ROWING AGAINST THE STREAM:
ELITE REGENERATION AND THE QUESTION OF REGIME CONTINUATION IN CUBA

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This dissertation explains the perseverance of state socialism in Cuba in terms of elite composition and explores the efforts of this elite to preserve the state socialist system across generational change in its ranks. It is argued that four characteristics of the Cuban political elite have contributed to regime preservation in Cuba so far: That the first generation of Revolutionary leaders are still in command accounts for their reluctance to enact reforms toward systemic change; their siege mentality accounts for their readiness in confronting crises; low intra-elite institutionalization endows the regime with flexibility to adapt to stark changes in exogenous circumstances; and elite unity accounts for resistance to strong pressures for change. These characteristics combine in a model of “extraordinary elite” which represents a kind of agency likely, or at least able, to successfully withstand structural and institutional pressures for regime change. Explaining regime persistence in terms of elite composition raises questions as to the odds of regime continuation as the composition of the elite changes. Thus this dissertation also looks at the attempts at elite regeneration, or the attempts of the elite to maintain the regime across a generational shift in its ranks. This is accomplished by looking at the related processes of elite rejuvenation, as reflected by the turnover in the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party; the attempted transmission of values, beliefs, and skills across generations, as reflected in the speech of Cuban leaders
and educational materials in the Cuban schooling system; and the formation of new leaders, as reflected by the policies on the recruitment, selection, training, and promotion of cadres in the party apparatus and the state administration. The findings suggest that the Cuban leadership has learned from the collapse experience of other state socialist regimes and that has applied this knowledge to try to perpetuate the Cuban state socialist system over time. Both the model developed and the processes described offer contributions to the interrelated literatures on political stability and change, elites, the Cuban Revolution, state socialism, and socialism.
To the memory of my grandfather,
Abraham Schabes
El tiempo pasa,  
nos vamos poniendo viejos  
y el amor no lo reflejo, como ayer.  
Pablo Milanés (“Años”).

Time passes by,  
we are becoming older  
and I do not reflect love, as yesterday  
Pablo Milanés (“Years”).

Defender mi ideología  
buena o mala pero mía  
tan humana como la contradicción  
Alejandro Lerner (“Todo a pulmón”).

To defend my ideology  
good or bad but mine  
as human as a contradiction  
Alejandro Lerner (“All from the lung”).
Preface

Every time that I read *The Social Contract*, I think of Cuba. It is in this book that philosopher and Genevese citizen Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) laid down the essentials of his republican thought. He believed that a state of relative small size, with a population that lives in rough equality and observes an austere way of life, and that is unswervingly committed to defend its independence, is apt to construct a strong and enduring form of legitimate government. Finding these characteristics in the inhabitants of Corsica, he conjectured that “this little island will one day astonish Europe.”

I could not have written a dissertation on the “Corsica of our times” without many individuals that helped me along the way. I shall thank all of them but will express my gratitude here only to those few whom even my faulty memory cannot forget.

All through the source-gathering process I benefited from the assistance of staff in the libraries in which I worked. These include the employees of Lauinger library at Georgetown University, especially those who staff the Interlibrary Loan Service; the employees at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C, in particular in the Hispanic, Periodicals, and Main reading rooms; the employees at the José Martí library in Havana, in particular (but not only) Mirta; and the employees in the library at the Museum of the Battle of Ideas in Cardenas, Matanzas. Without their work I could not have reached many of the sources informing this research, including those that turned out to be the most important ones. I thank them all for their efficient help.

As a nonnative English speaker, I very often find it difficult to conform my writing to the rules and idiomatic expressions of this language. The editorial assistance provided by Moshe Ben Shahar, Jeremy Blank, Richard Mendelbaum, and especially Sylvia
Whitman cannot be described as anything other than heroic, especially taking into account my insistent stubbornness in rejecting their suggestions. I must thank them for making from my scribble a text understandable in English.

I also have to thank all those Cubans in the island and in the United States who offered either logistical support or their time and willingness to reflect on the topics of this research through pleasant yet passionate conversation. Most of them offered both, and all of them did so in their personal rather than official capacities. For identification purposes only, I nevertheless list their institutions, as appropriate, along with their names. They include Rafael Hernández, editor of the international journal Temas; Jorge Luis Acanda, from the faculty of philosophy and history in the university of Havana; Francisca López Civiera, vice-dean of that faculty; Marta Pérez Rolo, director of the Center of Entrepreneurship Management, Technical, and Administrative Improvement (GESTA); Alexis Codina, director of the Center for the Study of Economic Direction (CETED); Dario Machado and Ariel González, from Cuba’s Foreign Service (MINREX); María Isabel Domínguez, from the Center of Psychological and Sociological Research (CIPS); Froilán González and Adys Cupull from the National Union of Writers and Artists (UNEAC); Raúl Valdés Vivó, director of the Party’s Higher School; psychologist Daybel Pañellas; my research assistant Mónica García; my personal friends Alejandro Gaviria and Arturo López Calleja; and my friend and colleague Arturo López Levy, from the University of Denver.

During the writing of this dissertation I additionally benefited from the guidance of my academic adviser, Marc Chernick, who supported this project since its very inception, and who somehow stoically tolerated my whimsical outbursts at moments of
crisis and despair. I also benefited from the insightful comments of Harley Balzer, Daniel Brumberg, and Julia Sweig, who forced me to sharpen my thinking and express my ideas with more clarity. With their help, all remaining imperfections must clearly be mine alone.

Admittedly, the unconditional support of my family was my most valuable asset. My father, Adolfo Berman, and my mother, Aida Berman, provided full financial support for this research. Along with my brother, Moy, and my sisters, Selma and Esther, they also endlessly encouraged me to stay the course until the completion of the dissertation. Finally, I want to mention the essential contribution of my core family. Without Tal, my wife; Lia, my daughter, and Abri, my son, I would not feel capable of doing anything meaningful, let alone persevering until the completion of a PhD program in a renowned institution like Georgetown. In many ways, the many burdens implied in doing this research were carried by them. My thanks to them are much beyond what I can express through language.
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Introduction

There is a picture by Klee called *Angelus Novus*. It shows an angel who seems about to move away from something he stares at. His eyes are wide, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how the angel of history must look. His face is turned towards the past. Where a chain of events appears before us, he sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it at its feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise and has got caught in his wings; it is so strong that the angel can no longer close them. This storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows towards the sky. What we call progress is this storm.

Walter Benjamin

If a cataclysmic event is that which divides history into “before” and “after,” then the disintegration of the Soviet Union was such an event. As historian Eric Hobsbawm has famously put it, the twentieth century ended in 1991 because in this year the defining characteristics of its second half came to a definitive end. The second half of the “Short Century” was shaped by a worldwide military and ideological contestation between two alternatives of socioeconomic and political development. The disintegration of the Soviet Union symbolizes the failure of one of them.

The alternative that failed called itself “socialism.” By the mid 1970s it was represented by the consolidated socioeconomic and political regime in some fourteen countries where about a third of the world population lived. The ruling socioeconomic and political regime in all these countries shared three defining characteristics. All were monopolistically governed by a Communist Party as defined by its Marxist ideology rather than by its name, and therefore scholars and other experts on the matter often term them “communists.” Resource allocation in all these regimes was done through a central authority rather than through the supposedly unmediated exchange between producers and consumers, and therefore some scholars, mainly economists, term them “centrally planned economies.” To these two characteristics, those scholars who prefer the term “state socialism” add the public ownership of the main means of production as an
equally essential one. For this last characteristic they concede to these regimes the label socialism. The prefix “state” both distinguishes this kind of socialism from other possible societal formations that may claim this label as well, such as “market socialism” or even “social democracy,” and stresses the prominent role played by state personnel and state agencies in owning property, in allocating main resources, and in maintaining public order.

For social scientists the demise of state socialism is an important occurrence. By virtue of their profession they thrive on regime change, and the demise of state socialism is an instance of socioeconomic and political regime change. In light of the revolutions that swept away all East and Central European socialist states between 1989 and 1991 and the extent of economic reform in China and Vietnam, social scientists have been therefore working hard on testing their conventions on regime stability and change and on formulating new ones. Doing so, we all hope, would foster our general understanding of the processes involved in and the factors contributing to the stability and change of socioeconomic and political regimes.

**Explaining Demise**

At the very least four different (yet interrelated) established wisdoms in the social sciences claim relevance for explaining the demise of state socialism. First is “modernization” theory. For more than forty years students of this school have maintained that the process of industrialization produces an urban, healthy, and educated population, which is relatively equal in wealth but heterogeneous in social and economic interests, which shares social values such as trust and tolerance, and which represents the social basis for the political institutions of a liberal democracy. The demise of state
socialism and the ensuing holding of general elections ever since in almost every industrialized former socialist state—even though elections have been in some places “freer” than in others—represents therefore the adaptation of the political institutions of these countries to their to social basis. Empirically, this argument seems to apply well to all former socialist regimes in Europe with the exception of the Albanian.  

A second view ascribes explanatory primacy to economic variables in general and in particular to economic crisis. In this line of thinking economic duress hinders public support of governments and without public support any government in any regime would find it difficult to stay in power for long. The end of state socialism provides strong supporting evidence for this contention. Despite variations in policies implemented against economic crises (reform or lack thereof), and despite different trajectories leading to the transcendence of state socialism (economic transformation or collapse), wherever state socialism has ended, it has ended after periods of decreasing (and in some cases negative) economic growth.

The third account fully agrees with the connection between economic crisis and regime change, but it innovates in seeing economic underperformance as endemic to the institutions of a socialist economy. According to this view the production process of socialist economies is necessarily overly wasteful of scarce resources, lacks effective incentives to harness work, lacks technological innovation, produces corruption, suffers from chronic shortages, and manufactures products that are uncompetitive in world markets. Given its internal deficiencies state socialism was thus able to provide populations with barely something more than the means for their physical subsistence. Yet for their materialistic philosophy most socialist states claimed to provide much
more, in some cases even to compete in welfare standards with advanced capitalist economies. The ongoing distance between real economic performance and developmental pretensions explains in turn the need for economic reform and eventually the transformation or else the collapse of state socialism.

Finally, the passing over of state socialism can be explained from an international perspective. According to this view a common change in their immediate international environment was a necessary condition for the collapse of socialism in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania. Particularly in these cases the stability of state socialism was explained in the context of Soviet military and economic assistance. When the assistance stopped, or decreased dramatically, these regimes collapsed. The proximity in time between the shift away in Soviet foreign policy from the Brezhnev doctrine and regime collapse in these countries gives strong empirical foundation to this contention.

All four views underline factors that can coherently explain the demise of state socialism. Because these factors do not contradict each other, their combined effect is cumulative. The demise of a state socialist regime is most likely to occur whenever and wherever all of them are found. That is, in a country with a predominantly urban, healthy, and educated population, in times of economic crisis, where the economy persistently underperforms, and under a hostile international environment.

Who Said Cuba?
Cuba stands out as an exception to all these conventions of regime change. Consistently ranking high in indexes of human development, Cuba has the “social basis” for “democratization” as measured by modernization theorists. About 75 percent of the
Cuban population live in cities, Cubans have access to health services on a universal basis, and adult illiteracy is nonexistent in Cuba. Again and again modernization studies have thus found that the “structural imbalance (i.e. the incompatibility between the social basis for democratization and the autocratic political system) is as great in Cuba as it was in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe before the collapse of socialist systems.” Moreover, with a GNP per capita of about $1,270 by 1978 as estimated by the World Bank, Cuba stood at the right time in the “transition zone” between the $1,000 and $3,000 GNP per capita, within which modernization studies have located most cases that were to “democratize” during the so-called “third wave” of democratization. Small wonder then that in his 1991 study on the theme Huntington indicates that a “movement toward democracy might occur in Cuba.” Yet nothing in this direction by the standard of electoral contestation has happened in Cuba to date.

Defining democracy by the same standard of electoral contestation, Linz and Stepan arrive in their study on democratic transition and consolidation at the conclusion that the link between socioeconomic crisis and regime change is stronger for “nondemocratic” (the term is their own) than for democratic regimes. Their conclusion is based on comparative quantitative empirical studies with findings as unequivocal as “no nondemocratic regime survived more that three years of consecutive negative growth.” Yet state socialism in Cuba has endured after a pervading economic crisis during the 1990s, within which from 1989 to 1993 the Cuban economy experienced four consecutive years of negative growth.

To be sure, the Cuban economy underperforms in the same sense as any socialist economy is said to underperform. Phenomena indicating resource misallocation such
as imports languishing for indefinite time in the freight terminals, crops rotting in the fields, and construction begun but never finished, have been persistently noticed in Cuba.\textsuperscript{18} Scholars who stress the link between socialist economic inefficiency and market reform have accordingly insisted that for “reasons related to efficiency and practicality, Cuba will reform its economy in the near future to create a market economy.”\textsuperscript{19} While in dealing with economic inefficiency the Cuban government has indeed taken some steps in the direction of a market economy, a comprehensive program of market reform has still to come to Cuba.

As in the case of most socialist states of East Europe, the consolidation of a state socialist regime in Cuba can be explained only by Soviet economic and military support and Cuba was for years economically dependent on the Soviet Union. Following the collapse of state socialist regimes in East Europe and the Soviet Union, it was therefore widely predicted that state socialism in Cuba “will certainly not escape the collapse of the Soviet communist state.”\textsuperscript{20} And yet to this day state socialism in Cuba has outlasted the collapse of the Soviet Union and an ensuing international environment unequivocally hostile to the political and economic principles advocated by the state socialist regimes.

Because Cuba meets the conditions for change specified by accounts of the demise of state socialism but fails to conform to them, the Cuban case is an anomaly in these accounts. Because studying anomalies is a proven mechanism for conceptual innovation in science, inquiring into why state socialism in Cuba has not come to an end can produce conceptual innovation in our understanding of regime stability and change.\textsuperscript{21} Asking about the reasons for the perseverance of state socialism in Cuba may shed some
light on the conditions upon which the above-mentioned conventions on regime change do or do not apply.

Levels of Analysis

In coming to grips with social phenomena social scientists often differentiate their explanatory variables by their broadness or generality on three levels of analysis. At the structural level of analysis explanatory emphasis is put on broad geographical, cultural, economic, social, and international factors. Emphasis is put at the institutional level of analysis on organizational principles that regulate human behavior. At the actors (or agency) level of analysis the explanatory burden falls on relatively small groups of people or individuals who make decisions at critical times. These levels of analysis are related to each other hierarchically. Structural variables constrain institutional arrangements, which in turn constrain the behavior of actors. For students who value the generality and parsimony of scientific theories, structural factors generally take explanatory precedence over institutional, and both take precedence over explanations at the actors level.

A “social basis,” “economic crisis,” and the “international system”—all three are variables at the structural level of analysis because all three specify conditions that delineate the boundaries of possible outcomes and constrain their probabilities to occur uniformly across time and space. The accounts of the demise of state socialism building on these variables offer explanations at the structural level of analysis. The view that attributes the demise of the state socialist regimes to their economic underperformance offers an explanation at the institutional level of analysis because it explains this underperformance in terms of the organizational principles particular to these
economies. Since the conditions for the demise of state socialism specified by these accounts are present in the Cuban case, and since these accounts have done fairly well where state socialism has come to an end, it seems reasonable then to say that socialism in Cuba survives under certain structural and institutional adverse conditions. By elimination, the perseverance of state socialism in Cuba can be accounted for primarily at the level of agency.

In searching for actors in Cuba the figure of Fidel Castro invariably stands out. He is the founder of the state socialist regime over which he has ruled uninterruptedly for nearly fifty years. Even after he irrevocably transferred his formal charges in government to his brother and second in command, Raúl Castro, means of communication continue to refer to him as the highest leader of the Cuban Revolution, he continues to be invited to congresses and other events, foreign heads of state pay him visits, he writes newspaper editorials and messages to diverse recipients, and he and high ranking officials alike declare that he is consulted on all important decisions. His charisma and leadership skills make him the kind of leader whose mere (omni)presence may be decisive in rendering the force of institutional and structural variables ineffectual.

And yet, no leader of any modern state rules alone. For the requirements of governance in a modern state any leader has to be aided by many collaborators, at the very least in the gathering and processing of information for making decisions and implementing policies. He and his collaborators group together in a governing or political elite. Certainly, without the obedience of the Rebel Army’s fighters to their leader and their concrete actions in both the armed struggle and in policy
implementation after the taking of power, no revolution would have been possible and Fidel would not have become “Fidel.” With the passing of time, the persons with some influence over policies around Castro have tended to gather in the highest spheres of the Communist Party. The party members also permeate the highest posts in the state administration and the army, and without their support of the state socialist regime, even the nominal existence of this regime would have been impossible in the first instance.

**The Argument**

A main goal of this dissertation is to explain the perseverance of state socialism in Cuba in terms of the composition of its political elite. It is argued that four characteristics of the Cuban political elite have contributed to maintain the Cuban state socialist regime in its place after the demise of state socialist regimes elsewhere. This elite has so far been ruled by its first generation of leaders, which accounts for its high reluctance to let the state socialist regime change in type or fall apart. These leaders have a siege mentality, which accounts for their readiness in confronting crises. The relationships among elite members are lowly institutionalized, which endows the regime with flexibility for adapting to stark changes in exogenous circumstances. And this elite has maintained the unity of its ranks, which accounts for regime resistance against factors adverse to its continuation over time. The combination of these four characteristics represents a model of elite that is likely or at least able to successfully withstand structural and institutional pressures for regime change. Drawing from characterizations of those revolutionary breaks which punctuate long periods of historical progression, and as it will become clearer as the argument unfolds, I will call to this elite model “extraordinary.”

Yet, if only for biological reasons, elites necessarily change in personnel if not in
anything else. Explaining regime continuity in terms of elite composition invites questions as to the implications of changes within the elite for regime stability and change. The persons who made the Cuban Revolution are no longer young and increasingly more of them are no longer in their working age or even alive. They have increasingly been replaced by younger cohorts who were born in the revolution and/or have been educated by the revolutionary regime. As the shift of generational guard within the Cuban political elite proceeds, the continuation of the state socialist regime increasingly depends upon the commitment and skills of the new leaders to maintain and further develop it. Another main purpose of this dissertation is, accordingly, to inquire into the efforts of the Cuban political elite to regenerate, or enable generational change in its ranks, in a way consistent with the continuation of the state socialist regime.

In a sense, Cuba’s political leaders are today in a better position to perpetuate over time the regime that they instituted than were the leaders who instituted the state socialist regimes that disappeared. The political leaders who instituted the state socialist regimes that disappeared lacked empirical experience on the demise of any consolidated regime of this kind. Obviously, they could not reflect on factual experiences to discriminate among policies in ways that would evade proven pathways to demise. In contrast, one can expect that the leaders of the Cuban Revolution have learned from both their own experience in building socialism and especially from the experience of collapse or abandonment of state socialist regimes elsewhere, and that therefore in trying to perpetuate the socioeconomic and political setting that they have created, they have taken steps to prevent what happened to most other state socialist regimes.

Hindsight experience of how state socialism has come to an end is crucial in this
hypothesis. Arguments with a similar logic have been advanced in the social sciences on a great variety of topics. The “nuclear deterrence” thesis that purports to explain the absence of direct confrontation between the superpowers during the Cold War is based on the awful experience of humanity with the use of nuclear weapons and therefore on the understanding of their destructive potential. Marxists have long argued that the economic crisis of the 1930s strengthened capitalism because it taught it how to confront recessions, and actually this is how they explain the rise of Keynesianism as well as its acceptance by what they call the privileged classes. There is also the whole issue of the fall of the Weimar Republic and the allowance of nondemocratic mechanisms in liberal democracies to prevent, if necessary, the rise of undemocratic governments by democratic means. If we can detect at this point in time a similar process of learning in Cuba, we can plausibly expect a different outcome in terms of regime continuation than what we can predict from the previous experiences of almost all regimes of this genre. If not, then we can expect Cuban state socialism to follow a path of transformation into something else or overall collapse in accord with what we know from other experiences.

Within the wider process of elite regeneration, the particular processes of physical renovation, ideological or rather normative education, and new leadership formation constitute suitable referents to test this hypothesis because each of these processes has been singled out by both the scholarly literature on the topic and the Cuban political leaders as particularly important in accounting for the demise of state socialist regimes. Physical renovation refers to the stream of new blood, or rejuvenation, in the elite. Normative education refers to the transmission of values, beliefs, and skills from the old to the young. Leadership formation refers to the more specialized education of new
leaders. By tracking down these processes throughout time, this dissertation seeks to identify what the departing leaders of the Cuban Revolution have done, if anything, to enable their regime to avoid the fate of other state socialist regimes that have ended in the restoration of capitalism.

Yet, neither the confirmation nor the refutation of the research hypothesis guarantees the continuation or the demise of the Cuban state socialist regime after the completion of the first generational transition in the ruling elite. Either of them merely suggests a likely possibility. For the most part political elites do not rule unchallenged, and Cuba is no exception. In the Cuban case there are groups outside the Cuban government with a stated or unstated interest in bringing the state socialist regime to an end, or “counter elites.” In both quantity and quality the success of the efforts needed from the Cuban political elite to preserve the state socialist regime depends not only on its ability to transmit values, beliefs, and skills across generations and thus prevent a transition driven from its ranks, but also to a substantial degree on the ability of the counter elites to organize in the pursuit of their (stated or unstated) interests and to seize their opportunities to change the regime along the way. Because actor behavior at those particular moments when choices matter most is unpredictable, the mid- and long-term outcome of the interplay between the Cuban political elite and its counter elites is unpredictable. What empirical research can uncover is how actors prepare to influence future events. What analysis on these preparations can help project, in turn, are different plausible scenarios for the future.

**Research Organization**

This dissertation consists of two parts, one addendum, and conclusions. Each of the two
parts consists of three chapters and has a distinct research question. The first part asks what accounts for the perseverance of state socialism in Cuba. The question underlying the second part is whether and how Cuba’s political leaders are preparing new generations of leaders to try to ensure the perpetuation of the state socialist regime after their departure. The argument is organized around these two questions in the form of circumferences within circumferences: as the argument unfolds, the discussion narrows in scope. Thus the argument begins with a general discussion of state socialism (Chapter 1) followed by the particular Cuban experience with this regime type (Chapter 2). Next, the argument focuses on the Cuban political elite (Chapter 3), and subsequently on distinct processes mainly within this elite (Chapters 4-6). The addendum identifies the main groups interested in regime change both inside and outside the elite, in order to facilitate the assessment, in the concluding chapter, of the possible consequences of the attempts at elite regeneration for regime continuity vis-à-vis actors who seek or might seek to offer a ruling alternative.

The need for a general account of state socialism arises from the general goals of the research. Explaining both why Cuban state socialism has outlived other state socialist experiences and what Cuban political leaders have learned from the demise of state socialist regimes requires familiarity with the generic state socialist experience. Chapter 1 depicts this experience. This chapter presents an historical and institutional overview of the state socialist system, which ranges from its philosophical origins in the writings of Karl Marx to the disintegration of the Soviet Union and its ensuing worldwide consequences in the early 1990s. This overview provides the socio-historical, theoretical, and institutional framework for the rest of the study. It provides elaborated
information (both analytical and empirical) necessary for the subsequent examination of Cuba’s particular experience with state socialism, including the normative and theoretical principles upon which this system is built; the reasons behind socialist economic inefficiency and the need of constant economic reform; the international structural conditions that heavily constrained socialist development in the early 1990s; and the diverse paths away from state socialism which were followed in other places and which, through either their adoption or evasion, might influence the direction of Cuba’s future socioeconomic and political development.

Against this background, the particular Cuban experience with state socialism is introduced in Chapter 2. The narrative follows a chronological schema which accords with most conventions on the topic and which divides the evolution of the Cuban Revolution into four stages: “Trial and error” (the 1960s), “institutionalization” (from 1970-4 to 1986), “rectification” (from 1986 to 1990-2), and the “special period” (from 1990-2 to date). Each of these stages represents a distinct socioeconomic and political alignment within the institutions of a state socialist regime. Each was adopted following particular significant experiences of the Cuban leadership, and each pervades all phenomena related to the construction of socialism in Cuba at any given time. This chronological overview is important for the argument because it provides a backdrop against which changes in the more particular policy processes described in following chapters should be considered. Although every new stage represents a change in relation to the previous ones, the biggest watershed so far is between the special period and any other period before it. Through its first thirty years, the state socialist regime in Cuba developed under the military protection and with the economic assistance of the Soviet
Union, which guaranteed its survival. Because with the removal of this basic condition this survival was no longer guaranteed, the perseverance of the Cuban state socialist regime after the collapse of the Soviet Union demands an explanation. This chapter reviews the explanations in the literature, shows their shortcomings, and calls for a more elaborated account of why regime change has not occurred from “above,” or at the initiative of the revolutionary government.

Such an account is elaborated in Chapter 3. This chapter presents the “extraordinary” elite model, which helps explain the perseverance of state socialism in Cuba thus far and which constitutes a claimed contribution of this research to the literature on regime stability and change. The characteristics of this model are presented following a general pattern of revolutionary progression upon which a first generation of leaders, their siege mentality, and low intra-elite institutionalization appear as typical of elites in early revolutionary stages and unity appears as an important addition. Since one characteristic of this model that irremediably fades with the passing of time is the rule of the founding generation of leaders, the chapter also discusses the possible implications for regime stability and change of the related yet distinguishable ongoing processes of top leadership succession and generational turnover in the political elite. By presenting once again the main question to be discussed and restating the main hypothesis to be tested through the subsequent three chapters, this discussion sets the stage for the second part of the research.

Part two inquires into the processes of elite regeneration. Each of its chapters represents a distinct yet overlapping facet of the overall attempt of the Cuban political elite to undergo generational change in its ranks in a way consistent with the
perpetuation of the state socialist regime. All three chapters of this part are similar in their structure. Each begins with an analytic account shared by the Cuban leadership on the demise of state socialist regimes. Under this framework, the hypothesis that Cuba’s political leaders have learned from experience and that this learning is expressed in relevant policies is tested. This test is performed in each chapter by tracking down relevant policies over time in order to detect their variations. Knowledge of the history of the state socialist regimes and the reasons for their demise, particularly those emphasized by the Cuban leadership, helps assess the significance of the variations found. The particular processes of elite regeneration tracked down are the same that the Cuban leadership has found faulty in the state socialist experiences that came to an end: physical renovation, as reflected by personnel turnover in the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party (Chapter 4); normative education, as reflected by the content of messages transferred through the speech of political leaders, didactic materials in the schooling system, and common formative life experiences of the young (Chapter 5); and leadership formation, as reflected in the policies on the recruitment, selection, training, and promotion of cadres in the party apparatus and the state administration (Chapter 6).

Chapter 7 is the “addendum” to the dissertation. It surveys the groups outside and inside the political elite with either an explicit or implicit interest in bringing an end to the Cuban state socialist regime and assesses the relative actual or potential threat of each to regime continuity based on what we know from the processes of demise of other state socialist experiences. Such an exercise describes alternatives to the argument of the research. Knowing the alternatives is in turn needed for assessing the argument’s implications for Cuba’s socioeconomic and political institutional future.
The concluding chapter thus juxtaposes the attempts at elite regeneration in a way consistent with regime continuity against the pressures for and possible future actions of groups interested in regime change. By so doing, it builds some tentative future scenarios for regime stability and change in Cuba. This chapter also summarizes the research argument and highlights its contributions to the interrelated literatures on regime stability and change, the comparative study of elites, the Cuban Revolution, state socialism, and socialism. These literatures are presented in the section on secondary sources below.

Methods

The research above delineated follows a comparative methodology; it looks at different cases of the same kind in order to detect patterns of similarity or variation among them. Comparisons are drawn across nations (Chapters 1-3 and 7) or chronologically within one nation (Chapters 4-6), according to the different goals of the research. Nations compared have in common a state socialist regime type. The scope of chronological comparisons is the Cuban case.

Cross-national comparisons are drawn in ways that resemble Mill’s comparative methods of agreement and difference. In the method of agreement the researcher looks at similar cases in order to identify regularities among them. From the recurrent patterns generalizations are drawn. Such a procedure is followed throughout this research mainly to identify the generic state socialist type in Chapter 1, and to identify future possible regime transition scenarios for Cuba based on its similarities with former state socialist cases in Chapter 7. In the method of difference the researcher looks once again at similar cases but focuses on detecting their differences. The variation identified is then
significant for the explanation of different outcomes. This research follows such a procedure mainly in Chapters 2 and 3. Throughout these chapters several state socialist experiences are discussed in order to illuminate different aspects of the Cuban reality. The comparisons drawn help make the case that under similar cross-national institutional settings and structural constraints existing in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Cuba’s distinct political elite composition goes some way to explaining its deviant systemic outcome.

Part two of the research requires a different methodology. In Chapters 4-6 the experience of former state socialist regimes is of limited use to illuminate the Cuban reality mainly because their ruling elites lacked hindsight experience from the demise of state socialism. This part of the research is rather based on comparisons of the Cuban reality at different periods in time, precisely in order to isolate this hindsight. Former state socialist regimes are not ignored through this part of the research, however. Their accumulated demise experience represents “what went wrong in other places,” which provides the rationale for the discussions on elite rejuvenation, education, and new leadership formation in Cuba. Additionally, because, as we will see, the socioeconomic and political institutions of the Soviet bloc countries were basically replicated during the period of “institutionalization” in Cuba (1970/4 – 1986), these cases are also implicit in the comparisons of the Cuban institutional configuration between this and other periods of time.

Sources

Depending on whether events are narrated, interpreted, or analyzed by observers or their protagonists, a certain piece of information can respectively be considered a secondary
or primary source. These categories are, of course, relative. Observer/protagonist are context related labels, and therefore quite a few pieces of information substantiating this research fall into both. A comment of a Cuban leading social scientist on a Castro speech is a secondary source when the focus is on what Castro says, but it is a primary source when the interest is on the relations between the Cuban political leadership and Cuba’s leading intellectuals. Similarly, a particular interpretation on the Cuban reality is a secondary source when the particular reality is discussed, but it is a primary source when at stake is the cogency of the existing interpretations of that reality. Despite this relativity, and in the absence of a better schematic alternative, the secondary-primary distinction is nevertheless workable. After all, most sources can be assigned to one of the two categories. For the sake of the systematic organization of sources, their following presentation observes this distinction.

Secondary

In great part, both the analytical and empirical information documenting this research comes from books and articles written by academic and other experts on the relevant topics discussed. By their content, these can be divided into four broad literatures. Again, the division is somewhat artificial as one particular book or article often falls under two or more of these headings. And again, for the schematic presentation of the secondary sources, their categorization is nevertheless convenient. By the order in which they appear along the research, these literatures are the following:

On Regime Stability and Change – Under this heading enter all those writings summarized earlier in this introduction offering an explanation about why state socialism came to an end on the basis of structural and institutional variables. These
writings include accounts on political stability and change in general, disregarding regime type, and accounts that draw from the state socialist regimes in particular and attempt to explain no more than their demise. In light of this literature, the Cuban case represents an anomaly and it is therefore puzzling. In other words, this literature helps showing why the Cuban case is theoretically significant and therefore worth studying.

On Socialism and State Socialism – This heading includes all writings related to the theory and practice of the state socialist regimes. It includes the writings of Marx and Engels (once again the problem of differentiating between primary and secondary sources appears) and subsequent Marxist writers or writings on Marxist writers, but also substantial empirical research done about the state socialist regimes and known alternatively under headings such as Sovietology, communist studies, and others. The information contained in this body of literature constitutes the raw material for both telling the state socialist institutional history of Chapter 1 and doing all cross-national comparisons with the Cuban case throughout the research.

On Revolutions and the Cuban Revolution – Accounts aiming at typifying a generic revolutionary process help put the particular Cuban revolutionary process in spatial and temporal perspective. Although Crane Brinton and Thomas Kuhn look at different areas of human activity, both authors describe revolutions as an abnormal, short-lived, and agitated process opposed yet functional to routine-based long-term historical progression.\textsuperscript{32} The revolutionary process depicted in Chapter 3 draws primarily from both accounts. In addition, much empirical information found in Chapters 2 and 3 of this study comes from writings specific to the Cuban Revolution produced by Cubanists, or students who define their area of specialization as “Cuban studies.”\textsuperscript{33} Their writings
inform much of the historical review of the Cuban Revolution and help build the extraordinary elite model upon characteristics widely agreed among observers as descriptors of the Cuban political elite. Building this model from agreed characteristics has marked advantages. At a minimum, it helps reduce observer skepticism about the characteristics employed. To the extent that observer agreement indicates a higher match between a claim to reality and this reality, it is also a means to increase the validity of the characteristics observed and thus of the model that these make up. Additionally, because the extraordinary elite model is intended to contribute to the literature on regime stability and change, building on characteristics agreed upon by observers represents a methodological example of how consensus in a particular literature can contribute to more general literatures in the social sciences.

*Elite Theory* – The heading refers to an established intellectual tradition in political sociology. While the germs of this tradition can be found in the writings of Niccolo Machiavelli, its intellectual origins are usually set in the writings of Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, and Roberto Michels. At the core of this theory lie the related assumptions that power is unevenly distributed in society and that those who hold most power are substantially fewer than those who do not. In order to explain social outcomes, it is imperative to center on those who wield power, or the elites. While much contemporary “rational choice”-influenced research shares in one way or another these assumptions, the classical elite theorists mentioned above attempt to explain political outcomes by the sociology and social psychology of elites. In their writings, elite behavior stems from socialization processes particular to actors, rather than from a supposedly universal instrumental rationality attributed for the most part by the
researcher and therefore extrinsic to the actors themselves. In contrast to the other three literatures under review here, the contributions of elite theory to this research are not of the kind that can be cumulatively reflected in the endnotes. Rather than providing information, this literature shapes the questions and points to where and how to find their elucidation. Perhaps there is no more classic endeavor to this literature than to explain regime stability and change in terms of elite composition, as this research intends to do. This literature has long associated generational junctures in political elites with potential for institutional discontinuity, which validates looking at the generational transition in the Cuban political elite for evaluating prospects of regime stability and change in Cuba. Of the four literatures discussed here, the influence of elite theory to this research is the closest to what can be regarded paradigmatic.

Primary

This research is also based on information drawn from documents produced by—or unmediated documentation about—prominent participants in the relevant depicted events. Sources of this kind inform all the research except in Chapter 1. These are used more or less sporadically according to convenience in Chapters 2, 3, and 7, and constitute the main kind of sources for Chapters 4-6. Speeches of and interviews with Fidel Castro constitute a particular source of this kind used throughout the research. I have accessed the speeches through the electronic database found on Cuba’s government website, complemented, as needed, by data drawn from thematic compilations in print. The interviews consulted were the only four long interviews found in print. As in the case of the secondary sources, the rest of the primary sources can be presented, generally speaking, in the order in which they appear:
My personal files are the source of information for much of Chapter 4 and of the final section of Chapter 6. These files contain biographical information of all 458 Central Committee (CC) members of the Cuban Communist Party (PCC) appearing on any of the lists published at seven points in time, including the CC presentation in 1965, the five party congresses (1975, 1980, 1986, 1991, 1997), and July 2006. The files have been compiled for longer than I care to remember from journals, magazines, newspapers, and books. Providing a list of all materials gathered is impracticable. When conflict existed in the biographical details of an individual such as date of birth or occupation at a given year, data published in personal interviews were preferred over official sources and ranked in this order: nonofficial but Cuban sources, scholarly publications, and publications of dissidents and Cubans in exile. In terms of age, the files include data on about 90 percent of the CC population. Due to conflicting data, the accuracy of an additional 20 percent of the ages recorded cannot be guaranteed. Data in the files are accurate enough, however, to locate with a minimal or no margin of error all CC members according to their generational and occupational location in Chapter 4, as well as to trace the career trajectories of the selected leaders of the new generations discussed in the final section of Chapter 6, which is, in both instances, their main use.

Data on the attempted transmission of values and beliefs reported in Chapter 5 were taken from a variety of sources. Records of Communist Youth congresses, including speeches of both PCC and Communist Youth leaders, resolutions, and memoirs of participants are used to document the intergenerational relations of the elite, or how elite members with different formative experiences look at each other. Elementary and secondary textbooks used in the Cuban schooling system are indicative of how the
Cuban Revolution is taught to the new generations. University textbooks are in turn indicative of how Marxism has been taught. The chapter draws additionally from articles in Cuba’s social science journals in order to document the intellectual and practical (policy-oriented) production of social scientists in general and their role in shaping the dominant understanding of Marxism in Cuba in particular.

Information on cadre policies depicted in Chapter 6 was taken mainly from documents produced by either the state administration or the party apparatus. Several of these documents express broad policy lines. Those produced by the state administration generally take the form of a law or an amendment to a law published in the official bulletin, Gaceta Oficial, or of advisory documents circulated among administrative personnel. Those produced by the party apparatus include the party statutes as well as reports and resolutions with official character produced at congresses and similar events.

Information on the implementation of cadre policies was taken mainly from the two party journals: Cuba Socialista, the theoretical party journal, and El Militante Comunista, the journal edited by the party Secretariat and directed to the party militants (discontinued in 1990). Additionally, materials such as textbooks and course offering catalogues for both the political and technical training of cadres were used to document the specialized education given to individuals destined to occupy leadership posts. As reported above, this chapter also draws information from my personal files.

Source Gathering

All the above-mentioned sources were gathered mainly in four libraries in two countries. Most secondary sources were consulted in Lauinger Library at Georgetown University. Most of the few consulted materials not owned by this library or not stocked on its
shelves at the time of request were efficiently achieved through its services, including the Washington Research Library Consortium (WRLC) and Interlibrary Loan (ILL). A few additional sources were consulted in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and a handful of recent publications in Spanish were collected from bookstores, stands in book fairs, and street vendors in Cuba.

Lauinger Library stores a few of the primary sources consulted, including what is apparently the only copy in U.S. libraries of the textbook on scientific communism used in Cuban universities through the 1970s up to the early 1990s. Yet most primary materials were gathered elsewhere. During my four years of research, the Internet developed significantly and Cuban websites were increasingly useful for gathering relevant information. At the time of this writing (spring 2008), most if not all of Cuba’s newspapers and surely the most important ones can be accessed through the Internet. These include the party’s newspaper, *Granma*; the Communist Youth newspaper, *Juventud Rebelde*; that of the mass organization of workers, *Trabajadores*; all of the provincial newspapers; the magazine *Bohemia*, and that of the mass organization of women, *Mujeres*. Additionally, most ministries have websites, as do the PCC and the Central Bank. In my experience, the proliferation of electronic sources makes data gathering from locations with efficient access to the Internet easier than on Cuban soil, where for the most part public access to the Internet is both inefficient and expensive, and where there is no one location where all relevant printed newspapers and magazines can be either purchased or consulted.

Despite their great help, Lauinger Library and the Internet were not sufficient for the gathering of all required data. I spent about two years scavenging the extensive
collections on Cuba’s newspapers and PCC documents owned by the Library of Congress. These collections were of great help for consulting newspapers before the age of the Internet, including those mentioned above and a few more, such as *Revolución* and *Ahora*, merged in 1965 into the party newspaper; the weekly magazine by the Cuban Army, *Verde Olivo*; and that of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, *Con la Guardia en Alto*. The Library of Congress also keeps several volumes of the party’s theoretical journal (available elsewhere) and the journal directed to the party militancy, which, as said, I found highly useful for finding information on the cadre policies depicted throughout Chapter 6.

To gather additional data, I traveled to Cuba in the springs of 2006 and 2007 for a total of about six weeks. On each trip I had a very clear idea of the materials needed—mainly a few biographies for my files, textbooks used in the schooling system, and didactic materials for the training of cadres. On each trip I was uncertain about the availability of these materials and my ability to reach them. As I believe the endnotes of Chapters 4-6 reflect, the results of the trips far exceeded my expectations. During my stays in Cuba, I spent long working journeys in the library José Martí in Havana as well as in that of the museum of the Battle of Ideas located in the town of Cardenas, Matanzas. Additional materials were located and consulted in neighborhood libraries around Havana or gathered through personal contacts.

During my stays in Cuba I had the opportunity to discuss my research with leading intellectuals who both specialize in some of the cardinal themes of this study, such as the youth, the social sciences, Marxism, and education, and have actively participated in many of the events depicted through Chapter 5. I also had the opportunity to meet
policymakers with a prominent role in the implementation of cadre training policies depicted in Chapter 6. For the most part, as a result of these conversations I was able to confirm earlier knowledge, on the one hand, and to separate important from marginal information on the other. In these ways these conversations “oriented” (as Cubans would say), my research. Save a few handwritten notes, the conversations were not recorded. Although none of the individuals with whom I conversed asked anonymity, I made clear that they were not recorded. Knowing that information provided to foreign students has at times compromised professional careers in Cuba, I never asked permission to link an individual to the provision of particular information. For the sake of replicability, any single piece of information used in writing this dissertation is backed by a source in print. I keep a personal copy of all sources reported unavailable in the United States.

**Term Clarification**

By no means are the terms “generations,” “political elite,” and “regime” so uniformly used in the literature as to obviate the need to specify their denotation through this research. The concept of “generations” is used through this study as an ordering principle for the social location of people according to their shared experiences with reference to a watershed event. Age matters for distinguishing generations but it is not their defining characteristic. Coevals or age-cohorts constitute a generation if and only if they have been significantly influenced by the same events. For the purposes of this study, Cubans who lived through the events shaping the Cuban Revolution up to its consolidation in October 1962 constitute the Revolutionary Generation. Those who were too young to participate in these events or were born after them are members of the new generations. Whether the members of the Revolutionary Generation participated actively
in the revolution or not, and whether those who participated were in the victor’s side or against it, creates additional distinctions that are discussed later in the research. A more detailed discussion of the concept is included through Chapters 3 and 4.

The term “political elite” is used in this study as a convenient way of designating the group of persons in every modern state who influence policymaking and policy implementation the most. This use purports to be free of both the conspiratorial and laudatory meanings at times attached to the same term. A political elite can be against the interests of the rest of society or represent them accurately in accord with the Leninist term “vanguard,” yet these are possibilities, or variations by case and opinion of interpreters, and neither connotation is essential for the definition of the term “political elite” as the most influential, or powerful, group in a state. This group is always a minority in society, though of uncertain extent. Whereas its outer boundaries are context related and tend to merge as a continuum with the wider population rather than be separated by any clear-cut division line, its core is formally identifiable with the persons who occupy the higher posts of government, the military, and the main economic enterprises in production, services, and financing.39

The term “regime” in turn comes to denominate a set or a system of rules that prescribes—and when effective also constrains—the socioeconomic and political behavior of all members in a society. Rules in this system are generally known to all members of a society either because they are formally documented—as in a constitution—or because members of a society learned them from experience irrespective of whether these are formally documented. These rules change most if not all the time, and therefore regimes are in perpetual flux. The Cuban state socialist regime
has changed much over time, and in all likelihood will continue changing much. Yet all changes thus far have occurred in quantitative terms alone. A change of regime occurs when the rules prescribing behavior in a society change qualitatively, or when the ordering principles that integrate them in a more or less coordinated system change in type. For state socialist regimes this qualitative change occurs when (or as) private replaces collective ownership of the main means of production, or the market replaces central management as the main principle for the allocation of most resources, or multiparty contestation puts an end to the one party political system. None of these has happened in Cuba to this day.

Because this research intends to explain regime stability and change in terms of political elite composition, the terms “political elite” and “regime” denote respectively its independent and dependent variables. Once defined, or clarified, it remains to consider the possible relations between them. The lines between the two may blur inasmuch as organizational patterns or rules of behavior are inferred from the actual behavior of the relevant actors. In this sense extrapolations from elites to regimes are valid and commonplace. By identifying patterns of behavior in the relationships among members of an organization, for example, one can characterize the organization itself as highly or lowly institutionalized. At the same time it should be clear that elite and regime are variables at different levels of analysis. A regime is an institutional factor that indicates rules of social organization and an elite is an agent made up of individuals who follow rules and influence policy decisions the most. Elites do and undo “things” in the real world, including forms of social organization.

Consequently, a change of ruling elite and a regime change may or may not be
linked causally. Incumbent and contender groups quite often contest and replace each other but the underlying rules prescribing their behavior in society tend to change less often. History can be the “graveyard” of elites, in Pareto’s oft-remembered phrase, but not necessarily the graveyard of minority rule itself and neither of capitalism nor of liberal democracy so far. Regimes in turn may change by the initiative of their ruling group or following a change of ruling group. When a regime changes at the initiative of its ruling group there may be important circulation of personnel and other changes within the elite but there is no change of elite in power. In China and Vietnam, for instance, the underlying rules of economic behavior have been changing at the initiative of their respective Communist parties but the primacy of the Communist Party in both societies has remained basically unchallenged. In much of the former Soviet bloc, though informally, many of the same individuals have been positioned in influential positions under both the state socialist and the burgeoning liberal democratic regimes, or have been able to shift their former political to their actual economic power to keep a great deal of influence over decision making and policy implementation under both state socialism and capitalism.  

When in contrast a regime change occurs following a change of political elite, causation can be reasonably induced. The stark economic change in Cuba from capitalism to state socialism happened shortly after a change of ruling elites, and was allowed by it. The international circumstances however within which state socialism consolidated and evolved in Cuba for about its first four decades have already changed radically. According to the argument of this dissertation, since the collapse of the Soviet Union and because of it, regime change in Cuba would have occurred for reasons
exogenous to the Cuban political elite, but the Cuban political elite has prevented it because of its endogenous characteristics. Unless there is a new dramatic shift in the exogenous environment but in the opposite direction, insights into the continuation of state socialism in Cuba must be sought within the incumbent elite in general, and as it faces the departure of the members of its first generation, in its attempts at regeneration in particular.
In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished; after labour has become not only a means of life but life’s prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of cooperative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!”

Karl Marx

What was state socialism and why did it fall? While this socioeconomic and political regime can be defined by the institutions inherent to it—Communist Party rule, central management, and collective ownership—its strengths and weaknesses can be assessed only from a perspective of time. The purpose of this chapter is to provide such an assessment. The chapter begins with a blueprint of the socialist society based on Marx and Engels’ criticism of capitalism and on the conjectures of subsequent early Marxist thinkers on the advantages of collective over private forms of ownership and of rational planning over market resource allocation. It follows by describing and assessing (simultaneously) the concrete application of this blueprint as represented by the state socialist regimes. The description puts special emphasis on the early success of socialist economies, their institutional liabilities, and the process of systemic demise either through reform or collapse. This “institutional history” provides a perspective from which it will be possible to evaluate, in subsequent chapters, Cuba’s particular socioeconomic and political developmental policies over the last fifty years.

**Marxism and Socialism**

At times labeled avarice, at others egoism, at still others greed, the behavior rather associated with the term “capitalist entrepreneurship” today has been considered over
most of human history as morally wrong. The kind of self-interested behavior that makes possible the accumulation of private wealth and that therefore constitutes the bedrock of the capitalist system of production became morally tolerated only when it was presented as conducive to the material improvement of the commonwealth. Albert Hirschman finds this moment in the mid-eighteen century. He quotes Adam Smith (1723-1790) to make the point: “the private interests and passions of men,” wrote Smith in a celebrated passage, “naturally lead them to divide and distribute the stock of every society…as nearly as possible in the proportion which is most agreeable to the interest of the whole society.”¹ From here on, according to Hirschman, morally uncontested capitalism could thrive.

Yet the matching of self-interested behavior with the general interest of the commonwealth is less than a natural law. Logically, from each individual pursuing the increase of her own riches it does not necessarily follow that each individual does in fact increase her own riches. It could well be that some do increase theirs and some do not. What is more, it could well be that only a few individuals increase their riches, and they do so at the expense of the many who do not. Empirically, at least according to Karl Marx (1818-83) and Frederick Engels (1820-95), the latter seems to be the most common outcome. They depicted capitalism as an oppressive system of production in which the few appropriate what the many produce through their work.

*Marx’s Critique of Capitalism*

The few and the many, oppressors and oppressed, capitalists and workers, bourgeoisie and proletariat, as defined by Marx and Engels are respectively those who own the means of production and those who do not. These two groups meet in the workplace
with the purpose of producing commodities, which, according to Marx’s labor theory of value, have a value equal to the working time invested in their production.² Capitalists sell commodities at their full value in the market place yet they transfer less than that to workers in the form of wages and other benefits, which sums up to the minimum necessary for their reproduction as a class. The difference between the value of commodities at the market place and the value transferred to workers—which explains the possibility of profits in the first instance—is “pocketed” by capitalists by virtue of their ownership of the means of production, not of their work. Capitalists thus appropriate a value without having been participants in its creation. Correspondingly, workers are exploited as a share of the value of their work —what Marx called “surplus value”—is taken away from them and appropriated by capitalists.

Insofar as exploitation is a kind of injustice, capitalism is thus unjust. In addition, a system of production based on the exploitation of the many cannot but produce a negative outcome for many people. Massive poverty, for example, is built on capitalism because the amount of profit is inversely related to the costs of production, of which wages are a main element. As capitalists try to maximize profits they need to reduce wages, and for maintaining wages low, unemployment—and thus acute poverty—is highly functional. Since production is impelled by profit and not by the satisfaction of human needs, profitable enterprises that hardly fit anything suggesting “general interest” are coherent phenomena under a capitalist system of production. The production of warfare equipment, drug trafficking, and the destruction of the environment are but three instances of these. From this perspective, any moral justification of capitalism based on the convergence of self-interested behavior and the good of the commonwealth is
certainly lacking.

Yet Marx’s critique of capitalism is neither exclusively nor primarily moral. Marx and Engels believed in human progress, which they measured in terms of the productive forces of a society. Production is necessary to satisfy human needs. The productive forces of a society are made up of natural resources, means of production, and human skills. The higher the productive capacities of a society, the more advanced it is. The forces of production condition the way men organize to extract a living from nature, or the relations of production. In general, the development of the productive forces proceeds systematically, and the relations of production conform to that development. The relationship, however, is not linear. The forces of production develop faster than the consequent adaptation of the relations of production and thus at any given historical period there are moments of mismatch, or friction, in which the relations of production obstruct rather than facilitate the development of the forces of production. A stark change in the relations of production follows, which facilitates anew the development of the productive forces. With a change of the relations of production, a revolution is accomplished.

According to this scheme a capitalist society represents the most advanced stage of human history thus far because the means of production that characterize it, machines, by far exceed the productive capacities of earlier societies. Yet capitalism, as any social order before it, reaches a stage in which it hinders human progress. This can be seen in times of economic overproduction crises, in which not only the production process comes to a halt but also material destruction takes place on a great scale until room for further production is cleared. Overproduction crises are themselves a consequence of
market competition, which conditions, on pain of bankruptcy, each capitalist separately to invest part of her profits to increase labor productivity, generally in the form of technological innovation. An increase in labor productivity results in a fall of the rate of profit (profit per unit produced) and thus a quantitative increase in production is needed to maintain the aggregate amount of profits. In their attempt to maintain net profits, firms increase production at roughly the same time and as a consequence an excess of offer, or overproduction crisis, occurs. Material destruction follows, and a new period of economic recovery thereafter. The crisis-destruction-growth cycle is yet unlikely to endure indefinitely. As crises recur the capitalist system weakens, until it breaks down.

The final blow to capitalism is to be given by the working class, which has an objective interest in the collectivization of the means of production—that is, in effecting a revolution. Workers learn to recognize their interest as they suffer the consequences of recurring crises, and once they recognize their interests they will engage in collective action to bring capitalism to an end. Their success in doing so is certain both because of their numeric advantage over the bourgeoisie and because (and this is primary reason) of their indispensability to the production process. Without the work of workers an industrial society in which production is done by machines cannot sustain human life. If workers just strike, capitalists will out of necessity give up.

After capitalism human history will eventually move into a stage which Marx called communism. The means of production will be owned collectively. Production and distribution will be rationally planned. Under collective ownership of the means of production and a rationally planned allocation of resources, human needs rather than profits will underlie the production process. With the disappearance of the profit motive,
exploitation in the work place will come to an end. No exploitation, no need for coercion, and without the need for coercion there is no need for the state in a sense other than a mere administrator of abundance. In a communist society the working day will be short enough to allow men enough leisure time to engage in physical, spiritual and intellectually creative activities. In this society each will contribute to production according to ability and receive according to need.\(^9\)

Preceding the communist society will be a transition stage in which the means of coercion—and thus the state—will still be necessary to prevent a counterrevolution. In the transition stage each will contribute to the production process according to her ability and receive according to her contribution. Although public ownership and the rational planning of production will predominate, some remnants of a capitalist mode of production, like social classes and the circulation of money, will still exist. While Marx referred to this transition stage as the “lower phase of communism,” the bulk of the Marxist literature follows Lenin in referring to it as “socialism.”\(^10\)

**Arguing for Socialism**

“Socialism” thus appears in the Marxist intellectual tradition as a higher historical stage of society than capitalism, which antecedes the still higher, communist society. While always clarifying that many variables of the socialist society are impossible to determine a priori, Marxists have elaborated on Marx’s and Engels broad outline of this society, providing some sound reasons as to why it would facilitate the development of the forces of production better than capitalism. The early conjectures of this type did not have the benefit of observing actual attempts at building socialism at the state and worldwide levels. They therefore represent arguments for socialism in an abstract or
purely hypothetical form. These arguments often compared capitalism and socialism in terms of worker productivity, efficiency of production, and system stability. In each they saw evident advantages of expected socialism over existing capitalism.11

Workers would be more productive under socialism than under capitalism, early Marxists speculated, in great part because of the collectivization of the main means of production. Since the collectivization of property eliminates the profit motive, it also eliminates the surplus value extracted from the laborer. Without any surplus value extracted from their work, workers would receive a higher compensation for their work—or at least a fair one. As a consequence, to the extent that wage increase performs as a work incentive, an increase in worker productivity is to be expected. In addition, because the collectivization of property will allow them to control the production process, workers would invest in bettering their working conditions in the workplace and in making their job a more enjoyable enterprise. Workers who enjoy the workplace not only work better than those who do not, but they also need far less supervision in assuring that they produce to their full capacity. A great part of the resources spent under capitalism to enforce worker discipline in the workplace could thus be freed by the collectivization of property for their better use.

Far more efficient use of available resources would be possible under socialism than under capitalism for the elimination of market competition. In a capitalist economy goods are produced for their exchange in ways that generate profits rather than for their direct use. This exchange takes place under conditions of competition among firms, creating waste that would be substantially reduced if goods were produced for their direct use. Resource allocation according to a collectively and democratically drafted
plan that prioritizes human necessities, would allow a quantitative reduction of the production of goods of high exchange value relative to use value (luxury products). It would require also far fewer people to be employed outside the production process, such as advertisers and lawyers, who in a capitalist economy make respectively a living from market competition and private ownership. A rationally planned economy would therefore stress the production of necessary products (high use value relative to exchange value) and divert the energies of quite a large number of intelligent people to the production process itself. A further gain of planning over the market would be the concentration of production in great plants equipped with the best technologies. Labor hours and raw materials would be saved in this way by the elimination of less productive industries, without the sluggishness and cruelty with which the very same process takes place under capitalism. In addition, because the owners of the means of production would not compete with each other, they would not keep secret the most efficient methods of production. Technological innovations would spread quickly and would be applied to the production process shortly after their invention.

And because of its systematic regulation, production under socialism would always match the existing demand. Or, to put it slightly differently, even if coordination problems persist under socialism, they would cause no economic stoppage and no destruction. In excess of a certain output a planned economy could always redirect resources to match unfulfilled needs, leisure included. All in all, socialism would be more stable than capitalism.

It would be more humane, too. A society that owns the means of production, controls the collective production process, and rationally plans how resources are to be
allocated, would be able to satisfy its own human needs to a degree never before experienced. In a socialist system there would be unprecedented expenditure on human welfare, education, and on the health of the population as a whole. This system alone would be able to defeat unemployment and to eradicate poverty. It would be able, in short, to provide a decent material life for all. This holds true not only for collectivities in the present—a fully rationally planned allocation of resources involves taking into account the needs of future generations as well.

The Rise of State Socialism

The scientific theories of Marx and Engels, as well as the expectations they generated, gave rise to the formation of communist parties and to the intensification of social mobilization aimed at speeding the historical process and bringing capitalism to an end. Some mobilizations were successful in achieving and consolidating state power. Communist parties in power claimed to construct a socialist mode of production within the limits imposed by their particular historical, geopolitical, natural, and other “real” circumstances.\(^{12}\) Of significance in this regard is the success of the Russian revolution of October 1917 (Julian calendar). This was the first socialist revolution to succeed, and for the influence of its experimentation in construing socialism all over the world, a critical case for the assessment of the supposed advantages of socialism over capitalism.

After some three years of civil war and chaos from the beginning of the revolution, the Bolshevik party under the leadership of Lenin consolidated power and instituted a new type of socioeconomic and political regime that was to highly influence world politics for some seven decades. By 1922 the distinctive features of this regime were already in place.\(^{13}\) Under the allegation that the state embodies the collective, the
socialist principle of collective ownership took the form of state ownership over the most important means of production including natural resources, large-scale industry, transport, and banking. For the “rational allocation of resources” a central planning commission was established, by the state, and staffed with state personnel. The “dictatorship of the proletariat,” a controversial concept for Marxists appearing in Marx’s writings as an inevitable political feature of the transition process to the upper stage of communism, justified the legal suppression of all political parties other than the communist—as a “temporary” measure of unspecified duration. State ownership, allocation of resources by the state, and the communist party alone wielding political power: the essential components of a state socialist regime were in place.

Since in Marxist theory socialism represents a higher phase of society than capitalism, in practice even the worst of all “socialisms” should be better than the best of all “capitalisms.” Consistent with their Marxist intellectual position, communist leaders of the Soviet Union and other socialist states repeatedly voiced the arguments for socialism as expounded above, and very often compared the economic performance of the socialist states to highly developed capitalist economies claiming the superiority of the socialist economies as evidenced by different indicators of welfare coverage, and above all, rates of economic growth. Insofar as the developmental gap between them and developed capitalist economies was closing as measured by rates of economic growth (real or fabricated), socialist states thought of themselves as successful.

By this parameter, for more than sixty years after the Russian revolution enough evidence could be found in the development of the Soviet Union and subsequent state socialist experiences to confirm to a considerable degree the expectations of early
socialist thinkers on the advantages of collective over private ownership, and of planned allocation over the market, for the development of the productive forces of society.\textsuperscript{15} While during the 1930s western capitalist economies were struggling with the worst of their economic recessions, the economy of the Soviet Union grew at “unprecedented” rates, estimated at between 9 and 15 percent from 1928 to 1938.\textsuperscript{16} Soviet planners put particular emphasis on the development of heavy industry, which allowed the construction of powerful war-machinery. In turn, the Soviet Union emerged victorious from WWII defeating a former industrial great power like Germany. Notwithstanding the high costs implied in rapid industrialization, with the victory in war Stalin could boast that in a decade or so the Soviet Union had bridged a gap equivalent to fifty or a hundred years of economic development of advanced capitalist states.\textsuperscript{17}

Economic growth in the Soviet Union and the then new socialist states in Europe also compared favorably with developed capitalist economies for some thirty years in the post WWII period:

Over the period 1950-80 the average annual rate of growth of the national income of the European Socialist countries was 7 per cent, compared with 4 per cent attained by the capitalist world, and the respective growth rates in industrial output were 8 per cent and 5 per cent…These countries’ share in the world’s industrial output increased from less than 10 per cent in 1938 to about 30 per cent in 1970, and in 1978 it was about 31 per cent (but according to some Socialist estimates, it was 37 per cent).\textsuperscript{18}

Especially during this period the structure of the international system was marked by the worldwide economic, military, and ideological rivalry between socialism and capitalism, symbolized by the Soviet Union and the United States as the leading forces in each camp. A symbol of both the success of socialist regimes in the development of science and technology and of the rough military parity of the two camps, was the Soviet launching of the first two satellites into space in 1957. In comparisons of the two
systems during this span of time socialist states often scored higher than capitalistic states in terms of distributive equality, full employment, and welfare indicators such as health and education. In part as a direct consequence of the Soviet victory in war and in part because the Soviet way of development favorably impressed revolutionary governments around the world, state socialism expanded considerably from the mid 1940s to 1980, reaching a hold across all geographical and cultural regions of the world. At the height of state socialism in the mid 1970s, some twenty-six state governments in the world claimed to be building a socialist regime. Scholars generally acknowledge that in fourteen of them a state socialist regime was consolidated. Until that time—the mid seventies—there thus existed some evidence backing Khrushchev’s prediction made to an American audience back in 1959: “we will carry on under socialism and build communism…we will catch and pass you, and forge ahead.”

Many observers of state socialist regimes and their way of development in Western industrialized countries were also convinced of the accuracy, or at least the plausibility, of Khrushchev’s prediction. Their reasons were not fundamentally different from the conjectures of early Marxists exposed above. Sidney and Beatrice Webb, for example, are memorable for having successfully predicted in the mid thirties that the Soviet “new civilization, with its abandonment of the incentive of profit-making, its extinction of unemployment, its planned production for community consumption…” will spread to other countries. In a very important book written in 1942, the renowned economist Joseph Schumpeter claimed on the grounds that socialism enforces work discipline beyond what is possible under capitalism that the latter is doomed and the former could survive for a long time. Even by the end of the 1970s, when socialist economies were
in evident decay, there were those who still insisted on their comparative strength vis-à-vis capitalist economies. “Once again,” noted Ernest Mandel in comparing the performance of socialist and capitalist economies in confronting what he defined as the generalized recession of 1974-5:

> history has confirmed that an economy based on collective ownership of the major means of production, central planning, and a state monopoly of foreign trade is qualitatively superior to a capitalist market economy in its ability to avert great cyclical fluctuations, over-production crises, and unemployment….

**The Decline**

In a dialectical unity of opposites that would have delighted Hegel and Marx alike, for all their virtues the state socialist regimes carried liabilities with them. Or so it seems in retrospect, in an attempt to uncover internal factors accounting for their demise. Under conditions of competition with developed capitalist states for economic, military, and technological supremacy in the world system of states, their institutional liabilities became fatal for most existing state socialist regimes.

Contrary to the expectations of early doubters, the states that experimented with socialism demonstrated that planning an economy is both possible and can promote high-speed economic growth. Yet a centrally planned economy has weaknesses of its own. The central planning of complex economies in which the needs and productive capacities of millions of people are calculated requires a large state apparatus that itself necessarily consumes a high amount of energy out of the production process. As the proponents of the terms “state capitalism” and “new class” have emphasized, and for reasons of what can be called “rational behavior,” this state apparatus tends not to forget itself while planning so the genuine intentions of planners to allocate resources according to collective priorities can be questioned in the first place. But even
assuming that these intentions are genuine, once basic industrialization is reached and in times other than war what constitutes a collective priority becomes unclear and the criteria according to which this is set even more so. The outflow of information required to draft accurate plans tends then to overwhelm planners, and as a result the distance between the economic plan and the existing desires of consumers, as well as the resources needed for their satisfaction, increases proportionately.

If drafting an accurate plan in a complex economy is already a difficult task, plan implementation according to draft seems near to impossible. Claus Offe makes this point by contrasting the “macro-planning of state socialist societies” and their “micro-anarchy at the level of the individual companies.”29 Central planning has as its rationale allowing planners a comprehensive view of both the capacities of firms and the needs of households, from which they can figure out in the best way possible how to utilize capacities to fulfill needs. Yet precisely because the planning is “central,” that is, drafted in state offices in main cities, the distance between planners and firms is too great for the former to effectively control the latter. Observations of the actual functioning of the production process in socialist economies thus point to an incessant bargain between planners and firm managers in which the latter systematically pad budgets, hoard materials and labor, and trade among themselves for considerations alien to the former, further distorting the information available to them.30

Adding difficulties to those arising from central planning are those arising from collective ownership. Even though for thinkers such as Karl Marx the industrial productive process can dispense with private owners of the means of production, in a capitalist economy they at least ensure that, given a certain technological level,
manufactured goods are produced with the least possible quantity of resources or near to it, and they meet standards of quality acceptable to consumers. Failure to do so generally represents for capitalists undesirable losses of capital and investments, and frequently brings companies to an end. Under collective ownership there is no clear bearer of responsibility for economic failures. Firms in state socialist regimes are said to perform under a “soft” budget environment; meaning that should they fall into financial insolvency the state bails them out. At a minimum, this gives rise to a higher input-output ratio of manufacture production and to end products of inferior quality than in economies where firms perform under “hard” budget constraints. As Adam Przeworski once noted:

The input-output structure of socialist economies is inefficient; they use 1.8 times more energy and more than twice the amount of steel as capitalist countries to produce a unit of output. Illustrations of irrationality abound: One-half of the agricultural output of the Soviet Union is said to be lost before it reaches the consumer market; in the winter children enjoy sledding down mountains of fertilizer that surround railway stations waiting to be trucked to farms; the value of goods that no one wants to take home at a zero price from Czech stores is equivalent to the economy’s growth over two years; the ratio of input to output inventories in Hungarian factories is five times higher than in the West; and the like.31

So even if favoring production for use rather than for exchange prevents a kind of waste, socialist economies produce other kinds of waste by failing to appoint concrete bearers of responsibility within the “collectivity” for the efficient use of scarce resources.

An additional problem of socialist economies, linked to both collective ownership and central planning, refers to the extrinsic motivation of workers to harness work. To this day neither capitalism nor socialism nor any other socioeconomic and political system has found a magic formula that motivates people to perform tasks that they would prefer not to. This, as explicit in Marx’s concept of alienation, has long been a well-known problem of capitalist economies that as presented above, socialist thinkers hoped to overcome with the collectivization of property, which they thought would give
workers positive incentives to perform boring and unpleasant industrial tasks. These rewards, however, seem to have been equally (in)effective or worse than the negative incentives of capitalism. In capitalist economies, where there is invariably a labor market with “excess” of laborers, undesirable jobs are performed because the alternative for those who perform them is starving to death. Such a negative incentive was absent in state socialist regimes once they provided full employment and a material basis for the subsistence of the bulk of the population, irrespective of their performance at the workplace. So in the terrain of work motivation the socialist states experimented a great deal, from moral incentives to differential rewards to brute repression. While indisputably each worked to a degree because otherwise significant and often impressive production outputs would be unexplainable, no one was able to eradicate, especially in the long run, widespread everyday forms of silent workers’ resistance such as high labor turnover, absenteeism, sabotage, and the “unsolicited borrowing” of working tools from the working place for moonlighting tasks.\textsuperscript{32}

For all their intrinsic liabilities the economies of socialist states suffer from diametrically opposite crises to those existing under capitalism. While capitalism produces excesses, as János Kornai has famously noted the socialist economies are characterized by shortages: of labor, because firms can fulfill their production targets only by employing many low-productivity laborers (many of whom lie idle at the work place except for the end-times of planning periods); of raw materials/investments/capitals, for their carelessness utilization; and of consumer goods, because a healthy and educated population that eats, drinks, sleeps under a roof, and has a workplace, develops additional needs that for all its dislocations the production
process as practiced in socialist states is incapable of recognizing, not to mention of meeting.\textsuperscript{33}

**Exiting through Reform**

Planners, political leaders, and the like in charge of making “socialism” work, were since very early in the development of the socialist economies aware of their troubles. They tried to mend them and to diminish their ill effects. Indeed, another common characteristic of all socialist economies is the constant experimentation with the organization of work. Reforms “of territorial administration, of economic management, of planning, of incentive systems” and else, are implicit in state socialist regimes.\textsuperscript{34}

Aiming at decentralizing the system and increasing firm responsibility and worker productivity, these reforms have gone far in some cases toward the adoption of those forms of ownership and allocation mechanisms typical of capitalist economies.

According to the relationship between market-oriented reform and the institutions of state socialism, it is possible to distinguish two approaches of “market socialism.”\textsuperscript{35} One approach is “better understood as a variation on state socialism rather than a competing model.”\textsuperscript{36} In this approach market principles are introduced as “complementary” to the institutions of state socialism. The functioning of a market economy is circumscribed by planning and private ownership is subjected to limits. In the second approach market oriented reforms are introduced as “alternative” to the institutions of state socialism. Limits to the functioning of the market and to private ownership are much more relaxed than in the first approach or do not exist at all. In this second approach a capitalist economy parallel to the socialist one develops with time and in the long run tends to outperform and to displace it. When this happens the “socialist” label ceases to apply. In
either approach “decentralization,” or the movement from planning to market allocation, generally precedes and proceeds faster than “privatization,” or the movement from public to private forms of ownership.

**Complementary Approach**

For nearly forty years Yugoslavia exemplified the first approach. The Yugoslav experience with socialism can be summed up as one long intellectual, economic, and political odyssey in search of the right combination of plan and market.\(^37\) Yugoslavia followed the Soviet model of state socialism for only five years. Since 1950 its economic institutions differed from other state socialist experiences mainly in that the state conferred self-management rights to firms.\(^38\) Yugoslavian enterprises had the direct power of decision over matters that in other socialist states were directly decided by planners, such as the appointment of management positions, wages of employees, the level of employment, and the proper use of net profits. For the limited scope of planning in Yugoslavia in comparison to other socialist states it is often said that enterprises in the country basically obeyed the laws of supply and demand, as enterprises in market economies do. And in fact the Yugoslav economy had problems common to market rather than planned economies, notably high rates of inflation and unemployment.\(^39\)

But problems of planned rather than market economies such as shortages of materials and consumer goods were not alien to it.\(^40\) Economic plans in Yugoslavia, drafted and carried out at three geographical-governmental levels, always restricted to some degree through macroeconomic tools (and political pressures) the “autonomous” decisions of enterprises. At the federal level this degree varies in time since self-management was proclaimed, ranging from control over investments and thus strong
influence over the rate and areas of economic growth across all the republics between 1950 and 1965, to slightly more than a merely advisory role through the issuance of informatory documents upon which enterprises could rely in deciding what and how to produce between 1965 and 1971. From 1971 on, the plan-market combination fell somewhere in between these ends, increasingly varying from republic to republic as power was devolved from the federal to this level of government.

Private ownership always existed in socialist Yugoslavia, and—like in other socialist economies where it existed—it was subjected to limits unthinkable under capitalism. Up to the end of self-management in the most pro-market Yugoslavian republic in 1989, even after recurring programs of “structural adjustment” that involved relaxation in restrictions of the private sector, any company employing more than fifteen workers could not be owned privately. Foreign investors were exempted from this limitation, but their investments had to be made in the form of joint ventures with local companies in which the local companies had to hold the majority of assets.\textsuperscript{41}

\textit{Alternative Approach}

Legal limits to private ownership such as these have long since been left behind in China and Vietnam.\textsuperscript{42} Since 1987 there are no more employment restrictions in the Chinese private sector and since 1988 none in the Vietnamese. Since 1986 in China and 1988 in Vietnam, wholly foreign owned enterprises are permitted. In both countries foreign investors are \textit{de facto} allowed to directly manage the hire, layoff, and wages of local employees, even if \textit{de jure} restrictions to the foreign invested labor market still apply. In both countries, also, there is a legal basis for the protection of private ownership and for the functioning of a market economy.\textsuperscript{43} These two countries represent the second
approach to market socialism. Following the Soviet model, state socialism was instituted in China in 1949, in North Vietnam in 1945, and in 1976 it was extended to the south. In both countries the state sector was dominant in ownership and resource allocation when the market-oriented reform began in 1978 in China and in 1986 in Vietnam. In both countries the economic reform began following periods of economic slowdown and was presented as a way to speed up economic growth. Since the process of economic reform in both countries shows marked similarities, and since in China it began first, it is often referred to as the “Chinese path.”

In both China and Vietnam the market-oriented reform began in the agricultural sector on a limited regional basis, and based on the experience obtained it has been extended to other economic sectors and regions. In both countries the market reform has been foreign oriented, in the sense that it has sought the integration of the national to the world economy by attracting foreign investments and by promoting production for export. In both countries, also, the economic reform has “bypassed” the essentials of the one party political system. In contrast to their paucity in terms of legislation and stated official policy, the reforms in both countries have paved the way for rapid growth of private enterprises and capitalist markets. In both countries since the early 1990s the market-oriented sector has outstripped the state sector in its share of the overall economic output. Estimates based on data of 1998 clearly show the predominance of the market oriented sector, pointing out a contribution of 73.5 percent of the non-state sector to the gross domestic product in China, which includes private (37.5%) and quasi-private enterprises (36%). In Vietnam the share of the private sector of the gross economic output is calculated at about 66 percent for 2000.
In light of the ongoing takeover of planning by the market and the rapid growth of a private-owned economic sector in China and Vietnam, scholars have been increasingly asking what is left of socialism in these countries and whether this label is at all appropriate. As to the first question a cold-eyed response…would have to be ‘Not much at all.’ The elements most commonly associated with a socialist economy are public ownership of the principal means of production, economic activity largely determined by government decisions as contained in an economic plan, a heavy dose of egalitarianism, and a high level of government attention to the welfare of the working population. All these elements are in the process of being dismantled in China under the current program of economic reform. And however negative the consequences, there is little likelihood that China will return to socialist solutions.47

The statement applies to Vietnam as well. Consequently, while referring to the prevailing socioeconomic and political arrangements of China and Vietnam, scholars have tended to substitute terms such as “market Leninism,” “soft authoritarian corporatism,” and “neo-authoritarianism” for “socialism”—even with the “market” modifier.48

But whether we call it market socialism, full capitalism, or anything else, the bottom line is that the “Chinese path” has been highly successful in fulfilling its stated intention of promoting economic growth. Between 1991 and 2001 the GDP in Vietnam increased at an average rate of 7.6 percent annually. Vietnam is second only to China worldwide, with an annual average growth of 9.7 percent between 1979 and 2000.49

Exiting through Collapse

Just as a distinction into alternative and complementary approaches to market oriented reform can be made according to its relationship to the institutions of state socialism, a market reform can be considered successful or unsuccessful according to whether it achieves its stated goal of promoting economic growth. When successful, as in China and Vietnam, the process that leads to the end of state socialism is marked by political
stability, the end of state socialism is set by measuring dominant patterns of ownership and centralization in the overall economic activity of the country, and the process itself is called reformatory. When unsuccessful, the reform tends sooner or later to encompass the political system, the end of state socialism is most visible and unambiguously set by the loss of hegemony of the Communist Party, and the process itself is most commonly termed collapse, or alternatively, revolution. Hungary since 1968, Poland since 1982, and most important for its implications on the demise of state socialism elsewhere, the Soviet Union since 1985, are examples of failed market oriented economic reform.

Reasons

Of all institutional liabilities, the Achilles heel of the socialist economies in the Soviet Union and East European socialist states seems to have been the inability of central planning and public ownership to foster technological innovation to the extent and speed of advanced capitalist economies.\textsuperscript{50} Early Marxists expected, as seen above, that with the elimination of market competition the appearance and spread of new technologies would proceed quickly, unrestrained by private entrepreneurs withholding information for the sake of profits. Yet, as with other expected gains, unforeseen obstacles to technological innovation and dispersion are built in the existing socialist system.

According to Joseph Berliner, a technological innovation gap between East and West always existed in civil enterprises, and the main reason for it lies in the relative small autonomy that production units or enterprises have in planned economies as compared to market ones.\textsuperscript{51} For their centralized structure, in which enterprises’ main task is to transform given inputs into assigned outputs, planned economies reward workers and managers alike for obeying rather than for taking initiatives, or for risk-avoiding rather
than for risk-taking behavior. Since a risk element is always implied in innovation at least in the short run, the socialist system is biased against innovation. This bias manifests itself in many ways. Managers are reluctant to carry out trials of new production methods for fear of failing to fulfill assigned targets because of the short-term disruptions implied. Managers, politicians, and workers alike, are reluctant as well to introduce new technologies into the production process for fear of unemployment. To this, one may add the soft budget constraints. Since failing to adapt to the highest technological methods of production does not threaten the survival of enterprises, the “creative destruction” that characterizes capitalism does not take place under socialism; old technologies do not disappear and new technologies do not necessarily expand.52

The technological gap in the civil sector did not have an immediate detrimental impact on the viability of state socialism. Insofar as the growth of the socialist economies was based on extensive methods, or on the quantitative incorporation of labor, capital, and land into the process of production, growth was achieved at quite highly satisfactory rates. As the extensive methods exhausted the socialist economies were unable to bring about a rise in productivity by intensive methods, or technological progress. As a consequence the rate of economic growth of the socialist economies slowed down. While an initial decrease in the rate of economic growth of the Soviet Union and East European socialist states is perceptible since the late 1950s, the sharpest decrease occurred in the second half of the 1970s.53 This sharp decrease is specifically attributed to the inability of socialist economies to base production on computerized and high tech electronic devices, as developed capitalist economies did by that time, in what is known as the information revolution.54
Because of the slow speed of technological innovation and the need to base production on intensive methods, by the end of the 1960s the socialist states of Europe decided to bring new technologies from abroad. The wish to import technologies explains, at least in part, the conciliatory steps by the Soviet Union which gave way to the brief East-West détente of the early seventies (epitomized by the Helsinki Accord of August 1975) under which an increase in East-West trade was made possible.\(^5^5\) For financing the acquisition of new technologies at this time most socialist states obtained easily available loans from western creditors. The socialist states expected to repay the loans by selling manufactures produced with these technologies in world markets. For a combination of factors, including the contraction of western markets due to the so called oil crises of 1973-4 and 1979, restrictions imposed by the West in West-East trade, and the intrinsic inefficiencies of socialist economies, these expectations never materialized.\(^5^6\) In practice trade deficits grew together with West-East trade, creating particularly heavy debt burdens for Poland, Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Romania by the end of the 1970s.\(^5^7\)

With an ongoing economic slowdown due to the inability to replace intensive for extensive production and an accumulating foreign debt, by the early 1980s the economies of the socialist states in East Europe and the Soviet Union stagnated and standards of living deteriorated.\(^5^8\) Figures presented to the Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress estimate a 2 per cent average growth rate of GNP of six East European socialist states between 1975 and 1980, and only 1.4 per cent for the period between 1980 and 1985.\(^5^9\) For the first time in postwar history, since 1975 rates of growth in the Soviet Union fell behind those of its main ideological and geo-military
competitor. According to C.I.A. estimates, while for the period between 1975-80 the Soviet GNP grew at an annual rate of 1.9 percent, the GNP in the United States grew at an annual rate of 3.4 percent. The trend continued into the eighties, with the Soviet economy growing at an average annual rate of 1.8 percent between 1980 and 1985 and the U.S. economy growing at an average rate of 2.5 percent. By the mid eighties the socialist prospects of “catching up” with the developed capitalist economies became thus more somber than ever. The comparisons between the two systems backfired with full strength.

In the Soviet Union the economic slowdown could not but have implications for “national security,” or for the prevailing geopolitical balance with the United States, at a time that the latter increased the stakes in the arms race threatening, through the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), to take it outside of the earth’s atmosphere. Given the slowdown in economic growth, keeping the rough military parity with the United States implied an increase in the share of the Soviet budget devoted to security and doing so could not but be reflected in further deterioration of already deteriorated living standards. Thus facing the dilemma of whether to try to catch up militarily with the United States or to try to improve standards of living, the new leadership of the Soviet Union decided on an overall overhaul.

Process

Contrary to both the Chinese style of reform and what seems to have been his original intention, Gorbachev’s “perestroika” involved not only economic policy, but domestic and foreign politics as well. The market-oriented reform, inspired by both and pointing to somewhere in between the Yugoslav and the Chinese paths, included both
decentralization and privatization and sought to promote economic growth by carrying out institutional changes that would increase firm responsibility and worker productivity. But, given the strong opposition to the economic reform among the party-state apparatus, a political reform was needed in order to allow real economic change to take place. The political reform began in early 1986 with an easing of censorship on the flow of ideas, or “glasnost,” followed two years later by the institutional separation of the state and the communist party and the partial democratization of both. Whereas glasnost was an attempt at sensing the desired direction of reform amongst the population, the institutional changes sought to recruit popular support for the economic reform.

The Soviet new political thinking in foreign affairs envisioned a more peaceful East-West international climate that would permit lowering the stakes in the arms race and in turn devote more resources and attention to the domestic overhaul. By 1987 the Soviet leaders began emphasizing in their speeches as their driving principles of behavior in the international arena universal human values and their desire to belong to a common European home instead of socialist-capitalist confrontation. In a speech to the U.N. General Assembly in December 1988 Gorbachev announced tangible steps in this direction with the retirement of 500,000 troops from missions abroad together with their equipment, including 50,000 from East Europe. Specifically and critically for East Europe, the new political thinking shifted away from the Brezhnev doctrine under which the Soviet Union claimed for itself the right to interfere militarily if socialism was threatened anywhere in this region, adopting in its stead the so-called “Sinatra doctrine,” or a policy of noninterference in others’ domestic affairs.
No doubt the process of reform in the Soviet Union, especially its foreign policy component, had a direct negative influence upon the stability of state socialism over most of East Europe:

The essential point is that the Communist regimes of Eastern Europe existed because the Soviet Union had put them in place—by force of arms or threat of force—and had been ready to intervene to sustain them in power...The stimulus of radical reform in the Soviet Union, the new Moscow doctrine of ‘freedom to choose’, and, above all, the growing (and accurate) perception that the Soviet Union would no longer intervene to uphold Communist Party rule were the main factors explaining the timing of the overthrow of Communist systems throughout East and Central Europe in 1989 and 1990.70

This is especially (but not only) true for Hungary, Poland, The German Democratic Republic (GDR), Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania, all them together with the Soviet Union full and active members in both the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) and the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA); respectively the military and economic alliances of the so-called Soviet Bloc. Laurence Whitehead considers in this vein the connection between the removal of the Brezhnev doctrine and the end of state socialism in these countries an instance of *decolonization*, noting that had it not been for the “Soviet military veto over democratization,” to use his own language, communist party rule in East Europe would have ended before as suggested by the cases of the GDR in 1953, Hungary and Poland in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, and Poland again in 1981.71

Analysis of the economic ties within the same bloc reinforces the sense of lethality in seizing the impact of the Soviet reform on monopolistic communist party rule over the East European countries of the bloc. The bulk of the foreign trade of all states in the Soviet bloc was between themselves.72 In what is called the “radial pattern,” the main trade partner for each East European country over time was the Soviet Union, despite repetitive efforts at bloc economic integration in which specialization, interdependence,
and multilateral trade among East European socialist states were encouraged. This broad generalization holds for the entire existence of state socialism in the post WWII period, even if both the Soviet Union and most East European socialist states increased over time trade exchanges with non-CMEA members.

In this relationship the East European socialist states mostly received raw materials and energy supplies from the Soviet Union, in return for which they mainly provided machinery and manufactured goods. Whereas scholars have yet to agree on who benefited from this exchange, for what period of time, and to what extent, as the Soviet rates of economic growth slowed down the Soviets came increasingly to believe that “Eastern European progress…has been achieved only through massive Soviet assistance, provided to the detriment of the Soviet economy.”

Economic policy steps by the Soviet Union toward East Europe since the early 1980s clearly reflect this belief. In a pattern that intensified until the revolutions of 1989, the Soviet Union sought economic improvement at home by among other measures getting rid of the “East European burden.” Over this period the Soviet Union increasingly toughened the terms of trade with East Europe, demanding better quality for the goods imported in exchange for Soviet exports, reducing credits and demanding payment in hard currency, as well as asking East European countries to share the costs implied in the development of Soviet sources of energy and raw materials. Terms of exchange with the Soviet Union further deteriorated for East European socialist states after 1986 as a result of a sharp drop in the oil price in world markets, which practically annulled any comparative benefit in trading oil with the Soviet Union at a so-called preferential price. According to a Soviet source quoted in a RAND publication, by
1988 all East European members of the bloc with the exception of the GDR maintained a trade surplus with the Soviet Union, yet also the GDR’s trade deficit was small compared with most other years. If for the East European socialist states it had ever been appealing to trade with the Soviet Union, this was clearly no longer the case by the end of the 1980s.

As the terms of trade with the Soviet Union deteriorated, “Eastern European interest in looking elsewhere for trade was stimulated.” The so-called West was there, as it always has been, eager to “open” new territories to capitalist expansion. Unlike the post WWII aftermath, however, the Soviet Union did nothing to stop an increase in East European trade with the West. Quite the contrary, the new political thinking in foreign affairs facilitated this development both as a way to “share” the East European burden elsewhere and as a way to prove to the West the Soviet seriousness in carrying out a policy of noninterference toward East Europe:

In essence, the relationship with the West was considered so important to Soviet transformation that it could not be risked, even if this meant losing the USSR’s European sphere of influence. As a result, it became possible for Western governments, Western academic economists and officials of international economic institutions to influence the democratisation process and the introduction of market reforms in Eastern Europe in a way that had previously been impossible.

In contrast to the increase in West-East trade that took place under the détente umbrella of the mid 1970s, this time Western governments and international financial institutions conditioned—both through explicit demands and tacit understandings of what works better to attract much-needed foreign investment in times of economic stagnation—aid packages, debt relief, loans, trade accords, and the like, on institutional reform in the direction of political multi-party contestation and economic decentralization and privatization. Eventually, at least at the formal level, multiparty electoral contestation and a market economy were adopted by all East European states in the Soviet bloc as a
rational outcome stemming from economic necessity, notwithstanding the variation in
communist leaders’ initial willingness to carry out institutional reform, and irrespective
of the differences between cases in the particular drama that led to this outcome.\textsuperscript{79} As a
matter of fact by the beginning of 1990 no communist party of the East European
members of the former Soviet bloc maintained hegemonic rule. By the end of 1991 all
these countries had formally adopted the political and economic institutions of a liberal
democracy.

Finally, state socialism in the Soviet Union capitulated. The political reform did
indeed facilitate real economic change but at the same time deprived the leadership of
effective control over the pace and extent of this change.\textsuperscript{80} The change went into havoc.
The policy of glasnost opened the way for the expression of societal pluralism, which
 crystallized, among other things, in the formation of groups with different ideological
orientations, or \textit{de facto} political parties. The partial democratization of party and state
opened these institutions, in turn, to the influence of groups pushing for an ever more
radical reform than that proposed by their leadership. And the separation of party and
state curtailed the overwhelming influence of the former over the latter. Responding thus
to reformist pressures from below, in February 1990 the central committee of the
communist party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) decided to give formal recognition to the
existing reality by declining its right to monopoly rule. One month later the
constitutional article that guaranteed this right was modified by the parliament. As the
influence of the communist party over state policy diminished, a “political takeover
coalition” of full-fledged market oriented, multi party oriented, and secessionist forces
came to dominate the state policy agenda.\textsuperscript{81} As this coalition augmented its influence
over policy, the institutions of state socialism vanished. The “conservative” quarters that still remained in the CPSU tried in a desperate step to counter the direction of change, but to no avail. The failed coup of August 1991 not only confirmed the end of state socialism in the Soviet Union, but it also ensured the irreversibility of events. The Soviet Union dissolved on December 25, 1991.

Consequences

Although less direct than in the case of the East European members of the Soviet bloc, the process of collapse of state socialism in the Soviet Union had an impact elsewhere. On one hand, the new Soviet behavior in the international arena changed the very structure of this arena. Not unlike the East European members of the Soviet bloc, as the constraints that had operated during the Cold War began to disappear, states everywhere made internal adjustments to adapt to the new far more “market friendly” and “electoral contestability” friendly dominant forces in international affairs. On the other hand, there is the so-called demonstration effect. Rifts within the socialist camp notwithstanding, the Soviet Union was always considered in the developed and undeveloped West alike, the banner of existing socialism—indeed frequently called “Soviet type system” by Western commentators. The fading of state socialism in the Soviet Union thus came to represent for regimes with socialist aspirations that this way of development leads to a dead end. For some consolidated state socialist regimes it came to demonstrate, in turn, the impossibility of confronting economic hardship by reforming rather than abandoning the system altogether.

So the avalanche was literally worldwide. Concurrently with the processes of collapse of state socialism in the Soviet bloc, socialist regimes fell one after the other
everywhere. Loyal to its surnames the “sixteenth Soviet republic” and the “oldest Soviet satellite,” the communist party of Mongolia followed the lead of the CPSU in renouncing its power monopoly, in disassociating itself from the everyday conduct of the state, and in initiating a program of market oriented economic reform. Multiparty elections took place in July 1990. The two East European “socialisms” relatively unconstrained by Soviet aid collapsed as well. In a case where the kind of conditionality exerted by international financial institutions is all the more evident, in the midst of quarrels surrounding the extent and desirability of an accelerated program of economic reform the long languishing League of Communists of Yugoslavia disintegrated in early 1990. Carnage ensued. In Albania, in the face of public protests that took place in 1990, a relatively new leadership rapidly opened the system to market institutions and political contestation, renounced to the Communist Party monopoly over power at the end of 1990, and carried out multiparty elections in March 1991. While the communists won them, further elections followed a year later in which they lost office. Meanwhile in Nicaragua, a government that sympathized with state socialist developmental alternatives decided to test its popularity in an electoral contest, only to be defeated by a U.S. backed candidate in February 1990.

The juxtaposition of events in the Soviet Union with the pace of reform in China and Vietnam permits establishing by means of time precedence the influence of the former also over the latter. Indeed in Vietnam, a CMEA member, the political leadership initiated a program of market reform shortly after the Soviets launched perestroika under the argument that the reform “is not merely an imperative resulting from Vietnamese realities, but also a general trend of the times.” In China, in the same vein, the reform
initiated more than a decade earlier was speeded up since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, which “confirmed Deng’s belief that continual and accelerated economic transformation in China was more urgent than ever.”

Carriers of Change

In none of the above cases did the demise of state socialism come through direct foreign military intervention. Institutional liabilities as well as economic crisis and the international system can cause change and do indeed explain it, but cannot carry it out. Change of political and economic institutions can be carried out only by people, or more accurately, groups of people that come together to “make things happen.” In all cases of institutional demise of state socialism, without exception, the social actors that attended demonstrations, passed legislation, or performed any other action that directly dismantled the socialist system were to be found at home. And without exception, the principal social actors that led socialism to its end could perceive beforehand the advantages awaiting them in a capitalist economy in comparison to the socialist one.

In the less economically developed cases of demise, the main social agent of change can be identified among party officers with control over distributive revenues in the planned economy and therefore in a position to gain personal privilege from its opening, either by “acquiring” former state property in the process of privatization or by charging “nominal fees” (exempted from taxation, to be sure) for the administrative processing of economic transactions in the burgeoning market economy. Such opportunism of state and party officers was critical in the dismantling of socialism everywhere, even though in the more developed socialist states, particularly in East Europe, the main impetus for the dismantling of the socialist system came from elsewhere. In this respect David Lane
speaks of an “acquisition class” of liberal professionals, many of whom occupied management positions in state owned enterprises, while others were university professors, scientists, artists, and the like. This social stratum in particular had come into contact with the western world, either by traveling abroad or by being receptive to the diverse means of communication through which the western images were disseminated in the East. It is this group of people with “marketable” skills in a market economy who wanted to transform their societies in the image of the developed West, and who gave the main popular support for systemic change. To the extent that this group is a product of modernization, and to the extent that one of the main objectives of state socialism was the formation of a modern society, state socialism was thus the victim of its own success.

For the few in the West who still believed in the supremacy of the socialist system as the 1980s were coming to a close, the collapse of the Soviet Union and other state socialist regimes were disappointing occurrences. They represented “nothing less than the defeat of the communist project as it has been known in the twentieth century and the triumph of the capitalist.” Time thus came for them to self-reflect and review basic assumptions, in an attempt to absorb the defeat and understand what went wrong. On the other hand, “liberalism” in economics, politics, or as a philosophical doctrine, has never had so many followers. For liberals all over the world these were times to celebrate and chant the victory of “freedom” over the evil of empires. In one version this victory is final, representing nothing less than “the end of history as such: that is, the end-point of mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.” Whatever their philosophical precision, these
words accurately capture the dominant intellectual and political mood in the advanced capitalist societies and by extension in world affairs by the early 1990s.

**What is Left?**

Of the fourteen countries that according to scholars had a consolidated state socialist regime by the mid 1970s, only regarding North Korea and Cuba did agreement prevail on the appropriateness of this label after 1992. As of this writing this is the case, even though in both countries the state socialist model has undergone considerable change. The preservation of state socialism in both cases is intriguing, especially in light of the mounting economic crisis that both experienced by the early 1990s concurrently with the demise of state socialism elsewhere.

Yet North Korea and Cuba have pursued different strategies in preventing their regime from collapsing, and they differ also in some vital characteristics, suggesting that the perseverance of state socialism in both countries should be attributed to different reasons. North Korea has traditionally had a policy of economic as well as political self-reliance, and accordingly has pursued isolation in and from international affairs, placating thereby the pressures for regime change that may have come from abroad. Its presumed possession of nuclear capability also limits the price that external actors are willing to pay in trying to induce change in its regime.

Cuba, in contrast, throughout its history has been an open economy dependent on exports. If only for geographical reasons, it simply cannot play the isolationist game. Until the collapse of the Soviet bloc the Cuban economy was dependent on the export of primary products among which sugar, the one crop that the inhabitants of Cuba had traditionally traded for financing almost every other area of economic development, was
paramount. As a matter of “no choice” since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuba has thus tried to insert its economy in the capitalist international system of states. As a matter of choice, it has tried to do so while preserving its socioeconomic and political internal institutional setting as far as possible. For its vulnerability to external factors, the continuation of state socialism in Cuba is all the more intriguing, and the question to be studied throughout the remainder of this thesis.
Whither Cuba?

If you must unite, Marx wrote to the party leaders, then enter into agreements to satisfy the practical aims of the movement, but do not allow any bargaining over principles, do not make theoretical “concessions.” This was Marx’s idea, and yet there are people among us who seek—in his name—to belittle the significance of theory!

V. I. Lenin

The collapse of the Soviet Union impinged strongly on Cuba. It unleashed a socioeconomic crisis of unprecedented dimensions during which a regime collapse seemed a feasible possibility. Not for the first time, though. From 1959 to 1962 the consolidation of a socialist government in Cuba seemed unlikely given that Cuba was in the geopolitical area of U.S. influence in a bipolar international system that aligned governments in either a capitalist or a socialist camp, and that the United States represented the capitalist camp. Although separated in time by nearly thirty years, the socioeconomic crisis of the 1990s is intrinsically linked to the consolidation of the socialist government. Under international conditions marked by U.S. hostility, consolidation was reached only thanks to Soviet military protection and economic support. With the collapse of the Soviet Union such protection and support were removed, but not U.S. hostility. It was plausible then to expect Cuban state socialism to collapse.

That it has not collapsed has however been unaccounted for insufficiently in the literature. While logically consistent, the diverse explanations focusing on the link between the Cuban government and the population are difficult to assess against each other according to the available evidence. Accounts of absence of regime change from “above,” or by the Cuban government’s own initiative are by contrast either tautological or simplistic. While it would be very difficult to transcend the existing research
difficulties by either offering a better explanation or judging among the existing ones from “below,” there is room for elaboration on why Cuban state socialism has not been abandoned from “above.”

This chapter looks at both the evolution of state socialism in Cuba and the accounts in the literature explaining its survival after the Soviet collapse. It begins with a chronological overview of the former, followed by a critical review on the latter. The overview shows that all fluctuations in Cuba’s socioeconomic and political institutional setting since the institution of the state socialist regime have remained within the borders demarcated by the dominance of collective ownership and central management in economics and Communist Party monopolistic rule in politics. This point can be contested especially after the economic reform of the early 1990s in which some mechanisms that characterize capitalist economies were adopted, and therefore the chapter puts special emphasis on this period. The critical review points to flaws in explanations in the literature as to why regime change has not occurred in Cuba, and accordingly delineates how more research may contribute to the further exploration of this question.

The First Time
Cuba achieved its formal independence in 1902 through American “mediation.” By that time Americans had intervened militarily in Cuba against the Spaniards, and agreed to grant Cubans their independence only after reserving for themselves the right to intervene militarily should the public order or economic progress, in accordance with their understanding of both terms, be threatened in the island. Although the infamous Platt amendment that affirmed that right in the Cuban constitution was abrogated in
1934, abrogation only took place after “the two countries signed a trade reciprocity treaty that institutionalized Cuba’s sugar monoculture and economic dependence on the U.S. market.”1 “Economic dependence” described accurately the relations between the two countries also by the end of the 1950s:

The United States bought about two-thirds of Cuba’s exports and paid, under the quota system, large premiums, sometimes approaching nearly twice the world-market price for Cuban sugar. In exchange, Cuba offered the United States tariff preferences, which was only one of several reasons why the U.S. sold Cuba nearly 70 percent of its imports. United States interests controlled a declining, but still large, percentage (about 40 percent) of raw sugar production, 90 percent of telephone and electric services, and 50 percent of public service railroads. In addition, U.S. banks had about 25 percent of all bank deposits in the nation.2

On January 1, 1959, the Cuban revolutionary forces came to change this state of affairs. “This time,” said their maximal leader, Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz, “the revolution is for real.”3 It was not clear at that time what could imply “real” change in the Cuban context, but it was clear that given the role played by U.S. interests in the Cuban economy, any “real” economic change would necessarily have to harm U.S. economic interests in the island. It had, therefore, from the beginning, little chance of success.

The U.S. and Cuba were not comparable in terms of military might. In principle the United States could relatively easily overthrow undesirable Cuban governments and reverse their policies through the use of force. There were also historical precedents, in Cuba and other countries of the Western Hemisphere, of successful American action to protect U.S. interests in confronting homegrown movements for “radical” change. In Bolivia, between 1952 and 1956, the U.S. government persuaded a revolutionary government to compromise its early aspirations to radical change through the extension of economic support. In Guatemala, in 1954, the radical government of Jacobo Arbenz capitulated to a C.I.A. -sponsored military operation, and its early policies of land reform were thereafter reversed. In Cuba, since formal independence the United States
had exercised its “right” to intervene militarily in 1906-9, in 1912, in 1917, and in 1921-3. The United States resorted, in addition, to economic leverage in influencing the ascendance to power of Cuban political leaders of its own choosing at least twice, in 1934 and in 1952.

Against the odds, then, the Cuban government launched a program of reform. Its first steps, such as the reduction of rents on an income basis for the urban poor, the reductions in the prices of energy and telecommunication services, and especially the First Agrarian Reform of May 1959 that limited the size of most agrarian properties to 1,000 acres and nationalized the rest, in effect harmed U.S. property owners in the island. And the U.S. government responded according to expectations, in a fashion that resembled the most recent case of Guatemala. After a short “wait and see” period, U.S. policy makers first sought to use economic coercion to bring the Cuban revolution into moderation, and when moderation was not obtained, to overthrow the revolutionary government. When economic coercion failed, they resorted to the use of force. However, none of their efforts achieved the desired result. In essence, the Soviets stepped in to bail Cuba out. And the combination of U.S. hostility and Soviet backing pushed the Cuban revolutionary government toward the radicalization of its program.

While U.S. policy makers tinkered with the possibility of economic sanctions against the “excesses” of the Cuban revolutionaries, a high-ranking Soviet envoy landed in Cuba to close a trade deal. The Soviets were to buy Cuban sugar and to ship oil in return. Less than three months later, in early May 1960, the two parties resumed full diplomatic relations. When the U.S. government “prompted” American companies not to refine Soviet crude oil, the Cuban revolutionary government nationalized oil
refineries. When the U.S. government cut the Cuban sugar quota for the balance of 1960, fixing it at zero for all practical purposes, the Cuban revolutionary government launched a total nationalization offensive against American properties in the island. Subsequently, the Soviet Union and other socialist states increased their purchases of Cuban sugar to the amount just cut. When the U.S. government authorized the infamous C.I.A. sponsored exile force to land in the Bay of Pigs to overthrow the revolutionary government, the popular militias and the Revolutionary Armed Forces crushed it and massive Soviet military assistance began flowing to Cuba.

When U.S. policy makers, however, realized that such assistance included medium range missiles with nuclear warheads, they ultimately preferred to “lose Cuba,” so to speak, rather than to risk a direct military confrontation with the Soviets. “For thirteen days of October 1962 there was a higher probability that more human lives would end suddenly than ever before in history,” Graham Allison wrote memorably about the historical impasse. Human life and the Cuban revolution were at once on safer ground when the two nuclear superpowers reached a settlement. The Soviets removed the missiles from Cuba; the Americans committed to not overthrowing the Cuban revolutionary government by direct military means. Sheltered by the Soviet nuclear umbrella, from then on and for the whole duration of the Cold War, the Cuban revolution was safeguarded.

**Building Socialism**

The socioeconomic and political regime that coalesced under revolutionary rule conforms to the state socialist type. On April 16, 1961, Fidel Castro first declared the socialist character of the Cuban revolution. In December 1st of that year he sounded
much more convinced while asserting that he was a Marxist-Leninist and would be one until the last day of his life.\textsuperscript{6} By then a central planning board had been formed and property collectivization had proceeded quickly and extensively. By the end of 1960 the most important means of production were already in state hands. Cuba “no longer had a capitalist economy.”\textsuperscript{7} In October 1965 a new Cuban Communist Party was inaugurated as the only legally permitted political party in Cuba. Central management, state ownership, and monopolistic Communist Party rule: the fundamental characteristics of a state socialist regime were in place.

And have subsisted ever since. Whereas in their substance the defining characteristics of state socialism have shown remarkable continuity in Cuba until this very day, there have been variations over time in their form. Logically, and as we shall see all through this study, these variations permeate all other phenomena related to the building of socialism in Cuba.

\textit{Trial and Error}

During the period of Soviet support the main watersheds occurred in 1970 and in 1986. The period before 1970 can be characterized as a time of “trial and error.”\textsuperscript{8} The first half of the 1960s was characterized by the constant quest for the proper methods to finance and manage enterprises and for the best incentives to motivate their workers.\textsuperscript{9} In this early period the Cuban economy was even bifurcated for a time by the simultaneous existence of the “budgetary system of financing” enterprises in the Ministry of Basic Industries and the “economic calculation system” for the same purpose in the ministries of agriculture and foreign trade. In general terms the first was more highly centralized, to the extent that in contrast with the second it kept no balances for the transactions
among the several enterprises, whose expenditures and revenues came from and went to a common fund. An additional difference between the two systems was the higher reliance on moral incentives to motivate workers in the former and material differentials in the latter. Because of the partial elimination of financial categories and the higher reliance on moral incentives, the first was considered (by the parameters of that time) to be closer to “communism,” in which, or so it is believed, money ceases to exist.

An all-encompassing approach of the Cuban revolution to building socialism emerged for the first time in 1966 with the extension of a version of the “budgetary system of financing” to the whole economy.\(^\text{10}\) The approach, properly coined (apparently) by Karol “the Cuban heresy,” proposed to build socialism and communism simultaneously rather than one after the other.\(^\text{11}\) With this purpose in mind in 1968 the Cuban government launched the “radical offensive,” which nationalized whatever private property remained in sectors other than agriculture. The “rightness” of the heresy was to be tested at the closing of the decade. Harvesting 10 million ton of sugarcane by 1970 would both generate enough external trade surpluses to ensure economic self-sufficiency for the financing of industrial development and signal that the route undertaken leads indeed to communism.

\textit{Institutionalization}

Because Cubans failed to harvest 10 million tons of sugar in 1970, their leadership reconsidered its approach to building socialism and reaching communism. In accord with the Soviet orthodoxy of the time, the approach now dominant dictated that socialism was to be built in phases and communism was to be attained gradually.\(^\text{12}\) Other peoples have had experience with building socialism before and Cubans could
only benefit from learning from them. The period from 1971 to 1985 is known as the “institutionalization,” for some the “Sovietization,” of the Cuban Revolution. It is characterized by the adoption of the basic economic and political mechanisms practiced in the Soviet bloc countries by the time.

Chief among these mechanisms is the “System of Economic Management and Planning” (SDPE).\(^\text{13}\) Officially established in 1975, the SDPE was based on the method of “economic calculation” for the financing of enterprises. In comparison to the system in place during the mid-end 1960s, it pointed to an increase in enterprise autonomy, to a greater reliance on material incentives to motivate workers, and to a greater role of the planning board and enterprise managers in economic decision-making vis-à-vis the political leadership. Under this system legal possibilities were opened up for petty private entrepreneurship in services, agriculture, and later on in building. Also during the 1970s appeared such institutions as the new constitution for the Cuban Republic, approved by a national referendum in 1976, and the Organs of People Power (OPP), or legislative bodies, which began functioning on a national basis that same year.\(^\text{14}\) Although the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC) had been officially inaugurated in the previous decade, it was not until this decade that it began to hold congresses and that its organs held meetings at more or less regular intervals.

Sooner rather than later, however, some phenomena emerged which were perceived as negative by the political leadership.\(^\text{15}\) The SDPE had certainly not eradicated resource misallocations, which however seemed to occur not out of disorganization or “unchecked” bad decisions, as many times in the past, but with organized regularity. Regarding enterprises as self-financing units induced them to maximize the exchange
value rather than the use value of their products in the search for profits. This problem was evident in the growing number of unfinished buildings. Since for construction companies the initial phases of construction were the most profitable ones, new buildings were begun but hardly ever finished. While construction companies showed black numbers in their balances, the housing shortage worsened. Similarly, regarding enterprises as self-financing units hindered the integration of investments, or the coordination among enterprises. Dams were built but not the watering system for agriculture, or the watering system was built but not the engines to take the water from the dam, or factories were built in places with no appropriate labor force to staff them. Moreover, under this system working norms had become “slack,” and the payment to most workers for their over-fulfillment generated an excess of purchasing liquidity in the economy. With more money than goods available for purchase, many Cubans probably felt frustrated as both consumers and producers.

Perhaps worse in the eyes of the political leadership was the appearance of marked socioeconomic inequalities. The delegation of greater authority to the planning board had created a privileged class of bureaucrats and enterprise managers who, because of their access to hard currency and travels abroad or outright corruption or any other reason, maintained a lifestyle well above what their official incomes would permit. The unregulated or “free” markets in agriculture, craftsmanship and housing, for their part, had created a burgeoning “capitalist” class which had enriched itself illicitly or semi-legally, especially through speculation in the housing markets and intermediation between farms and sale posts of agricultural products.

Rectification
In April 19, 1986, these and similar phenomena were energetically denounced by Fidel Castro. He included them in the category of “errors and negative tendencies,” which were to be corrected by the process of “rectification.” This process lasted until the failure of the Soviet bloc. During this process the planning board was practically disbanded and its faculties concentrated in the political leadership, all forms of “free” markets and self-employment were once again abolished or heavily restricted, moral incentives and voluntary labor were emphasized in the economy, and working norms were revised generally downwards but with a compensation to low-income workers through an increase in the minimum wage. During this process Cubans were no longer boasting about building socialism, let alone reaching communism. They rather were fixing what they had done wrong. As in the early 1960s but some a quarter century after the declaration of the socialist character of the Cuban revolution, the Cuban government was once again seeking the road to socialism first of all.

The Soviet Shell

All during this time the wider framework for the development of Cuban socialism, with its ups and downs, turns and turnabouts, advances and setbacks, was set by the bipolar international system prevailing during the so-called Cold War. Within this framework Cuba belonged to the socialist camp. After making possible the consolidation of the Cuban revolutionary government, the Soviet support that ensured its survival and financed the country’s economic development only increased over time. Even when rifts in the relationships between the leaders of the two countries occurred, notably in the 1960s, their resolution somehow involved an increase in the amount of Soviet aid
granted to Cuba. When Castro was outraged for having been left out of the negotiations between the superpowers for the retirement of the missiles from Cuba, “the Soviet Union increased its payments for Cuban sugar and agreed to provide more aid for economic development.” When after the defeat of the Cuban-Bolivian guerrilla and many rifts with the Soviet and Latin American leaders of communist parties Castro “finally” seemed to align himself with the Soviet foreign policy line, a flotilla of Soviet warships visited Cuba in a show of international solidarity and “a new trade agreement was signed that took account of the difficulties facing the Cubans.” According to a Soviet source the volume of trade between the two countries had increased from some 160 million rubles in 1960 to more than a billion in 1970. In dollars, the cumulative Soviet aid given to Cuba according to different sources ranges from 3.5 to 5.5 billion during the same period of time.

This amount however seems like “pocket money” in comparison with that of the rest of the “fraternal relationships.” In 1972, Cuba was accepted to the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) as a full member and in 1976 it began to coordinate its economic plans and strategies of development with other members. Cuba received special member status, which allowed it to benefit from price subsidies in its trade with more developed members. The more Cuba traded with the countries of the Soviet bloc, the more the non-repayable part of the economic aid increased. In this relationship Cuba provided other CMEA members with primary products, mainly sugar and its derivatives, and received in exchange manufactured goods, energy resources, and machinery necessary for industrial development. Conforming to the “radial pattern,” most of Cuba’s foreign trade was with Moscow. In addition, Cuba received low interest credits
and long-term loans from other members of the organization, primarily from the Soviet Union. The total dollar value of Soviet economic aid to Cuba for the decade of the 1970s has been estimated at over 17 billion, a third of which was provided after 1976.\textsuperscript{23} For the first half of the 1980s alone, estimates place it at around 22 billion.

Trade relations between the two countries suffered no significant variation as a result of either Soviet perestroika or Cuban rectification. Both had their expectable effect, but since these processes moved in opposite directions they neutralized each other. In the anti-capitalist spirit of rectification, in 1986 the Cuban government broke with its western creditors over the renegotiation of its debt.\textsuperscript{24} Notwithstanding gradually deteriorating terms of trade within CMEA in both amount and composition as a result of the Soviet foreign policy review under perestroika, trading within CMEA was still more favorable for Cuba than any of its alternatives.\textsuperscript{25} During the second half of the 1980s Cuba’s foreign trade reliance on the Soviet bloc countries reached its historical peak. From some 60 percent by the early 1980s, by the close of the decade Cuba was conducting some 85-90 percent of its total foreign trade with other socialist countries. Over 80 percent of its total imports came from the Soviet bloc countries, with the Soviet Union alone accounting for some 70 percent.

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Sources:

Not only was the proportion of Cuba’s trade within CMEA high in comparison with that of the European members, but also by some calculations Cuba was the most subsidized socialist country in the world. Vietnam and Mongolia also traded within this organization on preferential terms and therefore they too maintained a higher concentration of foreign exchange with other Council members than the European members. Mongolia’s share of foreign trade with other socialist states, estimated at some 95% of total, was the highest of the three. Yet because in absolute volume Cuba traded more than Mongolia, economists have estimated the value of subsidies given to Cuba as the highest. Whereas the annual value of non-military economic aid extended to Cuba by the late 1980s has been calculated at some $4 billion, or some $400 per capita, Mongolia’s has been calculated at some $800 million or $350 per capita. With a foreign trade volume equivalent to only some 10 percent of GDP (as opposed to Cuba’s 52% of GSP) by the mid 1980s, by this measure Vietnam lagged far behind. According to similar calculations, Vietnam held some 70 percent of its total foreign trade with other Council members, and received only about $1 billion or $14 per capita yearly in economic aid from more developed socialist states.²⁶

Overall, the dollar value estimations on Soviet economic aid to Cuba for the period between 1986 and 1990 stand at about 21 billion, almost equal to that of the first half of
the 1980s. Adding this amount to the estimates for earlier periods, the Soviet economic aid to Cuba for the whole duration of their “fraternal” relationships may have ascended to over $65 billion. The number does not include the estimated value of Soviet bloc military aid, which in dollars is around 20 billion from 1959 to 1988, and of which more than half was given after 1981.

In light of its strong military and economic ties with the Soviet Union from 1962 to the end of the Cold War, and especially its higher reliance in trade with the socialist countries since 1986, by the mid-end of the 1980s it was indeed “difficult to envisage how Cuba could possibly survive and maintain its present form of government” without the Soviet Union. The ties forged can well be summarized as ones of “dependence,” not in the rather simplistic sense that saw Havana as a pawn of Moscow on a Cold War chessboard, but in the structural sense that saw the military capacity and economic development of socialist Cuba ultimately conditioned by Moscow’s willingness to support its revolutionary government:

Soviet authorities have always had the power to bring the Cuban economy to a screeching halt simply by cutting off oil deliveries. The Cuban armed forces depended on the USSR for spare parts for most of their military hardware, inventories of which the Soviet military has typically limited. Such dependence also applied to most raw materials, food and manufactured goods. Conditionality was openly exhibited at least twice. “Responding to Soviet pressures,” in 1963 Cuba’s early attempts at heavy industrialization were officially postponed in favor of agro-industrial production in accord with the requirements of the division of labor in the so-called “fraternity” of socialist states. More clearly, in 1968 “the Soviets withheld petroleum shipments to win Castro’s approval of the invasion of Czechoslovakia.”
Socialism in Crisis

There can be no better proof of Cuba’s economic dependence on the Soviet Union than the economic crisis when the Soviet aid came to a halt. The hardest blow to the Cuban economy came in January 1990 when a CMEA meeting in Sofia announced the shift in terms of trade to world prices and convertible currencies. Although officially this shift was to start by 1991, from the time the decision was made Soviet deliveries to Cuba began lagging far behind schedule. With the change in terms of trade and the subsequent dissolution of CMEA, Cuba could no longer maintain the level of imports from its former main trade partners. By 1992 all Soviet special trade concessions to Cuba had stopped.

As Soviet aid vanished, the Cuban economy went into free fall. From 1990 to 1993 the Cuban Gross Domestic Product contracted anywhere from one third to a half and both imports and exports were reduced by between 70 and 80 percent. It is even tempting “to set out the proposition that the island’s drop in economic activity over 1989-93 represents a contemporary (negative) world record of sorts.” The human suffering implied in the macroeconomic data can be summarized by noting not only the shortage of basic daily staples such as soap and milk, the periodic blackouts of electricity, the sharp cutbacks in transportation services, and the drastic increase in such social pathologies as crime and prostitution, but also that the “average caloric intake dropped by some 30 percent between 1989 and 1993, while nutritional deficiencies arose,” causing, among other illnesses, an epidemic of blindness and nervous disorders that affected some 40,000 Cubans in 1993. At the nadir of the economic crisis many Cubans lived, literally, on the border of starvation.
Deteriorating living standards could not but spawn social unrest. Increasing numbers of Cubans ventured to sea in improvised boats hoping to reach U.S. shores. The number of rafters “climbed from just under 500 in 1990 to approximately 2,500 in 1991 to nearly 3,500 in 1993—then escalated sharply in mid-1994.” The number for the summer of 1994 alone is estimated at some 32,000. That same summer the broadest anti-government demonstrations in the history of the Cuban revolution so far also took place. On August 5, between 700 and 3,000 demonstrators gathered in various areas of Havana to protest for hours. Protesters “chanted ‘down with Fidel’ and ‘assassins’ and engaged in violent acts like throwing stones at tourist stores.”

Never since 1962 were the prospects for the mere survival of the Cuban revolution so bleak. Socialist regimes fell one after another like dominoes the world over. Cuba, submerged in an economic crisis of incredible dimensions and experiencing increasing social unrest, seemed next in line. Never before had the collapse of the socialist order in Cuba been so widely anticipated by scholars, journalists, politicians and other commentators: “It is only a matter of time before Cuban communism collapses,” reads a Foreign Affairs piece from the Winter of 1992. “While the date of its demise is obviously unknown in advance,” the article continues, “it can be expected sooner rather than later.” Other predictions were much more precise about the timing of the “certain” outcome. A U.S. former Assistant Secretary of State, for example, predicted at the beginning of 1992 that Fidel Castro would last from “nine months to a year” more in power. A Soviet dissident openly expressed his certainty “that with the severance of the economic aid previously so generously provided by the former Soviet Union, socialism, together with Fidel Castro, will fall in Cuba as an overripened fruit from a tree,
sometime in 1992-93.” Meanwhile, a Pulitzer Prize winner published in 1992 his *Castro’s Final Hour*, which professed to reveal the “secret story behind the coming downfall of communist Cuba.”41

**The Second Time**

In the perennial tendency of state socialist regimes to experiment with the organization of work, the process of rectification, in the path of which the collapse of state socialism in East Europe caught Cuba, represents a swing away from decentralization and private property. Somewhat ironically, then, as centrally planned economies were disappearing everywhere the Cuban government resorted heavily to central management in watering down the initial impact of the drastic reduction in Soviet subsidies and aid.42 In December 1989 the Cuban government officially inaugurated an import substitution food program, which aimed at increasing agricultural production in both quantity and diversity. Urban surplus labor was relocated to the countryside through voluntary mobilization, and the population was exhorted to practice individual agriculture in such places as house yards, patios, roofs, and open urban spaces. In August-September 1990 a set of austerity measures disciplined energy consumption and expanded the number of consumer items subjected to rationing. With these measures Cubans entered the so-called “special period in times of peace.”

Soon it became clear, however, that more than the reallocation of shrinking resources was needed to confront hardships of such magnitude as had been imposed on Cuba from the outside. Shortages of labor and consumer goods, worker absenteeism, low worker productivity, grandiose unfinished projects, and other inefficiencies generally attributed to the inherent functioning of a socialist economy were by no means
new in Cuba by the late 1980s and early 1990s, but once the Soviet aid came to an end these and similar phenomena evidenced more than ever before the need for reform in the direction of a more efficient system of production. In 1991 a swing toward the institutions of a capitalist economy began.

Economic Reform

Given the deteriorating terms of foreign trade, the market reform began in the external sector in the hope of attracting new foreign resources. When results were deemed positive but insufficient, it subsequently expanded to agriculture in order to increase primary production, to services in order to combat unemployment, and to state productive enterprises to alleviate the fiscal deficit. Governmental policies that retreated from collectivization included bolstering direct foreign investment (provided that foreign investors are private entities), the conversion of more than half state farms into cooperatives, and expanding the number of occupations open to licensed self-employment. Decentralization measures included the decriminalization of foreign currency transactions, the reopening of free markets for the trade of agricultural produce and manufactures, a state enterprise reform, and the reform of the banking system. The approach followed has been limited or complementary, according to the categorization drawn in the previous chapter. However significant all decentralization and privatization measures, they have so far been restricted in such a way that the primacy of central management and collective ownership in overall economic activity have been guaranteed.

The reorganization of the foreign sector has gone as far as to allow the full repatriation of profits to foreign investors, the creation of export processing or free trade
zones where foreign investors enjoy important tariff and tax exemptions, and since 1995, total ownership in the hands of the foreign investor for the first time. Yet labor allocation remains a privilege of the state.\textsuperscript{44} Foreign investors in Cuba can only hire, dismiss, and pay salaries to their Cuban employees through state agencies. As a matter of policy preference, in addition, the Cuban government has promoted foreign direct investment mainly in the form of joint ventures between the foreign investor and a Cuban party on either an equity or Cuban majority shareholding basis. Invariably, the Cuban party in joint ventures is the state, either officially as a state office or ministry, or as a quasi-private agency instituted for that end, staffed with state personnel, financed by the state, and supposed to remit its part of the profits to the state coffers.\textsuperscript{45}

Likewise, the new agricultural cooperatives, called UBPC for their Spanish initials, have usufruct over the land they work for an indefinite period of time. In contrast to state farms they own their working tools and products, elect their management, and decide autonomously how best to dispose of their residual income.\textsuperscript{46} Yet their only provider of inputs is the state and as a result state officers in fact determine the kind and quantity of crops sown in the land leased. The state also gets most of the produce of these cooperatives—often at below market prices—by setting their quota or obligations to the state at around 80 percent of total output.\textsuperscript{47} By the same token, the re-opening of markets for the trading of agricultural and artisan products in which prices are set by supply and demand do not represent but a return to market allocation devices complementary to the state economy that existed in several socialist states at different times, and in Cuba from 1980 to 1986.\textsuperscript{48}

Perhaps the best example that “theoretical concessions” have not been made, to
paraphrase Lenin, involves the regulations regarding the private sector in occupations other than agriculture. The list of self-employed occupations has expanded to more than 150. The self-employed own their working tools, and provide their services at prices set by supply and demand. Yet their ability to accumulate a considerable amount of capital and the possibility for a domestic capitalist sector to develop accordingly are significantly curtailed by a legal impediment to hiring labor other than family members. Additional restrictions apply to professionals with university degrees, who cannot be self-employed in the occupations for which they were formally trained. These and similar restrictions are theoretically significant for their function in averting so far, in Marxist parlance, the existence of exploitative labor relationships of the kind that characterize a capitalist economy—based on the combination of private property, waged labor, and the extraction of surplus value—among Cubans living in Cuba.

Nor has the reform of state enterprises been too extensive. Named “system of enterprise improvement,” this reform has been zigzagging in its advance since the rectification period, when it first was conceived by army officers and introduced to the army enterprises. In 1997, based on the experience obtained, the fifth party congress approved its gradual generalization to the whole economy. While some of its key components have less to do with decentralization than with the organization of work within the enterprise, this reform promotes the self-financing of enterprises and allows more decision-making authority to their managers, including over profits, investments, and transactions in hard currency. Not only have the aspects of the “system of enterprise improvement” that do not involve decentralization been the most widely applied—especially before and after the other reforms—but also, after fully ten years from the
announcement of its generalization and twenty from its conception, not even three of every ten enterprises have been licensed to adopt this system.\textsuperscript{52} In addition, students of the Cuban economy estimate the number of workers underemployed in Cuban state enterprises as between 500,000 and 800,000.\textsuperscript{53} If trusted, these numbers indicate that also from the point of view of worker rationalization the state enterprise reform cannot be rated but as limited.

In terms of performance, up to 2004 the limited reform seemed to have bred modest economic recovery as measured by rates of economic growth. According to official calculations, economic deterioration was arrested by 1994, the year in which the Gross Domestic Product increased by 0.7 percent. Growth of 2.5 percent was registered for 1995, and a somewhat impressive 7.8 percent for 1996.\textsuperscript{54} As the economy began growing anew, however, the reform slowed down in both scope and pace until by 1996 it had practically halted. The economic reform had created “contradictions,” one of its main architects admitted in March of that year, and resolving them “will require, without question, the strengthening of planning and the role of planning in accordance with the principles of our socialist system.”\textsuperscript{55} In 1997, the programmatic document of the fifth party congress could boast that in Cuba “there will be no restoration of capitalism because the Revolution will never be defeated. The homeland will continue to live and will continue to be socialist.”\textsuperscript{56} Since then, not only has the market-reform basically stagnated, but also some reversals have taken place, such as the constitutional amendment of 2002 which declares the irrevocability of the socialist system of production, the re-centralization of investment and foreign trade, and the reintroduction of penalties for transactions in U.S. currency beginning in November 2004.\textsuperscript{57}
After 2004 the growth of the Cuban economy accelerated. Two-digit increases in the rates of economic growth were registered for both 2005 (11.8 %) and 2006 (12.5 %). The Cuban government has made new international alliances, which for the last few years have brought significant Chinese investment in mining and transportation, and have permitted also the purchase of Venezuelan oil at below market prices in exchange for medical services.\textsuperscript{58} To be sure, the strides in the rate of growth also coincided with a shift in the method employed for measuring GDP to “better” account for the contribution of the “service” economy.\textsuperscript{59}

Conditions of accelerated growth permitted, according to the Cuban government, lifting restrictions imposed to the population at the nadir of the socioeconomic crisis either as austerity measures or in order to prevent the exacerbation of social inequality.\textsuperscript{60} Thus, since March 2008 Cubans have once again been allowed to stay in hotels destined to international tourism, and to rent cars. They can purchase electric appliances such as microwaves and communication devices such as computers and cellular phones for personal use. Accelerated growth also seems to have provided the Cuban government with the confidence necessary to try to fix some of the economic dislocations created by both the socioeconomic crisis and the market reform. The asymmetry between wages and prices has begun to be attacked by a general wage increase, which began in May 2008 with social security recipients such as pensioners, and which is projected to expand gradually to all state employees. Additionally, the government has repeatedly announced that it has been studying how to bring an end to the dual economy in which hard currency holders can afford a higher standard of living than wage earners in local currency, and in this regard the elimination of the double currency and the creation of a
single one seems imminent.

Although under conditions of accelerated growth the need for expanding the market-oriented reform is arguably less, insofar as economic growth is not based on rising enterprise productivity the deepening of this reform has remained in the background as an open possibility. In July 2007, for instance, Raúl Castro said that for “having more one has to produce more,” and announced that for increasing production more “structural” economic reforms are to come to Cuba.61 His announcement was followed in March 2008 by a series agricultural reforms which include the decentralization of much decision-making from the national to the municipal level; the rising of prices that the state pays farmers for crops; and the distribution of idle land to whoever shows interest and demonstrates capability to work it.62 Because of the first measure, and to the extent that the third measure will increase the share of the private sector in agriculture, these policies can symbolize the restarting of the market reform, even though many details concerning them are as yet unclear and it is therefore difficult to anticipate their significance. Yet, because in stark contrast with China and Vietnam, agriculture contributes less than five percent to the Cuban Gross Domestic Product, reforms in agriculture by themselves are unlikely to alter considerably the main ownership structure and allocation mechanisms of the Cuban economy.63

Overall, then, significant as the market oriented reform may be, in the resulting economic system the Cuban state still employs three quarters of the Cuban labor force and contributes a similar proportion to the GDP.64 Not only is this balance more or less diametrically opposite to the contemporary economic systems of China and Vietnam, but also restrictions to private entrepreneurship in Cuba today are tighter than in some
former socialist states such as Poland, Hungary, and the GDR—let alone Yugoslavia—where non-family hired labor in manufacturing enterprises was permitted to limited degrees well before the wide market reforms that preceded the end of these systems.  

Scholars have therefore continued to refer to the Cuban economy as socialist. At most, Cuba has a reformed state socialist economy and as such it probably represents what the Soviet and other unsuccessfully reformed state socialist economies would have looked like had their reforms been kept within the contours established by the predominance of collective ownership and the central allocation of resources, let alone political stability. 

### Table 2.2

State Socialism: Contemporary Demarcation Line

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<th>Estimated size of state sector in reformed economic system: Cuba, China, and Vietnam</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of state employees from total employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>72—82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>10—20</td>
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</table>

Note: Range reflects random fluctuations throughout time since the beginning of the market reform in each country as well as the different methodologies employed for inferring the values compiled from the following sources:
China: calculated from figures presented by Chow (2002, 269); (Meng, 2000, 82); Jeffries (2001, 194); Heberer (2003, 26); People’s Republic of China (2000, 115).  

**Political Adjustment**

If the economic defining institutions of state socialism have been safeguarded, there is no question at all regarding its political *sine qua non*. Here there has been almost no change since the end of Soviet subsides. By far the most significant institutional political reform that has occurred during all this time concerns the changes in procedural rules for choosing delegates to the Popular Assemblies, or the legislative bodies. According to the New Electoral Law approved by the national assembly in October 1992, the delegates to
the Popular Assemblies are elected directly and secretly by their constituencies at the national and provincial levels, which was already the norm for the election of municipal delegates. In several ways, however, political competition remains restricted. Elections to the national and provincial assemblies involve one candidate per post, who can be accepted or rejected according to a threshold of half the votes cast. And in the essentials the one party system remains untouched. Whereas there have been many changes to the 1976 constitution, not one of them concerns article five, which concedes to the Communist Party the “superior leading force of the society and the state.”

Explaining Survival

As the Cuban economy recuperated somewhat and the reform process slowed, the main question for scholars, journalists, politicians, and other analysts shifted from whether the regime would collapse to why it has survived. The parsimony provided by Soviet support in a bipolar international system gave way to a host of factors as diverse as charisma, social welfare, nationalism, U.S. foreign policy, the absence of a significant local opposition, Cuba’s emigration policies, centralization of the means of communication, and brute force.

All explanations based on these factors tell or attempt to tell why the Cuban people have not rebelled against their government and all them find or try to find their supporting evidence in the observable link between the Cuban government and the Cuban people. By the kind of link they propose they can be divided into essentially two groups. Some authors believe that of “all the hypotheses in the literature trying to explain the endurance of the Castro regime, repression is the only one that is sound...If repression were abandoned or drastically reduced, the regime would fall.” Repression
causes the Cuban people to fear their government. Given this fear and the relative easiness of leaving the country most Cubans who disagree with their government prefer “exit” rather than “voice.” \footnote{70} Given the centralization of means of communication those who stay cannot communicate to organize. \footnote{71} And when nevertheless they find each other and organize in opposition groups, the government has not refrained from infiltrating them, incarcerating them, beating them, firing them from their jobs, and practicing other forms of physical and economic intimidation. \footnote{72} Other authors believe by contrast that “popular support...gives the government its stability, and it is the government’s continued identification with the interest of the population that justifies its popular support.” \footnote{73} The support arises—according to the explanations in the literature—from the personality of Fidel Castro; from the achievements of the revolution in education, health and sports; from the relatively high levels of social equality; from the nationalist character of the Cuban Revolution in contrast to most former socialist regimes in East European states; and from the unity of Cubans against an external threat in the image of the United States. \footnote{74}

Assessing all these explanations against each other or determining the relative weight of each in accounting for the stability of the Cuban government is however severely complicated by the lack of systematically and “scientifically” gathered and published data on the degree to which the Cuban people support (or fear) their government. \footnote{75} Generally speaking, broad observations of popular support (or lack of it) would not miss the target at all. Practically all observers agree that the revolutionary government counted initially on massive popular support, which has been decreasing with the passage of time, and which reached its nadir by the early-mid 1990s, as
indicated by the events of the summer of 1994. Beyond that, however, it would be very difficult to assess the popularity of the Cuban government with any degree of accuracy. As one commentator has put it: “Without national elections or regular polling of public opinion to measure the national temper, one could only speculate about the popularity—or lack of it—of the Castro regime.” And the range of speculations available in the literature is indeed wide. Based on data such as participation in elections to the National Assembly, political mobilizations, polls either unrepresentative of the whole population or betraying the political orientation of the pollster, number of rafters, interviews with recent exiles, personal impressions, and the like, these vary from more than 70 percent uncompromising support for the government; to three roughly equal shares of the Cuban population who “support actively,” “oppose,” or “support passively” their government; to more than 80 percent who are against the government.

The unavailability of reliable data prevents the comparative evaluation of the several explanations and thus the determination of the relative explanatory range of each. Yet all these explanations make logical sense and can be backed by some phenomena. Each bears some truth and goes some way to explaining why the Cuban regime has not fallen. Even if it is impossible to specify the relative importance of each, taken together they may account for the “mix” of fear and support behind the Cuban people’s continuous allegiance to or at least tolerance of the Cuban government. This allegiance is certainly necessary to explain the absence of regime change in Cuba. Without it, no government can stay in power and no socioeconomic and political order is possible.

But it is not sufficient. Even if the continuous allegiance of the Cuban people to the Cuban government is taken as a given, or granted, there is still the need to explain the
absence of regime change by the Cuban government’s own initiative. And in the aftermath of the end of the Soviet support there were enough reasons to expect the Cuban government to shift further away from socialism in its policies or else to fall apart, together with—and due to—it’s “stickiness” to the economic and political institutions of the state socialist regime.

**Change from Above?**

To reiterate, as the Soviet aid came to an end the Cuban economy stalled. When an economy stalls, more investment is needed. If local sources of investment are insufficient, investments must be brought from abroad. Attracting foreign capital requires in turn creating conditions for investors so they can see their investments paying off. Creating such conditions requires, for a socialist country aiming at integrating its economy into the international capitalist economic system, at the very least institutional change in the direction of a market economy, if not a political opening toward a multiparty system as well. Accordingly, once the Soviet support came to an end, it was crystal clear what Cuban policymakers could do to replace the massive resources lost, at least in part, by American aid, loans from international financial institutions, and the like. As one student of the Cuban economy put it: “economic and political reforms that are sufficiently meaningful to bring about a market economy, a multiparty democracy, and normalized relations with the United States.”

Moreover, in comparative perspective less economic duress than that experienced by Cuba was sufficient to prompt other socialist governments to carry out wider economic and political reforms. Incumbent governments in the Soviet Union and Hungary, notably, initiated far-reaching political and economic transformations in the direction of
a multiparty system and a market economy without any strong opposition movement or popular protests demanding that they do so. In China and Vietnam significant political concessions in this direction have not taken place, but by their own initiative the governments have gone a long way from state ownership and central planning in economic institutional design. In countries such as Mongolia, Bulgaria, and Albania, socialist governments reacted to initial mass demonstrations of discontent by implementing political and economic reforms, thereby unleashing an escalating process that culminated in the end of communist party rule and the formal—if not always real—institution of a market economy. In both Nicaragua and Poland, incumbent socialist governments ultimately yielded to a well-organized opposition that demanded political and economic institutional change. Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, and to the clearest extent Romania, are the only countries where communist leaders rejected pressures for political and economic reform, until, under the pressure of mass mobilization, they could resist no more.⁸⁰

In carrying out some economic reform on its own initiative while denying any step toward allowing new political parties, the Cuban government has reacted to the socioeconomic crisis of the early 1990s in a way that resembles the gradual reform processes of China and Vietnam. Yet in contrast to these cases the extent of reform being carried out so far in Cuba has remained within the contours established by the dominance of state ownership and central management. At first sight the limited extent of economic reform in Cuba is somewhat puzzling given that the market-oriented reform delivered positive results in terms of economic growth, and that up to 2004 the economy was not growing enough. If growth was reactivated through economic reform, and if
economic growth is regarded as desirable, why instead of deepening the market reform—as the governments of China and Vietnam did—did the Cuban government halt it?

Moreover, economists of different persuasions tend to agree that the market measures implemented in Cuba are to date insufficient and need to be extended by, as a minimum, the further liberalization of the labor market in the foreign invested sector, the cutting back of subsides to state enterprises, and the easing of restrictions for hiring waged labor among the self employed. Andrew Zimbalist, for example, who in the past has expressed positive opinions about Cuba’s economic performance, has written that the Cuban economic model at present “does not offer a viable basis…for long-term economic growth,” and that “Cuba will only succeed in the world economy if competitive forces are allowed to influence resource allocation and motivate producers.”

His, and similar opinions, were supported for nearly fifteen years from the end of Soviet subsidies by the limited extent of net foreign investment attracted and the rates of economic growth achieved. Estimations on the former vary according to source from $1 to $2 billion up to 2003, which in any case amount to only one-half or less of the yearly value of former Soviet subsidies. Up to 2004 the latter could have been described as modest, so modest that even in that year the Gross Domestic Product had not yet reached its 1989 level.

Table 2.3
GDP Growth in Cuba 1997-2006 (Percentage)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: ONE, (2002, 41); Pérez Villanueva in Domínguez, Pérez Villanueva and Barbeira eds. (1994, 50); Escuela Superior del Partido Comunista de Cuba Ñico López (2007, 121).
These opinions, however, plainly ignore the socialist goals of full employment and equality or think them irremediably lost, or see their deterioration as an inevitable byproduct of an essentially positive development. Cuban policy makers evidently think otherwise, for after having arrested the economic free fall and being confronted with the alternatives of preserving residual social equality or furthering economic growth, they prioritized the former, as they have done in the past, which explains the halting of the market oriented reform even if successful in generating growth.\textsuperscript{83} This sustained preference for equality over accelerated economic growth is what differs from the priorities of socialist governments where this system has been abandoned through reform—successfully or not—and what bears explanation in the first instance.

\textit{Explaining Cuba's Government Behavior}

Two interrelated explanations as to why a wider extension of market-oriented reform has not been carried out in Cuba to date are recurrent in the literature on the topic. One follows the logic of political survival. Taking the Soviet perestroika as an example, according to this argument a thriving market economic sector creates forces independent of the state that can be politically harmful to the incumbent government. Since the Cuban government does not want to awaken these forces, it has not deepened the market reform. \textquote{We believe,} write Carmelo Mesa-Lago and Jorge Pérez López,

that the core reason why the leadership limited, slowed down and eventually reversed pro-market policies and launched anti-market cycles—actions certain to bring about adverse economic performance—is the fear of losing political control as a result of decentralization of economic policymaking, expansion of the market and the private sector, and the subsequent surge in economic behavior independent of the state. Political logic, therefore, has trumped economic logic, even though the result has been the deterioration of economic conditions and standards of living.\textsuperscript{84}

This account is necessarily correct by definition. Yet it seems internally inconsistent and empirically wanting. The mere definition of a government’s ultimate purpose in
preserving power leads to the interpretation of all its actions accordingly. In such a case, however, should the Cuban government act differently and remain in power, the same argument would apply. Because the same explanation applies to all successful policy choices, it fails to differentiate reasons for any distinct policy output.

Beyond tautology, both commonsense and the empirical evidence of state socialist regimes, including Cuba, suggest that at least equally destabilizing to the forces unleashed by market reform is prolonged economic duress, and that economic growth increases rather than decreases the public support of governments. Even when scholars no longer (if ever) found reasons for the passive public acquiescence to Communist Party rule in East European socialist states, they explained it by pointing to a positive link between economic performance and political stability.\(^8^5\) If the view of the proponents of the explanation quoted above is to be taken seriously and it is assumed that deepening market-reform would foster economic prosperity in Cuba, then by deepening the reform the Cuban government would increase, not decrease, its basis of public support and political stability would benefit as a result.

Moreover, the explanation does not fit particularly well the available evidence of the particular case to which it pretends to apply. Whenever significant market oriented measures have followed signs of open social unrest in Cuba, they seem to have mitigated rather than exacerbated the unrest. The free markets for agricultural produce, for example, opened for the first time shortly after the Mariel exodus of 1980 and for the second time after the so-called August riots of 1994. On both occasions they were reportedly opened as a measure to increase primary production in order to assuage the rising discontent.\(^8^6\) If judged by the evident decline of open unrest after the opening of
these markets on both occasions, the results can be deemed positive. And if the results are deemed positive then they fail to support the presumed negative link between market-oriented reform and political stability.

The second explanation finds the main reason for the relatively limited extent of economic and political reform in the “personality and whims of Fidel Castro:”

Castro’s tenacious grip on power and his inclination to control all aspects of Cuban governance have repeatedly silenced more pragmatic views and stifled serious political reform. The Cuban regime might be viewed as a dysfunctional member of the post-cold war community of states, unable to develop in a normal and healthy manner as long as Castro is intent on retaining absolute political control. This problem of centralized, unchallengeable, and inflexible decision-making has slowed and hampered the evolution of Cuban policies, just at a time when international developments require more flexible, creative, and novel policy making.87

This argument is obviously less and less relevant as Fidel departs the political scene. Yet even assuming his great influence during his lifetime, the explanation equivocates the unit of analysis. Fidel Castro is no doubt a strong leader. While only the few directly involved in policymaking may know with certainty his exact role and influence in the crafting of every policy decision, through superficial observation at the very least veto power over major policy decisions can be attributed to him. Assuming so, his position on every issue is of relevance in explaining the decisions made by the Cuban government. From here, however, to explain policy outcomes as an extension of his personality alone there is a gap that can be bridged only at the price of simplicity. Even if Cuba is an island Fidel Castro is not Robinson Crusoe. The island of Cuba has around eleven million inhabitants and no one leader, charismatic or omnipotent as he may be, can gather alone all the information necessary to make all policy decisions and implement alone all policies.

If only for purely technical reasons

the man who is at the head of the state would certainly not be able to govern without the support of a numerous class to enforce respect for his orders and to have them carried out; and granting that he
can make one individual, or indeed many individuals, in the ruling class feel the weight of his power, he certainly cannot be at odds with the class as a whole or do away with it. The aggregate of persons, or the “class” whose collaboration is necessary for the exercise of government in any modern state, is recognized by the scholarly literature as “governing,” or “political elite.” This group is commonly roughly and loosely defined as a minority in society consisting of “individuals who directly or indirectly play some considerable part in government.” Whereas the outer boundaries of this group can be determined only arbitrarily, some individuals such as members of a government, military leaders, and leaders of powerful economic enterprises in capitalist societies, are clearly “there.” In state socialist regimes, where invariably the highest posts in the state and the army are permeated with Communist Party members, it is traditionally assumed safe to identify the political elite with the party members. Accordingly, the extent of influence exerted by any single member of the political elite increases with ascendance in the party’s hierarchy. Representing the external contours of the Cuban political elite, as of today the Communist Party of Cuba has around 850,000 members, who constitute some 9 percent of the total population.

Looking Ahead
Against the odds a state socialist regime was consolidated in Cuba in the early 1960s and against the odds it has persisted after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. Necessary for regime persistence after the Soviet collapse is the willingness of the Cuban government to stay the course despite pressures exerted by economic crisis and the new structure of the international system toward regime change. Explanations of regime survival in Cuba found in the literature have however devoted only scant—and therefore superficial—attention to explain this willingness. Consequently, the literature
leaves room for further research on the factors accounting for the policy preferences of
the Cuban government.

The following chapter aims at presenting a model of political elite able to coherently
explain the perseverance of state socialism in Cuba. This model is constructed of
characteristics both evident from simple observation and about which there is wide
agreement among scholars and other commentators on the matter. The use of well-
known and agreed characteristics is deliberate—only a foundation in the obvious would
be strong enough to allow us move securely thereafter into the more complex fabric of
cause and effect in a manner, if not necessarily uncontroversial, that at least departs from
an uncontroversial basis and is verifiable or assessable by other students at once. While
remarks on the links between these characteristics and regime stability also exist in the
literature, this research claims novelty for their incorporation into a single model and for
the suggested contributions of this model to more general literatures in the social
sciences.
Why Cuba?

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.

Karl Marx

It seems that most revolutions follow a similar trajectory. Looking at the historical record left by the English, American, French, and Russian revolutions, Crane Brinton detects a pattern of uniformities in their progression. In his schema revolutionary movements arise with the promise to solve the problems of an inefficient and corrupted old regime. But when revolutionary movements are successful in taking power the transformations undertaken go further than that. In part for internal struggles, in part to prevent the restoration of the old regime, and in part for optimism about the new state of affairs that can be created, the revolutionaries in power typically radicalize and carry out a wider extent of changes than they seem to have originally proposed even to themselves—outspokenly in any event. The radicalization however consumes a kind of human energy in the form of renunciation to the self and devotion to the cause that seems hardly renewable. With time a decadent phase that subdues revolutions from within makes its appearance in the form of restoration of old customs, beliefs, vices, and prioritization of individual concerns. At the end of the revolution the society is never the same as before the overthrowing of the old regime, but also not so drastically transformed as the revolutionaries had attempted during the radical phase. While the details of each phase in the revolutionary progression naturally vary from case to case in their content, intensity, and length, the moderate-radical-decadent sequence is nevertheless apparent in most revolutions.
If we were to collocate the Cuban Revolution when the Soviet support came to an end, and even pretty much today, at some point along this trajectory, it would be somewhere in the radical phase. According to the revolutionaries’ own version of events, the demands that had inspired them in their struggle against what they considered a corrupt, unjust, and subservient-to-foreign-interests regime were met as soon as October 1960, when—after some nationalizations and the agrarian, educational, and urban reforms—the “Moncada program” was declared complete.\(^2\) The bulk and the deepest of the structural economic and political transformations occurred however after that, with the declaration of the socialist character of the Cuban Revolution and the pursuit, in practice, of a socialist developmental route.

By the sole yardstick of mass “participation in the common thing,” which Brinton regards as quintessential for measuring the different stages of revolutionary progression, it indeed seemed that after a very intense decade in the construction of socialism revolutionary fervor was waning, the initial enthusiasm was turning into conformism and the spontaneity, or at any rate the genuine faith that characterized the initial stages of the Cuban Revolution, was turning into ritual. “Mechanisms” had been established, voluntary work journeys were less and less frequent, corruption and even “classes” seemed to erupt, and people were motivated to work mostly by material differentials as in the time before the revolution. Yet even at the peak of the institutionalization period this is only partially true, because precisely in this period more Cubans than ever before flocked to “free the world from oppression,” or at any extent the African nations, most notably Angola, which does not square, to say the least, with the waning of revolutionary fervor.
In any case the period of rectification was a return to mass mobilization methods in work, in defense, and in the public gatherings in support of the revolution. Though with relapses, the high level of mass mobilization has continued into the special period, especially from the start of the new millennia with the massive campaign for the return of the boy Elian González and the subsequent launching of the Battle of Ideas, with all its massive gatherings in commemoration of May first, in repudiation of the U.S. government, or for bringing home the five Cubans condemned to prison sentences in the United States for charges on espionage.

What stands out in the radical phase of the Cuban Revolution is its length. Whereas students of revolutionary processes such as Brinton and Kuhn refer to this phase as a brief and intense period of time and use terms such as “disequilibrium,” “crisis,” and “extraordinary” as opposed to “normal” or “ordinary” times to describe it, in Cuba it seems to have been extended unusually or at least that several of its typical and critical characteristics refuse to disappear. This is important for explaining why state socialism in Cuba could outlast the cut of Soviet support. For some characteristics of the Cuban political elite that are typical of political elites in this radical phase can be proved, both logically and empirically, to have been functional in enabling the Cuban state socialist regime to survive this exogenous shock.

This chapter puts forth four characteristics. That the very same leaders who “made” or in any case took over power and radicalized the Cuban Revolution were, and still are, pretty much in command, accounts for the reluctance of the Cuban government to deviate from the path delineated by the state socialist principles. Their “siege mentality” accounts for their readiness to confront adverse external circumstances and struggle to
make their will prevail in moments of crisis, or rather whenever needed. That intra-elite relationships are poorly, or lowly institutionalized, accounts for regime flexibility in adjusting to a shifting external environment. Whereas unity is not a characteristic typically seen in elites in the “radical” phases of revolutions, it is present in the Cuban political elite and certainly adds strength to the stability of the state socialist regime. It would be the “surplus value” that makes state socialism in Cuba particularly resistant to exogenous pressures for change. The four characteristics combine together in an inextricable compound which helps explain why state socialism in Cuba has not been terminated “from above.” Following Thomas Kuhn’s usage of the term extraordinary to encompass in one word the turmoil characteristic of revolutionary times, I will call this compound “extraordinary” and qualify the Cuban political elite as such.³

Although the characteristics of this elite model are interwoven in their real workings and effects, for the sake of systematic analysis each is discussed separately in connection with the prevention of regime change. The elaboration of the extraordinary elite model concludes the first part of this dissertation. This part asks what accounts for the perseverance of state socialism in Cuba and this model aims at providing an answer. Since one characteristic of this model is a first generation of leaders, the model is necessarily bounded in time. Therefore, after presenting this model and as a way to link between the two parts of the dissertation, the chapter turns to discuss the impending and ongoing generational changes in this elite. By asking questions about the implications of these changes for regime stability and change and offering some tentative answers, this discussion presents the hypothesis for the next three chapters of the dissertation.

A caveat, or rather clarification, must be voiced before delineating the respective
links. No one of the factors stressed below is infallible in the sense that it would always compel all actors in which these are present to behave identically. The links discussed are probabilistic rather than deterministic in that each of the relevant factors influences but not forces the occurrence of certain outcomes. The conjunction of all four factors in any given political elite would thus help make its success in withstanding exogenous pressures for change possible, even likely, but by no means necessary.

**First Generation of Leaders**

As a sociological concept, a “generation” consists of individuals of roughly the same age who have experienced in common a significant historical or social event. Though opinions may differ about how “significant” is significant (and significant for whom) for any given historical or social event, some events in the historical genealogy of certain peoples are without reasonable doubt significant. In the Cuban genealogy, the revolution of 1959 that affected the life of practically all Cubans is without doubt such a watershed event, which facilitates the uncontroversial application of a generational analysis in reference to it.

For collocating individuals according to their “generational position,” Karl Manheim draws some useful distinctions in his famous essay on the theme. He distinguishes between a “generation as location,” or all those people who happen to coincide in time and space and are in a position to participate in the same significant socio-historical event, and a “generation as actuality,” composed of all those people who in fact do participate. Within the latter, people with differing attitudes to the event, very often antagonistic to each other, constitute separate “generation units.” The latter category can in turn be subdivided into “concrete groups,” which are those irreducible units to which
individuals actually belong and within which they directly interact with each other in the
pursuit of a common objective or goal.

According to this categorization, all those individuals in their formative ages of late
adolescence and early adulthood that happened to coincide in Cuba by the 1950s
constitute a generation as location. Of these, those who participated in the revolutionary
process compose a generation as actuality. Generation units are to be distinguished by
the different camps to which individuals belonged, for or against the revolution, when
mobility across generation units is both possible and, especially after the success of the
revolution, likely. The generation unit that made the Cuban Revolution is often known
as the “Generation of 1953,” for the year the revolutionary armed struggle formally
began, the “Generation of the Centenary,” for this year coincides with the one-hundredth
anniversary of the birth of Cuban national hero, Jose Martí, and the “Historic
Generation”—for this generation unit has, for better or worse, made history. Within it,
the three main “concrete groups” that joined forces during the revolutionary struggle are
the July 26th movement, the Popular Socialist Party (PSP), or old Communists, and the
Revolutionary Directorate (DR). By far the most central of these groups for the
revolutionary process was the 26th of July movement. With only a few exceptions, all the
core leaders of the historic generation belonged to this group, and even more
specifically, to the particular section of this group that participated in the guerrilla
fighting in the mountains.

Up to this very day, as shown in detail in the next chapter, members of this
generation have unequivocally dominated politics in Cuba. When the Soviet Union
disintegrated about two of every three members in the party’s Political Bureau and a
similar proportion of Council of State ministers had already joined the revolutionary movement at the time of its consolidation in power in October 1962. Even as of 2008, members of the historic generation still occupy most and the most important posts in the supreme decision-making bodies. While this generation is slowly disappearing from the Cuban government, inasmuch as the posts of president of state and party first secretary are occupied by the very same persons who actively participated in the overthrowing of the old government and in the consolidation of the new, it can be ascertained that the first generation of leaders is in command.

*The Link*

This fact has explanatory relevance, for it accounts in the first instance for the reluctance of the Cuban government to enact far-reaching change away from collective ownership, central allocation of resources, and one (communist) party rule. This link is explained by those psychological and sociological processes that tend to shape the personality of individuals through their participation in the social creation of something, in this case of a socioeconomic and political regime. Creators of social structures, like artists, have a tendency to like their own creations and therefore to wish for their preservation throughout time because these often reflect their own values and visions of a desired society. Additionally, what was created with effort is likely to be cherished by those who invested the effort. To institute the Cuban state socialist regime involved high sacrifices measurable in human lives as well as demanded great determination from those who participated in this enterprise. For all these sacrifices and with all this determination, once the regime consolidates and once its main structures are in place, the same people who instituted the regime are especially those likely to be willing to pay a high price in
struggling for its preservation. Inasmuch as they decide, their policy decisions would, accordingly, be likely to be conservative rather than transformative in terms of the socioeconomic and political order they have helped to institute.

So by the mid 1980s, when the winds of reform blew from Moscow and the Cuban political elite, a “founder elite,” had additionally to respond to problems such as mounting fiscal deficits and hard currency debts, it chose to “rectify.” Not unlike East European reforming countries such as Hungary and Poland, the Cuban government could have made an attempt to address the pressing economic problems of the time by decentralizing the system of economic management through the widening of enterprise self-financing schemes, and thus letting profitable enterprises subsist and others disappear. It could have renegotiated the foreign debt in hard currency by acceding to the creditors’ terms. It chose, however, to move in the opposite direction. Fiscal deficits were addressed by greater centralization and thus tighter control over expenditures; hard currency debts by decreasing exchanges with capitalist countries and thus by creating a higher reliance on trade with the Soviet bloc.

Even when the Soviet aid ended and insertion into the capitalist international economy demanded some steps toward the market, the Cuban political leadership never hid its aversion to them and carried them out to the least possible extent, or at least, as seen in the last chapter, in a very limited one in comparison with the other cases of economic “liberalization” without political “democratization.” “We have to be honest”—Castro clarified several times in respect to the market economic reform—“we have gone down this road basically because it was the only alternative for saving the revolution and saving the conquests of socialism.” Consonant with Castro’s “no-
choice” interpretation, other Cuban leaders consistently referred to the reform as a step back in history, and therefore away from socialism. According to their interpretations the hardships that originated on the outside were many and forced them to make concessions that they “would have preferred not to make.”8 This attitude makes sharp contrast with the attitude shown by the Soviet leaders while introducing market mechanisms to their economy. Gorbachev, for instance, claimed to have been inspired by “Lenin’s creative approach to theory and practice of socialist construction” in the formulation of his reform program, which accordingly was about to bring “more socialism and more democracy” to the Soviet people.9

The decision to rectify and the attitude toward the market reform undertaken show the reluctance of the Cuban government to endorse far-reaching programs of institutional change. This reluctance stems, at least in part, from the attributes of a first generation of political leaders whose wishes and visions of society the dominant political and socioeconomic institutions reflect. Because of the sweat and blood implied in building this order, they would be the last to relinquish its predominance by their own choosing. Now, a generation can be in power a very long time. The likelihood of policy changes throughout varies. “Timing,” matters. Within the time range delineated by a generation in power the degree of policy change is likely to increase as leaders change, and more likely so when they are new than when they settle in office.

*Leadership Turnover*

Different persons have different traits. To the extent that personal traits are reflected in policy choices, leadership turnover is likely to bring about policy change. In competitive political systems policy changes are likely to be more far reaching when the arriving and
departing leaders belong to different political parties. In a one party political system, for their different formative experiences, far-reaching policy changes are more likely when they belong to different generations.\textsuperscript{10} It is no accident that systemic change in the Soviet Union, Hungary, and Vietnam alike, which constitute three out of four neat instances of transitions from above, was aided as reported by scholars not only by the arrival of a new leader to the highest political office but by a generational transition in the political elite as well.\textsuperscript{11} That Cuba had not had even one leadership turnover when the perestroika process was undertaken in the Soviet Union, nor when the Soviet aid came to an end, and only an incomplete one as of 2008, has stymied change that might come with the arrival of a new leader to the top. Because Raúl Castro is a different person from Fidel, some policy change is to be expected as he consolidates in power, and some of it such as the set of economic reforms in agriculture is already in sight. But because he shares formative experiences with Fidel, expectations for far-reaching policy change of the sort that may bring about a regime change seem to have to wait also insofar as he rules.

\textit{Longevity in Power}

And not only had there been no leadership turnovers in Cuba when the Soviet Union collapsed, but also the leader had been in power for more than thirty years. Time in office decreases the likelihood of far-reaching policy change because of the commitment with policy lines built over the time. As a government enacts consistent policies this commitment is constructed and binds its future actions. Interests are created, and leaders would not find it favorable to alter them, or would just be reluctant to hinder their own credibility by deviating from their traditional policies and by acting in contradiction to
their past statements.\textsuperscript{12} In this vein Valerie Bunce has pointed to the existence of “a policy cycle calibrated by succession” in capitalist and socialist systems alike, wherein policy innovation “declines as the leader settles in office.”\textsuperscript{13} That this “cycle” existed in the socialist states seems corroborated by the different willingness of their leaders to follow the lead of the perestroika reforms undertaken in Moscow. The political reform that had begun in 1986 in the Soviet Union was followed by substantial economic reforms. By mid 1987 the main legislative framework for the growing of private enterprise and decentralization under contained limits, had already been set.\textsuperscript{14} The signal to the rest of the socialist governments in the Soviet bloc was clear enough. If the Soviet government was allowing free discussion of ideas in the press, and increasing the share of market allocation mechanisms and the private sector in the economy, other socialist governments were invited or at least allowed to carry out similar policies without fearing the application of the Brezhnev doctrine. Who is who in attitude towards reform could have been disclosed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Highest Leader</th>
<th>Longevity in Office (years)</th>
<th>Transformative/conservative (economics)</th>
<th>Transformative/conservative (Politics)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Korea</td>
<td>Kim Il Sung</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Todor Zhivkov</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Conservative: adoption of reformist program on paper only</td>
<td>Conservative: mild reform on paper only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Janos Kadar</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Transformative: he headed economic market reform since 1968. Reforms increased by 1987 under the influence of Perestroika.</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>Fidel Castro</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Nicolae Ceausescu</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechoslovakia</td>
<td>Gustav Husak</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Conservative: Some market economic reform in paper only.</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who is who correlates with length of tenure in office. Of the Soviet satellites in East Europe, in 1987 no leader had been in power for less than fifteen years with the exception of the Polish, who not coincidentally was also the most enthusiastic to following the Soviet example of experimentation with socioeconomic and political institutional reform. Although the Hungarian leader was a “reformist” in economic matters, (and this was not new when Gorbachev assumed power), significant political reforms did not begin in Hungary until his replacement in the summer of 1988. Similarly, for systemic change to be accomplished in all Soviet bloc countries, it was necessary that the long-lasting incumbent leaders, one by one, either abandon their posts by themselves or be ousted by others.

It matters, then, that the reform process initiated by a new leader of a new generation in the Soviet Union found in Cuba the same leader who back in 1961 had first declared in public his unconditional commitment to the socialist cause. Among strong actions supporting the established socialist order, Fidel Castro had supported the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia on the grounds that this country “was moving toward a counterrevolutionary situation,” and his government had sent troops to fight (thus to die) in Africa in the name of international socialist solidarity. When the process of reform

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GDR</th>
<th>Erich Honecker</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Wojciech Jaruzelski</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Transformative</td>
<td>Transformative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>Jambyn Batmonh</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Transformative</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Soviet Union</td>
<td>Mikhail Gorbachev</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Transformative</td>
<td>Transformative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>Ramiz Alia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Transformative</td>
<td>Transformative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Nguyen Van Lihn</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Transformative</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Yugoslavia is not included in the comparison for reasons of incommensurability. China is not included for the reform process had begun about a decade earlier.
occurred in the Soviet Union, he had already forged too great a commitment with the
established order to just step back and drive the Cuban institutional setting toward a
market economy and/or a multiparty political system. When the Soviet Union collapsed,
after having launched the process of rectification he had constructed an even greater
commitment with the principles of the state socialist regime.

**Summing Up**

In sum, because they were the very same persons who had constructed the state socialist
regime, when the Soviet support came to an end Cuba’s policymakers were very
reluctant to enact far-reaching change away from the principles of this regime. At that
time the Cuban regime had even not had its first leadership turnover, and the incumbent
leader had been in power for more than thirty years. The particular “timing” of the
exogenous shock could hardly be more unfavorable to propel a regime transition from
above. Because these elite factors are similar as of 2008, the reluctance of the Cuban
government to move toward the economic institutions of a market economy and/or a
multiparty political system is still very strong.

**Siege Mentality**

There is hardly a characteristic as recurrent in early revolutionary stages across cases as
the “war psychosis,” or the “siege mentality,” of political elites. In the socialist states
alone this factor is well evident in the early stages of all homegrown revolutions, and in
some states where a socialist regime was externally imposed such as Romania (at a not
so early stage) and North Korea (up to this day) too. Revolutions are violent episodes
and those who prevail had surely have to develop a mentality for success in violent
struggle, many times not only against enemies within the country but against external enemies as well. The governments in early revolutionary processes “are in part governments of national defense against war or the threat of war, against the menace of a foe.” But even when the foes are defeated or they come to accept the irreversibility of the revolution, it happens that the victors continue feeling, thinking, and acting for some time and even for the rest of their life as if the enemies are still in full strength and determined to reverse the current of events.

To this day, the siege mentality of the main leaders of the Cuban Revolution is very much evident in what they say and what they do. Fidel, Raúl, and the other main leaders are always engaged in terminal struggles against very dangerous and powerful enemies, be they counter-revolutionary forces within Cuba, imperialists, capitalists, or the U.S. government. It becomes, indeed, a challenge of outstanding magnitude to find a single major speech of any Cuban leader that makes no mention of at least one of these enemies.

This mentality surely has its explanations, but irrespective of them by itself helps shape some phenomena that permeate all aspects of Cuban life. Its existence is why in Cuba, in the words of Hugh Thomas, “the emphasis on war and weapons, on the importance of fighting, borders on the psychopathic.” It goes some way to explaining the prominence of the very organization that by definition exists to combat external enemies, or why “tasks normally falling to civilians” such as “the mobilization of the labor force in the 1960s, the reorganization of the state administration in the 1970s, the implementation of rectification in the 1980s, and the initiation of economic reforms in the 1990s,” have in Cuba “depended vitally on the military for their realization.” It also
helps explain the reaction of the Cuban government to the election of Ronald Reagan in the United States and his subsequent decision to send troops to Grenada—where not coincidentally U.S. soldiers found Cuban “engineers.” This reaction is known by the name of the War of All People and it consists in the military training of some three million people to take part in militias, the distribution of weapons among the population, and the digging of shelters against aircraft artillery and bombs.  

The Link

How has the siege mentality of the Cuban leadership contributed to the perseverance of state socialism in Cuba? Among the scholars who have studied the relationship between crisis and regime continuity and change, Alan Knight has developed a “rough schema” of the “objective” and “subjective” dimensions involved. Building on Harris’s famous categorization, he distinguishes between the “etic” and the “emic” dimensions of crisis: “the first retrospective, detached, and objective; the second contemporaneous, involved and subjective.” In his view a crisis is only a crisis with transformative potential when both dimensions concur. He bases this argument on several examples that show that an objective situation may exist for some time but only if and when registered as a crisis by either a sufficient number of people or policymakers it causes a sort of collective shock, precipitous decisions are taken, it becomes uncontrollable, and may help bring about a regime collapse. The Cuban case seems to indicate that the inverse sequence of the same combination of variables may deliver opposite results. For in Cuba the “emic” dimension of crisis is a constant among at the very least the policymakers, endowing them with a basic readiness in confronting the “etic” dimensions of crises when these have come.
From the constant belief that the revolution has very powerful enemies it follows that the revolution is in perpetual danger and because the revolution is in perpetual danger for it to subsist over time Cubans must be in a state of constant alert against terminal eventualities. Since the very beginning of the revolutionary process the Cuban leaders have kept telling the “people” and themselves alike that they cannot lower the guard and “must be ready to fight.” As expressed in the main report to the first Party congress, and as Raúl Castro confesses to have memorized for having repeated so many times, “insofar as imperialism exists…the revolutionary guard will never be lifted. History eloquently teaches that those who forget this principle do not survive their mistake.” Or as Fidel Castro kept repeating long after the missile crisis, Cubans “have to be ready even for atomic war.” The catastrophic event, when it comes, does not cause so strong a psychological shock as to make the leadership react hastily and haphazardly. In a sense it is what policy makers were waiting for and are ready to confront. The only external event to occur after the consolidation of the Cuban revolution with the potential to bring about a regime change was the collapse of the Soviet Union and the respective end of Soviet subsidies. The reaction of the Cuban government to this event is good enough to illustrate the point.

Not that the constant expectation of catastrophic events brought the Cuban leadership to anticipate the collapse of the Soviet Union. It did not. But it brought the Cuban leadership to contemplate this collapse as a possibility, and in any event to be ready or in a state of mind to confront it. Clearly, by 1986 the Cuban leaders did not expect the regimes in the Soviet bloc to collapse because no government of any country would try to ensure material supplies by increasing trade dependence with governments
on the verge of collapse as the Cuban government did. It is also clear, however, that by
the summer of 1989 Fidel Castro’s expectations of Soviet disintegration were real
enough to suggest such a possibility in a speech and proclaim that even then “Cuba and
the Cuban revolution would continue struggling and resisting.”

The preparations of policies that formed the initial response to the end of Soviet aid
had in any case begun some time before. They can be traced back in time to the early-
mid 1980s, at least, when a national response to a “zero option,” or a situation of foreign
invasion in which there are no trade relations with the rest of the world, began to be
worked out. With all the human suffering implied in the crisis occasioned by the end of
Soviet aid, it was not that much worse. Cubans were preparing for resisting even greater
hardships, and from these preparations the policymakers drew some ideas and policies
for watering down the first impacts occasioned by the drastic cut of Soviet supplies,
such as the “food program” and the austerity measures undertaken, perhaps the “rapid
response brigades” which patrolled the streets to keep the public order at an extremely
sensitive moment, and most likely the creation of the National Defense Council under
the leadership of Fidel Castro, which was entrusted with special powers for managing
the nation in a state of emergency. Indeed, the declaration of a “special period,” to
name the set of policies enacted to confront the socioeconomic crisis, had been
previously included in the plans for the “zero option.”

That a plan was elaborated for a worse case scenario than that which in fact occurred
shows the constant expectations of the Cuban leadership for catastrophic events, which
betrays, in turn, its siege mentality. But even if no plans were elaborated or adapted, and
irrespective of the specific policies undertaken to confront the crisis, the siege mentality
of the Cuban leadership has its most basic policy corollary in choosing to struggle against rather than submitting to adversities. In the specific response to the fall of the Soviet Union and the economic crisis that this occasioned there was no question as to the strategy of response even if most tactical questions had to be elucidated. Fidel turned “socialism or death” into the closing slogan of his speeches, symbolizing what was at stake and what must be fought for if it is to be preserved. A party congress was summoned to devise the policy lines to follow in the struggle for regime survival, and the people were called—once again—to “sacrifice,” “resist,” “struggle,” “combat.”

Even if in the heat of this struggle some tactical economic concessions were made, a “transition” to the market, let alone to a multiparty political system, never did seem to have arisen as a policymaking possibility.

**Low Institutionalization**

A revolution is always made by men and women who almost by definition break with the main institutions of the old regime and place new ones in their stead. But the process does not happen nor can it happen overnight. After having overthrown the old regime, the leaders of revolutionary movements in power often find themselves “inventing,” “improvising,” and for sure “innovating” in trying to set up new rules to constrain the behavior of most members in a society. At such moments of radical change the role of specific individuals in the making and maintenance of the new social order is extremely important. If and when the new rules are settled, however, the role of the same individuals in the same respects decreases. Leaders and the wider public alike begin to follow the rules, rather than the decrees for the occasion, which are promulgated with decreasing frequency. And as this happens the new regime is being institutionalized. In a
regime with high levels of institutionalization all office holders obey rules (written or unwritten), and even rules must be followed to change the rules. Office holders of such regime engage in stable, recurrent, and thus predictable patterns of observable behavior.

At the very least by two common yardsticks of institutionalization—autonomy and complexity—the socialist regime in Cuba is only partially institutionalized. Autonomy is achieved when rules no longer depend on any one particular individual to be established or changed, and especially obeyed by most members in a society. Complexity means that the organization has multiple, differentiated, and specialized units for the performance of its several tasks. In Cuba some of the same individuals who led the revolution in its inception still seem to concentrate much decision-making authority in their hands. Perhaps because they created rather than socialized within the party and the other main institutions of the socialist regime or at least do not owe their political career to them, at times the main leaders of the Cuban Revolution do not seem to take into account established institutions much in constraining their own behavior. Famous in this respect are the “special plans” of the 1960s, which seem to have been special because of Fidel’s faculty for circumventing the planning board in allocating resources when and as needed; the “continuous planning” resource allocation method of the mid-end 1980s, which as we shall see meant more or less the same; and even the several programs in the “Battle of Ideas” during the 2000s seem to be pretty much Fidel’s own initiative and to have drawn resources previously allocated to the ministries through more standardized means and for other purposes.

High concentration of decision-making power in one or a few hands seems to have worked as an asset rather than a liability for regime stability during the crisis occasioned
by the cut of Soviet aid. Lack of autonomy is generally regarded as unfavorable for organizational stability because when the “vital” individuals go the shakeout is likely to be sharp. Low complexity is regarded as unfavorable to organizational stability because organizations lack resources such as diversity and specialization to perform optimally and to adapt to changes in demanding tasks. Both links may hold under certain circumstances, and the litmus test of the first has yet to come, but in confronting the exogenous shock of the end of Soviet subsidies, the high concentration of decision making power in the very highest spheres of the Cuban political elite seems to have endowed the state socialist regime with enough flexibility to change without falling apart.

The Link

There is nothing inherent to institutions that makes a highly institutionalized organization inflexible, even though some formulations of the so-called new institutional historical school seem pretty close to suggesting this. As this school emphasizes, however, inefficiencies in history are possible. Institutions can emerge and become strong because of their viability for organizational stability at a given time, but once they become strong and precisely for this reason the same institutions can be used again and again to meet demands of very different kinds from that which had generated them. If the rate of success is less, highly institutionalized organizations become unresponsive to exogenous change. When environmental change demands adaptation or death, existing institutions may hinder their adaptation.

The institutions of state socialism as coalesced in the countries of the Soviet bloc constitute a case in point. In the words of Richard Pipes, “Communism was
unreformable, which is to say, incapable of adjusting to changing circumstances. Its inherent rigidity led to its downfall.” The particular (but not the only) organization that has been blamed for “failing to adapt” is the centrally managed economy, which as explained in the first chapter, was highly successful in fostering rapid extensive growth but turned out to be unsuitable to fostering a shift toward intensive methods of growth. When reforms in the planning system were attempted to further the intensive methods of growth, as in the Soviet Union, Hungary, and Poland alike, institutional rigidity was manifest. Behind this rigidity was found the so-called party-state bureaucracy, or intermediate elites with posts of influence in the party and in the state administration, composed of individuals appointed by political criteria in the so-called nomenklatura system. Some were planners who opposed whenever reforms pointed toward more enterprise autonomy. Some were managers of big enterprises who opposed reforms toward the democratization of the workplace. Some others were full-time party officers who opposed reforms whenever they were told to interfere less in the everyday management of the economy.

All this “opposition” to reform, however, held only to a degree. The party-state officers were institutional actors privileged in the centrally managed economy. When their institutional incentives changed, their behavior changed as well. The great innovation of the reform process initiated by Gorbachev and imitated in the other countries that embraced political reform was in essence the loosening of the economy from its traditional political levers. By effectively removing the political impediments standing in the way of a “real” change in the behavior of economic actors, the ongoing separation of party and state could have been determinative in boosting renewed
economic growth. Yet it primarily caused uncertainty among members of the party-state bureaucracy regarding their possibilities for continuing to hold privileges under the new rules. Under conditions of uncertainty, in a behavioral pattern that increased exponentially they pursued their self-interest to the detriment of the system as a whole. Thus as the economic and political reforms proceeded, “the nomenklatura elites sought to secure their authority and social status through adept moves to convert their political and bureaucratic power into market assets and capital. In a word, they saw the handwriting on the wall and acted accordingly.”

In this analysis the state socialist system fell victim to opportunism from within: “Once the servants of the state stopped obeying orders from above, its fate was sealed.”

Although Cuban state socialism adopted essentially the same institutions that in the Soviet bloc were to become manifestly rigid to reform, no “routine,” “custom,” or just “habit” has ever been so “entrenched” in either the party or the state that the political leadership could not modify without undoing the system. There are many examples of attempted institutional adaptation to the end of Soviet subsidies, including the limited market reform as presented in the last chapter; the “worker parliaments” through which workers participated in the selection of the austerity measures undertaken; and the “popular councils” built as an intermediary step of government between municipalities and neighborhoods; all of which came as a response to problems occasioned or aggravated by the socioeconomic crisis of the 1990s. Yet because the centrally managed economy represents the lack of adaptation to external circumstances in the countries of the Soviet bloc, the planning system is the obvious referent to show in more detail this alleged institutional flexibility of socialism in Cuba.
As seen in the last chapter, Cuba adopted a Soviet-like planning system by the mid 1970s, which came under the attack of the political leadership by the mid 1980s. Opening this attack and presaging the upcoming process of rectification, was the firing in mid 1985 of Soviet trained economist Humberto Pérez as chair of the planning board. After his dismissal the planning board lost much of its autonomy as economic decision-making devolved first to a Central Group at the Council of Ministers, and from September 1988 to the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers under the leadership of Fidel Castro. “Because the board was…associated with the use of market-reliant ideas that in the USSR would lead to perestroika,” explains student of Cuba Jorge Dominguez, “the attack on the board had the anticipatory effect of weakening the institution that might have been most receptive to perestroika.” Beyond this preventive consequence, the hyper-centralization resulting from the attack on the board increased the distance between the economic decision-making center and the production units, and therefore necessarily resulted at the same time in increasing decentralization of economic implementation at the level of the enterprise. Accounting for this expected consequence, plan elaboration began experimenting with first so-called plan response, and from 1988 “continuous planning.”

While in the Soviet-like planning system five-year and yearly plans were elaborated by the board’s staff, which then allocated resources by issuing directives to enterprises, under “continuous planning” plans were elaborated simultaneously by all bodies involved, increasing thereby the participation of enterprises and workers in the formulation of their own plans and saving resources such as time. Yet continuous planning also meant that adjustments could be made at any given moment, and because
under this method the plans formulated by enterprises had to be approved by the center, continuous planning could not but at the same time give to Fidel (read the center) the continuous faculty to allocate resources without much, if any, procedural checks. These checks can perhaps ensure that decisions give due response to the imperatives of the time, but for sure—and this is the main example of the Soviet Union—can also modify and even truncate their implementation.

Under “continuous planning” the level of centralization in economic decision-making was such when the Soviet support came to an end that the decisions on economic reform could be taken without much institutional bargain, if at all, and thus could be free of the influences of the classic intermediary elites—enterprise managers, to name one—that would have been in a position to take greater advantages for themselves of greater levels of decision-making decentralization. This explains probably much of the “limited” character of the reform, or why it did not go out of control. Now, with the demise of state socialism in East Europe the trading external environment changed radically for Cuba and so for Cuban enterprises, if only because much of their supplies depended in one way or another from imports and imports decreased sharply. Besides the resulting resource scarcity, possible trade partners multiplied exponentially—from a few friendly governments to innumerable private enterprises governed by the profit motive. Devoid of the resources and mainly the information needed to follow any plausible standard of rationality, save strategic essentials (food and energy), the state renounced to continue allocating resources physically. So the key adjustment in the planning system was the substitution of financial for material balances.
In contrast to a planning system ruled by material balances, in a planning system regulated through financial balances enterprises are in charge of finding their own physical inputs among the possible providers, and decide on the how and how much of their outputs. The outputs, in turn, are assessed not only in quantity but also in quality and variety according to the standards acceptable to their markets. In principle, this change endows Cuban enterprises with greater ability to respond to fluctuations in demand and prices. Whereas when resources are allocated in kind enterprises lack any practical response other than stockpiling to changes in product demand and price, when resources are allocated in budget enterprises can, at least in theory, adjust to environmental changes by changing the use of their funds.⁴₈

The shift from a Soviet-like system of planning to “continuous planning” during the period of rectification and from material to financial balances during the special period show the flexibility, or at least malleability, of the Cuban planning system. The latter clearly came in response to the end of subsidies from the Soviet bloc, and thus represents an attempt to adapt to a stark change in the external environment. How well the Cuban planning system has adapted to the change in the external circumstances depends entirely on the standard used to assess adaptation. The socialist sector continues to constitute the bulk of the Cuban economy, and therefore, as the mainstay of the socialist sector the system of planning has obviously adapted well enough to keep the centrally managed economy afloat. Another symptom of adaptation is the capability of the planning system to direct the structural shift from a sugar to a service or tertiary economy.⁴⁹ A third indication of adaptation would be the rate of sustained growth, and especially the two-digit rate obtained in the last two years, but following this standard
can be deceiving.

Although they are related, international adaptation and economic adaptation are not the same. Assuming that, like the relationship with the former Soviet Union, the international alliances with China and Venezuela explain a substantial share of the accelerated resumption of economic growth, then thinking that the socialist economy in Cuba has reached a post-Soviet stable equilibrium may prove to be shortsighted if the new alliances change or vanish. Past experience has shown that trade subsidies hardly constitute a suitable condition for the stimulation of efficiency in local enterprises. Yet, in a sense, and in contrast to past experience, by helping generate economic growth the new international alliances may also help create a momentum of confidence among Cuban policymakers to further experimentation regarding the proper level of enterprise (de)centralization to increase worker productivity. The ongoing reforms in agriculture strongly suggest that something like this is happening. When all is said and done, an increase in worker productivity in rates meaningful enough to ensure sustained economic growth would constitute unequivocal proof of adaptation.

Unity
Typically, up to the takeover of power revolutionaries are united by a common enemy or a common purpose in overthrowing the old regime. Once the common enemy has been overcome, however, the broad ideals that had animated their common front have to be translated into concrete policies, and there is also the need to assign concrete persons to concrete and often limited posts. 50 How the policy lines are decided and the available posts distributed in the early stages of radical change sets precedents for the patterns of intra-elite relations long after that. And these two questions are more likely to be
answered by the creation, prolongation, and even institutionalization of elite divisions than by the consolidation of a united front or the restoration of the sort of “warlike” unity that existed while the armed struggle against the old regime.

Revolutionaries tend to divide into “moderates” and “radicals”—and everything in between—according to the scope of change they propose in relation to the old regime. For their different visions of desired society they propose different policy options. To define a policy line they are likely to quarrel against each other by the mechanism they know, which is generally speaking the one in motion or the one through which they overcame the old regime. Owing to their better organization and higher devotion to the cause, the “radicals” are likely in most cases to get the upper hand and define policy options. But the mechanism of identifying and eliminating foes is difficult to stop. In some cases revolutionaries have continued splitting among themselves in an endless pattern that led, for example, Stalin to exterminate all important Soviet leaders of his (and Lenin’s) generation except of himself. Another possibility is that the elite divisions are somewhat contained or rather balanced by a charismatic leader who may pit each “faction” against the other, as Mao before the Cultural Revolution—even if he ended up siding with one faction as symbolized by this event. Radicals and moderates—and everything in between—can also reach a settlement, or agree to disagree, and then institutionalize a framework for the dispute of their disagreement such as general elections or any other relatively peaceful contestation device.

In a sense, to affirm that the Cuban political elite is characterized by its unity is very difficult to confirm. Great secrecy surrounds the “behind the doors” meetings of the party and the state highest officers, where most quarreling, if extant, would have taken
place. On another sense, or level, the affirmation can be fully confirmed. Notwithstanding great secrecy there is a level of strife that can no longer be hidden from the public eye. If we look at open divisions to measure unity or disunity, then the Cuban political elite has been united, at least to the level at which it has been able to hide its divisions from the public eye, unlike most political elites in regimes at the border of demise.

The Link

This is important for accounting for the perseverance of state socialism in Cuba. For elite unity is critical to resist exogenous pressures for change. When oppositions exist divisions in the elite open a window of opportunity for the regime’s enemies to bring about a regime change.\(^{53}\) Such divisions can cause hesitation in the use of repression and thus widen the room for the movement and actions of oppositions, or they also can weaken the regime from within by opening the room for alliances between opposition movements and groups of “fifth columnists,” or “softliners,” in the incumbent government. The point is that when the elite is united these and other possibilities do not arise. Moreover, all factors for a systemic change can be “there,” ready to work, but when the political elite is unwilling to yield, prepared to struggle, and also united through the struggle to prevent a regime transition or collapse, these processes may not unravel. Not by accident students of the phenomenon have pointed to a crack in the incumbent elite as an initial and important part in the general processes of both democratic breakdown and transitions away from authoritarian rule, and not by accident clearly identifiable elite cracks occurred everywhere in the processes of state socialist demise, with the possible (and then puzzling) exceptions of Czechoslovakia in 1988-9
If elite unity is a variable that explains regime stability, and the Cuban political elite has been united, then it seems obligatory to look into how elite unity was achieved in Cuba and how it has been maintained. As anywhere else where a revolution occurred, very early in the history of the Cuban revolution in power the divisions within the political elite appeared. The questions that generated these divisions were however solved by achieving essential unity on who decides policies and on this basis on policy direction, as opposed to procedural unity on how both questions are to be decided.

Unifying Mechanisms

The affair that symbolizes the triumph of the radicals over the moderates unfolded between October and December 1959. Rebel Army Commander Huber Matos apparently planned to resign his post as military governor of the Camagüey province over the issue of what he and others understood as communist infiltration into the revolutionary ranks. But before he could do so he was arrested and then sentenced to twenty years in prison on charges of treason and conspiration. From here on it was clear that open opposition within the elite ranks to the policies of the revolutionary government might carry a heavy price measurable in long imprisonment. Most of those who chose continue struggling for the moderation of the revolution did so openly only after defecting. Although the affair took place before the declaration of the socialist course of the revolution, the debate on policy lines over Cuban soil was pretty much ended here.

Once the moderates were crushed and the road to socialism cleared, the conflict among the radicals over the repartition of posts emerged with full strength in March.
1962. After the declaration of the socialist character of the Cuban revolution it was decided to form a single party from the three organizations that had collaborated in the struggle against the old regime or that in any event supported the socialist turn that the revolution had just recently taken. The organizational task of the new party was commended to former PSP member, Aníbal Escalante, whose methods of personnel selection caused much alienation or at least complaints among the former July 26th members. Fidel investigated the complaints, found them correct, denounced Escalante’s methods in public and later on sent Escalante to a period in exile. He himself established a new method of personnel selection for the new party based on worker assemblies, which as we shall see in Chapter 6 is still used today. By the new method the process of party formation went on without major strains, first to the institution of the United Party of the Cuban Socialist Revolution (PURSC), and in 1965 to the foundation of the Communist Party.

There is an amount of both “deterrence” and “leadership” in the mechanisms that brought the early divisions on policy direction and the repartition of posts to an end, but the amount of deterrence is greater in the first and of leadership in the second. And both deterrence and leadership have remained over time the main mechanisms for either maintaining or restoring when needed unity within the Cuban political elite.

Deterrence consists in setting a clear example of possible dire consequences for a given behavior. The Matos affair established the precedent and it was used again in 1968 in the so-called micro-faction affair, which involved the same Aníbal Escalante of the party formation but who this time seemed too close to the Moscow line in times of increasing strains between the Soviet Union and Cuba, and was sent to serve a fifteen-
year sentence in jail together with thirty-four of his acolytes—whose sentences ranged between three and twelve years—for charges of plotting against elite unity or, in the communist jargon, “factionalism.” Deterrence was used too and more dramatically in the 1989 imprisonment of ten and execution four high-ranking security officers for several charges of corruption including drug trafficking, which, arguably, represent the “most serious leadership crisis that the Cuban revolution has ever known.” Curiously or not, both the micro-faction affair and the executions of security officers occurred on the verge of a major crisis for the regime. The first was less than two years before the 1970 sugar harvest failure, and the second right before the fall of state socialism in East Europe. And in both occasions the “softliners” were not there (and if they were they did not show up). The cracks within the elite that may have allowed a process of systemic change unravel, shone for their absence. Punishment, “as Emile Durkheim long ago pointed out, is designed to reinforce the moral and legal order, and not merely to penalize individuals who violate the law.”

The mechanism of “leadership” consists of and revolves around the personality of Fidel Castro. He himself has been always very insistent on the need to conserve unity within the revolutionary ranks, to the point that student of Cuba Carolee Bengelsdorf has written that for him this value stands “above everything else.” There is no question that he embodies in his person much of this unity. It is telling in this regard to look at the public discussions in Cuba. As with the selection of the early party members, a pattern emerges whereby discussions and debates are held for some time while Fidel is seemingly observing from afar. Then he intervenes and his intervention is the last word. After that the debate reaches a consensus or decreases significantly. Such a pattern can
be established by following almost any public discussion in Cuba, from the ordinary sessions of the National Assembly on issues such as setting regulations for the dumping of waste or the exact codification of a traffic law,\textsuperscript{59} to the broader and arguably more substantive debates on economic course when these have been held. The debate on the level of enterprise centralization and kinds of workers’ incentive systems of the early 1960s observably faded when Fidel declared that revolutionaries should no longer “theorize in the field of philosophy.”\textsuperscript{60} Discussion on the extent of economic reform of the early 1990s perceptibly receded when Fidel said that he sees “no immediate need” for continuing to expand it.\textsuperscript{61} It would be, indeed, as Bengelsdorf also points out, the “overwhelming importance given to unity that explains Fidel’s centrality.”\textsuperscript{62}

**What is Next?**

A first generation of leaders, their siege mentality, low institutionalization, and unity—all four characteristics of the Cuban political elite have contributed to state socialist survival after the exogenous shock represented by the demise of state socialism in general and the end of Soviet military protection and economic support in particular. These characteristics account, in turn, for the reluctance of the Cuban government to carry out reforms consistent with systemic change and its readiness to confront crises, as well as for the regime’s flexibility to adapt to changes in external circumstances and its resistance to external pressures for change. These characteristics form the model of extraordinary elite, which represents, in turn, a kind of elite that is able to provide for regime continuity despite strong external pressures for change. The elaboration of this model concludes part one of this dissertation.

Yet, if the composition of the political elite largely explains regime continuity, then
the regime’s future continuity is uncertain as the political elite changes. And two interrelated changes in the political elite are imminent: leadership succession and generational change.

Leadership Succession

Because of the centrality of Fidel Castro in the revolutionary process, there has long been much uncertainty as to the odds of regime continuation, “after Fidel.” If the socialist regime could survive the crisis stemming from the exogenous shock represented by the collapse of its trade relationships with the Soviet bloc, it has still to prove its ability to outlast the inner shock represented by the departure of its first leader, or first succession crisis. And if one of the variables that contributed to outlasting the exogenous shock was the relatively low level of autonomy of the socialist regime from its founder leaders, then the crisis resulting from the departure of these leaders can be expected to be severe.

The long awaited and much speculated period “after Fidel” began on the night of July 31, 2006, when the scheduled television broadcast was interrupted to announce that Fidel had undergone intestinal surgery and that for the period of recovery he would delegate his functions as first secretary of the party, commander in chief of the Cuban Armed Forces, and president of state, to his second in command in all three organizations, Raúl Castro.63 The statement read by Castro’s personal secretary assigned additional functions to six other high-ranking office holders, but minor ones in comparison to these three.64 The ensuing period of uncertainty concerning whether the delegation of power is temporary or permanent ended on February 19, 2008, when in a newspaper article Fidel asked the national assembly not to be nominated for a further
term as President of State, and renounced the title of “Commander in Chief.” Following elections to the national assembly on February 24, Raúl became officially (rather than provisionally) President of the Cuban Republic. As of this writing (May 2008) Fidel has not specifically relinquished his post as first secretary of the party. Unless something dramatic happens, it can be expected that Raúl will officially assume that post in the upcoming party congress due to take place sometime during the second half of 2009. With Raúl’s assumption of this post, the first leadership succession in the Cuban revolutionary government will be formally consummated.

That Fidel’s departure has been gradual rather than sudden, and that Raúl is single anointed successor, have favored a seemingly smooth transfer of power. So far this transition has been free of the internecine struggles that characterized the succession of leaders such as Lenin in the Soviet Union and Mao in China, who departed without pointing to a clear single individual to take over in their stead. Born in 1931, Raúl is however not exactly young. Biologically, his time in power is almost certainly bound to a one-digit number of years. Looking at the Political Bureau of the party as a referent, among the political leaders “after Raúl” in the current hierarchy of power is a group of six military men, a few years younger than him, with experience in the armed struggle against the old regime, all of whom have once worked or have long been working under him in the Cuban Armed Forces. The youngest of them, Alvaro López Miera, was born in 1944. The maximal party organ also includes three high-ranking officers who did not participate in the armed struggle against the old regime but who did join the revolutionary movement before its consolidation in power in October 1962. The youngest of them, minister of culture Abel Prieto, was born in 1950.
**Generational Change**

Along with all imaginary successions that could in principle still occur among political leaders who joined the revolutionary movement before its consolidation in power, is the more tangible and related, but also differentiable, process of generational transition in the political elite. Those political leaders who were born after the triumph of the revolution or were too young to participate in the revolutionary movement before its consolidation in power are increasingly assuming posts of importance in all spheres of the Cuban government, and currently they hold seven seats in the twenty-four member party Political Bureau.\(^68\) Consistent with explaining the endurance of Cuba’s socioeconomic and political institutional order in terms of the inner composition of its political elite, the long-term continuation of this order under sustained unfavorable structural and institutional constraints depends primarily on the regeneration of this elite, or the ability of its members to transmit from the older to the younger the determination and skills needed to maintain and further develop the state socialist regime.

Taking the accumulated experience of the state socialist revolutions as precedent, there is much reason to doubt the ability of the Cuban state socialist regime to outlast its first generational transition at the top. In all state socialist experiences that have come to an end the partial restoration of the old ways of life that came after the stage of radical change ultimately included the restoration of the capitalist system of production, and in most cases either the restoration of or a transition to a multiparty political system as well. Cuba was the last state socialist regime to consolidate and logic therefore dictates that it would be the last, or one of the last to disappear. With the departure of the main leaders of the Cuban Revolution and as the generational transition proceeds, it may well
be that the revolutionary energy that has animated the “radical” stage of the Cuban Revolution would finally exhaust itself, and as this happens, what one of Castro’s critics has called the “gravity law of socialism” would render its expected effect.\textsuperscript{69}

To the extent, however, that the species “man” learns from experience, it may be too soon to doom the Cuban state socialist regime to either an economic transition to capitalism or an overall regime collapse as the younger take the place of the older leaders in the political elite. Having seen the demise of state socialist regimes in other places, the Cuban political leaders are in a particularly suitable position to reflect on what went wrong and to try to prevent that from happening in Cuba. To the degree that they do so, they could be able to provide a better foundation for the long-term continuation of state socialism in Cuba than leaders did in places where this system disappeared.

By their own statements, the founder leaders of the Cuban Revolution wish that their “revolutionary work be not ephemeral but perennial,” and have accordingly reflected on how to guarantee the continuity of the revolutionary process “when those who were the first, the veterans, would disappear and leave room for the new generations of leaders.”\textsuperscript{70}

The policies of rectification that questioned the wisdom of copying the basic institutions of the Soviet Union in Cuba represent their learning from their own experience in learning from others’ experiences. The demise of the state socialist regimes in the Soviet bloc in turn confirmed their wisdom in rectifying errors in due time, for the dismantling of socialist systems elsewhere demonstrated the risks involved in carrying out political and economic market-oriented reform too far. Glasnost, in the words of Raúl Castro, “consisted in handling over the mass media…to the enemies of socialism,” and
therefore, “alerted by that experience…Cubans maintain and will continue to maintain that the genuinely free press is that which serves the freedom of the people.”

Perestroika, according to Fidel, was nothing less than “an historical crime that confused not a few.” Had Cubans followed “that type of reform” they would have destroyed themselves. “But we are not going to destroy ourselves,” affirms the commander in chief, “this has to be clear.”

Beyond sine qua non examples of “what not to do” to improve the socialist regime, glasnost and perestroika were medicine for illnesses, not the illnesses themselves. In reflecting on what went wrong in the Soviet Union and other state socialist regimes in East Europe that in the first instance their leaders wanted or needed to reform, the Cuban leadership has insisted on the generational theme. According to its interpretations in some cases there was an essential distrust of youth that blocked the ascension of new political talents, as a result of which aging leaders died in their posts without having proper substitutes to take over. Errors of direction were also committed in the political education of the new generations, as a result of which as time passed by the official ideology became fixed or dogmatic rather than creative or innovative, losing its ability to keep pace with the historical flow of events. Also crucial were errors committed in the formation of new cadres, as a result of which the elites detached themselves from the rest of society. Detached from the people, when given the opportunity many party and state cadres did not hesitate to “annihilate” the system while trying to get rich.

If Cuban leaders have understood the demise of other socialist regimes in these terms, and they want to prevent a similar outcome from ever happening in Cuba, then an important part of what they have done and undone to prevent such an outcome is likely
to be indexed in the policies on personnel turnover in political posts, political education, and cadre formation. By looking at these processes, in turn, it would be possible to gain some insights into whether, how, and to what extent are the historical leaders of the Cuban revolution applying both their own accumulated experience in the construction of socialism and their own understandings on the failures of similar attempts in other places, to try to make perennial the socialist construction of their own.
Turnover

There are men who struggle for a day and they are good
There are others who struggle for a year and they are better
There are those who struggle for many years, and they are very good
But there are those who struggle over a lifetime
Those are the indispensable ones.

Bertolt Brecht

How often political leaders assume and leave high posts in government is an indicator of political stability and change. While swift turnover is an unequivocal symptom of political crisis and turmoil, its symmetrical opposite by no means augurs well for political tranquility and stability. Lack of turnover in the highest posts of government at time $t_1$ may be a source of much political instability and social strife in time $t_2$. It may indicate that posts of political leverage are blocked for contenders, who out of frustration may try to reach the positions they think they deserve by proposing a change of the whole institutional setting that prevents their advance to high office, often by force.\(^1\) Even worse, especially the younger among them may instead develop apathy towards politics and channel their skills to a brighter future in other occupations. In the absence of elite rejuvenation, when incumbent leaders finally die or choose to retire, there might not be anybody to follow. Government may fall into the hands of inexperienced and unknown individuals, who out of their lack of skill or will (or both) to rule in accord with the established socioeconomic and political order may put its continuity at risk. Failure to rejuvenate their ranks is a problem common to successful revolutionary elites.\(^2\) Revolutionary leaders generally reach power at a relatively young age and therefore, physically speaking, they can run a national government for a long time. The credentials that brought them to office, such as “heroic” deeds implied in having
overthrown the previous government by military means, make them feel an exclusive right to govern. The skills that they develop while in office make them feel indispensable.\textsuperscript{3} Devoid of such credentials and skills, younger aspirants to posts of importance in government typically have to satisfy their ambitions with posts of secondary importance as they wait for older leaders to die or choose to retire. This problem seems particularly acute at generational junctures, or when older and younger leaders have had markedly different formative experiences. Participants in the revolutionary struggle tend to develop a sense of solidarity around their shared experiences, which facilitates intragenerational rather than intergenerational personnel turnover in influential positions.\textsuperscript{4} Moreover, for their role in creating worldviews, different formative experiences may help create an ideological gap. If and when this gap exists, intergenerational turnover slows down because the older distrusts the younger.

It is a problem common to the ruling elites of state socialist regimes, too. Scholars, for instance, often attribute to state socialist regimes a “natural” tendency toward gerontocracy. They were able to maintain this claim throughout the existence of most state socialist regimes by pointing to the aging political elites almost anywhere, including China—the prototypical example—Vietnam, and most of East Europe.\textsuperscript{5} Although not in the revolutionary generation, this tendency displayed itself pathetically at the very top of the Soviet elite by the early-mid 1980s, when following Brezhnev’s death in 1982 his two immediate successors died one after the other from natural causes shortly after becoming first secretaries of the CPSU.\textsuperscript{6} At the age of fifty-four, Mikhail Gorbachev was in 1985 the youngest member of the Soviet Politburo. Given the experience of his two predecessors, the possibility that his age was a decisive factor in
his election cannot be ruled out. Because Gorbachev was the first member of the so-called post-Stalinist generation to become first secretary of the CPSU, his election to that post represents the culmination of a generational shift in the leadership of the Soviet Union. Judging by the subsequent course of events, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that this generation lacked the skill or the will, or both, to provide for systemic continuity.

At first glance in Cuba, too, a tendency toward gerontocracy can be observed at the very top. The average age in the Political Bureau of the Communist Party has risen from thirty-seven in 1965 to fifty-four in 1986 to sixty-three in 2006. At present two thirds of its members as well as over a half of the Council of State are individuals who actively participated in the revolutionary armed struggle and/or in the events that mark the consolidation of the socialist regime. Symbolizing this tendency is the recently instituted Politburo commission in charge of taking fast “operational decisions,” whose members also occupy the posts of President, first Vice President, and other Vice Presidents in the Council of State, and whose average age as of April 2008 is over seventy-one.

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The way in which the transfer of power from Fidel to Raúl is taking place and the age of those involved in it give additional reason to expect that elder leaders at the peak of the Cuban political elite will continue dying (or getting too ill to work) in their posts. It remains to be seen whether they will be followed in the highest posts of government by younger leaders prepared to rule in accord with the continuation of the socialist
regime. A snapshot insight into this question can be gained by looking more in detail at the formative process that determined the choice of the Cuban revolutionary elite for socialism and the extent to which, over time, younger blood has streamed into its veins.

This chapter documents the process of rejuvenation in the Cuban political elite. The chapter provides a closer look at the formative experiences that define the Revolutionary Generation, which is followed by examination on whether and to what degree the members of its political elite are having difficulty in moving aside in order to allow the ascension of younger “talents.” This last question is addressed by gauging generational turnover within the political elite through comparing data on the age and occupation of the members of the Central Committee (CC) of the Cuban Communist Party (PCC) across seven points in time, including its presentation in 1965, the five party congresses (1975, 1980, 1986, 1991 and 1997), and 2006. Tracking down the age of the CC members provides an indication of the degree to which younger individuals have been incorporated into the political leadership. In addition, its juxtaposition with occupation indicates the main institutional locations of the leaders of the new generations, and thus facilitates a more detailed scrutiny of their formation process later on (chapter 6) in this research.

**Why Socialism?**

All social phenomena are the working of environmental conditions that allow them and of human beings who implement them. No doubt the socioeconomic and political conditions in Cuba before the revolution were ripe for a change of government. For the building of a socialist regime, however, the human factor was the strongest. Under the socioeconomic and political conditions prevailing in Cuba throughout the 1930s, 1940s,
and most of the 1950s, social turmoil and political instability were the rule rather than the exception.\textsuperscript{10} Political “gangsterism” dominated such social organizations as universities and trade unions, and governments often ended by means other than electoral defeat, as happened in 1934, 1952, and 1959. Yet social turmoil and political instability could have continued indefinitely or been terminated by an authoritarian restoration of order without any structural socioeconomic change, as had happened more than once, in Cuba as well as in several other countries in the area of U.S. influence during the Cold War. In terms of human factors, the choice and the ability to build a socialist regime in Cuba owe much to the particular experiences of the group that led the Cuban Revolution through the struggle against the old regime, and to the social composition of the bulk of its troops.

\textit{Formative Experiences}

The members of the group that led the Cuban Revolution rebelled against what they considered an order flawed by lack of social justice, subservience to foreign interests, and corruption in government. While these sentiments may have developed in most of them through their childhood and early youth, the concrete trigger for their rebellion was Fulgencio Batista’s military coup of March 10, 1952. Upon seizing power, the old-new dictator cancelled the upcoming elections in which he was a candidate but had little chance of being elected. For young lawyer and congressional candidate from the Orthodox Party—which had good prospects of success in the elections—Fidel Castro Ruz, that was enough for losing whatever patience he had with conventional politics. He decided to overthrow the newly installed dictatorship by taking up arms.
Castro’s turbulent road to power was marked by some critical events. At dawn on July 26, 1953, a force of 121 men and two women under his command attacked the Moncada barracks in the city of Santiago de Cuba at the same time that twenty-seven men attacked the Carlos Manuel de Céspedes barracks in the nearby city of Bayamo.\textsuperscript{11} From a military standpoint, these attacks were a resounding failure. The barracks were not seized. The attackers suffered sixty-one deaths as a result of the attempt. Casualties among the army and police personnel numbered about nineteen. For the revolutionaries, however, the attacks on these barracks symbolize a beginning. For them, the failed military attempt to seize the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes barracks represents the “small engine that put in motion the big engine” of the Cuban Revolution, through which they were to learn “how to make victory from defeat.”\textsuperscript{12}

Some thirty-two rebels were captured, tried, and convicted for their participation in the failed attacks. Twenty-seven of them served part of their sentences together with Fidel Castro in the Model prison on the Isle of Pines. During his term in this jail Fidel Castro wrote down his “history will absolve me” speech, originally delivered, by his own account, as self-defense in his separate trial held behind closed doors. Smuggled out of jail, the speech became the group’s socioeconomic and political manifesto for the rest of the struggle. The inmates also recount from their jail experiences having enough free time to read, think, and debate socioeconomic, political, and military issues. For them the jail was a school of intellectual preparation for the rest of the struggle. For study purposes they founded the Abel Santamaría academy and the Raúl Gómez García library. In the academy they held study circles on matters as diverse as geography, mathematics, and languages, but especially on world and Cuban history, political
Following a general amnesty by President Batista, the group was released on May 15, 1955. After a short stay in Cuba—during which the 26th of July movement (M-26-7) was founded—Castro decided to go into exile in order to prepare an invasion force that would penetrate the mountains of Oriente and struggle against the Batista army from there. He left for Mexico on July 7, 1955, and some seventeen months later he was sailing back to Cuba aboard the Granma yacht. Eighty-two expeditionaries were aboard, of whom twenty had participated in the attacks on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes barracks. The expeditionaries landed in Cuba on December 2, 1956. Three days later they were surprised while resting in unprotected terrain and nearly annihilated by the army. Three men died instantly from enemy fire. Eighteen were captured and killed in subsequent days. At least seventeen were taken prisoner alive. Others avoided capture and escaped, and the fate of some is uncertain to this very day.

Nineteen expeditionaries—including eight veterans of the attacks on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes barracks—somehow reached and stayed in the Sierra Maestra, as the mountains of Oriente province are called. Eventually they succeeded in launching a guerrilla struggle there. For this purpose they built the armed wing of the M-26-7, the Rebel Army, which according to the Cuban revolutionary myth was the fundamental factor in overthrowing the Batista dictatorship.

Myths are allegories, and therefore the Cuban revolutionary myth is neither true nor false. What distinguishes it from the historian’s academic rigor, for example, is that it tells the story of the Cuban Revolution from one particular viewpoint, that of the Rebel Army, which after victory eventually became the main pool of personnel for influential
posts in the new regime. The formative experiences of those who waged the guerrilla struggle in the mountains are therefore of particular importance in explaining the socialist undertaking of the new regime, especially in the early days after the seizure of power, when more than one policy direction was possible.

In this regard Fidel Castro has depicted the experience of combat in the mountains as absolutely necessary:

If we had gained victory at that moment [he refers to the Moncada attacks] we would have gained it with a team of very green men, without sufficient experience. In the final analysis the struggle of the Sierra Maestra taught us much more about every stage of life. It taught us to fight; it taught us to solve difficult problems; it developed the highest virtues of common men during the twenty-five months of struggle. We believe that this experience was decisive afterwards.\textsuperscript{17}

The fight in the mountains was character building. The debacle after the \textit{Granma} landing (which in fact was a shipwreck) and the subsequent miserable days taught the rebels that overthrowing the dictatorship required much more hardship and sacrifice than they had expected.\textsuperscript{18} By struggling and sacrificing in pursuit of their goals, they became better men, and by becoming better men, they were better prepared to accomplish their goals.

As the rebels tell their own story, in the mountains of Oriente they shaped, or at least sharpened, their social convictions. Arriving in the mountains, they found entire communities living under dire conditions of oppression.\textsuperscript{19} Most peasants in this area were illiterate, and many children suffered from undernourishment. Contact with these populations developed their sensibilities toward the poor and illiterate and led them to identify their cause with the interests of the underprivileged. As the war advanced and the areas under their domain widened, the rebels had the opportunity to gain experience in governing. Their social conceptions were translated into policies, and these policies were tested in the “freed” territories. The agrarian reform of May 1959 thus had its
direct antecedent in Law no. 3, “about of the right of the peasants to the land,” or “law of the Sierra;” the literacy campaign of 1961 was modeled on the reading and writing lessons for adults carried out by the Rebel Army’s education department. Similarly, it has been suggested that the rough material equality that prevailed in the Rebel Army under the scarcity imposed by life in the mountains inspired, at least in part, the new revolutionary government’s radical redistributive policies, such as rationing essentials.

Above all, the psychological consequences of scoring a military victory over an ostensibly superior force are apparent in the revolutionary government’s early policies. From a purely military standpoint, the decisive period, if any, in the armed struggle was the summer of 1958, when some 300 guerrillas at most successfully repelled an offensive aimed at their annihilation by some 12,000 army soldiers. This triumph marks the conversion of the Rebel Army from guerrilla to regular army. Afterwards its columns began descending to the plains and expanding activities to other regions, seizing towns and cities along the way until their triumphal entrance into Havana. Whoever on the road to power defeats an army mightier in equipment and number of soldiers may believe while in power that it is possible to dispense with a main commercial and political patron, and thus the revolutionary government let the relationships with the United States deteriorate to an unprecedented low; or that it is possible to make the soil produce according to will, and thus the revolutionary government set unreachable goals for sugar production; or even that it is possible to free the world from oppression, and thus the revolutionary government sent contingents to ignite insurrections in African and Latin American countries.

**Social Composition**
Alongside these formative experiences, the socioeconomic background of most combatants against the old regime, and of the Rebel Army in particular, help explain the early radical wealth redistributive policies of the Cuban Revolution, i.e. nationalizations and agrarian reform. When he started the rebellion, Fidel Castro may have been a lawyer and son of a wealthy landowner, but most of those who fought side by side with him had a markedly lower socioeconomic background as measured by both occupation and education (or rather lack thereof). By occupation, the single largest group of those who attacked the Moncada barracks was construction workers. Then “came farm workers, cooks and waiters, office workers, drivers, shoemakers, mechanics, bakers, milkmen, ice-delivery men, street vendors, and self-employed persons.”23 About nine were “liberal professionals” or intellectuals, and only about the background of two does the term “petite bourgeoisie” apply.24 By educational level, four had university degrees. Of the rest, five were public accountants, and another five were occasional university students. The bulk of the group had only an elementary school education, “and many lacked even this background.”25 The socioeconomic background of the Granma expeditionaries was slightly higher, but still the largest group (44) had only an elementary school education, and only ten had a university degree or its equivalent.26 Sixty-nine individuals were employees, of whom sixteen were blue-collar workers. Of the remainder, four were students and nine were professionals or technicians.

Because of the incorporation of many peasants from Oriente into its ranks, the socioeconomic background of the Rebel Army was particularly low.27 Data on three of its columns (N=1271) give an idea of its social composition shortly before the seizure of power. Of this sample some 83 percent were either blue-collar workers (47.2) or
peasants (36.0). The others were self-employed workers (2.6 %), administrative employees (2.4 %), and unemployed, students and housewives (6 %). About 3 percent could be described as petty bourgeois, and only ten individuals had any sort of liberal professional or intellectual occupation. It is often affirmed—with exaggeration—that some 80 percent of the Rebel Army combatants were illiterate. But whatever the precise educational level of the Rebel Army, it was very low. Because people with a low socioeconomic background are the ones to gain the most in the short run from wealth redistribution policies, most Rebel Army fighters had a material interest in the implementation of such policies as nationalization and agrarian reform. And because they controlled the arms, their support of such policies was critical for their implementation in the ground.

From the moment Batista fled Cuba, the Rebel Army assumed a strategic position in defining the outcomes of events to come. Most persons who immediately assumed formal government posts can well be described as middle-class professionals who enjoyed a great deal of respect in Cuban society. A nineteen-member cabinet chaired by judge Manuel Urrutia as president was declared formal government. While this cabinet included several 26th of July members, only three or four—according to how the count is done—belonged to the Rebel Army. Yet the Rebel Army soldiers had the weapons and its leaders had the obedience of the troops. Precisely for these reasons the leaders of the Rebel Army could pass policy initiatives of their own choosing irrespective of the majority in the official government. In policymaking matters, the Rebel Army’s “Commander in Chief” systematically favored a group of his closest collaborators, who worked behind the scenes and who crafted under his assignment some of the most
sensitive early policies such as the agrarian reform of May 1959. As policies radicalized, the “moderates” (most) in the formal government stepped out voluntarily or were pushed aside quietly, at the same time that “radical,” Rebel Army commanders, stepped in.

It did not take long for the formal government to reflect more or less accurately—never a perfect match—the constellation of power as perceived by the naked eye. In February 1959 Fidel Castro became prime minister, and by 1961 Rebel Army commanders already had an important presence in the official government, including Industry Minister and head of the National Bank Ernesto Guevara, National Defense Minister Augusto Martínez Sánchez, Transport Minister Omar Fernández, Public Health Minister José Ramón Machado Ventura, Minister of the Armed Forces Raúl Castro, and Minister of the Interior Ramiro Valdés. The last two, together with the general commander of the ground armed forces, Juan Almeida Bosque, were the spinal cord of the security apparatus. The three: veterans of the assault on the Moncada barracks, the jail, the Granma expedition, and the fight in the mountains of Oriente.

The Generation of the Centenary

Peasants, workers, and other lower-class populations benefited from the new regime’s wealth redistribution policies. Since the Rebel Army was composed mainly of such populations, it supported such policies, and since it controlled the arms, its support was key for their successful implementation. Yet saying this is not to suggest that while struggling against the old regime the Rebel Army represented or attempted to represent class categories such as “workers” or “peasants” or that the Cuban Revolution was led by a class of and for itself. By the highest estimation, the Rebel Army had slightly more
than 3,000 armed combatants at its peak in January 1959. In a country with a working class estimated in more than two million wage earners in industry, services, and agriculture, and a peasantry estimated in more than 220,000 ranchers and farmers—of whom those in the mountains where the guerrilla warfare took place were atypical as squatters rather than renters or sharecroppers—the Rebel Army should be better considered a small group, an “elite” or “vanguard,” rather than a “class” of any kind, let alone a “people” in arms. The number of all those who somehow actively fought the old regime is impossible to estimate with any degree of precision beyond the “few thousands” or the “few tens of thousands,” but most commentators agree in ascertaining the absence of phenomena that would suggest active mass participation in the overthrowing of the old regime, such as looting and spontaneous public lynching, in the terms immediately before or after the shift of governments.

This is not to deny broad popular participation in the early years of the Cuban revolutionary process. Political power was obtained by a small group, but the revolution could only be made by broad sectors of the population—led by this group. To defend the motherland and the revolution at once from their ever-dangerous enemies, anyone could volunteer since October 1959 in the militias, which had “over 500,000 Cubans of both sexes by the end of 1960.” From September 1960 anyone could volunteer in the less demanding Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR), which had nearly a million militants by the end of 1961 and ever since have maintained a presence in “every city block and in every large building, factory, or work center” in Cuba. Through these and other mass organizations—such as the Cuban women federation (FMC)—the Cuban “people” could and did participate in the consolidation of “their” revolution in a series of
successive events of which the most renowned are the socializations of property, the
1961 nationwide one-shot effort to eradicate illiteracy, the massive mobilizations against
the intruder forces that landed at Girón (Bay of Pigs) in April 1961, the cleansing of
counterrevolutionaries in the Escambray mountains, and the mass mobilization in
preparation for war during the missile crisis of October 1962.\(^39\)

All those Cubans who participated with the revolutionary forces, fully or partly, in
any of the events that mark the armed phase of the revolution and its consolidation, from
the Moncada attack to the missile crisis, constitute one generational unit. They belong to
the Revolutionary Generation—that is, to the *Generación del Centenario*. Of course, not
all those who somehow contributed to the revolutionary process throughout this time did
so evenly; participation opportunities varied by location and age at the very least. Those
born in the 1920s and before the end of the 1930s were more likely to fully participate in
the revolutionary process and to receive their formative experiences from it. Most Rebel
Army commanders, including Fidel and Raúl Castro, Ernesto Guevara, Camilo
Cienfuegos, Juan Almeida Bosque, Ramiro Valdés, and Guillermo García, belong to this
age-cohort. At the time they arrived to power they were young, so young that for
philosopher Jean Paul Sartre the “greatest scandal of the Cuban Revolution” was “that it
brought children to power.”\(^40\) And there is perhaps no better example of their young age
than Fidel’s public denial of intentions to assume the presidency of the Cuban Republic
in the first week of 1959, when he was thirty-two years old, due to a constitutional
minimum age requirement of thirty-six.\(^41\)

Not all revolutionaries were that young, to be sure. Those born before 1920 and who
participated in the revolutionary process are likely to have had additional formative
experiences, mainly in the hectic events of 1933-4, when a presumably revolutionary process was interrupted by Batista’s first coup. Individuals of this age group thus belong simultaneously to the generational units of 1933 and of 1953, or Revolutionary Generation. Osvaldo Dorticós, Raúl Roa, and former PSP members Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, Blas Roca, Juan Marinello, Lázaro Peña, and Fabio Grobart typically characterize this group. Their contribution to the Cuban Revolution was influential especially over the years that followed the seizure of power, but they were also the first to leave the political scene.

Those individuals born at the end of the thirties through 1949/50 are more likely to have participated in the revolutionary armed struggle and consolidation process only in the later events. In the Rebel Army they usually ranked as soldiers, and the most advanced of them as lieutenants or captains, though by the very end of the struggle probably a handful achieved the rank of major or commander. Others collaborated with other groups during the revolutionary struggle, such as the urban underground of the M-26-7 or the PSP youth, or joined the revolutionary process and stood out later on, during any of the early mass-mobilization campaigns. This age cohort belongs to the Generation of the Centenary but simultaneously represents an “intermediary generation,” which is less removed from the formative experiences of both those who fully participated in the armed and consolidation phases of the Cuban Revolution on the one hand, and those who did not participate in any of these phases on the other, than these two groups are from each other. According to Manheim, such a group is critical in making a generational transition smooth. Many individuals who today have much influence in Cuba belong to this age group. Examples are Rafael Alarcón, Political
Bureau member and head of the Cuban parliament, Esteban Lazo, Political Bureau member and vice-president of the Council of State, Abel Prieto, Political Bureau member and minister of culture, and the generals Ulises Rosales del Toro, Ramón Espinosa Martín, Abelardo Colomé Ibarra, Leopoldo Cintra Frías, Rogelio Acevedo, and Alvaro López Miera, all them in posts of command in the armed forces under Raúl and current members of the Political Bureau.

**The Communist Party of Cuba (PCC)**

A core group, forged in the guerrilla struggle in the mountains, led the way. The “people” followed suit. The Generation of the Centenary built the socialist regime in Cuba and has ruled it. Now it has begun to pass away. If the formative experiences and social background of the core concrete group within this sociological generation determined the choice for socialism, then there is reason to cast doubt on the odds of regime continuity as this generation leaves the political scene. To a great degree the prospects of continuity or change for the Cuban state socialist regime should be sought in the generational transition within the Cuban political elite.

In its most visible or physical sense, this transition implies the intergenerational turnover of personnel in posts of leadership. In this regard the patterns of inclusion and advance of younger cadres are of special interest, since failing to rejuvenate has been a liability common to both revolutionary and state socialist elites. For formal and practical reasons, of the main governing organizations in Cuba, the Communist Party seems the most suitable framework of reference for gauging the extent to which high posts in the Cuban government have been open to access by younger individuals.

Formally, the party is the “political instrument that guarantees” the historical
continuity of the Cuban Revolution and the “construction of socialism and communism” in Cuba. Obeying the well-known Leninist principle according to which the party is the direction and the state the administration, officially the party rules Cuba. If one wants to know whether and at what speed young cadres are rising to positions of influence on policies in Cuba as the historic generation fades away, one has to track this process in the PCC. According to its own statutes, the party is organized hierarchically on both a territorial and a work-center basis. Territorially, in descending hierarchical order the party is divided into national, provincial, municipal, and local levels. Directives issued by organs at any level are binding upon all lower levels. On the national level, the statutes point to the party Congress as the highest instance of the party, establishing a period of five years between its periodic meetings. In its meetings the Congress elects a Central Committee (CC), which between congresses is in charge of policy resolution and implementation, and which for carrying out its tasks effectively is aided by a number (unfixed by the party statutes and varying over time) of departments staffed by professional cadres. In its first session after being elected, the CC elects a Political Bureau (PB) and other directing organisms such as its Secretariat, which assists the PB in managing the everyday affairs of the party, and the President of the Commission for Revision and Control of the Party, in charge of party discipline. When the CC is not in session, the PB is the highest leadership organ of the party. It is headed by the party’s first secretary, and its decisions are binding upon all party organs, members, and candidates.

Practice is not so well demarcated, though. In real life party membership is a necessary requirement for anyone individual thinking of holding a position of either
political or administrative influence in Cuba, but office holders may influence policy decisions from posts outside of the party hierarchy. Holding a position in any of the organs of the state administration—National Assembly, Council of State, and Council of Ministers—and, especially, holding the rank of general in the army, seems to confer a degree of influence on policy decisions that most party members by no means have.

The party hierarchy is nevertheless the most appropriate framework of reference for tracking down the turnover of personnel in the Cuban political elite because it is more visible and therefore more researchable than the army’s general staff, and because its role in setting policy direction is clearly greater than the role played by the state administration. The CC of the party also has a higher overlapping of personnel with the Council of State, Council of Ministers, and the army’s general staff than any one of these has with another, and, therefore, irrespective of the role and weight of each in setting the policy agenda, it “indexes” better the occupational diversity of the Cuban political elite. As a sample of the core of the Cuban political elite, the CC of the PCC is reliable as long as it resembles the non-CC population in the highest posts of the army and the state administration in its characteristics of importance such as age, experiences, and occupation. At first sight, this seems a plausible assumption to make.

**Personnel Turnover in the CC of the PCC**

Officially, a single ruling political party of Marxist orientation was established as early as 1962, but not until 1965 was the Cuban Communist Party established as such and its first Central Committee presented. In his speeches of presentation of the first CC Fidel Castro specified the criteria for its composition. Individual merit of candidates was a main criterion, but also the overall CC composition had to reflect as much as possible all
sectors within the Cuban Revolution. More or less in accord with the party’s statutes, a
national party congress took place every five or six years from 1975 to 1997. In each of
the five party congresses celebrated so far, a “candidacy commission” has elaborated the
composition of the new Central Committee and then subjected it to the vote of the
congress delegates for its rejection or approval.

In tracking down the main patterns of personnel turnover in the CC of the PCC over
time, a line must be drawn in the third party congress. Before 1986 the new members to
the CC came mostly in addition to rather than in substitution for those who were
previously there (incumbents). As a result, the period is marked more by cadre
continuity than by change. During the 1970s the PCC grew sufficiently to penetrate the
rest of society in workplaces and localities, and its activities became more regulated. Its
statutes and programmatic platform were written, and its first congress was held in 1975.
On the grounds that the party had expanded its size and activity, the leadership decided
to expand the size of its CC and PB as well. This was the norm in the CPSU by that
time, and doing so prevented the pain of choosing between adding worthy individuals
waiting for their turn and removing the incumbents.

| Party membership (rounded to closer thousand): LeoGrande (1978, 12); Gort Wong ed. (1990, 204, 343, 500); Reed ed. (1992, 20); Madan, Ramos y Zabala eds. (1997, 68). |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CC | 50,000 | 203,000 | 434,000 | 524,000 | 612,000 | 780,000 | 850,000* |
| PB | 100 | 124 | 225 | 225 | 225 | 150 | 134 |
| Secretariat | 8 | 13 | 27 | 24 | 25 | 24 | 21 |

While allowing new entries, the expansion of the directing organs permitted an even
higher rate of incumbent continuity. Whereas the proportion of new CC members in the first and second party congresses was 38 percent and 58 percent respectively, more than 75 percent of the members in the original 1965 CC were confirmed in 1975, and more than 75 percent of the members in the 1975 CC were confirmed in 1980.\(^{50}\) Over this time no member was ever dropped from the PB.

<table>
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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td></td>
<td>77</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td></td>
<td>76</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One does not need to assume the existence of unwritten seniority norms to suggest that the incumbent members played a greater role than the new in the direction of the party. The preeminence of the former was formalized to a degree by the distinction between full and alternate members. This distinction was established in the first party congress and eliminated in the fourth. When this distinction existed, most alternates were new. Like full members, alternate members participated in the deliberations, but unlike full members, they did not have the right to vote. While this distinction may have been useful in several regards, as in setting a structure for the gradual advance of new members, it surely indicates that rates of new members with votes in the CC were far less than shown by their total.
Table 4.4
The PCC
New members in the CC and PB over 5 congresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>CC</th>
<th>PB</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1975 N=124 (112 full)</td>
<td>1975 N=13 (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1980 N=225 (146 full)</td>
<td>1980 N=27 (52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1986 N=225 (146 full)</td>
<td>1986 N=24 (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1991 N=225 (146 full)</td>
<td>1991 N=25 (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1997 N=150 (64)</td>
<td>1997 N=24 (25)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New members in the CC and PB over 5 congresses</th>
<th>(percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47 (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>130 (58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>94 (42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>126 (56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>48 (32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full members (percent)</td>
<td>35 (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>57 (38.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>23 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>144 (64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate Members (percent)</td>
<td>12 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>73 (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>71 (90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>11 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td>8 (80)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*“New” member is defined as not appearing in the list of the preceding congress. The 1975 list was compared to the list reported in the presentation of the CC in 1965.

Dual membership in both the PB and the Secretariat marked the pinnacle of the party hierarchy. Of the nine-member Secretariat, five held posts simultaneously in the Political Bureau in 1975, as did seven in 1980. During this time, promotions were gradual. New members to the Political Bureau often came from the previous Secretariat (two in 1975 and one in 1980), and no member was ever promoted to any of these two bodies without at least having been a full CC member in the previous congress. In 1980 all full members of the PB and all members of the Secretariat had been full members in the CC since 1965.

If anything, the main changes in the CC up to 1986 were neither in the persons nor in their places in the party hierarchy, but in their occupations. The occupational composition of the CC over this time as measured by sector of employment reflects the story of a leadership group composed of former combatants against the old regime who in the early years of the revolutionary regime became the mainstay of the army and later on took up civilian tasks in the direction of the party and in the state administration.
Table 4.5  
Occupational Profile of the CC of the PCC (1965-1980) 
Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>1965 N=100</th>
<th>1975 N=124</th>
<th>1980 N=225</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Organizations</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific/Cultural/Technical</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, the 1965 CC included sixty-eight individuals with military ranks, of whom fifty-eight were on active duty in the military. Then the share of the military in the CC sharply decreased by 1975, but this decrease can be explained to a substantial degree by the lateral transfer of personnel from the military to civilian occupations rather than by demotions or by the addition of individuals with a different background. Some 35 percent of individuals in civilian occupations in the 1975 CC were on active military duty in the 1965 CC, and some 15 percent of the new members in civilian occupations in 1975 had served actively in the military of the new regime in the past. If all these “former military” were included with the military in one category in the 1975 CC, this category would comprise some 50 percent of the CC elected, which represents a drop of 8 rather than 26.5 percent in the share of the military from 1965. Making a similar calculation for the 1980 CC, controlling for lateral transfers from military to civilian occupations amongst both the incumbent and the new members, the share of the “military” would be some 42.2 percent.

Another part of the variation in the occupational composition of the CC prior to 1986
was facilitated by its almost doubling in size from 1975 to 1980. Such a widening of membership posts allowed for a greater inclusion of individuals employed in sectors other than the party, the state administration, and the army, where most “power” is concentrated. The growing shares of cadre working in the mass organizations and in scientific, cultural, and technical enterprises in part reflects the addition of new members singled out for possible promotion, and in part, together with the persons working in the “other” occupations such as “simple” workers in factories and state farms, reflects the inclusion of what scholars often call “symbolic” or “ordinary citizen” representation, consisting of individuals working “in production, research institutions and social services” who lack “a high political, economic, or military rank.” \(^52\) The “ordinary citizens” are usually chosen to CC membership for their background characteristics, such as ethnicity and gender, rather than for their high-ranking position or their outstanding deeds, and therefore their inclusion commonly represents an attempt by the leadership to adjust its composition to that of the rank and file of the party or to that of the population in general, presumably under the belief that doing so increases its acceptability among them.

And notwithstanding the continuous influx of new members, practically all members in the CC before 1986, in alternate positions and/or symbolic representation or else, belonged to the same sociological generation. The biographies of the new CC members that appeared in the official party newspaper over a year and a half after the 1980 party congress leave little room for doubt. Although more than forty percent of the new members in 1980 were born in or after 1939, save two exceptions and only one because of age, their biographies invariably extol their revolutionary merits either as combatants
against the old regime or as literacy workers in the 1961 campaign or as militias before the end of 1962.\textsuperscript{53} The party newspaper was probably therefore only slightly exaggerating when stating that 63.9 percent of the delegates to the congress participated in combat against the old regime, and when hinting to its readers that the other 36.1 percent had actively defended the revolution against either the counterrevolutionaries in the Escambray Mountains or the imperialists in Girón (Bay of Pigs).\textsuperscript{54}

\textit{Beginning}

Held in 1986, the third party congress is a watershed because, beginning in this congress, the size of the directing organs stopped growing. Since 1980 rates of growth in party membership decreased, and the leadership decided that the directing organs should no longer grow. The proportion of new members became equal to the rate of turnover from congress to congress. Hard choices were not delayed anymore. Presaging the rectification process, or perhaps initiating it, in his reading of the main report to this congress Fidel voiced harsh criticism of the management of the economy, which had grown using others’ resources, and he warned that as a result the replacement of unsatisfactory officials is to be expected.\textsuperscript{55}

In line with this tone, the choices in electing the new CC members favored turnover. For the first time, more than 40 percent of the members of the previous CC were not confirmed. For the first time members were dropped from the PB. Three of the six 1980 PB members who were not confirmed in 1986 had died or were too ill to continue working for long. That the other three were historic figures in good health shows that renovation in the leadership was put deliberately into effect.\textsuperscript{56} From here on, rejuvenation was not left to “spontaneity,” or rather biology alone. The turnover began
to be intergenerational. The new members were on average nine years younger than those confirmed (forty-three and fifty-two respectively). The average age in the CC was forty-seven. Of the total CC members, forty-four were born in 1945 or after, of whom seventeen were born in 1950 or after. Especially the latter are not likely to have participated in the overthrowing of the old regime and in the events that mark the consolidation of the new.

As far as the promotion and advance of the youth are concerned, the decision to renovate personnel in the directing party organs may have obeyed the lessons learned by the Cuban leadership from observing events elsewhere in the socialist world, and in the Soviet Union in particular. By evidencing the difficulties of the ruling elites in the socialist states to endow generational renewal in their ranks, the triple turnover-death sequence in the highest Soviet leadership between 1982 and 1985 sent a warning to the other socialist regimes that seems to have been well taken by the Cuban leadership. Reporting from the third party congress, political sociologist Nelson Valdés observed at the time: “It is obvious that the Cuban PCC has learned from the Soviet…experience. The recent history of the Soviet CP, with its litany of deaths, suggests that a gerontocracy is hardly the best way of running a political party.” Or as Fidel told to the Congress, “We have to renew or die…we must trust our youth.”

Yet at the time of the third party congress, intergenerational turnover was certainly contained within tight limits. As a beginning, the generational transition in the Cuban political elite was timid. The patterns of slow advance within the CC continued. More than 75 percent of the new members entered the CC as alternates. None of them was included in either the PB or the Secretariat. In the PB, only four of the fourteen full
members were new. Three of them had been alternate PB members since 1980. All ten alternate members in the 1986 PB had belonged to the 1980 CC. The only member born in or after 1945 who entered to a directing organ in 1986 was not new in the CC, had instructed fishermen during the literacy campaign, was a founder of the militia, and had mobilized to defend the homeland in Girón and the missile crisis. Even then in the PB Yolanda Ferrer was an alternate rather than full member. “Beginning” notwithstanding, while observing the composition of the directing organs of the PCC as obtained in the third party congress, it was still possible to say something like “the leadership of the Cuban Revolution has shown very little interest over the years in recruiting into top positions of power those of different background or fewer years,” and to qualify the Castro government as “an incipient gerontocracy.”

Acceleration

The same or something similar could hardly be said some five years later. Held in October 1991, the fourth party congress took place after the collapse of socialist regimes in East Europe and on the eve of the disintegration of the Soviet Union. “To save the homeland, the revolution and socialism” was its slogan; survival was its “only one real agenda item.” The strategy of survival, it turns out, implied among other things the acceleration of intergenerational turnover. In one of his interventions in this congress, Fidel explicitly linked his understanding of recent events in other socialist states and the necessity to rejuvenate the Cuban political direction:

I think one of the problems of the revolutionary movement, of revolutionary and communist parties, has been their failure to sufficiently revitalize their leadership...Sometimes the leadership and cadres of those parties became very old and did not have an injection of new blood.
In part in order to ensure that “this isn’t our case,” prior to the congress new procedures favoring turnover—such as ballot-box elections rather than a show of hands—were undertaken to choose party leaders in provinces, municipalities, and local party branches, as well as to choose the delegates to the congress.\(^6^2\) For the first time local party branches could propose candidates to the CC. In so doing, local branches were specifically instructed by the party’s “topmost leadership” to assess the revolutionary background of their nominees in a way “consistent with their age.” A commentator explained in a radio broadcast that this instruction “is important because it defeats the arguments of the extremely demanding members who would like to turn down young” and good candidates who because of their age “did not participate in the outstanding events of the revolution’s early decisive years.” The same radio program also reported that seats were reserved for the youth at “the majestic Santiago de Cuba Theater, the site of the congress.”\(^6^3\)

Leadership exhortation and limited procedural change delivered a turnover rate of 56 percent in the CC elected in the fourth party congress, the highest so far. Since the category of “alternate member” was eliminated in this congress, all 126 new members were “full” members. Ninety-eight of them were forty-six years old or younger (that is, born in 1945 or after), of whom sixty-one were forty-one years old or younger. The respective numbers for the total CC membership were 115 and seventy. Thirteen CC members were born after the triumph of the revolution. The average age of the new members was under forty-two and that of all members stayed forty-seven. Seventeen of the twenty-five PB members did not figure in the 1986 PB as full members, and only two figured as alternates. In a rather unprecedented step that broke with the slow
patterns of any individual advance up to then, four new PB members between forty and forty-four years old were catapulted from outside the previous CC. In addition to the elimination of the alternate status, stratification in the CC decreased because of the elimination of the Secretariat. In total, eight PB members were forty-six years old or younger; six were forty-one years old or under. The new generations had been incorporated into the topmost directing organ of the party. Fifty-one was the average age of the new PB, three years younger than its average in the previous congress.

Following the fourth party congress, the acceleration of the generational transition in the Cuban government became very evident everywhere. Parallel processes occurred in the National Assembly, for example, where the direct elections of 1993 delivered more than 83 percent new delegates, whose average age was forty-three years; 38 percent of the delegates were under thirty years old. In the party, from 1991 to 1996 most provincial first secretaries were replaced by younger cadres. By 1996 all but two first secretaries in the fifteen provinces (including the special municipality of the Isle of Youth) were born after 1945. Had intergenerational turnover continued at this pace, the generational transition would have been complete by the time of the fifth party congress.

*Depuration*

But by 1997 “renovation” was no longer the principle underlying the turnover of personnel in the CC of the PCC. From 1991 to 1997 the party had once again experienced high growth in its membership, yet in accordance with the austerity policies pursued during the special period, and in contrast to the 1970s, in setting the size of the CC this time, the Cuban leadership found the logic of efficiency and reduction of costs more compelling than reflection of party growth. The size of the CC was contracted to
150 members. Two thirds of them were confirmed from 1991. Forty-eight were new. Two were old-new members in the CC who were elected in previous congresses but not in 1991. Never in the past had the delegates to a party congress voted on a CC including a fewer percentage of new members. Although two new PB members were catapulted from outside the previous CC again, the highest organ within the CC showed more continuity than change, as eighteen of its twenty-four members were reelected from 1991.

The turnover of personnel became once again more intra- than intergenerational. The forty-seven new members aged fifty-two or younger who entered the CC in 1997 came twice in the stead of members of the new generations than in the stead of members of the historic generation. The number of those who entered the CC in either 1965 or 1975 and survived the 1991 shake-up remained mostly steady. In 1997, biology—physical incapacity or death—was a main factor in its decrease.67

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1986</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>1997</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1965</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980*</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The only member of the new generations is not included in the data.

In the fifth party congress, the issue concerning the turnover of personnel in the CC of the PCC was “depuration.” With the contraction of the CC, the less important categories reduced their shares from 1991, whereas the state administration, the military, and the party increased theirs. The CC of the party became once again less a representative of wider populations and more a group whose integrants “seek to rule.”68
Although most CC personnel turnover takes place in party congresses and no such event has been held since 1997, some personnel turnover has nevertheless occurred since 1997 as a result of turnover of the party’s provincial secretaries and state ministers, penalties, and deaths. Thirty-one individuals figuring in the CC elected at the fifth party congress do not appear on the list of CC membership updated as of July 2006, where fifteen individuals not elected in the fifth congress figure, for a total of 134 members. Changes from the 1997 Politburo as of May 2008 include the death of one member, two demotions and expulsions from the party, one demotion from the PB but not from the CC, and the promotion of four members from the 1997 CC.

Structurally, the major changes have been the restitution of the Secretariat in July 2006, and the creation of the Politburo commission in April 2008. That, as of 2008, five out of thirteen Secretariat members are older than 60 is one more indication of the unwillingness of the remaining leaders of the historic generation to leave. That six out of seven Politburo commission members also belong to the historic generation is irrefutable confirmation of this. The overlapping membership of three individuals in the Politburo commission and the Secretariat both narrows once again the party’s highest leadership and reintroduces some stratification at the very top. Two of the overlapping individuals—Raúl Castro and José Ramón Machado Ventura—were Rebel Army

![Table 4.7](image)

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<tbody>
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<td>Mass Organizations</td>
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<td>Scientific/Cultural/Technical</td>
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<td>19.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>12.8</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
commanders who are over seventy years old today. The other one, Esteban Lazo, is in his early sixties and participated in the literacy campaign of 1961, the year in which he also joined the militias. Carlos Lage is the only representative of the new generations in the Politburo commission, and Jorge Luis Sierra is the only one with membership in both the Politburo and the Secretariat.

**Gazing into the Future**

Participation or lack of it in the struggle against the old regime and in the consolidation of the new makes a generational difference in Cuba. The generation that made and consolidated the Cuban Revolution built a state socialist regime. It remains to be seen whether the generations born and/or socialized under the revolutionary regime will be willing and skillful enough to continue it. To increase the odds of regime continuity after their final departure from the political scene, the leaders of the revolutionary generation have tried to avoid the trap of failing to rejuvenate the regime’s ranks. Consistent with their learning from the failure of other socialist experiences, they have been intentionally promoting to posts of influence in government younger individuals with different formative experiences from theirs, while retaining for themselves the most important offices. As reflected by the personnel turnover in the CC of the PCC, the generational transition was initiated in the third party congress in 1986, accelerated in the fourth party congress in 1991, and depurated in the fifth party congress in 1997. It has reached practically all the hierarchical levels—except the very helm. Until those leaders of the historic generation still in command either decide to leave or—more likely—are removed by biology, under their tutelage the leaders of the new generations are gaining valuable experience in governing to be applied when their turn to assume full command
comes.

The crosstabulation of age and occupation of CC members may help single out the cadres who from the point of view of the departing Cuban leadership are “bound to lead” Cuba in the future. As of the end of 2007, the list of CC members found in the PCC website (updated July 2006) includes seventy-four individuals who where born in or after 1945 and who constitute some 55 percent of total CC membership. Most of them have been CC members for over ten years, as only eleven of them do not appear in the 1997 list. Most of them were elevated to CC membership from posts of direction in the party or the state administration or were transferred to posts in these sectors along with their CC confirmation from congress to congress. Of the forty 1991 CC members born in or after 1945 who appear in the 1997 list, for example, 85 percent occupied a post in the party or the state administration at the time of their ratification in 1997.

By contrast, only 37 percent of the seventy-five members from this age group who were not confirmed in 1997 belonged to the party or state occupational categories. The new members aged fifty-two or under in 1997 clearly reinforced this trend. Their single highest occupational category was party professional (27), followed by the state administration (9). With their inclusion professional work in the party increased its distance from state administration as the main occupation among the CC members born in or after 1945 by some 10 percent more than in 1991. These two categories together comprised nearly 75 percent of the members fifty-two years old or younger in the 1997 CC, some 10 percent higher than their proportion in the whole CC.
### Table 4.8

CC Members Born in or After 1945
Occupations by Sector in Percentages (1986-1997)

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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>9.09</td>
<td>11.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Organizations</td>
<td>34.09</td>
<td>13.04</td>
<td>8.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific/Cultural/technical</td>
<td>20.45</td>
<td>24.35</td>
<td>12.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.82</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the absence of a party congress or any other standard reference (such as the discontinued CIA directories), it is difficult to assert what is the current occupation of some CC members. Nevertheless, that thirteen of the fifteen members who have entered the CC after the last party congress are either provincial party secretaries or members in the Council of State strongly suggests that the policies of strengthening the leverage of the party professional cadres and state administrators have not as yet changed. Further information on this and other trends will surely be provided by the sixth party congress, scheduled for late 2009.

Overall, then, the occupational background of the CC members born in or after 1945 suggests that, in contrast to their elders, the political leaders of the new generations are not reaching their leadership posts by virtue of merit in armed struggle, nor after a glorious military career—though most males have completed compulsory military service. Instead they have grown up professionally within the party and state apparatuses or were transferred to them from the mass organizations and scientific, cultural, or technical institutes, which meanwhile have become the main pools of personnel for the party direction and state administration. As a result of the social change brought about
by the Cuban Revolution, members of the new generations have grown up in a social environment radically different from that under which the members of the revolutionary generation were raised, and have been educated according to radically different values.

Looking into these values and the mechanisms for their transmission over time may be useful for gaining further insight into the efforts of the Cuban leadership to increase the long-term durability of the state socialist regime.
(5)

Education

It will be the duty of the leaders to gain an ever clearer insight into all theoretical questions, to free
themselves more and more from the influence of traditional phrases inherited from the old world
outlook and constantly to keep in mind that socialism, since it has become a science, demands that it
be pursued as a science, that is, that it be studied.

Fredrick Engels

Just as every modern state is founded on violence, every socioeconomic and political
order is founded on values and beliefs. Qua humans, those persons or groups who
control the means of coercion in every modern state have or claim to have values and
beliefs through which they frame the ruling socioeconomic and political order and
justify it. When their values and beliefs change, the socioeconomic and political order
changes. As theoreticians have repetitively pointed out through concepts such as “false
consciousness,” “legitimacy” and “hegemony,” this order strengthens as more and more
people accept it for normative, or internal reasons, rather than for an either coercive or
uncoercive external system of rewards and punishments. Thus, in order to strengthen the
socioeconomic and political order at any given time, rulers can try to propagate their
values and beliefs. In order to prolong it over time, they can try to transmit them from
the old to the young. It is possible to call the process of transmission of values and
beliefs “education.” This process is political when the values and beliefs concerned refer
to the institutions of government. When the process of education flows from the
incumbent government, as an iron rule it seeks both to strengthen the ruling
socioeconomic and political order and to prolong it over time.

Now it has become clear that in the long run most state socialist experiences that
have come to an end scored a political-educational failure. Notwithstanding the very
strong efforts at times invested by leaders of state socialist regimes to propagate and
perpetuate their dominant set of values and beliefs, whatever consent with the socialist rule existed, it constantly shrunk over time. Along with the shrinking of consent, social life came to transpire “within a lie,” to paraphrase Vaclav Havel, or contrary to the own values and beliefs of most citizens, including most if not all persons in leadership positions. From here on systemic change—the adjustment of acceptable behavior with the “real” dominant set of values and beliefs—was only a matter of time, though of uncertain length until that the change effectively took place.

Whether Cuban state socialism is following or escaping that script depends to a degree on the ability of its political leaders to transfer the values and beliefs upon which it lies both horizontally, to the population, and longitudinally, from the old to the young. Their persistent effort to do so vacillates between fomenting the reverence or the autonomy of their pupils, and consists of two moments of “character” and two moments of “reason.”

This chapter aims at documenting this effort. It begins by discussing the general goal of the system of socialist education: to create a new man. Next it describes how the founders of the Cuban revolutionary regime have pursued this goal. This description includes two parts: attitudinal and normative. It starts with a discussion on how the leaders of the Cuban Revolution have tried to shape the attitudes of the new generations toward them, and it follows with an exploration on how they have tried to imbue in the new generations values and beliefs specific to socialism both through speech and through the framing of life experiences. The chapter ends by discussing the possible results of the attempted transmission of values, beliefs, and skills from the founder revolutionary generation to the new generations. It is argued that because the process is
still unfolding the results are unclear. We might however reasonably assume social
diversity, or diverse results of this process. Then, for a more full assessment of the
prospects of Cuban state socialism to endure over time, a look at the more specific
processes of formation of new leaders is needed.

The New Man

Creating anything new is never an easy task, the less so when it implies a change of
human behavior. Yet a new human morality is just what political leaders of state
socialist regimes aimed to create. Early socialist thinkers and ideologues of socialist
states alike hoped that the socialist revolutions would breed a man whose soul and mind
would be compatible with the long-term development of socialist societies. Upon the
appearance of that man were hung great expectations: the coercive features of the state
would disappear, the economy would thrive, and the arts would flourish. What exactly
this man should look like has never been, of course, fully clear. To conceive a new
morality requires a non-negligible degree of imagination that to a lesser or greater extent
is always delimited by what is known. The clearest characteristics of the new socialist
morality have therefore always been depicted in terms of selflessness and subordination
of the individual to the general interest, which are but the symmetrical opposite of those
values implicit in the behavior of economic agents in any capitalist model that socialist
believers generally despise. Beyond that, depending on speaker, thinker, or imperatives
of time and place, the socialist citizen has been imagined mostly through universally
accepted positive values open to broad interpretations, such as international solidarity,
patriotism, fraternity, frugality, honesty, modesty, sincerity, discipline, optimism,
humility, boldness, and so forth.
Although in several of their most suggestive passages on the topic Marx and Engels subordinated the morality of men and women to their material conditions, and although from these passages it can be understood that, in their thinking, material abundance and rational economic planning would be preconditions for the emergence of the new human morality, leaders of the state socialist regimes never merely waited for institutional change and economic growth to produce more or less automatically the expected change in human behavior. In all state socialist regimes—to degrees varying across time and place—the new morality was actively pursued, at a minimum, through a branch in the dominant party for the socialization of the youth and a universal schooling system with curricula specifically designed to promote the new morality. The moral engineering of man was justified, when needed (occasionally), by the particular local conditions upon which communism was being built, which necessarily differed to some degree from the theoretical expectations of Marx, Engels, or other theoreticians.

Thus, in his much celebrated writing on the topic, Ernesto Guevara identifies the divergence of existing conditions for the building of a socialist society between those expected by Marx and those initially prevailing in Cuba. Whereas Marx saw socialist revolutions taking place in advanced capitalist societies and the new morality emerging upon conditions of material abundance, according to Guevara Cubans suffered from underdevelopment and material scarcity. In Cuba, therefore, he argued, to advance toward the construction of communism it is necessary to work on the modification of man’s morality together with and as emphatically as on the modification of the material and institutional economic basis. The new man would then be the crucial agent to construct the communist society, rather than the one who would emerge as a result. To
the degree that Cubans achieve concrete successes in creating a new man, they “will have made a valuable contribution to Marxism-Leninism, to the cause of humanity.”

In their effort to “contribute to the cause of humanity” in this sense, Cuban leaders have built over the years an all-encompassing system of socialist education, which literally accompanies the Cuban citizen from the cradle to the grave. This system encompasses the whole schooling system from preschool to universities, the mass organizations (for infants, youth, women, students, elders, or just citizens), the party, the army, and most workplaces. Within these spaces socialist values and beliefs are transmitted through the speech of high-ranking leaders, study materials of diverse kinds (including speeches of leaders), and formative experiences. It is no exaggeration to say that in these spaces and through these means in one way or another the attempt of the Cuban leadership to instill a new morality in humans has reached practically all Cubans who have grown up (and therefore been educated) since the institution of the revolutionary regime.

The Founder’s Challenge

Whoever is designing a system of socialist education for the first time in a burgeoning socialist society is inevitably confronted by the challenge of forming a man for a society that does not yet fully exist. He, she, or rather they, surely have to ask to themselves what the person compatible with the long-term endurance of the socialist regime might look like and what are the most appropriate methods to bring her about. A first, rather intuitive answer to such questions is that any ruling group that wants to preserve its rule over a long time “must design the education of the latest generation to build a character identical to the first.” The Cuban leaders of the first revolutionary generation made a
conscious choice for socialism and profess to like it. They have also been able to preserve it, sometimes despite many difficulties. If they want the socialist regime to endure after their death, perhaps the safest rule of thumb for them to follow would be to try to replicate their own character among their “chronological followers.”

Through memory and the method of imitation much seems to be made in Cuba to replicate the character of the main protagonists of the Cuban Revolution. Ernesto Guevara in his aforementioned essay finds in the Rebel Army fighters a glimpse of the “man and woman of the future” and points to the propagation of their heroic attitude as the principle to follow in creating the new morality. Since his death, Guevara himself has become the quintessential example of the new Cuban man, to the extent that the schoolchildren pledge every morning that they “will be like Che.” The epic episodes of the revolutionary war are well remembered through their commemoration as national holidays. Part of their commemoration consists of their replication, even if symbolic. Every July 26, the best elementary school students of Santiago de Cuba “take” the Moncada barracks. Every beginning of January marches recall the victory caravan of the Rebel Army to Havana. On December 2, the landing of the Granma yacht is commemorated as Revolutionary Armed Forces Day. The commemoration does not include sea voyages from Mexico to Oriente, though this voyage has been replicated occasionally by groups of Cuban youth. At least once in their life hundred of thousands of Cubans climb the Turquino peak, the highest in Cuba and located in the area of operation of the Rebel Army, where significant events during the revolutionary struggle took place. In remembering and imitating the epic events of the revolutionary struggle, those who did not participate in them come to know better those who did and
the circumstances under which they fought. By knowing them better and (symbolically) sharing their experiences, they can increase their likeness to them.

*The Problem of Beginnings*

Yet for any group that achieved its power through rebellion, an exact replication of its character among the youth—even if possible—would be too dangerous a principle to follow in trying to perpetuate its rule for generations. The “problem of beginnings” looms large against this rule of thumb. Those Cubans who made the revolution attained power by rebelling against the incumbent socioeconomic and political order under which they grew up. If they transmit their rebellious spirit to the next generation, there is always the danger that the next generation will rebel against their rule, just as they rebelled against the rule of their time. Not for nothing are revolutions so often likened to Saturn, who devoured his own children out of fear of their insubordination.

The founders of the Cuban socialist regime have tried to mediate their own “problem of beginnings” through reason. The telling of history is the method par excellence in the service of reason. Through the telling of Cuban history, those Cubans who participated in the revolutionary struggle and instituted the socialist regime teach their chronological followers about the ills of the old society and the marvels of the new one. In their first contact with the history of the Cuban Revolution in the Cuban schools, children ages nine to ten read in their textbook that life in Cuba before the revolution was plagued by undernourishment, unemployment, and racial and gender discrimination.13 Peasants were pulled away from their lands, children had neither schools nor hospitals, and people could not speak their minds. The law favored “exploiters” and foreign interests, and Cuban governors were subordinated to the United States. With the revolution,
Cubans “achieved their long-awaited liberty.” Now “Cuba is a free and sovereign Republic,” where “oppression, hunger, unemployment, illiteracy and discrimination” no longer exist. Rather than rebellion, Cubans who have come of age after the revolution have the historical mission to “maintain the conquests” achieved and to further develop the socialist regime. With greater historical detail and more elaborate data, this message repeats itself several times in the schooling system as students continue studying the history of their revolution in higher grades.14

Reverence

If believed, this interpretation of history cannot but create a mix of sentiments such as admiration, veneration, respect, and gratitude, that is, reverence, toward the persons who overthrew the old regime and instituted the new. Those who substitute clean for corrupt government and convert oppression into justice and subordination into independence are great men and women, the more so when so many difficulties stand in their way. Thanks to them, by implication, Cubans born or raised under the revolutionary regime live in a good rather than an evil society.

That at least the leaders of the Communist youth organization (UJC) appear to revere their revolutionary elders comes to the fore in their writings and speeches. In newspaper editorials they often express admiration for the “exemplary generation” that built the revolutionary regime, “unbreakable, firm in action and thinking, altruist, of whose fertile legacy we are honored.”15 At youth congress after youth congress, all them invariably attended by historical leaders of the Cuban revolution, the young delegates thank their elders for “having given us the political weapons, the moral weapons, and the physical weapons that we have to defend the Revolution.”16 And they declare themselves
Reverence fosters obedience. The leaders of the Cuban Revolution claim the right to ask obedience from their youth because they see themselves working for the future, that is, for the younger generations. “We do not work for us; we work for you,” said Fidel in a typical statement to his audience in a meeting with university students. “Therefore we have the right to demand from you,” he continued, “to expect the best from you.”

The young Communists by and large correspond. It seems, at times, that at the slightest request the leaders of the Communist Youth do the bidding of the high-ranking revolutionary leaders. When the revolutionary leadership decided to finance economic development through record sugarcane harvests, the young Communists invariably organized the most productive cane-cutter brigades. When the historical leadership decided to engage in international military campaigns, the young Communists fought heroically in faraway lands. When more recently Fidel declared an energy revolution, the young Communists substituted fluorescent for incandescent light bulbs all over Cuba. Communist Youth leaders say they have a “commitment to Fidel, to Raúl, and to the historic generation of the revolution” that impels their behavior. Making the historic leaders happy by fulfilling their requests is their satisfaction.

A generational division of labor thus develops. Drawing an organic analogy, the generation that made the revolution is the brain and the generations that grew up under the revolution are the body. Hardly ever was this differentiation of tasks more clearly uttered in speech than when the chief of revolutionary orientation of the CC of the PCC asked from the delegates to the 1972 UJC congress to be “doers” rather than “thinkers.” In his words, the Cuban exemplary youth should consist “not of philosophers but of
fighters, of builders of socialism and communism.” The symmetrical correspondence of the Communist youth to advice such as this is evident in one of its slogans of the time (used until the early 1980s), which literally begged the “commander in chief” to tell them what to do. “Wherever, whatever and whatsoever,” the slogan went, “Commander in Chief, give us command!”

If not for the biological tendency of the older to retire and die sooner than the younger, this generational division of labor could work well for the long-term endurance of the Cuban socialist regime. It has its clear advantages, for with tasks so clearly differentiated, time and other resources are not wasted in endless discussions between persons of different ages, who may see the world differently, over who decides what and what to do next. When reverence among the young is strong and their obedience to their elders ensured, generational conflict does not arise, so-called generational gaps do not develop, let alone a rebellion of the youth. And yet, in so much obedience there are clear dangers for the longevity of political regimes. Much obedience can easily slip into dependence. Dependent continuing generations may lose their way when left by themselves. When their elders are no longer around to tell them what to do, the leaders of the generations accustomed to obey may feel confused, unsure, and lacking such decision-making skills as confidence in themselves, creativity, and initiative, which are imperative for giving effective responses to the challenges of their time in a way consistent with preserving the ruling political and socioeconomic regime they have inherited from their elders and within which they have grown up.

**Autonomy**

Evidently aware of these dangers, at least a few high-ranking revolutionary leaders have
tried to palliate the possible ill side effects of youth reverence by stimulating alongside it such skills and qualities as initiative, creativity, self-esteem, and self-judgment among the young. The possession of those skills and qualities among the new generations may help develop their autonomy, that is, their ability to control their own fate. Just as reverence is “that sentiment…which binds a generation to those who have preceded it,” autonomy prepares a generation to build a future of its own.\textsuperscript{23} Chief among these leaders was Ernesto Guevara, who openly chastised the Cuban Communist Youth organization of his time for lacking creative spirit and for being “too docile, too respectful…not decisive in addressing its own problems.”\textsuperscript{24} Likewise, in the speeches of Fidel Castro, the intention to create “young people who think,” who “accept nothing of which they are not convinced,” and who “learn by themselves to be revolutionary,” has always been a recurrent theme.\textsuperscript{25}

Here, however, that the Communist Youth leaders declare themselves “revolutionary by conviction and not simple repeaters of slogans, who do not think, who do not analyze, who wait always for orientations to act” speaks more of their ability to repeat the speech of their elders than of their possession of skills such as initiative, creativity, and self-judgment.\textsuperscript{26} Nor does their behavior manifest their possession of such skills as abundantly as it manifests their reverence and obedience to their elders. Given the dominant personality of the political leaders of the revolutionary generation, it seems by and large that the political leaders of the new generations find much security and comfort in their shadow, agreeing rather than debating, following rather than proposing.

Perhaps for this reason the political leadership’s concern with increasing youth autonomy has seemed to be on the rise since the mid-end 1980s. Youth passivity,
apathy, and lack of initiative certainly did not escape criticism in the critical atmosphere of the rectification process. Some policy responses to these problems seem evident. Study methods in schools and universities have been revised constantly with the stated purpose of stimulating “creative thinking, active participation of students, more independent work, and a dialectical approach to problems.”27 Spaces have been opened for students on school boards and for representatives of high school and university student organizations in the national assembly.28 More recently, under the umbrella title of “Battle of Ideas,” the leaders and former recent leaders of the UJC (best known as the Taliban) have played an unprecedented role in directing the revolution’s current ideological campaigns. While welcoming youth representatives into decision-making bodies says nothing about their real participation in policy formulation, it reveals the leadership’s disposition, at least formally, to share decision-making with the youth. To the degree to which taking part in decision making requires thinking (of whatever sort), and the related information-processing and self-judgment abilities, through participating in decision making young leaders are likely to develop these abilities.

Some glimpses of autonomy appear. At the 1987 UJC congress, delegates finally denounced the “paternalism” of their party elders, who assign them tasks without asking their opinion, kill their initiatives, and block their promotion to higher posts.29 Even if this congress took place after Fidel signaled criticism as the order of the day, youth leaders nevertheless showed some ability to reflect upon themselves by criticizing their wrongdoings, ranging from the widespread “formalism” or insincere behavior in their practices to the numerous exemptions from compulsory military service given for figurative academic merit and faked medical illnesses.30 The demands raised by the
delegates to the congress of the Federation of University Students (FEU) earlier that year, in turn, helped shape the policy on revamping study methods and programs.\(^{31}\) At the same time these organizations also showed a degree of creativity and originality in devising and implementing the so-called new working methods, which attempted to reach young audiences by combining political events with cultural and recreational activities like concerts in open spaces and dances in discotheques.\(^{32}\)

While these examples concern the most politically active young, other young have gone further in taking initiative and in showing creativity and criticism. Creators by vocation, the new generations in the visual arts have more than once since the late 1980s challenged political authorities by emphasizing the “individual” rather than the “collective,” as well as by experimenting with unconventionally erotic and satirical forms of expression.\(^{33}\) Young musicians, for their part, have ventured into new genres for Cuban interpreters such as rap and rock, their lyrics often touching on taboo issues such as racial discrimination.\(^{34}\)

And yet, much youth autonomy is not without risk in ensuring the long-term continuation of the Cuban socialist regime—for autonomy can easily slide into irreverence. Irreverent continuing generations might step away from the socialist path out of an overdose of confidence rather than for a lack of it. With their elders no longer around to punish or else to prevent what they would consider unacceptable behavior, much initiative, creativity, self-esteem, and self-judgment may awaken among the leaders of the new generations a desire “to open a new route, which has not yet been followed by any one,” even at the price of breaking with the sacred cows of their venerated predecessors.\(^{35}\) For that not to happen, the founding leaders of the Cuban
Revolution have tried to influence the impending choice of the new generations—for or against socialism—by appealing, in great part, to their reason.

The Conceptual Basis of Socialism

Hence we meet a second moment of reason in the attempt of the Cuban political leadership to perpetuate its revolutionary deed for generations and the one specific to “socialism” as such. In order to let the new generations of Cubans “understand” or rather “discover” the intrinsic high value of their socialist system of production, the Cubans who made the revolution have in part taught them “Marxism.” Built upon the writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, this theoretical basis has always been broad enough to allow for different, even conflicting, interpretations. A look at the dominant strands of Marxism in Cuba and how they have been taught in universities and other centers of higher education over time may provide further insight on the unfolding attempt of the revolutionary generation to convince its successor generations of the desirability of having a socialist system of production.

Since the declaration of the socialist character of the Cuban Revolution, the conformation of any dominant Marxist view in Cuba has always been made through the interaction between international and institutional relations. Until the collapse of the Soviet Union, the relations between the two countries, or rather between their respective leaders, always constrained to a degree the relations between the Cuban political leadership and the Cuban “organic intellectuals,” in a Gramscian sense, whose commitment to the incumbent social order is without doubt and who play a critical role in its maintenance through generating and disseminating the kind of knowledge needed to make it acceptable, or at least bearable, to the rest of society. Throughout this
period, the dominant strand of Marxism in Cuba always varied in tandem with the bilateral relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba.

Conflicting Views

Throughout the 1960s, when Cubans were both building socialism by trial and error and testing the appropriate distance to take from Moscow, oscillations occurred in the favoritism of the political direction towards one of two developing strands of Marxism in universities and other centers of higher education. The 1962 university reform established the Marxist hegemony in universities and by extension in social thinking. Within this hegemony two main views can be differentiated according to the apparent politico-intellectual alignments toward the Soviet theoretical orthodoxies that were reaching Cubans through foreign assessors, books, and didactic materials of diverse kind, as well as through Cuban students returning from Soviet bloc countries in Europe. The *reverent* position proposed to build socialism in Cuba by imitating, adopting, or at most adapting formulas that were proved effective—according to the criteria of the time—in the Soviet Union and other socialist states. The *autonomous* position, while hardly anti-Soviet, wanted to incorporate methods of its own creation in the construction of socialism in Cuba and also to create theoretical understandings based on the Cuban experience, which would put Cuban Marxism—in Fernando Martínez’s felicitous phrase—“at the height of the Cuban Revolution.”

In the relatively free atmosphere needed for testing alternatives, the two views developed somewhat separately—each with its own epicenter of theoretical formulation and dissemination—yet at times also clashed with each other. In the “Great Debate,” high-ranking policymakers like the National Bank president, Marcelo Fernández Font,
and the agriculture minister, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, argued for the suitability of the Soviet “system of economic calculation” for managing Cuban enterprises. Against them, Industry Minister Ernesto Guevara proposed the “budgetary financial system” based on his own analysis of the characteristics and needs of Cuban enterprises. In the “polemic on the manuals,” Humberto Pérez and Félix de la Uz from the schools of Revolutionary Instruction (ERI and EBIR) argued for the convenience of Soviet didactic materials for teaching Marxism to Cuban laypeople. Confronting them, Aurelio Alonso from the University of Havana philosophy department disputed the usefulness of these materials, arguing that because of their uncritical perspective they are inherently anti-Marxist.

Given the incompatibilities between these views, as definitions were reached one of them had to become hegemonic. By 1966 the autonomous view gained momentum as the whole Cuban economy adopted a version of the budgetary financial system and as the second national congress of philosophy endorsed the views on the study of Marxism promoted by the University of Havana philosophy department. Under the direction of members of this department, in February 1967 the first issue of Pensamiento Crítico came into being. By giving voice to different strands of Marxist thinking, the journal purported to create an authentic Cuban Marxist thought. That same month the Political Bureau of the PCC announced the temporary suspension of the publication of the Party’s theoretical journal, Cuba Socialista, precisely for lacking a “theoretical elaboration of its own.” The ERI were closed in 1968. Their main organ of expression, Teoría y Práctica, ceased publication in December 1967.

This momentum, however, was short-lived. In the eyes of those engaged in creating
an autonomous strand of Cuban Marxism, their chance ended before they could fully mature their views.46 As a result of the failure to reach the production goal of 10 million tons of sugarcane in 1970, the Cuban leadership reconsidered its views and concluded that the Cuban Revolution had sinned from arrogance and idealism in trying to build socialism by methods of its own. “We thought we were approaching communist forms of production and distribution,” expressed the main report to the first party congress, “whereas in reality we were drifting farther and farther away from the correct methods of building socialism.” Time had come “to make use of the wealth of experience accumulated by other people in the building of socialism.”47 The ensuing reverent phase lasted for about fifteen years from the cane-cutting failure.

Reverent Hegemony

The event that marks the starting hegemony of the reverent view is the First National Congress on Education and Culture, held in April 1971. Aside from targeting homosexuality and extravagance (whatever its exact meaning) as aberrant behaviors, its declaration takes issue with “pseudo-leftist intellectuals who aspire to represent the critical conscience of society” and who “pretend to be Marxists but are against the socialist countries.”48 As if to make clear where intellectuals of this type gathered in Cuba, that same year the University of Havana philosophy department was disbanded and Pensamiento Crítico ceased publishing, its last number appearing in August.

Beginning in 1976, the “social science cycle” was introduced to the study plans of higher education.49 The plans dictated a uniform curriculum for the teaching of Marxism to all students in the system of higher education, composed of the Leninist triad of philosophy (with the division between dialectic and historical materialism), political
economy (of capitalism and socialism), and scientific communism/socialism (the term varying according to the accent of the time). The textbooks for these courses were the didactic materials imported from the Soviet Union or translated from Soviet authors or in a few cases their copycats written by Cuban authors. Completing the cycle was a course on the history of the Cuban working class and the Cuban Revolution.

Faculty and students in universities often recount that the reverent view was promoted with “extreme radicalism” under which there was “no room for doubt,” and therefore, as René Descartes would add, no possibility of generating new knowledge. Official policies projected great certainty about what was the truly Marxist “scientific” interpretation of the world, and therefore what was left was to reveal it to those who did not know it yet. Given this certainty, through the study of Marxism professionals were trained to either eulogize what existed or apologize for it, in Cuba as well as in the other socialist regimes—neither to question nor to improve it. Whereas for its schematic introduction in teaching programs and the clarity of messages conveyed this view may have contributed to the systematic propagation of Marxism in Cuba, with the passing of time it became more and more clear that the drawbacks by far outweighed the gains. The credibility of the study materials was undermined by their inconsistency with real events in general, and with Cuban history in particular. Whereas according to the study materials feudalism precedes capitalism in a rather mechanistic evolving of history, feudalism was by and large missing from Cuban history as well as from most of the American continent. Whereas according to the study materials socialist revolutions are driven by a party of the working class, whatever the contribution of worker movements to the Cuban Revolution, it did not correspond to this script.
It is not clear, in any case, whether and how many students and faculty accepted in earnest this view. If a bit of inherent ability to autonomous thinking is credited to persons who after an ostensibly rigorous process were selected to learn and teach in universities, then probably not many. They may rather have developed a double morality, behaving at formal forums as good believers in what they preached or heard in class, but at the same time laughing in the more informal forums at the forced succession of stages throughout history and dubbing their course on Scientific Communism “Science Fiction,” because, in the words of one professor, “many times the utopian and idealized worldview preached was very far from the concrete reality.” Not coincidentally, therefore, the “double morality” was a main target of the process of rectification, which, as far as social thinking is concerned, launched an authentic crusade against “dogmatism,” or the uncritical and ahistorical acceptation of truths.

Against Dogmatism

This crusade can be traced back to Fidel’s speech on October 8, 1987, in commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of Commander Ernesto “Che” Guevara’s falling in combat. In this speech he made a forceful call for Guevara’s economic thinking to be studied in Cuba and elsewhere, including the other socialist countries, just as Cubans read “many texts on many themes” produced there. Though Ernesto Guevara was by no means a forgotten figure in Cuba by this or any other time, hereafter intellectuals and political leaders alike increasingly evoked his figure in ways that subverted the reverent view and by implication criticized the dominant practices in the Soviet Union and other East European socialist regimes. In line with what Fidel had said in his speech, throughout the process of rectification the figure of Che was evoked to
assert the rights of Cubans to be and think differently from the rest of the socialist countries to a degree, especially as the Soviet Union proceeded with the perestroika process of reform.\textsuperscript{55}

After the Soviet collapse, the self-assertion claims turned into sheer irreverence, more from intellectuals than from political leaders, toward the former “big brother” and other allies.\textsuperscript{56} Articles and public statements since the Soviet collapse have repeatedly criticized the former socialist states for their “bureaucratism,” “dogmatism,” and lack of political education, at the same time that they have proposed reading Che as preventive medicine for these illnesses.\textsuperscript{57} Supporting both the diagnosis and the prescription are not only Che’s public statements and writings, but also his private correspondence, unpublished prior to the demise of the other socialist regimes, in which he explicitly mocks the Marxist study materials imported from the Soviet Union by calling them “Soviet bricks which have the inconvenience of not letting you think.”\textsuperscript{58}

\textit{The Sciences of Man}

In the social sciences, the crusade against dogmatism has resulted in some “opening.”\textsuperscript{59} Official documents during the rectification process repeatedly criticized the social sciences and the humanities for “lacking authentic debate and for their tendency to repeat supposed truths pre-established by others,” while calling upon these disciplines to “resurge with strength and fulfill a greater role in the generation of knowledge and the transformation of social realities.”\textsuperscript{60} Aiming toward that end, new research institutes such as the Institute of Cuban History and the Center for the Study of Che Guevara have been created, and others like the Center of Psychological and Sociological Research (CIPS) and the Institute of Philosophy (IF) have been increasingly employed by the state
in trying to respond to concrete social necessities. Between 1995 and 1996, five journals of relevance to the social sciences either appeared for the first time or reappeared after being discontinued for lack of resources during the early years of the special period. Between 1989 and the application of the so-called study plans “C,” universities have received more freedom to choose their own programs and content of study in the social sciences according to the needs, interests, and abilities of faculty and students. Through these and similar policies, the climate was created for the ongoing widening diversity of research topics and of views expressed by social thinkers.

The evolution of the discipline of sociology illustrates this widening. With the creation of the Ministry of Higher Education in 1976 and the introduction of the social sciences cycle, the only sociology department in Cuban universities closed under the conception that this discipline is comprehended within historical materialism. Practitioners say, however, that in practice a narrowing of perspective occurred. Research on topics such as social stratification, downward social mobility, generations, civil society, social conflict, and the like was not supported by a policy view that could not recognize them as phenomena (let alone important) under socialism, and therefore it was not done. Social problems such as youth alienation and gender, racial, and class inequalities did not disappear, however. In a May 1984 document, the Political Bureau of the Communist Party finally addressed the resulting detachment of the social sciences from reality. That same year, the department of sociology in the University of Havana opened again. After 1986 sociology was taught as a specialization (minor) in other disciplines within the faculty of philosophy and history, and since 1990 it has been reestablished as a major program. Today three universities in Cuba offer a bachelor’s
degree in sociology and the University of Havana offers in addition master’s level and doctoral programs. Along with the restitution of the career of sociology, research on its classical areas of inquiry has been promoted and evidently used by policymakers in tackling concrete social problems. While aggregate social research may have influenced policymaking only indirectly—as elsewhere—practitioners have been able to point to specific policies on several issues, such as religion, the young, and education, which were preceded by recommendations of social research.

While a trend in the same direction has occurred in all other disciplines in the social sciences and the humanities, including economics and political science, these two disciplines at once seem to stand at the shortest end of the opening. Policy recommendations are clearly limited by the predominance of state property and central management in economics and the Communist Party in politics. When the outer edges of the opening have been tested, these limits have appeared. In March 1996, for instance, a Political Bureau document presented by Raúl to and approved by the Central Committee, singled out “several comrades” within the Center of the Study of the Americas for collaborating with U.S. interests, after economists within this center began speaking favorably about a transition to a “decentralized market economy with a high level of state participation.” The “restructuring” of the center followed. To this day Cuban universities do not offer a major degree in political science, and taboo topics exist, especially as research nears the political elite. If the Communist Party and the sociological, psychological, and institutional dynamics among its members have ever been researched by the Cuban “organic intellectuals,” the results have never been made available to outside observers, for whom information remains restricted.
Autonomy by Default

In spite of the many social problems appearing in the special period and the role that the social sciences have played in finding solutions, policy-oriented research has not been the only nor perhaps the principal task played by the Cuban social sciences in the aftermath of the disappearance of the “socialist camp.” Theoretical elaboration has been an equally or more demanding task. While increasingly questioned since 1986, the reverent view was ultimately removed by the flowing of events. The “Kostantinov”—the textbook for the basic philosophy course for all students in institutes of higher education as mandated by the study plans up to 1989—declared that “imperialism” was in crisis and that the “socialist regimes” headed by the Soviet Union were in line with the direction of historical progress and therefore destined to become hegemonic all around the world. Since the status of “science” was ascribed to Marxism, these and similar assertions claimed the status of “scientific law.” When the Soviet Union and other socialist regimes collapsed, what the reverent view specified as impossible phenomena thus happened. In light of its unequivocal refutation, heretofore (true and faking) believers confronted the dilemma of either to dispense with their theory or to reformulate it in such a way that it could account for the new events.

The dilemma was resolved by the decision of the political authorities to “stick” with socialism. The theoretical reformulation required for its rational justification has been taking place since the early 1990s. The social sciences have contributed their share. Once again, both Cuban political leaders and intellectuals have been engaged in constructing an autonomous strand of Marxism. In contrast to the 1960s, this time not as
an option between two alternatives, but, under the transformed geopolitical realities, as
the only possible option to base the socialist system of production on reason.

Repeated invitations to reread the classics of Marxism in the pages of Cuban
journals and newspapers mark a logical, if not strictly chronological, beginning to this
reformulation. By the passages chosen and the interpretations offered, it turns out that
Marxism as understood by its founders and highest authorities is a quite malleable and
open-ended theory. Marx himself even denied being a “Marxist” in order to pre
“stiff” interpretations of his writings.77 For Engels, “Marxism” was a method as opposed
to a doctrine, and for Lenin it was a guide for action rather than a ready-to-be-applied
recipe.78

Armando Hart, who as past minister of education and culture and as current director
of the Martí studies program has throughout his trajectory stood rather permanently at
this intersection of power and knowledge, has drawn an analogy between Marxism and
mathematics, according to which Marx “invented the tables for summing, resting,
multiplying and dividing” for the social sciences, but the solution to every particular
problem depends on the applier.79 In his opinion, the application of the Marxist method
in the Soviet Union and other socialist regimes was characterized by an economic
reductionism that sought answers to all questions in the objective or material basis. This
application was wanting, for experience has demonstrated that changes in the material
basis by themselves are not sufficient to produce a subsequent change in human
behavior. The underestimation of the subjective or superstructure factors was the
theoretical error with the most tragic consequences for the unraveling of these regimes.
Yet the economic and social conditions that gave rise to the socialist regimes have by no
means disappeared. With capitalism unchecked by a rival bloc, its evolution is causing more socioeconomic, demographic, and ecological strains worldwide than ever before in history. As the most powerful theoretical criticism of capitalism, Marxism is thus not only highly relevant for explaining the world surrounding us, but its ethics of equality and solidarity are key for the forging of any better alternative. If this alternative is to incorporate the lessons of past experience, its sustaining theory must now pay due attention to the subjective factor, or to the role that men and women do play in the making of their own history.

In line with Hart’s humanist rather than materialist interpretation, over the pages of academic journals the search for an authentic Cuban brand of Marxism has expanded to figures and authors forgotten, ostracized, or banned by the Soviet Union and therefore of little or no diffusion in Cuba during the hegemony of the reverent view. These figures include Leon Trotsky and Rosa Luxemburg, but especially the so-called superstructure authors for their emphasis on the relative autonomy of human consciousness, among them Georg Lukács and, above anybody else, Antonio Gramsci. Adding emphasis to the subject, even the emancipatory links between Marxism and psychoanalysis have been explored, as well as the points of contact between Marxism and postmodernism. While necessarily eclectic in the topics chosen, sources and references, and the ideas expressed in the journals, this theoretical reformulation is taking place within the Marxist hegemony and has a common denominator in placing men and women rather than their surrounding environment at the center of their own making.

A similar yet much less complex shift in theoretical orientation can be identified in the study programs and didactic materials used in universities, though much uncertainty
during the early years of the special period made them change frequently and lack of resources has caused lags in both the discontinuation of the old and the introduction of the new textbooks, the latter usually written by collectives of faculty members. According to a high officer in the Marxism department in the Ministry of Higher Education, the changes introduced in the programs seek to present Marxism as a coherent whole rather than in fragmented parts, to link teachings to the specific disciplines of students, and to incorporate more materials of Cuban intellectual history. The distinction between dialectic and historical materialism has thus been abolished, professors have now the discretion to choose additional literature and adapt textbook content to specific programs and abilities of students, and more writings by or about Cuban historical personages such as Martí, Che, Fidel, and others have been included in the curricula. As in the reverent period, the common social science curriculum for students in all disciplines now includes courses on philosophy, political economy, and Cuban history, though each with a rather different content except for the political economy of capitalism, perhaps under the criterion that its underlying mechanics have not changed much. There is no longer a course on “scientific socialism/communism,” which has been replaced by a course on sociopolitical theory taught exclusively to students enrolled in programs within the social and economic sciences.

In content the changes in university study materials are consistent with both the rejection of the reverent view and the renewed attention to the superstructure. The textbook for political economy of socialism, for instance, from the outset clarifies to its readers that what they have in their hands “is not a manual,” in an explicit and somewhat belittling allusion (among many) to the materials of study used in the past. More
important, students at this level no longer learn that socialism is unbeatable as revealed by “scientific” laws on the unfolding of history, but rather that its continuation in their country “depends on the subjective factor, on our moral and ideological clarity.”

Arguably, to the same extent in which what is more in accord with reality is also more believable, arguments that start from the premise that the future of the socialist system of production in Cuba depends on the determination and commitment of Cubans themselves sound more convincing in times of socialist debacle and crisis than anything promising predestined victory. For this reason and in the special period at least, even if eclectic and unconcluded, the subjective viewpoint has the potential to frame more reasonable arguments for socialism in Cuba than ever did the viewpoint prevailing during the “three black quinquennia,” as Jorge Luis Acanda has termed the period from 1971 to 1986.

The “Praxical” Basis of Socialism

Intelligent theoretical elaboration transmitted through speech in classrooms and printed materials may convince the leaders of the new generations, based on their own understandings of Marxism and socialism, to follow the socialist path traced by their elders. Yet it may not be enough for ensuring the long-term continuation of this path. Theoretical argumentation alone may well create coffee-shop Marxists and revolutionaries, able to make an erudite point on the suitability of the socialist system of production to Cuba and even to all the countries of the world, but not necessarily with the courage and determination to defend this system beyond the rhetorical space, whenever and wherever needed in the face of difficulties. Cuban political leaders know well that full commitment to socialist values and beliefs can neither be transmitted nor
formed through spoken and written language alone. Their insistence that theory must be complemented by praxis, that is by theoretically informed action, simply cannot be overstated. A second moment of character in the attempt of the political leadership to perpetuate its revolutionary deed for generations thus takes place through the framing of some of the most important life experiences of practically the whole population raised under the revolution. This framing stems logically from basic Marxist notions about justice, freedom, and solidarity and has a stated purpose of promoting a socialist morality.

*Justice*

In the schooling system, for instance, the main directing principle is the unity of study and work. From preschools to universities, Cuban students do manual labor as part of their study programs. The amount and kind of manual labor varies, from watering seeds and plants in the gardens of elementary schools to tasks related to the professional training of students in universities. The highlight programs oriented by the work-study principle take place in the midlevel education stage, ages twelve to eighteen roughly speaking. In secondary and pre-university schools (more or less parallel to high schools in the American system), students from cities either go to the countryside for about forty-five days each academic year to study and work in agriculture or are enrolled in boarding schools located in the countryside where they similarly study for half of the day and work in agriculture for the other half. Carried out systematically since the late 1960s and early 1970s, these programs are considered by their promoters as both the realization of Martí’s vision of Cuban students holding the pen “after noon in the schools; but in the morning, the hoe,” and in correspondence with the work-study
principle, as “the only formula of communist education.”

The communist educational purpose claimed by the work-study principle finds sustenance both in Marx’s statements on the division of intellectual and manual labor as the source of class societies and therefore of all exploitation and in his depictions of the communist society where this division no longer exists. By applying the work-study principle, the Cuban schooling system at least heuristically eliminates this division and by so doing advances values associated with justice as distributive equality or as the end of exploitation in labor relations. Assuming that people who do or have done manual labor are likely to value it as much or even more than intellectual labor, citizens educated in the work-study principle may keep wage differentials between intellectual and manual labor low, as well as attempt to even the standards of living between the city and the countryside.

*Freedom*

Work, of course, is not only part of the study programs in the Cuban schooling system but also the main activity that most persons do for most of their lives. In a sense, what the schooling system in Cuba does, as anywhere else, is to prepare people to enter the labor force. As the main activity of humans, work distinguishes between societies or historical stages for Marx. According to his distinction between the realm of necessity and the realm of freedom, whereas in all past societies most people worked to obtain the bare minimum to satisfy their basic material necessities, in a socialist society an ever-growing amount of work will be done beyond what is dictated by material necessity. With the basic necessities fulfilled, people will feel free to create.

From the very first year of the Cuban Revolution in power, policies have tried to
approximate the “realm of freedom” by promoting work in ways that do not involve material rewards.\textsuperscript{92} Besides a wage and other material benefits, the remuneration system in the workplaces includes moral incentives such as the public recognition for a worker or a group of workers as outstanding. Work that involves no external rewards at all, or voluntary labor, is often done in the framework of the mass organizations. When done en masse, as in the national journeys of voluntary labor, it purports to represent the maximum expression of a people that is “free to create.” If a reward exists at all for voluntary labor it must be internal, or in Marx’s system of human motivations, “joy.”

How to create joy from work so that it motivates more work has always been a main concern of socialist practitioners. For Ernesto Guevara, voluntary labor may be initially motivated by social compulsion, at least for some, which becomes habit as it is repeated several times, and eventually turns into “joy” as workers perceive the fruits of their labor.\textsuperscript{93} He did not live long enough, however, to see how deeply people could be disappointed when their voluntary effort does not bear fruit. Much resource misallocation and the general disorganization that prevailed in the journeys of voluntary labor during the 1960s indeed seem to have wasted the initial willingness of many to work voluntarily and therefore to have contributed to growing rates of absenteeism and lower productivity in the taxing voluntary journeys held during the 1970 harvest.\textsuperscript{94} With the willingness of workers exhausted, incentives to work changed. Neither moral incentives nor voluntary labor disappeared in the years between 1971 and 1985. The former, however, were less used than in the earlier period and the latter was mostly fused with material rewards in hybrid forms of labor, such as the construction microbrigades of the early 1970s (and then from 1986), and the several contingents of
youth, students, workers, and soldiers which did “crash-works” in infrastructure.\textsuperscript{95}

Since the launching of the general offensive against capitalist methods in the framework of rectification, moral incentives and voluntary labor have once again been emphasized. Some lessons from the experiences of the 1960s seem to have been drawn. Newspaper invitations, for instance, call to the voluntary journeys only laborers strictly necessary in both number and skill to do the assigned tasks efficiently.\textsuperscript{96} And because organization makes a difference in the results of work, to the extent that the voluntary journeys have been better organized than in the past, they may have increased the chances for the voluntary workers to see the schools, hospitals, or sports facilities that they contribute to create. To the extent that the development of intrinsic rewards from work does indeed depend on the results of work, better results of voluntary labor do increase the chances to produce the expected joy of workers.

\textit{Human Solidarity}

In theory, all young Cuban males spend from two to three years in the army.\textsuperscript{97} In practice, most of them do. As in any national army, their military training teaches them discipline, friendship, courage, and patriotism to the point of ensuring their willingness to defend the motherland with their life if necessary, both from external aggressors and from internal threats to the incumbent socioeconomic and political order.\textsuperscript{98} Since December 1963, the party has had a presence in the army. Party and Communist Youth members work as political assessors in the units. They give political guidance to the ranks, which includes the study of Marxism and the speeches of the Cuban revolutionary leadership.\textsuperscript{99} Yet it is through the frequent engagement of the army in operational tasks that military service seems to play an important role in the formation of the new
generations. Army units have always been involved in tasks such as voluntary labor and prevention before and relief after natural disasters. During the Cold War, the army was also constantly deployed to missions abroad in the name of international solidarity.

Consistent with Marx’s characterization of capitalism as worldwide in scope and with his famous urging for the workers of the world to unite for its removal, Fidel has famously defined internationalism as “the most beautiful essence of Marxism-Leninism and its ideals of solidarity and fraternity among the peoples.”

By losing his life while practicing international solidarity, Ernesto Guevara set the standard for how far an exemplary revolutionary should go with this practice.

From 1963, when the first international contingent of the Cuban Revolutionary Army (FAR) arrived to Algeria, to 1991, when the last military contingent returned home, hundreds of thousands of Cuban volunteers served in international military missions. In Angola alone served some 300,000 military personnel, and over 2,000 of them lost their lives. The numbers do not include some 50,000 personnel in civilian tasks, nor do these include the undetermined number of Cubans who militarily and nonmilitarily sought to foster insurrections in Latin American countries and actively supported their allies in armed conflicts throughout the Middle East, East Asia, and the rest of Africa.

Although the post-1989 geopolitical realities forced the Cuban government to step away from international military campaigns, tens of thousand of Cuban doctors, nurses, engineers, technicians, and teachers have continued rendering services at no charge to populations in need the world over. In June 2007, for instance, an estimated 42,000 or more Cubans were fulfilling internationalist duties in about 101 countries. Of them,
some 32,000 in seventy-six countries were health workers.\textsuperscript{103} To these numbers must be added the physicians who have assisted in Cuba hundred of thousands of sick from other countries free of charge and the professors who have trained more than 47,600 foreign students, from some 126 countries, who have graduated from Cuban universities in about thirty-three programs since 1961.\textsuperscript{104}

Irrespective of any Realpolitik consideration that must surely apply to the Cuban government’s internationalist practices, the exercise of internationalism, or the extension of free help to peoples of other nationalities, is also a “revolutionary necessity,” in the words of Ernesto Guevara, for its educative value in strengthening the selflessness and solidarity characteristic of the socialist morality. Consonant with this educative aim, participants in internationalist contingents often speak of their internationalist experience as a “school,” where they developed their sense of human solidarity through the contact with populations in need.\textsuperscript{105} If so or otherwise, the practice of internationalism clearly fosters at the same time more practical and immediate understandings that may help strengthen support for the socialist regime. By comparing life in Cuba to the “unbelievable misery” of the people they help in their missions, participants in internationalist contingents are more likely to feel satisfied with their own standard of living in Cuba.\textsuperscript{106} Relating to others by giving rather than taking, they may also develop a feeling of pride in their country and in their ruling socioeconomic and political system.

\textit{Summing Up Praxis}

Internationalism, moral incentives, voluntary labor, and the work-study principle in the system of formal education—all of them have in common the intention to promote the
socialist morality through life experiences. In theory, Cubans raised under the revolution would develop out of their own experiences at school, work, and in the army and the missions abroad values such as justice as equality, freedom from insatiable material want and therefore to create, and solidarity with the weak in the amounts needed to perpetuate the socialist system of production for long. To the extent that these experiences succeed in promoting the pursued values, Cubans of the new generations would feel committed to the project started by their revolutionary elders not only out of the reverence they feel toward them, but also, and mainly, out of their own experiences while plowing the fields in secondary school; while cutting cane, building hospitals, or cleaning the streets in the journeys of voluntary labor; or while serving the wretched of the earth in Angola, Ethiopia, Haiti, or Pakistan. The higher their commitment to the values forged through actions such as these, the greater their expected determination to follow the route started by their elders when these finally leave the political scene.

**Is the Battle Won?**

Whether, in the final account, the new man exists in Cuba is a question both necessary and banal. It is necessary because only by asking it can we gain some insight into the critical factor that will determine the fate of Cuban socialism in the long run. But lacking any clear-cut depiction of the features of this man, we can know whether he exists only by the results. The question is thus banal because only when we know whether socialism in Cuba has or has not lasted for generations, will it be possible to discuss on firm empirical grounds whether or not a man compatible with the long-term endurance of a socialist regime has been produced in Cuba. And because the unequivocal evidence has yet to arrive, all we can do at this moment in time is speculate.
Rather than conjecturing sharply cut yes/no answers into the future, any careful (perhaps timid) speculation should begin by stressing existing diversity. Logically, the Cuban leadership’s attempts to build the new man have been experienced differently by populations of different age and social location. For any one member of the new generations it makes a difference for the engineered formation of his or her personality whether she or he came to age before or after 1970, or the transition from “trial-and-error” to “institutionalization”; before or after 1986, or the transition from “institutionalization” to “rectification;” and even before or after the end of subsidies from Moscow in 1990-2, or before or after the re-booming of mass mobilizations and the Battle of Ideas started in 2000. Within any of these periods, further differences can be noted. To give one example, for the age group of “institutionalization,” it makes a difference whether a given person fought in Angola or was trained as an engineer in one of the socialist states instead. Because these experiences are hardly the same, their results in terms of human morality cannot be assumed to be uniform.

Nor is there any apparent reason to suggest that similar experiences of people with different personal traits have rendered the same normative results. According to different personal traits the effects of the same experiences on individual behavior can be worlds apart. Vladimir Cruz Naranjo lost an arm, a leg, and a testicle while fulfilling his international duty in Angola. Yet he maintains enough revolutionary morale to declare to the Cuban press his disposition to use what is left of his body “to continue struggling for the socialist regime,” which he finds “the only honorable way for Cuba.”¹⁰⁷ Like Naranjo, Froilan Osmany Rodríguez fought in Angola. However, he soon discovered himself clashing a local insurgency rather than defending a sovereign country from
foreign invasion. Upon returning to Cuba, he decided to raise his voice on the issue and eventually joined the opposition to the regime. Today he lives in Paraguay.

The most immediate implication of existing diversity for the stability of socioeconomic and political regimes is that “who rules” matters. People with different degrees of commitment to the established social order are unlikely to pursue similar policies should they reach positions of influence. And because “who rules” matters, the ability of the departing leaders of the Cuban Revolution to find, select, train, and promote to posts of leadership the most committed among the new generations acquires critical importance for the long-term longevity of the state socialist regime.
Formation

When crises are defined as total, and as seemingly permanent, the consequences of decision become total, and the decisions in each major area of life come to be integrated and total. Up to a point, these consequences for other institutional orders can be assessed; beyond such points, chances have to be taken. It is then that the felt scarcity of trained and imaginative judgment leads to plaintive feelings among executives about the shortage of qualified successors in political, military, and economic life. This feeling, in turn, leads to an increasing concern with the training of successors who could take over as older men of power retire. In each area, there slowly arises a new generation which has grown up in an age of coordinated decisions.

C. Wright. Mills

Human or rather social diversity makes from the policies on recruitment, selection, training, and promotion of public officers, a topical issue for the proper functioning of any socioeconomic and political regime. Policies can be well designed to effectively address the imperatives of time and place, but their results ultimately depend on the skill and disposition of persons in positions of responsibility for their successful implementation. Borrowing a term from the military, in state socialist societies these individuals are known as “cadres.” But a cadre is not only a public officer. She is a public officer with a sense of mission.¹ For the far-reaching scope of the state in state socialist societies, the difference made by cadres on the success or failure of policies is far greater than of public officers in capitalist societies. Cadres not only regulate the economy and correct market imperfections as needed, but are also in charge of production and distribution of goods and services. For this reason, it is often said that the “subjective factor is vastly more important in socialism than in capitalism.”²

The importance of cadres has been long emphasized by leaders of the state socialist regimes. One of Lenin’s most well-known contributions to the theory of Marxism—which he also demonstrated in practice—is that cadres, rather than “workers,” make revolutions.³ Stalin put it quite succinctly: “cadres decide everything.”⁴ In a similar
manner, Ernesto Guevara wrote that cadres are the “backbone of the Revolution,” and pointed to their “quality” as being that which truly bestows authority to the party.⁵

If the cadres are so vital to the proper functioning of state socialism, something had to have gone wrong with their performance in the process of its demise. It may be that with the passing of time many cadres tired of supporting a system that consistently under-rewarded them in relation to their self-perceived contribution, leading first to their demoralization and then to their seeking of personal privilege.⁶ When many of them came to perceive that they could do better under another “order of things,” they supported, or at least did not oppose, a transition away from state socialism. Whether we call this behavior rationalism, opportunism, or treason, it does not really alter the conclusion that socialism can be dismantled by its own apparatus. Reflecting upon this very lesson, Fidel has many times urged party members to “prepare cadres for posts of direction,” so that the “revolution can never be destroyed by ourselves.”⁷

Cadre formation policies in Cuba are thus of special interest. If cadres failed in other places, what have Cuban political leaders done to prevent their failure in Cuba? Since, as shown in Chapter 4, the patterns of personnel turnover in the CC of the PCC indicate that the new political stars are being groomed within the party and state apparatuses, tracking down the processes of recruitment, selection, training, and promotion of cadres within these institutions may be a good starting point for gaining some insight into this question. This Chapter documents these processes as successive stages in the career of any one individual to the top.

**Recruitment**

Any individual who aims to occupy a post of high political influence in Cuba first has to
pass through the filters set by the Communist Party membership. The party’s statutes explicitly require party membership for occupying a post of direction in its ranks. While not all state cadres are party members, party membership is a tacit requirement for occupying a high post in either a state enterprise or ministry. A party member is called a militant. In the official documents of the party, the militants are distinguished from the other members of Cuban society by their higher “quality.” The quality of the militants is measured by their performance at work, contribution to defense, ideological strength, political, cultural, and technical knowledge, and their fulfillment of social duties with their nation, community, and family. Persons who rank high in these indexes are worthy of belonging to the party. Besides personal behavior in these parameters, the party also assesses the quality of its ranks by their social composition. Occupation is a main factor, and working in production is highly valued.

Procedures exist within the party to reach a high-quality of militancy. According to the principle of “selectivity,” entrance to the party is voluntary, but not everyone who wants to be a member of the party can become one. There are three methods of admission, and in any of them the members have the last word. The “indirect” and “direct” methods differ from each other in whether or not a person is proposed for admission by his or her co-workers in an “exemplary worker assembly” before raising his or her voluntary application to the corresponding party cell. In either method, two-thirds of the members of the corresponding party cell must agree to approve an application, and the decision must be availed by the next upper organ—typically a committee in the workplace or the municipality—in order for membership to be granted. The statutes also confer to the Political Bureau of the party the faculty to sidestep these
methods in deciding on the admission of new members in cases of outstanding merit or national security considerations.

For assessing the personal merits of the applicants, the members may ask from them a written statement of purpose, letters of recommendation, a personal interview, and to be in the party on a probationary term as a candidate. These and similar requirements tend to be added to or dropped from the process of admission according to the plans for party growth, for besides high quality ranks, party members also want to have a party numerically big enough to penetrate society by establishing branches in most workplaces and all municipalities.

Thus, after the period of accelerated growth that the party had during the second half of the 1970s when such a penetration was achieved for the first time, the leadership decided to increase the quality of persons admitted and applications began to be more thoroughly reviewed. The statutes first approved in the 1975 congress required each applicant to have two endorsements by party members who themselves had more than two years of seniority and who had one year of acknowledgment with the applicant through “relevant” relations; after the 1980 congress they required two, and after the 1986 congress, three of each item.11

By the early 1990s, quantitative growth became a priority again. In view of the socioeconomic crisis and the dire panorama expected as a result of the fall of the East European bloc and the end of the Soviet subsidies, the party sought to broaden its popular basis of support. A resolution approved by the 1991 party Congress eliminated requirements such as a written statement of purpose and recommendations for most applicants and the probation period as a candidate.12 Moreover, the Congress abdicated
to the principle of “scientific atheism,” and any possible interpretation preventing the admission of religious believers—other than communists—was eliminated from the statutes. The results were quite surreal in comparison to what was happening with the Communist Parties of the former socialist states and the general worldwide trends of that time. Just after many party members had returned their membership cards in rejection of the socialist system in countries such as Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the GDR, and just as, fully discredited, the Communist Parties of former socialist states were even changing their names or disappearing, more than 46,000 new members on average were, in the midst of a severe socioeconomic crisis, entering the Communist Party of Cuba between 1992 and 1997.
Behavioral Codes

In the party, a militant has to abide by the rules. Inwardly, the directing principle is “democratic centralism.” Although this principle allows free discussion on everything until a decision is made, it mainly demands unwavering discipline to the policies from above. Outwardly, the main principle is contact with the masses. Through constant social interaction with the rest of the population, militants are supposed to educate the masses, or help them discover their “true” interest, but also acquaint themselves with the masses’ wishes and necessities so the party policies can address them. There are many rules and prescriptions relating to contact with the masses but none as important as leading by example. All speeches of party leaders and other prescriptive documents on the topic invariably insist that party members should practice what they preach—at work, at school, in the community, in the family, and the like. Only then, it is thought, can members really gain the confidence of the rest of the population and can the party fulfill its mission of guiding the rest of society and the state.

To maintain the quality of the ranks, some controls apply. Party members are called upon to practice self-criticism and to listen to the criticism of others. Every cell carries out this practice in the assemblies of balance, where all members are evaluated periodically. When necessary, penalties are applied. Reasons for the application of penalties are lack of commitment to the rules and norms of the party, negligence at work, social misbehavior, breaking the rules of the nation, and ideological problems. Penalties can be internal or external depending on their severity, with the latter carrying with them a separation from the party. Only when it is considered that a punishment can and should help educate broader publics, is it published beyond the cell and the
corresponding upper organs. External penalties generally are.

Party discipline matters are managed by the National Committee of Revision and Control, always under the direction of Commander of the Revolution and Politburo member, Juan Almeida Bosque. Although this committee has existed since 1978, it was not until the rectification process that enforcing discipline among the militancy seems to have become a concern among the party leadership. In 1986, the personal evaluations in the assemblies of balance began employing tougher criteria, or rather “spirit,” and from 1987 to 1989 a process of ratification of party membership cards was carried out.\textsuperscript{19} The process consisted of personal interviews of practically all the party rank-and-file with a “duo” of cadres. Although the interviews had the stated purpose of “elevating the exemplarity and combativeness of the militancy,” the interviewers could recommend the application of penalties to the interviewee through their cells.\textsuperscript{20} As a direct result of these interviews over 7,800 militants were penalized, of whom over 1,740 were expelled from the party.\textsuperscript{21}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|}
\hline
Year & Total Membership & Total Penalties & External penalties \\
\hline
1985 & & 3.49 & .79 \\
1986 & 523,639 & 4.58 & .97 \\
1987 & & 6.06 & 1.36 \\
1988 & & 5.09 & 1.17 \\
1989 & 596,620 & 4.70 & 1.00 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Penalties as a percent of Total Membership during the Process of Rectification}
\end{table}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\hline
Negligence at work & 12.2 & 17.3 & 21.6 & 18.7 & 29.8 \\
Misbehavior & 22.3 & 22.5 & 19.7 & 21.5 & 11 \\
Breaking of national law and Ideological weakness & 25.9 & 26.3 & 9 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Main Reasons for the Application of Penalties during the Process of Rectification (Percentages from total penalties)}
\end{table}

\textit{Sources: José Angel García Hernández (April 1988); Teresita Díaz Lago (May 1990, 83).}
Taking into account, however, that most penalties imposed either in the assemblies of balance or as a result of the process of ratification cards were internal, and that external penalties did never reach even 1.5 percent of the militancy, the increase in punitive measures during the rectification period could be better considered a warning or a calling of attention to the rank-and-file to keep their behavior on track, rather than anything suggesting a witch hunt within the party. Although aggregate data on penalties during the special period is scarce, the yearly average of 1.2 percent of the militancy expelled between 1992 and 1997 as announced in one of the documents of the last party congress, suggests continuity in trends. Assuming that no major changes have happened since then, short of anything connoting a purge within the party, the application of punitive measures seem to have remained an active enough mechanism to keep discipline within the ranks.

Selection

Those militants who best keep their behavior within the parameters established by the principles of the party become or have the opportunity to become cadres. The party’s documents use the language of “elections” to denominate how individuals reach its top, but when the mechanics of the referred elections are reviewed it turns out that “appointment from above” may be an equally or more accurate denomination. At most, the elections are held to select between several candidates that were either selected or approved beforehand by commissions at higher instances, and in any event, there is always a safeguard—as a right to veto—to prevent nominations against the will of the higher instances. In the state apparatus most cadres are appointed, according to their rank, directly by the ministers, vice-ministers, and other personnel working in the
ministries, respectively. The most important posts are nominated in consultation with the party.\textsuperscript{23} The ministers themselves are appointed by the Council of State. The Council of State is comprised of members elected by the National Assembly, and the National Assembly has to approve the nominations of ministers. The National Assembly is an elected body, but again, its members are selected in elections based on nominations made by candidacy commissions appointed from above.

In both the party and the state apparatuses, cadres are appointed for their “suitability” to the post. Criteria of suitability such as “political resolve, loyalty to the Revolution and socialism, high dedication and devotion to work, high professional capacity, constant technical, political, and ideological improvement, austerity…modesty,” and more, always boils down to either one of the categories within the politics/economics dichotomy.\textsuperscript{24} Cadres are “political” or “technical,” “executives” or “specialists,” “reds” or “experts,” according to the job they do at any particular moment, with jobs in the party apparatus associated with the first term in each of these dichotomies and in the state apparatus with the second. Both types of skills are considered important. While technical skills are the human basis for economic development, political skills are needed to drive this development in accord with the preferences and principles of a socialist regime. Since 1986, at least nominally, additional criteria for the selection of cadres are race, age, and gender, which were introduced in the third party congress with the stated intention that the cadres would reflect in their demographic composition the rest of the party militancy and, if possible, the Cuban working population as a whole.\textsuperscript{25} In theory, this policy should favor the nomination of the young, women, and blacks to cadre posts.
The fundamental problem in the selection of cadres is that the criteria for assessing their suitability may, in many cases, be conflicting. The most technically suitable person for any given post may not be the same individual as the most politically suitable one. In such situations, a choice between technical and political criteria is needed. The prescribed policy in Cuba, in the past, present, and perhaps the future, is to solve this dilemma whenever it appears by favoring political over technical criteria. In other words, at least officially, loyalty to the system is a precondition for occupying posts of direction in the party and the state, and only when this condition is met, does technical suitability to the post matter for the nomination of a cadre.

Control
Choosing cadres from among party members is already an attempt to staff the important posts of government with loyal individuals. Yet for the leadership of the party, it seems by no means enough. After all, with hundred of thousands of members, there is no assurance that the party is free from “rotten apples.” Institutionally, then, the party aims to additionally ensure the loyalty of the cadres by controlling their appointments and supervising their performance. The so-called nomenklatura, or the nomination system of cadres, works by party officers at the different levels drawing lists which, on the one hand, identify the most important posts in the party, state, and mass organizations for the proper functioning of the system, and on the other hand, name the persons loyal enough to occupy them. The nominations are then made by matching between the lists.

Because party officers control the nominations to posts, party cadres have, in theory, the power to supervise the work of the cadres working in the state administration. By definition, this is part of their job, and in doing so, they can request reports and demand
results from the state cadres, who in theory would comply if only out of fear of demotion. Given this aspect of the job of the party cadres, there is no clear demarcation of tasks between their duties and those of the state cadres, nor can there be, insofar as the party cadres are literally asked to “control” the state administration but not to “manage” it.\(^{27}\) The resulting overlap of tasks is a source of perpetual tension and conflict within the party/state system, and even of awkwardness, yet trying to solve these problems by cutting the supervisory link between the party and the state may be suicidal, as, arguably, the collapse of the Soviet Union has proven.

Short of cutting this link, what Cuban political leaders have done throughout time to mitigate tensions—and live with the awkwardness—is to tighten or loosen the control of the party over the state according to their own perception of the political and economic requirements at the moment. Thus, at roughly the same time in which the control of the party apparatus over the state administration began to be questioned in the Soviet Union, an October 1986 orientation issued by the Secretariat of the Cuban Communist Party urged all members and cadres to “participate more actively in the process of selection, periodic evaluations, and movements” of state cadres.\(^{28}\) The meaning of the orientation was well clarified by the Secretariat member in charge of ideology, when he ranked the lack of interest of party cadres in the management of the state a worse sin than their duplication of tasks with the state administration, on the grounds that the latter is an error that at least shows concern.\(^{29}\) Years later, when well into the special period a “new” system of economic management was being generalized to all state enterprises, the indications to party cadres had changed somewhat. “The party is not to manage…managing has taken time and mind from the party in the past,” became the
word of the day as expressed by Politburo member José Ramón Machado Ventura in a 1998 meeting with cadres from the Holguín province.\textsuperscript{30}

Yet, the very pretension that the loyalists can control the experts seems questionable. As the “convergence” theorists once argued, in many instances reds would lack the technical knowledge to efficiently supervise the job of experts.\textsuperscript{31} Then, in trying to supervise the functioning of the state administration, political cadres would either systematically truncate the productive process with anti-technical decisions or just, out of ignorance, agree to anything that experts would say. Experts can also intentionally prevent reds from making informed evaluations on their performance by presenting things in terms and in ways that the reds would not understand. Even worse, on occasion, reds and experts in the same workplace or area of competence could become cronies, and protect each other in their jobs or plot together against the system by gaining personal privileges from the state resources they manage and/or supervise.

All of this raises the question of who controls the controllers. Without any institutional check or balance to the Communist Party, the only possible answer lies in the vertical controls within the party, which, at the end of the hierarchical chain, mean the leadership: If the head is rotten, everything else is. Here again, for the last twenty years or so the leaders of the Cuban Communist Party have been very busy in controlling the cadres. This is not to say that before the rectification process there were no controls on the performance of cadres, but rather, that these barely worked.

The attempts of the party leadership to set a systematic policy for the selection, training, allocation, and promotion of cadres date back to the first party congress in 1975. The Congress approved a resolution on the policy for cadres, which mandated to
“establish mechanisms for the correct selection and allocation of cadres under the
direction of the Communist Party.” Such mechanisms as standardized qualifications
for measuring suitability, periodic evaluations, gradual promotion, and the creation of a
reserve were established thereafter, but it seems that in paper alone. The application of
the policies for cadres was indeed one of the few areas in which the balance made five
years later in the second party congress was negative, when it turned out that on “some
occasions” the nominations and promotions approved by the party violated the
prescribed regulations, and that the reserve lists for most posts had even not been
created. Repetitive warnings from the leadership that the policies on cadres were not
being applied correctly were voiced in 1983 and 1985, yet these apparently did little or
nothing to correct the deficiencies. The main report to the third party congress
consequently ranked the application of cadre policies as “very limited,” and again
emphasized the lack of systematic training and selection. In confronting these
deficiencies, the report warned of little patience with “deficient officers” and pointed to
the work with cadres as a high priority for the years to come.

So in a process parallel to the establishment of controls for the rank-and-file of the
militancy, an overall cadre evaluation in all the institutions of government was carried
out between 1985 and 1988. These evaluations resulted in some cadre turnover—over
40 percent of the First Secretaries in the party municipalities alone, between 1986 and
1988—of which the turnover in the CC elected in 1991 is but the tip of the iceberg. Yet,
while the general evaluations may have brought younger and more (formally)
competent individuals to posts of direction, which points to a more correct application of
established cadre policies, the very effort to streamline cadre behavior which symbolizes
the process of rectification was the “one exemplary case” known as Cause One. Irrespective of their causes, purposes, and justifications, the executions of General Arnaldo Ochoa Sánchez, Colonel and secret agent Antonio de la Guardia, and the closest assistant of each, sent a message clear enough for all high-ranking officers to understand. If Arnaldo Ochoa—Hero of the Republic of Cuba, leader of the forces in Angola, Central Committee member since 1965, a Rebel Army soldier from Camilo’s horse-eater heroic avant-garde column—if he could be executed, except for a handful at the very helm, perhaps, no one could feel beyond the reach of punitive measures for criminal acts.37

The exemplary discipline measures during the summer of 1989 may have helped streamline many cadres on the eve of a time of extreme systemic vulnerability. Some three years later, however, the external conditions had already changed radically in a direction that by no means favored cadre discipline. The Cuban economy had undergone a reform process that included the multiplication of foreign trade licenses to enterprises, the establishment of joint ventures with foreign enterprises, and the impulse of the international tourist industry. As a result, the opportunities for many cadres to commit acts of corruption abounded. The economic crisis coupled them with need. For the leaders of the Communist Party, this was a time of very intense work with cadres.

Chronologically, the first leadership measure to control the behavior of cadres during the special period may have been the downsizing of the party professional apparatus. Although specific data on quantities were never given, by October 1990 the party press reported on the intention to reduce the party professional personnel by about half, and later on it was known that between 1992 and 1995 more than 50 percent of the party
This downsizing can be interpreted as setting an example at a time of unemployment and downsizing in state enterprises, but also as an attempt to put away anything suspected as being a rotten apple in order to convert the party professional apparatus into an agile, trustable, and easy to control executive arm that could be useful in confronting the difficult times.

Along with this downsizing, the party leadership increased the direct contact with cadres. In July 1994, in the so-called territorial party meetings the leadership of the party met with the most important cadres of all organizations “to analyze all problems that have to do with the subjective factors and that are in our hands to solve.” From these meetings came out the “working methods” of the special period which emphasize honesty, or rather frankness, of cadres in their reports to their superiors and which demand from party cadres a more active approach in their contact with the rest of the militancy and the masses. Thereafter, and for the rest of the decade, the members of the Political Bureau made much publicized visits to the provinces, some municipalities, and organisms, in order to motivate and advise cadres on the one hand, but also to assess their performance through the constant conversation with laypersons on their problems and opinions of local leadership. On the motivation side, in one of these visits Raúl coined the expression “yes we can,” which meanwhile has become the cadre’s and indeed Cuba’s battle cry in confronting the hardships of the special period. On the side of control, not once did a “cadre renovation or substitution at all levels” ensue a Politburo visit.

With time, these seemingly ad-hoc mechanisms were replaced by more
institutionalized ones. In 1995, a central commission of cadres in the executive Committee of the Council of Ministers was created. Under the leadership of Raúl Castro, this commission is in charge of designing the policies for the work with state cadres, as well as for supervising their application. Since the creation of this commission, an ethical code of behavior for state cadres has been established and a new law on the work with cadres has been promulgated. As the name of the first suggests and the content of the second confirms, both emphasize ethical values. The code preaches honesty, discipline, optimism, initiative, commitment, friendship, and loyalty to the homeland, the revolution, and the socialist regime. The law warns against the violation of the code and even has a chapter on ethics which the law it replaced did not have. For enforcing legislation, new monitoring bodies have appeared. In 1995, the National Auditing Office was created, which in 2001 turned into the Ministry of Auditing and Control. Symbolizing the importance of this monitoring body was the promotion, upon leaving office, of the cadre who had headed it since its inception, Lina Pedraza Rodríguez, to the party Secretariat.

Because of its clandestine character, corruption is a phenomenon difficult to measure and perhaps immeasurable. Yet, there is enough evidence to suggest that at least some of the mechanisms outlined here work. The Ministry of Auditing and Control, for example, has uncovered enough corruption cases to publish them from time to time in the newspapers, thereby sending warnings that impunity is never ensured. That controls apply even (and perhaps mainly) at very high levels is evident from the Poliburo demotion and party expulsion of Juan Carlos Robinson Agramonte for charges of corruption. In June 2006, he became the first Poliburo member of the Cuban
Communist Party to ever been incarcerated. So even if it is difficult or impossible to assess the dimensions of corruption among the party and state cadre in Cuba, it is clear that alongside the increasing temptations of the special period, controls have been established and improved to try to prevent this phenomenon from becoming widespread.

**Training**

Many control devices could be minimized if only most cadres would have both the technical and political skills needed to perform well and the moral strength to be incorruptible. If the “red-expert” or “integral” cadre could be produced, then he or she would be able to control the state administration while in a political post and contribute to the process of production while in a technical post. If the cadres were strongly committed to the goals of the socialist regime, there would be less need to monitor their actions. To the extent that such a cadre could be formed, he or she would be, in the words of José Ramón Machado Ventura, the “result of a long process…of patient, careful and systematic work.” Part of this long process consists of formally educating cadres, or cadre training.

**Political**

For the political or rather the ideological training of cadres, the party has its own system of schools. At times the party schools have also given some technical instruction, but politics and ideology have always remained the central concern. From the very beginning, this system has been led by former PSP members, or old communists, who were the main carriers of Soviet interpretations of Marxism and therefore quintessential representatives of the reverent view, as discussed in the chapter on education. Until the
collapse of the Soviet Union, the evolution of the system of party schools followed a trajectory symmetrically opposite to that of the institutions of the autonomous view. It thrived when the autonomous view was repressed and vice versa.

In the trial and error approach to building socialism that characterized much of the 1960s, party schools were opened and began functioning at a rather breakneck speed.\(^{50}\) According to a former rector of the main school in this system, by 1966 there were over 240 Party schools where some 150,000 Party militants, young communists, and outstanding workers had received instruction.\(^{51}\) Other sources speak of about half a million.\(^{52}\) However, during this time most of these schools were Basic Schools of Revolutionary Instruction (EBIR) whose main concern was increasing the cultural level of the militancy rather than transmitting a Marxist-Leninist conception of the world proper.\(^{53}\) In the Schools of Revolutionary Instruction (EIR), the study of Marxism-Leninism was more strongly emphasized. Until 1966, there were six such schools at the national level, among them the Ñico López, or Higher School of the Party, where some 200 high-standing cadres had received instruction.\(^{54}\) Thereafter, with the short-lived attempt to forge a Cuban indigenous road to communism, the activities of these schools reduced considerably. In 1968, the EIR and EBIR were closed, with the Higher School of the Party only remaining open for short political and technical seminars.\(^{55}\)

The system of party schools resurged when the official policies of the country aligned more closely with the institutional Soviet practices of the time. Following the 1971 National Active of Internal Education, courses on Marxism-Leninism were taught again at both the national and provincial levels.\(^{56}\) After the first party congress in 1975, a system was properly constructed with the Higher Party School in Havana, a school in
each province, and, in the municipalities, the Centers of Political and Ideological Improvement (CSPI) for the militancy. Cadre courses were divided into higher, middle, and basic levels, to which party cadres were sent according to their rank. Among other selected groups, the Higher School of the Party offered instruction to cadres in the party apparatus at the national level, professors for the party schools, journalists, and foreign students. The courses for cadres and professors—and probably all others—were produced in collaboration with foreign advisors, and even many of the courses were taken directly from the party schools of East European countries.

All of this suggests that when policies changed once again in the process of rectification, party schools could not evade a “restructuring.” And they did not, but given the orthodox views represented by these schools, the restructuring was perhaps less than could have been expected.57 The rector of the Higher School was changed in 1986, but still replaced by a former PSP member.58 In line with the general orientations for all the system of higher education at that time, practical knowledge was emphasized at the expense of theoretical knowledge. In an effort to create more integral cadres, beginning in the 1987-88 year, the ideological and economic specializations in which the courses for cadres were divided disappeared from the study programs. In addition, the part-time study program for the bachelor’s degree in the social sciences was eliminated, and the CSPI were transformed into municipal party schools.

This restructuring was apparently ongoing, when, as a result of the economic crisis in the early 1990s, emerged the imperative to prepare cadres for making quick and efficient decisions. In other words, the party schools expanded their scope, offering many new short courses on anything from political and ideological improvement to
finance, negotiations, and the like, to which cadres attended in mass. Along with the courses, more active methods of study such as class discussion rather than lectures were introduced.\textsuperscript{59} For the 1994-95 study year, for instance, some fifty-two study programs were offered which were not offered before the collapse of the Soviet Union, and more than 300,000 party cadres and militants received training in a course on political and ideological improvement alone.\textsuperscript{60} By 1998, the Higher School of the Party alone, according to its rector, was offering some 80 courses to about 6,000 students per year, a number that contrasts sharply with the some 6,900 Cuban and foreign cadres who had received instruction there over the twenty-five years since its founding on December 2, 1960.\textsuperscript{61} By his own description, the Ñico López “is like a university of the party:”

The main course lasts six months. Members of the Central Committee, state employees, youth and other sections attend these courses. We also conduct special courses for journalists, lawyers, and people working in various other fields. There are special courses for Ministers and Polit Bureau members—they have to spend one week at the school as students. They sit with other students. The rectors of all the universities in Cuba also attend two-week courses every year. Elected representatives—from the municipality level to Parliament—also attend courses at the school.\textsuperscript{62}

In terms of study materials, throughout the time these can be divided into three groups: speeches of Cuba’s political leaders and party documents, the writings of the classics of Marxism, and “other” materials that generally help students “digest” the classics.\textsuperscript{63} Up to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the materials in the “other” category were, of course, the much-debated textbooks produced according to a Soviet-like interpretation of the classics, which represent the quintessential example of the reverent view. In theory, the higher the level of instruction, the less the reliance of the study programs on the “other” materials in relation to the classics, though in practice, even at the highest level the “other” materials have always been used. A few early prototypical representatives of these in the 1960s include the \textit{Project of the Program of the CPSU}, the \textit{Manual on
Marxism Leninism by the Soviet “eminence,” O. Kuusinen, and for the basic schools, the Fundaments of Socialism in Cuba by Blas Roca, first secretary of the former PSP, whose intellectual jugglery to fit the Soviet orthodoxy goes as far as identifying stages in Cuban history according to the primitivism-slavery-feudalism-capitalism historical progression. When new materials were produced and introduced, these continued reflecting a strong reverence to the Soviet Union. Thus, the 1985 Methodological Manual of Scientific Communism, specifically written for teaching purposes at the Higher and provincial schools of the Cuban Communist Party, is full of quotes from Brezhnev and categorically affirms that under the leadership of the Soviet Union, the socialist system “advances and develops” on a worldwide scale at the time that the “decadent capitalist system is bound to disappear.”

With the demise of state socialism in East Europe, all materials of study in this category—unlike the speeches of Cuban leaders and the writings of the classics of Marxism—became obsolete. As in the universities, these were replaced by textbooks written by the local staff. In comparison with the writings of intellectuals whose main center of activity is the universities, the textbooks prepared by the staff of the Ñico López show less change in their underlying Marxist view. These still contain triumphalist sentences characteristic of the Soviet-like Marxist conception of the world, suggesting that “capitalism is condemned to disappear and be substituted by socialism,” and that “only under socialism there can be an economy without crisis,” although this last affirmation is done with caveats. Rather than with irreverence, the collapse of the Soviet Union and other socialist regimes is looked at with pain. These regimes appear as inherently good, on the side of the people and enjoying popular support. They failed
because of the “subjective factor,” as taught in universities, but here, the “subject” that failed is not a meta-theoretical abstract “man.” After all, a school for leaders, the Ñico López produces study materials according to which there were rather specific political leaders like Mikhail Gorbachev who, out of a mix of ingenuity and evilness, committed treason against their people by making the wrong decisions at the most critical times, and specific groups like cadres, whose treason consisted of detaching themselves from the rest of society for converting into a materially privileged class.

Events, from this perspective, look different from how they are viewed from the victor’s side. People, or rather workers, in East European socialist regimes liked their socialism but were unable to defend it for a lack of sovereignty. In Czechoslovakia, for instance, “thousand of workers…wanted to defend their socialism” by preventing counterrevolutionaries from demonstrating, but Soviet authorities did not let them. In Romania, for another, the Ceasescuses were blamed, and finally executed, for the Timisoara massacre that did not even take place. The changes that ensued were unfortunate for most people:

The former European socialist camp presents poverty indicators, unemployment, social inequality, infant mortality, racism, drug addiction, prostitution…Bulgaria does no longer reminds Dimitrov because it no longer exports compotes but whores to Western Europe. Symbolizing the transitions to capitalism are the windows in Ambers and Munich showing half-naked girls who, had socialism continue in their countries…would have been engineer or artists.

In light of these descriptions, the message seems clear. A cadre who is on the side of the people would never commit the treason of wanting to abandon the socialist regime or let it fall apart.

Now, Cuban socialism does not appear alone on the world map. According to the same study materials, socialist regimes in Asia have survived and are even developing fairly well. Two of the three regimes there, however, have undergone an extent of
market reform that still has not and may never come to Cuba, and which has been, arguably, the engine of their economic growth. While recognizing the right of each country to find its own way to communism, the referred study materials advise against such a turn for Cuba on both historical and National Security grounds. Historically, neither China nor Vietnam had the same level of capitalist development as Cuba had at the time of their revolutions. Therefore, they turned to capitalism to develop the forces of production and later on will turn to socialism again, which will be possible because the political direction of the party has not been lost. But not only do Cubans not need to turn to capitalism to develop, they can not even afford it because an economic opening of the type of China and Vietnam would be enough for the “fascist mafia in Miami” to take over the economy. Fidel has affirmed many times “that in the mind of the cadres and the leaders of our party is not found the idea of privatizations in our industries.” In their intention, the party’s school textbooks are fully directed at making the statement true.

Technical

The unspoken truth in the party textbooks is that worker productivity, and therefore intensive economic growth, is the Achilles heel of socialism. Besides all of the talking on the role of the subject and the errors of particular persons at various decisive historical junctures, if judging by the East European examples, this is the single most important battle lost in the road to demise. All errors and treasons were committed, after all, against an objective framework set by economic decay. And rising productivity requires not only determination or commitment but also technical skills.

Not since the advent of the Cuban Revolution has the need of developing those skills
been as vital as after the end of the Soviet subsidies. Without Soviet aid, Cubans found themselves coerced to trade under a competitive, quickly changing, and thus uncertain environment, which may be all the contrary to the protective environment provided by the Soviet subsidies. As seen in Chapter 3, as a result of the change in the international environment Cuba adjusted its system of planning, and as a result of the changes in planning, the environment for local enterprises changed as well. When inputs are ensured and the output value is fixed by quantitative indicators, the proper methods of management in enterprises are not the same as when inputs have to be sought among different possible providers and output value is set by a market that prices products and services for their quality not less than for their quantity. The point is not that Cubans never paid attention to the improvement of management techniques before the end of the Soviet subsidies, but that with a yearly $4 billion subsidy from an external partner, the need to organize existing human and material resources for their efficient use was not the same as without the subsidies; therefore, the effort to develop managerial skills among the economic cadres was also not the same.

To begin from the beginning, with the triumph of the revolution the skills needed to develop an economy were either non-existent or quickly flew away. The posts, however, had to be filled. And were, by loyalists to the regime, who, although enthusiastic, were not skilled enough “to manage with a minimum of efficiency the national economy.”76 The first drive, or economic intention, of the Cuban revolutionary government was to industrialize, to substitute imports by developing local infrastructures and technologies. Cubans, however, found their skill shortage too insurmountable an impediment to undertake such a drive, and as soon as 1963, the government turned back to sugar
production. The alliance with the Soviet bloc and the priority given to education over the years permitted Cubans to acquire many technical skills needed to develop an economy, especially in the engineering and scientific fields. Management, however—the very art of organizing work to get the best out of existing human and material resources—was somewhat underrated as a “bourgeois” concern.

All attempts to train cadres in management for posts of direction in the enterprises during the 1960s, such as the emblematic Particio Lumumba School in the Industry Ministry, were short-lived and sporadic. It was not until the inauguration of the National School of Economic Direction (ENDE) in 1976 that the first concerted effort for the training of cadres in management took place. Up to 1980, when it was transformed into the Higher Institute of Economic Direction (ISDE), the school had graduated more than 10,000 cadres. Yet, at least until 1982, studies in the institute seem to not have been taken very seriously by many managers of the enterprises themselves who decided on who was sent to training, and therefore, seem to have used the training offerings as an opportunity to get rid of either redundant or problematic personnel, if only temporarily. When the correspondence between required qualifications and posts in the enterprises was checked, it turned out that the enterprises were overstaffed with formally qualified personnel for management positions, yet the positions themselves were understaffed by the formally qualified personnel. To what population belonged the formally under-qualified individuals who occupied the posts of management in the enterprises is not so difficult to guess. As the rector of the ISDE noted in 1985, “most cadres in posts of direction are the same who with the triumph of the Revolution…assumed the direction of the state administration and productive enterprises.” This would probably not have
been perceived as a problem if studies had not found a strong positive correlation between enterprise profitability and the formal proper training of their managers.\textsuperscript{82} No wonder then that the leaders of the state administration so repetitively complained that cadre policies were not been applied.

The better application of cadre policies that followed the third party congress accelerated the substitution process of “scientific” for “empirical” cadres. Yet, a new skill shortage was about to come, for the cadres trained in the ISDE and other schools did not receive the much needed instruction for coping successfully with an external capitalist environment. The ISDE programs of study were designed in collaboration with institutes of countries such as Czechoslovakia, GDR, Bulgaria, and the USSR and were naturally suited for socialist enterprises operating in an environment that ensures the inputs and the markets for the enterprise output. Courses like English, marketing, and negotiations figured nowhere in their curricula.\textsuperscript{83} Instead of undergoing a restructuring with the shift of the external environment, this school was left to rest for good. At the same time, parallel structures being developed within the Ministry of Higher Education took the main role in the technical training of cadres.

These parallel structures can be traced back to 1984. Perpetually unsatisfied with the performance of local enterprises, in his 26\textsuperscript{th} of July speech Fidel called for the study of “new” management techniques that were developing all around the world. With this purpose in mind, in 1985 a group of university professors began to look for study materials, contact experts on enterprise management, and engage in exchanges with international agencies and universities in countries such as the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Spain.\textsuperscript{84} Based on these exchanges, in 1988 were opened the Center for the
Study of Economic Direction (CETED) at the University of Havana (UH) and the Center for the Study of Direction Techniques (CETDIR) at the Higher Technological Institute José Antonio Echeverría (IPSJAE). The goals of these institutes were defined in terms of cadre training for enterprise management through “the critical and rational assimilation of the international experience, doing research on the topic, and giving consulting to enterprises and ministries.”

The study centers began by training personnel who were to take the knowledge acquired to other universities and study centers in the country. Such expansion actually did take place, and at a much accelerated speed in response to the radical change in the international environment as a result of the end of Soviet subsidies. In the framework of this expansion, new structures for the training of economic cadres appeared, such as study centers in all universities and organisms of the country and the master’s degree in Direction at the UH. This last program is framed after the MBA programs of leading universities in the countries mentioned above, and is specifically addressed at training cadres with promotion perspectives. Later on, more master’s degree programs in specialized topics such as Management Consulting, International Trade, and the like also opened. As institutes and programs developed, their trained personnel began offering consulting services to enterprises according to the specific needs of each.

So far, in keeping with both the changing necessities of the Cuban economy and the international developments in the field of management, the evolution of the specific techniques taught in these structures can be divided into three stages. In the first stage, the main effort was to improve the working performance of managers, who received training in topics such as time management, delegation of tasks, interpersonal relations,
worker motivation, direction by objectives, and direction by values. With the stark change in the international environment between 1989 and 1992, the economic training of cadres began to emphasize topics related to the link between the enterprises and a capitalist external environment, such as strategic marketing, strategic planning, negotiations, and conflict resolution. Later on, as the need to increase productivity became the central concern of the enterprises, the economic training of cadres shifted its emphasis to techniques and production processes such as total quality, reengineering, management for change, management of human resources, and specific selling and commercial techniques.

It would be no exaggeration to say that probably all economic cadres, including their reserves, have received some training in the different study centers. In the CETED alone, 1,500 cadres receive instruction yearly, and up to 2003, the master’s program in Direction had graduated some 150 additional cadres. The real “quantities” are taught, however, in the schools of the organisms or ministries. These schools, or training centers, aim at developing specialized skills among the direction cadres, fitted to the particular characteristics of the organism in which they work. To give a concrete example, the Center of Entrepreneurship Management, Technical and Administrative Improvement (GESTA), does the training for the cadres in the Ministry of the Steel-Mechanical Industry (SIME). This Ministry has about 250 different enterprises with some 70,000 employees. For the training of its some 2,000 cadres, GESTA has more than 200 workers, including over sixty instructors. In 2007 alone, GESTA offered nine different programs for directors and managers at the different levels and specializations, four additional workshops, and five areas of consulting and congresses. Courses in the
programs contain all of the techniques mentioned above, but also, in committing to the national strategy for the formation of cadres, political culture and defense studies. The latter include as supporting materials the writings of Ernesto Guevara on the importance of cadres. All of this is done in addition to the courses that many cadres take within the system of party schools, which complement the technical education by centering on politics and ideology while also offering some technical instruction.

The application of the managerial skills acquired has been far reaching. Management techniques such as direction by objectives, direction by values, and strategic planning have been adopted by all state organisms, the Communist Party, the national trade union (CTC), the UJC, and the local governments. The point to notice, however, is not the particular techniques employed, for these have been and are changing all of the time, but rather, the sheer effort to develop and systematically apply knowledge in management, perhaps, in the special period, for the first time since the beginning of the revolution. The application of management techniques may result in a better organization of the working process, which in turn may increase the efficiency of local enterprises as measured by productivity per worker.

Perhaps the most telling indication that something has been achieved is the growing number of Cuban enterprises certified with the international standard of quality ISO 9000 by the agency Buro Veritas. While in October 1994 there was only one enterprise with this certification, in November 2006 this number stood at 344. In addition, for the last fourteen years the Cuban economy has been growing, and more profitable enterprise and increased productivity numbers—for whoever believes in them—have also appeared. Yet the best indication that what has been achieved is not enough is the
admission by official sources that worker productivity has grown less than the average wage, and therefore, distribution has grown more than production, which is not a policy sustainable in the long run. More increases in productivity are therefore needed if socialism in Cuba is to subsist irrespective of the friends, foes, and international alignments of any particular historical moment. Ernesto Guevara wrote about the creation of the new Cuban man as a possible contribution of the Cuban experience to socialist theory. In light of all socialist experiences hitherto, a “socialism that works,” which in the long run does not fall in productivity per worker with capitalism, would be an equally notable contribution.

**Promotion**

Additional means for the leadership to both control cadre behavior and develop their integral skills are the promotion policies. As a cardinal principle, these policies prescribe gradual advance. When posts are assigned in slightly increasing responsibility and difficulty, each is a preparation for the next. Gradual advance also permits the superiors to evaluate the cadres for a long time before they reach high-standing ranks. In design, the process resembles a military hierarchy and seems to ensure enough checks to prevent both the idiot and the ill-intentioned access to the topmost posts of command.

Within gradual advance, cadre promotion through rotation is often recommended by the political leadership in its speeches, and at times it also seems to be standard practice. This approach has the advantage of helping control cadre behavior. It prevents the formation of particularistic, or interest groups, within the party/state apparatus because, on the one hand, cadres who shift posts constantly do not have the time to consolidate such alliances, and on the other, cadres who shift intermittently
between the party apparatus and the state administration may be more suited to
distinguish the interest of the system as a whole from that of any particular component.
Rotation may also contribute to the formation of integral cadres when it is done among jobs in different areas of activity, to the extent, of course, to which working in different areas of activity helps develop diverse skills. Though not exactly by rotation, the formation of integral cadres may also be achieved through assigning cadres, at least once in their career, to general direction posts such as the instructor who provides the nexus between the party municipal committee and the cells or a party general secretary at any level.

On the flip side of rotation, there is the need for specialization. The “general experts” resulting from much rotation may be able to solve no problem in particular. Because problems demand solutions, at times policy makers advise on the promotion of cadres within the same organism or area of activity “for the better development of their skills,” and job stability becomes standard cadre promotion policy. In addition, that the positive link between job stability and work performance is often drawn by the cadres themselves, suggests that many of them would prefer the comfort of the known job, workplace, and living place, to the uncertainty of the unknowns. If leaders want cadres to do their jobs, some concessions must be given. Job stability may be one of them.

An idea, even if limited, on the extent to which both gradualness and rotation are observed in the promotion of cadres can be acquired through looking at the trajectories of the sixteen CC members born after 1950, and who in December 2007 held a post in one or more of the highest party and/or state bodies: Secretariat, Political Bureau,
Council of Ministers, and Council of State. This group is particularly interesting because by its position and age it represents the best product of cadre policies of the Cuban Revolution, especially since 1986 when these have been more seriously applied. All members of this group have been educated in the values of the socialist regime as described in the last chapter, and have been exposed to the controls and training processes so far described herein. Regularities in their trajectory may indicate an intentional policy approach to their promotion. To avoid extensive background detail from overflowing the following analysis, the relevant biographical data of each member is presented as an appendix to this chapter.

In terms of their personal background characteristics, the most salient regularity that all members of this group share is their relatively high level of formal education. All sixteen have completed, at minimum, a bachelor’s degree; four have completed more than one, two have a master’s degree, and one has a Ph.D. Of the bachelor’s degrees, nine are in the social sciences and humanities, including history, Marxism, pedagogy, geography, economics, and management; six are in any area of engineering or the technical professions; two are physicians, one is a lawyer, and one individual has a degree in the natural sciences. Three are teachers by formal training, and at least six have worked as either teachers in schools or professors in universities at some point along their career. Five have fulfilled internationalist duties, and their average age by the end of 2007 is slightly over forty-eight. In terms of their trajectory, most passed with flying colors through the controls exerted during the period of rectification, and all of them have been promoted to their key positions in the special period. By their patterns of advance, the group can be divided into three subgroups.
Career Patterns

Some were recruited from the enterprises to professional jobs in the UJC and then the party or into the latter directly. As professional cadres in the party, all of them forged their way up the hierarchy through “hard work” in the municipal and provincial committees. All became provincial first secretaries and then members of either the Political Bureau or the Secretariat. From the Political Bureau, Pedro Saéz was additionally promoted to the Council of State and Jorge Luis Sierra to the Secretariat and then to the Council of Ministers as Minister of Transport. Their path may be a possibility for the future promotion of Roberto López Hernández, Miguel Díaz Canel, María del Carmen Concepción González, Misael Enamorado Dager, Lazará Mercedes López Acea, and Víctor Gaute.

Others have followed an “essay tube” trajectory, to use a term employed by Raúl.\textsuperscript{103} All members in this subgroup were student or mass organization leaders who then became members of the UJC national bureau. From there, they passed to occupy posts of leadership in either the state or party higher instances without going to an enterprise for more than a mere excusing term (and this only in some cases), nor did they start in the party from the basis. Within this subgroup, two smaller groups can be distinguished as well as one coveted post. Some went from the UJC national bureau to the Council of State, like Carlos Lage, who after that also became a member in the Political Bureau of the Party. His path may indicate the future trajectories for Council of State members Felipé Pérez Roque, Otto Rivero, and Carlos Valenciaga. Unlike them, Yadira García went from a leadership post in the Communist Youth to a job in the party as provincial first secretary; then she was promoted to the Political Bureau, and then concurrently
became a minister. The coveted post, which may well be a mark of “bound to lead,” is having worked in close collaboration with Fidel Castro as a member of his both emblematic and enigmatic “supporting group.” It is known that Carlos Lage, Felipé Pérez Roque, Yadira García, and Carlos Valenciaga can include this item on their résumés.

Three are a “third or quarter of a cadre,” by Machado Ventura’s own denomination. Like the cadres in the other subgroups, the cadres in this subgroup have rotated jobs between the party or the UJC and the state administration, but unlike the others, they have done so always in a post that demands the same specialization. Concepción Campa is a well-known expert in biotechnology but in little else. The same applies for Lina Pedraza with respect to financial and accounting jobs. Although Fernando Remírez is a physician by profession, since the Communist Youth he always has been assigned to jobs concerning foreign affairs. Based on their trajectory up to now, they seem over-specialized to head a leadership team, but the three are probably highly contributive when decisions in their particular area of expertise are made.

Table 6.3
The New Generations of Leaders
Integral Versus Specialized Approach to Formation

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<th>Integral Cadres</th>
<th>Specialized Cadres</th>
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Table 6.4
The New Generations of Leaders
Patterns of Promotion

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<th>Hard Workers</th>
<th>Essay-Tube</th>
<th>Big-Leap Forward</th>
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To summarize, this sixteen CC member sample supports the stated intention of gradual advance in the formation of Cuban cadres. All except Concepción Campa were promoted to their post in the national direction of either the party or the state administration from a post in the national bureau of the UJC, as a state minister, or as a provincial party secretary, which are posts of high standing as well, and to which they were promoted after being student or mass organization leaders or having escalated through the party hierarchy from the bottom up. Without exception, all members in this sample have rotated between posts in the party or the UJC and the state administration. Their rotation pattern indicates a deliberate attempt to form an integral rather than a specialized cadre, as only three out of the sixteen have so far always occupied posts within the same area of activity.

*The Heirs*

As of December 2007, of this sixteen member sample the better formally positioned to occupy the highest posts of direction with the consummation of the generational transition at the top are Carlos Lage, Pedro Sáez, Jorge Luis Sierra, and Yadira García, because only they hold a post in any of the higher instances of both the party and the state. From a slightly different formal (and any informal) perspective, Felipe Pérez-Roque is also well-positioned, as from this sample he is the only one who figured along with Carlos Lage among the officers in charge of managing the affairs of the state.
during Fidel’s “temporary” (now permanent) absence.

One should, however, proceed with caution in pointing to any of these or other high-ranking officers as the future leaders of the Cuban government, even if assuming regime continuity. High-ranking officers of the new generations have fallen in the past. Immunity from future political or other disgrace for those who have remained is never ensured. Had these lines be written before November 2006, the analysis would have included the trajectory of Robinson Agramonte, who as mentioned above, was expelled from the Politburo and the party for charges of corruption. Had they be written anytime between 1991 and 1998, in all probability they would have expanded on the personality of Roberto Robaina, whose many apparent sins for which he was demoted from the Political Bureau and expelled from the party, seem to indicate he behaved more autonomously than his elder gatekeepers were willing to permit.106

There is much certainty, however, in affirming that all sixteen members represent, as a group, the kind of cadre that from the standpoint of the historical leadership of the Cuban Revolution is to lead Cuba in the future. Regularities in their behavior may help identify what personal traits are rewarded for achieving and maintaining a post of high importance in Cuba, as a member of the new generations. And the demotions, in this respect, may tell not only about the infractions committed by the demoted but also about the errors not committed by those who have remained. If taken at face value, the mentioned demotions suggest that living a life in accord with income (Agramonte’s) as well as discipline and obedience (Robaina’s) are behaviors that cadres of the new generations must observe to maintain themselves in the highest posts. Besides this inference, there is great observable confidence in the members of this group about the
continuation of the socialist system of production. After Fidel, “there will be no transition but continuation of the Revolution and socialism,” in the words of Fernando Rémirez; or, we “must understand very clearly that the main part of our economy is and will continue to be state-run,” as Carlos Lage has put it.

**Are they Ready?**

The fundamental problem of saying anything concrete on how these cadres are going to behave if and when they will become Cuba’s most influential policymakers resides in distinguishing conviction from ambition. In other words, their apparent confidence in the future of the socialist regime may stem from their formation process as both citizens and cadres, and then be genuine, but it may also stem from their political ambitions, should they have any, and up until now these two possible behavioral motivations are inseparable. When they become separable, it will be possible to judge the results of the cadre formation process on the basis of more firm evidence. While the historical leadership of the Cuban Revolution has consciously worked hard to form cadres that will be both able and willing to continue the socialist regime, it remains to be seen whether and to what extent its efforts will pay off.
Carriers of Change

Freedom only for the supporters of the government, only for the members of one party—however numerous they may be—is no freedom at all. Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently. Not because of any fanatical concept of "justice" but because all that is instructive, wholesome and purifying in political freedom depends on this essential characteristic, and its effectiveness vanishes when "freedom" becomes a special privilege.

Rosa Luxemburg

People “may submit from individual weakness and helplessness because there is no acceptable alternative,” and therefore a regime does not change “unless and until some alternative is organized in such a way as to present a real choice for isolated individuals.” Yet the existence of such an alternative is not sufficient condition for a regime change. In any incumbent regime alternatives always exist as a conceptual choice. Social groups, or actors, are the ones who do or do not bring them about. The question of regime change is therefore not only whether alternatives to the incumbent regime exist, but also what is the balance of power among their supporters and opponents.

Balances of Power

A regime change happens if and only if the forces supporting the alternative(s) are equal to or stronger than the forces supporting the status quo. Upon conditions of rough parity of forces in uncompetitive political systems, supporters and opponents of the status quo may clash indefinitely. The resulting protracted interregnum can better be conceived as chaos than by any particular regime type. Supporters and opponents of the status quo, however, may also set up institutions such as elections at regular intervals for the peaceful settling of their differences. The outcome is a competitive political system,
which is possible as contenders with roughly equal power tire from violent struggle or when from the beginning they find the price of mutual compromise cheaper than the price of violent defeat. When the forces supporting an alternative are stronger than the forces supporting the status quo, they impose the alternative. The classical scenario is confrontational: an opposition gets stronger, then overthrows the government, and then changes the regime. However, governments unrivaled by oppositions can also choose to change regimes, insofar as regime change is in the interest of sectors growing stronger within them.

According to whether groups interested in regime change are outside or inside the government, they can be denominated counter elites or just groups that represent antisystemic interests within the elite. In the case of the state socialist regimes, this distinction correlates well with the main institutional differences among the successor regimes. When the transition was initiated or “taken over” by groups outside of the government, either in the form of mass mobilization or political parties (or both), the successor regimes included, at least at the formal level, the political institutions of a liberal democracy (i.e. elections at regular intervals) as well as the economic institutions that characterize a market economy (i.e. private ownership rights and allocation of goods and services by their supply and demand). This pattern characterizes all East European transitions from state socialism. When oppositions have not appeared or have been defeated (Tiananmen), transitions from state socialism have been controlled by governments. In such cases, market economies have emerged without significant political openings. Vietnam and China characterize this pattern.

The correlation can be explained by the different relative distance of different groups
from policymaking. In order to influence policies, groups outside of the state socialist government had first to get access to government, and for getting access to government they needed to open political spaces that previously did not exist. In the process, they brought an end to Communist Party hegemony. Groups within the state socialist government, in contrast, had no need to open new political spaces in order for them to influence policymaking. Only groups within the government could initiate a process of economic systemic reform without substantially altering the political system.

The Question of Alternatives in Cuba

While the last three chapters of this research have explored what the supporters of the Cuban state socialist regime have done to preserve it across generational change in the political elite, this chapter looks at groups that may offer an alternative. By their strength, it would be possible to know whether a regime change is in sight. By their institutional location, it would be possible to identify the basic features of a successor regime. This chapter surveys in this order groups of Cubans in exile, local dissidents, nongovernmental organizations, petty bourgeoisies, professionals, and party-state bureaucrats. Each of these groups is relevant insofar as it can start or play any role in a process of regime change. There is no intention to present an exhaustive review of each group per se. On the basis of this survey and the balances of power presented above, the chapter concludes by identifying the most likely pathway for regime change in Cuba.

The Exile

By far, the most open and vociferous challengers to the Castro government reside outside Cuba. The main bearers of this opposition are Cubans who have left the island as
a result of or after the revolution of 1959, and whose main destination has been the United States. According to the U.S. bureau of the census, in the year 2000 over 1.2 million persons of Cuban “origin or descent” lived in the United States. This number amounts to nearly 90 percent of the estimated 1.4 million Cubans living abroad, and over 10 percent of the island’s population by the end of 2006, estimated at about 11.2 million. Most Cubans in the United States tend to concentrate in a few states, and within them in a few cities or counties. The three states with the most Cuban American residents are Florida (over 800,000), New Jersey (over 77,000), and New York (over 62,000). Cuban Americans in Florida tend to reside in the south, and in the Miami-Dade area in particular.

In several intended and unintended ways, Cuban Americans influence or seek to influence regime stability in Cuba. Their patterns of influence are direct or indirect, depending on whether their interactions with Cubans on the island are mediated through a third party. The direct pattern of influence can in turn be divided into stated and unstated, depending on whether these interactions are explicitly maintained with the purpose of undermining the Castro government. The direct and stated pattern of influence can be subsequently divided into coercive and persuasive, depending on whether these interactions involve the actual use of violence.

Direct and Stated Coercive Pattern

Groups with a stated purpose to bring the Castro government to an end have been formed especially among the approximately 672,000 Cubans who arrived to the United States over the twenty years after the Cuban Revolution (that is, between 1959 and 1980) and their descendants. The wealthy and the mighty of the old regime did not
renounce their privileges willingly. By all accounts, especially the earliest to arrive in the United States within this population saw themselves as refugees rather than immigrants; they were not looking for a brighter future in a new place but rather expecting to return to their country after the restoration of their privileges. The most militant of them have also taken direct action to fulfill these expectations. Their actions have included, many times, the use of violent means.

Initially, Cuban exiles sought to topple the Castro government by, among other means, defeating his army on the battlefield. The brigade that landed on the Bay of Pigs on April 1961 consisted of about 1,400 troops, of whom 143 were killed and 1,189 were taken prisoner by the Castro forces. The whole episode lasted less than three days. Despite the “unmitigated disaster,” the most determined among Cuban exiles did not desist from continuing to try to bring a violent end to the Castro government. The CIA, in any case, recruited over 2,500 troops for a second invasion, which had to be aborted as a result of the American-Soviet Missile Crisis resolution agreements. Some Cuban exiles have been difficult to deactivate, however. Without the organizational and financial backing of the CIA, they turned to organize mostly in small paramilitary groups which in the 1960s carried out mainly hit-and-run operations against the Cuban government, and later have resorted also to terrorist attacks against indiscriminate targets on and beyond Cuban soil.

Among the most well known of these groups are Omega 7, Alpha 66, Cuban Forces of Liberation, Commando Zero, F-4 Commandos, Cuban Action, Cuban Nationalist Movement, Cuban Power, and Revolutionary Bloc. Among the most well known operations carried out by these and similar groups are the assassination, on American
soil, of Orlando Letelier, former Chilean ambassador to the United Nations, in September 1976; the bombing of a Cubana airliner which killed all seventy-three passengers on board the following month; a series of explosions in Havana hotels which killed Italian citizen, Fabio di Celmo, in 1997; and—according to Cuban and Cuba-friendly sources—protracted chemical and biological warfare in cooperation with the CIA, which according to the same sources has at times seriously damaged crops and farm animals destined for food consumption.¹¹

Operations such as these have no doubt harassed the Castro government because at the very least they undermine the sense of personal security of the Cuban people. Yet they are completely irrelevant to bringing an end to the Castro government or even to weakening it. Terrorism is the weapon of the weak—in numbers, weapons, and ideological support—and therefore a weak weapon for reaching its political objectives.¹² If Cuban exiles determined to topple the Castro government by violent means had the human, material, and organizational resources to build a regular army, they surely would confront the Castro army directly with tanks and airplanes. Their resort to terrorist methods betrays their numerical, material, and organizational limitations. If anything, their methods are likely to strengthen the Castro regime by confirming their own reputation (projected by the Cuban government, among others) as insane extremists with little or no respect for human life. If there are Cubans in the island who would like to contemplate an alternative to the Castro government because of its human rights record, logic dictates that these same Cubans would reject any embodied by paramilitary groups in exile.

*Direct and Stated Persuasive Pattern*
Besides coercion, there is suasion. Cubans in exile have organized in political groups to convince and mobilize Cubans against Castro. These groups are not monolithic in their methods, origins, or views.\textsuperscript{13} Some were or still are the political wings of armed groups, but others do not center their effort on the use of violence. Some, such as the Cuban Revolutionary Party, the Cuban Patriotic Board, and the Cuban Christian Democratic Party, are either the same or successors to political organizations that joined the exile as a result of the revolution. Some others, like the Cuban Democratic Directory, Cuban Change, the Cuban Committee for Democracy, and the Spain-based Cuban Liberal Union, were born and developed in exile. Some declare loyalty to “social democratic” principles and some to “liberal international” ones; some support a dialogue with the Castro government and others do not; and some support the American embargo while others criticize it. Yet, all of them say that Cubans on the island lack democracy and respect for their human rights, and all of them, with the notable exception of a small anarchist group, include in their demands or ideological platform general elections and the broadening of the market economic reform.\textsuperscript{14}

Over the years, exile political organizations, especially the new ones, have turned more and more to the population on the island.\textsuperscript{15} They realize, apparently, that to fulfill their goal they will need the collaboration of this population. Gaining the collaboration of Cubans on the island is complicated, however, by well-known disadvantages of political groups operating from abroad.\textsuperscript{16} Being in exile by itself discredits any claim for the allegiance of those who stay in the home country. Even if there are Cubans on the island who share the views represented by political groups in exile, it is not clear why they should follow the lead of those who by living abroad have evaded daily suffering
under the government all them despise. In addition, and despite improvement in international means of communication over the last few years, most Cubans still have no access to computers connected to the Internet, and censorship is applied to the press.\textsuperscript{17} Oppositional information from abroad does not easily reach the Cuban population, which at first glance seems largely unaware of, and in any case unconcerned with, the existence of Cuban political exile groups.

\textit{Direct and Unstated Pattern}

Perhaps the strongest direct influence of Cuban exiles toward regime change in Cuba is unstated, though hardly unintended, and organized by no one in particular. People-to-people contacts between Cubans in exile and on the island began in 1979, when the Cuban government lifted the ban that had prevented the return of most Cubans who left during the revolutionary regime.\textsuperscript{18} Over this year and 1980 some 100,000 exiles made short trips from the United States to the island. After the 1980 “Mariel exodus” (see below), this number significantly decreased as the Cuban government prohibitively priced trip packages from the United States and limited visitor movement on the island.\textsuperscript{19} In the 1990s, however, these and other restrictions were eased in an attempt by the Cuban government to boost the tourist industry. Scholars’ best guesses indicate that during the second half of this decade about 100,000 Cuban Americans visited Cuba per year.\textsuperscript{20} Although in 2004 the U.S. government imposed restrictions on their visits, and although travel agencies report a consequent 80 percent decline of U.S. travelers to Cuba, circumventing the U.S. travel restrictions is relatively easy by third country routes. Therefore, the number of Cuban Americans visiting Cuba yearly may not have decreased much.\textsuperscript{21}
Through direct contacts with Cubans on the island, Cubans in exile influence Cuba’s society in ways that have mixed effects on regime stability and change. One evident and immediate effect of exiles’ visits to the island is the raising of “material” discontent among the population living in Cuba. Cuban Americans bring to Cuba consumption habits well above the Cuban average. Lured by the image of capitalist societies embodied by their compatriots living abroad, growing numbers of Cubans on the island desire life in a capitalist society. They can fulfill their desire by either transforming their socioeconomic order or leaving the island. Since the second is easier by far, it is the choice of most Cubans who have taken any explicit action to live in a capitalist society. This pattern became evident shortly after Cuban exiles began flocking to the island in significant numbers, notably on April 1980, when some 10,000 Cubans jammed the Peruvian embassy seeking to emigrate. As a response the Cuban government opened the port of Mariel for unrestricted emigration. By September, some 125,000 Cubans had left for the United States. The episode marks a watershed. Unlike the preceding period under the revolution, Cuban emigration has since been motivated more for economic than for political reasons.

A second effect of people-to-people contacts is to help mitigate economic hardships on the island. Many times, after visiting the island, Cuban exiles keep sending money from the host country either through messengers or agencies established for that purpose. Although U.S. legislation sets a statutory ceiling on the dollar amount of remittances to Cuba, it is again easily evadable through many means in the ongoing informal economy developing between Cuban Americans and their homeland. Estimated at about a half billion dollars by 1995 and ranging from 800 million to one billion by
most recent estimates, remittances from abroad have become a main source of hard
currency for Cubans.\textsuperscript{23} Given the hardships of everyday life in Cuba during the years
after the end of Soviet subsidies, such remittances may have become fundamental in
bailing out an economy that otherwise might have been transformed further in search for
hard currency from profit-oriented investors and for rising local enterprise productivity.
It also might well be that remittances help make everyday life bearable for many Cubans
who otherwise would direct explicit economic and political demands for change toward
their government.

While by mitigating economic hardship remittances arguably contribute to regime
stability, they also have a potential destabilizing effect, especially in the long run.
Reportedly, most individuals who send remittances seek primarily to help their relatives
on the island make ends meet.\textsuperscript{24} Help in this sense detaches income from work on the
island. Detached from income, hard work is discouraged, and thus autonomous
economic progress hindered. There is also reason to presume that the work-income
detachment demoralizes those who collaborate with, work in, and support ideologically
the socialist economy as those who can afford not to work (or work less) have both a
higher consumer capacity and receive on an equal basis the welfare benefits both created
and provided by hard workers in the socialist economy.

Yet, whatever its extent, socialist demoralization has not produced any tangible
result toward regime change. For the most part, it has created short bursts of protest and
propelled the choice of many individuals to emigrate—as in the Mariel boatlift and the
1994 rafter crisis alike—and perhaps political apathy among many more, but so far has
not crystallized in any political alternative to the Castro government. Bursts of
discontent clearly precipitated the collapse of the state socialist regimes in Czechoslovakia, the GDR, and Romania. Yet critical in all three cases is also the presence of organized groups, which were then able to take advantage of the opportunity to challenge the incumbent government and replace it.\textsuperscript{25} This variable has been missing in the bursts of discontent that have taken place in Cuba. Without an agency able to channel the discontent and the desire to emigrate into steady and protracted popular demands for regime change, émigré visits and remittances can continue indefinitely with their regime transformative effects neutralized as needed by the Cuban government’s migration, education, security, and other policies.

\textit{Indirect Pattern}

In comparison to overthrowing the Castro government, Cuban exiles have been more successful in influencing U.S. foreign policy. This is their single most important indirect pattern of influence toward regime change in Cuba. Just that U.S. foreign policy makers have been equally or even less successful than Cuban exiles in nearing the end of the Castro regime.

Cuban Americans have classic attributes for success as an interest group in electoral polities.\textsuperscript{26} They have resources such as money, time, and education to organize in the pursuit of their goals. They also concentrate in geographical areas and thus constitute a voting bloc. Not surprisingly, as of 2008 three Congress members, one senator, and the secretary of Commerce are Cuban Americans. To influence U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis Cuba, Cuban Americans have organized since the early 1980s in lobby groups. These groups call, meet with, and disseminate information among politicians to try to influence their choices on Cuba. More than once they give substantial financial contributions to
the politician’s careers, especially during electoral campaigns.\textsuperscript{27} Congressmen, senators, presidents, and other representatives of the American people, in return, work on Cuban and Cuban American policy-related issues in accordance with their sponsors’ preferences.

By far the most successful of these groups, and actually a textbook example of lobbying, is the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF). This organization advocates overthrowing the Castro government mainly by international hostility and isolation. From its very inception in the early 1980s, it was headed by Cuban American multimillionaire and community leader, Jorge Mas Canosa.\textsuperscript{28} When he passed away in 1997, one of his sons took over. There is hardly any need for examples to show this organization’s success in lobbying policymakers. To name but the few most illustrative, the foundation was instrumental in founding, ensuring public funding to, and actually running the radio and television Martí broadcasting stations that send subversive messages to Cuba; in creating and then getting grants from the National Endowment for Democracy and other governmental agencies that, at least nominally, exist to promote democracy across the world; in processing (for a fee) U.S. visas to Cuban exiles in third countries; in appointing public officers at both the federal and Florida state levels; and, of course, in toughening the U.S. trade embargo to Cuba after the termination of the Cold War.\textsuperscript{29}

Yet, when it comes to immigration issues and cases that surpass the public interest of the Cuban American community alone, the limits of CANF’s power become evident. The 1984 migration accord between the Reagan administration and the Cuban government was reached despite CANF’s opposition, and, of course, the Cuban
American lobby could not prevent the federal government from returning the boy Elián González to his father (thus to Cuba) in the year 2000. Many times, also, CANF’s wins on some issues are tied to losses on others. CANF leaders, for instance, were reported to be outraged when during the 1994 rafter crisis the Clinton administration reversed the automatic political asylum status heretofore granted to all arriving Cubans; yet they were more appeased when two days later the same administration announced new restrictions on traveling and cash remittances to Cuba, which they had long been lobbying for. This has nothing extraordinary, but demystifies the Cuban lobby’s all-powerful image. After all, give and take is what lobbying is all about, and Cuban American hard-liners have proved to be able negotiators.

Despite claims to the contrary, the foundation seems to represent well the political stance of the bulk of the Cuban American population on the most important issues concerning U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba. If anything, the Cuban American population, at least in Miami, supports an even harsher stance towards the Castro government than what the CANF leaders would dare lobby for or acknowledge as their own to non-Cuban American publics. According to a 2007 survey of Cuban Americans in south Florida conducted by the Cuban Research Institute at Florida International University in Miami (FIU poll), over 50 percent of Cuban Americans favor military action to overthrow the Cuban government, either by the U.S. army (51.1) or an exile force (70.7). CANF does not lobby, at least officially, to bring either U.S. or exile armed forces to Cuba. It does, however, support the continuation of the embargo, as does over 57 percent of the polled population.

What Cuban Americans think is important because of their electoral clout. Over 65
percent of Miami’s Cuban émigrés and 53 percent nationally are American citizens. Of
the former, over 90 percent are registered voters.\textsuperscript{33} For most of them, the candidate’s
position on Cuba is important in determining their vote even on local politics.\textsuperscript{34}
Candidates interested in the vote of Cuban Americans try to reflect their stated interests
as well as they can. Candidates generally do not go, or have not gone yet, as far as
offering to send the American army to bring “freedom” to Cuba, but in close presidential
races they seem to compete with each other for the harshest stance against the Cuban
government in hope of winning the volatile Florida state.

When presidential candidate Bill Clinton supported the Torricelli bill that prevented
subsidiaries of American companies from trading with Cuba and barred sea carriers that
had touched the island from touching American ports for six months, president and
candidate for reelection George Bush signed it into law. Four years later, after the Cuban
air force downed two Cessnas piloted by Cuban exiles, president and candidate for a
second term Bill Clinton signed into law the even harsher Helms-Burton bill. The new
law discourages third country companies from doing business with Cuba and contains a
(so-far-waived) clause that permits Cuban Americans to submit property claims in U.S.
courts against the Castro government. The result: “In the 1996 elections Clinton carried
Florida…winning more Cuban-American votes than any Democratic candidates before
him.”\textsuperscript{35} The trade embargo, which made some sense (for some) under a bipolar
international system and mostly for national security considerations, has endured mainly
because of Cuban American influence exerted through lobbying and voting.

If the goal of U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba is to hasten the end of the Castro
regime, the irony is that the embargo has not worked. On the one hand it has never been
harsh enough or effective enough to completely isolate Cuba or to reach the Cuban people’s conversion point from starvation to rebellion. On the other, it seems both to foment nationalist sentiments among many Cubans who then unite with their government against the external threat, and to allow this government to plausibly blame the enemy, not the economic system, for economic failure. This is not to say, of course, that if the embargo has not worked its opposite will. A policy of engagement that includes unrestricted bilateral trade, investment, and traveling might deprive the Cuban government of the nationalism card to sustain the socialist system and also lure more Cubans than ever to a capitalist way of life. However, much investment and traveling is also likely to bring more accelerated economic progress, and under conditions of economic progress it is difficult to see how much and how many Cubans would want to change their government and/or their economic system.

The day in which these and other speculations could be tested is probably not too far away. Polls show sustained weakening support within the Cuban American community for U.S. policies of hostility and isolation toward Cuba as economic has replaced political immigration and as the generations born in the United States have come of age. According to the FIU time-series polls, whereas in 1991 some 40 percent of Miami Cuban Americans supported a national dialogue with representatives of the Cuban government, in 2007 65 percent supported such a dialogue. Whereas in 1993 50 percent supported selling medicines to Cuba and 23 percent selling food, the respective shares for 2007 were 72 percent and 62 percent. Whereas in 1991 some 45 percent favored unrestricted travel to Cuba, in 2007 over 55 percent favored it. Opinions endorsing the trade embargo still predominate, but they are almost 30 percent less so
than in 1991 and over 20 percent less than in 1997.

Should these trends continue, U.S. foreign policy shifts toward increasing engagement with Cuba are expected to occur in the near future—especially in or following electoral junctures. Should these trends continue consistently enough to bring about the definitive removal of the embargo, and if the Cuban state socialist regime (with or without the Castro brothers) is not removed first, then, and only then, will we see whether and to what degree engagement is better or worse policymaking strategy than hostility and isolation for bringing “democracy” and/or “free markets” to Cuba.

Local Dissidents

Strictly speaking, U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba is Janus-faced. The processes of regime change in East Europe demonstrated that state socialist demise is possible not only through popular rebellion but also through peaceful negotiations between the incumbent government and organized opposition. Following the Polish transition scenario in particular, since the early 1990s U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba has rested on a government-people bifurcation. Whereas the policies of hostility and isolation are addressed to the former, “assistance” is the catchword underlying the policies toward the latter. Carrying out the people part of the equation is a host of Miami and Washington based “nongovernmental” organizations that, contrary to their legal status, are directly or indirectly sponsored by the U.S. government. Organizations such as the Center for a Free Cuba, the Dissidents’ Supporting Group, and many more deliver to Cuban dissidents cash, clothing, food, “training,” and all sorts of office equipment and communication devices, including facsimiles, laptops, radios, and televisions. This support is supposed to help building a meaningful local opposition to the Castro regime.
Opposition to the Castro regime on the island existed in the distant past. Through the early 1960s, splinter revolutionary and other groups waged a guerrilla struggle from the Escambray Mountains in central Cuba. By 1965, however, they had been crushed by the Castro forces. Never then since has another armed opposition against Castro been organized on Cuban soil. Since the mid 1970s, and especially through the 1990s, peaceful dissident groups have been organized. Apparently the first such group to appear, or at least to gain international acknowledgment, was the Cuban Committee for Human Rights, headed for many years by the late Moncada attacker and long time dissident Gustavo Arcos Bergnes. Currently among Cuba’s well-known dissidents are Oswaldo Payá, who heads the Christian Liberation Movement; Martha Beatriz Roque, from the Cuban Institute of Independent Economists and head of a coalition called the Assembly for the Promotion of Civil Society; Elizardo Sánchez, president of the Cuban Human Rights and National Reconciliation Commission; and Vladimiro Roca, a Cuban Social Democratic Party leader and spokesperson of the alliance “All United.”

Dissident sources estimate the number of dissident activists in no more than 5,000. They associate in more than 330 groups, which, for their minute size, are better known by the individuals heading them than as organizations. As the names of most of these groups indicate, all of them are for the promotion of individual human rights and democracy in Cuba. For constituting themselves into viable alternatives to the incumbent government, they have, time and again, tried to unite. So far, all their unity attempts have followed a similar pattern. They first announce a coalition. Then, either because of security agents’ infiltration or genuine divergences, or both, the umbrella organization breaks down. When nevertheless dissident groups gain momentum, the
government has not hesitated to detain and incarcerate dissidents, or else to facilitate their exile. Although from exile they by no means are completely neutralized, their capability to coordinate dissident acts on the island obviously diminishes.

The most recent repetition of these dynamics occurred between 1998 and 2003. Some time after, or even concurrently with the falling apart of the umbrella dissident organization Cuban Council, a group of dissidents began to promote an initiative to amend the Cuban constitution on a few issues.\(^4^2\) Human rights aside, their proposal contained the holding of multiparty elections and the permission for Cubans to establish enterprises; thus it was an explicit proposal for regime change.\(^4^3\) Slowly but consistently, the dissidents collected more than the 10,000 signatures that the Cuban constitution requires for a national referendum on the changes proposed. With the signatures in hand, they brought their proposal to the National Assembly. The Cuban higher legislative body rejected the Varela project, as the dissident proposal is known, putting one of its own in its stead. This explains why and how, in a June 2002 extraordinary session, the Cuban National Assembly approved a law ensuring the irrevocability of the socialist system of production by an unsurprising 96.71 percent majority.\(^4^4\) The dissidents backing the Varela project, however, denied, or in any case ignored, the right that the National Assembly claimed for itself to reject their proposal, and continued collecting signatures. So in March-April 2003 some seventy-five dissidents were detained, tried, and condemned to sentences ranging from six to twenty-eight years in prison. Friendly (to the dissidents) estimates posit the number of total signatures gathered between 25,000 and 30,000.\(^4^5\)

As always, brutal repression stops some individuals from doing something that
otherwise they would continue doing, deters many others from behaving in a certain way, and also enrages some, who then become more determined to embrace their cause. The 2003 crackdown was a mortal blow to the Varela project, but it also created the dissident group “women in white.” Formed mainly by the relatives of the incarcerated, this group aims to “free” the “prisoners of conscience.” Thus far it has succeeded in helping to free some fifteen dissidents for ill health, and its endeavor has been recognized by the European parliament, which awarded it the 2005 Sakharov Prize for Human Rights.46 For any future assessment of Cuba’s government-dissident relations, it would be interesting to follow how this group evolves.

The 2003 crackdown also made evident the ties linking Cuba’s dissident groups to foreign support, especially from the United States. In a long press conference dated April 9, Foreign Minister Felipe Pérez Roque gave detailed examples of how the financing network for the local Cuban dissidence works.47 He offered some supporting documentation, though the “hardest” evidence appeared later in a book by two Cuban journalists containing testimonies from Cuban security infiltrators and photos of original correspondence, encounters, and other exchanges between dissidents and U.S. foreign policy carriers.48 In the appended documents, proof of cash transfers is given. Although not all local dissidents may accept funds from abroad, the 2003 crackdown stained all of them. Exactly how many among the Cuban population believe the government’s projected image of the dissidents as mercenaries and antipatriotic foreign agents is unmeasurable under current restrictions and thus unclear. In any event, there is no evidence whatsoever of widespread awareness of and sympathy toward dissidents within Cuba, beyond the few tens of thousands of signatures on the failed referendum petition.
To be sure, U.S. policymakers see nothing wrong in giving material help to local Cuban dissidents. They do not hide the fact that they assist or support those who assist them. The problem (for the Cuban dissidents, not for U.S. officers) is that collaborating with the Helms-Burton legislation is an infraction under Law No. 88, which gives the Cuban government the legal basis to incarcerate dissidents who receive U.S. government sponsorship.49

Local dissidents in Cuba are thus bear-hugged by their supporters from abroad. Outside sponsorship and recognition empowers and weakens them at once. Thanks to outside sources they can organize and get the material resources needed to operate within Cuba. Probably, given Cuba’s repression machinery, outside support also helps them to keep decent clothing and food consumption standards when they are out of jail. Moreover, their ties abroad make their principal figures the ideal representatives of the “people” in a “free” Cuban scenario brought about by external pressures—including military intervention. For them, collaboration with the United States in the present can bring a high political office in the future. Yet, by “legalizing” governmental repression and blackening the dissidents’ public image, the very same U.S. contacts undermine their chances of growing in numbers and getting stronger within Cuba. Without getting stronger within Cuba, dissident groups will not be able to challenge, let alone change by themselves, the Castro regime.

Nongovernmental Organizations

On the borderline between explicit and implicit opposition to the Castro government stand the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). By definition, these are organizations independent of the state in which individuals associate for purposes other than changing
or overthrowing a national government. In state socialist societies in particular, these associations necessarily exist in potential conflict with the institutions of the state. When the reach of the state encompasses the management of not only the economy but also of cultural expression and recreation, the space for the legal existence—let alone growth—of organizations independent of it is very restricted. If these organizations that nevertheless exist aim at providing social assistance and moral guidance to the needy, they can easily find themselves competing with the state for the people’s loyalties, or at any event being looked upon with suspicion by the ruling authorities as potential contenders. Insofar as they are truly independent from the state in their financing and decision-making, they may provide the only possible harbor for dissidents at times of state repression and may spawn dissidence at times of toleration. Dissidents may join NGOs and use them to foster their objectives, in a rather symbiotic relationship that makes it difficult to separate “nongovernmental” activities from oppositional ones. Not for nothing, students on the topic have insistently pointed to the Catholic Church in Poland as the mainstay of the societal forces that successfully brought the Polish United Workers’ Party to the negotiation table, and, consequently, precipitated the events that culminated with the end of Communist Party rule in East Europe.\textsuperscript{50}

The example of the Catholic Church is important for Cuba because historically the Catholic Church represented the epicenter of local opposition to the Castro regime and more recently appears to be the only existing NGO with a national reach.\textsuperscript{51} As in Poland, church and state in Cuba have had their clashes. As early as 1959, Cuban Catholic priests organized armed attacks against the Castro government, backed U.S. foreign policies toward Cuba, and were involved, among many other episodes, in the infamous
illegal operation Peter Pan through which from 1960 to 1962 some 14,000 children were taken to the United States unaccompanied by their parents to save them from communist indoctrination.\textsuperscript{52} The Cuban revolutionary government, in turn, nationalized education in May 1961 and thus abolished the thriving private educational network operated by the Catholic Church. In September of that year the government also expelled 135 Catholic priests from Cuban territory.\textsuperscript{53} Thousands more priests and nuns apparently understood the hint and went “voluntarily” into exile. The 200 or so priests who stayed in Cuba suffered state surveillance and repression.\textsuperscript{54} Cardinal Ortega y Alamino, for instance, who is currently the maximal Catholic authority in Cuba, was sent to a Military Unit to Back Production (i.e. work camp) from 1966 to 1967.\textsuperscript{55} Repression seems to have overcome quite effectively the regime’s early opposition represented or sponsored by the Cuban Catholic Church. Nonetheless, in a further similarity to Poland, the regime’s dissidents have continued asserting their Catholic values and are also often congratulated by church-related authorities and publications for following their “Catholic conscience.”\textsuperscript{56}

But the parallels to Poland end here. Historically, the Cuban Catholic Church cannot be seen as a symbol against foreign aggression, but it can be seen as an institution that educated and serviced the upper and middle classes closely tied with the United States before the revolution. The scenario of catholic “nationalism” fighting against foreign-imposed “socialism” cannot unfold here. Nor is the mobilization potential of the Cuban Catholic Church comparable to that of the Catholic Church prior to the demise of state socialism in Poland. In the early 1980s, after some thirty-five years of Communist Party rule, some 90 percent Poles were Catholic by baptism and about half attended Mass. By
contrast, after more than forty years of socialism, baptized Catholics amount to about 40 percent of the Cuban population, and only between 2 and 5 percent of the Cuban population are defined as active Catholics by church officials.\(^{57}\)

Moreover, animosity of international Catholic institutions toward the Cuban government is less today than it was toward state socialist governments in East Europe on the eve of their collapse. In Latin America, the Cuban government has even developed fairly friendly relations with liberation theology activists, which call upon the poor to take action to change the existing socioeconomic structures of oppression in this world. Symbolizing these relations, a prominent liberation theology proponent, Frei Betto, was the first individual ever to carry out a published in-depth interview with Fidel.\(^{58}\) Since the conclusion of the Cold War, the Cuban government has found areas of affinity with the Vatican as well, especially concerning denunciation of growing socioeconomic inequalities on a global scale. Following the consequent improvement of relations between the two sides, in January 1998 Pope John Paul II made the first-ever papal visit to the island.\(^{59}\) While he repeated in Cuba his “do not be afraid” call that triggered the 1989-91 East European revolutions, he also called from Cuban territory for the termination of the U.S. embargo.\(^{60}\) While the first call is open to different possible interpretations—it all depends who is afraid and why—the second is unambiguous in its solidarity with Cuba.

Relations between the Cuban socialist government and the Cuban Catholic Church have also improved with the passing of time. Since the late 1960s the Cuban Catholic Church has turned from confrontation to coexistence and accommodation with the socialist government.\(^{61}\) Concurrent with the process of rectification, since the mid-1980s
the regime has allowed greater religious freedoms, and the number of religious practitioners has consequently grown, especially during the special period as many people have sought in religion some relief from their daily hardships. The growing scope of religion, including Catholicism, has not revived (so far) the open clashes between church and state. While important priests have occasionally hinted their criticisms of the regime in public speeches through warnings against “false messiahs” and other dangers, their pronouncements are always indirect enough or cautious enough or sporadic enough to allow either pretended ignorance or favorable interpretations by both the regime’s authorities and their supporters.\textsuperscript{62} Rather, the relations between communism and religion have been redefined in ways that seek growing ideological compatibility with each other. After the 1991 Communist Party Congress authorized the admission of religious believers to the party and, one year later, an amendment to the constitution defined the Cuban state as secular rather than atheistic, there is no longer a formal conflict among being Cuban, communist, and religious believer.

But the factor that critically differs from Poland’s transition scenario is the absence of a well-organized opposition. After all, good relations can be tactical (for both sides) and reflect their current asymmetries in mobilization potentials rather than their ideological compatibility. If the balance of power changes, hostility may increase again. In the Polish transition to liberal democracy Solidarity was the main actor for change.\textsuperscript{63} Once this independent trade union emerged, the Catholic Church provided moral and at times also logistical support for regime change. Even if the Catholic Church would support a similar organization in Cuba—which is not at all clear—such an organization has yet to appear. And until it appears, nongovernmental organizations are likely to

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continue as merely spaces free of state intervention where dissidents can exist, or rather subsist, waiting for their opportunity to act.

**The Petit Bourgeoisie**

Even if the limited market reform carried out by the Cuban government between 1990-1 and 1996 can be credited with stopping rampant socioeconomic deterioration and therefore with saving socialism, it certainly has not ensured its long-term continuity. The reform has created new social groups, empowered others, and weakened still others. The long-term institutional expression of the resulting social realignment has yet to be seen. There are reasons to believe that it could well imply the termination of the state socialist regime.

A new social group that has been created by the economic reform consists of self-employed workers. With the legalization of self-employment in September 1993, the number of licensed self-employed workers rose sharply, yet following growing taxation and other restrictions imposed by the state it decreased somewhat. In January 1996 over 208,000 Cuban workers were licensed self-employed; through the 2000s this number has been steadily calculated at around 150,000. By conservative estimates, the number of unlicensed self-employed workers is about twice that much. Most self-employed workers provide services either to the local population (plumbers, carpenters, electricians, taxicab drivers, and the like) or to tourists (restaurateurs, lodging renters). Self-employment is also common among street vendors of items such as books and among producers and sellers of artworks and crafts.

As a consequence of what they do, the self-employed are prone to develop a capitalist or self-oriented mentality, which may conflict at times with the collectivistic
and egalitarian values promoted by the socialist regime. The self-employed run their own businesses and make a living from their profits. They have thus a vested interest in maximizing their business profits. Interest, in turn, is an automatic shaper of mentality. Unsurprisingly, studies that have tested their opinions on economic reform invariably report that the self-employed tend to justify existing inequalities as natural ones and express “growing disaffection with the revolutionary government and its ‘socialist’ project.” Most studies of the self-employed in occupations connected to the tourist industry also report that they would like to expand their businesses or create others and would therefore support policies aimed at facilitating access to credit, opportunities for investment in local private enterprises, the lifting of restrictions on the hiring of labour, and the lowering of taxes.

It may well be—or not—that the support among the self-employed for the widening of the market oriented reform is shared by widespread sectors of the Cuban population. Aggregate data lacking, one can only speculate. The cardinal difference, however, between the self-employed and the bulk of the Cuban population is that the self-employed own their businesses and, at least some of them, have money. While they are probably not rich in comparison with the middle classes in developed capitalist countries or the upper classes in underdeveloped ones, most of them have a net income above the average Cuban. And if the existing institutions prevent them from making use of their disposable income as they wish, they are the ones who at least can try to use their material resources to change existing institutions. So they use their wealth, among other things, to circumvent existing regulations—by bribing inspectors, for example—while seeking to maximize their profits. The repetition of such behavior among many self-
employed workers—and authorities—changes little by little the social fabric and corrodes the socialist regime. Should, through practices such as these, the self-employed sector expand beyond what the authorities would find possible or affordable to reverse by repression, sooner or later the same authorities would have to recognize the existing realities by deepening the socioeconomic market-oriented institutional reform. Far from historical necessity, this scenario is certainly a plausible one.

**Professionals**

On the other side of the coin are the professionals. They are the clear losers from the limited market-oriented reform, yet they do not necessarily reject it or oppose its further progression. This social stratum is comprised of over 600,000 Cubans in the active working population with university degrees, and athletes and artists in the state sector of the economy (some are self-employed). Following the allowance of convertible currency transactions in the Cuban economy, the real income of peso earners in the state economy no longer corresponds to their highly valued social status in the socialist regime. While the socialist regime traditionally prizes education and technical skill, exactly the educated and skilled have come to see how as a result of the socioeconomic crisis of the early 1990s and the ensuing limited market-oriented reform the unskilled self-employed working population has come to earn (much of it illegally) more than them and to carry out a higher standard of living than theirs. The asymmetry exists in tension with the current socioeconomic setting and can lead to its change.

Cuba’s universal health and education systems are considered the very bastion of the socialist regime and the objects of its supporters’ pride. During the socioeconomic crisis of the 1990s both deteriorated considerably. In the health sector, shortages of medical
equipment and medicines have caused innumerable disruptions that have in turn propitiated the suboptimal treatment of patients. Lack of supplies—from study materials to daily meals—and deterioration of facilities in the education system are very common, and many teachers have also quit in order to earn higher incomes in other occupations. Yet not one school or medical facility has closed during the special period. Most state factories decreased production and some closed, but with the passing of time they have resumed activity on ongoing greater scale. Despite everything, a socialist system of production somehow continues existing in Cuba. The achievement would have not been possible without the hundreds of thousand of doctors, teachers, engineers, and other professionals who have stoically held their state posts as well as the newcomers who have replaced those who have left. Educated by the Cuban Revolution, this social stratum responded to the mission of keeping socialism alive at this particular “moment of truth.”

The question is: how much longer will the professionals continue carrying the burden of the system? So common are the stories in which traditionally conservative social groups become transformative that it would hardly be surprising that at one time or another the heroes of the special period would play the role of Lane’s “acquisition class” of professionals with marketable skills, which, according to his analysis, provided the main impetus for change in the East European revolutions of 1989-91. Cuban professionals maintain frequent exchanges with professionals in other countries through a variety of means, such as publications, direct means of communication, and congresses and conferences both in Cuba and abroad. Through increased contact with professionals in other places, if not through other means, they become aware of their potential for
success in a capitalist society. Because in Cuba they are underpaid in relation to their perceived official contribution to society, many of them might reasonably expect that a transition away from central management would bring them “material compensation more consistent with their occupation and occupational prestige.” Consistent with these expectations, the most extended nondissident proposals for change in the direction of multiparty political systems and a market economy have been voiced by members of this social stratum, especially in academia. This by no means is to cast doubt on the loyalty of Cuban professionals to the socialist system. It is to say, however, that should current conditions persist, there is no assurance that this loyalty will hold much longer.

**Party-State Bureaucrats**

Finally, the party-state bureaucrats can lead a transition away from state socialism. As we have seen in Chapter 6, all CC cadres of the new generations with posts in the highest bodies of the party and the state have at least a university bachelor’s degree. To the extent that they are representative of the larger intermediate- and upper-level cadre population in the party and state bureaucracies, members of these bureaucracies belong to the professional social stratum and their social problematic is common to that of the other members of this stratum. Yet the thousands or tens of thousands cadres in the middle and upper levels of the party-state apparatus also constitute a distinguishable subtype within this social stratum because they are located closer to the decision-making epicenters and therefore can influence policies more directly than can most other professionals in Cuban society.

Within this group, a potentially strong force for institutional change can be what Haroldo Dilla calls the “technocratic-entrepreneurial block” of enterprise managers and
party officers located in the intersections of the Cuban economy with foreign capital. Some of them work in or are in charge of enterprises engaged in joint ventures with foreign private entities, and others manage or supervise successful Cuban enterprises in capitalist markets. Many of these enterprises belong to the army. According to one estimate, by 1999 military enterprises accounted for 89 percent of exports, 59 percent of tourism revenue, 60 percent of hard currency wholesale transactions, and 66 percent of hard currency retail sales. The high shares of the army in hard currency transactions may suggest that Cuban political leaders regard the intersections with convertible currency a matter of national security and definitely would prefer to permeate them with individuals of proven loyalty. In a less benevolent (or less ingenuous) interpretation of civil-military relations, since access to hard currency is easiest for workers and managers in these intersections, the placement of army officers in them may represent an effective cooptation mechanism for gaining the continued support of army officers. Either way, the hundreds or few thousand managers and party officers located at these intersections may both develop a capitalist mentality and have the strongest incentives to either initiate or support a transition to capitalism.

Party officers and state managers located in intersections with foreign currency often come into contact with businessmen and representatives of capitalist companies who share life experiences, ways of life, and aspirations substantially different from those of the rest of the population, in Cuba as elsewhere. Through working interactions with them, the party officers and state managers may develop a “capitalist entrepreneurship” mentality, characterized, generally speaking, by a greater interest in profits than in politics, or, more specifically, by a greater interest in the generation of privately
appropriable profits than in the satisfaction of social needs. Moreover, through their contacts with representatives of capitalist enterprises, the members of the Cuban technocratic entrepreneurial block both get plenty of opportunities for illicit enrichment and develop managerial skills for success in a capitalist environment. Both the riches (to the extent that they exist) and the skills place them in a position to benefit from privatization processes through which they could acquire properties by laundering money obtained through bribes, as well as from the establishment of a labor market where they could sell their skills—and political connections—directly to international trusts.

Because members of this group in particular can expect the greatest benefits from a transition to a capitalist economy, it is only consequential that they would support, and if given the opportunity perhaps initiate, the furthering of the market-oriented reform. Yet, beyond a few anecdotal cases there is no evidence of widespread corruption among party and state officers located at the hard-currency intersections, and there is also no evidence whatsoever that they support privatizations and labor-market deregulation in the foreign invested sector.79 It may well be that this is precisely the kind of support that matures in the shadows and makes itself apparent all of a sudden as an accomplished fact. In any case, even if this support is weak or does not exist as of yet, it remains as a likely outcome to arise from the structural position of the technocratic-entrepreneurial block in Cuban society.

What Change?
Cubans in exile, local dissidents, nongovernmental organizations, the self-employed, professionals, and party-state bureaucrats—all these groups have some interest in regime
change in Cuba. Of them, the ones who have articulated this interest into goal-oriented organization for regime change are Cuban exiles and local dissidents. They constitute explicit counter elites and as such seek to build an opposition that would be powerful enough to change the regime either through negotiation with the Cuban government or through the imposition of their will. According to the values and goals they profess today, most of these groups and certainly the most important ones would bring the institutions that characterize a liberal democracy and a market economy to Cuba.

Yet the probability of a transition to liberal democracy through either “compromise” between government and opposition or “imposition by the opposition” in the short and mid terms is very small. To begin with, local dissidents are fragmented and discredited by their ties abroad. Of the groups in exile, the paramilitary ones are irrelevant because of their lack of coercive capability vis-à-vis the Cuban army. Given the state information monopoly in Cuba, political parties are limited in their capability to reach the bulk of the Cuban population; their location abroad additionally hinders their chances of getting the support of discontented populations on the island. Cuban exiles have also tried to reach their goals through influencing U.S. foreign policy. Although the resources allocated by U.S. policymakers since the end of the Cold War to bring an end to the Castro regime through hostility and isolation seem high in comparison to merely national security considerations, Cuban American lobby groups and voters have not succeeded in bringing U.S. administrations to devote resources in the amounts necessary to bring about their desired change in Cuba.

Conditions that may improve the odds of political institutional change in Cuba are created by people-to-people contacts between Cubans in exile and on the island on the
one hand, and organizations in the sphere independent of the state, on the other. People in Cuba become more consumer oriented as they contact those who had left. Their religious devotion has increased since the late 1980s following greater governmental tolerance for religious practices, and especially during the 1990s, as a resource for coping with the economic hardships. Yet still missing is the critical variable for converting growing consumerism into demands for regime change rather than a wish to emigrate, and, possibly, religious beliefs into competing loyalties to the socialist regime. In spite of repeated attempts to form one, no tangible carrier of alternatives to the Castro government exists within Cuba.

Absent this carrier, gradual regime change promoted by the Cuban government is more plausible. The market reform of the early 1990s has provided specific incentives to specific social groups that can bring about more market reform. These groups can, by pursuing their own interests, drive the Cuban government to pursue socioeconomic and political institutional change. The self-employed workers would want to maximize their business profits. The professionals would want to close the gap between their perceived contribution to Cuban society and their wages. Both are distanced from the decision-making epicenters in the party and the state. Yet professionals who are party members and self-employed who have become wealthy nevertheless have a degree of “power” or contact with those who do. They in particular can use their power to try to open the political spaces in the party and the public sphere from which they could influence policies more directly in accord with their own economic interest. Should either or both these two groups be the main force of change, alongside a market economy a multiparty polity emerging through gradual and controlled political openings is not an unlikely
outcome in the long run.

However, since the party-state bureaucracy is relatively well positioned to influence policies, a political opening is not a must. Since they do not need to open the political spaces to influence policies, the members of this bureaucracy are more likely to pursue the kind of change that has characterized China so far. While boasting of communism and socialism, they can direct an economic transition under their own political grip. By so doing, they can also become rich. Unless U.S. foreign policy shifts to either military action or economic engagement—and then everything changes and calculations would have to be made anew—of all available regime change scenarios this seems the most likely. Given the weakness of opposition groups in both Cuba and abroad, and the relative closeness of the technocratic-entrepreneurial block to both the decision making epicenters and the means of violence, the Cuban state socialist regime may, in the final account, be transcended by forces emerging from its womb.
Conclusion

From the very start the species man has not appropriated the world passively but actively, through practice, labor, the setting of goals, the giving of forms. As men changed the world they explained and refined their ability to know it, and the growing capacity for cognition again enhanced their ability to change it.

Ernst Fischer

Elites “rise” and “fall,” socioeconomic and political regimes “develop,” decisions are “taken,” and policies “implemented.” While all these expressions common in the writings of social scientists attest to the steadiness of social movement and change, some movements are more sudden and some changes are more expected than others. The last time that the international system changed in structure occurred between the years 1989 and 1991. This change was brought about by the sudden and for the most part unexpected fall of communist governments in East Europe. As this happened, the world arena was reshaped. As market-oriented reforms and multiparty political contestation expanded across countries, it was widely expected that the Cuban state socialist regime will either proceed along the path of its East European relatives or follow the Chinese route characterized by a gradual transition to a market economy under Communist Party political hegemony. Although intermittently, and especially since the beginning of the first leadership succession in July 2006, this expectation has remained pretty much in place. “After Castro’s death,” according to the most recent academic version of this expectation, “things simply cannot stay as they were, and real change becomes unavoidable.”¹ Meanwhile, until the much anticipated change happens, and almost twenty years after the reshaping of the international arena, enough time has elapsed to reach some “tentative” conclusions from the “uncertain” Cuban reluctance to commit.²

Regime Stability and Change

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Especially when changes are unexpected, they captivate our imagination and call for investigation. As seen in the introduction to this research, social scientists have found in the demise of state socialism much confirmatory evidence for structural (a “modern” social basis, economic crisis, the international system) and institutional (central management, collective ownership) variables explaining socioeconomic and political change. Accounts building on these variables normally specify conditions under which regime stability and change are possible outcomes and delineate patterns to which most cases conform in the long run. Unless understood deterministically, all these accounts certainly allow for deviations to their expectations, and authors sometimes clarify that even when the conditions of change that they specify exist, “transitions may not occur when top political elites resist change.”3 This research has gone one step further in this direction by both detecting and describing a type of actor that may prevent structural and institutional variables from having their expected regime-change effect.

To recall, the model of extraordinary elite has four elements: a first generation of leaders, siege mentality, weak institutionalization, and unity. The first three are common to ruling elites in early stages of revolutions, and the fourth is a plus. During the socioeconomic crisis occasioned by the demise of state socialism in general and the end of Soviet support in particular, each element was instrumental in providing for the survival of state socialism in Cuba. All together, these elements combine in a particularly powerful compound that counters the forces pushing Cuba’s socioeconomic and political institutional setting away from state socialism.

Thus far, the extraordinary model is nascent and made on the basis of one case. Its further refinement and elaboration may be possible by looking at whether and to what
degree its components are present or absent in the ruling elites of other cases where regimes apparently subsist or subsisted notwithstanding structural and/or institutional pressures to the contrary. From the similarities among the cases, general propositions could be reached on the links between the extraordinary elite composition and regime stability and change; from the differences it could be known better what elements are more important than others and to what degree.

As the only post-Cold War state socialist survivor besides Cuba, North Korea provides an obvious unit for future comparisons. Although, as said in Chapter 1, because of its self-reliance policy North Korea is logically less exposed than Cuba to stark fluctuations in international conditions, the collapse of the Soviet Union badly affected North Korea too. With the collapse of the Soviet Union North Korea lost much oil deliveries and with them its energy supplies. The ensuing socioeconomic crisis has been estimated in about 35 percent GDP contraction between 1990 and 1997, and characterized by famine in proportions impossible to hide from foreign observers.4 As in Cuba, in light of the dire socioeconomic situation and the worldwide state socialist demise, observers predicted “major change in the DPRK,” if only because its centralized economy “offers no structural solution to meet future needs.”5 Yet, as in Cuba, basically the same socioeconomic and political institutional setting continues in North Korea almost twenty years after the demise of state socialism worldwide. Because both the North Korean and the Cuban state socialist regimes have survived structural and institutional pressures for change, the comparison between their political elites is inviting. Their similarities and differences at the time of the Soviet collapse are likely to reveal to what extent the extraordinary elite model is generalizable to contemporary state
socialist regimes.

Cuba and North Korea are not, of course, the only cases throughout history where state socialist regimes have subsisted despite adverse external circumstances. The Bolshevik party that led the Russian Revolution of 1917 established the first state socialist regime worldwide despite famine, bloody civil war, and international hostility of Great Powers. The political elite that instituted and consolidated the Vietnamese state socialist regime had even to overcome actual Great Power aggression. To the extent that the characteristics of the extraordinary elite model could be found in cases such as these, then it could be generalized to state socialist regimes across time. Additional research can be done by comparing the model with cases beyond the state socialist universe. Comparing the extraordinary elite model with cases such as the Israeli political elite under David Ben Gurion, which was able to build and consolidate not only a regime but also a state under clearly adverse external circumstances dominated by neighbor hostility, is likely to reveal whether and to what degree this model is generalizable not only across time but also across regime type.6

Elites

Explaining socioeconomic and political stability and change in terms of elite composition is perhaps the most classic endeavor of the elite intellectual tradition commonly associated with the writings of Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, and Roberto Michels, at least as this tradition was or still is generally taught to students in their introductory courses on comparative politics in universities across the world.7 Obviously sharing intention with and drawing insight from the elite intellectual tradition, this research can also contribute to it. For its focus upon those who wield “power,” most
research within the elite intellectual tradition tends to exaggerate the explanatory role of actor choice at the expense of broader social and international variables. Elites are typically seen as limited only by themselves or else, a la Schumpeter, by the publics to which through electoral linkages—for example—they are held accountable for their actions. By contrast, Cuba presents a case in which, at least through the early and mid-1990s, purely external events were clearly predominant in constraining political elite behavior. Comparing the findings of this research with established common wisdom on elites can thus enhance our understanding of the linkages between elite composition and socioeconomic and political regime stability and change under different levels of exogenous constraints.

From the outset, an interesting conclusion emerging from such a comparison regards the linkage between intra-elite institutionalization and regime stability and change. Students of this question usually stress a correlation between strong, or high, intra-elite institutionalization and political stability. For Huntington, in perhaps the most influential proposition of such a correlation, the lowest, or weakest, institutionalized regime is that which is led by one man, and it “is also the less stable.”8 Similarly, more recent studies often regard “institutional weakness” as synonymous with “erratic patterns of policy making” and attribute to it a high likelihood of regime “interruption and breakdown.”9 At a minimum, by showing that in the particular case of Cuba weak institutionalization was an asset rather than a liability in providing for regime survival during the socioeconomic crisis that originated in a structural change of the international system, this research asks to qualify the connection between elite composition and socioeconomic and political stability by levels of external constraint. To be sure, the link
between high institutionalization and regime stability would be stronger for low levels of external constraint.

By implication, the case of Cuba strengthens the commonsensical affirmation that in our increasingly “globalizing” world, theoretical formulations based on within-nation-state variables alone do not seem to satisfactorily account any longer for a widening range of empirical phenomena, especially in states with little or medium-level influence in the international arena. More comparisons of different elite attributes across different environmental settings are therefore needed in order to widen our explanatory range on the link between elite composition and regime stability and change. Such comparisons can help us know better whether the elite attributes that conduce to regime continuity under a nation-state setting are the same or differ from the elite attributes that conduce to regime continuity under different levels of external constraints.

Cuba

This research also has drawn extensively from and aims to contribute to the literature centered on the Cuban case. While comparative studies on the Cuban case aimed at reaching lessons at more general levels of analysis exist,¹⁰ these are extremely uncommon among Cubanists. Excursions to other cases among this latter group of researchers are not uncommon, but these are for the most part intended to “illuminate” the Cuban case, and this case is only seldom taken to illuminate or propose contributions to literatures at more general levels of analysis.¹¹ In offering contributions from research based on the Cuban case to more general literatures in the social sciences, this dissertation breaks with this pattern. While it relies on the writings of Cubanists both to sketch the historical evolution of socialism in Cuba and to build the model of
extraordinary elite, Cubanists may find its second part especially useful in enhancing our accumulated ability to build reliable scenarios for Cuba’s socioeconomic and political future.

Present in the works of Cubanists at least since the early 1970s, such scenarios have become with time an inseparable companion to the concluding part of books and articles on the Cuban Revolution.\textsuperscript{12} As does Chapter 7 of this dissertation, most of these scenarios follow a deductive logic. Typically, the researcher looks at the particular position of social groups within Cuba vis-à-vis the others and calculates, many times aided by the historical experience of other cases, the possible reaction of each group to a certain stimulus—say, Castro’s death. From the different possible reactions of each group, different socioeconomic and political arrangements may coalesce. Inasmuch as more market-oriented reform might benefit groups within the Cuban political elite, the most likely future scenario that emerges following such logic—in most analyses and this one alike—is the Chinese path. In this scenario the basic institutions of a market economy will be adopted, but, somehow, under the direction of an elite that pays rhetorical homage to socialism. The Communist Party will continue ruling unchallenged. A political opening from within, either through popular revolt or gradual, elite-driven political reform, is far less likely because the forces that would propel it are weak.

Lacking in these exercises are inductive methodologies to predict what a certain group will do based on processes within the group.\textsuperscript{13} Researchers, for example, very often deduce that the long-standing period in power of the first generation of revolutionary leaders in Cuba plays a role in keeping the state socialist regime in place and that therefore what a future generation of Cuban leaders will do and undo to
maintain this regime will be of outmost importance for its perdurability over time.\textsuperscript{14} What has followed from this deduction, however, has not been research on the intergenerational processes within the elite but rather predictions of behavior based on more—mostly positional—deductions. What political leaders are doing and undoing to influence future events through the transference of values and beliefs to and development of skills among younger cadres is thus not taken into account. The oversight seems understandable and may be indeed justifiable from a teleological perspective that sees the institutions of a market economy and sometimes of a multiparty political system as the ultimate destiny of all other socioeconomic and political regimes; then what is done and undone by their leaders to construe, preserve, and develop their economically “irrational” and politically “nondemocratic” rule becomes ineffectual.\textsuperscript{15} Under any other perspective, however, the oversight is unfortunate. It hinders our ability to project future trends from processes happening in the present. Filling in the gap, this research has looked at, and found in the intergenerational processes within the Cuban political elite, empirical hints (that is, data) about what the historical leadership of the Cuban Revolution has done and is doing in the present to preserve the state socialist regime after its departure.

And these empirical hints unambiguously suggest future regime continuity, which is never given a chance in scenarios built following a deductive logic.\textsuperscript{16} The Cuban political leadership has learned both from its own experiences in building socialism and from the collapse experiences of others and has made policy choices consequent with this learning. After a decade of experimentation in the building of socialism, the Cuban leadership decided in the early 1970s to adopt the basic socioeconomic and political
institutions of the Soviet bloc countries. Policies in the period of rectification initiated in 1986 symbolize therefore the learning of the Cuban leadership from the adoption of state socialist institutions as existed in the countries of the Soviet bloc. Policies during the special period represent the learning from their collapse. And what Cuban leaders learned from the collapse of state socialist experiences in East Europe was pretty much a confirmation that what they learned from the adoption of Soviet bloc institutional settings was correct. “Obstructionism,” “dogmatism,” and “opportunism” had systemic destabilizing potential and therefore had to be combated. Consequently, the policy trends that sought to combat these ills and that had begun during the second half of the 1980s were pretty much reinforced after the collapse of state socialism in East Europe in the early 1990s.

One set of policies regards the incorporation of new blood into the elite. The data presented in Chapter 4 of this dissertation shows that the process of generational turnover in the elite has been intentional. It began in 1986, it accelerated in the early 1990s, and it has been depurated since 1997. As a result today there are leaders of the younger generations with experience in the tasks of government that have worked with and therefore been “tried” by the leaders of the first generation for a long time.

A second set of policies concern the values, beliefs, and skills transferred to the new generations. Data contained in Chapter 5 pinpoint specific policy changes in the second half of the 1980s which were reinforced during the 1990s and which reflect a growing concern of the Cuban leadership with increasing youth autonomy, fostering critical thinking, and strengthening the character of the new generations through the framing of their life experiences. These policy changes include growing participation of youth
organizations in decision making bodies since the second half of the 1980s; a relative opening in the social sciences since roughly the same time; the reformulation of the Marxist paradigm from a triumphalist Soviet-based materialism to an eclectic Cuban humanist strand beginning in the early 1990s; the invigoration of voluntary labor since the second half of the 1980s; and the restructuring of internationalist schemas after the conclusion of the Cold War, characterized by the elimination of military support but the intensification of services such as health, education, and technological and technical advice.

The third set of policies reviewed in this research refers to the particular education and skills given to cadres in the party apparatus and the state administration, that is, to the specific formation of new leaders. The data presented in Chapter 6 shows marked variations also in these policies, which include a relaxation in the criteria for the admission to the party in the early 1990s at a time when popular support was needed; the tightening of controls to cadre at times when opportunities for corruption abound; dire depictions of post-transition East European societies in the programs for the political training of cadres; and an upgrade in the management skills developed among the technical cadres as a means to try to increase enterprise productivity.

All three sets of policies are consistent with the learning of Cuba’s leadership from the demise of state socialist regimes elsewhere and show therefore an effort to prevent a similar scenario in Cuba. Whether the effort reflected through these and other policies will be enough to provide a basis for long-standing regime continuity is very difficult to predict. But inasmuch as education and skill development matter, this effort certainly makes the continuity option both possible and likely.
It is, of course, also likely that Cuba’s future socioeconomic and political institutional setting in the short and mid-term—say over the first two decades of the twenty-first century—will fall somewhere in between these two scenarios. Between a transition to autocratic capitalism and the continuation of state socialism, scholars, journalists, politicians, and other people interested in the Cuban case will find with astounding accuracy what they will look for.

This outline of Cuba’s alternative socioeconomic and political institutional future scenarios is conditioned by continued U.S. policies of hostility and isolation. And this continuity cannot be taken for granted. Should U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba become tougher and extend to military intervention, then as in post-World War II Japan, Germany, and Italy, as well as in contemporary Iraq, alongside a market economy the political institutions that characterize a liberal democracy will no doubt arise in Cuba, at least at the formal level. No other scenario stemming from U.S.-instigated coercive intervention is possible, except, of course, regime continuity following the military defeat of the invasion force. Though possible, at present the military imposition scenario seems highly unlikely. The U.S. army seems overstretched in other places, and there is only marginal talk in the U.S. media about a Cuban security threat, be it biological, chemical, or just migratory, which, if following the Iraq scenario, would precede military action. A shift of U.S. policy toward the normalization of relations with Cuba is by contrast much more likely. Structurally, the embargo does not seem to play any vital role for U.S. national security, and in terms of agency its continuation is losing support among the public that arguably has been most influential for keeping it in place. While these two variables suggest that the embargo will come to an end, its exact timing is
uncertain insofar as it depends on factors as variable as electoral results and leadership choice.

What is certain is that should the embargo be lifted with the current socioeconomic and political incumbent regime in Cuba in place, it will present Cuban state socialism with a challenge of unprecedented type, comparable only to the end of Soviet subsidies. When the embargo ends, it will become clear to what extent the state socialist regime in Cuba is based on chauvinistic defiance of American aggression and how much of it is based on its intrinsic benevolence as a provider of fairness and human emancipation to the Cuban population—at least in the opinion of the political elite. If, and only if, the latter outweighs the former, has the Cuban state socialist regime any chance of outliving and actually benefiting from the normalization of relations with the United States.

**State Socialism**

Inquiring into the intergenerational relations within the Cuban political elite is of theoretical significance well beyond helping venture informed guesses about Cuba’s socioeconomic and political future, although the magnitude of this significance cannot be assessed with surgical precision at this point in time. Depending on the occurrence of different scenarios of regime stability and change, the degree of possible theoretical significance of what the historical political leaders of the Cuban Revolution have been doing to preserve after their departure the socioeconomic and political order that they instituted will vary.

If Cuban state socialism outlasts its first generational transition at the top, then the phenomenon will hint at the theoretical possibilities of this system to develop effective mechanisms for its reproduction over time. In such a case, by spelling out the turnover,
educational, and leadership-formation processes aimed at attaining regime continuity across the generational change of guard, this research can contribute much toward theorizing state socialist perdurability. For such theorization, the study of these processes can be deepened on the basis of this research, as for example through its comparison with research focused on the same processes in state socialist regimes that collapsed, in order to single out better the particular differences in the formation and transference of values, beliefs, and skills among the new generations of leaders that may account for the different outcomes.

Should any scenario other than regime continuity materialize, the data elaborated through the second part of this research will nevertheless be of theoretical significance, although less. In such a case, all the attempts at elite regeneration in a way consistent with regime continuity presented here will constitute but one more confirmation of what teleologists already know: state socialism is unviable in the long run, notwithstanding the actions and inactions of political leaders in these regimes to make it workable and sustainable. The demise of state socialism in Cuba will be an especially strong confirmation of this inevitability, however, for unlike previous cases of state socialist collapse, the Cuban case includes hindsight advantage of demise tendencies inherent or at least habitual to this system, which, according to the Cuban leadership, are remediable.

**Socialism**

The relation between state socialism and socialism can be spelled out as political sociologist Robert Dahl once posited the relation between democracy and what he
termed polyarchy. One is the theoretical ideal, and the other refers to the empirical approximations to the ideal. By looking at the approximations, it would be possible to suggest some conclusions upon the ideal as well.

As explained in Chapter 1, Marx gives two different responses to the question of what is wrong with capitalism. One is inherently ethical, or moral; the other is materialist in its philosophy and historical in its approach. According to the ethical critique, capitalism is based on the exploitation of man by man because the few appropriate most of what the many produce through their work. According to the materialist and historical logic, it is a system suboptimal to satisfy human needs when production is done through machines. In a socialist society both wrongs are transcended. Members of a socialist society at a minimum will receive the full value of their work and will be able to satisfy their material necessities at a level higher than in their capitalist past.

Based on these premises, all state socialist regimes officially claimed to represent a social order both ethically and historically superior to the capitalist. At particular historical junctures, however, both arguments could not be sustained at once. Especially at times of economic stagnation and deterioration, the socialist ethic of justice as equality seemed to slow historical progress as measured by rates of economic growth. After choices were made, the historical-materialist argument came to take precedence over the ethical one. The ruling theoretical orthodoxy came then to see the satisfaction of needs as both an *invariable and undisputable* precondition for the fulfillment of a high socialist morality. Needs, however, proved to be elusive, and the attempts at their satisfaction invariably proved to be insufficient. In the process of trying to satisfy needs
better, the ethical argument was more and more relegated to a second plane. In the end, there was not enough socialist morality to sustain a system that in a stark clash between argumentation and reality could no longer be sustained by a materialist philosophy alone. The inescapable theoretical lesson from the demise of state socialism is that the subordination of socialist ethics to historical materialism does not lead to socialism but to the restoration of capitalism either through gradual reformation or collapse.

It would be an oversimplification to suggest that in Cuba, by contrast, the ethical argument for socialism has taken precedence over the historical materialist and therefore that an attempt at building socialism has persisted in this country despite sustained moments of unsatisfied material needs. The relation between socialist ethics and historical materialism in Cuba is far more complex. The statements of leaders and the policies of the Cuban government at the brunt of the socioeconomic crisis of the 1990s—as presented in Chapter 2—show that in Cuba, too, at moments of severe socioeconomic deterioration materialist considerations have taken precedence over ethical ones. Raúl Castro left little room for any other interpretation after he famously pointed to “looking for food” as the most important “political, military, and ideological problem of this country” in a 1994 interview. And the limited market-oriented reform is the institutional and unequivocal expression of the precedence given to the satisfaction of basic material needs over anything else.

What Cuba shows, however, is a different balance between historical-materialist and ethical premises from that which prevailed in the countries where state socialism vanished. During the socioeconomic crisis of the 1990s, for instance, at the moment when negative economic growth was arrested, the market-oriented reform was halted
and the socialist economy reactivated rather than abandoned. Since then, as in the period before the socioeconomic crisis, the effort of the Cuban government has been to try to bring—or rather force—material prosperity within a socioeconomic and political framework dominated by a socialist morality.

Would the conclusion then be that an ethically based socialist project above the level of basic-need satisfaction is the key to attain a socialist society? That would be to go further than historical fact allows. Cubans simply do not seem to be on the socialist historical stage, nor do they claim to be there. The theoretical lesson emerging from the Cuban case seems to be just that a socialist-inspired project based more on morality than on need satisfaction beyond the survival level can persist longer than a socialist-inspired project which continues subordinating morality to need satisfaction well beyond this point. And insofar as an attempt at building socialism in Cuba—as elsewhere—persists, then the possibility (rather than probability) that it will consciously evolve toward its stated historical end remains.

It is in this context that the historical role of the new generations of Cuban political leaders can be better appreciated. The political cadres that are taking over power from the historical leadership of the Cuban Revolution will have to decide whether and how to address the question of converting historical possibility into probability, and perhaps into concrete reality. Toward the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the post-Cold War structure of the international system prevails, but conditions are no longer as unfavorable to state socialist survival in Cuba as they were in the early and mid-1990s. In the 2000s Cubans have found new commercial and to some degree also ideological partners in the international arena, especially in Latin America. Steady
economic growth has resumed. The time for the Cuban government to focus merely on the defense of socialism seems to be elapsing and giving way to the further development of socialism, or rather, to the defense of the socialist system of production through its further development in addition to, and perhaps instead of, heroic resistance to “imperialism,” “American aggression,” and all other unfavorable external conditions.

Developing socialism further posits new and important challenges. First, there is the impending need to raise enterprise productivity. To find, or at least continue searching for, nonexploitative working schemas—in a Marxist sense—able to motivate workers and to produce outputs comparable in their quality to those of successful capitalist enterprises. Secondly, since in Marxist theory the socialist historical stage includes the gradual “withering away” of the state, moving toward more socialism necessarily implies sooner or later the retreat of the state from every nook and cranny of the productive and creative social processes, that is, from economics and culture. Such a retreat, in turn, would require Cuba’s future political leaders to find, or at least search for, ways to reduce both the coercive and authoritative—as opposed to merely administrative—roles of the state in the maintenance of the social order and in the production and distribution of goods and services respectively.

Socialism in Cuba may not only develop further but also gain in stability and thus in longevity should both challenges be overcome. Successfully addressing the first challenge carries the potential to make socialism in Cuba more stable because it would increase the ability of the socialist system of production to depend more on economic efficiency than on international solidarity ties and therefore it would make this system less dependent on what have proved to be (and there is no reason to expect otherwise in
the future) ephemeral international alliances. Successfully addressing the second challenge would make socialism in Cuba more democratic insofar as less state would enhance the individual’s ability to influence her socioeconomic, political, and cultural environment. If, as theories on democracy invariably assume, individuals do “crave” self-empowerment, successfully addressing this second challenge can also increase the stability of socialism in Cuba because it will strengthen its acceptability, or support, among the Cuban population. A more economically efficient and democratic socialist order is also likely to be more stable and therefore to endure longer than the hitherto perpetual Cuban Revolution, insofar as heroism, stoicism, and sacrifice are historically bounded and therefore exhaustible human qualities.

It goes without saying that success in overcoming both challenges is by no means guaranteed. There are no successful formulae on how to proceed. The theoretical record consists of a myriad of principles still waiting for successful application on the construction of a socialist society viable in the long run and the historical record is overwhelmingly negative as of the odds of such application. Yet, Cuban state socialism has defeated its teolologist detractors so many times that within the continuity scenario the possibility of its future evolution toward less state and more socialism should not be ruled out from the start.
Introduction


2. The Soviet Union, Mongolia, China, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, Albania, North Korea, Romania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, East Germany, Cuba.

3. For uses of the term state socialism along these lines see: Davis and Scase (1985, 87-8); Hechter in *Theory and Society* (April 1994, 157); Lane (1996, 5); Kotz and Weir (1997, 2); King (1986, 105-11).

4. As Peter Wiles (1964, 3) once put it, the distinction between socialism and capitalism is “exceedingly simple: public and private ownership, respectively, of the means of production.”

5. The classical formulation of this theory is Lipset (1960). For a more contemporary study on regime change within this perspective see Huntington (1991). See Pei (1994) and Lane (1996) for concrete applications of this perspective to the demise of state socialist regimes.

6. Even though industrialization is well in advance in China and Vietnam today, the population of both countries is still predominantly rural. See: UNDP (2006, 298-9).

7. James C. Davies (February 1962), for instance, has argued that revolutions often come during economic depressions, which follow on periods of generally rising standards of living. Especially in regards to the state socialist regimes of the Soviet Union and East Europe, Gunder Frank (1995) goes as far as saying that “socialism” was largely irrelevant to their failure. What mattered was the “economic” crisis, which he sees as international in scope. Relatively recent comprehensive empirical studies on the connection between economic crises and regime change, however, show it weaker for liberal democracies than for other regime types. See: Linz and Stepan (1996) and Maravall (1997). See Haggard and Kaufman (1995) for a discussion on this connection as it applies to transitions from authoritarian regimes.

8. Strictly speaking, economic slowdown in China and Vietnam did not immediately precede the end of state socialism. However, the reforms that led to the demise of state socialism were originally attempted as a response to economic slowdown and in this sense these cases conform to this characterization. For evidence on economic crises in state socialist regimes see: Dawisha (1990, 169-73); Pei (1994, 17); Batt, (Summer 1991, 368-90).


11. The following data was taken from UNDP (2006, 283, 297, 301).


13. For Cuba’s report of GNP per capita see the World Bank (1980, 6). As a socialist economy, the conversions of Cuba’s indicators from GSP to GNP or GDP are problematic. Additionally much controversy has surrounded the Cuban case due to a dearth of information. Beginning in 1981 the World Bank no longer reported or assessed Cuba’s economic performance for the 1980s in terms of GNP. Useful texts for the understanding of the convertibility problems in assessing Cuba’s economic performance are Mesa-Lago and Pérez-López (1985); Zimbalist and Brundenius in Zimbalist ed. (1988, 39-65) and Zimbalist and Brundenius (1989). The last two can be read as a criticism of the first and the first in turn as an assessment of the World Bank and other agencies’ estimates such as those of the C.I.A. For the demarcation of a “transition zone” on the basis of GNP per capita see Huntington (1991, especially pp. 59-72). See Hawkins (July 2001, especially pp. 442-6) for an article that similarly marks Cuba as an “anomaly” to modernization theory.

14. Huntington, (1991, 283). It is even less surprising that in a talk delivered at Georgetown University on October 25, 2007, Larry Diamond utterly admitted that he thought that the Castro government would collapse after the collapse of the Soviet Union and that he is “sure” that Cuba will move in the near future toward what theorists from this perspective understand as a democratic regime.
Emphasis in the original. The finding, that Linz and Stepan (1996, 79) qualify as “dramatic,” is based on data drawn by Limogni and Przeworski from South American countries between 1945 and 1988. It gives, according to Linz and Stepan, strong empirical support to their contention that democracies (i.e. elected governments) are far less vulnerable to economic crises than other regime types.

This data has been calculated and published by an Economist Intelligence Unit based in London and cited by Font in Centeno and Font eds. (1997, 118).

See the contribution by Jorge Pérez-López to Centeno and Font eds. (1997, 173).


Lane and Ersson (1994).

See Jaffee (1990, 9-14).

For parsimony and generality as criteria for measuring theoretical performance see Przeworski and Tenue (1970).


It has been widely noticed by current scholarship that a single outstanding leader may exert strong influence upon the perdurability of socioeconomic and political regimes. When structural and institutional variables do not seem to account for a particular outcome, the otherwise residual variable of leadership choice gains explanatory importance. See Linz in Linz and Stepan eds. (1978, especially page 5) for an example of an account that shares this view.

The same point is maintained by Fitzgerald (1990, 7).

For a useful compilation of articles that examine this thesis in depth see Lynn-Jones and E. Miller eds. (1993).

Hobsbawm (1994, 257-286) is once again obligatory consult.

An example of such mechanisms is the clause in the constitution of countries such as Germany, Israel and many others that ban “undemocratic” movements from participating in electoral contests. For a discussion on the fall of the Weimar Republic and some conceptual lessons for democratic equilibrium see in this order the part written by Rainer Lepsius (pp. 34-79) and a fragment of the part written by Juan Linz (pp. 91-97) in Linz’s and Stepan edited volume on democratic breakdown (1978).

The following discussion on Mill’s methods of agreement and difference is based on Ragin (1987, 34-52).

Thomas S. Kuhn (1996); Brinton (1965). In a postscript written in 1969, Kuhn acknowledges that in conceiving his account on scientific development he borrowed an understanding of revolutionary progression from other disciplines (p. 208). Although he does not give specific examples, it would be not at all implausible that one of his sources was Brinton’s book, whose first edition dates back to the 1930s. That both students of revolutions were contemporaries as faculty members at Harvard University may give credence to this hypothesis. In any case, as descriptions of revolutionary processes, both accounts are remarkably similar.

The more common terms are “Cubanologists” and “Cubanology” respectively, but in using this alternative terminology I obey to Pérez-Stable’s (1991, 250) objections to the traditional labeling. A representative list of Cubanists is relatively well indexed in the contributions to the several recent “readers” and other assembled books or special numbers of journals on topics related to Cuba’s socioeconomic and political realities. See Latin American Perspectives (May and July 2002); Horowitz and Suchlicki eds. (2003); Brenner et al. eds. (2008); and Pérez-Stable ed. (2007).

See Putnam (1976, 98-102) for a compacted overview on this relation in the aggregate study of elites.

The speech database can be accessed through: http://www.cuba.cu/gobierno/descursos/

For the thematic compilations used see entries Castro, Fidel in the bibliography.

See in chronological order interviews by Frei Betto (1987); Gianni Mina (1987); Tomás Borge (1992); and Ignacio Ramonet (2006). Particularly relevant for the writing of this study is the interview with Tomás
Borge, which intends precisely to document Fidels’ reflections on the collapse of state socialism in East Europe.

38 Provincial newspapers, for example, hardly reach Havana. The workers’ newspaper, for another example, is distributed in workplaces rather than through newsstands (well, newspaper distribution is not precisely through newsstands. Newsstands exist but for the most part are undersupplied. Newspapers can be bought for a modicum price from elders or handicapped individuals wandering in the streets).
39 I found Zuckerman (May 1977) useful to help understand why a relative flexibility and vagueness on the boundaries between elites and non-elites is actually convenient for the proper application of the concept “elite” across cases.
40 For investigations on the patterns of elite circulation including continuity and change of personnel in East European countries and in the Soviet Union before and after the transition see Theory and Society (October 1995); Higley, Kullberg and Pakulski (April 1996); and Higley and Lengyel eds. (2000).

Paradise Lost

1 The quote is from Smith’s Wealth of Nations. In Albert O. Hirschman (1977, 110-11).
2 This theory is mainly exposed in the first Volume of Capital. For an authoritative comment on it see article by Cohen in Cohen, Nagel and Scanlon eds. (1980, 135-57).
3 Whether Marx was at all concerned with morality in general and with justice in particular is a point of debate, indeed. On Marx, Marxism and morality see: Lukes (1985), Cohen (March-April 1981), and Cohen, Nagel and Scanlon eds. (1980).
4 Marx presents this view on the historical process in the Preface to The Critique of Political Economy. On the importance of this text for the understanding of Marx’s conception of history see Cohen (1978).
5 In an oft-quoted passage of the Communist Manifesto, for example, Marx and Engels extol capitalism for having “created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together.” In Marx and Engels (1987 [1848], 27).
6 This can also be seen in the Communist Manifesto (1987 [1848], 31) in the following description of workers’ behavior in the face of technological improvements that bring about unemployment:

They direct their attacks not against the bourgeois conditions of production, but against the instruments of production themselves; they destroy imported wares that compete with their labor, they smash to pieces machinery, they set factories ablaze, they seek to restore by force the vanished statues of the workman of the Middle Ages.

7 This chain of causation is in accord with Callinicos’s (1983, 128-139) exposition of Marx’s theory of crisis. His main sources for this exposition are the Grundrisse, Capital, and Theories of Surplus Value.
8 Again, this is written in the Manifesto in the following way (1987 [1848], 33):

Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product.

See Callinicos (1983, 140-177) for an analysis on the foundations of workers’ strength in Marx’s thought.
9 Marx’s indications of the characteristics of the future society are scattered throughout his several writings. Two texts from which Marxists often draw insights about this society are the Critique of the Gotha Programme where the principle of contribution according to ability and distribution according to need appears, and the Civil War in France, where Marx’s views on the futuristic society are extracted from his description of the Parisian Commune. Other texts that contain passages suggestive of the characteristics of communism are The Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right, The German Ideology, The Poverty of Philosophy and the Communist Manifesto.
10 The established usage of the term socialism in the Marxist literature follows Lenin’s State and Revolution.
11 An often-cited example of conjectures about the advantages of socialism over capitalism in the time between Marx’s death and the Russian revolution is Kautsky’s essay “on the day after the social revolution.” See Kautsky (1907, 103-189). In addition I have drawn from Rev. Charles H. Vail (1908), a precious book that I was lucky enough to find accidentally while digging deep into Lauinger library’s
shelves at Georgetown University. The ideas of early Marxist thinkers about the advantages of a socialist society are also reflected in Spargo (1906).

12 “Stalinist apologetics,” myself included, would regard the stark deviations in the implementation of socialism from its theoretical principles a consequence of the impossible conditions upon which a system with nevertheless socialist tenets (nationalization of main means of production, a planned economy, and a rough equality of and welfare to all) was established in the Soviet Union. For a “non-Stalinist apologetic” (read Trotskyist) interpretation of the same processes related here see Callinicos (1991).

13 For a brief description of the following characteristics in the consolidation stage see Rothman and Breslauer (1978, 30-33).

14 The source in Marx’s writings is the Critique of the Gotha Programme (1938 [1875], 18): “Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.” Lenin and Kautsky offered two diverging interpretations of this passage representing in turn the rift between revolutionary and reformist Marxists.

15 This point is developed in greater detail than possible here in Bottomore (1990, 33-51).

16 The pace of growth of the Soviet Union during the period discussed is “unprecedented” by Erlich’s (1960, xxi) qualification. The estimates vary by their methods in measuring economic growth and in general correspond to the more or less Soviet friendly political orientations of the estimator. These estimates of rates of growth are taken from Lane (1996, 42) who cites the work of Wilber, who in turn cites American economists who reported to congress. Alex Gerschenkron (1947, 166) quotes Soviet publications that suggest a rate of growth of industrial input of between 15 and 17 percent for the same period of time. For a thorough analysis on the early stages of economic development in the Soviet Union see Davies, Harrison and Wheatcroft eds. (1994).

17 Backing the first high-speed five-year industrialization program launched under his leadership, in February 1931 Stalin (cited in Callinicos 1991, 31) posed that the Soviet Union should catch up with western developed economies in ten years as a matter of survival: “We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do it, or we shall go under.” Ten years thereafter Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Not only did Stalin’s prediction prove accurate, but also for the victory in war the costs implied in the industrialization effort became justified in the same sense in which Stalin’s assertion was first made.

18 J. Wilczynski (1982, 215). Countries included in this comparison are: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the USSR, and Yugoslavia for socialist economies. For capitalist economies: Japan, United Kingdom, the United States, and the EEC.

19 Some representative examples follow: According to data presented by Ofer (December 1987, 1783), in 1980, 86.6 percent of the population in the Soviet Union aged between fifteen and sixty-four had a job, compared to 66.5 percent for the United States and 70.9 percent for the European members of the OECD. Kotz and Weir (1997, 248) present data according to which the provision of health in the Soviet Union was more extensive than in the United States. According to their data, per ten-thousand of population in 1980, the Soviet Union had 37.4 physicians and 125 hospital beds while the United States had 18.2 physicians and 58.5 hospital beds. They also (p. 28) show data suggesting that income inequality in 1967 was in the United States and France three and a half times higher than in the Soviet Union. Whereas income equality and full employment scored higher in state socialist regimes than in industrialized capitalist states, nowhere can the achievements of state socialist regimes in terms of the welfare provision of health and education be emphasized more than in the so-called third world countries. See White, Murray and White eds. (1983) in this respect.

20 On the process of expansion of state socialism the world around see Stern (1990).

21 In the chronological order they appeared these fourteen countries are: The Soviet Union, Mongolia, Albania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, North Korea, China, East Germany, Vietnam, and Cuba. Complete the list: Congo, Somalia, South Yemen, Benin, Ethiopia, Angola, Kampuchea, Laos, Mozambique, Afghanistan, Nicaragua and Zimbabwe. Source: Kornai (1992, 6-7).


23 Sidney and Beatrice Webb (1936, 1143).

24 See Schumpeter (1950 [1943] especially pp. 187-218). Among political scientists this book has been most noticed for its “operational” definition of democracy. However, read more in depth, the main
argument of the book, for which advance the operationalization of democracy is done, is to show that capitalism has a tendency to evolve into socialism. To this end Schumpeter answers in the negative the question whether capitalism would survive, and in the affirmative the question whether socialism can work. See Diamond and Plattner eds. (1993), for a reevaluation of Schumpeter’s book in light of its “failed prediction.”


26 The early doubters forcefully expressed their views in the so-called socialist calculation debate of the 1930s. They include authors such as von Mises, Hayek and Robbins. A summary of the debate can be found in Bottomore (1990, 52-69).

27 One brief but at the same time comprehensive account of the institutional weaknesses of a socialist economy can be found in Przeworski (1991, 113-122).

28 Following Cliff (1955) some writers (read Trostskists) use the term “state capitalism” to refer to what is denominated here “state socialism.” Defining capitalism as a system that involves exploitation, they argue that just as in “classical capitalism” the capitalist exploits the laborer in “state capitalism” the bureaucrats exploit the laborer. Similarly, Djilas (1957) uses the term new class as a referent to bureaucrats that summed up considerable power in these regimes and became dominant class.

29 Offe (1997, 4).

30 See for example Verdery (1996, 20-26.)

31 Przeworski (1991, 120). See also Kornai (1992, 293-296.)

32 An observation of the actual functioning of socialist economies may be pertinent here. Katherine Verdery (1996, 27) writes: “In most socialist countries it was not illegal to moonlight for extra pay—by doing carpentry, say—but people doing so often stole materials or illegally used tools from their workplace; or they might manipulate state goods to sell on the side.”

33 See Kornai (1992, 228-301).


35 Important texts for the definition and the whole debate on market socialism are Lange (June 1935); Nove (1983); Nove (1991); and Pierson (1995). The term as used here and the distinction made, follows Lane (1996, 85-86).

36 To borrow from Bunce’s (1999, 168, n. 2) characterization of the Yugoslavian model.

37 Without pretending to be exhaustive, the following list includes sources that I found useful in trying to comprehend the planning-market debate in the Yugoslavian context. Bicanic (October 1957); Comisso (1979); Milenkovich (1973); Lavigne (1974, 90-98); Dirlam and Plummer (1973); Horvat (1982, 328-347); Bottomore (1990, 70-99); Singleton (1985); Rusinow (1977); Lydall (1984); Stojanovic’ ed. (1982); Schweickart (1996); Denitch (1990); Woodward (1995); Flakierski (1989), and Uvalic (1992).

38 The differences between the Yugoslavian and the Soviet systems in the outline were summarized in greater detail than what is possible here by Bicanic (October 1957). He enumerated those differences as follows: (1) “social ownership” of the means of production as opposed to state ownership; (2) reliance on the market mechanism for the allocation of goods and services as opposed to adoption of simple administrative rules; (3) free distribution of available income by workers’ councils as opposed to administratively fixed wages; (4) decentralized and functional budgeting at all administrative levels as opposed to an all embracing state budget; (5) the rehabilitation of consumer sovereignty as opposed to the treatment of personal consumption as residual; and (6) the acceptance of independent farmers as opposed to compulsory collectivization.


40 The similarities between Yugoslavia’s self-management and other socialist states are strongly emphasized by Uvalic (1992). See also Kraft (1991) in this regard.

41 See Denitch (April-July 1989, 177). See also list provided by Dyker (1990, 165) on the restrictions on foreign investment in Yugoslavia as of mid-1988. Self-management can be considered ended, or at least fatally ill, since January 1, 1990, in which a “radical” program of economic reform came into effect. On the constitutional amendments laying the ground for the abrogation of the self-management system see article by Mencinger (1991, 64-71) and Halverson (December 1991, 49-59).

42 The following discussion of the reform processes in China and Vietnam is based on the following bibliography. For China: Wong and Ding eds. (2002); Shen (2000); Gungwu and Wong eds. (1999); Ambler and Witzel (2000); Starr (2001); Chow (2002); and report by Gregory et. al. (2000). For Vietnam: Van Arkadie and Mallon (2003); Litvack and Rondinelli eds. (1999); Griffin ed. (1998); Harvie and Van
imports from OECD to CMEA countries jump of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and see Crawford (1993, 25). This last author reports that “between 1960 and 1955 for détente. For a measurement of the increase between East and West trade under the détente umbrella

adaptation of Berliner’s analysis to three states, but his analysis has been generalized for any socialist economy. See Adam (1996, 33)

economic reform that preceded the collapse. For a representative example see articles in the special issue

largely responsible for the collapse, at least as largely responsible for the East-West growing development gap since the mid 1970s and for Gorbachev’s economic reform that preceded the collapse. For a representative example see articles in the special issue of Theory and Society (1994) dedicated to the demise of state socialist regimes.

Hoa (1997); McCargo ed. (2004); and Porter (1993). A useful comparison of capitalist entrepreneurship in both countries is Heberer (2003). See also Pei (1994, 18-24) for a useful comparison of both reform processes, and Tsai (2007) for an analysis that stresses the capitalist character of the Chinese economy. 43 The 1992 Vietnamese constitution lays the legal foundation for a capitalist economy in this country. It proclaims individual rights and guarantees foreign investments against nationalization without due compensation. The formation of a legal foundation for a capitalist economy in China, carried out throughout time through amendments to the 1982 constitution, seems to have culminated in March 2004 with a constitutional amendment guaranteeing private property and “human rights.”

40 In China the state control over the economy was stronger than in Vietnam, though. According to Heberer (2003, 26): “In 1978 state companies produced 77.6 (collective firms 22.4%) of the gross output. The percentage of private companies at that point was zero.” The same author (p. 29) estimates the share of the state sector in Vietnam before the reform around the 60 percent only. Janos Kornai (1992, 72), however, reports the share of state-owned enterprises in total output in Vietnam in 1987 in 71.4 percent.

According to Chow (2002, 58) “by 1990 China was approximately 61 percent a market economy.” Using data of 1992, Minxin Pei (1994, 38) reaches a similar conclusion. For China, he estimated that the private and “quasi private” sectors accounted for 59 percent of the Gross Social Product. Similarly, he estimated (p. 98) that in the early 1990s “about 60 percent of all producer goods (raw materials and energy) were traded on the market…and only 40 percent of them were allocated by the central planning system”. Pei also gives data on Vietnam (p. 38), estimating that its private sector accounted for 65 percent of the Gross Domestic Product in 1992. Nee and Lian (Theory and Society 1994, 285) present a more striking estimate regarding the substitution of planning by the market in China: “By 1993,” they estimated, “the central state controls the allocation of only 7 percent of the national budget.” Another well-known indicator of the extent of market economy in China is that since 1993 the state sector’s share of industrial output has been below 50 percent (Starr 2001, 75). One should interpret data on China and Vietnam with caution, but when different estimators all point to the same direction and differ only by degree, the direction is clear.


45 This factor has been widely emphasized in the literature on the collapse of the Soviet Union and East European socialist states. Most analyses touch on it, if not fully accounting for the collapse, at least directly responsible for the East-West growing development gap since the mid 1970s and for Gorbachev’s economic reform that preceded the collapse. For a representative example see articles in the special issue of Theory and Society (1994) dedicated to the demise of state socialist regimes.

46 Berliner’s (1988, 246-266) study deals with and uses data of the Soviet Union alone among socialist states, but his analysis has been generalized for any socialist economy. See Adam (1996, 33-35) for an adaptation of Berliner’s analysis to three former socialist states in East Europe.

47 This last reason is the one emphasized by Kornai (1992, 297-301).

48 See figure computed based on Soviet sources in Lane (1996, 153).

49 See for example Kotz and Weir (1997, 45).

50 Berliner (1988, 250) for instance states the Soviet need to import technologies as the obvious rationale for détente. For a measurement of the increase between East and West trade under the détente umbrella see Crawford (1993, 25). This last author reports that “between 1960 and 1975, trade between the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries showed a ninefold increase.” More in detail, “the value of machinery imports from OECD to CMEA countries jumped from $1.0 billion in 1965 to $10.2 billion in 1977.
During 1974, CMEA machinery imports from the West increased by 5 percent from 1973 levels, and in 1975 the increase was 55 percent.”

56 These reasons are emphasized by Adam (1996, especially pp. 71-88). See also Lavigne (1995, 82-87).

57 Bunce (Winter 1985, 36 table 4) shows estimates of Soviet bloc trade with the West according to which in every year from 1971 to 1981 the value of Soviet bloc imports from the West exceeded the value of exports. Yet the trade deficit was not uniform and therefore not equally problematic for all countries within the bloc. Using data from the beginning of the 1980s an Euromonitor publication ranked the foreign debt of East European socialist states by their severity in descending order as follows: Among full members of CMEA: Poland, Romania, Hungary, GDR, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union. Out of the so-called “Soviet bloc,” the publication compares Yugoslavia’s foreign debt to the Polish in severity. The Albanian foreign debt to western creditors is mentioned as insignificant and in any case difficult to estimate. See Alan H. Smith et. al. (1985, especially pp. 1-44.) Proof that importing technologies did not help to any significant extent in the transition from extensive to intensive methods is that those socialist states that were able to reduce their debt, as Romania and Czechoslovakia, did so by reducing imports from the West rather than by increasing productivity.

58 Moreover, as Karen Dawisha (1990, 171-2) has noted, because the socialist economies “were structured to favor heavy industrial production over consumer industries and agriculture, populations in East Europe experienced a much greater decline in living standard” than is indicated by GNP figures. See also table in page 171 of same book, which compares rates of growth of Less Developed Countries, the USSR, the OECD countries, and the socialist countries in East Europe.

59 Countries implied in this calculation are Bulgaria, GDR, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary and Romania. See table 6.1 in Dawisha (1990, 169).

60 The estimates are according to data presented by Kotz and Weir (1997, 43). They discuss different estimates, and they choose these, calculated by the C.I.A., as the best available.


62 It can be thought that had Gorbachev followed the Chinese example and implemented economic reform while leaving the political system intact, the result of the reforms would have been similar to those in China. However, this argument is flawed by “real” rather than “theoretical” constraints. As Juliet Johnson (March 1994, 63-4) has noted: “Gorbachev attempted to begin the Russian reforms with economic change, only to be stifled by entrenched bureaucratic and industrial interests. Without glasnost, without political reform, little economic change could have occurred.”

63 For brief but detailed analyses on the economic reform see Kotz and Weir (1997, 73-95) and Adam (1996, 186-189).

64 On the political reform see Kotz and Weir (1996, 63-72; 96-108), and Adam (1996, 190-193).

65 The “separation of party and state” as well as the “democratization” of both institutions are processes carried out through time for which it is difficult to single out any particular moment. Nevertheless, if one policy measure is to be pinpointed, the separation of party and state took an irreversible direction in September 1988 with the reorganization of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in which the number of departments was reduced from twenty to nine. For the far-reaching significance of this restructure see article by Di Leo (1991). For the “democratization” of party and state, significant events are open and competitive elections, of course. Elections for party institutions were carried out at local, regional and republican levels following a Central Committee meeting in January 1987. The benchmark election for state offices was held on March 1989, in which representatives for a new parliamentary body were elected. For the importance of these events see Kotz and Weir (1997, 98, 100).

66 On the primacy of the domestic reform behind the Soviet new thinking in foreign policy there is wide academic consensus. See for example: Pravda (1990, 1-24); De Nevers (2003, 55-6); Light in Pridham (1997, 133-153); Garthoff (1994, 193); Chafetz (1993); Lévesque (1997).

67 Thus in an authoritative study on Gorbachev’s reform program writes Archie Brown (1996, 221):

The most important element in the Soviet new thinking on foreign policy was a humanistic universalism…This was quite at odds with the Old Soviet pseudo-internationalism whereby lip-service to a ‘class approach’ to international relations and references to ‘proletarian internationalism’ and ‘socialist internationalism’ were coded language for putting the interests of the Soviet Union first and above all other concerns.
See Gorbachev’s “Address at the United Nations” delivered on December 7, 1988, in: Gorbachev (1990, 185-207).

The March 19, 1988, Soviet-Yugoslav statement of principles signals to most observers the point at which the Brezhnev doctrine was laid to rest. Critics with a more perceptive eye, however, have pointed also to some other events. If one is looking “for a particular moment at which the Brezhnev Doctrine ceased to be the basis of inter-socialist relations,” according to Margot Light (in Pridham 1997, 140), an appropriate event would be the fusion, in September 1988, of the Department for Liaison with Ruling Communist and Workers’ Parties that had responsibility for Soviet relations with Socialist states, with the International Department that had responsibility for relations with non-ruling Communist parties. This was “a sign that in future the same rules might pertain to Soviet policy towards socialist states as had always applied to relations with states with different socialist and economic systems.” The end of the Brezhnev doctrine can be also traced back to a meeting of CMEA members on November 10-11, 1986, in which according to Alex Pravda in Pravda ed. (1992, 17-18) it is likely that the East European communist leaders were informed of the Soviet decision to refrain from military intervention should it be necessary to maintain their rule.

In all these cases the Soviet Union intervened militarily, or threatened to do so, in order to support the Soviet-installed communist party in power. Although Whitehead does not mention the case of East Germany, its inclusion is entirely compatible with his analysis. See Whitehead in Whitehead ed. (1996, 356-391).

Dawisha (1990, 109). There is no dispute that between 1948 and 1953 the Soviets practically “plundered” the parts of East Europe under their domination. The controversy begins hereafter. Marrese and Vanous (1983) and Bunce (Winter 1985) contend that the Soviet Union increasingly supported the socialist East European economies through massive implicit subsidies stemming from oil trade at below world market prices. Dietz (1986) has revisited the method employed by Marrese and Vanous, arguing that the “subsidies” were substantially less than originally estimated. Poznanski (April 1988), in turn, has challenged Marrese and Vanous’s vital assumptions on the viability of Soviet’s trade alternatives, arguing that in fact the most rational economic partners for the Soviets were the East European socialist states. While agreeing that some substantive subsides existed but at the same time carrying out a methodological revision, Stone (1996), in turn, denies the political implications that Marresse and Vanous inferred from their data. Whereas for Marresse and Vanous the Soviets exchanged economic subsides for political influence, Stone finds no such correlation. Dawisha (p. 182) divides the terms of trade into different time-stages. According to her analysis, for the period between 1945-53 the Soviet Union benefited the most. In the 1970s, the patterns of trade benefited the East European socialist states. For the periods between 1953 and 1969 and from 1984 on, there is no clear pattern of benefit to either side.

Two short and detailed accounts of these measures can be found in Asmus, Brown, and Crane (1991, 150-6), and Smith in Pravda ed. (1992, 73-93).

The RAND publication is Asmus, Brown and Crane (1991, 156).

Dawisha (1990, 175).


Of course, conditionality was not the same for all East European countries. From this perspective there is no coincidence in the fact that the two highest debtors to western creditors by the late 1980s, Poland (in net debt) and Hungary (in per capita debt), carried out institutional reform first. For an analysis of the concept of conditionality in the international system and how influences the choice of actors internally, see Schmitter (in Whitehead ed. 1996, 26-54). According to Schmitter, whereas “economic” conditionality has long been a feature of the post-war international context, the tying of political responses was relatively new in the late 1980s and early 1990s. On the extent of foreign aid extended by western institutions to the “transition” economies of East Europe and their stark shift in foreign trade toward the West see Linden (March 1992).

These have been studied exhaustively (See Gill 2000, and De Nevers 2003, for two representative examples). Greater detail on them is scattered over the remainder of this dissertation.
What follows in this paragraph is based on the narration of events by Kotz and Weir (1997, 63-160), and their interpretation by both Lane (1996, 109-113) and Bunce (1999, 62-65).

“Take-over coalition” is a term borrowed from Minxin Pei (1994, see especially pp. 72-84). The election of Yeltsin for the all-Moscow district in the March 1989 elections for the new Congress of People’s Deputies symbolizes this trend more than anything else.

Mongolia is the “oldest Soviet satellite” as the title of a book on the subject reads. See Murphy (1966). See Heaton (January 1992) for a narration of the events that mark the end of state socialism in Mongolia. See Nixson and Walters (Summer 1999); and Fish (July 1998 and September 2001) for insightful analyses of these events as well as for the issues related to the construction of a market oriented liberal democracy in Mongolia.

For a narration of the process of socialist collapse in Yugoslavia see Stokes (1993, 218-252). See Woodward (1995, 98-163; 222-59; 345-70) for an analysis of Yugoslavia’s internal institutions as conditioned by the Cold War structure of the international system. SeeVidovic (1990) for the relations of Yugoslavia with international financial institutions.

In this vein Whitehead (1991, 231-236) characterizes Nicaragua as an instance of democracy promotion by intimidation.


Words of Nguyen Van Linh as cited by Thai Quang Trung in Thai Quang Trung ed. (1990, 3). The Vietnamese reformer leader is also cited by David Wurfel (1993, 19) as saying that the Vietnamese reform was inspired by “the restructuring in the Soviet Union.”

Evidence of this process in Hungary is provided by Róna-Tas (July 1994). See Staniszkis (1991) for this point as it applies to Poland.

For an elaboration of the point as it applies to the Soviet Union see Lewin (1991).

Market oriented reform in Cuba, as explained more in detail in the next chapter, took place between 1991 and 1996, roughly speaking. Wide market oriented reforms in North Korea took place only in 2002. According to The Economist (March 13, 2004, 41-3), the July 2002 reforms in North Korea were the first real step away from central planning since the dawn of communism there in 1945. The government announced that subsides to state-owned enterprises were to be withdrawn, workers would be paid according to how much they produced, farmers’ markets, hitherto tolerated, would become legal and state enterprises would be allowed to sell manufactured products in markets. Most of these enterprises, unless they produced “strategic items,” were to get real autonomy from state control.

Information on the extent of economic crisis in Cuba by the beginning of the 1990s is given in the next chapter. About North Korea, Park (2002, 11) reports estimations of negative growth between 1990 and 1994. According to these estimations North Korea’s average annual GNP growth was –3.7 percent in 1990, -5.2 percent in 1991, -7.6 percent in 1992; -4.3 percent in 1993, and –1.7 percent in 1994.

Political and economic self-reliance is the cornerstone of the so-called Juche, which is the underlying philosophy of the North Korean version of state socialism. See Park (2002, 3-4; 13-42).

Compare it with Iraq. Although Iran and North Korea are also members in the “axis of evil” that promotes terrorism worldwide in the opinion of George Bush, and therefore the same rationale that rhetorically applied for invading Iraq applies for invading them, the stakes of direct military intervention in Iran and North Korea are much higher than in Iraq. Of the three, for its presumed nuclear capability, the stakes for invading North Korea appear the highest.
Whither Cuba?

1 Farber (2006, 72).
2 Blasier (1971, 54).
4 The following sequence of events that culminated in the consolidation of the Cuban revolution is followed with exhaustive detail in the chronology written by Jane Franklin (1997, 18-62). The interpretation of events draws additionally from Pérez Jr. (2003, 238-249).
5 Allison (September 1969, 689).
6 Although he voiced this affirmation on the dawn of December 2, the common date given is December 1. See: Castro (1965, 120).
7 Pérez-Stable (1999, 74).
8 For a general background on Cuba in the 1960s the respective chapter in Bengelsdorf (1994, 66-98) is recommended.
9 A taste of the constant experimentation in the organization of work that characterized Cuba in the early 1960s is given by the Great Debate among Cuban policy makers and intellectuals of other nationalities. This debate focused on the possibilities of suppressing the “law of value” under scarcity conditions and on the proper methods of management in a socialist economy. The main contributions to this debate have been recently compiled by Deutschmann and Salado (2006). See especially the foreword by Marcelo Fernández Font (himself an important contributor to the debate) for an outline of the evolution of Cuba’s systems of financing enterprises during the 1960s and beyond. See Silverman ed. (1971) for a compilation of contributions to the debate in English.
10 Participants in the Debate (from either side) generally do not regard the financial system instituted in 1966 as a version of the “budgetary system of financing,” though they accept that it resembles it more than the “economic calculation” system. Conjecturing a little bit about the reason, it has probably to do with the high standing of the figure of Ernesto Guevara, who supported and actually devised the budgetary system, and the “bad” memories of the dislocations resulting from the application of the system instituted in 1966. This system was called “Material Registering” or “Material Control.” As stated in the text on the “budgetary system,” it did not rely on financial categories for recording the transactions among enterprises.
11 “Apparently by Karol” as far as I have been able to trace back the use of the term in the English language literature. See Karol (1970).
12 According to this doctrine there are four phases in the edification of a communist society. First is the transition from capitalism to socialism, then the socialist phase “proper,” then a phase of developed socialism, and then communism. Officially, Cubans have always seen themselves in the transition phase from capitalism to socialism. See Taratkevich and Toledo García (1985) for a didactic and systematic presentation of this view.
13 See volume edited by Departamento de Orientación Revolucionaria del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba (DOR del PCC) (1976, 188-207).
15 In all probability the manifestations noted in this and the following paragraphs were of common knowledge during this time but it is nevertheless startling to see how only after Fidel denounced them in the open these began to be noticed everywhere as if they “mushroomed” overnight. See Fidel’s discourses on April 19 and December 2, 1986, for his initial main denunciations on them.
16 See Regueiro Bello and García Zanquero (Octubre 1988, 67) for these particular examples.
17 Additional to the speeches of Fidel the point has been emphasized by Petras and Moorley in their contribution to Halebsky and Kirk eds. (1992, 19) and by Habel (1991, 58-65).
18 For a comprehensive overview of these measures see Jose Luis Rodriguez (Mayo-Junio 1990).
19 Shearman (1987, 13).
21 The source is reported in Shearman (1987, 29).
Carmelo Mesa-Lago in Mesa-Lago ed. (1993, 148) has estimated the amount of economic aid during this decade to be about 3.5 billion dollar. Other estimations that also include military aid are reported in Skierka (2004, 192); still others, based on figures from 1972, in Shearman (1987, 29).

Mesa-Lago in Mesa-Lago (1993, 148). Source for the immediate following estimation is the same.

In 1986 Cuba failed to obtain a $300 million loan at the so-called summer Paris club negotiations. The 1986 amount of the Cuban debt to creditors in capitalist countries is usually estimated as between $6 and $7 billion.

In amount the deterioration in terms of trade with the Soviet Union appeared bearable, especially given Cuba’s trade alternatives in world markets. In composition, the (theoretically) repayable share of the aid in the forms of loans and credits increased while the non-repayable in the form of price subsidies decreased. See Mesa-Lago in Mesa-Lago (1993, 147-151) for the arithmetic of this deterioration.

The data presented for Cuba and Vietnam was taken from Bunck (1996, 40-2). For Mongolia, the data presented was taken from The Economist, March 17, 1990, p. 31.


According to Mott (2001, 274) “from 1959 through 1979-1980 Soviet military assistance was only about $3.7 billion, whereas from 1981 through 1988 Moscow agreed to transfer weaponry worth $11.8 billion to Cuba, while other communist donors, except China, provided an additional $1.4 billion in weaponry.” Disaggregation of the Soviet military assistance to Cuba is presented by Cole Blasier in Mesa-Lago ed. (1993, 71-2). He reports data according to which there were by 1990 some 7,700 Soviet military personnel in Cuba, and the Soviet military hardware provided responded to defensive rather than offensive needs.

Shearman (1987, 81).

Blasier in Mesa-Lago ed. (1993, 60). For different perspectives that strongly endorse this view see Packenham (1992, 159-185) and Ruffin (1990).

See Gouré and Weinkle (March-April 1972) and González (1974, 127).


A detailed extension of this point is found in Cole (1998, 2).

These are the common numbers given by students of the Cuban economy. See Zimbalist in Kaufman Purcell and Rothkopf eds. (2000, 13-30); Mesa-Lago (2003); and Pérez-López (Fall 1997).


Eckstein in Centeno and Font eds. (1997, 147 and 150 fn.10).

Peter Smith (2000, 322).

Pérez-Stable (October 1999, 68).

For a vivid description of the August 5, 1994 incidents, see contribution by Landau to Latin American Perspectives (July 2002, 77-79). Juan J. López (2001, 795) gives the higher estimate of participation in the disturbances. The lower estimate is given by Landau.

The quotes in the paragraph correspond in order of appearance to Kaufman Purcell (1991-1992, 130); Elliot Abrams as cited in Griffin’s article (1992, 24); Shtromas (1992, 90) and Oppenheimer, (1992).

For a detailed overview on the initial response to the crisis see: Deere (July-August 1991).

Economic underperformance in general and resource misallocation linked to central planning in particular have been very extensively recorded by Carmelo Mesa-Lago and Jorge Pérez-López in their several works. Yet perhaps the most illustrative examples to date are still those provided by Dumont (1974). See also contribution by Zimbalist to Halebsky and Kirk eds. (1992, 102).

See Gaceta oficial (September 6, 1995) “Ley No.77—Ley de Inversión Extranjera”; (June 3, 1996) “Decreto-Ley 165—de las zonas francas y parques industriales.”

On this last point in particular see Mesa-Lago (2000, 295).

See Gaceta oficial (September 21, 1993) “Decreto-Ley 142—sobre las unidades básicas de producción cooperativa.”


See Deere and Meurs (June 1992) for a comprehensive review of the peasant markets that operated between 1980 and 1986.

Gaceta oficial (September 8, 1993) “Decreto-Ley 141—sobre el ejercicio del trabajo por cuenta propia.”

See Pérez-López (Fall 1997, 19).
51 For general background on the enterprise reform and far more detail than possible here see Casas Regueiro et. al. (1990); Pérez Betancourt and González Sánchez (Noviembre-Diciembre 1988, Abril-Junio 1990); Chaviano Saldaña and Tristá Arbesú (1998); Tristá Arbesú (2000); Machado Rodríguez (2000); and José Luis Martín (Julio-Septiembre 2002). See also Gaceta Oficial (August 18, 1998) “Decreto-Ley 187 — Bases Generales del Perfeccionamiento Empresarial” for the law that regulates this reform.

52 See speech of Carlos Lage: “El perfeccionamiento no es una meta, es un proceso de constante mejoramiento,” in Granma (digital edition) August 30, 2007. He puts the proportion of enterprises from total that applies the principles of the enterprise reform at 28 percent, but according to the data he gives that proportion would rather be 29.17 percent (797 enterprises out of 2,732).


54 As reported in Pérez-López (Fall 1997, 4).


56 In Equipo de Redacción de Política Actual ed. (1997, 16).


58 For more detail on the relations with Venezuela and China than possible here see Monreal (January-February 2006), and Erikson and Minson (Fall 2006) respectively.

59 For a detailed analysis in accord with the official version of the reasons for the increase in the rate of growth after 2004, see Ariel Terrero “Marcha a pie forzado” Bohemia Digital January 4, 2007.


61 He said this in his speech in commemoration of the 26th of July. The speech can be accessed through the Granma newspaper website. A version in English is available.


63 The calculation is done according to the most recent data available at Cuba’s National Statistics Office website, which dates back to 2006. According to this source (ONE 2006), whereas Cuba’s GDP at current prices amounted to 56, 180.7 million pesos, agriculture, hunting and fishing amounted to 1, 795.9 million pesos.

64 This are the figures managed in the literature on Cuba. See Mesa-Lago (2000, 303); Zimbalist in Kaufman Purcell and Rothkopf eds. (2000, 18); and Domínguez in Domínguez, Pérez Villanueva and Barbería eds. (2004, 27).

65 Aslund (1985, 2) reports that the socialist regimes of Hungary, the GDR and Poland recognized an official private sector where wage relationships were allowed, although he only deals with the last two. According to his study (p. 12), whereas the GDR set a limit of ten hired non-family workers in non-agricultural sectors, which was left unchanged, in Poland this limit varied over time from one to ten until the wide market reforms of the mid 1980s. See also Jeffries (1990), who in addition to these three cases reports about Yugoslavia, where hired relationships in the non-agricultural sector had been allowed since 1946 (p. 197).

66 Besides the consensus prevailing among economists on Cuba on this point, it should be noticed that students of economies in transition do not include Cuba in their lists. The 1996 World Development Report of the World Bank on the transition from plan to market, for instance, does not include Cuba. Included in the list are all countries in the geographical area occupied by former socialist states in Central and East Europe and the Soviet Union (Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary,
Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, The Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, Mongolia, China, and Vietnam. See Gelb et. al. (1996).

67 Of this opinion is Pérez-López in Pérez-López and Travieso-Díaz eds. (1998, 55-79).

68 A version in English of amended constitution can be found in Flanz and Ward eds. (2004) Find article of interest in page 5.


70 See Pérez Jr. (2003, 267-8).


73 Rafael Hernández (Winter 1997, 153).

74 See in this order Lievesley (2004, 180); Kacpia (2000, 26); Azicri (2000, 69); Pérez-Stable (October 1999, 63); Galeano in Blackburn ed. (1991, 252); Edelstein (Fall 1995, 23); Domínguez (Spring 1993); and Markovits (November-December 2001).

75 Quite reliable data gathered by the Communist Party through its well-known public opinion center may exist but these are only seldom and even then incompletely made available to the public. Of the data available perhaps the most reliable were generated by the public opinion poll carried out by the Costa Rican Gallup branch in collaboration with the Florida based newspaper Miami Herald in 1994. The results of this poll (Levinson, February-March 1995, 9) suggest that even in the worst of the crisis most Cubans supported their government. 58 percent of the 1,002 adults surveyed considered that the revolution on balance had more achievements than failures and 69 percent identified themselves as communists, socialists, or revolutionaries. The poll, however, was representative of only 70 percent of the population (and the results were not so unequivocal as to dispense with the remaining 30 percent in reaching general conclusions) and also some “irregularities” involving public officers and pollsters were reported by the same newspaper. After that—or before—no professional independent (of the Cuban government) polling agency has made another at least equally comprehensive opinion survey.

76 On the point that the revolutionary government had massive support at the beginning of the revolution William LeoGrande (Spring 1979, 40 fn. 2) comments about four credible opinion polls that gauged this support as between 70 and 91 percent.


78 See Fitzgerald (1994, 193) and Cole (1998, 122); Kacpia (2000, 257-8); and Juan J. López (2002, xviii-xix) respectively.

79 Pérez-López (Fall 1997, 4). In justifying U.S. policies toward Cuba after the conclusion of the Cold War, Bill Clinton, then president of the United States, made the same point in the following way: “The real problem is the stubborn refusal of the Castro regime to have an open democracy and an open economy, and I think the policies we are following will hasten the day when that occurs.” His administration explicitly promised as much as $6 billion over six years in economic aid and the retirement of U.S. personnel from the Guantanamo military base, contingent on a “democratic transition” in Cuba. Clinton’s statement is cited by Smith (2000, 322). On the amount of economic aid promised, see contribution by Pastor Jr. in Kaufman-Purcell and Rothkopf eds. (2000, 51). It also cannot be argued that U.S. authorities did not turn to Cuban authorities directly, and thus the Cuban officers could not know with certainty how serious were the offers of aid. Felipe González, then prime minister of Spain, and Carlos Andrés Pérez, then president of Venezuela, both recommended to Fidel Castro that he lead a transition to a multiparty political system (not necessarily not presided over by him) and a mixed economy, after discussions with American authorities. See Furiati (2003, 565) and Castro’s statement in interview with Ramonet (2006, 409). On the bottom line, if former enemies such as the Libyan leader Ghadaffi could be transformed with the conclusion of the Cold War (certainly not overnight) into “bearable” partners in the eyes of U.S. foreign policy, Fidel could have too.

80 For a synopsis of the different processes of change that stresses the actors that led them, see Gill (2000, 189-234). Yugoslavia presents an incomparable process in this regard, since it shows variations in the process of change across its several former constitutive republics. This does not prevent Gill (p. 211) from regarding it as a case of regime disintegration initiated by the incumbent government.

81 In Kaufman Purcell and David J. Rothkopf eds. (2000, p 25-6). Compare this statement (and article) with his earlier contributions to Zimbalist ed. (1988), where he shows the economic logic behind Cuban
policies that were presented as economically irrational by what he calls mainstream interpretations of the study of the Cuban political economy.

According to José Luis Rodríguez, minister of economics and planning, in 2005 the Cuban Gross Domestic Product equaled its 1989 level. See: “Cuba mantiene en 2006 su crecimiento Económico” El Economista de Cuba, Edición Online September 18, 2006. For a measurement of GDP in proportion to 1985 levels up to 2000 see table in contribution by Domínguez to Domínguez, Pérez Villanueva and Barbería eds. (2004, 19).

The preference for equality over growth at times when they stand in contradiction has been emphasized by Mesa-Lago (1986).


See White (April 1986).


Bunck (1996, 46).

Gaetano Mosca (1939, 51).


See Bottomore (1993, 7).


**Why Cuba?**

1 Brinton (1965). I would wish to thank my friend and exceptional colleague Arturo López-Levy for having suggested that I consider arranging the relevant phenomena for the writing of this chapter in the framework of a revolutionary indigenous process and for having suggested Brinton’s book for that purpose.

2 By “Moncada program” is meant the aggregation of demands raised by the revolutionaries led by Castro in their struggle against the old regime. The program comprised six issues: land, industrialization, housing, education, health and unemployment. When the first revolutionary reforms on these issues were obtained, the Moncada program was declared complete. Curiously, when it was declared that the Moncada program was fulfilled it was also declared that the “radical” phase of the revolution had concluded and that thereafter the revolution was to “moderate.” Some six months afterwards, however, the “socialist” phase began and the revolution was to radicalize to extents probably not imagined at that time. See Castro (Octubre 17, 1960) for the transcript of the televised interview with Fidel (October 15) when he declared the “Moncada” program completed.


4 The generational analysis as performed in the text draws primarily from Manheim’s classical essay (1952, 276-322). A useful article that helps elucidate the value and uses of Manheim’s essay is Pilcher (September 1994). See also Cherrington’s (1997) concrete application of Manheim’s generational framework to the case of China.

5 The statement refers to the Political Bureau elected in the fourth party congress held in 1991 and to the Council of State elected in December 1986, according to the lists that appear in Gail Reed ed. (1992) and Gramma, December 28, 1986, respectively.

6 This idea was inspired by Smith’s (1985, 3-101) interpretation of Machiavelli’s Republican thought.


9 Gorbachev (1987, 45 and 36 respectively).

10 See in this context Huntington (1968, 14-15).

11 See Porter (1993, xv) for the case of Vietnam. De Nevers (2003, 41) for Hungary. Lesourne and Lecomte (1991, 3-4) among many others emphasize this variable in the Soviet case. The other case is not an exception to this but also not so neat an example. The transition in China began certainly with a new leader but from the first generation. This has not prevented however authors familiar with the case to say
that nevertheless in China the economic transition coincided with a generational transition in the elite. See Cheng (March 2000) and Nathan and Gilley (2002, 10-23) in this respect. Their argument is that although Deng was a member of the first generation of leaders by his personal biography, he also was the leader of the second generation by the composition of his ruling circle.

12 On the conceptual link between time in office, commitment with a policy line, and therefore resistance to change, the remarks stated by Kuhn (1996, 144) are highly suggestive.

13 Bunce (1981, 10 and 35 respectively).

14 This framework includes the laws on Cooperatives, on Individual Labor Activity, and on State Enterprises. See Kotz and Weir (1997, 77-83; 92-95).


17 Brinton (1965, 232).

18 Needle to say, I tried and was defeated by the exercise.

19 See Thomas (1987, 726).

20 Pérez-Stable (1999, 188).


22 For this paragraph see contributions of Knight to Dogan and Higley eds. (1998, 29-46 and 71-94). Quote from page 32.

23 Examples mainly from the Great Britain and Mexico that, to be sure, do not concern us here. See especially pages 32-3 and 82 in Dogan and Higley eds. (1998).

24 See for example compilation of four speeches between December 5, 1988 and January 8, 1989, in Castro (1989). All four speeches have as a common thread this necessity to be in a state of alert. Quote from speech on January 8, 1989, 127.


27 See interview of Castro with Borge (1992, 174) and main report to the fifth party congress in Madan, Ramos and Zabala eds. (1997, 22) in this regard.

28 What is known beyond reasonable doubt (see footnote immediately above for example) is that plans existed for the “zero option” and that they were adapted to confront the socioeconomic crisis created by the end of Soviet aid. By Fidel’s and other Cuban leaders own admission it is known that the plans for the “zero option” included a declaration of a “special period” and from here the title “special period in times of peace,” which has come to name the period of crisis resulting from the socioeconomic compression as a result of the end of Soviet aid. What exactly were the other measures adapted from the “zero option” plan is less openly known. To some degree austerity measures such as cuts in the use of energetics, rationing, and development of local crops for food supplies, as classical measures undertaken everywhere for times of war, are obvious referents. Because the existence of the “rapid response brigades” and the National Defense Council in the plans for the “zero option” is mainly my inference, they are qualified by the terms “perhaps” and “most likely.” More on the “rapid action brigades” can be found in Dominguez’s contribution to Mesa-Lago ed. (1993, 124-125). On the centralization of power by Castro to cope with the crisis situation in general and the creation of the National Defense Council in particular see article of Mesa-Lago and Fabian to the same compilation (p. 369).

29 See for instance Fidel’s speech in the mass meeting to report the “people” on the accords of the fourth party congress, October 12, 1991. The speech can be found in Equipo de Redacción de Política Actual ed. (1992, 391-404).

30 The process, as depicted in this paragraph owes much to Kuhn (1996, 92-94). For the more abstract questions related to the social construction of institutions see Berger and Luckman (1967, 47-72).

31 Authoritative in regards to these criteria of institutionalization is Huntington (1968, 12-24).

32 Marifeli Pérez-Stable (October 1999, 70 for example) is pretty much insistent in that another example of this is the launching of the process of rectification. The example, however, is not so neat. Contrary to what she says, the third party congress held in February 1986 presaged in many respects this process, if it was
not actually initiated there. Moreover, from any review of Secretariat and Politburo meetings as well as among members of these bodies and party militants in the early-mid 1980s, it easily emerges that the policies marking the rectification process were very much discussed and announced in the higher bodies of the party. The reports on Secretariat and Political Bureau meetings appearing in the issues of the journal edited by the Secretariat, *El Militante Comunista*, during the early 1980s convey pretty much the sense depicted here. Some evidence on this is given in Chapter 6 of this dissertation, though a more thorough elucidation of the point would be rather the scope of a separate article.

34 Huntington (1968, 17-22).
35 For an overview of this school see Steinmo, Thelen and Longstreth eds. (1992). See additionally March and Olsen (September 1984) for a topical essay presenting the essentials of this view and its place in the overall discussion on institutions.
36 Pipes (2001, 155). The same thesis of “rigidity” in adapting to change has been maintained for the Hungarian case by Swain (1992) and by O’Neil (1998). In relation to Soviet-East Europe trade relationships it has been maintained by Stone (1996).
37 Note, however, that viewed more in detail existing political institutions were also inseparable from this “rigidity.” In particular Roeder (1993) has shown how specific informal political institutions in the Soviet Union inhibited adaptation to change. See also Harasymiw’s (1996) analysis on the institutionalization of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and how it prevented adaptation to change.
38 Cappelli (1988, 245-268) shows how over time, from Stalin to Gorbachev, the Soviet party-state apparatus resisted change or else interpreted commands from above in ways consistent with its own self-interest.
39 On this point David Lane (1996, 169) writes:

The ambiguous class position of the managerial and executive strata had been a major factor inhibiting a move to the market: as long as the mainstays of the political class were united and determined to keep the administrative system, they had potentially more to lose than to gain by pledging support to its demise. The leadership of Gorbachev was decisive in changing this relationship: he indicated that the acquisition class had more potentially to gain than it had potentially to lose.
40 The political reform was a process carried out over time and thus it would be inappropriate to “freeze” it by its identification with any particular point in time. Yet if an event is to be identified with the “political reform,” in the Soviet Union this is the XIX Party Conference held in June 1988. At this point the process of political reform in the Soviet Union came to the fore of the other reforming regimes as well, giving them a “green” light to pursue their own “democratization” agenda in significant ways. In particular, it was decided at this conference to abolish most of the ministries that monitored the economy. It was also resolved to increase the bottom up process of political appointments—though with many safeguards—within both the party and the state. The resolutions, evidently, produced a “sudden” and decisive change among the bureaucracy, contributing in great degree to the dismantling of the socialist system. Along these lines this process is outlined by Galeotti (1997, 84-104) and studied in comprehensive detail by Harris (2004).
41 The quote is from Wasilewski in Dogan and Higley eds. (1998, 151). The literature documenting the “power conversion” of “nomenklatura elites” in Hungary, Poland, and to a lesser degree the Soviet Union is so extensive that only a few references can be sampled here. See article by Hankiss and article by Staniszkis in Weilemann, Brunner and Tokes eds. (1991); Siklova (Winter 1991); Stark (September 1990); Rona Tas (July 1994); McAllister, White and Rose (March 1997); Tarkowski (Summer 1989); Rumer (May-June 1991); and Staniszkis (1991).
42 Solnick (1998, 3).
43 Expanded discussions on these mechanisms are available elsewhere. On the Popular Councils see Bengelsdorf (1994, 163-165 and 173) and on the Workers’ Parliaments see López Vigil (1999, p76-77); Saney (2004, p51-53) and Fitzgerald (1994, 187-8). See also excerpt from interview with Miguel Limia in special issue of NACLA (September-October 1995, 24).
44 Strictly speaking there are two tentative dates signifying the dismissal of Humberto Pérez. By the end of 1984 Castro appointed Osmany Cienfuegos to review the plan proposed by the board, which shows a lack of trust in the board, and signaled that the days of Pérez as its chair were numbered. The announcement of his dismissal came on July 1st 1985.
For some useful reports on the workings of and purposes behind “continuous planning” see Zamora Pérez (Junio 1987); Reguero Bello and García Zanquero (Octubre 1988); Ojeda Fernández (Septiembre 1989); and especially Mas Farias (Abril 1990). I was unable to find sources to recommend in English in this respect. Unfortunately, the importance of the experimentation taken with “continuous planning” during the rectification process has been either underestimated or plainly ignored by the literature in this language.

Among English speaker economists who have written on the Cuban economy, Al Campbell (Winter 2004-5) is the only one that I have been able to identify who has paid any attention beyond the superficial level to the Cuban system of planning, and even then only to tell his readers what Cuban economists have written about it. Yet this is definitely an improvement in comparison with the silence of any other writer on the Cuban economy. More detail on the link between flexibility and financial balances is available in Campbell’s article and especially its bibliography.

Pérez Villanueva in his contribution to Dominguez, Pérez Villanueva, and Barberia eds. (2004, 51) for instance asserts that by 2003 “services contributed 66 percent to GDP, signifying the transformation of Cuba into a service economy.”

See Brinton (1965, 121-175) and Kautsky (May 1969, 378-84) for two insightful depictions of elite-divisions along these lines.

In three of the four cases studied by Brinton (see especially pp. 148-175) the “radical” group prevailed, and he explains the reasons in these terms. However he also explains the exception in a way that confirms the rule, since according to him in the American Revolution the radicals had overcome the “moderates” even before the overthrow of the old regime. Analytically, however, the most basic reason why radicals normally prevail seems a matter of pure definition. If revolutions are defined in terms of rupture with the “old” social order, then “radicals” are necessary to carry out a revolution, and only when the radicals prevail a case would be ranked as revolution. Cases where moderates prevail would simply receive other name such as change of government, coup d’état, elite change, or any other that does not connote systemic rupture.

This last possibility is discussed at great length in Higley and Burton (2006) in the context of the emergence of liberal democracies. “Settlement” is their term. Notice, however, that their entire typology as well as their unity-scale is not followed here.

O’Donnell and Schmitter’s (1986, 15-36) discussion on the following consequences of elite divisions as it applies to authoritarian regimes seems generalizable regardless of regime type.

“Possible” means in this sentence that the reasons for which clear divisions in the Czechoslovakian and Vietnamese political elites were not openly apparent in their processes of transitions are not clear to me. It may be that more research on these particular cases would uncover the cracks, or the reasons for their absence. In any case the literature available in English does not point to clear elite divisions in any of these cases. In all other cases the divisions can be easily identified in any reading of the particular processes of demise as summarized by Holmes (1997) and Gill (2000) for example. It is worth clarifying that in the case of Vietnam part of the literature has identified cracks, but there is an ongoing debate as to their relevancy and significance. This debate by itself evinces that to the degree that cracks either exist or have existed in the Vietnamese political elite, these have not been as intense as in those cases in which the question does not even arise because the answer to it is obvious. For different points of view in this debate see Thai Quang Trung ed. (1990) and Pike (1989). The case of Czechoslovakia is truly peculiar in that rather than because of divisions in the elite, the regime fell after the Central Committee of the Communist Party abdicated altogether. This kind of abdication may symbolize a case of a united elite but unwilling or unready to defend the regime. For the general recognition of elite cracks in the processes of democratic breakdown see contribution by Linz to Linz and Stepan eds. (1978, 3-124). For authoritarian breakdown see O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986).

Vivid accounts of the following two events are available in Draper (1962, 65-69; 201-211). While Draper’s account may lack the perspective of time, it seems to capture the strong passions the Cuban Revolution generated and the significance that the events received at the time.

Long harangues taken from the judiciary proceedings and justifying the sentences on both occasions were published in the Cuban press, but more succinct and summarized accounts can be found in Karol (1970, 468-76) and article by Rosenthal (2007) respectively. Quote from Habel (1991, 178).
Quote from Bengelsdorf (1994, 73). Italics in the original.

The examples given by Dominguez (1982, 34-36) are telling in this respect.

The statement quoted in this sentence can be found in Fidel’s speech “Criterios de Nuestra Revolución” which appeared in Cuba Socialista, September 1965. Quoted by Silverman in Silverman ed. (1971, 16) and interpreted in the same sense as expressed in the text.

Fidel’s statement as quoted in this sentence can be found in Foreign Broadcast Information Service Latin America Supplement (FBIS-LAT), September 7, 1995, p. 2. Same interpretation is given by Pérez-Stable (Julio-Septiembre 2003, 555). It must be clarified that in both occasions of debate on economic reform there were groups that continued discussing the topic and in both occasions these groups were more harshly “reminded” that the discussion was over, meaning, perhaps, that no small amount of deterrence is also behind the mechanism of leadership. The “reminders” are the “micro-faction affair” of 1968, and the so-called CEA affair in 1996, which involved a “restructuring” of this research institute as explained in more detail in Chapter 5. It will be very interesting and telling in this respect to follow the evolution of the present discussion on economic reform initiated by Raúl Castro. Its resolution may well set a precedent for the patterns of public discussion “after Fidel.”


These include José Ramón Balaguer Cabrera as “main propeller” of a National and International Program of Public Health; José Ramón Machado Ventura and Esteban Lazo Hernández as “main propellers” of the National and International Program of Education; Carlos Lage Dávila, as “main propeller” of the National Program for the Energetic Revolution in Cuba and collaboration with other countries; and Francisco Soberón and Felipe Pérez Roque in addition to the already mentioned Lage as the fund managers for these three programs. In “Proclama del Comandante en Jefe al Pueblo de Cuba,” Granma (digital edition), August 1, 2006.

See in this regard Burling (1974, especially 256-7 for the link between a clear second in command and the avoidance of succession struggles, and pages 211-214 for the point as it applies to the Soviet Union in the succession crisis occasioned by Lenin’s death). See Ferdinand (1986, especially pages 194-205) for an illustration of the point as it applies to China after the death of Mao.

As of May 2008, these are Ulises Rosales del Toro, Julio Casas Regueiro, Leopoldo Cintra Frías, Abelardo Colomé Ibarra, Ramón Espinosa Martín, and Alvaro López Miera. Biographical data of all six is available through the website of the Cuban Communist Party (PCC), among many others. Except for Julio Casas, more detail on their collaboration in the struggle against the old regime and their closeness to Raúl can be found in the interviews done by Luis Báez (1996).

The other two are Esteban Lazo, born 1944, and Salvador Valdés Mesa, born 1945. Dates are given in accord with my personal files.

These are Carlos Lage, Yadira García, Misael Enamorado, Miguel Díaz-Canel, Concepción Campa, Pedro Sáez and Jorge Luis Sierrra. More detail on the topic is provided in Chapter 6 of this dissertation and especially in its respective appendix.

The “Castro critic” mentioned in the paragraph is Richard Planas (1994, 41), who was a senior research analyst at Radio Marti when he wrote the expression cited. Although in most cases it is impossible to point with arithmetic precision to specific events as turning points in history, at least in one of the cases he analyzes, Brinton (1965, 205-7) points specifically to the death of the leader who animated the radical revolutionary stage as a turning point to the period of decadence. While there are important differences between Castro and Robespierre in the time they ruled and in the way they departed the political scene, the two indisputably represent the radical impetus of their respective revolutionary movements.

They have stated their aspiration that their work be perennial so many times and Fidel has been quoted saying this so many times (even since Lockwood, 1967, 180) that it results in a cliché to point to any reference to it, but nevertheless the reader can find the statement as quoted in the text in the interview of Raúl with Luis Báez that appeared in the Granma newspaper on September 17, 1994, 5. The second statement is taken from Fidel’s key speech on November 17, 2005, but he had repeated the idea several times before and of course after. See also, for example his closing speech to the fifth party congress in Madan, Ramos and Zavala eds. (1997, 194).
Quoted from his speech to the Fifth Plenum of the CC of the PCC, on March 23, 1996. A translation to the English is PCC (1996) quote from page 30.


In interview with Ramonet (2006, 410).

See especially in this regard Catro’s reflections in presenting the Political Bureau at the closing of the fourth party congress. In Gail Reed ed. (1992, 158).

See in this respect the ideas displayed by Fidel in interview with Borge (1992, 82-84).


Turnover

1 This “blocking” is, of course, at the heart of Pareto’s (1968 [1901], for example) account on the rise and fall of ruling elites.

2 See Putnam (1976, 67 and 190-201).

3 See Michels (1962 [1911]).

4 This and the following reason for the existence of slow intergenerational turnover in successful revolutionary elites are inspired by Manheim’s essay (1952).

5 East Europe with the exception of Poland. For corroborative data see Putnam (1976, 196); Beck (1973 135); Hoffmann-Lange in Dogan and Higley eds. (1998, 179); articles by Pye and Griffith in Samuels ed. (1977, 107-134); and Wesson (1980, 40-46).

6 Rates of personnel turnover in the Central Committee of the CPSU over time have been found similar to those of ruling organs in developed western countries such as the Australian Parliament and the U.S. Congress. See Ozinga, Casstevens and Casstevens II (September 1989). In spite of this, researchers such as John D. Nagle (Spring 1975 and1977) and Lewytzyk (January-February 1987) found slow intergenerational turnover in the Soviet Union during the dominance of the so-called “managerial modernizer” generation (Brezhnev’s). Hints of the explosive potential of the resulting elite composition were expressed by Hough (1980) and Bialer (1980).


8 Unless otherwise indicated, the source of ages, trajectory, and other data on personnel in the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party as reported in this chapter is my personal files.

9 The commission was announced on the sixth CC plenum held on April 28, 2008. The integrants are Raúl Castro, José Ramón Machado Ventura, Juan Almeida Bosque, Abelardo Colomé Ibarra, Carlos Lage Dávila, Esteban Lazo Hernández, and Julio Casas Regueiro. See report in the party newspaper: “Si se ha trabajado en estos últimos meses, habrá que hacerlo mucho más en los que estan por delante,” Granma (electronic edition) April 29, 2008.

10 Farber (1976) is a very good source for this characterization.

11 The literature on the attacks on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes barracks is quite extensive, and sources differ in the data on participants and their fate. Data on the number of participants reported here is in accord with Mencia (1986), which contains a detailed account of events. Data on their fate is in accord with list of participants in Ramírez Sánchez, et. al. ed. (1981, 419-423). For an account on the attack in Bayamo see Castillo Ramos (1981).

12 A concentrated edition of some of the participants’ accounts on the significance of the attacks for the revolutionary process can be found in Ramírez Sánchez et. al. ed. (1981, 383-515). See also Centro de Estudio de Historia Militar de las FAR ed. (1986, 355-372).

13 An example of the kind of questions discussed in the study circles and the kind of thinking that occupied them can be found in the letters written by Fidel from jail. In perhaps the most famous of them he writes about the relative influence of objective and subjective factors in the unfolding of history—his favorite topic—by comparing Marx’s and Victor Hugo’s accounts on the rise of Napoleon III. Evidence of the relative importance of the time in prison for the development of Castro’s personality, in another letter he wrote that in the prison’s “formidable school” he was finishing to forge his “worldview.” He was twenty-seven at the time. Mencia (1980) is perhaps the most complete source on the experiences in jail.

14 For the period from the exile in Mexico to the beginning of the guerrilla struggle in the mountains, see Bornot Pubillones and Infante Uribazo (1981).
As with the number of participants in the attempts to seize the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes barracks, there are several versions of the exact number of *Granma* expeditionaries who reached the mountains to launch the guerrilla struggle. The source for this estimate is Bornot Pubillones and Infante Uribazo (1981, 123). See additionally Castillo Bernal (2000, p 21-23). See also the list of the nineteen expeditionaries who reached the Sierra in López Avalos (1993, 78). According to this last article the nineteen expeditionaries were Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, Juan Almeida, Ciro Redondo, Calixto García, Reinaldo Bentíz, Julio Díaz, Ramiro Valdés, Ernesto Guevara, Camilo Cienfuegos, José Morán, Calixto Morales, Luis Crespo, Efiegenio Ameijeiras, Universo Guevara, Francisco González, Rafael Chao, René Rodríguez and Armando Rodríguez. The first eight participated on the attacks to the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes barracks.

For a classical example of how this myth is told see Redacción Política Actual ed. (1986, 3-69).


The classic version of this story is told by Guevara in his “Notes for the study of the ideology of the Cuban Revolution,” first published in *Verde Olivo*, October 8, 1960; reprinted in English in Deutschmann ed. (2003, 121-129).


See respectively articles by Fernández Rios (1985, 42) and Gómez García and Belarda Salabarría (1986); see also article by Otero Martínez (1986).

Estimates of the size of both armies are given in accordance with Bonachea and San Martín (1974, 233).

Szulc (1986, 258).

Otero Martínez (1986, 40).


On the social composition of the *Granma* expeditionaries, see Bornot Pubillones and Infante Uribazo (1981, 109) and Blanco (1994, 83-4).

The following estimates were computed from data in Otero Martínez (1986, 40). The columns in question belonged to the second front under the leadership of Raúl Castro.

See Gómez García and Belarda Salabarría (1986, 58) for an example.

Logically, the link stretched here is correct. Wealth redistribution is always in the short-term benefit of those who have less. Given the disorder of the early years of the revolutionary process, the difficulty in gathering the data, and the whole gamut of manipulations that make both the supporters and the opponents of the revolutionary government, coming up with “hard” data to show the extent of this short-term material betterment of the poorest populations is extremely difficult. A remarkable effort has been made, however, by O’Connor (1970, 302-3).

Díaz Castañón (2004, 141-142) lists the following nineteen individuals as integrants of the first revolutionary cabinet under President Urrutia: prime minister: Dr. José Miró Cardona; state minister: Roberto Agramont; justice minister: Dr. Angel Fernández Fernández; government minister: Dr. Luis Rodríguez Rodríguez; public works minister: Engineer Manuel Ray y Rivero; agriculture minister: Dr. Humberto Sori Marin; commerce minister: Dr. Raúl Cepero Bonilla; education minister: Dr. Armando Hart; health minister: Dr. Julio Martínez Páez; wealth and goods Illicitly obtained recuperati
additionally a way to identify the most important ministries and therefore powerful members cannot be members in the Council of State and Council of Ministers. CC membership is members in the Council of State and Council of Ministers, in addition to the highly specialized character of the army’s general staff. Thus, most of the group thatsoftmax the process of generational transition.

Not all of them broke with the revolution, and some were simply assigned to posts of lesser relevance or were to leave the public service only to “radicalize” out of the government and return to serve in a high standing post. The latter happened in the particular case of Faustino Pérez Hernández. Enrique Oltuski, too, returned later to high posts, and today he serves as vice-minister of fishing, though his case is more complicated. Different versions of his career range from his being suspected as a CIA agent (O’Connor) to having been sent to jail for a time and later reincorporated into the revolution (Szule) to just being relegated to a post of lesser importance in the then Isle of Pines.

These names come from following the appointments announced in the Gaceta Oficial from January 1959 to the end of 1961.

DOR del PCC ed. (1975, 29).

See Farber (1976, 13) and Draper (1965, 73) for estimates on the size of the working force in Cuba and its distribution by economic sector; see Draper (1962, 13) on the “minute” size of the Rebel Army relative to anything that would suggest a “mass character.”

See Díaz Castañón (2004, 105-6); Farber (1976, 25); and O’Connor (1970).

Vellinga (January 1976, 247).

Jorge Domínguez (1978, 208 and table in 262).

See Díaz Castañón (2004) for a detailed overview of popular participation in the revolutionary consolidation process and Valdés (1972, 426-9) for the literacy campaign in particular.


See Bonachea and San Martín (1974, 328). He is referring to the Constitution of 1940. The restoration of this constitution was one of the banners of Castro’s opposition to the Batista dictatorship.

1949/50 seems a proper benchmark to the youngest extreme within this generation because the official lower age for participating as teachers in the 1961 literacy campaign was twelve. See article by María Isabel Domínguez (1988, 110). Of course, individual exceptions may have occurred.

“Intermediary generation” is the term used by Manheim (1952, 301-2) to denominate a specific age group that softens the process of generational transition.

See Redacción Política Actual ed. (1986, 38); Ortega López (1990, 90-94).

A presumably updated version of the statutes of the Communist Party of Cuba can be found in the party’s website. Other versions that I have found useful for tracking the changing regulations for the party members over time are the statutes as adopted by the first party congress and modified by the second and third congresses. The original version is available in English in appendix A of Blaustein and Flanz eds. (1979). See Alfonso ed. (1986) for the version after the modifications approved in the second and third party congresses.

The role of the party in setting policy direction vis-à-vis the state administration is clearly greater as policy processes look from the naked eye of most observers, myself included. While perhaps possible, it would be the scope of a different research to prove the point more rigorously by measuring the relative strength and particular fields of influence of each or division of labor between these governing organizations.

This is in part because of the larger size of the CC as compared to the Council of State and Council of Ministers, in addition to the highly specialized character of the army’s general staff. Thus, most of the members in the Council of State and Council of Ministers can be members in the CC, but most CC members can not be members in the Council of State and Council of Ministers. CC membership is additionally a way to identify the most important ministries and therefore powerful ministers at any given
time. In 1976, with the “new” administrative division that established the Organs of People Power and their current relationship with the Council of State and Council of Ministers (the Council of State is appointed by the Organs of People Power at the national level, or National Assembly, which in principle also has the role of appointing the different Ministers after a recommendation by the Council of State), of thirty-one members in the Council of State, thirty were CC members as well and of forty-five members in the Council of Ministers, twenty-seven were CC members as well. The overlapping figures include all seven executive officers in the Council of State who also held a post in the Political Bureau and all ten executive officers in the Council of Ministers, of whom six were Politburo members at the same time. See table in LeoGrande (July 1978, 19). The principle of overlapping membership of all organizations at the top has varied little over time. Of the thirty-one members elected to the Council of State following the 2003 elections to the National Assembly, twenty-one belonged to the last CC elected in 1997, of whom twelve belonged to its Political Bureau at the time. Of the current thirty-seven member Council of Ministers (not including presidents of provincial assemblies), nineteen are CC members and eight are Politburo members as well. See official website of the Cuban government for the current composition of the highest organs in the Cuban state administration and its overlapping membership with the CC of the PCC.

48 See especially his speeches of October 1 and October 3, available online through the websites of the Latin American Information Center of the University of Texas (LANIC) and the Cuban government, respectively.

49 See Hough (1980, 63) on the Soviet norm of expanding CC size at the time. He, however, interprets this as recourse of the party’s first secretary to overshadow incumbents with his own supporters. This may have been the case during the Stalin, Khrushchev and early Brezhnev eras, but during Brezhnev’s tenure the practice continued indefinitely, perhaps as a matter of routine, notwithstanding that as time passed by most incumbents were his own supporters. As for Cuba, under the same logic the lack of first secretary turnover would have rendered it unnecessary to expand the size of the CC to increase his own support and therefore the imitation and “hard choice avoidance” rationale seems more to the point.

50 Extracting from the calculation the members who died between congresses the proportion of continuity for 1975 would be 82.7 percent and 78.7 percent for 1980. Confirming the imitation of Soviet practices, these proportions mirror those in the CC of the PCUS during the Bhreznnev period: 79.4 percent at the XXIII Congress in 1966, 76.5 percent at the XXIV Congress in 1971, and 83.4 percent at the XXV Congress in 1976. Source, Bialer (1980, 92).

51 There is an inevitable degree of personal judgment in any classification of CC members by their occupation. Therefore occupational profiles of CC membership show some variation by author. The range of this variation is normally around the 10 percent. I have violated a somewhat orthodox practice by referring to the members of the UJC, or Communist Party’s youth, as belonging to a mass organization rather than to the party or forming an independent category, on the grounds that in terms of influence over policies their relevance seems to me similar to that of the members of the mass organizations. In cases of individuals with more than one occupation I have generally chosen the most highly ranked for its categorization. A member of any of the mass organizations who also held a position on the Council of State or Council of Ministers has been included in the State Administration category, for example. Ministers of the Armed Forces and the Interior have been ranked in the military. See LeoGrande (July 1978, 15), Dominguez (1982, 24) and Pérez Stable (1999, 144, and 184) for alternative categorizations, not one of them identical. Since all these studies, however, agree on the general trends suggested by the changing occupational profiles, notwithstanding the specific differences in percentages the direction is very clear. In this regard the evolution of the occupational composition over time presented here confirms the overall pattern depicted by these previous studies. This study adds the crosstabulation with age, which I have found useful for making inferences about the relationships among generations in general and for detecting the main occupational locations of the leaders of the new generations more in particular (see below).

52 Pérez-Stable (1999, 172) and Dominguez (1982, 32).

53 In total the party newspaper Granma published at the time the biographies of ninety-nine out of the 130 new members. The biographical data of the rest (that meanwhile has been published) is fully supportive of the assertion that the new members in 1980 had participated in the making and consolidation of the Cuban Revolution. As of this writing it has not been possible for me to gather the date of birth of nine new members, though by the positions of eight of them in the army at the time, and on the basis of the data
compiled from individuals with a similar trajectory to theirs, it is highly likely that they, too, conform to this pattern. The two exceptions were Casimira Torres Jauma (born 1940), who joined the militias “only” in 1963, and who as a black woman her inclusion was clearly a case of “symbolic” representation; and Carlos Lage Davila (born 1951), then representative of the youth and the only typical member of the new generations included in the 1980 CC. Today he is one of the highest public officers in Cuba, with much authority for economic policymaking.

54 See Granma, December 20, 1980, 5. The article resumes the report to the Congress of the President of the Commission of Nominations about the social composition of the Congress. Its language is not completely clear on whether the 36.1 percent who have participated in the consolidation of the revolution are in addition to or regardless of the 63.9 percent who combated the old regime from either the mountains or the plains. Because it would be highly improvable that these two percentages would add up to 100 if these were reported separately, it seems more plausible that their relationship is additive. That is, those who did not participate in the struggle against the old regime participated in the combats of consolidation of the revolution.

55 For a source in English see Madan ed. (1986, 26-39). See additionally the reports on the congress at the time by Valdés (Winter-Spring 1986); Cavallini (Mayo-Junio 1986); and Lemoine (Febrero-Marzo 1986) for insightful interpretations of its developments. For an assessment of the social, economic, political, and cultural patterns of continuity and change after the third party congress, see the collection of articles by Roca ed. (1988).

56 Osvaldo Dorticós and Arnaldo Milán had died. Blas Roca retired voluntarily alluding to ill health. Guillermo García, the first peasant to join the guerrilla forces in Oriente, Ramiro Valdés, assaulter of the Moncada, expeditionary in the Granma, and combatant in the Sierra, and Sergio del Valle, who had been a guerrilla doctor in the Sierra, continued active in other posts but lost their seats in the Political Bureau.

57 Both quotes in the paragraph are from Valdés (Winter-Spring 1986, 4). The first is his interpretation, the second a quote that he gives from one of Castro’s interventions in the congress.

58 Rabkin in Roca ed. (1988, 33 and 52 respectively).

59 For an assessment of the patterns of continuity and change in Cuba after the fourth party congress in several contexts see Pérez-López ed. (1994). While continuity, or at least less change than needed, is a recurrent theme of the collection, it is noteworthy that none of the articles argues that the Cuban leadership failed to rejuvenate. Indeed, Juan del Aguila (p. 35) recognizes that “age” was a factor in the far-reaching personnel turnover that did occur.

60 Reed (March-April 1992, 13).

61 In Gail Reed, ed. (1992, 158).


64 They were Nelson Torres, Abel Prieto, Concepción Campa and Cándido Palmero.


66 The exceptions were Alfredo Hondal (born 1942) in Ciego del Avila and Esteban Lazo (born 1944) in Ciudad de la Habana.

67 This is nowhere more evident than in the group that entered the CC in 1975. Three of the four not confirmed in 1997—José Felipe Carneado, Senén Casas, and José Enrique Mendoza Reboredo—had died between the fourth and fifth party congresses. Deaths that occurred in this lapse of time among members who entered to the CC in 1965 are those of Isidoro Malmierca and Faustino Pérez. The death of Manuel Piñeiro Lozada in 1998 suggests that by the fifth party congress he may have been in ill health. Death or ill health, naturally, was less a factor of removal between 1991 and 1997 among those members who entered to the CC in 1980.


69 To avoid methodological inconsistencies the analysis is done according to the list available at the PCC website updated for July 2006. It is noteworthy, however, that at least one individual appearing on the list has died then since. Vilma Espín, Raúl’s wife, and long standing FMC president, yielded to a long-standing illness in June 2007.

70 Alfredo Jordán died. Roberto Robaina and Robinson Agramoto were demoted from the PB and expelled from the party. Marcos Portal was demoted from the PB but retained his seat in the CC. Miguel
Díaz Canel Bermúdez, Salvador Valdés Mesa, Ramiro Valdés Meneses, and Alvaro López Miera were promoted from the CC.

See the official note on the most recent changes in: “It is a fact that the Party is strengthening itself like never before,” Granma International (digital version) July 4, 2006.

**Education**


2. The task is difficult to the extent that liberal thinkers tend to refer to individual social behavior as an unchanging given that is ultimately conditioned by human nature. If we accept their view, creating a new human morality is impossible, and any attempt at doing just this is inevitably doomed to fail. On extreme versions of this argument, the works of Hayek and Von Mises are obligatory consults, and the work of Popper (1966) strongly recommended, but any philosophical inquiry after the normative foundations of a free market economy leads in one way or another to this point. On another plane but equally to the point, on the difficulty of creating a new human morality was perhaps Niccolo Machiavelli (1950 [1513], 21) thinking when he wrote that there “is nothing more difficult to carry out, no more doubtful of success, no more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things.” The sentence refers to a political regime and not concretely to a new human morality, but Machiavelli’s overall insistence on the link between human morality and political stability gives some credence to this hypothesis.

3. The statutes of the Communist Party of Cuba, to give one concrete example, define the “new morality of the Cuban society” in terms of “collectivism, solidarity, equality, social justice, mutual trust, conscious discipline, modesty, honesty, critical and self-critical spirit, and confidence in the socialist future.” These values, according to the same document, are against “individualism, racism, skepticism, lack of faith in socialism, libertinism, defeatism, populism, opportunism, hipper-criticism, double morality, paternalism… indiscipline, corruption and any other form of criminal behavior.” See Estatutos del Partido Comunista de Cuba.

4. Consider, for instance, the following two:
   
   1) The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises. Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this, their real existence, their thinking, and the products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life. (Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, in Lewis S. Feuer ed. 1959, 247).

   2) Just as Darwin discovered the law of development or organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history: the simple fact, hitherto concealed by an overgrowth of ideology, that mankind must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, art, religion, etc.; that therefore the production of the immediate material means of subsistence and consequently the degree of economic development attained by a given people or during a given epoch form the foundation upon which the state institutions, the legal conceptions, the ideas on art, and even on religion, of the people concerned have been evolved, and in the light of which they must, therefore, be explained, instead of vice versa, as had hitherto been the case. (Frederick Engels, Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx, in Foreign Languages Publishing House ed. 1949, 153.)

5. See for instance the passage of the Critique of the Gotha Program (in Lewis S. Feuer, ed. 1959, 119) quoted as epigraph to the first chapter of this dissertation.

6. On this point it is customary to distinguish between the more “mechanical” or less intrusive post-Stalinist Soviet approach to the formation of the new morality and the more voluntaristic or intrusive Maoist approach of China. But even the post-Stalinist approach in the Soviet Union and East Europe was far from passive by the standards of liberal education in liberal democracies. See Paul (1979) and Medyesy (1975) for evidence based on the cases of Czechoslovakia and Hungary respectively. If we were to place Cuba at some point in a continuum between these two extremes, as this chapter aims in part to show, it would be closer to the voluntaristic end most of the time.
For writing this dissertation and this chapter in particular I have used the version of Guevara’s seminal letter directed to Carlos Quijano, director of the Uruguayan weekly magazine Marcha, best known under the title “Socialism and Man in Cuba,” as it appeared in Verde Olivo, December 31, 1967. The letter was first published in 1965 and since has been many times reprinted in almost every imaginable language. For a relatively recent translation to English see Guevara (2005). I have used this translation as the main source for my quotes. This particular quote appears on page 163.

Given the considerable quantity of academic production in English devoted to the Cuban case, the relatively little attention being paid to the regime’s efforts at transforming political culture and the total ignorance of the socialist dimensions of this effort seem quite odd. Books devoted specifically to the topic of political culture include Fagen’s pioneering work (1969), Medin (1990), Bunck (1994), and Kapcia (2000). Despite their many differences, the first three have in common the focus on concrete cases such as the literacy campaign (Fagen and Medin) or else on particular fields through which the transformation of culture has been attempted, ranging from the military and literature (Medin) to gender relations and sports (Bunck). These books contain mainly policy description and assessment (Fagen and Medin) or reports on Castro’s speeches (Bunck). The vision or ideological purpose behind the policies and speeches being described is only barely scrutinized and therefore stays at the very general level of “revolutionary consciousness” (Bunck), “rejection of money,” “importance of youth” (Fagen) and “confrontation and heroism” (Medin). By analyzing messages of national content in depth, Kapcia has been able to show a basic continuity over time in the transference of Cuban national values since the foundation of the Cuban Republic. See the remainder of this chapter, as a “socialist” corollary, albeit a partial one, of Kapcia’s meritorious work.

The phrase in the English translation reads: “In the attitude of our fighters could be glimpsed the man and woman of the future…Finding the method to perpetuate this heroic attitude in daily life is…one of our fundamental tasks.” In Guevara (2005, 150).

Specifically, Fidel and other guerrilla leaders had a CBS televised interview with Bob Taber at the top of that peak on April 28, 1957. The episode is narrated in Szulc (1986, 420). See also the article by de la Rosa Labrada in Juventud Rebelde, April 28, 2007, 4.

The book corresponds to the fourth grade. All quotes in this paragraph are taken from Santos Palma et. al. (1991, 41-47).

See for illustration Valdés López, Marta María, et. al. (2001 269-360) for ninth grade and Regla María Albelo, et. al. (2000), for high school.


The descriptive “all” in the text in respect to the lightbulbs should not be taken too literally. See, in this order, UJC (1972, 13); UJC (1977, 3, 8.); UJC (1990, 131); María Julia Mayoral and Orfidio Peláez, “Nada detendrá a esta Revolución Socialista dispuesta a lograr la real igualdad,” Grama Internacional (digital edition) November 24, 2005; Fidel Castro (speech on January 17, 2006); Julieta García Ríos, “un año intenso de trabajo juvenil,” Juventud Rebelde, June 3, 2006, 8.


See the speech of Orlando Fundora in the Congress as transcribed in Juventud Rebelde, April 1, 1972, 5.

Translated from the Spanish: “Donde sea, cómo sea y para lo que sea, Comandante en Jefe, ordene!” See also the exemplary of Juventud Rebelde at the closing of the congress, April 4, 1972. Upon a background of the commander in chief’s picture stands the eight-column inscription: “Ordene.”

Both the quote and the idea are taken from Smith (1985). The quote appears in page 10.

In his speech commemorating the second anniversary of the unification of revolutionary youth organizations, October 20, 1962. An English translation of the speech can be found in Gevara (2000, 101-117; quote from page 108).
25 Quotes taken from his March 13, 1962 and December 1, 1961 speeches. See also his October 24, 1961 and December 2, 1986 speeches.
26 See “Declaración Final del II Congreso de la UJC” in Juventud Rebelde, April 5, 1972, 6.
27 As stated by the Program of the Communist Party of Cuba approved by the deferred session of the Third Party Congress in December 1986. See Redacción Política Actual ed. (1986, 134-5). See also the interview with Secretariat member and chief of the education, science, and sports department of the CC, José Ramón Balaguer (Septiembre 1987). Academic and newspaper articles on innovations in education report changes in educational policy implemented in 1988, changes in study methods made official by the Ministry of Education in 1991, changes in educational plans and programs effective for the school years 1992 and 1993, and an “educational revolution” initiated in 2000, which by December 5, 2004, according to Castro’s speech of that day, had brought “radical transformations” to secondary schools. See María Isabel Domínguez (Enero-Marzo 1995, 90); FBIS-LAT-92-079, April 23, 1992, 4, and article by Margarita Barrio in Juventud Rebelde, September 3, 2006. In the same vein, numerous proposals and experiments to increase innovation skills and self-esteem of Cuban students in the schooling system have been carried out. One particular experiment with influential implications for policymaking in the 1990s is Avendaño and Minujín (1988). For theoretical studies with strong policy recommendations in this direction, see González Rey (1995) and D’Angelo Hernández (2001). See also Lutjens (1996, 167-8) for a general sketch of revamping study methods during “rectification,” and Leal García (2000) for attempts at and proposals for continuing revamping methods for teaching history afterwards.
29 See García Rodríguez (Mayo 1987).
30 See García Rodríguez (Mayo 1987); UJC (1990) and “todos los jóvenes al servicio militar,” Juventud Rebelde April 3, 1987, 1, 4-5.
31 See the intervention of Ramón Sánchez, director of the Marxism department in the Ministry of Higher Education, in a roundtable moderated by Enrique Ubieta (Enero-Marzo 1996, 140).
32 See the interview with then first secretary of the UJC, “Roberterto” Robaina by Arístides Sotonavarro González and Manuel Menéndez Diaz (Abril 1990). See also the article by Fernández in Baloyra and Morris eds. (1993, 200); Kapcia (2000, 248); and María Isabel Domínguez (2003).
33 Among them Eduardo Ponjuán, René Francisco Rodríguez, Fernando Rodríguez, José Angel Toirac, Licet Castillo Valdés, Sandra Ceballos, Carlos Estévez, Roberto Fabelo, Abigail González, Tania Bruguera, and Angel Delgado, to name but a few. See Block ed. (2001) and Kapcia (2005, 191-192).
35 Quotation marks enclose Machiavelli’s famous phrase in his introduction to the Discourses. Quoted from Machiavelli (1950 [1513], 103).
36 For years the conventional name of this theoretical basis was Marxism-Leninism. With the collapse of the Soviet Union this term fell somewhat into disuse (rather than Lenin into disrespect) in Cuba as well as in academic circles elsewhere, being replaced by Marxism alone.
37 Irrespective of the complex (and only superficially addressed in the text) question of how Gramsci defined organic intellectuals and what role they play in the maintenance of any given socioeconomic and political institutional order, the statement reflects the use of the term by at least some important Cuban political leaders and social scientists. See Jorge Luis Acanda (Abril-Junio 2002, 13-14); Hart (Julio-Septiembre 1995, 3); and Jorge Luis Acanda mod. (Abril-Junio 1997). For a similar interpretation of the function of the Gramscian organic intellectuals, see Femia (1981, 164).
38 On the penetration channels of the Soviet versions of Marxism that reached Cuba in the 1960s see the article by Fidel Díaz Sosa in Plá León and González Aróstegui eds. (2006, 78-96) or (preferable) its extended version downloadable from the website of Cuban contemporary thinkers (Spanish bibliography).
39 Fernando Martínez (Julio-Septiembre 1995, 20). During the 1960s Fernando Martínez Heredia had a prominent role in the conformation of this view as member, and for a time director, of the University of Havana philosophy department, director of the journal Pensamiento Crítico, and president of the second National Congress of Philosophy held in 1966.
40 See compilation by Deutschmann and Salado (2006).
41 This exchange took place between July 1966 and January 1967 over the issues 28, 30, 31 and 32 of the journal of the schools of revolutionary instruction, Teoría y Práctica. For the complete set of articles in the exchange, see in the bibliography entries Peréz, Humberto and de la Uz, Félix on the one hand and Alonso Tejada, Aurelio on the other.
42 The latter event is widely known as the “institutionalization of the heterodoxy,” because in this congress it was agreed that the materials for studying Marxism can be diverse and do not have to conform to any particular official line. Although public records on this congress have either not been kept or not made available to the public, in the accounts of the participants it invariably appears as the moment signaling the relative ascendancy of the view that here is named autonomous. Its president, Fernando Martínez, for instance, mentions it as a moment of breakdown with “the whole Soviet conception” of Marxism in Cuba. In an interview with Yohanka León del Río in Plá León and González Aróstegui eds. (2006, 203).
43 The most easily available documentation for the lifetime of academic journals is the WorldCat electronic catalog. It contains the information reported on the lifetime of Cuba Socialista and Pensamiento Crítico, which was matched with the hard copies available at both the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and the José Martí Library in Havana. The date of closing of Teoría y Práctica is reported by Fidel Díaz Sosa in Plá León and González Aróstegui eds. (2006, 92) and matched with the copies available at the José Martí Library. For a closer perspective of the motivations behind and the purposes of Pensamiento Crítico, see the interviews on the issue with Fernando Martínez Heredia. See in particular the interview with Nestor Kohan (1994) reprinted in Kohan (Enero-Junio 1995).
44 See the article by Natasha Gómez Velázquez in Plá León and González Aróstegui eds. (2006, especially p. 99).
45 The decision, however, can also be interpreted as denoting divided opinions or a personnel shortage in the party. See Buró Político (Febrero 1967, quote from p. 3).
46 Fernando Martínez (Julio-Septiembre 1995, 22).
47 Quoted from the English edition of the report: PCC (1976, 32 and 31 respectively).
48 Excerpts of the declaration can be found in Joaquín G. Santana ed. (1977, quoted from pages 52, 61, and 63 respectively).
49 See the article by Vecino Alegret (Diciembre 1982 - Febrero 1983, 20-21). He was the minister of higher education at the time.
50 A partial list of these materials include Konstantinov, F. (1979, 1980) for the course on philosophy, Pérez, Humberto (1976) for the course on political economy, and Afanasiev (1984) for scientific communism.
52 For the following two examples, see Konstantinov (1980, 192-193) for the views expressed by the study materials. See Fernando Martínez in Kohan (Enero-Junio 1995, 42) and Oscar Zanetti (Enero-Marzo 1995, 122), for two Cuban authors who have pointed to these disparities in the order appearing in the text.
54 The speech can be downloaded from the website of the Cuban government. Statements of relevance appear also in the preface written by Aurelio Alonso to Plá León and González Aróstegui eds. (2006, 16).
55 See, for example, articles by Miranda Hernández y Ortega Paredes (1987); Chavez Antunes (1987); Barrios Osuna (1987); Turner (1988); Pupo Pupo (1989); Rivero Alvisa (Enero-Abril 1990) and Estevez (Enero-Abril 1990) as well as the book by Fernando Martínez (1989).
56 The analogy of the Soviet Union with a “big brother” is common among Cuban authors. See, for example, Yoss (Abril-Septiembre 2004, 139) and Mayra Espina in Rafael Hernández ed. (2003, 34). Political leaders have been equally or more critical than intellectuals toward the East European socialist regimes but markedly less toward the Soviet Union.
For general overviews on the evolution of the social sciences during the process of rectification and beyond, see Alvarez Sandoval and Alvarez Hernández (n.d.); Machado Rodríguez (Septiembre-Octubre 1987) and (Enero-Marzo 1990); Casamayor Maspón (Abril-Junio 1990); Fernandez Rios (Septiembre-Diciembre 1990); Valdés Gutiérrez (Mayo-Junio 1989); Diaz Caballero (Julio-Agosto 1989); Ortiz Torres (Noviembre-Diciembre 1989); Toledo y Nuñez Jover (Julio-Septiembre 1990); Limía David (1994) and (Enero-Marzo 1995); Yañez Quintero (Julio-Septiembre 1995); Enrique Ubieta mod. (Enero-Marzo 1996); Rafael Hernández mod. (Enero-Marzo 1997); Rafael Hernández ed. (2003); Juan Luis Martín (Octubre 1998 - Junio 1999) and (March-April 1999); Mayra Espina mod. (Enero-Marzo 2003) and Aurelio Alonso (Julio-Septiembre 1995).


See Amaro Cano (Enero-Junio 1997, 106) and Zardoya Loureda (Noviembre-Diciembre 1997, 60).

The following account draws from Muñoz Gutiérrez (Julio-Diciembre 2005); Boves, González and Ravenet (Julio-Septiembre 1990); Toledo and Nuñez Jover (Julio-Septiembre 1990); Espina (Enero-Marzo 1995); and Espina in Hernández ed. (2003, 29-48).

The conception is very well reflected by the title: Historical Materialism is the Marxist Sociology, a book written by F. Konstantinov, the same author of the university textbooks for the course on philosophy as imparted under the predominance of the reverent view.

On this point in particular, see the article by Mayra Espina in Rafael Herránández ed. (2003, 42).

The document is mentioned as a turning point by Alvarez Sandoval and Alvarez Hernández (n.d.).

The other two universities that offer a B.A. program in sociology are the University of Oriente and the University of Las Villas.

Among the problems “rediscovered” by social research during rectification and the special period, Mayra Espina in Rafael Herránández ed. (2003, 36) points out a weakening in popular participation; absolutism in the equation state property = socialist property; contradiction between an increase in state employees and a decrease in state productivity; low efficiency in the cooperative agricultural sector; deficit of qualified and surplus of professional workers; disproportion in the technical workforce occupied in productive and not productive enterprises; young professionals’ lack of interest in promotion to posts of direction; lack of symmetry between the system of higher education and the requirements of the economy; proliferation of crime and black markets; and sexism within the family. María Isabel Domínguez (Enero-Marzo 1995, 89) also identifies the predominance of class divisions and their tendency to reproduce across generations and low social mobility.

On this point in particular, see examples provided by Juan Luis Martín (Octubre 1998 – Junio 1999, 150) and Maria Isabel Domínguez (Enero-Marzo 1995, 91).

For greater detail in a few other disciplines within the rubric “social science and humanities,” see Zanetti (Enero-Marzo 1995) and Torres Fumero (Julio-Septiembre 1995) for history; Joaquín Santana mod. (Julio-Diciembre 1999) for philosophy; Fernando González Rey (Enero-Marzo 1995) for psychology; and Alzugaray Treto (2005) and Valdés Paz in Rafael Hernández ed. (2003) for political science.

Raúl’s criticism appears in the report of the Political Bureau to the fifth plenum of the Central Committee delivered on March 23, 1996. The text appeared in the Granma newspaper on March 27, 1996, 2-6. The particular accusations to the “comrades” within the Center of the Study of the Americas appear on page 5. For a version in English, see PCC (1996). The quote on proposals for economic reform is taken from the interview with Julio Carranza by NACLA (September-October 1995, 31). He is commenting on his co-authored book with Luis Gutiérrez and Pedro Monreal (1995), which is the usual reference on proposals for far-reaching economic reform in Cuba made by Cuban intellectuals.


The point is raised by Juan Valdés Paz in his contribution to Hernández ed. (2003, 159). While anecdotal, my personal research experience fully confirms it. I requested official permits for gathering data in Cuba through diplomatic and academic channels. While two research institutes agreed to host me...
while gathering the data, none was able to obtain the required authorization from the political authorities in their respective ministries.

72 See Konstantinov (1980, especially 206).

73 The point could be taken to ridiculous extremes. One needs to go no further than to the very opening of the Afanasiev (1984, 3) text on “scientific communism,” which describes the discipline as “the science about the inevitability on the destruction of capitalism and the triumph of communism.”

74 For a few examples see Armando Hart (Enero-Marzo 1990; Abril-Junio 1990; Septiembre-Diciembre 1990, 14); Limia David (Enero-Marzo 1995, 21); Fernando Martínez (Julio-Septiembre 1995, 19); Rauber (Abril-Junio 1996, 77); and Duharte Díaz in Ubieta Gómez mod. (Enero-Marzo 1997, 126).

75 See excerpt from Engel’s letter to Conrad Schmidt in Hart (Abril-Junio 1990, 11).

76 See excerpt from Engel’s letter to Werner Sombart in Hart (Abril-Junio 1990, 14) and Hart (Enero-Marzo 1990, 2) respectively.


78 For a brief synopsis of this expansion, see interview with Celia Hart by the Mexican newspaper La Jornada, April 6, 2005 (electronic edition). I reviewed all the numbers up to December 2006 of the journals Temas, Debates Americanos, Contracorriente and Marx Ahora to write this paragraph. For a few typical examples of articles appearing in these journals, which stress both the theoreticians and the research directions mentioned in the next two sentences, see Jorge Luis Acanda mod. (Abril-Junio 1997); Díaz Castaña (Enero-Junio 1995); Jorge Luis Acanda (Abril-Junio 1998; Abril-Junio 2002; Octubre-Diciembre 2006); Azor Hernández (Julio-Septiembre 2005); Ravelo Cabrera (Julio-Septiembre 1995); and Soler Martínez (Enero-Junio 2001). See also the books by Jorge Luis Acanda (2002); Hiram Hernández (2006); and Centro Juan Marinello (2000).


80 These intentions are presented according to the explanation of Ramón Sanchez Noda in Enrique Ubieta mod. (Enero-Marzo 1996, 140).

81 Compare textbooks written by Humberto Pérez (1976) with books written by García Fernández and Campos Alfonso (2004). These are basically identical in both structure and analysis.

82 Sánchez Noda ed. (2002, 8 and 335 respectively).

83 In Zardoya Loureda mod. (1999, 180).

84 See Arbesú (1993, 29); Departamento de Estudios para el Perfeccionamiento de la Educación Superior de la Universidad de la Habana (1985, 4); DOR del PCC ed. (1975, 119).

85 For more detail on these programs than possible here, see Carnoy and Wertheim (1979, 96-105); Fitzgerald (1990, 76-80); Arbesú (1993, 49-54); Figueroa et. al. (1974); DOR del PCC ed. (1975, 119); and article by Odalis Riquenes Cutiño and Lisván Lescaill Durand, “El Plan la Escuela al Campo se Renueva,” in Juventud Rebelde, November 5, 2006 (digital edition).

86 Quotes correspond to Marti (1976, 72) and Fidel Castro’s speech of April 4, 1972.

87 Hence the exquisite paragraph from the German Ideology (in Lewis S. Feuer ed. 1959, 254):

As soon as labor is distributed, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a shepherd, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood; while in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have in mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd, or critic.

88 As Bottomore (1993, 105) observes, the same idea recurs in the first volume of the Capital:

The detail-worker of today, the limited individual, the mere bearer of a particular social function, will be replaced by the fully developed individual, for whom the different social functions he performs are but so many alternative modes of activity.
For a detailed summary of additional particular goals pursued by the schools in the countryside, see Figueroa et al. (1974, 14-26).

For this distinction, see once again the passage from the Critique of the Gotha Program quoted as the epigraph to the first chapter of this dissertation.

That is, even before the bulk of nationalizations. The date that marks this beginning is November 22, 1959, when following an initiative of commander Ernesto Guevara, thousands of volunteer laborers began building a school facility for 20,000 children in the Sierra Maestra.

He repeated this idea in several of his speeches and writings, but to refer the reader to the same text as earlier in this chapter, see Guevara (2005, 156, 159,160).

See Fitzgerald (1990, 48-53) for an illustrative account on this process. Bengelsdorf (1994, 95) reports that about 20 percent of the work in the 1970 harvest was voluntary.

See in this order Pérez-Stable (1999, 157-160); Kapcia (2005, 152); Fitzgerald (1990, 63-4); UJC (1977, 3); UJC (1982, 3); UJC (1990, 98); and Fidel Castro, speeches on April 5, 1987 and April 4, 1992.


According to Tzvi Medin (1990, 148), a law of November 12, 1963, established compulsory military service in Cuba and the first contingent of conscripts was called up in April 1964.

See Vecino Alegret and Escavia Rivero (Enero 7, 1968).

The construction of the party in the army was initiated in December 1963 and concluded in 1966. Throughout this time Marxist instruction was generalized, and later systematized in concurrence with the processes of institutionalization begun in 1971. For a synopsis on this process, see Alvariño Atienzar (Diciembre 1981). For further detail on the educational work of the party cells in the army, see Medín (1990, 147-153); editorials in Verde Olivo December 1976, 59; Vellinga (January 1976, 253); and interview with Brigadier General Harry Villegas (Pombo) in Pathfinder (1999, especially pages 146-150).

In his speech for the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the attack on the Moncada barracks, July 26, 1978.

Other kinds of aid to Algeria had begun as early as 1961. Reported as stated by late Division General Néstor López Cuba to his interviewers in Pathfinder (1999, 24).

These are the numbers generally managed by Cuban sources. See Castro’s speech on December 2, 2005, for instance. See Eckstein (2003, 171-175), additionally, for a synoptic map of Cuban military internationalism. For a detailed account on the initial involvement of Cuba in Angola, see Gleijeses (2002).

Numbers taken from “Más de 42 mil cubanos brindan su aporte a otros pueblos,” in Granma (digital edition), June 19, 2007. See also the website on Cuban cooperation (Spanish).


“Unbelievable misery” in the words of General Samuel Rodiles Planas (in Baez 2006, 287), recounting his experiences in Angola.


Histories like this abound on the Internet. This particular one was taken from article by Shelyn Rojas, “Ahora soy opositor por enfrentarme a la mentira: Froilán Osmany Rodríguez,” Cubanet, March 31, 2006.

Formation

Though not really succinct, Ernesto Guevara (in Deutscmann ed. 2003, 154-155) offers a quite comprehensive definition of the term:
We should state that a cadre is an individual who has achieved sufficient political development to be able to interpret the larger directives emanating from the central authority, make them his own, and convey them as an orientation to the masses; a person who at the same time also perceives the signs manifested by the masses of their own desires and their innermost motivations.

A cadre is someone of ideological and administrative discipline, who knows and practices democratic centralism and who knows how to evaluate the contradictions in our current methods in order to make the best of them. In the field of production, he knows how to practice the principle of collective discussion and individual decision making and responsibility. He is an individual of proven loyalty, whose physical and moral courage has developed in step with his ideological development, in such a way that he is always willing to face any debate and to give even his life for the good of the revolution. He is, in addition, an individual who can think for himself, which enables him to make the necessary decisions and to exercise creative initiative in a way that does not conflict with discipline.

The cadre, therefore, is a creator, a leader of high standing, a technician with a good political level, who by reasoning dialectically can advance his sector of production, or develop the masses from his position of political leadership.

3 Anybody replying that this is an exaggeration would be correct. But the exaggeration is slight. Lenin proposes in What Is to Be Done? to help ignite the workers through a party of disciplined cadres. He does not call the cadres to make the revolution without workers, which would have probably been beyond any permissive heresy to the Marxist theory of his time. The way he seized power and the factual working of the socialist regimes, however, support the statement as written in the text.
4 The statement, of course, has a context. According to Sheila Fitzpatrick (September 1979, especially p. 392), the statement comes in a moment of a speech, during the Spring of 1935, aimed at motivating army cadres to learn to use new technologies. The previous slogan was, paradoxically, “Technology decides everything.”
6 Hobsbawm (1994, 461-499). The process he depicts is of course far more complex, and many more factors are implicated, but this opinion is at the core of his overall analysis.
7 This particular quote is from his closing speech to the fifth party congress. See Madan, Ramos y Zavala eds. (1997, 188-9). See also, in this regard, his speech on November 17, 2005 in commemoration of his entrance to the University of Havana.
8 An explanatory note on the party statutes is perhaps in order here. These constitute the “fundamental law in party life,” similar to what a constitution aims to represent to the citizens of a state. In addition, the party has a set of rules which expand upon and clarify the principles of the statutes. In case of conflict between the statutes and the rules, the statutes take precedence. Unless otherwise specified, all allusions to the party statutes in this chapter refer to the version available in the party official website, which, for this reason alone, I take as the version currently in effect.
9 This is not to ensure that there is no enterprise director or even a minister who holds no party membership card. It is to point to the rule rather than to the exception.
10 As expressed in Article 18 of the rules for the admission to the party as approved by the Political Bureau of the Party in March 1987. See Buró Político (Diciembre 1987 – Enero 1988, 49).
11 The relevant modification is found in Article 7 of the original statutes and Article 8 of the versions after the modifications introduced by the second and third congresses. A version in English of the 1975 statutes can be found in the appendix of Blaustein and Flanz eds. (1979). For the versions after the amendments of the second and third party congresses, see Grupo de Publicaciones II Congreso del Partido Comunista de Cuba (1981, 9) and Alfonso ed. (1986, 2-3) respectively.
12 See Equipo de Redacción de Política Actual ed. (1992, 85).
13 See Equipo de Redacción de Política Actual ed. (1992, 86).
14 See Equipo de Redacción de Política Actual (1997, 43).
15 For a comprehensive review of how this principle is kept by both the statutes and the rules of the PCC see Suárez Pérez (2004).
Ernesto Guevara was insistent to the tilt on this principle. Reynaldo Castro Yedra, hero of work for his ability to recollect cane sugar in the 1960s and 1970s and CC member in virtue of this ability, tells that at the end of one voluntary journey, Commander Guevara passed his arm around his shoulder and said:

“Everybody has the right to become tired. But those who become tired do not have the right to belong to the vanguard.” *Granma*, (digital edition) November 10, 2006.

Periodically means yearly or every two or five years, depending on the particular rules for the different levels at particular moments in time.

See José A. García Hernández (Mayo 1989, 77).

One has to, however (or rather), take this new “spirit” with a grain of salt. As a result of the tightening of criteria for evaluations, the “critical observations” made of the militants in the assemblies of balance increased from some 35 percent of the evaluated in 1986 to over 75 percent in each of the two subsequent years. When, however, the content of these observations is looked at—too much smoking, overweight—it becomes clear that only about a third of the observations referred to deficiencies that could carry penalties. See Abelardo Álvarez (Agosto 1988, 2-3).

The stated purpose of the ratification of party membership cards is reported in the words of Abelardo Álvarez (Agosto 1988, 4), who was then in charge of the organization department of the CC.

The principle is stipulated in the resolution on the matter obtained in the first party congress. See DOR del PCC ed. (1976, 93-94). The document stipulates four criteria for the selection of cadres in the several institutions of government, including the party, the state, the UJC, and the mass organizations. In order of importance these are: a) political loyalty; b) ability of direction and organization; c) consciousness and responsibility at work; d) knowledge and proficiency with the related activity. In every document on the matter, the same criteria is repeated with a degree of variation in vocabulary and detail but always with loyalty at the top. Thus, for instance, in a more recent document outlining the “national strategy for the preparation and improvement of state cadres and their reserves,” political and ideological preparation appear as “master strategy” upon which the several “components” are arranged by order of importance: preparation for defense, technical and professional preparation, economic preparation, and preparation in direction. See Comisión Central de Cuadros (Septiembre 17, 2004).

See intervention of José Ramón Machado Ventura in his visit to the Holguín province as reported in *Granma* November 18, 1998, 4.

The idea was expressed by Carlos Aldana in an interview with Manuel Menéndez Díaz (Junio 1989, 16).

Their argument, more broadly stated, was that under capitalism and socialism alike, power is concentrated in the hands of those who have technical knowledge. While for capitalist societies the argument may or may not apply, if the argument is accepted for state socialist societies, then a conclusion from their demise would be that socialism cannot endure when decisions are made on the basis of technical knowledge as a dominant criterion. The quintessential example of convergence theories is Galbraith (1967).

See DOR del PCC ed. (1976, 92).

The resolution on cadres of the second party congress, from which these lines draw, can be found in Partido Comunista de Cuba (1982, 333-337, see especially 333-4 for the criticisms noted).

“We have to improve our work, when we will analyze it in the third congress, we will see that if we do not move forward in the years 1984 and 1985, we will not be able to do a good balance in relation to cadre policy.” José Ramón Machado Ventura (Mayo 1984, 20) in a control to the Province of Havana city, November 18, 1983. “In the party congress, almost ten years ago, we approved an excellent thesis on cadre that is not been applied or is partially applied…in practice, there are still deficiencies.” Raúl Castro

35 In the references to this report made in this and the following sentence, see Reinaldo A. Salinas ed. (1986, 40, 46, and 95-96).

36 See Abelardo Álvarez (Enero-Febrero 1988, 48).

37 By way of comparison with Abelardo Colomé Ibarra, the magnitude of the execution of Arnaldo Ochoa can be emphasized, for both received the emblematic merit of Hero of the Republic on the very same ceremony, on January 1, 1984. Abelardo Colomé’s nowadays posts as Politburo member, Council of State member, and Interior Minister may give some idea of where could Arnaldo Ochoa have been now, would he not have fallen into disgrace. By around the same time, there were other arrests and heavy sentences for charges on corruption and other crimes to very high-ranking officers in the state apparatus as well, but Ochoa’s is the highlighting case. Among other officers whose star fell into disgrace during the rectification process for charges on corruption, are Diocles Torralba who was former Vice-President and Minister of Transport, and José Abrantes Fernández, who was nothing less than in charge of Fidel’s personal security as Minister of the Interior.


40 In relation to more honesty, the slogan is “to call bread to the bread and wine to the wine” and it is asked simply because, if trusting the reports, otherwise the leaders cannot be aware of the real problems of the population. See Susana Lee, “Seguimos en ese combate,” Granma July 22, 1995, and “El Partido en el centro de los problemas,” Granma October 4, 1994, 2.

41 In Spanish, the expression is “si se puede.” It apparently was uttered for the first time in the connotation given in the text as a comment to the outstanding achievements of an agricultural contingent of the Guantánamo province on July 16, 1994. See “Participa Raúl en encuentro con contingente agrícola,” Granma July 16, 1994, 1.

42 As reported by Susana Lee in “Seguimos en combate,” Granma July 22, 1995, 5.


44 The ethical code is available through the Internet in several websites, including the website of the Ministry of Auditing and Control (see entry Comisión Central de Cuadros in the section of “sitios web” of the bibliography in Spanish). The document is signed July 17, 1996. The law was published in Gaceta Oficial October 18, 1999, 37-50. It came to replace Decree-Law 82 of September 14, 1984.

45 In his February 12, 2005 speech, as reported in La Jornada (electronic edition) February 13, 2005, Fidel Castro, for instance, mentioned that “measures” had been undertaken against corrupt managers with access to hard currency who fell prey to the temptations offered by their capitalist counterparts. The article also mentions that the decreasing power of managers is a well-known phenomenon in Cuba. Numbers, however, or specific names and posts were not given.

46 For a typical example of this kind of report in the press, see article by María Julia Mayoral “Con control las cosas cambian,” in Granma (digital edition) November 10, 2006.


48 José Ramón Machado Ventura (Julio- Agosto 1988, 2).

49 As indicated in the footnotes for the last chapter, for more detail on this point, the work of Fidel Díaz Sosa is recommended. The work is downloadable from the website of Cuban thinkers (colección Pensadores Cubanos de hoy en la bibliografía), and appears also in a short version in Plácido León and González Aróstegui eds. (2006, 78-96).

50 In addition to the work of Fidel Díaz Sosa, for the evolution of the system of party schools during the 1960s, see the series of seven reports written by the head of the system of party schools at the time, Lionel Soto, in Cuba Socialista from 1961 to 1967. See also Antonio Díaz Ruiz (Noviembre-Diciembre 1985, 35-41). In English, the reader can consult the work of Fagen (1969, 104-137), which remains so far the only academic work in this language specifically addressed to anything having to do with the system of party schools.

51 Antonio Díaz Ruiz (Noviembre-Diciembre 1985, 39). He breaks down the data on the number of EIR as follows: in total, until 1966, functioned 244 EIR. Six at the national level, six schools of the party at the
proportional level and six of the Communist Youth, twenty-six internal or full-time EBIR, and 201 nocturnal or part time EBIR. Additional data with much detail can be found in the sources of the footnote immediately above.

52 Fidel Díaz Sosa in his contribution to Plá León and González Aróstegui eds. (2006, 82).
53 For example, the programs of study in the full-time EBIR contained 70 percent courses devoted to cultural improvement and 30 percent to the study of the Marxist theory. Fidel Díaz Sosa, in Plá León and González Aróstegui eds. (2006, 86).
54 See Antonio Díaz Ruiz (Noviembre-Diciembre 1985, 39).
55 Antonio Díaz Ruiz (Noviembre-Diciembre 1985, 42).
56 For this term in particular, see Antonio Díaz Ruiz, (Noviembre-Diciembre 1985, 42-43). Unless otherwise specified, the rest of the paragraph draws from this article and Antonio Díaz Ruiz (1984, 70-91).
57 The “restructuring” described in this paragraph draws from Militante Comunista (Enero 1988, 27-29) and Bruno Hurtado Marrero (Noviembre 1988).
58 Antonio Díaz-Ruiz was replaced by Raúl Valdés Vivó.
64 See Blas Roca (1943, 15-22).
65 Taratkevic and Toledo (1985, 3; 56-57).
66 A note on sources may be in order here. The following account is built from three textbooks that are, or were, used as materials of study in the party school system sometime after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The three materials are signed by “Escuela Superior del Partido Ñico López” and have been written by a “collective” of professors within the school. For this reason, I take them to reflect and represent the official view of the Higher Schools of the Party on the topics discussed. The three texts are listed in the bibliography with “Escuela Superior del Partido Ñico López” as author.
67 Escuela Superior del Partido Ñico López (1999, 18); Escuela Superior del Partido Ñico López (2007, 66). The caveats in the second affirmation are not committing mistakes in planning, and natural problems as draught, tornadados and floods, or “as in the case of Cuba, an insane blockade.”
71 About the East Asian regimes, see Escuela Superior del Partido Ñico López (1999, 28-29).
73 This explanation seems to be becoming kind of “official.” See Manuel E, Yepe, “La táctica de las comparaciones,” Granma (digital edition) March 5, 2007.
75 In his closing speech of the fifth party congress. In Madan, Ramos y Zabala eds. (1997, 164).
76 Rosendo Morales (Septiembre-Noviembre 1982, 112).
77 For a brief synopsis of Cuba’s shifting strategies of economic development, see contribution of López García in Bell Lara and Dello Buono (2005, 101-114).
78 Rosendo Morales, (Septiembre-Noviembre 1982, 120).
79 To the extent that the practice was specifically criticized by the resolution on cadres of the second party congress. See Partido Comunista de Cuba (1982, 334-335).
80 Rosendo Morales (Septiembre-Noviembre 1982, 128-9) reports on a sample taken from 2,735 enterprises. Whereas the proportion of cadres formally trained for management positions working in them was 170 percent, about 30 percent of the managers did not have the required formal training. The proportion for assistant managers was 109 percent and over 32 percent, respectively.
81 Rosendo Morales (Julio-Agosto 1985, 98).
Rosendo Morales (Julio-Agosto 1985, 95) reports in a study on profitability based on a sample of thirty enterprises. According to this study, whereas 50 percent of the enterprises with qualified personnel in posts of direction were profitable, only 36 percent of the non-profitable enterprises had qualified personnel in direction posts.

Rosendo Morales (Septiembre-Noviembre 1982, 118 and 123). The courses in the ENDE can be compared, for the sake of emphasis, with the courses in the bachelor’s degree program on economics currently offered in Cuba’s universities and centers of higher education, which offers specializations in either business management or national economics. Rosendo Morales tells that in the ENDE were taught courses on mathematics, general statistics, political economy, accounting, statistics for economics, enterprise economics, credits and finance, national planning, and economic direction. The article by García Rabelo, Quintela Fernández and Ruiz Valiente (2002, 43-47) presents in three appendixes the current program of study for a bachelor’s degree in economics, including both specializations. The relevant additions include courses in matters previously considered irrelevant for socialist economies such as econometrics and micro and macro economics, and courses that were incorporated to cope better with a capitalist international environment, such as marketing and English.

The account is given according to the version from Alexis Codina (Abril 1993 and Febrero 2004), current director of the CETED.

In the words of late General Senén Casas Regueiro, who inaugurated them. Cited by Codina (Febrero 2004, 3).

Codina (Febrero 2004, 5).

Codina (Febrero 2004, 3-4).


GESTA (2007, 7, 11).

The national strategy for the formation of cadres is elaborated on by the Central Commission on Cadres in the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers. The strategy comes out as a document updated from time to time and accordingly distributed to the relevant organisms. On the political instruction of state cadre in coordination with the schools of the party, see Comisión Central de Cuadros (2004, 15-16).

GESTA (2007).


According to data presented in a document downloadable from the website of the Cuban Central Bank, the productivity per worker increased at an average of 3.2 percent between 1995 and 2000 (Banco Central de Cuba, 10). The same document also states that between 1993 and 1999, the proportion of profitable enterprises grew from 29 percent to 74 percent.

See Francisco Rodríguez Cruz “Employment and Productivity in Cuba” Trabajadores (digital edition in English) January 8, 2008.

See resolution on “Cadre formation, selection, allocation, promotion and improvement” in DOR del PCC (1976, 92-99, especially 94); Decreto-Ley 82, “Sistema de Trabajo con los Cuadros del Estado,” Gaceta Oficial September 14, 1984, 53-73, especially 55.

Raúl Castro, for example, has manifested in the open his opinion that municipal and provincial party secretaries should stay in the same post no longer than five years. See interview with Luis Báez in
4. Professors of party schools, for an example of one common practice, switch posts periodically with cadres in the municipal and provincial committees to learn from each other’s jobs.


101 For a typical example of such a link as drawn by a cadre, see Ileana Hautrive (Noviembre 1983).

102 With the elections to the National Assembly in February 2008 and the celebration of the sixth CC plenum in April 2008 there have been some changes in this list. One individual (Otto Rivero) should be dropped and two (Julio Martínez and Roberto Morales Ojeda) should be added. The list would then include seventeen members. For data constraints I could not update the list accordingly. In any event the changes in substance should be insignificant.


104 Machado Ventura (Febrero 1983, 4).

105 Recent changes not accounted for in the text for constraints of data and time include the election of María del Carmen Conception González to the Council of State and the inclusion of Carlos Lage as only member of the new generations in the April 2008 Politburo commission which demarcates the pinnacle of the political elite. This gives Lage a visible formal advantage over other individuals of the new generations as possible ‘heir,’ though it is too early to make affirmations in this sense. Pedro Saéz and Carlos Lage were ratified Council of State members. With the projected nomination of a council of ministers by the end of 2008, it will become clear whether Jorge Luis Sierra and Yadira Garcia continue being members of this selected group.

106 The gossips around Robaina’s demotion are variegated and range from indirect involvement in a prostitution network to links to a Mexican governor who happened to be drug dealer as well. Of course, and as always, ex post facto, he has been depicted as a “reformer” and a challenger to Castro’s authority, but these asseverations lack any firm basis. What is more certain is that Robaina was the cadre who represented, more than anybody else, the drive from paternalism to the autonomy of the new generations as presented in the chapter on education. He led the UJC during the period of rectification and the “new working methods” were associated mainly with him. It seems certain too that by 2002 a video was shown to party intermediate cadres in which his ousting was explained. According to the sources alluding to such video, a repetitive charge made by Raúl against him was “acting”— that is, holding meetings and reaching agreements with other sides—without previous authorization or without giving due reports to his superiors. See: “Expulsan del Partido Comunista de Cuba a ex Canciller Roberto Robaina” La República (digital edition) August 01, 2002.

107 The behavior of Felipe Pérez-Roque and Otto Rivero are very characteristic of this trait. There are other young cadres (as Hassam Pérez) who also emphatically and very often express their commitment to maintain the socialist regime but who do not belong to this group. On Pérez-Roque in this sense, see La Jornada (electronic edition) April 27, 2006.


**Currents of Change**

1 Weber (1968, 214); Przeworski (1986, 52).

2 Drawing mainly from Latin American and southern European examples of the 1970s, the literature on transitions from authoritarian rule is very insistent on this point. This literature applies here because authoritarian regimes resemble state socialist regimes in their lack of political competition. For elaborations of this proposition see O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986), and Przeworski (1986).

3 On the basis of the transitions away from state socialism McFaul (January 2002) has additionally argued that new regimes created through “imposition” tend to be more stable than regimes created through “negotiation.”

4 All data on Cuban Americans in this paragraph is taken from Guzmán (May 2001).

5 See contribution of Lisandro Pérez to Pérez-Stable ed. (2007, 244) and ONE (2007) respectively.

See Rieff (July-August 1995) for an example of such an account.

Exact numbers diverge by source. Data given according to Suchlicki (2001, 65).

“Unmitigated disaster” by Olson’s and Olson (1995, 56) qualification.

See Olson and Olson (1995, 58).

Agee (Summer-Fall 2003); Franklin (Fall 1998); Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (website).

See Tracinski and Wakerland (February 2006) in this regard.

See Manuel Ramón de Zayas (Spring 1991); Torres (1999, 127-154), and the Cuban Information Archives Website for a more detailed overview of Cuban exile political (and other) organizations.

The small anarchist group is known as the Cuban Libertarian Movement.


See Reporters Without Borders (October 2006) for a relatively recent report of Cuba’s population access to the Internet.

See table in Eckstein and Barberia (Fall 2002, 814) and Torres (1999, 105-112).

Eckstein and Barberia (Fall 2002, 813). The figure they present one page later, however, suggests half this amount.

Brenner and Jimenez (January-February 2006).

Blue (January 2004).

LeoGrande (November-December 2000, 38).

Eckstein and Barberia (Fall 2002).

Prototypical examples of these groups are “Civic Forum” in Czechoslovakia, the “New Forum,” “Democracy Now,” and “Peace and Human Rights Initiative” in the GDR, and the “National Salvation Front” in Romania.

Haney and Vanderbush (June 1999, 355).

For very detailed examples the article by Landau (March 1999) is recommended.

The Cuban American National Foundation was born, apparently, following an initiative of Reagan’s intimate staff member, Richard Allen, in 1980. See Haney and Vanderbush (June 1999, 347-8) for further detail.

See in this order: Haney and Vanderbush (June 1999, 350-3); Olson and Olson (1995, 106); Portes (May-June 1998).

Torres (1999, 117); LeoGrande (November-December 2000, 3).


Maria de los Angeles Torres (1999) for example, claims that the foundation does not represent the opinions of the Cuban American public.

Eckstein (June 2006, 299).

Grenier and Pérez (2003, 88).

LeoGrande (November-December 2000, 36).

Juan J. López (Summer 2000).

Markovits (November-December 2001).

Poll results are given immediately below in the paragraph. For detail on how these trends break down by generation and year of arrival to the United States, see Hill and Moreno (May 1996); Eckstein and Barbeira (Fall 2002); and Eckstein (June 2006), in addition to consulting the FIU’s poll website. See also the article by Maya Bell, “Younger Cuban-Americans challenge hard liners’ approach” in the Orlando Sentinel, June 21, 2004.

For more detail on the workings of this machinery the article by Philip Agee (Summer-Fall 2003) is highly recommended. See also a report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (November 15, 2006).

In the table given by del Aguila in Baloyra and Morris eds. (1993, 70-71) this group appears to be the first to have been founded. The year he gives is 1976.

Data of this paragraph were taken from note by Yolanda Martínez, “Crean Unión Disidente en Cuba,” in Reforma (digital edition), September, 6, 2007.

The other three items in the dissidents’ proposal were free speech, free assembly, and the freeing of political prisoners.


The higher estimate is reported by Padgett in Brenner et. al. (2008, 110). See the other and far more frequent estimate in Pérez-Stable in Pérez-Stable ed. (2007, 35), for example.


The Speech is available in English in Pérez-Roque (2003) and in Cuba’s Foreign Ministry website.


According to his biography as posted in the Catholic-pages.com website.

Data about Poland is given by Kennedy and Simon (1983, 27). About Cuba see Fernández in Pérez-Stable ed. (2007, p 106-7) and David Briggs, “A faith that refused to die,” Atlanta Journal, July 9, 2000, B1. For a particular recent account that examines the potential of the Cuban Church as an oppositional mainstay, see Pedraza (2007, 239-263).

For a synoptic assessment of the Pope’s visit, see Azicri (2000, 251-74).

He stated his “do not be afraid” message upon arrival in Cuba and repeated it at least once, in his homily in Camagüey, dated Friday, January 23, 1998. The Pope’s homilies are available through the Vatican website. He called for the removal of the U.S. embargo in his farewell speech in the airport José Martí. The relevant excerpt can be found in Azicri (2000, 265).

For a comprehensive account of Solidarity, see Garton Ash (2002).


Dilla (2000, 28), and ONE (2006) respectively.

Valdés (Enero-Marzo 1997, 107) for example.
50 percent transfer seems high, it nevertheless allows professionals to earn many times more than their market wages with the requirement that they transfer about 50 percent of their income to the state. While a temporary basis by companies abroad. Cuban professionals in these companies earn capitalist la

to give one example, the government of Cuba has created agencies for the hiring of its professional force

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findings is lack of support for privatization. Of course, it would be overly innocent to take these opinions at face value, given that the job of none of the polled is detached from political criteria. Thus, in the best of the cases the finding has to be taken with a grain of salt.

There is a whole uncharted field for the investigation of instrumental responses that the Cuban government has given to the interests created in the direction of more market-oriented institutional reform. To give one example, the government of Cuba has created agencies for the hiring of its professional force on a temporary basis by companies abroad. Cuban professionals in these companies earn capitalist labor

We refer to the work of González Nuñez (1999) where he discusses the implications of the socioeconomic crisis for Cuba’s health and education systems. “Hard” aggregate data of how many teachers left their occupations during the special period, for example, is very difficult to come by, and most analyses rely on illustrative examples. In real peso value, however, the budgetary compression of both systems amounts to over 35 percent between 1989 and 1997, and therefore their general deterioration seems inevitable and the illustrative examples fairly generalizable. For recent short descriptions see article by Mesa-Lago in Pérez-Stable ed. (2007, 195-198) and Uriarte (2002).

Lané (1996, 162-75). For a detailed account on how Muscovite professionals undermined the state socialist system in Russia (thus in the Soviet Union), see Garcelon (2005, 36-76).

See, for example, Dilla, (January 2000, especially 40-3) for political reform and Carranza, Gutiérrez and Monreal (1995) for economic, market-oriented reform. It is interesting to note that Dilla sees his proposal for political reform as the only way to prevent the restoration of capitalism in Cuba in the long run. He thinks that the dispersion of power among the population would prevent the forces that would undermine the system from above to lead a transition to the market. His proposal thus implies the “withering away” of the state, at least to a degree. His proposal obviously comes from a profound understanding of Marxist theory, and its successful application may imply the deepening of socialism in Cuba. The question is, of course, whether it is practicable at this moment in time. Judging by the fact that Dilla was expelled from the Communist Party and right now lives in the Dominican Republic, it is likely that Cuban authorities have dismissed his proposal as impracticable.

Dilla (January 2000).

Citing what he defines as “Cuban sources,” Frank O. Mora, (November-December 2004, 51) reports on this estimate. Observations of other authors on the topic invariably confirm the impression given by these data, though their writings do not include specific measurements. After a detailed description of the Cuban army’s participation in the economy, Hal Klepak (2005, 7), for instance, justifies his omission of aggregate data by the difficulty of access to it: “Data on the armed forces are difficult to come by…data on the role of the FAR in the economy are even more so. Only Fidel and Raúl, and presumably General Casas Regueiro know how it all actually fits together.”

Klepak (2005, 75-80).

Latell (2003, 19).


As said in Chapter 6, corruption is a phenomenon difficult to measure and perhaps unmeasurable. Yet, in their recent book, Díaz-Briquets and Pérez-López (2006) make an effort to gauge the extent of corruption in Cuba. In regard to the group in society that corresponds to what here has been called the technocratic entrepreneurial block, they give a few examples of common knowledge involving punished high-ranking officials (pages 137-141), but no aggregate data. Perhaps some insight into this question can be gained by noticing that, by their own admission, Cuban politicians and government officials rank relatively well according to international measures of corruption (see pages 171-3 in particular). Regarding the opposition to privatization among Cuban managers of enterprises connected with hard currency operations, González Nuñez’s (1999) research findings are somewhat interesting. He reports attitudes toward market reform among what he denominates “Cuban entrepreneurs,” and one of his findings is lack of support for privatization. Of course, it would be overly innocent to take these opinions at face value, given that the job of none of the polled is detached from political criteria. Thus, in the best of the cases the finding has to be taken with a grain of salt.
permanent jobs pay in Cuba. Such responses have to be distinguished from the more “long-term” ones, as presented in the three chapters preceding this one.

Conclusion

1 Pérez-Stable in Pérez-Stable ed. (2007, 4, 6).
2 The words in quotation marks are a paraphrase of the subtitle of O’Donnell and Schmitter’s study (1986) on transitions from authoritarian rule.
3 Pei (1994, 42).
4 Nanto (2006, see especially table in p. 120).
5 Phipps (Winter 1991, 54).
6 The idea of developing an elite model to explain the phenomena relevant to Cuba actually originated in my reading of Jonathan Shapira’s writings on the United Labour Party elite hegemony in Israel. His writings could be compared with the findings of this research to test the applicability of the extraordinary elite model across socioeconomic and political institutional settings. While most of Shapira’s writings are available only in Hebrew, a few have been translated to English. See especially Shapira (1976). Studies on the relations between the United States and Israel normally set the 1967 war and its aftermath as the decisive turn toward strong and decisive support of the former, which altered the balance of power in the region and thus the ability of Israel to survive. See Reich (1984); and Ben-Zvi (1993) in this regard.
8 Huntington (1968, p. 18).
10 Hawkins (July, 2001); Packenham (1992, 159-185).
11 A representative list of authors within this group is relatively well indexed in the contributions to the several recent “readers” and other assembled books or special numbers of journals on topics related to Cuba’s socioeconomic and political realities. See Latin American Perspectives (May and July 2002); Horowitz and Suchlicki eds. (2003); Brenner et. al. eds. (2008); and Pérez-Stable ed. (2007). Even authors whose books are written at relatively higher levels of abstraction than is usual to find among other Cubanists, such as Kapcia (2000) and Bengelsdorff (1994), do not pretend, even for a moment, to extrapolate their findings to more general literatures. One exception to this general portrait is María de los Angeles Torres (1999). Her book represents a welcome example of a “Cubanist” who both draws from and contributes to more general literatures. While there are probably more exceptions, these are not many.
12 I have been able to trace back the construction of future scenarios to González (1974, 225-236). For texts specifically intended to build scenarios, see Colomer in Horowitz and Suchlicki eds. (2003, pp. 523-537); Suchlicki ed. (1985); and Pérez-Stable ed. (2007). Each of them is an accurate representative of the portrait given in this section.
13 I have not been able to find even one.
14 Find a very good example in Frank O. Mora (November-December 2004, 52-3).
15 I assume, therefore, that the bulk of the literature on Cuba that draws future scenarios omitting this variable implicitly shares this perspective.
16 None of the contributors in the recent edition by Pérez-Stable (2007), for example, includes this possibility in her or his forecast.
17 Hamilton in Latin American Perspectives (May 2002, 31).
18 Dahl (1971).
20 For a highly useful introductory review on theories on democracy and their link with individual self-empowerment, see Held (2006).
Appendix to Chapter 6

Biographical Sketches of Cuba’s Leaders of the New Generations

Concepción Campa Huergo

Born May 12, 1951. She has a bachelor’s degree in pharmaceutical sciences and a Ph.D. honoris causa from the Havana University and from the Villa Clara Higher Institute of Medical Sciences. Has been the director of the Finlay Institute since 1989. The institute specializes in research and development of vaccines. In the fourth party congress was elected CC and PB member. She was ratified in both posts in the fifth party congress. From 1991 to 1998 was also a member in the Council of State.

María del Carmen Concepción González

Born September 15, 1957. She has a bachelor’s degree in History and Social Sciences. Began her working life in 1972 as administrative officer in a chicken farm. In 1977 she enrolled in a center for educational improvement. After completing her bachelor’s degree she began working as secondary school teacher in 1982. Five years later she was assigned a professional job in the party as municipal instructor. In 1990 she was promoted to the post of municipal first secretary and in 1994 to the post of provincial first secretary in Pinar del Río. She is a CC member since the fifth party congress in 1997. In 2006 she was promoted to the party Secretariat.

Misael Enamorado Dager

Born August 19, 1953. Has a bachelor’s degree as Electrical Engineer. Occupied several
posts of direction at the faculty and local levels in the organization of university students and the UJC. From 1977 to 1981 worked as engineer and chief of maintenance of a dam in the ministry of sugar. Beginning in 1985 became professional party cadre, occupying posts at the municipal and then provincial levels, where he was in charge of ideology and basic industry. From 1995 to 2001 was provincial party first secretary in Las Tunas. In 2001 became first secretary in the province of Santiago de Cuba. In the fifth party congress was elected member of the party Political Bureau. He is a CC member since the fourth party congress.

Miguel Mario Díaz Canel Bermúdez

Born April 20, 1960. Has a bachelor’s degree as Electronic Engineer. From 1982 to 1985 worked as radio specialist in the FAR. Then he became a professor in the University of Las Villas, and served in several positions as UJC professional cadre. He was student leader and occupied several posts in the UJC until becoming the second secretary of its national bureau in 1993. The same year he also became member in the executive bureau of the provincial Party Committee in Villa Clara. In 1994 he was elected provincial party first secretary in Villa Clara and member of the CC. In 2003 he was transferred to party first secretary in the Holguín province. He is a current member of the Party Political Bureau. Fulfilled internationalist mission in Nicaragua.

Yadira García Vera

Born December 28, 1955. She has bachelor’s degrees in Chemical Engineering and in the Social Sciences. In 1982 became vice-president of the national executive committee of the mass organization of school children. Upon leaving that office she became a
member in Fidel’s supporting team in 1986. Concurrently, she was a member of the national Bureau of the UJC. From 1993 to 2000 she served as provincial party secretary in Matanzas. She was elected alternate CC member in the third party congress, and a member of the Political Bureau in the fourth. In the fifth party congress she was ratified in that post. Since October 2004 has been serving as Minister of Basic Industries.

**Víctor Fidel Gaute López**

Born in 1960. Has a university degree in Law. In his student years he worked in the Interior Ministry as custody of the Revolution Palace. In 1984 began working in the Matanzas harbor until becoming its director. In 1992 or 1993 began working in the municipal assembly of popular power in Matanzas. In 1992 was elected member of the provincial party committee. In 1996 became municipal party secretary in the Matanzas province and member in the provincial bureau. In 1996 he became the provincial party secretary in Matanzas. In the fifth party congress he was elected to the CC, and in 2006 was promoted to the Party Secretariat.

**Carlos Lage Dávila**

Born October 15, 1951. He has a degree in medicine and a bachelor’s degree in the Social Sciences from the Party’s Higher School. Occupied several leadership posts during his youth. Was elected president of the Federation of University Students in 1975 and first secretary of the UJC in 1982. In 1986 began working in the commander’s in chief supporting team. Since that year he has been a member in the Council of State and since 1990 has been general secretary of the executive committee of the Council of Ministers. In 1993 was elected vice-president of the Council of State. Was elected as
alternate member to the CC in the second party congress, as a full member in the third and ratified in the fourth and fifth. He has been a member in the party Political Bureau since 1990. He is known as the architect of the economic policies of the special period. Fulfilled internationalist mission in Ethiopia.

**Lázara Mercedes López Acea**

Born September 1, 1964. Has a bachelor’s degree as Forestry Engineer. From 1987 to 1997 worked in provincial enterprises in tasks related to her profession. In 1997 began working as a party professional cadre attending the area of food production in the Cienfuegos provincial Committee. Was elected CC member in the fifth party congress in 1997. In 2000 she became party first secretary at the municipal level, and in 2002 became a member of the provincial bureau. In April 2003 was promoted as provincial party first secretary in Cienfuegos. In 2006 she was removed as provincial party first secretary and promoted to the Secretariat.

**Roberto López Hernández**

Born between 1960 and 1964. Has a bachelor degree in Pedagogy and Geography. He was a secondary school director between 1983 and 1987, when he became professional UJC cadre. He has been working in the Communist Party since 1990, where he fulfilled posts in the municipal and provincial committees until becoming provincial first secretary of Villa Clara in 2003. In 2006 was released from that post and promoted to the party Secretariat. Fulfilled internationalist duty in Angola.

**Lina Olinda Pedraza Rodríguez**
Born September 15, 1955. Has a bachelor’s degree in economic control. Was the provincial director of the national bank in Villa Clara. Began her work as party cadre in 1991 in the Provincial Committee of Villa Clara and then in the Central Committee until 1996, when she was designed head of the National Auditing Office. She became a minister in 2001 as the auditing office was turned into the Ministry of Auditing and Control. In 2006 she was released from that post and promoted to the party Secretariat. Elected to the CC in the fourth party Congress and ratified in the fifth.

Felipe Ramón Pérez Roque

Born March 28, 1965. Electronic Engineer. Occupied several posts of leadership during his youth, including president of the Federation of Secondary students and of the Federation of University Students between 1988 and 1990. He was also a member of the UJC national bureau, and of the supporting team of the commander in chief. Was elected to the CC in the fourth party congress and ratified in the fifth. He has been a member of the Council of State since 1993, and has served as foreign relations minister since 1999.

Fernando Remírez de Estenoz Barciela

Born October 9, 1951. Has a degree in medicine and a bachelor’s in the Social Sciences. Since his youth has occupied important posts in the sphere of foreign relations, including foreign relations secretary of the Federation of University Students; President of the Latin American Continental Organization of Students; Head of the Foreign Relations Department of the National Executive Committee of the UJC; Ambassador in Angola; Officer at the Foreign Relations Department of the CC of the PCC; Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs; Permanent representative at the United Nations and Head of the Interest
Section in Washington D.C. Was elected CC member in the fourth party congress and ratified in the fifth. In 2006 was promoted to the Party Secretariat. Fulfilled internationalist duty in Angola.

**Otto Rivero Torres**

Born in 1968. He has a bachelor’s degree in Economics and a master’s in Management. As a student he also worked in a state enterprise as data collector for a bus company in the Santa Clara province. He was president of the Federation of University Students between 1993 and 1995 and first secretary of the Communist Youth between 1997 and 2004. He is CC member since the fifth party congress and member of the Council of State since 1998. Has played a prominent role in the current ideological campaign of the revolution, known as the “Battle of Ideas.”

**Pedro Sáez Montejo**

Born August 13, 1953. Has a bachelor degree in History. Worked in the military school “Camilo Cienfuegos” in Santa Clara, first as unit and company commander, and then as history teacher. In 1975 was demobilized from the FAR and passed to work in the UJC as professional cadre. In the UJC reached the post of second secretary of the national committee. Entered to the party in 1975 through a special procedure at the age of twenty-two. In the party was second and then first municipal secretary as well as member of the provincial committee in Havana. He was promoted in 1994 as provincial first secretary in Sancti Spiritus. In 1997, he passed to occupy the same post in Havana. Has been a delegate to the last three party congresses and elected Political Bureau member in the last. Fulfilled internationalist mission in Angola.
Jorge Luis Sierra Cruz

Born September 8, 1961. He has a bachelor’s degree as Mechanical Engineer and a master’s degree in applied mathematics and managerial informatics. Was a teacher in the technological institute of Holguín until 1987, when he was promoted as professional UJC cadre, organization of which he became provincial first secretary in Holguín. In 1991 passed to integrate the executive bureau of the Holguín municipal party committee, of which he became first secretary in 1993. In 1994 was elected party first secretary of the same province. In the fifth party congress was elected member of the CC and of its Political Bureau. In 2006 his name was announced as one of the members of the newly restituted party Secretariat, and became also Minister of Transport on October of that year.

Carlos Manuel Valenciaga Díaz

Born September 16, 1973. Has a bachelor’s degree in History and Marxism from the Superior Pedagogic Institute “José Varona.” After graduation integrated the special pedagogic reserve of the special period. After having occupied several posts in the federation of secondary students was elected its president in 1997. He was also a member of the national UJC bureau. Entered to the Party in 1997. Was or is member in Fidel’s supporting team. He is also member of the party CC and of the Council of State.
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