



UNIVERSIDAD DEL SALVADOR

Buenos Aires - ARGENTINA



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**Analyzing Variables to Understand Prospects
for a Democratic Transition in Cuba**
by
Marisa S. Gonzalez
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Tutor de Tesis.- Douglas Washburn, PhD.
Asesor Académico: Lt Gen Evergisto de Vergara (Ret).
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CHAPTER ONE: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Introduction

Cuba has long been viewed as the symbol of a functioning communist republic that evaded the collapse even as it lost financial backing as a result of the United States (U.S.) economic embargo and the fall of the Soviet Union. Cuba is now entering a period of transition—Fidel Castro is no longer head of the Cuban government and his brother Raúl is the newly elected President of Cuba. The future of Cuba is at a critical point—democratic transition can be considered a possibility for the first time in fifty years. As Fidel and Raúl Castro favor a transition from one dictator to another that preserves the remnants of the Cuban police state and the nation's decrepit socialism, Raúl is showing signs that he will rule differently than Fidel, and has shown a commitment to improving Cuba's economy. Is democratic transition now a possibility for Cuba? Cuba's opposition groups and dissident movements have also been more vocal regarding Cuba's problems, while mostly still publicly criticizing Cuba's economy, some have openly criticized Cuba's political controls. Does the opposition force in Cuba have enough strength to bring about democratic transition like which happened with the fall of communism in Eastern Europe? The U.S. economic embargo has not brought about the demise of Fidel, as it was originally intended to do. Fidel left office due to illness and not because of actions of the U.S. government. With Fidel out of power, can the U.S. rethink its relations with Cuba? There are three variables that need to be analyzed in order to determine if democratic transition is possible, the actions of the Cuban government, the actions of the U.S. government, and the autonomous civil sphere in Cuba. The objective of analyzing these variables is to determine the crucial steps needed to push for democratic change and make the reader aware that if certain steps are not taken, Cuba will continue to be controlled by the Communist party state and will remain a non democratic government in the Western Hemisphere.

1.2 Problem Statement and Research Questions.

Cuba adopted the form of Marxism, where a highly organized Communist Party controlled the government. Cuba has since been governed according to socialist economic and political principles, with a centralized economy and a government under the control of the Cuban Communist Party. Cuba demonstrates that a government based on Marxist principles and non democratic governance can sustain long term rule in close proximity to the United States. Cuba provides a positive example of non-democratic governance however, under socialism; individual freedoms were sacrificed for the social advancement of all Cubans. In addition, religion was discouraged, although not forbidden, so that the allegiance of citizens would belong solely to the state. Fidel Castro personally retained ultimate control over the Communist Party, all governing bodies, and the military until he resigned as president of Cuba in 2008 and was succeeded by his brother Raúl. Although no longer president, Fidel remained the head of the Cuban Communist Party. With Cuba reaching an important crux, Fidel slowly leaving power, can democratic transition begin in Cuba? What steps are needed to assist Cuba in its democratic transition? In this regard, to find out whether a democratic transition is a possibility in Cuba, we have to delve into three causal variables actions of the new Cuban government, actions of the United States government and the strength of the autonomous civil sphere.

1. The actions of the Cuban Government

-Who is Raúl and how does Raúl differ from his brother Fidel?

-Will Raúl Castro choose to stubbornly dig in his heels and adamantly insist on maintaining the true Fidelista faith or will Raúl lead Cuba on a path toward economic liberalization and democracy?

-What does economic opening mean for Cuba and will economic liberalization equal political and social liberalization?

-Not only understanding who is Raúl Castro an important variable, but his future successors merit discussion to analyze a Post-Raúl Cuba and the possibilities for transition.

2. Cuba's civil sphere

-Does the growth and increased participation of opposition groups coupled with increases in private market activities pose a threat to communist rule in Cuba?

-Does the autonomous development of the civil sphere and its subsequent thickening increase the potential efficacy of the civil sphere as an opposition force?

3. Actions of the U.S. Government

-Should the U.S. maintain in its hard line policy of regime change?

-What are the shortcomings of current U.S. policy toward Cuba?

- Can the U.S. make use of the limited opening under Raúl to pursue a new relationship?

-Are their strategic considerations to a U.S. relationship with Cuba?

1.3 General Objective

Revise and thoroughly analyze the prospective for a democratic transition in Cuba

1.4 Specific Objectives

- 1) Determine Post-Fidel successors, and how they may rule Cuba. Analyze newly elected President and Fidel's brother, Raúl Castro and a cadre of successors who could rule Cuba in the future.
- 2) Understand what economic liberalization will mean for Cuba. Evaluate if economic liberalization can lead to democracy in Cuba.
- 3) Determine whether the Cuban population is an efficient opposition force to the regime.
- 4) Question the effectiveness of current U.S. policy toward Cuba and examine if United States engagement can thrust democratic transition.

1.5 Central Hypothesis

Cuba will continue to be an authoritarian state with repressive political controls if certain actions are not taken. The actions of the U.S. and renewed engagement in Cuba are crucial to achieving a democratic transition for Cuba.

1.6 Derived Hypothesis

1) In a post Fidel scenario, partial economic reform may probably take place, therefore bringing economic relief to the Cuban population, however without loosening political and social controls. A successor will allow limited, mostly economic changes in order to appease the population.

2) Cuba's autonomous civil sphere is not a powerful opposition force and independently cannot bring democratic change to Cuba.

3) A change in the US policy towards Cuba cannot guarantee results, but it offers new possibilities and a better chance of success.

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1.7 Methodology

Mainly inductive reasoning and analogies will be used. Other corners of the world offer many example—in the not-so-distant past—of transitions from dictatorship and what variables had the greatest impact on pushing for regime change and how these variables bode for Cuba. As mentioned above, the three variables are the following: Actions of the Cuban Government, Actions of the Cuban population, and Actions of the United States government. These three causal variables provide the greatest impact to a Cuba Post-Fidel. All three variables have the possibility to push for regime change and prevent the status quo and further reversion to authoritarian repression and bring democratic transition in Cuba to which will be analyzed in this paper.

This Thesis is structured in the present Analytical Framework as Chapter one, the second Chapter will analyze actions of the Cuban government to broaden our understanding of who is

Raúl Castro and what is the possibility that he will allow democratic transition. Chapter three will compare political movements in Eastern Europe to opposition and dissident movements in Cuba to determine if they are a significant opposition force capable of bringing democratic transition. Chapter four will analyze actions of the U.S. government. Finally, Chapter five will deal with general conclusions on this issue.

CHAPTER TWO: THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT

2.1 Introduction

When Fidel Castro was about to undergo intestinal surgery in July 2006, he “temporarily” transferred power to his brother Raúl Castro. For the first time since taking power in 1959, Fidel would relinquish power and through an official proclamation to the Cuban population, Raúl was named provisional First Secretary of the Central Communist Party, Commander of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, and President of the State and Government of Cuba. Raúl was officially elected to the position of President of Cuba in February 2008, signifying Fidel’s departure from Cuban politics. Fidel Castro once said, “I think that a man should not live beyond the age when he begins to deteriorate, when the flame that lighted the brightest moment of his life has weakened,” and now in Cuba, we are beginning to see Fidel’s flame slowly burning out, as the possibility that he will return to power seems ever more remote. After almost fifty years in power, the regime of Fidel Castro is near the end because of Fidel’s failing health. Will the government of Raúl be a succession from Fidel, or will Cuba see a transition to democracy? The one change Raúl has already shown is that Cuba’s new government signifies broader Communist party rule, instead of rule by one man. Raúl’s predilections—likelihood to institute increased military and security presence to legitimize regime, hard-line communist, uncharismatic, lack of political support from Cuban population—could suggest repression under an authoritarian regime. However, Raúl is demonstrating that he may rule differently than his brother by opening up Cuba’s economy, which Fidel has long been opposed to, by lifting some restrictions such as cell phone usage and allowing Cubans to stay in tourist hotels. Bereft of charismatic leadership and the iconic symbol of Fidel, Raúl has to appease the population and make some concessions in order to see continued stability in his regime. The stability of Cuba depends on the economic vitality of the Cuban population.

Who is Raúl and how he will rule Cuba is an important variable to understanding Cuba Post-Fidel. How does Raúl differ from his brother Fidel? Will Raúl Castro choose to stubbornly dig in his heels and adamantly insist on maintaining the true Fidelista faith, or will Raúl lead Cuba on a path toward economic liberalization and relaxation of social and political controls? What does economic opening mean for Cuba, and will economic liberalization equal political and social liberalization? Not only is understanding Raúl important, but it is also important to analyze a future cadre of successors, to determine the possibilities for a democratic transition, in Post-Fidel Cuba.

2.2 Raúl Castro

Raúl will undoubtedly pay homage to his brother Fidel and not let the socialist state crumble under him or a future successor. Raúl has the reputation for being severe and uncharismatic, which questions his ability to continue Fidel's revolutionary legacy and have the ability to institutionalize the revolution. One of the most important differences between Raúl and Fidel is that Fidel is a "politician first and second, while Raúl is a soldier first, politician second."¹ It is Raúl's role in the military that has given him the reputation for being severe, uncharismatic, and the brutal enforcer of Fidel's regime. Raúl has served simultaneously in several Cuban government posts, institutionalizing his influence in three principle bodies of the Cuban hierarchy as Fidel's second in command.² Figure 1 illustrates the significant overlap between the Politburo, which has 24 members, the Council of State, which has 31 members, and the Council of Ministers, which has 38 members, with 19 people serving in at least dual capacity and 7 people serving in all three organs of state.

¹ Erikson, Daniel P., "Charting Castro's Possible Successors," Project Muse, Winter-Spring 2005: 89-102

² Erickson, 93

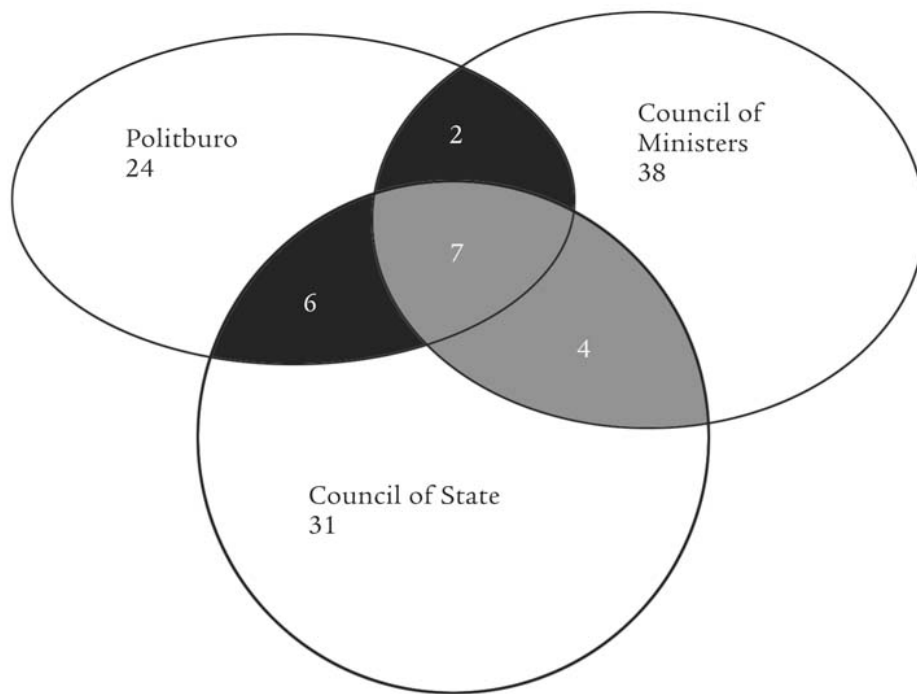


Figure 1: Diagram of Membership in Cuba’s Government Structures³

While he brandishes influence, ultimately, Raúl has deferred to Fidel on all matters of the Cuban government and has mostly functioned in the background. Raúl Castro is the longest running Defense Minister, and it is this role that Raúl, solidified his reputation as the quintessential military man. The military is notorious for its oppression of dissidents and counter-revolutionary activities in Cuba, and the military, with Raúl as head, is responsible for the imprisoning, and in many instances, torturing thousands of dissidents. As a result, Raúl is the “most hated and feared by the Cuban population, remembered as his brother’s most brutal executioner and hard line enforcer.”⁴ Raúl can claim an earlier commitment to socialism than his brother, whose early defining political characteristic was nationalism.

³ Erickson, 93

⁴ Latell, Brian, “Confronting Fidel’s Legacy in Cuba”, *The Washington Quarterly*, Summer 2007: 53-65

2.3 Raúl Signifies Change

It is important to note that Raúl is not Fidel, and the differences between the two brothers should be examined to provide clues into possibilities for a democratic transition in Cuba. Fidel has come to embody the Cuban revolution mainly through his charismatic leadership. Fidel's charismatic leadership has afforded him continued popular support almost fifty years after the Cuban revolution. Even in recent years, as some analysts⁵ state the revolution has lost stamina and no longer exports itself, Fidel is the revered leader of Cuba and is still idolized by many Cubans. "To the extent that Castro is perceived as a defender of independence, he stands to win support even from non-communists - an intangible but important factor that helps explain Castro's political longevity."⁶ Max Weber defines charismatic leadership as "resting on the appeal of leaders who claim allegiance because of the force of their extraordinary personalities by virtue of which is he/she is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural or superhuman qualities."⁷ Fidel is the Cuban revolution and has solidified himself to the Cuban population as a legendary revolutionary hero. Through monologues, public speeches, and writings of revolutionary rhetoric, Fidel reaffirmed and reeducated people's faith in themselves and institutionalized the revolution. Through charismatic leadership, Fidel was able to legitimize the use of force against dissidents in the name of the revolution and labeled dissidents as anti-Cuba. Raúl's lack of charismatic leadership may lead his regime "to lead by force rather than charisma"⁸ as stated in Jean C. Robinson's piece on Institutionalizing Charisma. She argues that Fidel could maintain popular support even after the use of violence because of his ability to legitimize violence in the name of the revolution. The legitimacy of the Cuban Revolution is intrinsically dependent on Fidel's charismatic leadership, revolutionary legacy, and

⁵ Erikson, Daniel P., "Charting Castro's Possible Successors," *Project Muse*, Winter-Spring 2005: 89-102 and Latell, Brian, "Confronting Fidel's Legacy in Cuba", *The Washington Quarterly*, Summer 2007: 53-65

⁶ Peters, Philip, "A Policy Toward Cuba that Serves U.S. Interests," *Policy Analysis*, No. 384, 2 November 2000

⁷ Weber, Max, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, (New York: The Free Press, 1964). 324-392

⁸ Robinson, Jean C., *Institutionalizing Charisma: Leadership, Faith & Rationality in Three Societies*, *Polity*, Winter, 1985: 181-203

his embodiment of the national identity. Raúl's use of violence could maintain stability by use of force but will delegitimize his regime as he lacks Fidel's charismatic leadership. Raúl seems to understand that legitimacy is imperative to stability. In order to prevent public manifestations and the subsequent use of force, Raúl will appease the population through economic reforms, garnering support from the Cuban population and legitimizing his rule.

The Cuban population's lack of support for Raúl could result in the tightening of political and social controls. Raúl's initial months as "temporary leader of Cuba" saw continuity and stability because of his use of military force to squelch dissidents. Human rights groups, activists, political dissidents, and opposition groups were placed under coercive surveillance or detained."⁹ Prohibitions against any form of political expression or participation independent of the Communist Party continue to be enforced as ruthlessly as they always were under Fidel. Instability in Cuba while Raúl has "temporary power" could delegitimize his regime and therefore the new regime has signaled there will be no political relaxation. While a lack of charismatic leadership under Raúl could lead to a more authoritarian regime for Cuba, Raúl has shown a commitment to bettering the lives of the Cuban people through economic reforms. This is a small gesture to the Cuban population in the hopes that it will squash any public manifestations to oppose his rule. The strategy that Raúl seems to be using is appeasement; hoping to better the lives of Cubans in order to pacify them. Since his election in February 2008, President Raúl has legalized cell phone use for ordinary Cubans; granted Cubans access to previously off-limits tourist hotels; and legalized the sale within Cuba of microwaves, DVD players, and personal computers. The gesture by Raúl to the Cuban population is merely symbolic; most Cubans can't afford cell phones, DVD players, or stay in hotels, as the average income is just \$20 a month. Raúl has lifted these petty restrictions that burden Cuba's everyday lives, however, political controls continue in Cuba.

⁹ The Economist, The comandante's last move, 21 February 2008, 29 March 2008, http://www.economist.com/world/la/displaystory.cfm?story_id=10727899

2.4 Post-Raúl Cuba

Who may rule Cuba after Raúl is one of the most important variables to understanding the future of Cuba. The parallel competition to replace Raúl is one of the least understood dynamics within the Cuban government.¹⁰ Understanding the future of Cuba needs to take into account the current members of Cuba's government who are top members in the Council of State, Council of Ministers, the military, and the Politburo. The next leader of Cuba will ultimately need the blessing of Raúl, and in many regards, Raúl is the gatekeeper to Cuba's future. The Cuban military and the Ministry of the Interior, which runs the state police, will act as an anchor to stabilize the new government.¹¹ The candidates to rule Cuba give no indications for supporting a democratic transition, but some do support economic reform to assist Cuba's flagging economy.

Fidel Castro, in one of his last public policy speeches in November 2005, stated "the veterans are disappearing," he said, "and making room for new generations of leaders." He asked whether socialism is "irreversible," and his answer was clear. "This revolution can destroy itself," he said. "We can destroy it, and the fault would be ours." Fidel confronted his generation's mortality. Raúl's new cabinet shows the fragility of the revolution—most newly elected members are close to their own mortality. The National Assembly in February 2008 elections chose Raúl as president, who is 76 and the longtime defense minister. José Ramón Machado Ventura, 76, was elected first vice president and is another veteran of the revolution. A former health minister, Machado Ventura has a reputation as a Communist hard-liner fiercely loyal to the Castros. The assembly re-elected Ricardo Alarcón, 70, as its president. Three star general Julio Casas became the new Minister of Defense. Raúlistas have taken top positions of power, not Fidel loyalists. Moreover, the elections showed that Raúl preferred the leadership of

¹⁰ Erikson, Daniel P., "Charting Castro's Possible Successors," Project Muse, Winter-Spring 2005: 89-102

¹¹ Erikson, Daniel P., "Charting Castro's Possible Successors," Project Muse, Winter-Spring 2005: 89-102

Cuba be taken by top military officials. The Council of State now possess four generals, not counting Raúl, while the Politburo has five—three have posts in both bodies. The message being sent to the Cuban people was that Raúl wasn't offering any concessions and there would be continuity in the Communist state.



Figure 2: Results of Council of State Elections in February 2008

The Military

Fidel Castro defined the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) in Cuba as the “soul of the revolution.” Components of the economy are directly under military control or run by present or former military officers. Even the most dynamic, typically civilian-dominated sectors of the economy are managed by and directly benefit the armed forces: tourism, agricultural products, tobacco, import-export services, technology and telecommunications, construction, free trade zones, and manufacturing all have significant military presence. The military also has a say in allotting nickel mines and leasing offshore lots for oil exploration. The University of Miami's Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies estimates that soldiers control more than 60 percent of the island's economy. The 2008 elections in Cuba show the future of Cuba is to be in the hands of the military; key positions in his government were given to trusted military confidants. military may allow some economic opening, because they own more than 60% of the economy and they could enrich themselves. The military, because of Cuba's flagging economy, is in need of funding to be put back up at readiness level. Their equipment is old and not well serviced and there is limited funding for training.

- **Gaviota S.A. [Hotels]**
- **Aerogaviota S.A. [Domestic tourist airline]**
- **TRD Caribe S.A. [Retail chain store]**
- **Union de la Industria Militar [Defense industries]**
- **Grupo de la Electronica [Electronics and IT hardware/services]**
- **Habanos S.A. [Cigars]**
- **Sugar Ministry [Sugar industry]**
- **Cuban Civil Aviation Corp. [Cubana and Aerocaribbean airlines, airport services]**

Figure 3. Major Military Managed Enterprises and Industries

Due to their age, more than any other factor, the two most prominent military generals in Cuba will most likely never see office. However, one can assume as long as they are able to exert influence in the Cuban government, there will not be many changes in Cuba. Julio Casas Regueiro, Vice-President of the Council of State and is the new Minister of Defense, was a member of the July 26th Movement, and one of the founders of the Second East Front, in the Sierra Cristal Mountains of Oriente province during the guerrilla warfare against Fulgencio Batista. He is known to be one of the closest associates of Raúl Castro, as well as a mastermind and key figure in certain commercial operations and international tourism such as Gaviota Enterprises, S.A.¹² General Abelardo Colome was appointed Vice President. Colome is a prominent official in Cuba's military and has a radically different background from those of his younger counterparts. Colome is a career military man, joining Castro's rebel army as head of counterintelligence, and later having led Cuba's Revolutionary Forces in Angola. Colome has served as the vice president of the Council of State and the head of the powerful and feared Ministry of the Interior.

The Old Guard

The median age of the members of the newly elected government of Cuba is 70 years. While the election of the old guard sends a strong message for continuity rather than transition, it is important to note that changes being made today are changes that Fidel never would have allowed. In addition, it further demonstrates Fidel's concerns about the mortality of his generation. The Cuban government and Communist Party have the largest struggle legitimizing the revolution with Cuba's youth. Cuba's youth, are needed to keep the revolution alive and

going, but they are quoted as being materialistic and individualistic, two staunch differences to communist ideologies.¹³

An example of a member of the old guard who has a remote possibility of being the president of Cuba is Ricardo Alarcon de Quesada, president of Cuba's National Assembly of People's Power. While many state this position is unlikely to achieve prominence, "Alarcon has succeeded in positioning himself as one of the leading contenders for Cuba's top job in the future."¹⁴ Alarcon reportedly has "incisive political skills, deep knowledge of the United States, and keen mind"¹⁵ but lacks top management and policymaking experience. Ultimately, scant reporting seems to indicate that he has fallen out of favor with Raúl, which could ultimately prevent his political mobility; in addition, he is 76 years of age.

Young Ideologues

Raúl became the new president of Cuba, ending Fidel's rule as well as speculation that a younger generation would take power. Cuba's National Assembly ensured the continued power of Cuba's old guard and broader Communist party rule, instead of rule by one man. Two of Cuba's government's younger ideologues were passed over for promotion: Carlos Lage, 56 and Felipe Pérez Roque, 42. Lage was named Vice President, signifying that Raúl wants Lage to keep his distance, either because he is more pragmatic than Raúl wants, or that it is a sign that the future of Cuba is the hands of the military.

Lage has been described as Cuba's de facto prime minister. A physician with no military experience, Lage is decades younger than most of Cuba's ruling elites. Lage currently plays a key role in economic reforms in Cuba, and is said that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, he

¹³ Latell, Brian, "Confronting Fidel's Legacy in Cuba", *The Washington Quarterly*, Summer 2007: 53-65

¹⁴ Erikson, Daniel P., "Charting Castro's Possible Successors," *Project Muse*, Winter-Spring 2005: 89-102

¹⁵ Latell, Brian, "Confronting Fidel's Legacy in Cuba", *The Washington Quarterly*, Summer 2007: 53-65

was instrumental behind the decision to pass some economic reforms to improve the dire economic conditions in Cuba. Lage is viewed as pragmatic, but a steadfast communist hardliner, which could merely be due to his rhetoric, which is mandatory as part of political position, rather than an absolute reflection of what he really wants for Cuba. “Socialism in Cuba is irreversible ... because with our efforts yesterday and today, we make it irreversible,” he said in a speech in February 2007. “In Cuba, there will be no succession; there will be continuity.” Lage has shown a commitment to economic liberalization in Cuba, but it remains to be seen if he will loosen social and political controls. Some people in the Cuban population believe he may have more tolerance for political and civil liberties.

Felipe Perez Roque is the foreign minister of the Republic of Cuba and has forged a powerful relationship with Fidel Castro. At his appointment in 1999, he was not only the youngest member of the Cuban cabinet, but also the only one to be born after the Cuban Revolution in 1959. Pérez Roque was formerly an electronics engineer and president of the student union, and has served as Fidel’s Castro’s Chief of Staff for a decade prior to his ministry. As well as being a prominent member of the Cuban Council of Ministers, Pérez Roque is also a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and serves on the Council of State. Perez Roque’s dedication to Fidel Castro is cited in an article by Ann Louise Bardach in *Vanity Fair*, “Felipe is so loyal to Fidel, that on the day his wife gave birth to his first child, he remained at Castro’s side for ten hours. Then he went to see his newborn baby.”¹⁶ Perez Roque’s Fidelista faith will ultimately lead Cuba on a continuation of Castro’s regime, with little chance for a democratic transition. Roque’s involvement in Cuba’s communist political circles since a young age has institutionalized the revolution in him, and he has only ever known life under Fidel. But Roque is a lackey and follower, and because of this, it is unlikely that he will ever become President of Cuba.

¹⁶ Erikson, Daniel P., “Charting Castro’s Possible Successors,” *Project Muse*, Winter-Spring 2005: 89-102

2.5 Cuba's Economy

The Cuban Government continues to adhere to socialist principles in organizing its state-controlled economy. The socialist economy applies to most Cubans, providing them with free education, free health care, universal employment, unemployment compensation, disability and retirement benefits and the basic necessities of life: food, housing, utilities, and some entertainment at very low cost. Most of the means of production are owned and run by the government and, according to Cuban Government statistics, about 75% of the labor force is employed by the state. According to the U.S. State Department, the figure is closer to 93%, with some 150,000 small farmers and another 150,000 "cuentapropistas," or holders of licenses for self-employment, representing a mere 2.1% of the nearly 4.7 million-person workforce.¹⁷

Cuba has long been viewed as the symbol of a functioning socialist republic that evaded collapse, even as it lost financial backing after the fall of the Soviet Union and the United States economic embargo. The Cuban economy declined by at least 35% between 1989 and 1993 due to the loss of Soviet subsidies. To alleviate the economic crisis, in 1993 and 1994 the government introduced a few market-oriented reforms, including opening to tourism, allowing foreign investment, legalizing the dollar, and authorizing self-employment for some 150 occupations.¹⁸ These economic liberalization measures were staunchly supported by Raúl Castro. However, Fidel saw these measures as a threat to the revolution and stopped all economic liberalization measures. In 2004, he cut foreign businesses active within Cuba because his lack of support for economic reform. Cuban authorities, under the direction of Raúl, are starting to open once again to new foreign investors. Most of the activity will be in major projects in strategic sectors such as mining and energy, but in activities dependent on technology

¹⁷ Background Note, State Department, Nov., 2007, 29 March 2008, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2886.htm>

¹⁸ Background Note, State Department, Nov., 2007, 29 March 2008, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2886.htm>

and specialist markets, smaller projects will emerge. Venezuela and China will take a large share of the business.¹⁹

Cuba's economy is failing and the population lives with scarcities brought on by a centrally planned economy. Raúl's leadership style is less centralized in the economic sphere, which has allowed him to introduce some liberalizing economic measures to help Cuba's flagging economy. He settled the state's debts to farmers and tripled prices paid to milk and beef producers. He ended abusive pricing at Cuba's airports, where high landing fees and refueling charges were making Cuba a less competitive tourism destination. He changed customs regulations to allow Cubans to receive video equipment and car parts from relatives overseas. Rather than punish private taxis and black market entrepreneurs, including restaurateurs, occupations considered anti-revolutionary under Fidel, Raúl has allowed them to continue operating. These limited measures, are allowing Cubans to decrease their dependence on the Cuban government and creating their own economic opportunities for growth. Raúl's economic liberalizing policies are in staunch contrast to Fidel and the policies he laid out in his last public policy speech, where he called for more control and pricing to end Cuba's black-market activity that pervades Cuba's economy. Raúl's insistence on an open debate on economic problems has garnered attention from the local population. At the nationwide meetings of local branches of the Communist Party, trade unions, neighborhood committees, and other organizations including women, farmers, students, and pensioners voiced strong complaints and hard-hitting criticisms of the system of economic management.²⁰

¹⁹ Cuba: Country Report, The Economist Intelligence Unit, - 1 Oct. 2007, 29 March 2008, http://mutex.gmu.edu:2213/index.asp?layout=displayIssueArticle&issue_id=1142662699&article_id=1152662700

²⁰ Cuba: Country Report, The Economist Intelligence Unit, - 1 Oct. 2007, 29 March 2008, http://mutex.gmu.edu:2213/index.asp?layout=displayIssueArticle&issue_id=1142662699&article_id=1152662700

2.6 Economic Opening does not equate to Democracy

Economic opening does contribute to democracy and political reform; rather, it is state controls that curb these gains. China, Vietnam, Singapore, and Malaysia demonstrate that it is also quite possible to link positive management of economic transformation with autocratic practices. There is a high capacity for economic management in authoritarian regimes and “this capacity strengthens the ruling elites’ claims to legitimacy; this is particularly true for the modernizing authoritarian regimes in Vietnam and China.”²¹ China’s dramatic post-Mao development includes rapid economic growth, greater access to information and personal mobility, the decline in the state role of the economy, and integration into the global economy. But the link assumed between economic development and the achievement of democracy, or political liberalization, has failed to operate in China.²² Set against such massive, and largely positive, economic and social changes, however, is China’s political system, which, at its core, is still a Leninist party state that has remained unchanged.

Raúl has expressed frustration at the current status of Cuba’s economy. In multiple speeches since assuming “temporary” power in July 2006, and later after being elected President in February 2008, Raúl has stated that the economy and improving the lives of the Cuban population are priorities for his regime. Raúl declared that he is considering policies that will open Cuba to more foreign investment, allowing Cuba to benefit from capital, technology, or markets. But while some look to these statements as a promising hint towards transition in Cuba, Raúl has carefully followed up these statements with meanderings on how economic opening will need to be done in a way “that preserves the role of the state and the predominance of

²¹ Croissant, Aurel, *Democracy, Market Economy, and the Political Management of Transformation in 119 Countries: The Findings of the Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2006*, Center for Contemporary Conflict, <http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2005/Dec/croissant1Dec05.asp>

²² Perez-Lopez, Jorge F., *Cuba’s Second Economy: From Behind the Scenes to Center Stage*, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers 1995) 2-10

socialist property.”²³ In a speech made by Raúl on January 12, 2008 before the National Assembly, Raúl stated “as we can see, the challenges we have before us are enormous, but nobody doubts the firm conviction demonstrated by our people in the fact that only socialism can overcome the difficulties and preserve the conquests of almost a half century of Revolution.”²⁴

Raúl has made it evident that he prefers China’s economic model, which he studied in 1997 in Beijing. Raúl’s interest in the Chinese model indicates he prefers market socialism under single party direction.²⁵ Even if he does not support or implement large-scale market reforms such as those that took place in China, his inclination towards this model signals continued political controls. This would equate to economic liberalization with continued political controls to curb freedoms such as free and fair elections, free speech, and free press.

China has stalled in a trapped transition because its Communist leaders insist on maintaining power and taking a gradual approach to market reforms. This is not part of a strategy for political liberalization; instead, China's leaders are cautious to shore up their monopoly on power. The dividends of economic reform are used to "strengthen their repressive capacity and co-opt potential opposition groups, especially counterelites."²⁶ Seeing even limited erosion of their political power causes them to “intensify their efforts to maximize current income while maintaining a high level of repression to deter challengers.”²⁷ This is what Raúl’s admiration of the Chinese model could mean for Cuba. Raúl wants to preserve the socialist regime, meaning continued political controls, with economic opening.

²³ Raul’s Talking cure: Cuba’s Economy, *The Economist* 27 Oct. 2007

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Perez-Lopez, Jorge F., *Cuba’s Second Economy: From Behind the Scenes to Center Stage*, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers 1995) 2-10

²⁶ Croissant, Aurel, *Democracy, Market Economy, and the Political Management of Transformation in 119 Countries: The Findings of the Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2006*, Center for Contemporary Conflict, <http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2005/Dec/croissant1Dec05.asp>

²⁷ Croissant, Aurel, *Democracy, Market Economy, and the Political Management of Transformation in 119 Countries: The Findings of the Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2006*, Center for Contemporary Conflict, <http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2005/Dec/croissant1Dec05.asp>

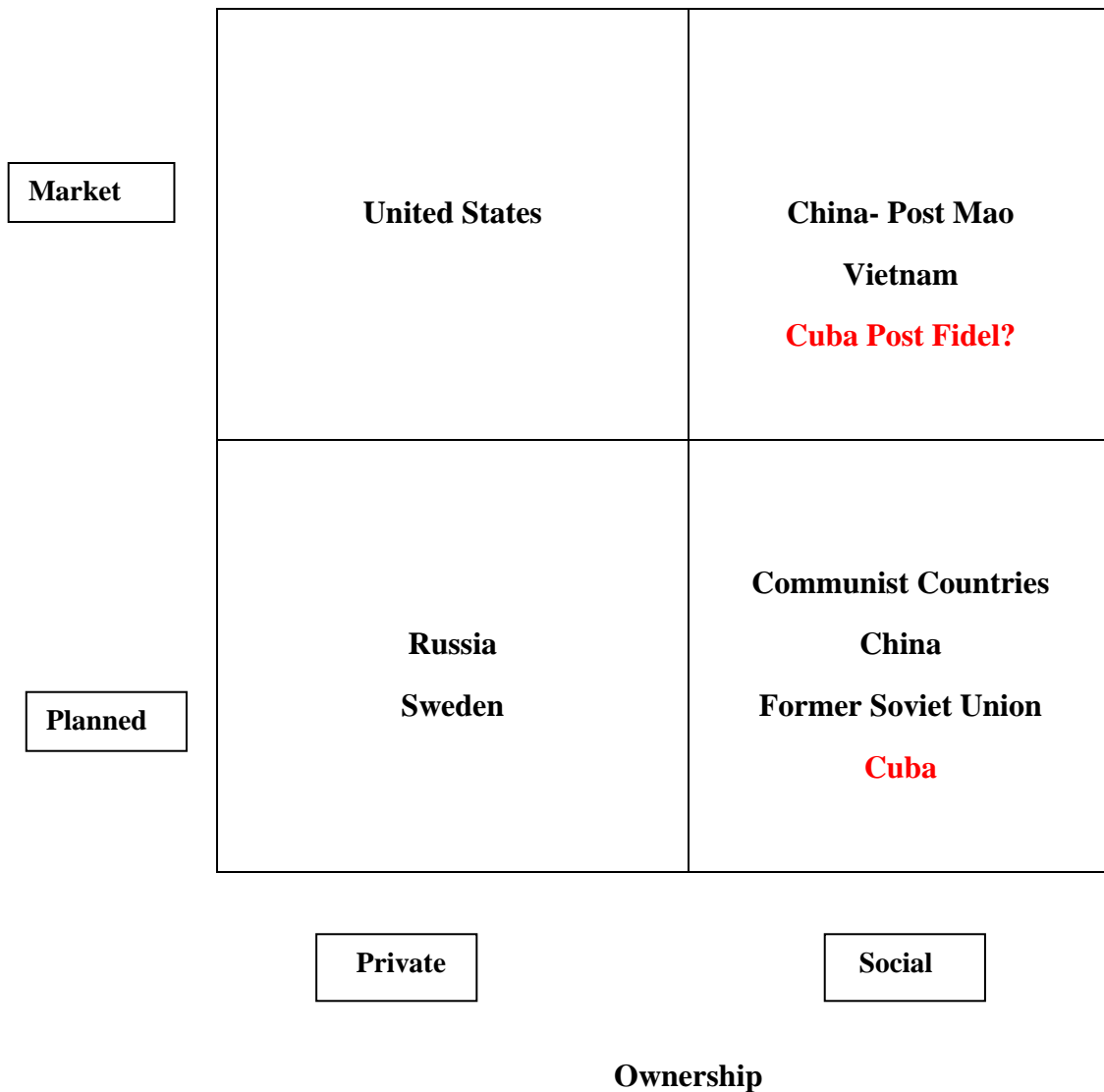


Figure 4. Politics and Markets²⁸

A planned economy is an economic system in which the state or government manages the economy. Its most extensive form is referred to as a command economy, centrally planned economy, or command and control economy. In such economies, the state or government controls all major sectors of the economy and formulates all decisions about usage and about the distribution of income. The planners decide what should be produced and direct enterprises to produce those goods. Planned economies are in contrast to unplanned economies, or market economies, where production, distribution, and pricing decisions are made by the private owners of the factors of production, based upon their own and their customers' interests, rather than upon furthering some overarching macroeconomic plan. Falling somewhere between societies that emphasize either central planning or free enterprise are those that practice social democracy or liberal socialism. Examples of social democracy are the Scandinavian countries, Sweden in particular. Sweden organizes the bulk of productive activity under private ownership but regulates this activity closely, intervenes to protect the jobs of workers, and redistributes substantial portions of profits and large individual incomes to low-income groups.

²⁸ Diagram based on the book Politics and Markets by Charles Lindblom

2.7 Partial Conclusion

The ultimate quagmire is now developing, and whether Raúl Castro will choose to stubbornly dig in his heels and adamantly insist on maintaining his loyalty to Fidel, or if, in the long term, Raúl's path toward economic reform will lead to political relaxation remains to be seen. In the short term, Raúl Castro has already begun showing signs he will rule differently than his brother. Raúl Castro can sustain a successful interim government with the support of the military, limited economic reforms, and some political and social relaxation measures that appease the population. Raúl knows that more than revolutionary rhetoric, the Cuban population is need of economic advantages, which may temporarily quell any civil unrest during the transition from Fidel's rule. "Bereft of Fidel Castro's revolutionary legitimacy, a successor government may seek to obtain political support by undertaking targeted economic reform that will improve the welfare of the Cuban people."²⁹

Raúl's interest in the Chinese model would appear to mean continued political and social controls for Cuba. China and Vietnam have allowed greater access to information and personal mobility, the decline in the state role of the economy, and integration into the global economy under a Communist party system. But the link assumed between economic development and the achievement of democracy, or political liberalization, has failed to operate in China and Vietnam, and therefore, could fail to operate in Cuba. Inevitably, as happened in China, this could indicate that the Cuban government would use the wealth acquired from a limited economic opening to further enforce the Communist party's ruling position. This would indicate that Cuba would not see a transition to democracy, but rather, continued succession under the Communist party. This, coupled with Raúl's severe and uncharismatic leadership, his reputation for being the brutal enforcer of Fidel's regime, and his hard-line approach to the communist ideology all represent a hypothesis that the future of Cuba will not involve democracy.

²⁹ Erickson, 96

After Raúl, the potential candidates are all arguably political hardliners, well enveloped in the revolutionary rhetoric, having grown up and continually supported Fidel. These Communist hardliners in Cuba's government may sustain their grip on power through economic opening, improving the standard of living of the Cuban population. Those elected to power in February 2008 are not Fidel loyalists, but rather, Raúl loyalists, showing that the future of Cuba, for now, is in the hands of the military. These Raúl loyalists are top military men who manage much of Cuba's economy and populate the upper reaches of power. Younger ideologues were passed over for promotion, which could ultimately harm the Cuban government's appeal with younger generations, who are the future of Cuba. The young ideologues show signs of wanting to bring change to Cuba, what kind of change remains to be seen but there are hints that it is more than just economic opening. Post-Raúl successors do not appear to set Cuba on a new trajectory, although some who have a predilection for economic reform may bring economic relief to the Cuban population and slowly begin to loosen political controls.

CHAPTER THREE: CUBA'S CIVIL SPHERE

3.1 Introduction

Chapter two concluded that actions of the Cuban government alone were not likely to bring democratic change to Cuba in the near future. The communist party state is still staunchly supported by the old guard. The purpose of Chapter three is to determine if there is a viable opposition force in Cuba that can push for regime change, like that which occurred in Eastern Europe. The assumption of most analysts and scholars prior to the fall of communism in Eastern Europe was that socialist states lacked an autonomous civil sphere.³⁰ The fall of communism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union exposed the importance of civil opposition groups and showed a decisive role they can play in the push for regime change. The civil sphere in Cuba developed to compensate for inefficiencies in the centrally planned economy, and was spurred on by continued economic and political crises. Opposition groups, identified as everyday forms of resistance that circumvent laws and formal channels of approved activities, manifest themselves through dissident movements, human rights groups, youth movements, and political opposition parties that have pro-democracy undertones.³¹

Cuba's second economy is a critical part of Cuba's civil sphere that is also autonomous from the socialist state. Because of the issues in Cuba's centrally planned economy, poverty and scarcities have become problematic for the Cuban population, and the disenfranchised majority turned to illegitimate means to supplement their incomes, such as circumventing laws to develop entrepreneurial skills to supplement socialist state incomes. This is Cuba's second economy, which is increasingly organized and autonomous, and most resembles capitalism and markets.³²

³⁰ Gerardo Otero and Janice O'Bryan, Cuba in Transition? The Civil Sphere's Challenge to the Castro Regime, *Latin American Politics and Society*, Winter 2002: 32

³¹ Peters, Philip, "A Policy Toward Cuba that Serves U.S. Interests," *Policy Analysis*, No. 384, 2 November 2000

³² Perez-Lopez, Jorge F., *Cuba's Second Economy: From Behind the Scenes to Center Stage*, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers 1995) 2-10

Recognizing a wide diversity within the civil sphere whose “emancipator struggles are valid and urgent, the civil sphere can be viewed as an essential ingredient to a democratic system.”³³ Does the growth and increased participation of opposition groups, coupled with increases in private market activities, pose a threat to communist rule in Cuba? Does the autonomous development of the civil sphere and its subsequent thickening increase the potential efficacy of the civil sphere as an opposition force capable of bringing democratic transition to Cuba?

3.2 Case Study: Eastern Europe

The transition of communist countries in Eastern Europe to democracy shows us that a successful transition to a strong democratic regime is dependent on a strong civil sphere that is a powerful opposition to the elites in power. Eastern Europe’s opposition to communism always existed but could not be expressed openly. This opposition had been represented by a small number of individuals who were willing to take the risk of prison or physical harm in support of basic freedoms. They were called “dissidents.” The “dissidents” were proven correct in 1989–91, when the people in all of the countries of Eastern Europe, and then in the former Soviet Union, overthrew the regimes in power through massive demonstrations and other forms of popular pressure and replaced them with democratic governments in free and fair elections. In nearly all of these countries, the “dissidents” led these opposition movements and people turned to them to negotiate a transition to democracy and to reform the state, the government, the economy, and society. When given a real chance to express their choice in free and democratic multi-party elections, the people in large measure chose parties representing the views of the long-time opposition activists, whose platforms included support of basic human rights, real democracy, the rule of law, some form of market economy (although many differences existed

³³ Gerardo Otero and Janice O’Bryan, *Cuba in Transition? The Civil Sphere’s Challenge to the Castro Regime*, *Latin American Politics and Society*, Winter 2002: 32

on what sort of market economy), civil liberties and protection of the rights of minorities, and cultural and academic freedom.

“While everyone agrees that communism collapsed because it was an unsustainable system based on repression and terror, history shows that repression and terror can continue for a very long time. Ultimately, for communism to collapse, an organized opposition representing alternative views is necessary. In short, pluralism is anathema to communism and when the people’s will to freely express different viewpoints can survive communism’s system of terror, when the system’s terror is balanced by society’s opposition, then communism cannot survive much longer. So, the experience of Eastern Europe showed it is not enough to wait for communism to collapse³⁴.”

Weigle and Butterfield identify four stages to civil society’s development in the Central European cases (Poland, Hungary and the former Czechoslovakia): defensive, emergent, mobilization, and institutional.³⁵ The defensive stage began, as systemic crises afflicted each country, involving both economic failure to the centralized system and consequent loss of political legitimacy. Popular dissatisfaction spurred increased dissidence by many individuals and some small groups. The defensive stage led eventually to an emergent one, as dissidents coalesced into various groups or social movements. As the opposition groups gained a public presence and legitimacy, they could contest the hegemony of the socialist state and present themselves as a political alternative, which is the mobilization stage. This process culminated in the final, institutional stage, where new, publicly acclaimed political leaders reestablished a legal framework of human rights, and the autonomy of civil society involved free elections.³⁶

The case study of Eastern Europe will provide a framework to discuss the civil sphere in Cuba. The civil sphere in Cuba has been operating in the first two states, defensive and emergent, since the economic crisis in the 1990’s, when the former Soviet Union collapsed and

³⁴ Common Elements of Successful Opposition to Communism in Eastern Europe , Institute of Democracy, <http://www.idea.org/cubaideas4.html>

³⁵ Gerardo Otero and Janice O’Bryan, 32

³⁶ Otero and O’Bryan, 33

no longer sent Cuba subsidies. The dire economic hardships of Cubans during this time generated challenges to the political system. Despite these economic hardships, Fidel maintained his commitment to the socialist state and the revolution. Dissidents, activists, and opposition organizations began to exist in Cuba despite harsh repression for non-revolutionary activities. This represents the emergence of an autonomous civil society in Cuba. The emergence of civil society can be seen in opposition groups, human rights groups, unorganized dissidence, and youth movements. The second economy and its actions, which are autonomous from the official social economy, are also important.

3.3 Unorganized Dissidence

“Most opposition groups against the Cuban state today must still be categorized as unorganized or informal dissidence carried out by individuals, families, and friends in their private lives.”³⁷ This is a covert circumvention of laws and formal channels. Unorganized dissidence in Cuba takes on many forms, such as participation in the second economy, dressing in American fashions, absenteeism from work, theft, and graffiti. In Cuba, the unorganized dissidents have reached the emergent stage. However, since assuming office, Raúl has not heavily cracked down on some everyday examples of resistance, as did his brother. For example, the St. Petersburg Times recently published an article on Yoani Sanchez, a dissident living in Cuba who has taken up blogging on the internet to express her discontent with the Cuban state. Sanchez's outspoken comments are a rarity in Cuba, “where printed criticism of its communist system can be considered enemy propaganda, punishable by stiff jail sentences.”³⁸ But more open debate is flourishing on the Internet, where bloggers like Sanchez, who are part of the island's dissident movement, “walk a fine line between criticism and political opposition.”

³⁷ Gerardo Otero and Janice O'Bryan, Cuba in Transition? The Civil Sphere's Challenge to the Castro Regime, *Latin American Politics and Society*, Winter 2002: 32

³⁸ Perez-Lopez, Jorge F., *Cuba's Second Economy: From Behind the Scenes to Center Stage*, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers 1995) 2-10

Dissidence in Cuba is insufficient to accomplish a democratic change in the regime. The wide spread dissidence in Cuba does suggest that this movement is reaching a level of public presence and legitimacy, but while promising, has not reached wide levels of participation, and individuals still need to protect themselves from the party-state.

3.4 Cuba's Youth

Raúl's biggest concern, since assuming command in July 26, has been engaging the youth of Cuba. Raúl needs the youth to keep the revolution alive and has the largest struggle with legitimizing his regime is with Cuba's youth. In December 2005, Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque spoke at some length about the volatile youth generation. The survivability of the revolution was at risk, admitting that large numbers of youth have no "historical memory and are apathetic, lazy and frustrated materialists. In a society that continues to value collectivist virtues, they are individualists lacking in revolutionary convictions."³⁹ Raúl has recognized that many of their complaints are valid, and Raúl has called on the youth to debate fearlessly their concerns. Raúl has allowed certain levels of free speech, through open and candid comments in the youth newspaper, *Juventud Rebelde*.⁴⁰ However, serious problems still exist with Cuba's youth, and although open criticism of the government is a stark difference from the environment under Fidel's rule, Raúl has still signaled that there is a line and he is not tolerant of certain types of public manifestations. Cuban police rounded up a group of young people wearing white rubber wristbands stenciled with the word "cambio," or "change," and held them for hours before releasing them without filing charges. While the youth are disenfranchised and advocating change in Cuba, Raúl's government still prevents large scale mobilization, limiting public manifestations. However, the youth having a voice is a staunch difference between the Fidel and Raúl regimes. Another example of youth speaking out against the regime and making frank and candid comments occurred in January 2008. During a meeting between Ricardo Alarcon, the

³⁹ Latell, 59

⁴⁰ Latell, 60

president of the National Assembly, and students at the University of Computer Science, Cuba's youth publicly voiced some of their concerns, including the status of the revolution and asking questions such as why they aren't they allowed to stay in tourist hotels, why the internet is restricted, and why they are paid in Cuban pesos.

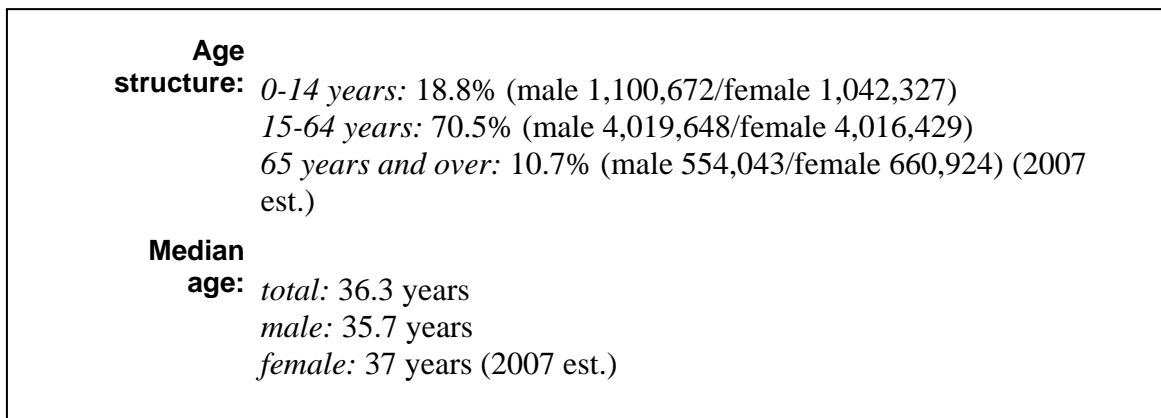


Figure 5. Age Structure and Median Age of Cuban Population⁴¹

These two examples of disenfranchised youth publicly speaking out against the Cuban government show the volatile state of the youth. Figure 4 shows 18.8 percent of the population is 0-14, while 10% of the population is over the age of 65. The youth are a sizable part of the population and are the future of Cuba. Ultimately, Raúl hopes economic reform will appease the youth, as disenfranchised youth cause civil unrest. Cuba's youth play a critical role in pushing for democratic change in Cuba. While they are currently not able to reach the mobilization phase for continued fear of repression by the state, as discussed in Chapter two, the current Cuban state will face their own mortality.

⁴¹ CIA World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cu.html#People>, 20 March 2008, 5 April 2008.

3.5 Organized Opposition Groups

Since the fall of communism and a loss of support from the former Soviet Union, increasing numbers of human rights, pro-democracy, and other organized groups have risen in Cuba, despite heavy condemnation and repression by the government. Although these organized opposition groups are autonomous, they still fear repression by the Cuban government, and therefore, are at the emergent stage and are not capable of mass mobilization. Opposition groups in Cuba are numerous and some operate in a secretive nature and it is difficult to determine how many groups there are and how many participants form these groups.⁴²

Human rights groups are the largest group type. The more renowned groups are the Cuban Commission for Human Rights (CCDHRN) and the Cuban Committee for Human Rights (CCPDH). The CCDHRN's platform includes the denunciation of human rights violations, lifting the U.S. trade embargo, and normalization of U.S.-Cuban relations. The CCDHRN defines itself as a Civil Rights Movement that denounces political crimes, the atrocities against the right to life, physical integrity, and fundamental public liberties of the citizenry. These groups argue for systemic change in Cuba, however, they still lack any sort of influence over state policies or society at large, which prevents them from reaching the mobilization phase. Human rights defenders continue to be harassed. The authorities routinely used surveillance, phone tapping, and intimidation in its efforts to restrict independent monitoring of the government's human rights practices. In some instances, they employed arbitrary searches, short-term arrests, evictions, travel restrictions, politically-motivated dismissals from employment, threats, and other forms of harassment against local activists.

There are a number of official and unofficial political opposition parties and groups that campaign for political change in Cuba. Though amendments to the Cuban Constitution of 1992

⁴² Otero and O'Bryan, 40

decriminalized the right to form political parties other than the Communist Party of Cuba, these parties are not permitted to engage in public political activities in Cuba.⁴³ The multitude of groups suggest a lack of unity among them—a detriment to themselves—as together they could possibly reach the mobilization phase and bring democratic change to Cuba if they worked together. Leaders of these groups, in some cases, are pursuing their own agendas for political stature. As Fidel's age has increased, the population has become hopeful that he will leave power, these groups may be trying to jockey for position as to play a lead role in the event of a democratic transition. Since these groups are fractured, they do not have the public presence, mass popular support, and legitimacy for mobilization. If these groups united, they could be an efficient opposition force.

In addition, these groups still face repression from the state. These political opposition groups were placed under coercive surveillance or detained during the transition of power from Fidel to Raúl, signifying that prohibitions against any form of political expression or participation independent of the Communist Party continue to be enforced as ruthlessly as they always were under Fidel.

Organized groups, in order to evolve into an effective oppositional force and provide a political opportunity in which to operate, need to broaden their support base to include reformers within the state. At this time, these opposition groups are in position to play a meaningful role in the transition process if given the opportunity to act, but lack the ability to reach a mobilization phase to bring change to Cuba.

⁴³ Otero and O'Bryan, 43

3.6 The Second Economy

The growth and increased participation of opposition groups, coupled with increases in private market activities, pose a threat to communist rule in Cuba. Problems in Cuba's centrally planned economy have increased poverty and scarcities of basic necessities in Cuba and resulted in the creation of a second economy. Some members of the Cuban population turn to illegitimate means to supplement their incomes. It is important to note that illegitimate is not illicit. When analyzing the illicit global economy, the focus tends to be on drug trafficking, human smuggling, and organized crime. In Cuba, the illegitimate sector is made up of common occupations that are not sanctioned by the Cuban government, such as taxi drivers, bakers, and entrepreneurial-type remedies to the state imposed incomes. As the Cuban population needs to break the socialist state laws everyday by engaging in the second economy to guarantee their survival, respect for socialist norms erodes and discontent with the state rises.⁴⁴

The second economy has the potential to play a positive role in a transition to a market economy. The second economy in Cuba most directly responds to market signals and operates most efficiently. The Cuban leadership under Fidel has rejected all attempts at economic opening consistent with implementation of the market system. However, the poverty and scarcities have become problematic for the Cuban population and have created a disenfranchised majority who now turn to "illegitimate" means to supplement their incomes. The Cuban population and entrepreneurs in Cuba's "second economy" take independent initiatives to cope with scarcities often produced by Cuba's centrally planned economies and create their own solutions to adversity. They are increasingly organized and a strong opposition to the norms in Cuba.⁴⁵ Due to state controls in so much of Cuban life, any inroads into that centralized control are significant. These inroads represent steps toward developing an autonomous public sphere.

⁴⁴ Perez-Lopez, Jorge F., *Cuba's Second Economy: From Behind the Scenes to Center Stage*, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers 1995) 2-10

⁴⁵ Ibid.

In the case of Cuba's second economy, it represents less dependence on the state, which is crucial to the mobilization phase.

3.7 Partial Conclusion

Power distance “informs us about dependence relationships in a country” and “shows the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.”⁴⁶ Cuba, under the leadership of Fidel Castro, developed into a high power distance country, where the political structure was shaping out to be authoritarian, with little free speech, and where violence is used to protect the current political structure and eliminate dissidence. Fidel's interpretation of equality was the elimination of certain freedoms to create a society that was unilaterally alike, and workers were told what to do. Arguably, this is not what Karl Marx meant by “dictatorship for the proletariat.” The dictatorship appealed to rulers, as in the case of Fidel, who has based parts of his revolution on the concepts of Marx, but the proletariat has been largely forgotten. A common fear in communist societies is that the civil sphere is institutionalized in the revolution and does not develop an autonomous sphere. The Cuban population would therefore be a society where everyone has a specific place and specific role, eliminating individuality. In Cuba, this created a culture where people had few desires and grew accustomed to hierarchy, with no communication between those in authority and subordinates. “Organizations began to centralize power as much as possible in a few hands and subordinates expect to be told what to do⁴⁷.” Those who are “dominant and dominated always remain in their born places⁴⁸.”

However, inefficiencies in the centrally planned economy spurred the development of opposition groups and created an autonomous civil sphere. This autonomous civil sphere,

⁴⁶ Geert Hofstede and Gert Jan Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations*, (McGraw Hill: New York, 2005) p. 46

⁴⁷ Hofstede and Hofstede, 55

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 55

coupled with the entrepreneurial spirit in the second economy, show a strong opposition voice in Cuba and demonstrate that Cubans are not institutionalized in the revolution. The lack of success of these organized opposition groups is because of continued government repression. The Cuban government also attempts to undermine these groups' legitimacy in the eyes of the public by portraying them as traitorous or U.S. puppets. "This attitude is not conducive to constructive dialogue between civil society and the state, nor does it suggest that Cuban civil society will accomplish Weigle and Butterfield's second stage of carving out a public space for autonomous activities in the foreseeable future."⁴⁹

The Cuban state does not allow the creation of an autonomous public sphere, and has used strict repression tactics to curtail any counter-revolutionary activity. This prevents further progression to the mobilization phase, which is the most important variable in a push for regime change. Nevertheless, it is important for organized groups, human rights groups, dissidents, youth movements to continue as these organizations will be part of Cuba's future democratic process. These democratic groups 1) offer political alternatives to citizens; 2) lead Cuba in a trajectory to democracy in the case of political manifestations; 3) fill the power void, should the regime collapse; and 4) serve as interlocutors to government elites in case of a transition.⁵⁰

Cuba's culture minister, Abel Prieto, headed a debate sponsored by the government on 6 February 2008 in which he and others criticized some of the controls imposed on Cubans by the communist regime. The significance may be that the criticism made during the public debate is the latest manifestation of the political transition in Cuba. The Cuban President, Raúl, is allowing articles and debates in order to promote constructive criticism of the regime. This approach is very different from the authoritarianism of his brother, Fidel, who had been Cuba's unquestioned leader until elections in February 2008 which elected Raúl as the new president of Cuba.

⁴⁹ Otero and O'Bryan, 60

⁵⁰ Lopez, Juan P. Alternatives futures in Cuba, CADAL, Number 77, 18 September 2007.

However, the political opposition does not begin to compare to the political opposition groups that brought regime change to Eastern Europe.

Therefore, the autonomous civil sphere in Cuba is unlikely to bring about a democratic change, and it will not occur under the government of Raúl. The hope for democratic change in Cuba lies with the disenfranchised youth, who someday will rise to positions of power, and based on what is occurring today in Cuba, will support democratic change.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

4.1 Introduction

The second Chapter analyzed Raúl Castro and stated he can sustain a successful interim government with the support of the military, limited economic reforms, and some political and social relaxation measures that appease the population. Raúl, based on his likening to the models of China and Vietnam, may allow greater access to information and personal mobility and limited integration into the global economy under a Communist party system, without free and fair elections, freedom of speech and freedom of press. The third Chapter explored the variable of the autonomous civil sphere and compared Cuba's autonomous sphere to that of the opposition groups in Eastern Europe that brought about the collapse of communism and concluded it did not have the strength to bring about democratic change. The third variable, United States relations with Cuba is the crucial factor to bring about democratic change in Cuba and prevent Cuba from further reverting to an authoritarian regime without political relaxation. It is clear that the present policy will not succeed, just as it has failed for fifty years. A change in policy cannot guarantee results, but it offers new possibilities and a better chance of success. Cuba's leadership is undergoing change, and there is a new opportunity to change unproductive relations between the two countries. The U.S. can approach this moment of change on the island in one of two ways: It can persist in the hard line policy of regime change; or it can make use of the limited opening under Raúl to pursue a new relationship.

4.2 Examining U.S. Policy toward Cuba

The problem with U.S. foreign policy is that it is based on historical grudges rather than concrete interests. The policy is based on the premise that strangling the Cuban economy, together with an ever-increasing worldwide isolation of the government, will cause a popular uprising and the overthrow of the government. With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the Torricelli and Helms-Burton laws were promoted under the theory that the loss of massive Soviet assistance had made Cuba so vulnerable that an intensified embargo coupled with aid to the opposition on the island would trigger regime change. The embargo's purpose was designed in a way to punish Cuba for its "socialist internationalism, Havana's alliance with the former Soviet Union, its decades of political and military support for Marxist revolutionary movements in the Americas."⁵¹ At the time the embargo was initiated, the response was understandable because Cuba was a hemispheric security threat due to its close relations with the former Soviet Union. However, with the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990's and the subsequent loss of aid, Cuba became a country starved for resources. Nevertheless, Fidel did not let his regime crumble and maintained his country's decrepit socialism. Cuba is a functioning communist regime that evaded collapse even as it lost financial backing as a result of the U.S. economic embargo and the fall of the Soviet Union.

4.3 Reasons U.S. Policy toward Cuba not Producing Results

Uneven relations with Communist countries

The United States wants the Cuban government to demonstrate that it has adopted fundamental freedoms. These include the freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of press, freedom to form political parties, and the freedom to change the government through

⁵¹ Peters, Philip, "A Policy Toward Cuba that Serves U.S. Interests, Policy Analysis, No. 384, 2 November 2000

periodic, multi-party elections. However, United States policy toward Cuba is contrary to United States policy in Vietnam and China, where these freedoms do not exist. While in China, citizens enjoy a bit more entrepreneurial freedom to open businesses, in Vietnam they do not.

According to the United States Census Bureau Foreign Trade Statistics, trade with Vietnam is 1,902.7 million dollars in exports and 10,633 million dollars in imports making the U.S.

Vietnam's largest market. Vietnam has opened its markets under a centrally controlled political system. Vietnam has remained a communist one-party state, ruled by the Communist Party of Vietnam. It tolerates little criticism and restricts basic civil and political freedoms for its citizens. Thus, Vietnam's transition has proceeded at a rapid pace in the economic realm and much more slowly in the political realm. Carlos Gutierrez, United States Secretary of Commerce, stated in an online interview regarding U.S. policy to Cuba in October 2007, the reason there were differences in policies was because open economies create opportunity and growth. When people are allowed to "invest, make business decisions, be entrepreneurs and have a wide range of consumer choices, economies and people flourish."⁵² However in Vietnam large state corporations dominate the Vietnamese economy, and in some strategic sectors, their position is codified in legislation. All large companies are state-owned, which entails close relationships between business leaders and politicians exist. Some state-owned enterprises receive government subsidies and hence state-owned enterprises receive comparative advantages over private providers. The Vietnam case study illustrates that the United States has taken a different approach to relations with other communist regimes. The most noted advantage to the Vietnam case study is the free flow of "people, ideas, and commerce to advance American values and influence."⁵³ Similar to Vietnam, Cuba has a burgeoning tourism sector. Even as U.S. visitors are few, tourism has increased, with visitors from Canada, Europe and Latin America coming in even greater numbers. As in the case of Vietnam, an increase of American tourists to Cuba can spread democratic values.

⁵² Gutierrez, Carlos, On-The-Record Briefing with Secretary of Commerce Carlos M. Gutierrez, 24 October 2007, 3 April 2008, <http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/07/q4/94089.htm>

⁵³ International Finance Corporation: World Bank Group, IFC Helping Build Vietnam's Private Sector, http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/media.nsf/Content/IFC_Helping_Build_Vietnam_Private_Sector, 2008, 5 April 2008.

Rules designed to hamper the growing commerce in agricultural and food items should be changed to permit more normal trade. In 2006 Cuba was the 33rd largest market for U.S. agricultural exports, a fact often overlooked when discussing the embargo. U.S. agricultural exports to Cuba have grown significantly since trade was authorized in 2000. The legislation liberalizes U.S. sanctions on exports to Cuba of agricultural commodities. However, strict laws remain in place on using U.S. dollars in Cuba, financing transactions, traveling to Cuba, and limiting U.S. Government assistance.⁵⁴ The United States now is Cuba's largest supplier of agricultural products, supplying approximately 96 percent of U.S. agricultural exports to Cuba peaked at \$384 million in 2004 and dropped to \$328 million by 2006. Cuba imports about \$1 billion in agricultural products overall. Basic food products and commodities such as rice, wheat, poultry, corn, soybeans, and soybean products have dominated U.S. sales to Cuba. Engagement with Cuba begins with limited forms of economic engagement, the economic impact and increased American influence in Cuba will nonetheless be substantial.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Foreign Agricultural Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000, 5 June 2007, April 6, 2007, <http://www.fas.usda.gov/itp/cuba/cuba-faq.html#level>

⁵⁵ Foreign Agricultural Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000, 5 June 2007, April 6, 2007, <http://www.fas.usda.gov/itp/cuba/cuba-faq.html#level>

Product	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total Agricultural	4	140	248	384	346	328
Coarse grains	2	23	36	57	55	43
Poultry Meat	2	23	36	61	58	45
Rice	0	6	11	64	39	40
Wheat	0	23	37	58	51	47
Soybean Meal	0	19	25	33	19	34
Soybeans	0	21	34	28	33	32
Soybean Oil	0	21	51	23	26	21
Pulses	0	.6	1	8	7	19
Red meats	0	.2	0	2	7	14
Dairy products	.3	.3	.3	28	30	13

Source: FAS BICO database, U.S. Bureau of the Census

Figure 6. Top U.S. Agricultural Exports to Cuba \$ million⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Foreign Agricultural Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000, 5 June 2007, April 6, 2007, <http://www.fas.usda.gov/itp/cuba/cuba-faq.html#level>

Enriching Cuban Elite vs. American Influence

A 1992 pastoral letter from Cuba's Catholic bishops said that the U.S. embargo "directly affects the people who suffer the consequences of hunger and illness. If what is intended by this approach is to destabilize the government by using hunger and want to pressure civic society to revolt, then the strategy is also cruel."⁵⁷ The goal of U.S. policy toward Cuba is to help its people achieve freedom and have a better life, but the economic embargo has intensified the dire state of the Cuban people. President George W. Bush in 2003 established the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba (CAFC) where it stated its mission was to respect human rights and meet the basic needs of the Cuban people in areas such as health, education, housing and human services. It means less independence for Cuban workers and entrepreneurs, who could be earning dollars from American tourists and fueling private-sector growth.

The embargo is being partially vitiated by dollars -- about a billion of them, equivalent to about 2 percent of Cuba's GDP -- sent to Cuba by the Cuban diaspora, 1.5 million strong. That diaspora supports the embargo, but dollar remittances from abroad can be spent only in government stores, so they accrue to the benefit of the regime.

The policy of denying hard currency earnings to the Cuban government carries a tradeoff—reduced American influence. "It is impossible to isolate Cuba without also erecting barriers between Americans and Cubans, cutting off a free flow of people, activities, and ideas that could constitute a powerful source of American influence in Cuba."⁵⁸ Philip Peters, a former State Department official in the Reagan administration and expert on Cuba, argues that American tourists would boost the earnings of Cubans who rent rooms, drive taxis, sell art, and operate restaurants in their homes. Those dollars would then find their way to the hundreds of freely priced farmer's markets, to carpenters, repairmen, tutors, food vendors, and other

⁵⁷Peters, Philip, "A Policy Toward Cuba that Serves U.S. Interests, Policy Analysis, No. 384, 2 November 2000

⁵⁸Peters, Philip, "A Policy Toward Cuba that Serves U.S. Interests, Policy Analysis, No. 384, 2 November 2000

entrepreneurs. In Cuba, the illegitimate sector are everyday type occupations that are not sanctioned by the Cuban government such as taxi drivers, bakers, entrepreneurial type remedies to the state imposed incomes. As the Cuban population needs to break the socialist state laws everyday by engaging in the second economy to guarantee their survival, respect for socialist norms erodes and discontent with the state rises. This is where American influence can assist in encouraging modest economic reforms, and promote independence from the government.

Changing Opinions of Cuban Americans

About 1.5 million Cubans and Cuban-Americans live in the United States, two-thirds of them in Florida and the majority in Miami-Dade County, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. “Of all the aspects of the Cuban revolution, none has had a greater impact on America than the immigration of over one million Cubans to the United States. Settling mostly in Miami, but also elsewhere, Cuban Americans have created a wealthy, successful, politically influential immigrant society.”⁵⁹ Traditionally, they have opposed any suggestion of rapprochement with Castro's government and have been the biggest supporters of the embargo. The Cuban-exile vote is considered key to winning Florida, and top presidential candidates have generally followed the recommendations of the community's most hard-line and vocal leaders, who support a full embargo against Castro's government.

But lately, some exiles — those who have arrived relatively recently and the youth — have questioned this hard-line strategy. This group has argued that limited contact with Havana, such as cultural exchanges, could hasten the demise of the communist regime there. Many influential Cuban-Americans are pushing for "conditional engagement" with Cuba -- a strategy that they hope would embolden reform-minded elements on the island. The challenge is to

⁵⁹ Fidel Castro: Cuban Americans in Miami; PBS Online, 21 December 2004, 5 April 2008, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/castro/peoplevents/e_exiles.html

convince Cuban-American hard-liners that a new policy is imperative for a possible democratic Cuba.

Embargo Fuels Castro's Revolutionary Rhetoric and Legacy

“The wide array of U.S. sanctions has failed to promote change in Cuba and has allowed Castro to reinforce his arguments that the U.S. promotes economic deprivation in Cuba and seeks to abridge Cuban sovereignty.”⁶⁰ Fidel Castro, through his charismatic leadership, continually tells the Cuban population that their dire economic conditions are a result of the United States. Fidel has always stated that the embargo has created the current dire economic conditions, and many Cubans believe support from the United States means their economic livelihoods will better. This allows Fidel to play the victim rather than admit to the Cuban population that their economic problems are a result of a socialist economy and the Cuban government's economic mismanagement. Domestic policy is the main problem of Cuba's flagging economy. Socialist policies in Cuba as elsewhere, “stifle initiative, slow and slow and economy's ability to adapt and support output.”⁶¹ Fidel has used the embargo to fuel anti-American sentiments in Cuba and escape blame for the current state of Cuba's economy.

Lack of International Support for Embargo

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly in October 2007, for the 16th year in a row, voted to end the crippling U.S. trade embargo against Cuba. By a vote of 184 in favor, it reiterated its “call upon all states to refrain from promulgating and applying laws and measures (such as those in the US embargo) in conformity with their obligations under the Charter of the

⁶⁰ Peters, Philip, “A Policy Toward Cuba that Serves U.S. Interests, *Policy Analysis*, No. 384, 2 November 2000

⁶¹ International Finance Corporation: World Bank Group, IFC Helping Build Vietnam's Private Sector, http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/media.nsf/Content/IFC_Helping_Build_Vietnam_Private_Sector, 2008, 5 April 2008.

United Nations and international law.”⁶² The 192-member assembly again urged “states that have and continue to apply such laws and measures to take the necessary steps to repeal or invalidate them as soon as possible in accordance with their legal regime.”⁶³ Four countries -- the United States, Israel, Marshall Islands and Palau -- voted against the resolution and one, Micronesia, abstained.

In addition to lacking international support for the embargo, Cuba is attracting non-US investment which has helped boost economic growth. Cuba’s main allies, China and Venezuela have boosted Cuba’s flagging economy. Most critically for Cuba, China represents a vital alliance for the island's declining economy. The Chinese have shown interest in investments in nickel, petroleum exploration, and agriculture. If those investments materialize, China could become Cuba's top foreign investor. Also aiding Cuba in its times of economic strife is Venezuela and its shipments to Cuba of 98,000 barrels of oil a day under preferential terms, a deal giving the island one of its strongest economic boosts since the fall of the Soviet Union.⁶⁴

Cuba is able to purchase U.S. products from the international market. There is not a product that Cuba needs that cannot be purchased from other countries. Cuba routinely purchases from Panama, Venezuela, Colombia, Canada and the Dominican Republic.⁶⁵ In addition, most countries liberally trade with Cuba. In fact countries that are closely aligned with the U.S., Canada, France and Spain, are Cuba’s main trading partners.

⁶² Hoge, Warren, Cuba: U.N. Vote Reaffirms Opposition to U.S. Embargo, New York Times, 31 October 2007, April 6, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/31/world/americas/31briefs-cuba.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

⁶³ Hoge, Warren, Cuba: U.N. Vote Reaffirms Opposition to U.S. Embargo, New York Times, 31 October 2007, April 6, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/31/world/americas/31briefs-cuba.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

⁶⁴ Cuba: Country Report, The Economist Intelligence Unit, - 1 Oct. 2007, 29 March 2008, http://mutex.gmu.edu:2213/index.asp?layout=displayIssueArticle&issue_id=1142662699&article_id=1152662700

⁶⁵ Lopez, Juan P. Alternatives futures in Cuba, CADAL, Number 77, 18 September 2007.

4.4 Partial Conclusion

The intention of the embargo against Cuba was to bring about the collapse of Castro's regime. For reasons discussed in this Chapter, the embargo has, in some regards, empowered the Cuban government against the U.S. and prevented democratic gains. For this reason, the U.S. needs to begin diplomatic dialogue with Cuba and end the current impasse, now based on historical grudges rather than concrete interest. Chapters two and three analyzed the variables of the Cuban government and the autonomous civil sphere in Cuba and concluded they would not bring about democratic change. Chapter four has shown that the variable most likely to bring democratic change to Cuba are actions of the U.S. government. The U.S. government is not engaging with Cuba as it has little to gain economically and because of the end of the Cold War, is not rushed to reinstate relations with Cuba for fear that other countries will exert more influence.

The United States has wanted to “deny Castro the political victory they think he would win if sanctions were lifted.” But Fidel's current exit from Cuban leadership, coupled with a new U.S. administration to take office in 2009, presents an opportunity to begin dialogue and create a policy that will lead to the promotion of economic liberalization and democratic values.

There are three main points where the U.S. insists Cuba take action on before dialogue begins. They are the freedom of speech, free and fair elections and the release of political prisoners. It is important to note that a United States-Cuban relationship does not mean U.S. withdrawal of staunch disapproval of the political, economic and human rights policies of the Cuban government. While changes are being made under Raúl, it is important to remember that it is still a dictatorship. Raúl has allowed the Cuban people be outspoken and critical of the problems of the Cuban government, a staunch difference from Fidel, but it is too early to tell how far he will go to squash a rebellion. While these criticisms are allowed mostly in the area of the economy, it at least shows that things are changing under Raúl. The United States should

respond positively to these small steps and view these as positive steps to better the lives of the Cuban people. Raúl has also shown a minimal tolerance for criticisms that have fallen into the political realm, where Cubans use to be critical of the government in their own homes only for fear of reprisal, now they are becoming vocal in public. More importantly, Cuba, under the government of Raúl, signed two legally binding human rights agreements. The covenants—part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—commit Cuba to freedom of expression and association, and the right to travel. This may show a change in Cuban human rights policy and something the U.S. should recognize.

Moreover, as discussed in this Chapter, the U.S. maintains uneven relations with communist countries. The U.S enjoys diplomatic relations with China and Vietnam, where there is limited freedom of speech and no free elections. Regardless of the fact that the U.S. enjoys diplomatic relations with China and Vietnam because of enormous economic gains, the U.S. should still have a uniform way of dealing with Communist countries.

There is a strong possibility that Raúl will endorse some legal changes to allow markets to play a greater role in the economy. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit possible liberalizing measures that have been mentioned “include: expanding the space for self employment and non-state small and medium enterprises, possibly using forms of co-operative ownership; increasing the financial autonomy of state enterprises; improving competition and freeing more prices in retail goods markets; and increasing ownership rights in housing (where currently occupants may own their home but can only sell through a state agency, at a fixed price).” Raúl has followed through on some of his promises by legalizing cell phone use for ordinary Cubans; granted Cubans access to previously off-limits tourist hotels; and legalized the sale within Cuba of microwaves, DVD players and personal computers. Cubans are welcoming the change, even if the costs are out of their reach. While some call this nothing but a petty makeover, these are significant and better the everyday lives of the Cuban people. The U.S.

government should recognize these changes, staunch changes from the government of Fidel and see that Raúl is showing a commitment to better the lives of the Cuban people.

The U.S. should allow Americans to travel to Cuba to spread and promote democratic values. “The more American citizens in the streets of Cuban cities, the better for the cause of a more open society.”⁶⁶ Allowing Americans to travel to Cuba will bring more liberalization to Cuba. While Cuba under Fidel has always blamed the embargo on lack of dialogue from the United States, lifting the restrictions will put the ball in Cuba’s court. This strategy is a win for win for the U.S. First if Cuba does not allow American s to enter Cuba, it will expose Cuba as being the players who are unwilling to cooperate. Second, the flood of American tourists to Cuba, will not only promote democratic values and ideals, but will also cause the collapse of the repressive tactics of the Cuban government. The military and Department of the Interior will not be able to control the increase in tourism and their repressive tactics will not be able to control what American say, who Cubans do business with, and overall not stop the flow of American values, ideas and increase the access to information of the Cuban population. Arguably, this alone could bring democratic change to Cuba.

Lifting the embargo will take time and be more complicated. The U.S. still wants compensation for the nationalization of U.S. properties when Fidel came to power. There have been indications from the Cuban government that this could be negotiated.⁶⁷ The Helms Burton Act should also be lifted and trade should resume. This step will come after dialogue has improved. If the embargo were lifted, the Cuban people would be a bit less deprived and Raúl would have no one else to blame for the shortages and stagnation that will persist without real market reforms.

⁶⁶ Peters, Philip, “A Policy Toward Cuba that Serves U.S. Interests, Policy Analysis, No. 384, 2 November 2000

⁶⁷ Peters, Philip, “A Policy Toward Cuba that Serves U.S. Interests, Policy Analysis, No. 384, 2 November 2000

The most contentious issues between the U.S. and Cuba is in regard to political prisoners. The Government of Cuba's in March 2003 sentenced 75 pro-democracy advocates to up to 28 years in prison “in the most severe crackdown on Cuban dissidents in over two decades, marking a worrisome deterioration in Cuba’s human rights policies.” Havana denies the existence of political prisoners in Cuba, saying all inmates are there for legitimate reasons, including counter-revolutionary crimes stipulated in Cuba's penal code. Controversial portions of Cuba's criminal code include vague provisions providing for the arrest of persons committing anti-revolutionary acts. Under Cuban law, an act is a crime only if it is prohibited by the law and is socially dangerous or harmful.⁶⁸ Violations of law that do not rise to the necessary level of social harm are considered to be infractions, that is, a noncriminal citation offense. In addition to standard crimes against persons, property and social order, the Cuban penal code enumerates various offenses against socialist organization.⁶⁹

The United States would like Cuba to better define what is a criminal offense and what is a political prisoner. This will at least assist the two countries to begin dialogue. The United States has repeatedly called for the release of all political prisoners in Cuba. Some have been explicitly convicted for political reasons, such as “enemy propaganda,” a vague legal term that can be translated as “contempt for authority.” Others have been detained on fictional criminal charges to disguise the political motivations for their arrests.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Alfonso, Haroldo Dilla, Cuban Experiment , Latin American Perspectives, Vol. 27, No. 1, The Working Class, Democracy, and Justice. (Jan.,2000), pp. 33-44

⁶⁹ Peters, Philip, “A Policy Toward Cuba that Serves U.S. Interests, Policy Analysis, No. 384, 2 November 2000

⁷⁰ Alfonso, Haroldo Dilla, Cuban Experiment , Latin American Perspectives, Vol. 27, No. 1, The Working Class, Democracy, and Justice. (Jan.,2000), pp. 33-44

CHAPTER FIVE: FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Cuba is undergoing a transition, not succession, although the nation's socialist system is being preserved. Raúl Castro is transitioning Cuba through economic reforms that are bettering the lives of Cuban people and allowing them access to certain freedoms that improve their everyday lives. Raúl is not Fidel, and his rule of Cuba is a staunch contrast to that of Fidel. Bereft of the charismatic leadership of Fidel, Raúl has sought to appease the population.

Fidel has often spoken of the mortality of his generation. Fidel would not invest almost 50 years in his revolution to see it crumble upon his demise. Information is limited, and therefore it is difficult to discern who is being cultivated in his image and who Fidel would like to see rule Cuba after Raúl and the old guard is no longer in power. The old guard has shown a strong commitment to the Communist Party and Raúl and his loyalists will continue to pay homage to Fidel and show loyalty to promote his legacy. The Communist state and political controls will not crumble while they are in power, which further diminish the chances of a democratic transition in Cuba in the near term. Younger ideologues and Cuba's youth are continually reported as being pragmatic. Some information indicates that Fidel took great interest in cultivating the career of Carlos Lage and cultivated his career in the Communist Party, having an almost father-son relationship with him. Lage will be part of the future of Cuba, as will other young ideologues. What is promising for Cuba's long term are future reports which suggest that Lage is not liked by Raúl because he is overly pragmatic, which bodes well for a transition to social democracy. Pragmatic young ideologues and the current disenfranchised youth assuming roles and ranks in the Communist Party, Provisional and National Assemblies, the Military, and some day coming into positions of power could mean a democratic transition in the long term in Cuba.

Actions of the Cuban government will not bring democratic change to Cuba in the short term. The Old Guard will continue to rule and while they will allow limited economic reforms, basic freedoms will continue to be curbed in Cuba and non-democratic governance will continue. Cuba will most likely remain Communist for a number of decades until younger ideologues and the youth can climb the ranks and be in positions of power. Younger ideologues and the disenfranchised youth may be in more favor of a social democracy, a favorable alternative that allows certain political freedoms.

The civil sphere in Cuba is splintered. There are a multitude of human rights organizations, opposition groups, dissident movements and disenfranchised youth that all have pro-democracy undertones. These groups form the autonomous civil sphere in Cuba, and it is important for them to exist in order to decrease dependency on the government. In Eastern Europe, these groups effectively brought about regime change and were an important variable that caused the collapse of communism. In Cuba, these groups are fractured; instead of uniting to become a strong opposition force, they remain splintered, and subsequently, ineffective to push for regime change. There is limited information as to why this occurs, but possibilities include self-interest of these groups and their desires to play leading roles in Cuba's transition; they may be jockeying for political stature and hope to be future rulers of Cuba. Other possibilities include the oppressive nature of the Communist state which both prevents public manifestations of discontent and uses strict repressive tactics to curtail counter-revolutionary activities. This prevents groups from operating openly out of fear of the state and contributes to the further splintering instead of thickening of the civilian sphere. "The opposition movements in Eastern Europe discovered after many hard years of tilting at windmills that absent more collective or group action no effective opposition can be organized." This idea is understood in the *Acuerdo para la Democracia*, signed by some Cuban opposition and exile organizations, mainly in Miami, that agreed to unite in a basic statement of commitment to democratic principles for Cuba. This remains an idea for groups in Cuba. The autonomous civil sphere in Cuba is not strong enough

to bring about democratic transition. But if a transition to democracy is to occur, a strong opposition to the ruling elite exists to future democratic progress.

U.S. policy toward Cuba is based on historical grudges and an old containment strategy that was birthed during the Cold War to reduce the ability of the former Soviet Union to project power outside and curb its sphere of influence. With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuba is no longer a Hemispheric security threat. Current U.S. policy toward Cuba undermines the current needs of the Western Hemisphere, which is the promotion of democratic governance. U.S. foreign policy is currently focused on other areas of the world and is not overly involved in Latin America, where governments are continually leaning more to the left and promoting non-democratic governance. The problem with U.S. policy toward Latin America is that it does not reflect strategic consideration and underestimates the extent to which U.S. interests are at stake in the region. The United States should look at the bigger strategic advantage to engagement in Cuba—an opportunity to promote democratic rule and curb nationalist/populist/leftist trends in Latin America. Cuba showed that a government based on Marxist principles and non-democratic governance can sustain long term rule in close proximity to the United States. Cuba provides a positive example of non-democratic governance that encourages nationalist/populist/leftist trends. Cuba's transformation to democracy will further strengthen the cause for democratic rule in Latin America, strengthening stability in the Western Hemisphere, ultimately demonstrating nationalist/reformist/populist/leftist trends and non-democratic regimes ultimately fail. Only if the U.S. rethinks its foreign policy and engages Cuba can this transformation occur. A new foreign policy with Cuba will promote and spread the free flow of people, ideas, and commerce to advance American values and influence. The United States is the most viable variable in achieving democratic transition in Cuba more than actions of the Cuban government and actions of the autonomous civil sphere.

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Appendix 1: Timeline of United States-Cuban Relations

1959: Castro leads a 9,000-strong guerrilla army into Havana, forcing Batista to flee. Castro becomes prime minister

April 1959: Castro meets US Vice President Richard Nixon on an unofficial visit to Washington. Nixon afterwards wrote that the US had no choice but to try to "orient" the leftist leader in the "right direction".

1960: All US businesses in Cuba are nationalized without compensation; US breaks off diplomatic relations with Havana and imposes a trade embargo in response to Castro's reforms.

1961: US backs an abortive invasion by Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs; Castro proclaims Cuba a communist state and begins to ally it with the USSR.

1961: The CIA begins to make plans to assassinate Castro as part of Operation Mongoose. At least five plans to kill the Cuban leader were drawn up between 1961 and 1963.

1962: Cuban missile crisis ignites when, fearing a US invasion, Castro agrees to allow the USSR to deploy nuclear missiles on the island. The US released photos of Soviet nuclear missile silos in Cuba - triggering a crisis which took the two superpowers to the brink of nuclear war. It was subsequently resolved when the USSR agreed to remove the missiles in return for the withdrawal of US nuclear missiles from Turkey.

1980: Around 125,000 Cubans, many of them released convicts, flee to the US, when Castro temporarily lifted restrictions.

1993: The US tightens its embargo on Cuba, which introduces some market reforms in order to stem the deterioration of its economy. These include the legalization of the US dollar, the transformation of many state farms into semi-autonomous co-operatives, and the legalization of limited individual private enterprise.

1994: Cuba signs an agreement with the US according to which the US agrees to admit 20,000 Cubans a year in return for Cuba halting the exodus of refugees.

1996: US trade embargo made permanent in response to Cuba's shooting down of two US aircraft operated by Miami-based Cuban exiles.

1998: The US eases restrictions on the sending of money to relatives by Cuban Americans.

November 1999: Cuban child Elian Gonzalez is picked up off the Florida coast after the boat in which his mother, stepfather and others had tried to escape to the US capsized. A huge campaign

by Miami-based Cuban exiles begins with the aim of preventing Elian from rejoining his father in Cuba and of making him stay with relatives in Miami.

June 2000: Elian allowed to rejoin his father in Cuba after prolonged court battles.

October 2000: US House of Representatives approves the sale of food and medicines to Cuba.

November 2001: US exports food to Cuba for the first time in more than 40 years after a request from the Cuban Government to help it cope with the aftermath of Hurricane Michelle.

January 2002: Prisoners taken during US-led action in Afghanistan are flown into Guantanamo Bay for interrogation as al-Qaeda suspects.

May 2002: US Under Secretary of State John Bolton accuses Cuba of trying to develop biological weapons, adding the country to Washington's list of "axis of evil" countries.

May 2002: Former US President Jimmy Carter makes landmark goodwill visit which includes tour of scientific centres, in response to US allegations about biological weapons. Carter is first former or serving US president to visit Cuba since 1959 revolution.

September 2002: The Cuban Government is particularly exercised by the actions of James Cason, the head of the US Interest Section in Havana, who is increasingly active in support of the internal opposition.

October 2003: US President George Bush announces fresh measures designed to hasten the end of communist rule in Cuba, including tightening a travel embargo to the island, cracking down on illegal cash transfers, and a more robust information campaign aimed at Cuba. A new body, the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba, is created.

October 2004: President Castro announces a ban on transactions in US dollars, and imposes 10% tax on dollar-peso conversions.

July 2005: US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announces the creation of a new post to help "accelerate the demise" of the Castro regime in Cuba. Caleb McCarry, a veteran Republican Party activist, is appointed as the Cuba transition co-ordinator.

February 2006: A propaganda war breaks out in Havana as President Castro unveils a monument which blocks the view of illuminated messages - some of them about human rights - displayed on the US mission building.

July 2006: The US Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba recommends an \$80m fund to support Cuba's opposition and the deployment of US aid once a transitional government is in place.

August 2006: US President George W Bush - in his first comments after President Castro undergoes surgery and hands over power to his brother Raúl - urges Cubans to work for democratic change.

December 2006: The largest delegation from the US Congress to visit Cuba since the 1959 revolution goes to Havana. Jeff Flake, a Republican congressman heading the 10-member bipartisan delegation, said he wanted to launch a "new era in US-Cuba relations", but the group is denied a meeting with Raúl Castro.

July 2007: Cuba accuses the US of issuing far fewer visas to Cubans wanting to leave than allowed for under an agreement between the two nations. A deal reached in 1994 allows Washington to grant up to 20,000 entry visas a year for Cubans.

July 2007: Acting leader Raúl Castro again indicates he may be open to a warming of relations with the US. He offers to engage in talks, but only after the 2008 US presidential election.

Timeline: BBC News <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/3182150.stm>

Appendix Two: Fidel's Proclamation to the Cuban People Before Undergoing Intestinal Surgery

Given that our country is threatened in circumstances like this by the government of the United States, I have taken the following decision:

- 1) I provisionally delegate my functions as first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba to the second secretary, comrade Raúl Castro Ruz.
- 2) I provisionally delegate my functions as Commander in Chief of the Revolutionary Armed Forces to the abovementioned comrade, General of the Army Raúl Castro Ruz.
- 3) I provisionally delegate my functions as president of the Council of State and the government of the Republic of Cuba to the first vice president, comrade Raúl Castro Ruz.
- 4) I provisionally delegate my functions as the principal instigator of the National and International Public Health Program to member of the Political Bureau and Minister of Public Health, comrade José Ramón Balaguer Cabrera.
- 5) I provisionally delegate my functions as the principal instigator of the National and International Education Program to comrades José Ramón Machado Ventura and Esteban Lazo Hernández, members of the Political Bureau.
- 6) I provisionally delegate my functions as the principal instigator of the National Program of the Energy Revolution in Cuba and cooperation with other countries in this sphere to comrade Carlos Lage Dávila, member of the Political Bureau and secretary of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers.

The funds corresponding to these three programs: Health, Education and Energy, should continue being managed and prioritized, as I have been doing personally, by comrades Carlos Lage Dávila, secretary of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers; Francisco Soberón Valdés, minister president of the Central Bank of Cuba; and Felipe Pérez Roque, minister of foreign affairs, who have accompanied me in these matters and who should constitute a committee for that objective.

Our glorious Communist Party, supported by the mass organizations and all the people, has the mission of assuming the task entrusted in this announcement.

The Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, scheduled for September 11-16, should receive the greatest attention of the Cuban state and nation to take place with the maximum brilliance on the agreed date. I would ask everyone to postpone the anniversary of my 80th birthday, which thousands of personalities so generously agreed to celebrate on August 13, to December 2 of this year, the 50th anniversary of the Granma Landing.

I ask the Central Committee of the Party and the National Assembly of People's Power to give their firmest support to this announcement.

I do not harbor the slightest doubt that our people and our Revolution will fight until the last drop of blood to defend these and other ideas and measures that are necessary for safeguarding this historical process.

Imperialism will never be able to crush Cuba.

The Battle of Ideas will continue advancing.

¡Viva la Patria!

¡Viva la Revolución!

¡Viva el Socialismo!

¡Hasta la Victoria Siempre!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fidel Castro Ruz', with a horizontal line underneath.

Fidel Castro Ruz

Commander in Chief

First Secretary of the Party and

President of the Councils of State and

Ministers of the Republic of Cuba.

July 31, 2006, 6:22 p.m.

Appendix 3: Results of Council of State Elections, Raúl loyalists Take Power

609 deputies exercised their right to vote

Valid ballots 609

United vote (for all candidates proposed) 600

Selective vote 9

Votes %

President of the Council of State and Council of Ministers:

Raúl Castro Ruz 609 100

First Vice President of Council of State and Council of Ministers:

José R. Machado Ventura 601 98.69

Vice presidents:

Juan Almeida Bosque 608 99.84

Abelardo Colomé Ibarra 608 99.84

Carlos Lage Dávila 609 100

Esteban Lazo Hernández 608 99.84

Julio Casas Regueiro 608 99.84

Secretary

José Miyar Barruecos 608 99.84

Other members:

José Ramón Balaguer Cabrera 608 99.84

Iris Betancourt Téllez 609 100

Roberto Fernández Retamar 609 100

Luis Herrera Martínez 608 99.84

Orlando Lugo Fonte 608 99.84

Felipe Pérez Roque 609 100

Pedro Sáez Montejo 609 100

Ramiro Valdés Menéndez 608 99.84

Francisco Soberón Valdés 608 99.84

Carlos Valenciaga Díaz 609 100

Surina Acosta Brook 609 100

Regla Dayamí Armenteros Mesa 609 100
Leopoldo Cintra Frías 609 100
Inés María Chapman Waugh 609 100
María del Carmen Concepción González 608 99.84
María Yolanda Ferrer Gómez 609 100
Guillermo García Frías 608 99.84
Tania León Silveira 609 100
Álvaro López Miera 608 99.84
Julio Martínez Ramírez 609 100
Dignora Montano Perdomo 609 100
Juan José Rabilero Fonseca 606 99.50
Salvador Valdés Mesa 609 100

