the principal institution of the old Anglo establishment, led a vigorous campaign to remove the new arrivals from the city. After the end of the exodus, a rapid grass-roots mobilization led to an overwhelming vote against the public use of Spanish: "My parents were immigrants and had to learn English promptly; Cubans should do likewise" proclaimed one of the organizers of the anti-Spanish referendum (Portes and Stepick 1993, 38).

Although denounced as an increasingly undesirable foreign element, the Cuban exiles did not respond with the usual complaints of racism and discrimination; instead they laid claim to the city. Miami before them had been an insignificant, southern tourist town. The commercial and financial emporium that had suddenly emerged at the tip of Florida was entirely their creation, part of "The Great Cuban Miracle." These were the years in which the Cuban American National Foundation was created under the leadership of Jorge Mas Canosa. They were also the years in which detailed plans were laid out for the achievement of local political power.

"The anti-bilingual referendum was a slap in our face," said a Cuban American local government official in 1981. "People began to feel more Cuban than anyone." Political organization at that time was embryonic and plans for redress were relatively modest—"to elect a Cuban mayor of the city and perhaps one or two state legislators" (Portes and Stepick 1993, 35). By the mid-eighties, these goals had been amply fulfilled: the mayors of Miami, Hialeah, West Miami, and several smaller municipalities were Cuban-born, and there were ten Cuban Americans in the state legislature. The momentum toward political hegemony kept growing. By the early nineties, Miami Cubans sent two of their own, Lincoln Díaz-Balart and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, to Washington as Republican congresspersons. They were repeatedly re-elected throughout the decade without credible opposition.

A study by a liberal think tank, the Center for Public Integrity in Washington, DC, ruefully concluded that the Cuban American National Foundation was the most effective ethnic lobbying organization in Washington, surpassing even the pro-Israeli lobby which it had originally imitated. The report noted the conservative lobby's "potent, sometimes fearsome" role in shaping U.S.-Cuba policy and criticized Mas Canosa's access to Washington power brokers as "inordinate," noting that "most foundation heads don't meet with presidents and secretaries of state in every administration" (*Miami Herald*, 24 January 1997, 1a, 15a).

What had happened? The local Miami Anglo establishment, accustomed as it was to dealing with impoverished racial minorities, thought that it could deal easily with the seemingly penniless exiles. The ethnic hierarchy of a self-respecting southern city would be promptly restored. They never knew what hit them. For the Cubans were not just another ethnic minority, but the displaced elites of their former country with considerable resources of education, organizational skills, and entrepreneurship. Between 1960 and 1980, thousands of small, medium, and even large firms were created by the former exiles. Although their political goals centered on the prompt overthrow of the communist regime on the island, their economic energies focused on recuperating their positions of privilege. Solidary and resourceful, they supported each other with subsidized credit and information and patronized each other as customers. For two decades the Cuban enclave economy of Miami never ceased growing.

Policies designed to retain the hegemony of the dominant group in any community inevitably trigger reactive mobilizations by the excluded. For the most part, these mobilizations are ineffective because of lack of resources. Events in Miami moved along a very different path. When the former exiles turned their attention from the political situation in Cuba to that in their adopted country, they brought to the confrontation serious wealth and organizational knowledge. Their mobilization rapidly put the old Miami political establishment on the defensive and then routed it. Consequences of the Cubans' political victory have lasted to our day.

In many ways and with varying undertones of celebration or lament, this story has been told before (Didion 1987; Rieff 1987; Grenier and Stepick 1992). Less explored have been the reasons for the perpetuation of the new order that emerged in South Florida in the early and mid-eighties. The Cuban American elites not only achieved political control of their city, but they proceeded to consolidate it during the next two decades eliminating, sometimes with an iron hand, all traces of opposition. This situation gave rise to three paradoxes:

- Immigrants, especially the ones who are economically successful and have been in the host country for many years, usually tend to integrate into society's mainstream. Despite their success and their four decades in the United States, Cubans remain apart, having created a distinct political economy in South Florida. This is the *assimilation paradox*.

• Collective attitudes change, especially when subject to strong exter-
nal influences. The political outlook of the Miami Cuban establish-
ment is widely regarded as extreme and as out of touch with post–
Cold War realities. The strident ways in which that outlook has been
put forth on repeated occasions made it unpopular, not only in Latin
America but in the United States as well. Public opinion surveys
consistently place Cubans as one of the least liked groups by the rest
of the U.S. population. This is the *intransigence paradox*.

• Cuban American leaders are well aware that by pursuing their mili-
tant agenda, they provide the Cuban government with an invaluable
symbolic resource. Experts on the island nation have repeatedly
argued that the main claim of legitimacy left to Castro's government
and one of the major reasons for its continuing existence lies in its
credible claim of embodying nationalist opposition against U.S.
aggression. Thus, the more Cuban Americans promote U.S. policies
hostile to Cuba, the more they contribute to buttressing a regime
grounded on the defense of national sovereignty (Dominguez 2003;
Dominguez 1993; Eckstein 1994). This is the *legitimacy paradox*.

In the remainder of this chapter, I explore the reasons for these para-
doxical outcomes and the social and institutional mechanisms that have
supported their continuation over an extended period.

WHY DO THEY DO IT? THE RATIONALE
FOR POLITICAL EXTREMISM

For many years, the standard explanation for the anomalous situation in
South Florida was the radical character of the Cuban Revolution and the
wounds that it inflicted on its many victims. Tens of thousands of people
lost their properties without compensation and thousands were imprisoned
under harsh conditions; hundreds more lost their lives before firing squads.
The victims and their families could not but harbor a relentless hostility
toward the Cuban Communist regime and an unquenchable thirst to see
it pay for its deeds. This is also the usual explanation advanced by the exiles
themselves for actions that the outside world sees as political lunacy. A
Cuban American businessman explained the militant protests orchestrated
against the presence in Miami of Cuban artists in this fashion:

> *When so many persons have been affected by communism, when so many had to abandon the land where they were born, when people could not visit the cemeteries where their loved ones rest, we do have to protest this kind of thing. Why not? Why do they have to impose on us such a painful thing? A person who has not suffered, who has not had relatives killed, can say coolly that there must be freedom of expression. We know better. It is too hard that they come here, to our center, to tell us these things. (Portes and Stepick 1993, 138).*

There is little doubt that the experiences of loss in their home country have been a powerful motivating force but, by themselves, they represent an insufficient explanation for the tenacity and resilience of Cuban exile ideology. The traumatic events so vividly described by our informant are, for most Cuban Americans, a distant memory. A growing number of the people who actually experienced them have now died. Their denunciations are now ritualistically repeated by younger Cuban Americans who never lived in Cuba and never suffered these traumas. Currently, more than half of the Cuban population of Miami is composed of refugees who came after 1979 and their offspring. Contrary to the exiles of the sixties, these newer arrivals grew up and were educated under the revolution, they did not have any properties confiscated, and in most cases, they came for economic reasons and not because of militant opposition to the regime (Eckstein and Barberia 2001).

The perpetuation of the discourse and practice of intransigence is better explained by the confluence of two other forces: first, the consolidation of unanticipated economic and political interests; second the cumulative consequences of past events on cultural practice.

Emergent Interests

The successful mobilizations against local Anglo hegemony had a significant consequence, namely the gradual devolution of political power within the U.S. electoral system to the former exiles. Cuban American entrepreneurs made the economic contributions that enabled newly minted politicians to win local elections, mainly by mobilizing the Cuban American vote. It was relatively easy to persuade the mass of Cubans concentrated in Miami to gain U.S. citizenship and register to vote. First, the option of returning to Cuba was blocked, leading to cit-

izenship acquisition as part of the process of long-term settlement.[1] Second, this was already a politically mobilized population; the only requirement was to alter somewhat the direction of this mobilization— from protesting against Castro in the streets to voting in local elections.

With this block of voters solidly behind them, Cuban Americans could successfully challenge the incumbents, first for municipal office, then for the state legislature, and finally for the U.S. Congress. Once elected, Cuban American politicians rapidly discovered two important facts: first, the considerable gains in status and influence accruing to them by virtue of their office; second, the debts that they had to pay to the businessmen who had contributed to their successful campaigns. Thereafter, Cuban firms in South Florida started to flourish, going from servicing a purely ethnic market to becoming purveyors of goods and services to the mainstream population and to the state. Cuban American firms laid cable for the local telephone companies, paved Dade County's roads, and built many of the new housing developments.

It helped that the city and county officials who handed out the contracts and the building inspectors who supervised the housing developments were fellow exiles or employees under the control of elected Cuban American officials. Church and Tower, the company founded by Jorge Mas Canosa, became one of the most important Dade County contractors. The Latin Builders Association, grouping all Cuban developers in the county, emerged as one of the most powerful local political lobbies. In time, the contours of what Logan and Molotch (1987) call an "urban growth machine" emerged in South Florida, in this instance with a strong Latin undertone.

The basic dynamics of this machine are easy to understand: Cuban American entrepreneurs contributed to the campaigns of Cuban American politicians who, once in office, reciprocated the favor. The Cuban American National Foundation, founded in 1981, became the core of this exchange network, ensuring its smooth operation and the strategic targeting of the Cubans' political contributions. In time, not only Cuban American politicians but mainstream U.S. political figures, such as senators Jesse Helms of North Carolina and Robert Torricelli of New Jersey, became beneficiaries of the former exiles' largesse.

Cubans in Miami discovered that they were doing well by doing good. Their mobilization against local Anglo attempts to reduce them to

the status of another ethnic minority had succeeded beyond all expectations, putting them in control of the levers of local power. That situation, in turn, catapulted politicians and entrepreneurs alike into positions of prominence until the former exiles became *the* power structure in Miami. The unique growth machine that they created was not, however, without its failings. Many exiles, now in office, seemingly believed that they had been elected in Cuba, not in the United States, and that they could behave accordingly. In time, they found themselves behind bars or forced to resign.

The popular mayor of Hialeah, Raul Martínez, was indicted repeatedly by federal authorities, a fact that did not prevent his subsequent re-election. The flamboyant Sergio Pereira was forced to resign in disgrace as Dade County manager. So did Xavier Juarez**,** a Harvard-trained lawyer and presumed exemplar of a "new" generation of Cuban politicians after his election as Miami mayor in 1997 proved fraudulent. Even the respected Cesar Odio, for many years the city administrator, lost his job and went to jail on charges of malfeasance. There were so many rigged elections, so much influence peddling and plain stealing of public funds that the Federal Bureau of Investigation had to appoint a special task force for South Florida. At some point, the near bankrupt city of Miami was placed under the direct control of the State of Florida. Federal district attorney, Janet Reno, had her hands full in the late eighties teaching the upstart émigré politicians that Miami was still in the United States and was no banana republic (Portes and Stepick 1993, ch. 6; García 1996).

By fits and starts, the scandals subsided during the nineties. The change was due, at least in part, to the learning curve among Cuban political figures hit by so many fines, loss of office, and jail terms. But despite all the setbacks, the political machine created by the former exiles never lost its grip and never ceased to consolidate its position. At the core of this resilience was the remarkable solidity of its electoral base. Cuban American voters continued to line up at the polls in high numbers and to vote monolithically for their own, sometimes disregarding the candidate's past offenses and jail terms.

That asset insured a near monopoly of elected offices in areas where Cubans constitute a plurality. The behavior of the mass of Cuban voters did not reflect mere ethnic solidarity; instead, it was a direct consequence of an ideology of anticommunism and implacable opposition to the

Castro government. In a real sense, a vote cast in Miami was not a vote for a co-ethnic candidate, but a vote against Castro (Rieff 1987, ch. 12; Allman 1987, ch. 16; Pérez 1992). Electoral platforms, even for such modest offices as the local school board, had to be carefully tailored to fit this outlook. Conversely, any candidate, Cuban or not, who dared to express some doubts about the righteousness of this position signed his/her own political death warrant, at least in the Cuban precincts. "Soft on communism," the old ladies would say on their way to the voting booth, and that fact alone would decide their choice.

This frame of mind explains why Cuban American politicians have been repeatedly elected without opposition. In particular, the two U.S. representatives, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Lincoln Díaz-Balart, have not been sent to Washington in defense of mundane local interests but as ambassadors of a national mission. They are, in the minds of Little Havana voters, the voices of the oppressed Cuban nation and the instruments for its redemption. To the extent that Ros-Lehtinen and Díaz-Balart continue to don the mantle of implacable enemies of Fidel Castro, their re-election is assured.

More than personal experiences of victimization, it is this concatenation of events that explains the resilience of the Cuban American machine. The beneficiaries, politicians and entrepreneurs alike, have developed strong vested interests in the continuation of their positions of privilege. To do so, however, they need to keep the electorate in a state of permanent mobilization against the regime on the island. It is this sacred mission—"to free our country from communism"—that translates into votes in Miami. The votes, in turn, translate into powerful offices in Tallahassee and Washington and into profitable contracts for local entrepreneurs.

The underpinnings of this machine also explain the peculiar situation of entrapment in which some of its members find themselves. Cuban American politicians who begin to doubt the wisdom of the ideology of intransigence or who become aware of how negatively it bears on the public image of their community must keep silent, for to weaken the fervor of the masses is also to jeopardize their own positions. For the same reason, anyone voicing doubts about the reigning ideology or finding some merit in the policies of the Cuban regime is cast aside and barred entry into the charmed inner circle of the machine.

Cumulative Causation

Many processes in social life build upon themselves. In such instances, events in the present are determined by similar events in the past and spiral up or down in a cumulative sequence. Examples include individual unemployment, where long spells without a job significantly increase the chances of remaining without one in the future. Market rallies and stampedes are collective examples, where the behavior of certain actors triggers a mass response (see Coleman 1991; Granovetter 1974).

One of the key characteristics of cumulative causation is that it progressively eliminates other options, funneling future actions along a narrower path than was possible at the start. Thus, once a person has been convicted of a crime and labeled a social deviant, it becomes difficult for him/her to return to normal life because the actions of others in the immediate environment tend to reinforce the original label and, hence, exclude him/her from a range of opportunities. Similarly, a government that becomes known as unreliable in handling its finances will find the doors of international lenders closed, further aggravating its economic situation and leading, in turn, to a new round of unorthodox measures. "Vicious circles" is the name given in popular parlance to such processes (Becker 1963; Coleman 1994; Merton 1968).

Along with the consolidation of political and economic interests requiring continuous popular mobilization, the perpetuation of the Cuban American machine is also due to a cumulative causation process. It was not inevitable that the cognitive framework that came to dominate the exile community would be right-wing extremism. Other, more moderate ideologies competed for favor in the early years of this community. The reasons for their demise have been examined in detail elsewhere (Portes and Stepick 1993, ch. 6). The key point is that, once the ideology of intransigence became dominant, it fed on itself closing down other options and narrowing with the passage of time.

This narrowing of options has two main manifestations. The first is cognitive, leading to an unnuanced outlook on the world. Second-generation politicians, born and bred in Miami and who have never been to Cuba, repeat without hesitation the same fervent anticommunist mantras and the same calls to arms learned from their elders. They do this, in part, because of political expediency, but there is also an element of genuine conviction. The ideology of intransigence has deprived them of any alter-

native lens through which to interpret the Cuban revolutionary process or understand the actions of its leaders.

The second consequence is more tangible. Built around this ideology, there developed over time a behavioral repertoire that became habitual and necessary. To be part of the community, to be a true "Miami Cuban," it does not suffice to have been born on the island and left because of political persecution. It is also necessary to engage in a series of expected behaviors, ranging from supporting right-wing candidates to opposing publicly and loudly anyone voicing sympathies for the Cuban regime. This frame of mind also explains why many aged exiles, who are able and would dearly love, under other circumstances, to visit the island, refrain from doing so. "My social class doesn't travel to Cuba. Jorge Mas Canosa is a saint. We won't break ranks," an elderly exile told Susan Eckstein in the course of her study of the Cuban community (Eckstein and Barberia 2001, 15).

The same study reports the case of Josefina, an elderly Cuban woman living in New Jersey who actually went back. She decided to do so because of an 81-year-old sister whom, she feared, she would never see again. Her husband did not accompany her. "I won't visit, I won't return," he explained. Josefina met her sister, made a peace of sorts with a niece who remained a committed revolutionary, and declared upon return: "It was like Beirut. A country filled with misery and destruction." When her trip drew to a close, Josefina knew that "this was goodbye. I vowed never to return again while Fidel is in power" (Eckstein and Barberia 2001, 19).

Eckstein and her collaborator Lorena Barberia found the "Beirut theme" repeated again and again by older exiles who had dared to break the injunction against travel. That their views of "a country filled with destruction" are conditioned by their own community's ideology is made clear by the fact that younger Cuban Americans living outside of Miami and who have visited the island never dwell on this theme. Indeed, many report quite a different impression:

I was blown away on my first visit. I grew up thinking that Cuba was like Eastern Europe—gray and fearful. But I found it gorgeous. People have a hard time, but they also have a sense of life. . . . I cried every night because it was the first time I felt at home. There were Cubans talking with their hands! And I knew their accent! (Eckstein and Barberia 2001, 19–20).

The inertial force of a cumulative causation process helps explain why not only Cuban American leaders who benefit directly from the Miami political machine, but even the mass of exiles who derive little material gain from it continue to uphold the same outlook and to behave accordingly. Theirs is a world in black and white, apart from which there is no alternative. After four decades, this self-reinforcing outlook is next to impossible to overcome.

How Do They Do It? The Mechanics of Continuing Hegemony

It is not the same to explain *why* a social process comes about than to account for its actual inner workings. A process may be beneficial or desirable to certain people, without their wishes being translated into reality. Similarly, once the process is in place, it may be carried along by its own inertial force, but that force may weaken if not re-energized periodically. From an earlier study of the rise of the Cuban enclave economy in Miami, I want to rescue a central notion, namely that it constitutes a *moral community* (Portes and Stepick 1993, 137–44). The term "moral" is not used in its everyday meaning, but to denote the fact that transactions among community members, even the most instrumental, are imbued with the overarching ideology. Adhering to this ideology defines the limits of this community, that is, who is a true Cuban exile, and, therefore, who can claim the protection, social status, and economic opportunities that the community can provide. To understand how this moral community is perpetuated, two general concepts are useful: social capital as a mechanism for social control and ritual as a mechanism for reaffirmation.

Social Capital

Social capital, a concept introduced by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1980) and popularized by the American sociologist James S. Coleman (1988), is defined as the ability to access resources by virtue of membership in social networks or larger social structures (Portes 2000). Resources can be of any kind—credit, information, votes, labor, and so on. The central idea is that social capital provides individuals with a privileged means to obtain resources that bypass the market and its rules. It is a privilege granted on the basis of membership. Those who have it gain access to jobs, special rate loans, stock market tips, and voluntary

help from friends or neighbors. Nonmembers must purchase these services at market prices or do without.

From the point of view of the recipient, resources mediated by social capital have the character of a "gift." Hence, reasons why recipients would want to participate in these transactions are unproblematic. More difficult to understand is the motivation of donors who appear to be giving away something for nothing. The theoretical literature on this concept identifies several mechanisms that make such transactions possible. For the present analysis, two are relevant: *Reciprocity expectations* lead members of a community to do favors for each other, in the belief that such favors will be repaid in the future (Bourdieu 1980; Coleman 1988; Portes 2000; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993). The key factor that distinguishes these transactions from market exchanges is that the form of repayment is left unspecified. What donors create in these transactions is a diffuse sense of obligation on which they can base future claims. *Bounded solidarity* is a source of social capital that prompts individuals to help others because of common membership in a given collectivity. Bonds can be of any kind—nationality, class, ethnicity, or family. Regardless of their source, such bonds give rise to a "we-feeling" among those so linked, leading them to prefer each other, even in the absence of reciprocity expectations (ibid.; Granovetter 1995).

One of the most notable characteristics of the Cuban enclave of Miami, particularly in its early stages, was its internal solidarity, born out of common experiences of forced departure and loss and cemented subsequently by opposition to the regime on the island. The simultaneous growth of Cuban American economic and political power created a mass of resources and opportunities available to friends and allies. Fellow Cubans were first in line as recipients of this largesse, but only on condition that they adhered strictly to the ideological outlook of the enclave. Cuban Americans bought from each other, supported each other's firms through concessionary credit and preferences, employed co-ethnics, and voted monolithically for Cuban candidates. Members of the community—from wealthy entrepreneurs to workers—stood to gain from its reciprocity networks and bounded solidarity (García 1966, ch. 2; Pérez 1992; Portes 1987).

As elsewhere, these sources of social capital have both their positive consequences and their downside. They create opportunities for individuals, but simultaneously impose social controls over them. Put differently, social capital provides rewards for conformity and disincentives

for deviance. The stronger the bonds, the more difficult it is to challenge the dictates of the collectivity. The Cuban enclave constitutes a moral community because of the strength of its social capital and, hence, the unique combination of rewards and punishments with which it holds its members in line.

In the early meetings leading to the creation of the Cuban Committee for Democracy, an organization of centrist Cuban Americans opposed to the Cuban government but also to the ideology of the machine, several prominent Miami professionals and entrepreneurs participated enthusiastically, but they eventually dropped out. Their reasons were invariably the same: fear for their jobs and pressure from families fearful of the consequences or opposed to their joining a "communist" organization.[2] These Cubans had effectively traded suppression of their rights to free expression under communism for a similar suppression under capitalism, Miami style. The existence and operation of social capital within the Cuban enclave are thus important factors explaining the resilience of its political machine: year after year there have been rewards, material and symbolic, for those who toe the line and significant disincentives for those who dare to express a different opinion.

Rituals

Like political leaders the world over intent on hanging on to positions of privilege, the heads of the Miami machine know that its continuation also requires periodic rituals. Rituals fulfill the dual purpose of keeping the crucial mass of supporters involved and re-energizing the collective ideology, adapting it to new circumstances. In Miami, there are two types of rituals: regular and circumstantial. Cuban holidays like Independence Day or the birthday of José Martí are celebrated in Miami as on the island. To these are added observances that are part of the history of the exile community, such as the Bay of Pigs landing on 17 April 1961.

Such occasions are used by Cuban American leaders to recommit to their ideological principles, attack the government in Cuba, and request continuing support in the struggle to bring it down. Editorials are read out over the enclave's many radio stations, led by WAQI (Radio Mambi) and WQBA (La Cubanisima). Listeners are encouraged to participate, which many do vying with each other in their exalted declarations of anticommunist and patriotic fervor. A number of sites in Miami have

been imbued with a quasi-sacred meaning in the collective imagination and are, hence, suitable for the celebration of these periodic rituals. The most important of these is the eternal flame honoring exile soldiers fallen during the Bay of Pigs invasion, located in the heart of the enclave, at the intersection of Calle Ocho (SW 8th Street) and Cuban Memorial Boulevard (SW 13th Avenue).

A second such site is Freedom Tower, a replica of the Giralda tower of Seville, located in downtown Miami. It served for many years as headquarters of the Federal Cuban Refugee Center, which processed hundreds of thousands of new arrivals from the island. It was recently purchased by the Mas Canosa family, which announced plans to turn it into a memorial and museum of Cuban American history. A third is the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Charity (Nuestra Señora de la Caridad), the patron saint of Cuba, built by the Catholic Church on the shores of Biscayne Bay, with its main altar pointing toward Cuba.

These sites also serve as locations for mass rallies, protests, and Catholic masses on the occasions when outside events provoke the animus of the community. Although irregular, these occasions are not rare because interest of machine leaders lies in cultivating a mobilized, emotional state among the mass of exiles. It also helps that clashes between this community and its perennial island communist foes are quite common. After the planes of Brothers to the Rescue, an exile organization, had flown several times over Havana distributing anti-Castro leaflets, the Cuban government sent a MiG fighter to shoot them down. The incident, in November 1996, triggered instant mass protests in Miami and led directly to passage by the U.S. Congress of the Helms-Burton bill, which aimed at decisively choking the island's economy. Only weeks later, several streets in Miami were rebaptized with the names of the downed exile pilots.

Albeit quite significant, the incident provoked by the Brothers to the Rescue planes is just one of a long chain of events triggering mass mobilizations in South Florida. At the forefront of these rallies are multiple pocket organizations whose very *raison d'être* lies in stoking the fires of anti-Castro sentiment. While supporting and benefiting from these rituals, the top leadership of the Cuban machine seldom takes part in these street actions. That task is left to the pocket organizations whose leaders vie with each other in their patriotic militance and fervor. Table 1 presents a partial list of these organizations grouped in two umbrella federa-

Table 1. Confederations of Cuban Political Groups of Miami

JUNTA PATRIÓTICA	UNIDAD CUBANA
• Founded in April 1980 • First led by Tony Varona, a Cuban former Prime Minister	• Founded in June 1991 • First led by Armando Perez Roura, a radio commentator

Organizations

JUNTA PATRIÓTICA	UNIDAD CUBANA
• Puente de Jóvenes Profesionales Cubanos • Coalición de Profesionales Cubano–Americanos • Movimiento de Recuperación Revolucionaria • Partido Revolucionario Cubano Auténtico • Pro Cuba • Municipios de Cuba en el Exilio • Brigada 2506 • Central de Trabajadores de Cuba en el Exilio • Colegio de Arquitectos de Cuba	• Movimiento Demócrata Cristiano • Grupo Táctico Cubano • Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Cubanoamericanas • Alianza Fraternal José Martí • Federación de Masones Cubanos Exiliados "Cuba Primero" • Federación Mundial de Ex-presos Políticos • Alpha 66 • Bloque de Organizaciones Anticomunistas • Federación de Logias Unidas Orden "Caballeros de la Luz" • Alianza "17 de Abril" • Federación de Trabajadores Azucareros • Claustro de Profesores de la Universidad de la Habana • Comandos Martianos • Centro de Derechos Humanos • Municipio de Remedios • "Stop Dollars to Castro" • Coalición Democrática Cubana • Republican Hispanic Association • Movimiento Comando F4 • Vigilia Mambisa • Municipio Santiago de las Vegas • Asociación Ideológica Combativa • Partido Revolucionario Cubano Auténtico • Frente de Liberación Cubano • Movimiento Insurreccional Martiano • Asociación de Veterinarios

Source: Hidalgo (2001).

tions—the Junta Patriótica and Unidad Cubana. As their names indicate, they are a motley crew, ranging from fictitious military commandos to various occupational and municipal associations.

During the Elián González episode, several of the most exalted grass-roots groups vowed to "shut down Miami" in protest against the U.S. government's decision to return the child to Cuba. They blocked traffic and sought to paralyze the harbor and airport of Miami with utter disregard for the opinions and wishes of the non-Cuban inhabitants of the city. When Elián was forcibly removed by federal authorities, the protests turned violent with torched cars and repeated confrontation with police forces throughout the city.[3] Plans were subsequently announced by the Cuban American National Foundation to turn the house where Elián lived into a shrine and museum, still another sacred site for the celebration of future public rituals.

The rituals, periodic and circumstantial, help keep the mass of the exile population in a state of heightened emotional tension. There is little chance that the classic assimilation process can play itself out among Cuban émigrés when every few weeks another event jolts their collective conscience, leading to poignant reminders of why they left and who the real enemy is. The subsequent protests and rallies, spearheaded by the pocket organizations but with the support and connivance of their superiors, help explain the paradoxes noted at the start of this chapter: just as it is difficult to assimilate into American society in such an atmosphere, it is impossible to forego an ideology reaffirmed so often by highly charged public rituals.

Speaking over Radio Mambi, an exile leader had this to say about one of the latest episodes triggering collective mobilization in Miami—the expulsion of twenty-one young Cubans who had sought refuge in the Mexican embassy in Havana in late February 2002:

> The great Mexican patriot Benito Juárez declared that "respect for the rights of others is peace." Conversely, "lack of respect for the rights of others is war." The Mexican government has shown a complete lack of respect for the rights of oppressed Cubans. Therefore, we are at war with Mexico. We call on all Cubans to boycott Mexican products and on our elected representatives in Washington to decisively oppose President Fox's request to legalize illegal Mexicans living in America.[4]

That such declarations are taken seriously is a testimony to the narrowing outlook brought about by the machine's ideology of intransigence.

CONCLUSION: PERSPECTIVES FOR THE FUTURE

The Cuban government and its organized opposition in Miami share many things, including frequent predictions of their demise. So far these predictions have come to naught. Both political systems have demonstrated remarkable resilience. There are indisputable forces arranged against the Miami machine, most significantly those of demography: the segment of the Cuban American population most identified with the ideology of intransigence—pre-1980 exiles—is aging and dying fast. Simultaneously, the faster growing segments of this population—second- and third-generation Cuban Americans and new arrivals from Cuba—are less militant, when not alienated by the reigning exile ideology.

Nevertheless, it is not likely that demographic trends by themselves will produce significant political changes in Miami. The machine is so well entrenched that even aspiring second-generation politicians must abide by its dictates. Young Cuban American politicians continue to utter the same old anti-Castro mantras; the same right-wing representatives to Congress continue to be elected unopposed; and no sane Miami merchant would dream of sponsoring a radio or TV program that challenges the machine's ideology.

In this context, political change in Miami can only came about through deliberate, concerted action by moderate elements of the Cuban American community in alliance with other non-Cuban groups in the area. With some exceptions, however, moderate voices are seldom heard in Miami since those who hold these views have generally preferred to pursue their individual careers and avoid open confrontation with the dominant ideology. They may despair in private, but fail to enact their beliefs in public. A few first- and second-generation Cubans have become so disgusted with the antics of the machine that they have swung to the other side, re-enlisting themselves as supporters of the Cuban government in Miami. Obviously, that is a dead end.

Although Cuban exiles may continue to believe that they will bring change to Cuba, the opposite may actually be the case. In the absence of deliberate efforts for change within the Cuban American community itself, the only remaining option is significant political change in Cuba

that alters the overarching political equation of the last four decades. Throughout this lengthy period, exile politics has been the faithful mirror of events on the island, reacting vigorously and always in opposition to every move by Castro and his government. It is impossible that a momentous change in the Cuban regime would not affect Miami as well. That possibility is uncertain, however, since Castro and his closest followers appear strongly committed to the perpetuation of communism. Thus, the most plausible outlook for the foreseeable future is more of the same—a sad and unending saga that would be comic if its results had not been so tragic.

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NOTES

1. A standard finding in the literature on naturalization and citizenship change is that immigrants and refugees whose return to their home country is blocked are significantly more likely to naturalize than those able to return. See Portes and Rumbaut (1966, 115–24).

2. Personal interviews with three participants in these early meetings. Miami, spring 1993.

3. "INS: Send Elian Back," and "Cuban exiles vow widespread protests." *The Miami Herald*, 6 January 2000, pp. 1a, 12a, 13a.

4. "La Mesa Revuelta," *Radio Mambi*, 2 March 2002.

The Transformation of the Diaspora and the Transformation of Cuba

SUSAN ECKSTEIN

T he diaspora is part of any full understanding of Cuba, especially Cuba in the post-Soviet era. This means that the diaspora itself, and changes in its composition and its homeland views and involvements, need be understood. This chapter will show that that archetypal émigré from Cuba changed dramatically in the 1990s, a change, however, that already began to take form in the 1980s. The pre-migration and postmigration experiences, values, and coveted and actual cross-border ties of these more recent émigrés are nearly opposite to those of earlier émigrés. The recent émigrés, though economically and politically weaker, will be shown to have done more, paradoxically, to change Cuba, and unintentionally, than the economically successful and politically powerful first wave to flee Castro, who tried unsuccessfully for some forty years to undermine the revolution.

PREMIGRATION BACKGROUND
OF CUBAN ÉMIGRÉ COHORTS

Cubans who have made their way to the United States, the home of about 89% of island émigrés (Aguilar Trujillo 2001), have differed in the assets they came with, their premigration lived experiences, and their weltan-schauung, world view, and basic values. They differ depending on when they left Cuba: before the 1959 Castro-led revolution, soon after the revo-lution, or decades later, in which case they lived the revolution. Because few Cubans emigrated before the revolution, I will not focus on them.

As of 2000 over a million people in the United States identified them-selves as Cuban American (Díaz-Briquets and Pérez-López 2003, i). Nearly half were U.S. born (see Table 1), children mainly of families who

emigrated soon after the revolution. And among the Cubans who emigrated since 1959, approximately half arrived before 1980 and half after. Since émigrés who arrived in the first five years of Castro's rule lived almost their entire lives in pre-evolutionary Cuba and little at all in Cuba-transformed, and since they have become the dominant force within the émigré community, my cohort analysis of pre-1980 émigrés will focus on them. Similarly, my analysis of post-1980 émigrés will focus mainly on islanders who emigrated since 1990, in the post-Soviet era.[1]

I draw below mainly on material from the 2000 census[2] and published survey data on Cuban Americans in Miami. I also draw on interviews I conducted in Miami and Cuba between 2000 and 2003,[3] and selectively on secondary sources as well.

The first cohort, especially those of prerevolutionary middle- and upper-class origins, lived a privileged lifestyle. For this reason I refer to them as the Privileged Cohort, even though, as we shall see, some were far more privileged than others. Their class background contrasts with the majority who left in the eighties and nineties, whom I refer to as the Proletarianized Cohort. By the nineties subsistence had become so problematic, even for the working classes in whose name the revolution had been "made," that they too sought refuge abroad. Islanders could no longer live on their official salaries, for the value of the peso had plunged as the economy contracted over 30% between 1989 and 1993, following the precipitous halt to Soviet bloc aid and trade on which the country had depended for thirty years. Survival became a greater preoccupation than pursuit of revolutionary principles (see Eckstein 2003a).

Table 1. Cuba. Émigré Cohorts in 2000

YEAR OF ARRIVAL	PERCENT
Before 1959	3
1959–1964	9
1965–1979	17
1980s	11
1990–2000	15
U.S.-born	46

Source: Ruggles and Sobek (2003)

The Privileged Cohort

The first cohort included many of the prerevolutionary professional and managerial class, more than three times their percentage of the prerevolutionary social structure (see Table 2). Well-standing Cubans fled as the revolution stripped them of their property and bases of wealth.

But the first to flee interpreted their exodus politically. They were deeply anti-Castro and anti-Communist, and they considered themselves exiles from a country (and lifestyle) they much loved. Only a small portion of the first wave of émigrés, however, left exclusively for political reasons: because their life was at risk. Genuine political refugees included associates of the Batista government, whom the revolution discredited, and anti-Castro activists.

The 1959–1964 émigrés typically were conservative and religious Catholics, and many racist and elitist. They had hoped and anticipated that their stay in the United States would be short-lived, until Castro was deposed and they could return Cuba to the status quo ante. While in exile they lived with idealized memories of times past, which they had no desire to dispel. They barely if at all knew the revolution first hand and many did not want to. Their conception of Castro's Cuba became largely a construct of their imagination, and a very negative construct at that. Hostile to the Castro regime, and wanting to undermine it, they advocated a personal as well as a national embargo of Cuba. They advocated the embargo on moral grounds, and believed it would destabilize the regime and bring it to heel. Meanwhile, with their political mission in mind they used their political muscle in the United States to keep cross-border ties, by individuals and institutions, at bay.

The prerevolutionary middle class followed the upper class. More than twice as many clerical and sales workers as their portion of the prerevolutionary work force joined the exodus to the United States by 1962 (see Table 2). Many had been petit bourgeoisie, small businessmen, and white-collar workers before leaving. If they lost less than the professional and managerial classes with the revolution it was because they had less to lose. But they shared with the more well to do, in many respects, a similar weltanschauung, a similar cultural and ideological mindset.

The laboring classes, especially those who worked in agriculture, were far less likely to leave Cuba as the revolution radicalized in the first years of Castro's rule. In contrast to prerevolutionary elites, they benefited from the revolution almost immediately. This was especially true of farm laborers, who gained access to schooling, plus a stable and improved income, and sharecroppers and tenant farmers gained legal rights to the land they had been tilling. They also gained a new sense of dignity. Accordingly, the class base of the revolution shaped the class background of who sought

Table 2. Cuban Occupational Structure and Jod Held by Emigres to the U.S. Immediately Prior to Leaving Cuba (in percentages)

	CUBAN OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE				LAST JOB IN CUBA HELD BY ÉMIGRÉ COHORTS[F]		
	1953	1980	1989	2000	1959–1962	1980	1989
JOB IN CUBA[E]							
Professional/manager	9	9	6	8	31	11	13
Semi-professional							
Technical		19	22	21			
Clerical, sales	14	7	7	4	33	7	9
Skilled	27[a]	52[a]	52[a]	50[a]	17[c]	26	14
Semi-skilled, unskilled					8	45	47
Services	8	13	14	17	7	5	15
Agriculture, fishing	42				4	7	1
Total Percentage[b]	100	100	101	100	100	101	99
Total Individuals	1,938[d]	2,600[d]	3,641[d]	3,843[d]	27,419	5,809	16,750

(a) includes semi-skilled and unskilled workers

(b) total percentages do not always equal 100 due to rounding of occupational distributions to the nearest whole number

(c) includes operators and laborers, craft and repair workers

(d) thousands

(e) officially reported occupational categories change after 1959 to worker, technical, administrative, service, and management, roughly equivalent, respectively, to worker (skilled, semiskilled, and unskilled), technical (without equivalent), clerical and sales, service, and professional/manager in the 1953 census.

(f) among people working, for whom information available

Source: Pedraza-Bailey (1985, 2 and references therein); United States Immigration and Naturalization Service (1999, 69); CEE (1991, 126); ONE (2001, 123).

refuge abroad. However, as Table 2 demonstrates, the prerevolutionary privileged were not the only ones to leave.

The Proletarianized Cohort

Émigrés of the eighties and nineties represented another Cuba. They were the antithesis, in many respects, of the first cohort. They were the antithesis in part because the revolution early on eliminated the social and economic base of propertied classes, so that there no longer were independent entrepreneurs and independent professionals to leave.

But the proletarianization of the labor force alone does not explain why growing numbers of workers came to seek refuge abroad. With time many workers became disillusioned with the revolution, as their living conditions stalemated and the revolution made political and labor demands on them that they disliked, such as helping out in back-breaking sugar harvesting. They were not alone in leaving. Especially the large exodus from Mariel included a wide spectrum of Cubans, ranging from intellectuals, artists, homosexuals, and long-time disaffected who for one reason or another had not previously left, to criminals and mental patients the government loaded on to boats picking up islanders.

Beginning in 1990–91 everyday living for most of the labor force, workers included, took a downward turn. The value of peso earnings plunged as the official currency, de facto though not de jure, lost value. The black market dollar/peso exchange rate rose to 1:130 in 1993, after which the government-recognized informal exchange rate ranged between 20 and 27 pesos to the dollar, while officially the two currencies remained on par. In the new economy even professionals, as state employees, joined the ranks of Cuba's poor.[4] The increase in service employees joining the diaspora in the nineties, shown in Table 2, no doubt includes pauperized employees of the cradle-to-grave welfare state the revolution ran. As of the nineties state employees could no longer live on salaries that formerly had made none of them rich but everyone secure.

The more recent émigrés differ from the first arrivals, however, not merely in class background but in the Cuba they experienced, their views, and reasons for migration. They lived the revolution, many with little or no first-hand knowledge and without memories of the prerevolutionary period. By virtue of living most if not all their lives under Castro, they had a nuanced understanding of conditions in Cuba, and

they were socialized by the revolution. This meant they experienced no civil society involvement independent of the state, as had the middle and upper classes before the revolution. Thus, for post-nineties émigrés Castro's Cuba was not imagined and prerevolutionary society not idealized, the opposite of the situation of the first cohort.

Many islanders who emigrated after 1990 had political reasons for emigrating, as had the first cohort, a conception reinforced by U.S. immigration policy, which continued to classify Cuban arrivals as refugees. However, for most nineties émigrés economic concerns were paramount.

POSTMIGRATION ECONOMIC ADAPTATION

Cubans did well economically in emigrating. They quickly became one of the most successful immigrant groups in America. Indicative, revenue of Cuban American–owned businesses by the turn of the century was equal to that of the entire island's GDP measured at the official exchange rate, and substantially more at the unofficial de facto exchange rate (Díaz-Briquets and Pérez-López 2003, 12, 15). Sales and receipts of Cuban-owned businesses increased over 37-fold between 1969 and 1997 in constant (1997) dollars.

In 2000 the median annual Cuban American household income somewhat exceeded $30,000, with 19% of the households earning $75,000 or more a year, up from 9% ten years earlier (Díaz-Briquets and Pérez-López

Table 3. Economic Status of Cohorts in 2000 (in percentages)

	YEAR OF ARRIVAL		
	1959–1964	**1980s**	**1990s**
Work			
Professional/managerial/technical	43	21	15
Worker[b]	18	39	54
No/Low Individual Income	49	62	66
No/Low Household Income	35	45	51
Income Below Poverty Level	9	19	22

(a) information on selective employment
(b) laborer, craftsperson, operative
Source: Ruggles and Sobek (2003)

2003, 6). Cuban Americans did well occupationally; by 2000 more Cubans in the United States held top-level jobs, managerial and professional, than in Cuba before the revolution (see Tables 2 and 3).

The first cohort did especially well. They may not have emigrated by choice, but they benefited economically by uprooting. Far fewer émigrés of the eighties and nineties by 2000 shared the American Dream. Their experience in the United States proved the mirror opposite of the first cohort. The more recent arrivals were two to three times less likely to hold top jobs and two to three times more likely to be workers than the 1959 to 1964 arrivals.

Not surprisingly, earnings of the cohorts differ. At the century's turn émigrés of the 1959–64 cohort, in comparison to those of the eighties and nineties, were less than half as likely to live below the U.S. poverty line and considerably less likely to be low-income earners, that is, to rank among the lowest third of American income earners (see Table 3). While in 2000 half of the first cohort ranked among the country's low-income earners, two-thirds of the nineties and only slightly fewer of the eighties émigrés did. On a household level the émigrés did better, but again, the first cohort more than islanders who subsequently joined the diaspora.

Several factors explain why recent émigrés are not reproducing the economic experience of first arrivals. For one, the recent émigrés arrived with fewer human, social, and economic assets. By the time the second cohort came of age in Cuba the revolution had eliminated private business opportunities and accordingly opportunities to accumulate capital, to acquire entrepreneurial expertise, and to build up a business reputation potentially transferable to Miami. The second cohort also tended to be less educat-

Table 4. Culture and Citizenship in 2000 (in percentages)

	YEAR OF ARRIVAL		
	1959–1964	1980s	1990s
High school education or less	48	72	71
Speaks English well or very well	74	51	41
Speaks Spanish at home	92	94	95
Citizen	92	51	14

Source: Ruggles and Sobek (2003)

ed (see Table 4). Over 70% of the eighties and nineties émigrés have no more than a high school degree, though they arrived at a time when the U.S. labor market required ever more schooling and skills for "good jobs." The more recent émigrés even lack the social capital first arrivals came with, described in more detail below. Post-1980 émigrés, in essence, came without the range of personal assets helpful for "making it" in America.

Two, the second cohort faced a less favorable labor market. By the century's turn blue-collar manufacturing jobs, which had offered a stable mid-level income, had largely moved abroad, where labor was cheaper. The garment industry, for example, which had employed many émigrés in the sixties, especially women, by the nineties had all but disappeared. In the changed context, Cuban American factory employment (operators, fabricators, and handlers, in the census) in Miami–Dade plunged from 34% to 19% just in the course of the nineties (Boswell 2002, 35).

Three, Cuban émigrés to Miami in the sixties formed a so-called local enclave economy, an economy by and for Cubans (see Portes and Stepick 1993, 123–49). Entrepreneurial and professional Cubans, drawing on the capital assets they came with, established businesses and professional practices that other émigrés patronized and that hired fellow émigrés. Small exile-owned banks, in turn, financed start-up businesses of their co-ethnics; and exiles who became loan officers at, and managers of, non-Cuban owned banks also favored fellow émigrés. Initially they made so-called character loans, to collateral-less émigrés, based on known reputation in Cuba (ibid., 139–40).

But the first émigrés also benefited from a billion dollars worth of federal, state, and local government aid that eased their adjustment. They received food, clothing, and health care, assistance in finding jobs, financial aid, job and professional training, bilingual education, and college tuition loans (see Pedraza-Bailey 1985, 4–52). No other Latin American immigrants received comparable assistance. The more recent island arrivals never had access to the same assistance as the first émigrés. Differential access to government help is yet a fourth factor distinguishing the experience of the first and later émigrés.

The first cohort to settle in Miami also benefited from being in the right place at the right time, and capitalizing on it. Beginning in the seventies the Miami economy restructured, diversified, and expanded, and took on hemispheric reach. The city became a hub of regional trade,

banking, multinational corporate activity, and tourism. Trade became the city's number one industry, most hemispheric based (see www.co.miami-dade.fl.us/portofmiami/cargo_facts.asp; Kanter 1995, 285).

Large national and multinational businesses squeezed out many smaller Cuban-owned firms, but they hired Cubans who had the human capital, plus multicultural and multilingual skills, and by then also multicountry networks, for middle and top management positions. Indeed, business with a hemispheric focus located in Miami over other border cities mainly because Cuban Americans offered the bilingual skills, networks, and experience useful for economic activity spanning the Americas. Aside from previously discussed assets, the 1959–64 cohort acquired mastery of English while holding on to their mother tongue (see Table 4).

Cubans of the first cohort also benefited from, as well as contributed to, the transformation of Miami into a hemispheric national security outpost. Some 12,000 Cuban exiles are believed to have been on the CIA payroll in the early sixties.

However, by the eighties intelligence agencies had refugees from the Central American wars they also could and did hire. Consequently, more recent émigrés have not had the same national security employment opportunities as the first cohort. And the post-Cold War era reduced Washington demand for immigrant help in hemispheric counterinsurgency work; its concerns shifted to other regions, Colombia excepted, especially after September 11 2001.

Finally, the second cohort faced more immigrant labor market competition than the first, and not only for national security work. By the nineties other immigrants, and in Miami mainly from Latin America, flooded the local labor market, both taking jobs that incoming Cubans otherwise might have secured and driving wages down. Even businesses within the original enclave put ethnic loyalty aside if they could hire hardworking, trustworthy immigrants from elsewhere in the region willing to work for less.

POWER AND INFLUENCE

Cuban Americans also have become one of the most politically influential immigrant groups, and the most influential from Latin America. They have become important players in administrative governance and electoral politics in the communities where they mainly settled; they

have gained national influence on matters pertaining to U.S. policy toward their homeland; and, especially in Miami, their influence has extended to the media, through which they have been able to shape public opinion on Cuba.

Beginning in the eighties Cuban Americans increasingly were elected to political office. Wherever they live in large numbers, even if not the numerical majority, they have joined the political class. The City of Miami Commission, for example, has had a majority of Cuban Americans since 1985 and a Cuban American mayor almost continuously since then. Similarly, the City Commission of Miami Beach, the county's third largest city, became majority Cuban American around the same time. Hialeah, reputed to be home to more Cubans than any city besides Havana, elected a Cuban American mayor.[5] At the end of the nineties, the first Cuban American was elected countywide mayor: Alex Penelas. By then Cuban Americans also constituted the majority of the County Commission, and the county sent a predominantly Cuban American delegation to the state legislature. Cuban Americans became politically influential at the county level even though they accounted for only 29% of the county population (see Stepick et al. 2003; García 1996; Boswell 2002, 11).

By 2000 Cuban Americans held one-third of the top appointed as well as elected positions in Miami–Dade, more than any other ethnic group. Miamians, in turn, perceived Cuban immigrants to be the city's dominant class. Seventy-five percent of the eight hundred Miami–Dade residents who participated in a *Miami Herald* poll at the turn of the century believed Cuban Americans to be the most politically powerful of the county's ethnic groups (*Miami Herald,* 4 September 2000).

The Cuban Americans who dominate politically, as economically, are almost without exception from the privileged émigré cohort, or their U.S.-born children. The second cohort is being bypassed, a cohort that by a U.S.–Cuba accord grows to the tune of 20,000 a year.

In terms of voting, ordinary émigrés of the second cohort also are at the sidelines. As of 2000, only 14% of nineties émigrés (26 percent of eligible nineties émigrés) and about half of eighties émigrés, but 92% of 1959–64 émigrés, were citizens and therefore eligible to vote (see Table 4). Since Cuban émigrés by law are entitled to citizenship after five years of U.S. residence, all islanders who emigrated before 1995 who by 2000 were not "naturalized" were so at their own discretion.

Cuban American voters are, nonetheless, sufficiently numerous in Greater Miami that most politicians, even if not of Cuban background, address Cuban American concerns, but the concerns of the politically active first cohort. For opportunistic reasons if not political conviction local politicians advocate a "hard line" on U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba. In particular, they publicly support retention of the embargo, a mantra in Miami. Foreign policy regarding Cuba is a local political issue, alongside usual local political concerns.

Even though Cubans comprise less than 1% of the U.S. population (Boswell 2002, 2), they have become one of the most influential ethnic groups in Washington, in part because their concentration in Florida gives them leverage in national electoral politics. Florida commands the fourth largest number of electoral college votes and it is a "swing state." Therefore, both parties pander to the Cuban American vote. The 2000 election made transparent how critical Florida can be to national politics. Florida was decisive to George W. Bush's winning the electoral college but not national popular vote. Some 85% of Miami Cuban Americans reported voting for Bush (FIU-IPOR 2000), and they defended Bush when the state's vote was contested. Politically indebted, Bush appointed several Cuban Americans to senior posts on the National Security Council, the State Department, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Such appointments ensured that first-cohort views could be heard in the highest circles.

Cuban Americans became influential at the national level also because they became adept lobbyists, moneyed and well organized. Their national influence began under President Reagan, who supported the formation of the Cuban American National Foundation, popularly known as the Foundation, in exchange for the Cuban American vote. Jorge Mas Canosa, the community's most influential and charismatic leader as well as chief spokesperson for the Foundation, had access to the White House.

The national influence of the Foundation, however, began to crumble in the first years of the new century. Changes in Washington, Cuba, the global political economy, and Miami all contributed, in different ways, to a waning of Foundation influence. For one, in the post Cold War business, farmers in particular, convinced Congress to permit agricultural exports to Cuba, defying the embargo the Foundation defended. The changed international political context, and new emphasis on trade liber-

alization, contributed to diminished congressional commitment to the near forty-year blockade on trade.[6] While the Cuba lobby, which the Foundation dominated, failed to stop the lifting of export restrictions, it managed insert an amendment into the new law requiring the fiscally strapped island government to pay cash for all U.S. purchases. Having assumed that the Cuban government would be unable to muster the hard currency for American products, within two years Castro came up with the cash, and strategically made purchases from over half U.S. states; in so doing, it astutely broadened the economic base of national support for trade with Cuba. The Cuban government, along with U.S. business, accordingly eroded Cuban American influence over U.S. Cuba policy.

Against the backdrop of such highly visible defeats, as well as some political sea change in Cuba, Mas Santos and other younger generation Foundation members began to rethink their strategy. Concomitantly, some wealthy, prominent conservative Miami businessmen did the same, independently of the Foundation.[7] They began to support selective cross-border political ties and to put faith in islanders, not exiles single hand-edly, democratizing island governance. Mas Santos went so far as to announce a willingness to meet with high-level Cuban officials other than Fidel and his brother, second in command, to discuss a democratic tran-sition, as well as to support the dissident movement on the island (Elliott and del Valle 2003). Especially appealing to Mas Santos and his backers was Oswaldo Paya's Varela Project, which mobilized over 11,000 signa-tures for island political and economic constitutional reforms. Meanwhile, in Miami, Mas Santos promoted the city to host the Latin Grammy Awards, even though Cuban music groups were likely award-winners. His supporters believed the event would add to the city's luster and be a money maker. But Mas Santos continued not to challenge the embargo, the moral symbol of the community's anti-Castro stance.

The combination of circumstances led an impassioned, articulate, moneyed, and influential faction to split off in 2001 and form a rival group, the Cuba Liberty Council (CLC). Mas Santos's support for Miami to host the Grammys that Cubans would attend proved the coup de grace that led them to bolt. Lending symbolic strength to the new splinter group, President Bush invited CLC members to join him in the Rose Garden on 10 October 2003, when he announced harsher U.S.-Cuba travel restrictions.

In 2003 the Foundation was in such financial duress that it sought to sell off both its Washington townhouse, from where it had coordinated its lobbying, and its recently acquired Freedom Tower property in Miami. The Foundation also downsized its staff, closed its Washington office for lobbying, and shut down its radio station, its key venue for influencing public opinion in Miami.

In essence, at the same time that Cuban Americans, as individuals, were increasingly joining the ranks of Miami's political class, collectively the political class was fragmenting and weakening. Nonetheless, members of the community continued to have influence in the highest circles of the Bush administration. They were politically well connected. The 2000 election assured them of influence at least until 2004. By the early 2000s the Cuban American community's main source of national influence was political-geographical based, rooted in Florida's importance to electoral college politics. The Cuban American leadership knew how to leverage this to its advantage, even as most of the post-1980 potential electorate had not processed citizenship papers required to vote.

COHORTS, THEIR CROSS-BORDER VIEWS AND INVOLVEMENTS

The émigré community is not of one mind even if, at least until the early 2000s, of nearly one public voice. The pre- and post-1990 cohorts differ on many issues, yet the voice of the latter is rarely heard. One matter on which the cohorts agree, though, is that not all points of view are heard in Miami, such as on how to deal with Castro (see Table 5).

Dominating the media and public discussion, the first cohort influences second-cohort thinking. Yet, first-cohort influence is far from complete. While most recent émigrés remain publicly voiceless, survey data permit uncovering cohort differences in cross-border views and involvements (see Table 5).

Florida International University's (FIU) Institute for Public Opinion Research (IPOR) 2000 survey reveals *some* shared views among the "privileged" and "proletarianized" cohorts. Cuban Americans who emigrated between 1959 and 1964, between 1975 and 1984, and after 1984,[8] for example, concur that the embargo is ineffective and that six-year old Elian Gonzalez, rescued off the Florida coast in November 1999 when his mother drowned at sea, should have been able to stay in the United States.

Table 5. Cohort Cross-Border Views Toward and Cross-Border Travel to Cuba

	COHORTS		
	1959–64	**1975–84**	**1985–2000**
SHARED VIEWS			
1. At time of the case felt Elián should have been returned to father in Cuba	17	22	22
2. Embargo does not work or not well	73	74	82
3. Some views are not heard in Miami	79	78	78
4. U.S. should be very involved in what happens in Cuba after Fidel & Raúl Castro leave power	80	79	69
DIVERGENT VIEWS			
1. U.S. should reestablish diplomatic ties	26	37	74
2. U.S. should end embargo	30	36	53
3. Favor U.S. companies selling			
a. medicine to Cuba	60	62	80
b. food to Cuba	46	54	73
4. Favor unrestricted travel to Cuba	39	52	74
5. Actually traveled to Cuba	18	33	31
6. Still have close kin in Cuba	62	81	95

Source: FIU-IPOR (2000)

Cuban émigrés of the different cohorts also concur that the United States should be very involved in what happens politically in Cuba after Fidel and Raúl leave power. The cohorts may each have its own reasons for such overlapping viewpoints, or on these issues the first cohort may influence the views of more recent arrivals through their hegemonic media influence.

The survey data show, however, that the cohorts are not of one mind even when of one voice on a range of policies affecting Cuba. The 1959 to 1964 and post-1984 émigrés differ significantly in the extent that they (1) favor ending the embargo, (2) favor allowing U.S. companies to sell food and medicine to Cuba, (3) favor resumption of diplomatic relations with Cuba, and (4) favor unrestricted travel to Cuba. Washington only permits Cuban Americans one family visit a year, with rare exception. It restricts home travel of no other Latin American immigrants.

The cohorts differ in their support of the embargo while agreeing that it works poorly. To early exiles the embargo is politically and symbolically significant even if not economically useful in causing regime collapse, its intended purpose. Recent émigrés are more pragmatic and they have a different morality, rooted in the moral economy of family, not grandiose abstract ideological principles. Illustrative of how they want to help, not hurt, family left behind, they strongly support American companies selling food and medicine to Cuba. Now permitted, first cohort lobbyists had opposed the partial loosening of the embargo.

And for similar reasons most nineties émigrés feel there should be no restrictions on travel to Cuba. While most émigrés of the different cohorts continue to have close family in Cuba, recent émigrés almost without exception do, and their lives were mutually enmeshed on a routine basis until not long ago. Among the first cohort emotional bonds across the Florida Straits are weaker. In terms of cross-border people-to-people ties, the 1975–84 cohort resembles the nineties more than the 1959–64 cohort. However, in terms of cross-border ties at the state level, 1975–84 émigrés resemble the views of those who joined the diaspora before them. They are a cohort caught betwixt and between. Many knew life both before and after the revolution, but they left without ever having to experience first-hand the subsistence crisis of the 1990s.

Premigration political socialization may also contribute to cohort differences in views toward the embargo in general and toward specific

aspects of it. Cuban authorities blame island economic problems on the blockade, and a 1994 island Gallup poll showed Cubans to believe that interpretation. While conducting the survey at the time the economy hit rock-bottom, soon after Soviet aid and trade ended, islanders attributed the country's problems mainly to the U.S. embargo (*Miami Herald,* 18 December 1994, p. 39A).

If recent émigrés differ from the first cohort so significantly on matters important to them and their island families, why are their views not heard? There are several reasons for their silence. For one, the "proletarianized cohort" lacks the personal attributes previously discussed associated with political involvement. Two, the Cubans raised in Castro's Cuba lack experience in civil society involvement. Batista highly circumscribed political activity, but the permissible involved the upper and middle classes. Three, the first cohort leadership made no effort to represent new arrivals and their interests *ill served by* the Washington Cuba policy it backed. Four, the "proletarianized cohort" was publicly silent in part because they were silenced, and felt so. My interviews reveal that recent émigrés who tried publicly to take issue with the dominant first wave viewpoint faced repression, rejection, and resistance.

Although recent arrivals are silent and silenced, they are contributing to a change in popular opinion in Miami. The Cuban American community is coming around to the new Cuban immigrant views, with the yearly growth in number of new arrivals itself is contributing to the shifting consensus. Between 1991–93 and 2000 the percentage of Cuban Americans feeling that the embargo should be tightened decreased and the portion favoring sales of food and medicine and unrestricted travel to Cuba increased (see Table 6).

Table 6. Changing Cross-Border Views in the Nineties (percentages)

	1991–1993	2000
Favor tightening embargo	80	57
Allow medical sales to Cuba	48	64
Allow food sales to Cuba	23	55
Allow unrestricted travel to Cuba	43	51

Source: FIU-IPOR (2000)

Meanwhile, the dominating first-wave émigrés never spoke for all of their cohort. They restricted media access to those disagreeing with them. Over the years the dominating first cohort relied on intimidation, economic blackmailing, and violence (especially in the sixties and seventies), when normative means did not suffice (see Forment 1989; Didion 1987; Portes and Stepick 1993).

First-cohort hardliners, whom second-cohort émigrés refer to as "radical exiles," have gone so far as to launch a culture war, a war at the symbolic level. The culture war even impacted the Latin Grammys. When Mas Santos of the Cuban American National Foundation, among others, first tried in 2001 to bring the event to Miami, the city that had evolved into the capital of the Latin music world, threat of violent opposition to Cuban participation led the organizers to move the event to Los Angeles. In this instance, the hardliners won the battle. Two year later when Miami announced plans again to host the Grammys, local exiles threatened a 1,500-person protest if Cubans attended, performed, and accepted awards. This time the State Department intervened, at the urging of first-cohort opponents to Cuban participation. Washington denied visas to musicians associated with the ten nominated island acts. Absent the Cubans, the event still went on to be a glittering success. Washington did not resolve the underlying culture conflict, merely a manifestation of it before President Bush's reelection bid.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CUBA

The diaspora is central to any understanding of Cuba under Castro. But the nature of the diaspora has changed markedly over the years. Early and recent émigrés to leave the island are near opposite in their social and economic background, their values, and their actual and coveted cross-border ties.

There is an irony. A sizable portion of the first cohort has become economically successful and politically powerful. They live the American Dream while still identifying with Cuba, but an imagined and idealized Cuba rooted in times past. Adamantly anti-Castro, the archetypal émigré of the first cohort opposed cross-border engagement, under the assumption that isolating the regime would most likely help bring it to heel. Meanwhile, more recent émigrés, of more humble origins in Cuba and politically weak in the United States, see their world differently. They

want to retain ties with family they left behind and help them economically. They are not moved by abstract political-ideological principles but by a family moral economy, one transnationally based. It is their cross-border ties, in defiance of the Cuban American leadership as well as certain Washington and Havana regulations (such as on matters related to remittance sending), that has, in effect though not intent, done the most to undermine Cuban socialism as we knew it.

For one, remittances are serving to generate new inequalities in a country that had been committed for three decades to leveling social and economic differences. With 93%, 83%, and 86% of the 1959–64, eighties, and nineties cohorts, respectively, white, remittance-sending is generating new race-based income inequalities. And with Havana residents receiving 60% of all remittances (UCTEC 2002, 12), cross-border income flows are generating new rural/urban inequalities as well. Remittances are also eroding state control over the economy. About half of all Cuban Americans remit money to the island informally, via people traveling there (Orozco 2002), and state efforts to appropriate the dollar inflows through new hard currency stores have had the unintended effect of stimulating black market activity. Those offering goods for less money than the stores charge create a market for their goods, even if illegal. The government prices goods high to generate revenue it desperately needs (Eckstein 2004). Meanwhile, the gains to be made from black marketeering induce workers to pilfer sellable items from their jobs. The new consumer economy, with its diverse supports, in turn, defies the original moral, nonmaterial precepts of the revolution.

In essence, recent humble émigrés are doing more to change Cuba socially, economically, and culturally, if not yet politically, than the deliberate efforts of the first cohort to keep cross-border ties at bay. The politically constructed barriers across the Florida Straits that the first cohort defends are becoming no more effective in preventing change in Cuba than the Berlin Wall did in East Europe.

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NOTES

1. For more differentiated delineations of émigré waves, see, for example, García (1996), Pedraza-Bailey (1985; Pedraza 1996), and Amaro and Portes (1972). The more refined delineations can point to further differences among émigré waves, though the differences are less marked than among the cohorts I have delineated.

2. I am grateful to Wendy Roth for assistance in the census analysis. All references in the text to the census, unless otherwise indicated, come from Ruggles and Sobek (2003).

3. I have conducted over two hundred interviews in total, some also in Union City, New Jersey, once the second most important place where Cuban émigrés settled. I am grateful to Lorena Barberia for help in the interviewing. For a fuller description of the interviews and sampling procedures see Eckstein and Barberia (2002).

4. Professionals did not leave in larger numbers in the 1990s partly because the Cuban government restricted their emigration. The government, for example, required doctors to provide five years of public medical service before they could even go abroad to attend a conference. Doctors had taken advantage of international conferences to emigrate illegally. Cubans receive all schooling and training free of charge. Wanting to recoup its investment in the training of doctors, the government imposed the five-year waiting period.

5. Mayor Raul Martínez, elected first in 1981, was briefly forced to step down amid federal extortion and racketeering charges. The case was dropped after two hung juries, after which Martínez resumed office, a position he held still in 2004, at the time of writing. He is reputed to have a "well-oiled machine" (www.religionnews-

blog.com/3431). Martínez emigrated from Cuba as a child in 1960.

6. New legislature opened Cuba to U.S. exports, but Washington continued to restrict Cuban imports to the United States. Accordingly, U.S. business benefited while the Castro regime could lower its import bill but not thereby gain possible export revenue.

7. These businessmen formed the Cuba Study Group. Although moneyed, the businessmen's group never managed to become a significant political player. Politically inexperienced, they proved no match for the Miami leadership opposed to their conciliatory stance. Other anti-Castro groups, such as the Cuban Committee for Democracy (CCD), opposed the embargo and favored cross-border engagement. The CCD sponsored a radio program but it lacked the economic resources of the more "hard-line" group players.

7. Most émigrés of the 1975–84 period came in 1980 and, secondly, between 1981 and 1984, and most émigrés in the 1985 to 2000 period arrived after 1990. FIU-IPOR uses different cohort delineations than I do, but most émigrés in their cohort categories arrived during years corresponding to my categories.

RELIGION, CULTURE, AND SOCIETY

Civil Society and Religion in Cuba: Past, Present, and Future

MARGARET E. CRAHAN

Much of the literature on Cuba, both past and present, has concluded that one of the prime reasons for the triumph of the 26th of July Movement in 1959 and the subsequent consolidation of a Marxist-Leninist revolution was the weakness of organized civil society, as well as religion. Such assertions are without a strong basis. Civic and other organizations were common in Cuba as early as the nineteenth century and they continued to proliferate throughout the twentieth. By 1959 Cuban civil society had developed into one of the most advanced in Latin America in spite of periodic government attempts to regulate it both legally and through repression (Quiroz 2003, 59–63). Since 1959 the revolutionary government has tried, largely through executive orders, to limit the autonomy and development of associative organizations. Laws adopted from 1976 to 1985 to institutionalize the revolutionary process codified the state's efforts to control civil society (ibid., 63–64). Nevertheless, in recent years there has been a revitalization and expansion of civic and other organizations not dominated by the government. Indeed, there is a sense of mild ferment within Cuban civil society. Critical elements within the autonomous sector of Cuban civil society are religious groups that are increasingly occupying public space. Given that a good number of recent studies suggest that the nature, strength, and resources of a civil society help determine a country's direction, a better understanding of the role of religions, past and present, in the evolution of Cuban civil society could help clarify the island's future.[1]

THE PAST

The tendency to regard religions as being relatively weak in Cuba flows, in part, from a focus on formal participation, levels of activism, and direct

political influence. It is true that attendance at services and participation in religious groups was historically relatively low in Cuba and political influence was evaluated rather superficially. What has not been sufficiently studied is the very real penetration of Cuban society by indigenous, Judeo-Christian, and spiritist religions that have made the vast majority of Cubans believers and popular religiosity widespread. In addition, religious beliefs have permeated Cuban culture and molded societal values. At the same time, the very multiplicity of religions and the weak presence of religious institutions and personnel, especially in rural areas, have contributed to low levels of practice and also to a great deal of syncretism and permeability in terms of both religious and secular belief systems.[2]

Weak institutional presence, chronic limitations in terms of material and human resources, together with considerable openness to other belief systems resulted in higher levels of secularism, as well as lower levels of institutional identification and loyalty, than in most Latin American countries (Crahan 1979). Nevertheless, Cuban culture and society was and is permeated with religious symbolism, icons, referents, and popular religiosity. Belief in the divine has long been an integral part of Cubans' self-identification or *cubanidad* (Crahan 2003). Therefore, Cuba is somewhat contradictory in that while it is a nation of believers, institutional religion, especially Catholicism, is weaker than in most of Latin America's formerly Spanish colonies, thereby giving rise to the notion that religion in general has had relatively little sway in Cuba.

This is, in part, a result of the fact that during the colonial period the relative isolation of Cuba encouraged a greater degree of autonomy and adaptive response to local conditions on the part of both Catholic clergy and the laity than in the mainland Spanish possessions. This contributed to considerable religious heterodoxy including within the Catholic Church, which contained a strain of independent thinkers who in the early nineteenth century began championing independence, the abolition of slavery, a republican form of government, and expanded citizens' rights. The result was Spain's cracking down on some individuals and groups regarded as subversive. Chief among them was Father Félix Varela y Morales (1787–1853), a professor at the Seminary of San Carlos and San Ambrosio in Havana, who was exiled in 1823 to the United States. Varela was one of the first to champion a political role for the individual in society, human rights, and the reform of Cuban political, economic, religious, and social

structures according to the needs of the citizenry. His writings provided one of the earliest elaborations of a liberal polity and civil society (Torres-Cuevas 1997; Varela 1977). His ideas influenced the independence leader José Martí and were adduced as recently as 1997 at a University of Havana colloquium as indicating how a just society should be organized (Torres-Cuevas, et al. 1999; Liss 1987, 12). In general, Catholic priests ranged widely in terms of their educational attainments, as well as their political attitudes, as did other religious leaders including those involved in indigenous or Afro-Cuban religions. Most reflected the belief systems of the communities they inhabited which were dominated by daily concerns.

The complexity of attitudes among religious personnel was intensified as a result of the gaining of independence by other Spanish colonies in the 1820s, as well as by the French colony Haiti. This resulted in an influx of Catholic clerics who reinforced conservative sectors of the Catholic Church to the dismay of Bishop José Díaz y Espada y Landa (1802–1832), who attempted to curb their influence by promoting liberal republican ideas. This caused conservative church sectors to conspire against him eventually forcing him from office. His actions did succeed, however, in identifying a sector of the Catholic Church with the independence struggle and citizens' rights. Nevertheless, the church as an institution continued to be identified with Spain. Such cleavages contributed further to the institutional weakness of the Cuban Catholic Church in a period when Afro-Cuban and Protestant beliefs were more identified with an independent republic.

Protestant ministers and laypersons, whose numbers increased in the latter part of the nineteenth century, were effective transmitters of liberal political ideas. Some Protestant ministers, like their Catholic counterparts, fell afoul of the colonial administration and were forced into exile, generally in the United States, where their ideas concerning citizen participation and rights were further developed. Whether abroad or on the island many contributed to the movement for independence. The level of civil society organization immediately prior to the 1895–98 war of independence was notable and religious leaders were active not only in legitimizing the movement, but also as combatants (Crahan 2003, 47–50; Maza 1993).

The influence of spiritist beliefs imported from Africa by slaves in the definition of Cuban society was also substantial. Religious ceremonies helped to define community and transmit concepts of governance, as well

as legitimate resistance and ultimately stimulated participation in the struggle for independence, together with the ongoing struggle for full citizen rights. During the war for independence from Spain, Afro-Cubans often rode into battle flying the banner of the Virgen de la Caridad, who was identified with the spirit Ochún. In short, a Catholic icon and its spiritist counterpart doubly legitimated the struggle for independence and the creation of a republic. Overall civil society in late-nineteenth century Cuba was highly mobilized in opposition to continued Spanish control and awash in a welter of differing concepts of a reformed society that would allow for expansion of the full spectrum of civil, political, and socioeconomic rights.

The failure of the new republic, under the U.S. imposed Platt Amendment, to provide for broadly expanded citizen rights contributed to ongoing strife and civil society mobilization. Religious beliefs were employed to challenge the new republic as happened with an Afro-Cuban led armed uprising of 1912 during which both Catholic and spiritist iconography were invoked. In the aftermath of the suppression of that revolt, religions once again served as a mechanism of resistance and subterranean organization particularly by Afro-Cubans.[3]

Sectors of the revolutionary movements of the thirties and fifties also used religious beliefs not only to legitimate their objectives, but also to provide resources and collaborators. Protestant and Catholic university students were active in both movements, and some church groups and leaders served to generate monies for the efforts. In short, while the number of people attending services in Cuba throughout the twentieth century may have been low, religious beliefs and generalized identification with religious norms was common and, at times, coexisted with interest in Marxism. The latter was sometimes reinforced by interpretations of the social doctrines of the churches, which increasingly emphasized workers' rights. This helped justify movements in support of greater socioeconomic justice, together with less governmental corruption and abuse of power (Kirk 1989, 40–43).

Hence, while the percentage of Cubans actually engaged in regular religious practice was not high, religious beliefs were widely held and influenced concepts of polity and society, as well as Cubans' involvement in civil society.[4] Furthermore, the level of belief in the divine has remained remarkably stable in Cuba from the fifties to the present

(approximately 85%), albeit formal religious practice remains low.[5] This suggests that while institutional religion in Cuba has historically been somewhat weak according to such indicators as frequency of attendance at services, geographic reach, and resources, the influence of religions in the conceptualization of polity and society has been strong.

THE PRESENT

How have forty-five years of Marxist revolution affected the role of religions in civil society in Cuba today? Largely marginalized in the sixties, institutional religions began to recoup in the seventies and eighties and experienced a resurgence in the nineties, particularly as the government became less capable of fulfilling the population's basic socioeconomic needs. The government had from the outset justified its policies and actions, including organizing civil society into government-created mass organizations, on the grounds that this was necessary to ensure equitable distribution of the benefits of a socialist economy. Redemption of the latter promise was at the core of the government's claim to legitimacy. Although religious leaders supported the revolutionary government's objective of greater socioeconomic justice, by the eighties, and particularly with the economic crisis of the nineties, they were increasingly questioning governmental policies and programs.

Failure of the government's economic model to meet the basic socioeconomic needs of Cubans was linked by religious leaders to a lack of effective citizen participation in determining public policies and securing governmental accountability. The Cardinal of Havana, Monsignor Jaime Ortega y Alamino, stated in a 1994 visit to Rome that because the revolution had raised the hopes of so many and mobilized Cubans to create a more just society, the Catholic Church had a duty to help preserve the achievements of the revolution. At the same time, he argued, the Church had an obligation to help the Cuban people transcend the revolution's limitations, particularly through increased popular participation in government decision making. The latter, he posited, could best be achieved through intensifying evangelization so that the laity would be better prepared to act through a mobilized civil society.[6] In order to facilitate this, the Catholic Church adopted a Global Pastoral Plan for 1997–2000. Its principal objective was to promote evangelization via prophetic and inculturated communities that would disseminate the gospel message in

order to promote human dignity, reconciliation, and the construction of a society characterized by love and justice. This would require the strengthening of faith-based communities in which all individuals would be regarded as children of God and therefore treated justly (Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de Cuba 1996, 2–4). This required substantial resources, both in terms of monies and personnel, which were in short supply (ibid., 6). Some clerical and lay leaders felt that the plan was too general and not sufficiently proactive.

A group of priests issued a public critique arguing that a basic prerequisite had to be overcoming the profound passivity of citizens inculcated by the existing political system. In addition, they felt that calls by both the Catholic and other churches for a national dialogue were flawed as they were premised on the government's willingness to dialogue. Some priests proposed that what the Catholic Church should do instead was create a national dialogue that included a broad coalition of civil society sectors including other churches, fraternal organizations, and autonomous groups (LADOC 2000). Neither of these proposed national dialogues has been undertaken as the government is resistant and organized civil society not sufficiently strong to sustain such an initiative. This is further evidence of the fact that there has not yet been the necessary strength and unity of purpose within the Catholic Church, nor the religious community more generally, to adopt a consensual agenda together with a strategy to implement it. Although some have suggested that the Varela Project, which calls for constitutional and other reforms to make Cuban political life more participatory and pluralistic, could serve as a basis for such a consensual agenda, to date there has not been broad-based mobilization in support of it.

There are real impediments to the religious community mobilizing civil society. Virtually all religions in Cuba suffer from a scarcity of resources and face increasing demands for humanitarian assistance from the Cuban populace. Most of the material resources available come from abroad and are subject to government regulation and control, thereby encouraging caution on the part of churches and other religious organizations. Foreign religious donors have also been careful not to become identified with some of the more autonomous or dissident sectors of civil society. Even so, the increased role of religions in responding to the socioeconomic needs of the population has expanded the role and credibility of most religions within civil society. Overall, while religions are

emerging as critical elements of a slowly revitalizing civil society, there is an understandable desire on their part not to precipitate serious conflicts with the government.

THE FUTURE

In recent years, religions have been recognized as often serving as a stimulus for the growth in activism of civil societies, particularly in countries experiencing substantial pressures for change. In Cuba, where the revolutionary government has attempted to subsume organized civil society into the state and marginalize religions, the possibilities for religions to assume a major leadership role via civil society in determining Cuba's future is unclear. Nevertheless, given that there is currently a "ripening" of civil society in Cuba, the potential is there. In order for that potential to be realized, and for religions to play an influential role, there are a number of prerequisites both for the religions themselves, as well as civil society.

One such precondition is that there must exist sufficient space to allow for generalized pressures for a greater role for civil society to be effectively exerted, together with an increasing capacity on the part of civil society to effectively occupy it. In Cuba there has been some progress in this area. The government since the late seventies, for example, has increasingly allowed some autonomous civic, cultural, and religious actors to move away from the margins of society, to which they had been relegated in the sixties. This is partially a result of the government's need for assistance in meeting the basic needs of the population, as well as its efforts to compensate for the erosion of support from some other sectors. The government's inclination to accord more public space for religious actors was confirmed in the early nineties by the elimination of the prohibition against believers being members of the Communist Party, which had blocked religious activists from holding influential positions in government or in education. In 1992 a constitutional amendment transformed Cuba from officially an atheistic state to a lay state. There has been a concurrent ceding of public space by the government, the assumption of greater autonomy by some official organizations, and the mild revitalization of some historical organizations, including religious ones. The result is obviously increased ferment as such groups very tentatively attempt to exert more influence over politics and society. Few are questioning the socialist nature of the government, although a fair number are

challenging the government to deliver more enjoyment not only of socioeconomic, but also of civil/political rights. The upshot is that the government's claim to legitimacy rooted in the guaranteeing of greater freedom resulting from increased socioeconomic justice is also being challenged. There are some indications that this is striking a responsive chord among the population in general, but it is in the nature of agreement rather than mobilization.

Such a situation raises a critical question, that is, can the principles and norms that sustain a free civil society be a basis for the incorporation of self-organized groups into a socialist system, thus making it more pluralistic and participatory? If a pluralistic civil society is deemed compatible with socialism, then a program of reforms would have to focus on expanding structures of participation in such a way that they would not be totally subsumed by centralized political or economic structures (Armony 2003, 26). Furthermore, it is not clear that religions in Cuba are disposed to work for such incorporation. There is, at present, considerable difference of opinion on this point.

Some analysts posit that Cuba could deepen the autonomy of mass organizations as a way of allowing civil society to help rebuild social and political consensus. Others question the realism of a pluralistic concept of civil society in a context where forty-five years of governmental ideological hegemony has resulted in a fairly high degree of suspicion of ideological and political heterodoxy. A second issue concerns the fact that the Cuban political class has restricted the debate about civil society and limited the broadening of the public sphere arguing that civil society could become a "fifth column" on behalf of the United States. A third issue results from the effects of globalization on Cuba, particularly the penetration of nonsocialist norms and behaviors, including those transmitted by new religious actors (Armony 2003, 17–36). Indeed one of the most notable developments in contemporary Cuba is the intensification of international exchanges between religious organizations at both the macro and micro levels. This has been stimulated by a variety of humanitarian efforts, as well as the natural impulse to build community with one's counterparts (Hansing and Mahler 2003, 123–30). It has resulted in more discussion of the need for religions to formally undertake a role in promoting reconciliation, including developing a theology of reconciliation, among Cubans on the island and with Cubans abroad.

Given that religions in Cuba are increasingly playing an intermediary role (both formally and informally) between state and society in meeting the latter's basic needs, can religious actors gradually assume a mediating role in the current transition? Does increasing governmental and societal dependence on religious actors, national and international, provide a real opportunity for religions to influence the direction of society? The indications to date are that the government would resist such a possibility, but there is no guarantee that it will continue to be able to do so. To what degree, then, will relatively weak religious actors be able to take advantage of the situation? Furthermore, given the broad spectrum of opinions within the religious sector over the nature of the transition and the extent of the restructuring to be undertaken, would there be a consensus that goes much beyond the need for change? And to what degree would a civil society with strong strains of secularism be willing to accept a substantial leadership role by religions even if the latter have the most extensive institutional resources and networks?

In short, what is the disposition of Cuban citizens to accept the leadership of religions in building the Cuban society of the future? While there has been an upsurge in church attendance and involvement in religious groups in recent years, it is possible that if there were more secular associational alternatives, the current popularity of religious involvement might decline. Furthermore, there are no strong indicators that nascent Cuban civil society is committed to according religions a major role in a resurgent civil society, even if they are one of the strongest elements within it. In order for the desires of civil society in Cuba to become clearer, it would be necessary for the right of association to be exercised more broadly. Consensual agendas could then be more easily arrived at and pursued.

At present there is no acknowledged leadership of autonomous civil society. Identification of such leaders requires a critical mass of proactive citizens, albeit not necessarily a majority. That does not appear to have happened yet in Cuba. Whether the development of such leadership can be facilitated by religious groups is a question. There have been some efforts by various religions to train community leaders, professionals, youths, and others to take a more active role in civil society, but there has not been a coalescing of such individuals around a consensual agenda. While there has been some acquisition of leadership skills, they do not appear as substantial as those developed through government mass organizations.

In short, there is a lack of clarity about whether or not there is an emerging consensus about what forms Cuban society and polity should take in the future. Although there has been some discussion of this within the nascent civil society, the proposals circulated to date tend to be quite schematic. The topic has been explored to a degree in religious publications, conferences, and courses, but again without any strong indication that there is a consensus about what form Cuban political, economic, and social organizations might take in the future. This reflects the degree to which civil society is somewhat adrift conceptually. Religious actors do not, generally, feel in a position to lead such a discussion that would result in greater consensus. Hence, while Cubans have a history of strong associationalism, together with a tradition of religious beliefs informing civil society, neither appears to have sufficient force to guarantee that civil society and religions could determine the outcome of the transition that is currently underway in Cuba.

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Notes

1. The proliferation of literature on civil society since Robert D. Putnam's (1993) landmark study is well known. Following are a few of the works that suggest the complexity and diversity of civil society's roles: Linz and Stepan (1996); Richard and Booth (2000); Skocpol and Fiorina (1999); Warren (2001).

2. A 1957 survey of 4,000 agricultural workers in Cuba revealed that while 96.5% believed in God, 41.4% claimed no religious affiliation. In addition, although 52.1% claimed to be Catholic more than half of them (53.5%) stated they had never laid eyes on a priest and only 7.8% ever had any contact with one (Echevarría Salvat 1971, 14–15).

3. The Partido Independiente de Color, whose leaders led protests and ultimately the 1912 uprising was identified by a rearing horse, the symbol of the Yoruban spirit Shangó whose counterpart is the Catholic saint Santa Barbara. In the early 1900s Independientes urged Cubans to vote for the party of "the horse" (Helg 1995, 150–51).

4. A 1958 survey of Las Villas Province revealed that only 3.8% of male Catholic respondents had attended Mass the previous month, while 5.1% of females had. Close to 90% of the females and 92.6% of males did not generally attend religious services. This pattern was common throughout Cuba (Universidad Central 1959, 32).

5. In 1960 nominal Catholics constituted approximately 70–75 % of the total population of 7,500,000, while Protestants amounted to 3–6%. The Jewish community numbered approximately 12,000 in the fifties, while spiritists were estimated at about 65%. In the late eighties the Centro de Investigaciones Psicológicas y Sociológicas of the Cuban Academy of Sciences estimated that 65–85% of Cubans believed in the supernatural, while 13.60 % did not. In the mid-nineties believers were estimated to constitute approximately 85% of the population. Currently regular practitioners are estimated by various religious sources to be around 1–3%. For an analysis of Cuban religious statistics over time, see Crahan (1999, 297–98).

6. Jaime Ortega y Alamino, "Discurso de Mons. Jaime Ortega y Alamino: Visita Ad Limina de los Obispos de Cuba, 25.VI.94," Rome, 25 June 1994.

Relations Between the Catholic Church and the Cuban Government as of 2003

AURELIO ALONSO

BACKGROUND

In the late eighties, Cuba experienced a significant renewal of religious spirituality, ecclesiastical activity, and worship in general, following what could be considered two decades of retreat before the ideological hegemony of atheism. Renewal—also known as revival—refers to (sometimes documented) evidence of a growing number of believers, increased observance of important feast days, more outward religious symbols and less inhibition about overt professions of faith, and the emergence of new forms of religious expression. In short, today we can speak of the "active insertion" of religious institutions and movements in Cuban civil society (Del Rey and Castañeda 2002).

Much has been said on both sides about the conflict between the Catholic Church and the state that developed between 1959 and 1962 in the aftermath of the revolution. It is worthwhile to remember, however, that Cuban Catholicism has experienced two significant historical reversals. The first occurred during the transition from colonial rule to dependent republic and was related to anticlerical sentiment, in response to the Church's sustained and myopic rejection of the Cuban independence movement in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Church entered the republic encumbered by the fact that it was still Spanish, still the Church of colonial domination. It recovered from this reversal—with assistance from Washington, which held the republican state accountable for damages that should have been Spain's responsibility—by aligning its apparatus with the new framework of domination and placing at its service a vast, stratified Catholic education system that paralleled the public school system, in which religious education was expressly prohibited.[2]

The same means could not be used to recover from the conflict of the early sixties because, in 1961, the revolutionary government eliminated the Church's main sphere of influence by establishing public education as the only authorized system and expropriating private facilities. This time, the Church was obliged to recover under less advantageous circumstances and confront the restrictions imposed by a political system that was officially atheist up until the early nineties.

In examining the current panorama, and the nineties in particular, the time frame is significant because it shows that the phenomenon of renewal is not a recent one, that is, triggered by the 1998 papal visit to Cuba. Rather, that extremely relevant religious event occurred within the context of the revival and therefore cannot be construed as one of its causes in the strictest sense. Similarly, this phenomenon was not caused by the economic collapse in Cuba in the early nineties, although that must be recognized as an important contributing factor. In fact, it was the breakdown in social solutions to address material problems that accentuated the search for answers, real or symbolic, at the individual level.

Developments in the Catholic Church's profile in the eighties, some of which are reflected in the final report of the 1986 Encuentro Nacional Eclesial Cubano (ENEC 1986), were indicative of recovery in terms of the Church's presence and religious activity overall. This is confirmed by research conducted in the late eighties by the Department of Social and Religious Studies of the Center for Psychological and Sociological Research.[3] According to these studies, approximately 85% of the Cuban population reported some type of belief in or contact with the divine, while formal ties to structured religions remained under 16%. In contrast, atheists accounted for just 15% of the sample.

The current revival of religion in Cuba cannot be delinked from concurrent worldwide trends in the context of global change. Surveys conducted in the United States in the late nineties reveal significant increases in the number of Pentecostal Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and other nontraditional denominations. Similar trends have been observed in Europe, while Pentecostalism and other conversion movements, frequently considered "sects" by their critics, have proliferated in Latin America since the late sixties.

CATHOLIC VITALITY IN THE
RENEWAL PROCESS OF THE NINETIES

It is worth noting that what is being described as renewal is not exclusively—or necessarily even essentially—a result of numerical growth, although this may be its most visible manifestation. It should rather be described as a process that is taking place in several different spheres. The first is renewal in the sphere of popular (grass-roots) religiousness, in which worship is direct and syncretism[4] with religions of African origin cuts across virtually the entire spectrum. In the past ten years, popular religiousness[5] has become increasingly uninhibited and surfaces practically unimpeded in everyday life (Del Rey and Castañeda 2002). It frequently takes the form of self-discovery, accompanied by a certain air of surprise—not as the institutional church views it, as an imperfect or incomplete form of religiousness, but rather as a legitimate religious manifestation in and of itself. It is precisely in this sphere of popular religions that early trends toward renewal emerged most forcefully.

Popular prayer is a more spontaneous and direct form of communication with the divine than formal liturgical prayers (Guanche 2001). As one of Lidia Cabrera's (1989) sources remarked, the saints addressed in popular prayer are the same as the Catholic saints, they just have different names (also, the *orishas* eat a lot and need to dance, while the Catholic saints neither eat nor dance, and only accept offerings of candles, incense, and oils).

As for mainstream religions or religious groups, moderate growth in membership has been observed across the denominational spectrum of Protestant faiths. However, similar to trends across the continent, the membership of Pentecostal and other nontraditional faiths in Cuba has grown at a much higher rate than that of traditional Protestant denominations.

Catholic renewal is a more difficult and complex topic for well-known historical reasons.[6] In terms of social influence, Catholicism increasingly shares space on the contemporary religious map with Protestant denominations, even though its institutional strength increased consistently throughout the decade. Some exploratory studies[7] conducted recently estimate that not more than 100,000 people attend Catholic Mass on Sunday; this estimate would not exceed 300,000 were it to include committed Catholics who do not attend Mass. The number of Protestants is estimated at approximately 500,000 including Pentecostal Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Adventists.

CATHOLIC INSTITUTIONAL RECONSTRUCTION IN THE NINETIES

Although the corpus of the Catholic Church appeared to be on the road to recovery following the 1986 ENEC, the institution had not shown signs of development in other areas. The 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall, which precipitated the collapse of world socialism, was an event to which the Cuban experiment could not remain immune. In their 1993 pastoral letter, *Everything Waits for Love*, the bishops offered a more nuanced local interpretation of Catholic social doctrine. This missive was conceived for a world that was no longer bipolar, in which attention must be paid to the failure of socialism and the coordinates set for an alternative project—one of capitalist transition—reserving for Catholics a substantive protagonist role.

The ENEC was outdated for these purposes. There, Cuban Catholics had concluded that socialism taught them to give out of justice what before they had given out of charity. Their proposal for pastoral accompaniment, albeit critical of social transformation under socialist coordinates, gave way to launching a "project for alternative power through moral hegemony," in which charity precedes, informs, and subsumes justice (Alonso 1997, ch. III, IV). In early 1996, a meeting christened "ENEC II" was held to debate the guiding principles of the 1993 pastoral letter, as if it were a continuation of that earlier powerful moment in the life of the Cuban Church. The result was to consolidate a critical reading of the existing Cuban project—with little or no acknowledgment of its principles of equity and justice, the achievements made in that regard, and the barriers removed—with a proposal whose ambiguity failed to mask the familiar contours of Christian Democratic programs.

Turning to another facet of this institutional reconstruction, in 1989 the diocesan structure in the country comprised five dioceses and two archdioceses, each with its respective prelate; the territorial and hierarchical Church structure had remained virtually unchanged for thirty years. By the end of 1998, there were eight dioceses and three archdioceses, and the number of prelates had risen to thirteen. Currently, there are 602 churches, 297 priests (55.3% of them Cuban), 27 lay brothers, 31 deacons, and 518 nuns, for a total of 873 religious leaders, 420 more than ten years before. More than one hundred seminarians are studying for the priesthood in Cuba and abroad, a figure comparable to the highest numbers reached in the fifties and far higher than the figure for the late eighties, which barely exceeded twenty (Del Rey and Castañeda 2002).

The Catholic lay movement also was revitalized during this period. The Catholic University Student Movement (MECU), the Pinar del Río Center for Civic-Religious Training, the Promoter Team for Lay Social Participation, the Justice and Peace Commission, the Catholic Journalists Association, the Catholic Historians Association, and research centers in several dioceses are just a few relevant examples of organized laity. The Archdiocese of Havana's Casa Laical is another center of active cultural promotion.

The Dominican Fathers' Fray Bartolomé de las Casas School is a particularly interesting initiative. Since 1996, it has organized conferences, meetings, and roundtables featuring cultural and academic personalities from many different backgrounds. Today it constitutes the Cuban Church's most open forum in terms of the diversity of its participants, its atmosphere of freedom and respect, and its constructive approach.

During the nineties, the Church established an intelligentsia of young, primarily lay, ecclesiastically establishment people, willing to collaborate in any area not off limits to them. They publish numerous Catholic magazines, mostly diocesan bulletins, including *Palabra Nueva* (Archdiocese of Havana), *Vitral* (Pinar del Río diocese), and *Vivarium* (Archdiocese of Havana Cultural Center). More than forty Catholic publications currently are in circulation, compared to little more than a decade ago when there was just one Sunday bulletin, *Christian Life*, which the Jesuits printed in vast quantities. They have become the vehicles for critical opinions, some comprehensive, and for proposals that have sometimes been identified as the only opposition tolerated by the regime.[8]

The Church's visibility is also evident in the periodic "social weeks" involving cultural events, meetings of historians, and so forth. It is found also in the introduction of more elaborate and dynamic pastoral plans; in evangelization efforts carried out by a committed laity; and in efforts to apply the Church's social doctrine domestically, as the inspiration behind its own unofficial and usually contentious political, economic, and social projects.

The creation of a Cuban cardinalate ten years ago added yet another dimension to the institutional recovery process. This was the culmination of the development of a set of conditions that, it was hoped, would make it possible to receive the pope in a "new Church."[9] A new cardinalate had not been created in Cuba since the death of Manuel Arteaga in 1964. The reestablishment of the position of cardinal in the island's Catholic hierar-

chy meant that the world Church, through the pontiff, believed that significant renovation had taken place there. It meant that the Church was providing its flock with a pastor and the state with an interlocutor, at the highest hierarchical level. It also meant a prelacy that transcended territorial borders; Miami-based Cuban Catholics are under the jurisdiction of local bishops, but Ortega is cardinal of all Cubans, as has been pointed out in some controversial situations. Finally, apart from proximity to the pope, it meant membership in the college of cardinals, in other words, eligibility to elect, and be elected, a pope.

John Paul II's 1998 Pastoral Visit to Cuba

The pope's pastoral visit to Cuba was the religious event that raised the greatest expectations in the press and public opinion. The debate over the relevance of the visit polarized already inflamed positions in favor of, and against, the Cuban revolutionary project (Alonso 1998). Although in their missives preceding the papal visit the bishops assured everyone that it would be as if "Jesus Christ were to visit us," neither the Catholic nor the political hierarchies were harboring high hopes. Catholics from the Cuban American community in Miami organized a cruise to attend the pope's mass in Havana, while right-wing forces successfully pressured the archdiocese to block the initiative.

It should be pointed out that during the final months of 1997, the Cuban church and state worked together toward a common goal for the first time since 1959. Fidel Castro asked the entire population to attend the massive liturgical celebrations that the pope would officiate during his stay, extolled his personal virtues, and demanded the highest respect for his spiritual stature. He provided every security to the pontiff. He used historical arguments to justify Polish anti-Sovietism as a legitimate form of rebellion. He even went so far as to exonerate the pope of any responsibility for the collapse of European socialism, arguing that it had been attributed to him unfairly.[10] He thus announced what his personal stance would be and placed at the pope's service his demonstrated mobilizing power. From that time on, the potential for success was reinforced by an official invitation above and beyond the laborious preparations underway in the local church. The invitation from the political administration, supplementing that of the bishops, was directed toward the entire population of the country, rather than just Catholics.

Hence, the quandary of who would benefit from the success or failure of the visit was eliminated, since success would benefit everyone and failure would only serve the cause of intransigence. Perhaps for the first time in four decades, the population would find in the mass media a message that was not the official one (Alonso 2000a). The pope owned the Cuban media for five days.

A more careful examination reveals the distinction between the impact of the event itself and the substance of the pope's discourse in Cuba. One outcome of the event is that it left no room for political defeat. The pope's discourse, independent of this context, was ambivalent, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say contradictory. It oscillated between a global agenda and a local agenda of very different dimensions. It also moved back and forth between a religious agenda and a social agenda that were nearly impossible to distinguish (Alonso 2000b). Hence, despite an explicit pronouncement against hegemony, the papal discourse focused on an ethical project in which Catholicism exercises hegemony, outside of which moral values would not be viable. This begs the question of whether the pope seeks to reconcile like-minded projects or to actually displace others while proffering his own as the only acceptable option. This formula permeated all specific references; it demonstrated how setting expedient local Church priorities in function of a sectorial hegemonic interest could overshadow his global discourse—against unrestrained capitalism, the tyranny of the market, inequality, poverty, hunger, pollution, the violence of war, intolerance, and so on—that predominated on other occasions.[11]

Although there has been no new research on religious practices at the national level to follow up on the observations made in the late eighties, we cannot ignore that the pope's visit had a galvanizing effect across the spectrum of Cuban religious life, through discord as well as commonality. At the same time, however, we are seeing signs of moderation in some forms of popular religious expression. This was true of the pilgrimage to El Rincón for the feast of St. Lazarus (Babalú Ayé in Santería), an event that usually draws the largest number of believers. In 2003, 69,300 people joined this pilgrimage—8,000 fewer than in 2002, 12,500 fewer than in 2001, and 19,500 fewer than in 2000.[12] This trend cannot be regarded as merely ephemeral. Clearly, we are facing a complex phenomenon that requires well-substantiated responses.

THE POSTVISIT PANORAMA

Among social institutions, the Catholic Church involves such a dense concentration of power relations that some academics hesitate to situate it within the concept of civil society, preferring to assign it a separate category.[13] As a result, it is difficult to find a modern state in which the notion of normal relations with the church is not charged with a certain tension (and distension) between the ecclesiastical institution's desire to maximize its space and the political system's desire to preserve the boundaries it considers appropriate. What is usually considered normalcy is found somewhere between the two. Ideally, the church would be able to clearly define its legitimate needs, and the state the parameters and boundaries of its own institutional space.

It is therefore unacceptable that polarized positions be considered indicative of a state of normalcy. State imposition of an atheistic model reduces religious expression to a minimum, while the elimination of boundaries on religious expression can compromise the state in a tacit confessionalism. The dilemma takes shape at the level of institutional, rather than individual freedom.

The Cuban Catholic Church has a list of demands that predates the pope's visit and has not been addressed adequately, either before or since. The authorization of priests to enter the country is a persistent issue, since the actual numbers do not meet pastoral goals and the level of local vocation is never sufficient. Although the Church might be correct in terms of its pastoral needs, the solution involves a migratory aspect that overlaps with other government policies. Another pastoral need relates to permission to build new churches, and limitations in this regard seem less justified. Another recurring theme is the goal of having a Catholic education structure that is not limited to catechism. While the Church has come to recognize that this does not mean reinstating a parallel school system, there have been certain signs of this motivation. The fourth area of unmet interests relates to access to the mass media.

The Cuban Church operates within a socialist state identified for many years with an atheistic doctrine. Government leaders adopted this doctrine, passed it on to their successors, and denied political space not only to an ethical Christian project, but to any explicit form of religious commitment whatsoever. To date, neither the changes in the Church's institutionality and influence initiated in the early nineties nor the quota of understanding left

behind by the pope's visit have been able to erase the imprint of that lega-
cy or to stop new scars from forming around political decisions relating to
religion or the Church. Signs of unfulfilled expectations following the papal
visit to Cuba have been observed since the first anniversary of that event
and have persisted over the ensuing years.[14]

The Cuban Church, for its part, has demonstrated a level of conser-
vatism and homogeneity that is, I believe, unsurpassed in Latin America. In
the past forty years, there has been absolutely no room in the priesthood for
those committed in practice to more innovative and courageous positions
that challenge capital-driven approaches, as has occurred throughout most
of Latin America. In the sphere of social problems, which—more than the-
ological influences—ultimately inform its relationship with history, the
Church has adopted a largely contentious approach and, particularly since
1993, has routinely searched for alternatives on the margins of the system.[15]

It is therefore not difficult to see why the government might have a well-
founded tendency to look askance at the Church's demands, to refrain from
fostering a climate of greater institutional freedom for its pastoral adminis-
tration, and to carefully weigh any apparently ordinary political action that
might give the religious institution ammunition to use against the system.

Theoretical and pastoral production in Cuba has a decidedly *ecclesiacen-
tric* slant. And with the exception of a very small group of lay people, mar-
ginalized from the religious institution because of its opinions, the Cuban
Catholic intelligentsia (laity and clergy alike) is orthodox in its adherence
to the papal positions articulated in the social doctrine of the Church. The
orthodox homogeneity of institutional Catholic intellectuals surpasses that
attributed to the institutional revolutionary leadership. In other words, the
Catholics are more categorical, formulaic, and exclusive, and exhibit less
diversity, than the Marxists.

We have, then, a difficult normalcy. Nonetheless, I count myself among
those who believe that had the United States not pursued a course of
extreme hostility toward Cuba—including it in the "Axis of Evil" and once
again raising the fear of military aggression, and if the Cuban economy had
found a more stable route to recovery and a more rational structure, then
the Church's critical posture also might have been more moderate. In that
case, normalcy might have a different face. It is even possible that some
members of the hierarchy might have fostered a return to the positions of
ENEC. The communication barrier really does not lie in the extent to

which solutions can be found for specific demands or complaints, but rather in issues that go to the heart of opposing social platforms.

SOME VIEWS OF THE CUBAN CHURCH THROUGH THE LENS OF 2003

Over the past ten years, the Cuban Church has produced more official and unofficial documents than in the last thirty or more years. Two of the more recent writings stand out: "There is no Fatherland without Virtue," a pastoral letter from Cardinal Ortega commemorating the 150th anniversary of the death of Félix Varela,[16] and a theological-pastoral guide from the bishops entitled "The Church's Social Presence," issued in September on the tenth anniversary of the pastoral letter *Everything Waits for Love.*[17] Some expert readings see in them signs of a hardening of positions. Documents from this period have been increasingly sensitive to criticism from the political sphere, at the same time that the Cuban bishops have come under criticism from Miami, where they are frequently regarded as lukewarm and conciliatory.

Particularly striking was the September missive's emphasis on the Church's position of not supporting any political position; "neither the government nor the opposition" was repeated four times in an eleven-page paper. It also contained a warning about "divisive influences . . . of various types inside the Church urging it to play a political role that does not fall within its mission." Some months before, at the end of a conference held in Fray Bartolomé de las Casas School concluding the course introduction to *Te basta mi Gracia*, someone asked Cardinal Ortega why the Church did not support the Varela Project. He responded: "It is not the mission of the Church to be the opposition party, which unfortunately does not exist in Cuba . . . and it should not support any project of that nature." He also described how Cintio Vitier and Arcos Bergnes belonged to the same Church and had to make peace there, because the Church belongs to both of them.[18] This is not cited at random, but rather because this is precisely how the Church has handled its autonomy in its relations with the revolutionary government.

In another speech given in Germany in late 2000, Ortega said

Revolution in Cuba is nationality, future, and independence. The event that divides twentieth-century Cuban history into two parts can be con-

densed into a single phrase: the triumph of the revolution, since it is considered that in 1959 the authentic possibility of carrying out the revolutionary project so often dreamed of was finally achieved. . . . In everyday speech, anyone can profess their noncommunism, but not being a revolutionary entails serious deficiencies in the citizen's very status." (Te basta mi gracia,, p. 998)

Beyond this subtle remark, it would seem that an important deficit in the Church's discourse, one that isn't always obvious, is the lack of a global reflection on political, economic, and social change (perhaps it would be more accurate to say that there is an ill-conceived global reflection). The local Church appears to ignore entirely, and excludes from its discourse, the world of hegemonic relations that imposes its conditions and rules and defines the context of national reality. Not even in its social assessments does the Church contemplate the dramatic isolation of the Cuban economy or the real impact of policies emanating from the capitalist power center. There has yet to be a single voice from the Cuban Church to pronounce the word, "imperialism."

What is more, the types of solutions proposed for the inventory of problems facing the country, supposedly inspired by the social doctrine of the Church, point toward an inexorable subordination to the current system of dependency. The Catholic hierarchy has condemned the economic blockade (embargo, call it what you will) since 1969. But it is not enough to simply repeat a statement that increasingly comes across as formulaic, especially when offset by positions that reduce the problems facing Cuban society to defects in the political institutional structure, or its socialist orientation, or voluntarism, or lack of capacity, or an aging paradigm.

Not one Cuban bishop, for whom the scenario must be quite clear, has condemned the White House. And this is the case even though the society that taught them to "give out of justice what before they had given out of charity" has suffered 45 years of unrelenting harassment, over and above the errors and imperfections of the system, the defects attributable to its leaders and their leadership styles, and the wounds left behind from so many decades of atheistic disparagement. The global discourse of the Holy See attacks the macrospace of world domination and its effects, but this is not reflected in any statements by the Cuban hierarchy, which otherwise is quick to defend the pope's positions with regard to other matters (the family, abortion, sexuality, violence, corruption, and drugs). The Cuban

Church officially distances itself, where pertinent, from politically controversial extremes by adopting a supposedly impartial stance. It does not favor the more committed discourse that emerged autonomously from the 1986 ENEC and is present mostly among certain sectors of the laity.

Outside the country, the view from Miami frequently opposes the Cuban hierarchy and would like to see it take a firm stance of political opposition. Washington's point of view can be read in reports on international religious freedom written by the relevant committees acting under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1996. This act authorizes the United States to monitor, through its embassies, the status of religious freedom in the rest of the world and to intervene, along the sweeping arc traced by the concept of "intervention," when it decides that there is reason to do so. This apparatus for usurping sovereignty—of which, much to my surprise, many people inside and outside the United States are unaware—also has its particular view and assessment, usually documented, of the Cuban reality. Its interpretations clearly are aimed at making Cuba into a case of infringement. Thus, the complexity I described at the outset refers not only to the problem under examination, but also to its many diverse interpretations.

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NOTES

1. Presented at the seminar on "Changes in Cuban Society from the Nineties to the Present," Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO), Santo Domingo, 17–18 December 2003.
2. See Maza Miquel (1999).
3. These studies remain unpublished and circulate in manuscript form.
4. "Syncretism" is a religious and philosophical concept relating to the union of different ideas or beliefs, in the absence of a critical assimilation process. A classic application of this concept is found in the case of Latin American religions of African origin, although criticisms of this abound. Cuban Santería offers a good example of syncretism in the adoption of a Catholic saint to identify a Yoruba *orisha*. The most frequent objection is that "syncretism" doesn't contribute to clear differentiation, since it would be difficult historically to find a religion untouched by syncretic assimilation.
5. This term refers to religious activity that does not follow institutional models, churches, or denominations, rarely recognizes leaders for worship, and does not lend itself to liturgical disciplines. It is centered on the direct relationship between the believer and the divine. The Catholic Church assigns its own connotation to popular (grass-roots) Catholicism, one that is very controversial because it subordinates the syncretic aspects, which are predominant in the Afro-Cuban belief system, to the Catholic aspects.
6. Some of Cardinal Jaime Ortega's homilies included such allusions; see *Te basta mi Gracia* (Madrid: Ediciones Palabra, 2002).
7. These studies remain unpublished and circulate in manuscript form.
8. The Church has opposed officially registering its publications to avoid their being subject to government oversight, a decision that does not exempt it from respecting existing laws. This position, however, has not given rise to any difficulty to date.
9. This term appeared in some of the cardinal's speeches and homilies in the mid-nineties.
10. Fidel Castro's views can be found in his 13 December 1997 speech before the National Assembly of Popular Power, and in more detail in his appearance on Televisión Cubana on 4 January 1998. In his farewell speech to the pope, delivered on 25 January in the airport, he refers to the "religious leader to whom they would like to attribute the responsibility for having destroyed socialism in Europe."

11. See, for example, his speech at the Fiftieth Session of the United Nations General Assembly on 5 October 1995, which is emblematic of the meaning this global agenda should have for Catholicism.

12. Taken from the *Estudio sobre la devoción a San Lázaro (2003), Informe preliminar* conducted by the Social and Religious Studies Department of CIPS.

13. Antonio Gramsci's notes on Catholicism in his *Prison Notebooks* describes this problem on several occasions.

14. See, for example, Cardinal Ortega's pastoral letter on the occasion of the Holy Year of Jubilee, in October 1999; in *Te basta mi gracia* (see n. 6); and the Jubilee message from the bishop's conference in January 2000.

15. Alonso (1997) contains an analysis of "Everything Waits for Love" at the time it appeared (ch. III) and on the debate over the secular nature of the state and Catholic social doctrine (ch.VII).

16. *Palabra Nueva* (La Habana), No. 116 (February 2003).

17. *Palabra Nueva* (La Habana), No. 124 (October 2003).

18. *Palabra Nueva*

Notes on the Role of Religious Organizations in Community Work and Service Provision in Cuba After 1990

REV. RAIMUNDO GARCÍA FRANCO

SOME BACKGROUND

In order to understand what Cuban religious organizations have been able to do, and have been doing, since 1990, we must examine some of the preceding social history. The Roman Catholic Church, the Masonic lodges, and the Abakuá groups or societies have the longest history of providing community assistance. The first two were established in Cuba after the initial meeting of the European and Indo-American cultures, and the third emerged as a result of the importation of slaves from Africa.

The Roman Catholic Church, as was common practice in Europe, tended to the poor to some extent. It created health institutions, schools, and homes for children and the elderly. Likewise, some men and women religious tended to the sick and needy in hospitals and other government-operated centers. Other initiatives grew out of certain Church sectors devoted to improving society as part of civil society; these came to be known as "the living forces in society." Lay organizations associated with the Catholic Church supported its social initiatives.

The Masonic lodges, founded on the belief in a Supreme Being, sought the moral improvement of society. They worked to support lodge members and their families and also contributed to social development initiatives. In some places and on some occasions, these lodges provided assistance to the poorest sectors of the population.

The Abakuá societies emerged as secret all-male groups of blacks whose purpose also was to help members and their families.

Some Protestant or reformed churches, such as the Episcopal or Anglican, Baptist, and Presbyterian, had become engaged in missionary

work in Cuba by the latter part of the 19th century. These minority churches were strengthened, and initiated their social outreach, following the U.S. intervention and the founding of the Republic of Cuba, which afforded them more freedom relative to the colonial period when the Catholic Church was the official church of the country. The social work of the Protestant churches included opening schools and homes for children and the elderly (it should be recalled that a bloody war had just ended). They also participated in other initiatives for social advancement or collaborated with government projects to benefit the poorest sectors and to contribute to national development.

From the founding of the republic until 1961, religious institutions provided social assistance mainly in the areas of values-based education, national disaster relief, periodic assistance to the poor, and attempts to found agricultural cooperatives and youth and professional groups that also occasionally assisted poor sectors or dared to defend some rights in the sociopolitical context.

Leaving aside other considerations, the first laws enacted by the 1959 revolution included the Agrarian Reform and Urban Reform Laws, as well as other measures to benefit the most disadvantaged sectors of the population. This was the beginning of a change that was accentuated by the atheistic influence of the Soviet Union. Religious institutions were marginalized gradually and there appeared to be a strategy to eliminate their social assistance programs. This was compounded by the U.S. embargo, which blocked the flow of financial resources to religious institutions thereby weakening their role in society.

Cuban religious institutions then entered a prolonged survival period exacerbated by the drain of their leadership and members. This was attributable to two causes: religious discrimination that created fear and prevented the oblation from reaching religious institutions, and the exodus of Cubans who left their native soil for one reason or another. Surprisingly, during this period (1960–89) new socially involved religious institutions emerged despite the existing conflict among the revolution, the church, and believers.

The Christian Student Movement was founded in 1960 to educate young Christians with an ecumenical focus open to political and social participation. In 1969, a small group of evangelical pastors was able, for the first time as a religious group, to participate in the sugar cane harvest

in areas surrounding the township of Salvador Rosales. This set an important precedent during a particularly difficult moment for religion, believers, and particularly for ecumenical social service organizations. A representative group known as Ecumenical Social Action in Latin America (ISAL) was formed in 1971 (it later changed its name to Latin American Ecumenical Social Action—ASEL) to enhance the social and political awareness of Christians through biblical-theological reflection. The Cuban branch of the Latin American Evangelical Commission for Christian Education (CELADEC) was founded in 1974 with a spirit of renewal that enabled Christians to better understand the rapid social changes that were taking place worldwide, and particularly in Cuba.

Also in 1974, the Baptist Student Worker Coordination of Cuba (COEBAC) was founded. This group of pastors and other Baptist leaders from the three conventions of that period had a common ecumenical goal of social participation. This included voluntary social work in agricultural areas and consciousness-raising, so that Christians would not remain on the sidelines of the social process in which Cuba was immersed. In 1976, a chapter of the Latin American Union of Ecumenical Youth (ULAJE) was established in Cuba. A Cuba affiliate of the Christian Conference for Peace, based in Prague, Czechoslovakia, was organized during this decade and worked to support liberation movements and socialism, and to promote Christian social participation.

The objective of all these institutions was to contribute to the ecumenical education of Christian youth and improve the social insertion of this group as well as of evangelical believers in general. This included biblical and theological, and social and political studies, in addition to volunteer work with various governmental social programs and production activities.

The book *Fidel and Religion: Castro talks on revolution and religion with Frei Betto* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), which includes an interview by Dominican Friar Betto with Dr. Fidel Castro, was disseminated widely throughout the country. On 2 April 1990, President Castro held a nationally televised meeting with approximately seventy ecclesiastical and ecumenical Protestant and Jewish leaders. This was an unprecedented milestone because of the dialogues it launched, especially between Archbishop Zachi, the papal nuncio in Cuba, and President Castro, which to some extent eased relations between the Roman Catholic

Church and the revolutionary leadership. This posture of constructive dialogue has continued to be maintained by Cardinal Jaime Ortega.

In the late eighties, the European socialist camp, and in particular the Soviet Union, disappeared. This drastically reduced the pressure emanating from atheistic notions and launched a search for new national and international policy horizons on the part of the Cuban Communist Party and the government. The analysis presented in *El ahora de Cuba tras el derrumbe del comunismo y tras la visita del Papa* (Nueva Utopia, 1998), by theologian Giulio Girardi, is particularly interesting. It objectively describes the Soviet Union's impact on the Cuban Revolution, in what was referred to as "the copycat syndrome." The disappearance of the socialist bloc led to a revision of all strategies, including those related to religious institutions and believers in Cuba, although it is important to point out that a process in this direction had already gone through several stages.

These events were followed by another of equal significance: the Fourth Congress of the Cuban Communist Party in 1991 decreed an end to discrimination on religious grounds, opened the possibility of including religious believers in the party, and proposed constitutional reforms eliminating atheistic principles and the marginalization of believers. Although isolated social initiatives were already underway in the religious sector, these actions made a significant difference not only in terms of the growth of the churches, but also the possibility of a more relevant social participation beginning in the nineties.

THE WORK

Cuban society, which had evolved in a framework conducive to social and economic advancement, timidly embarked on a creative process in the nineties. At the government level this took the form of a limited economic reopening to foreign capital and the granting of permits to open small family businesses. In the religious sphere, this process was characterized by the growth of organizations and publications that quickly reflected differences with the political and social status quo. This did not mean "against," just "different." Student, worker, and professional groups began to form within the Roman Catholic Church. Although they were small and relatively "new," their publications contributed a brand of criticism that had virtually disappeared.

Within the ecumenical movement, the "evangelical" and "protestant" churches, Afro-Cuban cults, the Jewish community, and the Masonic lodges launched a slow but sustained movement characterized by growing social insertion at both the theoretical and practical levels. Religious institutions have been reinserting themselves in Cuban society through two main types of activities: charity and development assistance. The latter includes actions that contribute to the betterment of communities in many different ways, and those that help educate communities to analyze, study, and find solutions to their own problems.

The churches and ecumenical institutions have also participated in governmental plans and projects and, less frequently, have worked in a parallel fashion. Many types of projects are included here: agricultural; educational; cultural; sustainable energy; environmental protection; production of medicines, contributions of equipment and repairs for schools and public health centers; childcare centers; repair and construction of housing, health service centers, and water supply systems; and equipment for weather centers. International humanitarian assistance has been obtained including school supplies, medicines, food, and so forth. The churches have also provided technical-scientific advisory services to diverse sectors.

To this must be added services for the elderly in sectors that for one reason or another are not covered by social services, such as food, laundry, and personal care. These institutions have also contributed in the area of services for orphaned children, the use of traditional or alternative medicines, the production of medicinal plants, facilitation of specialized medical treatment from abroad, and agricultural production for social assistance. These institutions likewise have been involved in service provision to other sectors, including assistance and counseling for drug addicts, alcoholics, suicidal people, and those facing high levels of stress and other conflicts; and services for the disabled and the sick, including people infected with HIV-AIDS and their relatives. They have participated in vacation programs for children with cancer, opened new homes for senior citizens and centers for child workers, and provided services for the deaf and deaf-mutes throughout the national territory, among others.

Something new for the churches as well as the government has been the establishment of ecumenical centers for training and social services around the country, which are taking on various roles. Although their scope of activity is modest, these centers are significant in that they are recognized

by the churches, the Council of Churches, civil society, the Communist Party, and the government and are a sign of revitalization and creativity. Several religious and ecumenical publications have also emerged—books, magazines, and bulletins whose analytical content includes criticism and suggestions on matters of national and international interest.

The reaction of the political authorities and the government has been one of general acceptance, although dissatisfaction and suspicion persist on both sides. At the same time, channels for dialogue, collaboration, and supervision have been created that, despite their ups and downs, are continually in motion. Unfortunately, these successes have been accompanied by difficulties, including certain churches' use of some "social services" as a proselytizing tool and the action of certain unscrupulous individuals who use such facilities for their personal profit.

A significant achievement is the bridge that the Communist Party established in the form of the Central Committee's Office of Religious Affairs. Another has been sustained and ongoing dialogue that sectors of believers and the churches have developed with the political authorities and the government in Cuba. In addition to meetings with President Castro, in 2001, a group of Cuban religious leaders met with Dr. José Ramón Balaguer, director of the Ideological Department of the Party's Central Committee, and Lic. Caridad Diego Bello, director of the Office of Religious Affairs, to try to engage in sustained conversations on any issue of national relevance. Although that gathering concluded with a commitment to hold regular meetings, this did not occur until 17 October 2003.

The activities carried out by the churches and ecumenical institutions together are modest when compared to the enormous social undertaking that the socialist project has carried out under the leadership of the Communist Party and the Cuban government. They are, however, a sign and symbol of their desire and capacity to contribute to solutions in the midst of changes in the political, social, economic, and religious spheres (see a partial list of institutions in Appendix 1). Perspectives for social action by religious organizations will surely continue to develop, albeit not without contradictions. There will always be causes and the path of vigorous dialogue must be followed to work toward common goals and find solutions that respond to the diverse interests in Cuba.

APPENDIX 1
SOME INSTITUTIONS ENGAGED IN SOCIAL SERVICES

Ecumenical Institutions

- The Cuban Council of Churches: Committee for Life, Medical Committee, Committee for the Disabled, Research Center, and the Superior Institute of Biblical and Theological Studies.
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center.
- Christian Center for Reflection and Dialogue
- The "Bartolomé Lavastida" Training and Service Center
- Christian Youth Association
- Christian Student Movement
- The Evangelical Theological Seminary
- The "Obed Gorrín" Community Center
- The "Augusto Cotto" Information Center
- The Latin American Union of Ecumenical Youth

National and Local Churches Providing Some Type of Ongoing Social Service or Making Occasional Contributions

- Roman Catholic Church, through parishes and religious orders: three homes for senior citizens, two in Havana City and one in Havana Province; a center for sick children in Havana City.
- Baptist Church of Eastern Cuba: a home for senior citizens is under construction in Santiago de Cuba province.
- Salvation Army: senior citizens home in Havana City
- Reformed Presbyterian Church in Cuba
- Seventh Day Adventist Church
- Baptist Convention of Western Cuba: senior citizens home in Havana City
- Reformed Presbyterian Church of Luyano: CEPREL, Havana City
- Baptist Brotherhood of Cuba: Kairos Center in Matanzas City and other activities
- Evangelical Church of Los Pinos Nuevos.
- Evangelical Group of Gedeón: senior citizens home in Colon, in Matanzas Province

APPENDIX 1 *continued*

- Church of Christ
- Evangelical Pentecostal Christian Church of Alquizar: Biovida Project
- Assembly of God
- Free Evangelical Church, Havana City
- Methodist Church: senior citizens home in Havana City
- Episcopal or Anglican Church
- Independent Bethel Church
- Presbyterian Church of Varadero, Matanzas province
- Assembly of God Church in Havana City
- Reformed Presbyterian Church of Santi Espíritus.
- Reformed Presbyterian Church of Cabaiguan, Santi Spiritus Province
- Reformed Presbyterian Church of Máximo Gómez, Matanzas province
- "William Carey" Baptist Church in Havana City
- Reformed Presbyterian Church of Havana City
- Free Baptist Church: senior citizens home

Other Institutions of Cuban Believers

- Masonic Lodge: senior citizens home in Havana City.
- Odd Fellows Lodges
- Gentlemen of the Light Lodges.
- Abacuá Fraternities or Societies
- Yorubá Association of Cuba

Some Institutions That Have Supported Cuban Churches and Ecumenical Institutions

- World Council of Churches
- Caritas
- National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States
- Disciples of Christ Church, United States
- United Church of Canada
- Mennonite Central Committee of North America
- Anglican Church of Canada (PWRDF).
- OXFAM–Belgium.
- OXFAM–Canada.
- Council of Churches of Canada
- KAIROS–Canada

- Canadian government's Agency for International Development
- Japanese governments Agency for International Development
- Latin American Council of Churches
- Polytechnic University of Madrid.
- City of Alcorcón, Spain
- City of Madrid
- SODEPAZ of Spain
- Bread for the World, Germany
- Evangelical Churches of Germany
- Caribbean Council of Churches
- Agency of the Norwegian Church

- DIAKONIA–Sweden
- AIETI–Spain
- Spanish Agency for International Cooperation
- Presbyterian Church of Canada
- Church World Service
- A.I.D. International
- Partner International
- Johnny and Friends
- M. A. P. International
- Christopher Blinder Mission
- Evangelical Medical Association
- Reformed Christian Church of the United States

In Order to Wake Up Tomorrow, You Have to Sleep Tonight

Lázara Menéndez

This chapter examines Santería or Regla Ocha-Ifá in Cuba in the nineties. Using a "culturalogical" approach, it seeks to penetrate spaces in which everyday culture and art have interacted, making it possible to portray tangible conflicts in the intersection between the codes of Santería and those of the artistic tradition adopted by creators exploring grass-roots (popular) religious expression.

A complexity approach[1] applied to cultural theory can further the recognition of the power of a Cuban cultural process with the specific forces and influences of Santería or Regla Ocha-Ifá. According to Alberto Cirese (1992), the actions of the Fourth Congress of the Cuban Communist Party, the constitutional reforms, and the legalization of the Yoruba Cultural Society of Cuba[2] as a religious institution combined to partially elevate that religious system from its subordinate position. That position had historically provided the equilibrium within which it had developed since its reconfiguration during the colonial period.

The saying that serves as the title of this chapter contains a figurative paradox. In its formulation, it is an example of religious determinism; in its position in the Ifá predictive-interpretive system,[3] it relates to the content of the Santería or Regla Ocha-Ifá principle of transformation. It comes from the Ogbe Meyi *oddun* (sign),[4] which involves three of the 48 pairs that could be regarded conventionally as nodes of equilibrium in this system and, by extension, indicators of the cultural complex of Ocha-Ifá. The three pairs are the tension between light and shadow, the expansion and contraction of the forces of the universe, and the knowledge–no knowledge relationship.[5] These three pairings act as dialectically synthesizable concepts rather than opposing forces.

Regla Ocha-Ifá comprises multilayered structures on different horizons of complexity. Let us look at three of them situated within this cultural-religious complex: the *orichas*, predictive-interpretative modalities, and the ceremonial protocol. The orichas suggest strategies and standards of conduct governing the relationship between the subject and his or her context. Predictive modalities, articulated in oddun "letters" or signs, represent a "cosmovision" encompassing customs of spiritual discipline, an ethical complex, technology for the development of *iwapele*,[6] and the collection of *Pataki*.[7] The understanding of ceremonial protocol involves a holistic approach to ritual.

The Regla Ocha-Ifá is an open system that interacts with other religious and nonreligious systems. Hence, we can calibrate its relationship to daily life, the social structure, hegemonic cultural principles, the processes that have fostered modernization, enrichment, empowerment, and significant nuclei created or activated by the system in an anomalous or unstable situation. Once activated, points of defense are reinforced until the system has recovered and equilibrium is restored, among other reasons, because *santeros* share among themselves, and with non-santeros, an abstract world of language and thought.

The departure from the equilibrium caused by the events of the nineties in Cuba did not entail an alteration in flow and change; the variables of the Ocha-Ifá system fluctuated within certain tolerable limits. Among the ideas offered by the cosmology derived from the study of the Ifá corpus, the notion of progress does not imply a single, redeeming, universal path. This is because the uniqueness and importance of the individual mean that the stories woven do not comprise a single history, but rather leave the path clear for recognizing plurality, given the multidimensional nature of the oddun and the oricha. When the Yoruba Cultural Society of Cuba (ACYC) was founded in 1992, many religious believers opted not to join it and to refrain from recognizing that institution's project as part of their rituals; hence, the non-hierarchical sharing of functions[8] continued to be a mainstay of the Ifá cosmovision.

Popular religions of African origins in Cuba are part of a complex reality. The path taken, if one can call it that, cannot be traced with a straight line, nor has its development been uniform or free of contradictions. Successes and mistakes interact by virtue of their intercon-

nectedness. The individual may be subjected simultaneously to benefit and harm, or obtain material and spiritual wealth in some aspects of life while experiencing unanticipated want and privation in others. The implications and effects of the theory presented allegorically in the saying can be contrasted with the practice of Regla Ocha-Ifá in Cuba, but their effects on cultural theory are also visible and pertinent inasmuch as the concept of transformation becomes an analytical tool that contributes to the interconnectedness of religious life.

Few studies have attempted to systematize and take a problem-posing approach to the system of meanings and values contained in the present-day practice of Regla Ocha-Ifá as the expression and outward extension of the group. Likewise, assessments connecting the ideas and beliefs of actual people in the period with the social process experienced and organized according to specific values are practically nonexistent. Three different discourses will be discussed below: the official discourse, that of the santeros and babalaos, and that of the art world.

The Changing Paradigm Associated with Santería or Regla Ocha-Ifá

Gente de urgencia diaria,
voces, gargantas, uñas
de la calle, límpidas almas cotidianas,
héroes no, fondo de historia,
sabed que os hablo y sueño,
sabed que os busco en medio de la noche,
la noche, este silencio,
en medio de la noche y la esperanza.

People of daily urgency
voices, throats, fingernails
from the street, limpid every day souls,
heroes no, bedrock of history,
you know I speak to you and dream,
you know I seek you in the middle of
the night,
the night, this silence,
in the middle between night and hope.

In 1990 new changes swept through Cuba, and two artists, at opposite ends of the decade, gave expression to some of the transformations that took place: Adalberto Álvarez, with his song "Y que tú quieres que te den"[10] (So what is it you want them to give you); and Fernando Pérez, in his film *Life is to Whistle*.[11] They showed that is not always possible to separate the prevailing social reality from its aesthetic representations in literature or painting or the latter's contribution to the construction of the social reality. As Roger Chartier put it: "It is no longer possible to conceive of social hierarchies or divisions independently of the cultural processes that create them" (Chartier 2002, 211).

For many months, Álvarez's song, known for the line, "I'm going to ask for you just what you asked for me," was the most requested song on the radio. In this mix of *son*, traditional santero music, and rap, the artist recreates the structure of a *moyuba*, a sort of invocation of the orichas. In his song, the author, whose family comes from a strong religious tradition and who is himself a priest, criticizes the two-faced morality of those who practice their religion in secret. But he goes beyond that too; a careful reading evidences something already pointed out in "La santería que yo conozco":

To speak of Santería as a cultural practice means recognizing a way of living and behaving in the world; a way in which the subject can identify and recognize him- or herself in the particular social reality; a way of guarding against the hostility of the sociocultural milieu with which the individual interacts; and a way of conducting oneself to achieve a specific purpose (Menéndez 1995).

This song served as the backdrop for a pervasive rumor concerning a notable increase in the religious population belonging to Santería or Regla de Ocha-Ifá in Havana City. According to this rumor, one could imagine that virtually the entire population of the capital had been "crowned"[12] and that they were living in either a holy and divine city, a wicked and pagan city, or one contaminated by religion, depending on to whom one spoke. One thing was clear and surprising to santeros and non-santeros alike: santeros were beginning to break away from one of the long-standing rules of concealment, namely, masking their identifying religious symbols when in sociocultural spaces removed from the areas where Santería has traditionally been practiced.[13]

Historically, social and religious prejudice has disallowed external manifestations of religious symbols[14] in certain places of business,[15] in theaters

and movies, in museums and galleries located in certain Havana neigh-
borhoods, or municipalities not considered appropriate venues for dis-
playing one's connection with such "folkloric activity." Looks, gestures,
veiled comments or disapproving murmurs, and expressions of surprise
are still observed today in places or toward people who, it is believed,
should have rid themselves of that type of "virus."

The religious did not live on the margins of criticism but were situat-
ed at a slightly different angle. Ritualistic conventions, coupled with years
of clandestine existence, had created a practice that operated between
secrecy and privacy. Perhaps for that reason, santeros are accustomed—
and many say it is because of religious custom—to wearing their neck-
laces under their clothing, or carrying them in their pant or skirt pocket,
or in their purse. "The *iddé*" used to be carried around very discreetly.
Men wore the bracelet for Orula underneath a leather bracelet."[16]

The rumor surfaced more or less concurrently with the announcement
of the economic crisis[17] that the country was obliged to confront; with
the political and institutional changes that were a continuation of the
stage known as "rectification of errors" as well as a response to the new
circumstances posed by the "special period in peacetime." These could be
some of the reasons behind the increase in the numbers of believers.
Indeed there is a certain degree of consensus regarding an increase in the
population's participation in all sorts of religious activities.

Yet if increased affiliation with different religious creeds was and is indis-
putable, why is it that scandalized commentary centered only on Santería
or Regla Ocha-Ifá?[18] This was the tip of the iceberg that concealed cultur-
al, social, and racial prejudices and discomfort. Cuban society has failed to
"internalize" or to "raise consciousness" among its population that it is a
multiracial, hybrid culture, a self-proclaimed lover of teasing, touching, and
flirting manifested at different levels in almost all social and cultural circles.
It is a population that rarely accepts the notion of sin and dogma, is histor-
ically anticlerical, and prefers to do everything "its own way," after "seeing
to believe"; it takes equal delight in legality and infraction, has a proclivity
toward "carnivalization," and is therefore, a transgressor.

In this vein, it is worth recalling Nicolás Guillén's poem "La canción
del bongo," in which he alludes metaphorically to the hybrid nature of
Cuban culture: "Santa Bárbara on one side / Changó on the other."[19] The
Cartesian hegemonic vision of reality created poles of religious practice

in Cuba comprising two well-defined modalities. One was unique and the others multiple, one dominant and the others subordinate, one legitimate and the others derided, one specially identified (Catholicism) and the others lumped together (in contrast to the poet's approach) in generic, ambiguous references: African religions or religions of African origin, syncretic cults, folklore, witchcraft.

Religiousness associated with Catholicism on the one side and African religions on the other brings into sharp relief the existence of "imaginary limits" that mark the two extremes of a complex relationship between that which is considered transcendent or sacred and the commonplace. Between these two lies a complicated network that informs the intricate web of collective sensibilities. In this web, the "stew" of religious beliefs includes Santería or Regla Ocha-Ifá, the Regla de Palo Monte, the Sociedades Abacuá, and practices using mediums, among other popular variations distinguishable in Cuba.[20]

Santería is not represented by a center of ideological power outside of the island: it has no Mecca, no Vatican. These Cuban religions have no Messiahs, no truths revealed, no dogmas. Knowledge is found not in sacred scriptures but in nature, society, mankind; experience, and with it well-being, are achieved in life's struggles, in work, in solidarity with others who share the horrors of misery and disdain or the hope of a tolerable daily existence.

In this conceptual duality alongside the immediate, the unplanned, and the unexpected is a pole that comprises the cultural elements that describe the universe of the black population. A certain notion of that which is elevated, transcendent, sacred, and honored has been adopted as a counterpoint to daily life, and to it belongs the pole informed by the model established by Christianity, traditionally associated with the perennial, and in the case of Cuba, with whites in particular.

It would be difficult to accept religiousness in Cuba as a thick broth made up of the most diverse ingredients "bubbling in the cooking fire of the Caribbean" (Ortiz 1973) unless our study of it—particularly the widely known forms—recognized it as a cultural practice generated in rural and urban areas, characterized by profound crossbreeding, and experienced within complex sociocultural processes. In this context, the popular religiousness derived from Cuban religions of African origin can be regarded as a totality of coexisting, interdependent events, although this reality "is

constructed through the juxtaposition of residual and fragmentary elements considered resistant to a natural deterioration process" (Antonio Augusto Arantes, cited in Garcia Canclini 1988, 67). It is therefore helpful to create scenarios in which these matters may be approached not as isolated entities, but rather as fields, understood as systems of relationships including interpersonal, intergrupal, interspatial, and intertemporal connections.

It is not enough to describe just one of the Cuban religions to understand the way in which the subjects experience their faith; rather they must be examined in their constant interactions. The cultural capital accumulated in the subject and in the group is evolving constantly as it is continuously enriched by experience. The worldview and the lives of nonreligious Cubans, then, relate to the ways in which religious Cubans understand, feel, and experience reality. Hence, the socioritualistic configuration becomes essential, among other reasons, because "it is necessary to recover the notion of subjective experience in the culture of the popular sectors; in other words, restore the union between the fact under study, or the artifact collected, and the social subjects who are its creators and bearers" (Hernández 1988, 92).

The Cuban Revolution, as part of the constellation of events that occurred in the sixties, sought to transform old utopias associated with equality, fraternity, and liberty into reality. To this end, it pronounced itself in favor of the dignity of humankind and universal access to education, health, and artistic culture. Integration became one of the paradigms of the young government's discourse and actions. It followed, therefore, that social development and participation were the two cornerstones of achieving the reconstruction of a collective subject as social and economic transformations created a new scenario for historically marginalized sectors: workers, women, and blacks.

The process of human transformation can be approached through the flow of culture since "without people there is no culture . . . and without culture there are no people" (Geertz 2003). For three decades, official Cuban policy was informed by a transcendental and heroic ethic anchored in demythologizing essentially typological convictions inherent in enlightened thinking. The dominant intent was synthesized in the construction of an archetype of a potential and referential image of humankind on its feet, leading one to suppose that individual subjects are no more than approximations of the reference model.

Through culture, particularly artistic expression, the revolutionary process reclaimed past traditions formed in the various reincarnations of the artistic and literary vanguard, which had defined its paradigms in the context of social struggles and now reaped the inheritance that past generations had bequeathed. The artistic production that enjoyed recognition contained a large dose of ideology, explicit educational power, consciousness-raising capacity, and obvious artistic quality including substantial affective appeal, since ontological inquiry is facilitated by emotions. Predominant trends in the visual arts, cinematography, and literature of the sixties and seventies followed this line. A *consensus gentium* was required in those years; it was essential to focus on the masses and on unanimity. In the visual arts, the theme of the masses was developed superlatively "as an aesthetic category" by painter Mariano Rodríguez.[21]

At that time, according to the official discourse, Cubans who were "in" did not include characters such as Sergio in *Memorias del subdesarrollo,*[22] a sort of "doubtful and bygone other within a process that pretends to ignore the condition of the petit bourgeois" (Caballero 2000); the political manipulators of religion in *Los días del agua,*[23] who enriched themselves on the popular religions during the first fifty years of the republic; people in the indigent neighborhoods described in *De cierta manera*[24]; or the santera grandmother of Cristino Mora, protagonist of the novel *Cuando la sangre se parece al fuego* (Cofiño 1977) who dies like the slaves swallowing her tongue (the author has her commit suicide in anguished rebellion, and through her tries to kill off religious beliefs, without making it appear an actual homicide).

In that context, religion was considered a false conscience, a thing of the past, or obscurantism, and this fostered the spread of prejudices old and new as well as discrimination toward believers. This assumption had to do more with "a vulgar materialism and Illuminism than with the social spirit of the Marxist analysis of religion" (Cárdenas Medina 1995, 8). In fact, however, religions of African origin were trapped in a contradiction that dissipated in 1991 following the Fourth Congress of the Cuban Communist Party, when it emerged from the shadows to facilitate the dissemination of positions that gave expression to the religious commitment of the common people, including "he who steals food and then gives his life."[25]

In the nineties, the cycle of utopias seemed to come to a standstill. Cubans turned their backs on the main character of a transcendental and

heroic epic poem and returned to the common person; someone who is not perfect nor pretends to be, who struggles for daily bread in order to be a protagonist in an intranscendental daily existence, like the subjects of those old songs sung in the fifties by Benny Moré[26] and Bola de Nieve.

In his film *Life is to Whistle*, Fernando Pérez, a nonbeliever, used the popular songs "Chivo que rompe tambó" and "Maracaibo oriental" performed by Bola de Nieve and Benny Moré as the critical conscience and historical memory of one of his protagonists: Elpidio Valdés. In contrast to another chactacter of the same name—a captain of the liberating army, an authentic Cuban patriot, created by Juan Padrón in 1969[27] for a series of popular cartoons, animated drawings, and films—this protagonist is the poor son of a woman named Cuba. Raised in an orphanage and in love with a foreigner, he looks for personal fulfillment in music and is able to remain connected to the spiritual force bequeathed to him by his gods and to distance himself from a fossilized tradition symbolized through the recognition of an iddé. One name that over the past thirty years has come to represent two entities, two different circumstances.

The assumptions of a sociology of culture, and specifically of art, that sought to distinguish refined or elitist practices in the social scenario were made obsolete by the powerful discourse of the social sciences and an artistic practice that increasingly focused on demonstrating the futility of distinguishing conclusively and categorically between the refined and the "popular." Thus, the predominant trend was toward the "social ubiquity" of all existing cultural practices which maximized the spatial-socio-cultural mobility of the object.

The clearest example of this was the First International Workshop on the Problems of the Yoruba Culture in Cuba organized by the Yoruba Cultural Association of Cuba and the Academy of Sciences in 1992. It was attended by people who identified themselves as religious or priests, experts, academics, students of different disciplines, and artists who may or may not have belonged to the universe of beliefs inherent in Regla Ocha-Ifá.

In light of the changes introduced in the sociocultural reality of the island and the emergence of new social actors, it became necessary to find ways to ensure communication among different cultural levels and experiences. Scenarios were reconfigured in order to strengthen cultural flows and facilitate national and international exchanges of experts, academics, and religious practitioners. Some of the activities that come to mind are

the seminars organized by Casa de las Américas, the "Fernando Ortiz" Foundation, the "Juan Marinello" Center, the Center for Psychological and Socio-religious Research of the Academy of Sciences, and the House of Africa in Havana and Santiago de Cuba. The strengthening of the Caribbean Festival in Santiago de Cuba and the establishment of Wemilere celebrated annually in Guanabacoa, a Havana district with a longstanding religious tradition, are also worth mention.

Each of these institutions looked for ways to disseminate the research findings presented at the forums. Casa de las Américas devoted several editions of the magazine *Anales del Caribe* to the compilation of presentations given at the Seminar on Afro-Cuban Culture held from 1992 to 1997. The Fernando Ortiz Foundation has maintained a collection entitled *Fuente Viva*, 22 volumes whose academic content includes scientific developments in the fields of sociology, anthropology, and culturology. Various houses published or reprinted texts on the practice of Santería after nearly thirty years of few, if any publications on the subject. And this did not impede the circulation of texts written by santeros for underground distribution, especially to the foreign godchildren of national godparents.

A new perception of the issue of identity and a rediscovery of the "grass roots" created new spaces for dialogue connected to the community, mainly among religious practitioners—although experts are not excluded—who are interested in two of the most prominent religions of African origin in the national territory: the Yoruba Cultural Association of Cuba (ACYC), founded in 1992, and the United Abacuá Organization (OUA), founded in 1993.

Santería or Regla Ocha Ifá is highly unstructured by nature and the ACYC has fostered exchanges among its members on ritualistic differences in order to promote self-recognition as a result of a hybrid reality not marked by a forced crossbreeding. At this time, research is being conducted to reconstruct the santero genealogy, starting with, but not limited to Havana City. This has led to the formation of other groups who favor a conceptual return to Africa. International contacts, heretofore sporadic and fragmented, are now systematic. An annual international conference brings together religious practitioners and experts from different countries. The 2003 Oricha Congress held in the Palacio de Convenciones in Cuba brought together more than one hundred religious figures and experts from around the world.

The creation, development, or reorganization of spaces for debating issues concerning santeros and babalaos was something new in the nineties, but no less important were the publications and Web pages devoted to Santería as a manifest expression of its internationalization. It was in the late eighties, however, that taboos and proscriptions against popular practices and particularly Santería were broken down. The issue of myth and the artistic sphere was a pretext that paved the way for reflection on different aspects of Cuban culture and made it possible to examine issues of being Cuban in their more immediate context. The santero cosmovision was one of the keys that helped "fill in the metaphor" in the nineties.

The boom of the nineties was spearheaded by popular music. During those years there was not a popular band that did not sing to Oggún, Old Lázaro, or their godfathers and godmothers; that did not wish "good luck to their own" ("aché pa´los suyos") and good fortune to relatives, friends, countrymen, the country, and all Cubans everywhere. This is related to the socioeconomic circumstances and the spectrum of social and cultural problems that ushered in the decade. They were confirmation that it was not possible to achieve total cultural unity. The emergence on the social scene of actors demanding their own space made it clear, at least from the vantage point of 2003, that the family and the school, the last redoubts of ideology, were insufficient for socialization, in part because they had been changed by the events of the last forty years. By the beginning of the decade, it was clear that the stereotypes used to describe Regla Ocha-Ifá and the santeros had crumbled into pieces.

Artistic creation, which since the eighties had staged a frontal attack on such issues as poverty and exclusion, began to subvert institutional-legal boundaries. Critics and historians spoke of a revival of Cuban art, in part because out of the woodwork emerged the codes of a belief system rooted in mythology, the forces of nature, and experiences based on other kinds of reasoning. There was increasing space for the religious beliefs of African origin in Cuba heretofore relegated to the sphere of folklore, and in exceptional cases the fine arts (usually music with very limited circulation).

Although this was not the case with literature, the films produced during the course of the decade frequently examined the problem of exclusion, which had come to the fore once again after nearly forty years of silence. The revisiting of these issues was not limited to the black population, but also included homosexuals, migrants, women, the disabled,

and the devout. It is enough to recall the presence and function of religious elements in *Strawberries and Chocolate*[28] and *Dust and Gold* (*Polvo y el oro*; Travieso 1996); the plot structure based on myths of life and death or the origin of the world observed in *Guantanamera*;[29] and the inclusion of the sociocultural setting for the notion of "other" in *Las profecías de Amanda* (*The Amanda Prophecies*).[30]

The metaphorization of circumstances fosters obliquity and polysemy. Attention has been distracted to areas considered contemptible. Criticism is levied at the history of culture whose discourse incorporates what comes from the dominant power centers, shunting aside popular culture. The insertion of religiousness in the visual arts is an attempt to stanch a patrimony wounded by centuries of prejudice and ill will, in addition to highlighting an anti-emphatic aesthetic employed as a tool for cultural insertion.

In many Cuban households, the lithograph of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was taken to grandma's room and replaced in the living or dining room with a photograph of some hero or martyr of the revolution, which can also be found in places of worship; photographer Humberto Mayol has used this reality in his art.[31] Rolando Vázquez, in "Los Patrones de Cuba," emphasizes the presence of the orichas in daily life and reflections.[32] As someone knowledgeable about and committed to religious practice, he uses belief to portray his vision of his surroundings and enters the spiritual life of popular belief systems to depict, from that perspective, the conflicts in Cubans today.

The body is a privileged zone in santero beliefs and plays an important role in the reflections of believers as both a physical entity and as the reservoir for the spirituality that is cultivated on a daily basis. The human being is at the center of the santero cosmovision. The gods act in function of humans and rituals are oriented toward the preservation of the subject who feels a special need for protection and is sensitive to the ways of Regla Ocha-Ifá. Artists seeking to understand popular religions of African origin have demonstrated a willingness to participate in certain areas of worship and to capture the expressive essence in objects and in rituals. This can lead to an intellectualization of santero references, as in the work of Marta María Pérez.[33] Or to Abelardo Rodríguez, whose interest in the *paleros* led him to the plastic arts for depicting the black race; his works reflect the need to capture the subjective experience of his characters (Ravelo García 2002). Rituals associated with sexual stereo-

types of blacks in society allow the artist to propose breaking the rules in a way that serves as the departure point for a discourse that is not based on individual issues, such as in the work of René Peña.[34]

The works of Santiago Rodríguez Olazábal[35] and José Ángel Vincench[36] are noted for their philosophical reflection. The ontological will that unites them emanates from their profound knowledge of religion, and their disquisition about being is consistent with the discourse concerning signs or oddun that comprise the predictive-interpretive systems, the preferred term for the different oracular variations employed by the babalaos, babalochas, and iyalochas. Their work combines religious practice and the artists' own experience in such a way that the highly conceptual development does not tie in with the immediacy of the rituals.

Religiousness as a facet of race is the universe traversed by Juan Roberto Diago[37] and Michel Mirabal;[38] this area is not free of contradictions and historic pitfalls that complicate how it is approached in art. This is particularly true because in Diago's work we witness the shooting down of a myth: that racial prejudice does not exist in Cuba. The refutation of the historic myth of racial equality is based on the relatively autonomous codes adopted as part of one's own culture and preserved in the intimacy of the family, in the circle of one's closest friends, or between brothers in adventure. It is directed to those "outside," those "above," and those "on the sidelines," to those who believe in the inexistence of prejudice and close their eyes, cover their ears, and close their mouths.

Religious symbolism in the work of Diago is part of a spiritual universe that intensifies the tropological density of the icons and takes on a particular connotation. Texts referring to the saints, "Lázaro mío", the Eleguá[39], the knives, the coconuts, and the cowries that appear frequently in his work describe a belief system that historically has sustained spiritually, the most economically, socially, and culturally displaced sectors. For the population represented by Diago, religion has been the door that opens when all others are closed, the judicious counsel when others turn their backs.

In Michel Mirabal, the affective relationship with his neighborhood (Cayo Hueso), his street (Oquendo), and the house (358) are indissoluble units. In this context, the tenement becomes the fortress where battles are waged, balls roll across a collective patio used to hang out clothes, where one chats with friends and enjoys a rhumba spontaneously organized by some neighbors or one formally called by a local cultural institution. It is

also the space in which the imaginary pilots of brilliant paper airplanes performed the most diverse aerial acrobatics; it is the place where one learned to be a friend, to show solidarity, to be a partner with a big smile and a love of music. Other familiar aspects are creative lust, humor, irony, cynicism, and tenderness. He knows that for many, "rhumba, tenement, and rum are also art."[40]

SOME FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

With the boundaries blurred and the academic precepts imposed against Santería ridiculed, the current panorama takes shape as a real field and an evoked field, both struggling to represent the beliefs of the one who invokes and touches it, fears and loves it. Usefulness–unusefulness, pure art–applied art, aesthetic pleasure–game are transactions between those who want or need to express themselves and those who wish or need to see themselves reflected in that expression. Like water and fire, they can appear as irreconcilable enemies, "these two elements always in conflict, when they come to blows it is something to see the fury with which one sets upon the other, like the tiger and the boa in the African jungle howl with their strident battles" (Africano, 1988, 295). But they can, in their own way, coexist in the system that smelts and forges.

How useful for cultivating the spirit and expanding the cultural consciousness it is to be able to enjoy *White on White* by K. Malevich, the *7000 Oaks* planted by Joseph Beuys[41] (in Documenta VII from Kassel in 1982), *Danzón* by Manuel Mendive,[42] or reading the *The Drinker of Palm Wine* by Amos Tutuola.[43] The preservation of Santería should be accompanied by the greatest possible understanding and the continuous struggle against cultural biases shrouded in discourses on the exotic. Let the bearers of this tradition know what each of their acts might mean for other cultural models and from other perspectives, above and beyond the value that he or she attributes to it; it is not just an act of culture, but of humanity.

Educated Cuban creators have approached the universe of religiousness from the standpoint of their own experiences, free of prejudice and reductionism, since art is conceived as a space for inclusion and reflection rather than imposition. Fernando Ortiz (see Menéndez 2002) contributed to the recognition of the other that we carry inside us and that it is a cultural rather than a religious other. He made us aware of Calibán who learned to curse and to "flirt" in the language of the colonizer. These artists have been

able to traverse the paths of desacralization of powers and to approach and bring us closer to a reality in which it is not necessary to die without having had the pleasure of having walked hand in hand with Changó, Ochún, Yemayá, and Obatalá. The interconnections between art and Santería in Cuba have helped fracture the logic of the cultural other that excludes, segregates, and silences. The exchange of codes has fostered the existence of a space in which life and art can connect, essentially because of their nature as transgressors, their ethical meaning, their social interest, and the feeling of belonging that still explains and defines us.

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NOTES

1. Theoretical references for the complexity approach have been taken from the work of Frederic Munne (1997) and Fritjof Capra (1999).

2. A nongovernmental organization founded on 17 December 1991. Its objectives include unifying practitioners of the faith. It currently has approximately 5,000 members, including nearly 1,000 *babalaos* (people consecrated for adoration of Orula, *oricha* of divination and representative among other orichas comprising the corpus of Ifá), more than 2,500 *iyalochas* (santeras or mothers of saints), *babalochas* (santeros or fathers of saints), and others, some consecrated and some not. Approximately 200 foreigners are members of this institution, including 79 babalaos. Some 7,000 Cuban believers have asked to join. An important act was the creation of the Consejo Cubano de Obá Mayores de la Regla de Ocha-Ifá, a council made up of 21 elders with profound knowledge of these religious practices. *Obás* are responsible for consecrating those who participate in liturgical ceremonies of Ocha or Santería. There are three affiliates, one in the Cuban province of Holguín, one in Paris, France, and one in Florida.

3. Corpus of Ifá is demonized as the philosophical, ethical, and aesthetic underpinnings that conceptually govern the process of interpreting signs in the system inaptly referred to as divination.

4. The Ogbe Meyi sign, the highest in the Ifá system, indicates change. It was the ruling sign in 1989 when the world witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of socialism; in 1995, when the Brothers to the Rescue planes were shot down and the Helms-Burton Act signed; and more recently in 1998, with the papal visit and the relative improvement in the living conditions of the Cuban people following the years of the "special period." Personal correspondence from a babalao who preferred to remain anonymous, Havana, January 2004.

5. Awo FaLokun Fatunmbi, in the book *Awo: Ifá and the Theology of Orichas Divination*, examines the symbolism of Ifá signs, describing the specifics of each of the sixteen basic oddun that make up the corpus. In booklets and documents written by Cuban religious, similarities and differences are found between the two variations.

6. Iwapele, a Yoruba word meaning "good character" (see Abímbola 1975).

7. Pataki, a Yoruba word, is defined as "stories from ancient times and from the orichas" (see Cabrera 1957).

8. The analysis of what is here termed "nonhierarchical sharing of functions" is developed in Menéndez (2002).

9. Nicolás Guillén, "Elegía Camagüeyana." In *Obra Poética 1920–1958* (Havana: Letras Cubanas, 1972), p. 410.

10. *Adalberto Álvarez y su son* (Artcolor, 1993), compact disc.

11. *Life is to Whistle,* directed by Fernando Pérez, 106 min., 1998. More information about the director at: http://www.habanafilmfestival.com.

12. "Crowned" refers to someone who has been through the Santería initiation or consecration rite.

13. Several municipalities and neighborhoods in Havana City are traditionally known for their high concentration of people connected to Cuban popular religions of African-Creole descent. These municipalities include Guanabacoa and Regla; and the neighborhoods are aptly named Jesús María, Belén (Bethlehem), and San Isidro in Old Havana; Poey in the municipality of Arroyo Naranjo; Pogolotti in Marianao; El Canal and Carraguao in the Cerro municipality; Cayo Hueso and Los Sitios in Central Havana.

14. In Santería each oricha is represented by a series of objects: necklaces, bracelets, fans, swords, dishes, soup tureens, etc. They are identified by the color and/or the material of which they are made.

15. Institutions dedicated to teaching, research, and commercial and tourist transactions, etc. Changes in the Catholic churches have been observed and recently confirmed in terms of the conduct of lay people and religious who adhere most strictly to Church doctrines. They tend to be less tolerant of and more clearly express their dismay at the presence of *iyawó* in the churches. This is particularly the case in churches having a higher number of believers from Cuban popular religions, such as the churches of la Virgen de la Caridad, la Virgen de la Merced, la Virgen de Regla, and the sanctuary at El Rincón, which is consecrated for worship of St. Lazarus. No less significant was the avalanche of believers of different Protestant denominations who visted homes and hospitals trying to "save from paganism" anyone who did not share their beliefs.

16. The iddé is a bead bracelet dedicated to different orichas. Orula is the god of divination in the Santería or Ocha-Ifá belief system; his necklace and iddé are

made of alternating green and yellow beads. Personal correspondence with
Zenaida Mjontesinos, Omó Yamayá, Havana, 1992.

17. An explanation of religion based on economic, social, and cognitive crises might
be a necessary point of departure for understanding its origins and functioning,
but is insufficient as a principle in and of itself. As Stefan Morawski points out:
"Scientific research, particularly the natural sciences, revolutions and reforms,
the belief in utopia and efforts to attain it and, finally, the philosophy integrally
linking mankind to the universe and rationalizing, among other things, a destiny
enclosed in a biological cycle that precludes individual immortality, are all
responses to these persistent ills of individual existence" (1991). In the case of
Santería, we know that economic solvency is essential for holding a ceremony
such as a coronation; that the population's higher scientific-professional and cul-
tural level does not guarantee a decrease in the number of santeros or in any
other belief system; and finally, that the practice of Santería is enriched by the
scientific arsenal at the disposal of its members. Here, as in other cultural uni-
verses, the principle of uncertainty exists: studying an object changes it.
Therefore, economic, social, and scientific factors were insufficient to explain
the recognition of the existence of santeros in daily life and, more importantly,
the fact that they display their affiliation with the practice when this has never
been a sign of prestige and often has resulted to the contrary.

18. According to old Santeros, we were not witnessing the first boom in Santería or
Regla de Ocha-Ifá in the last thirty-eight years. Eusebio Hernández often told
me that an explosion also occurred in the sixties, albeit for seemingly different
reasons. At that time, it was associated with the triumph of the revolution and
the opportunities it offered to the most exploited and excluded sectors of Cuban
society. Santeros assert that in the sixties, "many people joined since even
though there wasn't much money, there was the certainty of a permanent job."
A monetary income made it possible to "fulfill the commitment entered into
with the saint, without the worry and anxiety of not knowing when and how
much would be earned because of the lack of a stable position in the workplace.
This was very important in the past." In the early sixties, faith and reflection on
the universe of traditional popular culture were fostered in everyday life to some
extent through certain examples of artistic and literary culture, and by the
research undertaken by the Ethnology and Folklore Institute. However, accord-
ing to testimonies, the fascinating or fascinated need to "be initiated" coexisted
with the experience of masking one's faith. Recognition of class differences, the
hierarchies that these imposed on a class-based society, and the values derived
therefrom did not disappear with the measures taken by the revolutionary gov-
ernment. (Personal communication, Havana, 1977)

19. Nicolás Guillén, *Obra Poética 1920–1958* (Havana: Ed. Letras Cubanas, 1972),
pp. 116–17.

20. La Regla Ocha–Ifá, la Regla de Palo Monte, and the Abacuá societies are grass-roots Cuban religions of African origin that emerged during the 19th century within a complex transculturation process. Each one includes key concepts for understanding.

21. For more information see López Oliva (1977); Veigas Zamora (1977); "Masas y gallos en los colores de Mariano," *Granma*, 3 octubre 1980; "Ver grandeza es entrar en deseos de revelarla," *Moncada* (La Habana), año XV, 9 septiembre 1980: 8; *Todos los colores de Mariano*, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (multimedia).

22 *Memorias del subdesarrollo*, directed by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 85 min., July 1966. More information on the director can be found at: http://www.habanafilmfestival.com and http://www.clubcultura.com.

23. *Los días del agua*, directed by Manuel Octavio Gómez, 1971. More information about the director can be found at http://www.habanafilmfestival.com.

24. *De cierta manera*, directed by Sara Gómez, 1974. More information about the director can be found at http://www.habanafilmfestival.com.

25. Silvio Rodríguez "Playa Girón," *Días y flores* (Egrem, LD3467), compact disc.

26. We share the views of Rodríguez Rivera (1999) about Moré: "a poor, black *guajiro* whose talent enabled him to get ahead and become the best singer in a country of singers and who always honored the values of his origins and history. For that reason he was a hero of popular Cubans, because he was also independent, a good friend, a good son, a good father, a partier and a womanizer; a synthesis of what this Cuban wanted, and could become."

27. In 1970 the character of Elpidio Valdés appeared for the first time in *Revista Pioneros*. In 1974 Padrón filmed the animation, *Una aventura de Elpidio Valdés*, and in 1979 the feature film *Elpidio* was made. More information on Padron at http://www.habanafilmfestival.com.

28. *Strawberries and Chocolate*, directed by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and Juan Carlos Tabío, 110 min., 1993.

29. *Guantanamera*, directed by Gutiérrez Alea and Juan Carlos Tabío, 101 min., 1995. For details see http://www.habanafilmfestival.com.

30. *Las profecías de Amanda*, directed by Pastor Vega, 1999. Further information about the artist at http://www.habanafilmfestival.com.

31. The image referred to is found in the Fototeca de Cuba. More information is available in Multimedia Afrocuban religions in contemporary photography: "El otro lado del alma." Curator: Morritz Neumuller, Institución asociada La Fototeca de Cuba, 2002

32. "Los patrones de Cuba," installation, polychromatic wood, canvas. 1996. Further information about the artist at: http://www.cnap.cult.cu/galeria/artistas/vazquezrolando_img.htm.

33. Information about the artist can be found at: http://www.cnap.cult.cu/gal-2.html.

34. Information about the artist can be found at: http://www.fcif.net/galerias.rene.pena.html.

35. Further information about the artist at: http://www.cnap.cult.cu/galeria/artistas/olazabal.htm.

36. Further information about the artist at: http://www.cnap.cult.cu/galeria/artistas/vincench_img.htm.

37. Further information about the artist at: http://www.cnap.cult.cu/galeria/artistas/diagojuan_img.htm and http://www.afrocubaweb.com/robertodiago/robertodiago.htm.

38. Catalog of the exhibit *Oquendo 358*, La Acacia Gallery, Havana, 2002.

39. In Santería, the Eleguá is the *oricha* of the ways and passages.

40. "El rumbero y el trovador" mixed technique and canvas. *Oqueno 358*, La Acacia Gallery, Havana, 2002.

41. Russian painter and designer (1878–1935) who founded the Suprematist movement.

42. See, for instance, www.giorgiocolombo.com/Documenta7Kassel.html.

43. Further information about the artist at: http://www.cnap.cult.cu/gal-2.html

44. Nigerian author (1920–1997).

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