

**Challenges of Party-Building  
in Latin America**

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## Past the Poof Moment

*Cuba's Future Political Parties*

Jorge I. Domínguez

Cuba's last freely competitive multiparty election was held in 1948. Today's octogenarians and nonagenarians may remember it, but probably with not as much enthusiasm as their first spin on a Model-T Ford. Thus the title for this chapter must be whimsical because no one has a good account of how or when this conceptual moment might be reached: the "poof moment" will be evident when the old political regime will have changed enough, or would have been replaced, to permit multiparty politics and freely competitive elections again. No Cuban alive at that time is likely to remember prerevolutionary elections.

Communist regimes in Europe *c.* 1990 collapsed without much scholarly anticipation. There is a vast retrospective scholarship on how the political regime transition took place but not a persuasive anticipatory scholarship. In East Asia, other than North Korea the remaining communist regimes have enacted market economy changes in order to avoid political regime changes, and in so doing also provide little comparative guidance for Cuba's imagined multipartisan future. Cuba's market economy transition is, at best, at its earliest stages and economic growth rates have remained anemic since the 2008–2009 worldwide economic crisis, which curtailed Venezuela's support for the Cuban economy.

The most intriguing anticipatory imagination of a nonexistent multiparty system was Juan Linz's (1967: 264–275) endeavor to characterize Spain's multiparty system one decade before Francisco Franco's death. A giant in the scholarly study of comparative politics during the second half of the twentieth century, Linz concluded that Spain's

I am grateful to Anna Grzymala-Busse, Alejandro de la Fuente, and my co-editors of this book for comments on an earlier draft. Mistakes are my responsibility alone.

postauthoritarian political system would be in the hands of two comparably very large parties: the Communists and the Christian Democrats. Yet, Communists and Christian Democrats would turn out to be minor political actors in post-Franco Spain. Linz's effort remains valuable, however, because he asked the right questions, asking scholars to:

- look at the political cleavages built on social cleavages;
- consider societal changes that may blur inferences from the past;
- look at the political parties of the last preauthoritarian period;
- take into account the possible electoral law; and
- compare to "most similar" cases (in Linz's case, Italy).

In this analysis, I expect to show that Cuba has had no experience of politicizing social cleavages to build or sustain political parties. Racial and social class differences impinged on party formation and development only in a limited way before the revolution; it is unlikely that they would be used to build new parties in the future. The prospects for parties built on regionalism or religion are even worse. Societal changes in the intervening decades have not altered the likelihood of successful conversion of social into political cleavages and have decimated the prospects for the rebirth of any of the old parties, save the Communists. The one salvageable political cleavage from before the revolution is the politics of intransigence, albeit not a good augur for democratic politics.

The most durable organizational legacy from before the revolution is the "party of power," which the Liberal Party was before 1959 and, after revolutionary victory, the Communists became. By "party of power" I mean a political party without which it is very difficult to organize and sustain an effective governing coalition. Such a party need not win a majority of the votes, but it is one without which no government will last long in power. In the future, much will depend on the internal evolution of the ruling Cuban Communist Party (PCC) and the rules and laws that may be constructed at or following the poof moment.<sup>1</sup>

In this book, thinking about Cuba's possible future party system allows us to consider a wider array of possible party outcomes. The book examines what makes some new parties successful while most new parties fail. This chapter ponders what may be the basis for new parties that could

<sup>1</sup> There is a vast literature outside Cuba fantasizing about a Cuba that does not exist. I have contributed to some of it (Domínguez 2006). There is, however, little political science work published by Cuban scholars who live and work in Cuba regarding their country's future circumstances. One such, on the political economy of future property ownership and the role of cooperatives, is Piñeiro Harnecker (2013).

grow out of an authoritarian regime, which is one of the key concerns of Chapter 1 of this volume.

#### POLITICAL PARTIES BEFORE THE 1959 REVOLUTION

Cuba's last freely competitive presidential election, held in 1948, characterized well the nation's politics at the time (Stokes 1951). Cuba's parties and party system had jelled in time for the 1940 presidential election and become fairly stable. In the four freest national elections (1944 and 1948 for president and Congress, and 1946 and 1950 for Congress), between 42 and 56 percent of members of the Chamber of Deputies had been reelected (computed from Riera 1955). These were not transient parties but, rather, well organized and durable political organizations that reelected their parliamentarians.

In 1948, there were four principal parties or party coalitions contending for the presidency. Cuba had six provinces. None of the presidential candidates won an outright majority in any province except for the governing Auténtico-Republican coalition which won big in Matanzas province. There was, therefore, substantial national electoral uniformity – Cuba had no Quebec, no Bavaria, no Catalonia, and no Scotland, each of which has a local party representing its interests while lacking significant strength in every other region.

In Cuba, national parties ran national campaigns. The winning Auténtico-Republican presidential candidate, Carlos Prío, for example, won a high of 54.5 percent in Matanzas and a low of 41.5 percent in La Habana provinces. The Auténtico-Republican coalition had become principally a clientelistic machine, disbursing goodies across the country. To the extent that the Auténticos had a political profile, they were mildly nationalist, and they had led Cuba's opposition to Fulgencio Batista's rule between 1933 and 1944.

Second, the Liberals and the Democrats coalesced. They overperformed in Pinar del Río province, but in the other five provinces these two parties came within 3 percentage points of their national average of 30.4 percent. They were also clientelistic machines. The Liberals had been Cuba's nearly indispensable ruling party. They had staffed Gerardo Machado's presidency-turned-dictatorship in the 1920s; they had stabilized Batista's rule prior to his convening the convention that would write the 1940 Constitution. Though defeated by the Auténticos in 1944 as part of Batista's coalition, the Liberals crossed the aisle to join the Prío

government soon after the 1948 election and would in the end, after Batista overthrew Prío by coup, support Batista's dictatorship in the 1950s. In 1948, the Liberals and the Democrats (the latter, a conservative party) proved, by running as an opposition alliance, that they could perform well without the spigot of resources from the national treasury. To the extent that these parties had a political profile, they supported US interests in Cuba.

The two weakest parties ran alone, and both ran better in La Habana and Oriente provinces. The Ortodoxos (one-sixth of the national vote, one-fifth each in La Habana and Oriente provinces) had one platform plank: they opposed corruption. Their slogan was "honor against money;" their symbol, a broom. There was a party of principle, vociferous in protesting against corruption and how Cuba was governed. In its advocacy, it was "intransigent" – a word its presidential candidate, Eduardo Chibás, cherished (Grupos de Propaganda Doctrinal Ortodoxa 1951). One of its deputy candidates for the 1952 elections (cancelled because of Batista's coup in March 1952) was Fidel Castro.

Finally, the prerevolutionary communist party, the Popular Socialist Party (PSP, est. 1925), earned 7.5 percent of the national vote, making it one of the more electorally successful communist parties in Latin America (only Chile's Communists would have a stronger electoral history). It won nearly one-tenth of the votes in La Habana province, although it also did well in Oriente where it had unionized many sugar mill workers. The Communists became a lawful party as Batista's allies at the end of the 1930s and were defeated as part of his coalition in 1944. In 1948, they ran alone – their one and only solo contest in a competitive election. The Communists had been skilled parliamentarians at the constitutional convention and in Congress. Although only 5.5 percent of the members of Congress, they accounted for 15.5 percent of the bills submitted; only one of the thirty-five bills submitted by Communist parliamentarians sought particularistic benefits for a single person, in contrast to a pattern common for other parties. Communist parliamentarians caucused regularly, worked as a team on legislation, sponsored and listened to a research advisory commission, drafted member speeches in caucus, and tithed a part of their salary to the party. They voted with high party discipline (Escalante and Marinello 1945). They contributed Cabinet Ministers to the Batista presidency (1940–1944). They founded the Cuban Labor Confederation (CTC, Central de Trabajadores de Cuba) and supported the Batista coalition and the US–Soviet alliance in World War II. Organized labor and university intellectuals were prominent in its leadership.

There are three implications from this account of the party system. First, there were too few votes to be gained either in regionalist representation (despite mild regional variation in voting patterns), or in labor union representation and responsible behavior in parliament that earned the Communists only one out of fourteen nationally cast votes.

Second, the politics of principled intransigence, with support from a sixth of the electorate, has an uncut umbilical cord with the revolutionary regime that came to power in 1959 – repudiating decadent tourism, proclaiming the worth of moral incentives and the construction of a “new man,” in the mid-1960s dispatching homosexuals to hard-labor camps in the hopes of converting them into heterosexuals, and even (briefly) seeking to substitute nonalcoholic malt for beer for the sake of productivity. There may be a good future for a party of intransigents.

Third, the Liberals were Cuba’s first “party of power.” They were part of the government coalition under seven of the ten Cuban presidents elected to a term between 1902 and 1958, including two whose elections were marred by fraud (Machado, Batista). They were masters of clientelist programming and appeals. They could be loyal, or cross the aisle, in search of political advantage. And only they and the Communists successfully appealed across racial lines.

#### SOCIAL CLEAVAGES IN SEARCH FOR A POLITICAL PARTY?

There were social class differences in the Cuban electorate. In December 1951, in anticipation of the 1952 presidential election (cancelled because of Batista’s coup), a public opinion survey ascertained that upper-class Cubans favored the Auténtico candidate, Carlos Hevia, by approximately three-to-one over Batista, who was once again running for president. The Auténticos were also well ahead of the Ortodoxos among the upper class. Among the lower class, the election was much closer, with Hevia ahead of Batista but within the statistical margin of error, and the Ortodoxos coming in third (Goldenberg 1965: 111). Nevertheless, no candidate or their parties made distinctive social class appeals to the electorate. Only the Communists did, but to little effect.

At the 1940 constitutional convention, the Communists had proposed various restrictions on schools run by Roman Catholic religious orders; the Roman Catholic Church resisted successfully (Amigó 1947). The Church had relatively modest social support, however. In 1954, the University of Havana Catholic Students Association conducted a

national survey (N = 4000). It found that only 24 percent of Catholics attended Church services regularly and only 16 percent of all marriages were formalized in church (Jover Marimón 1971: 400–401). Cuba had already become secular in advance of the 1959 revolution. A small Cuban Christian Democratic party was founded in the 1950s but it never contested a free competitive election.

Cuba’s most significant latent social cleavage pertained to race relations (de la Fuente 2001). A party based on race – the Independent Party of Color – was founded in 1908, following Cuba’s independence in 1902, but it was crushed militarily in 1912. Cuban parties based on race have been legally banned ever since. Since the early twentieth century, the Liberal Party encouraged the election of Afro-Cuban politicians to the senate and the house on the party’s ticket; one of them, senator Martín Morúa, sponsored the law that prohibited race-based political parties. In time, other parties also appealed to Afro-Cubans. Fulgencio Batista, himself a mulatto, included various Afro-Cuban politicians in his coalition, principally from the Liberal and communist parties. Blas Roca, long-serving communist party general secretary, was a mulatto and a close Batista ally from 1939 to 1945 (*Fundamentos* 1944). Through its leadership of the labor confederation (CTC), the Communists helped to narrow the wage gap between white and black skilled workers. In the 1943 census, blacks scored lower in all income categories, controlled for all occupations, but the white–black gap was narrowest among the skilled workers (República de Cuba 1945: 1203–1205). Nevertheless, from the late 1930s onward no Cuban party, not even the Communists, operated as a race-based party or made its principal appeals on the basis of race-based politics. The Communists focused on class-related policies, though in the expectation that “correct” class policies would also reduce the gaps between Cubans across the color spectrum.

In short, there were plausible social bases to establish political parties on the basis of race, though probably not on the basis of religion, and no party succeeded on either of these bases. Only the Communists focused on class-based policies, and they were the smallest of the parties in Congress.

#### TRENDS BEARING ON SOCIAL CLEAVAGES AFTER 1959

In over the half-century since 1959, have social changes increased the likelihood of transforming social differences with regard to region, social

class and inequality, religion, and race into political cleavages on which parties may be built? No.

Regional differences persisted after the revolution, and still exist. But, except for the obviously better circumstances of life in the city of Havana, the differences across Cuba's provinces have been modest and are an unlikely basis for new regionalist parties (Martín Posada and Núñez Moreno 2012).

Income inequality and inequality in access to goods and services widened dramatically after 1990, following the end of subsidies from the Soviet Union. Poverty reappeared amid about a fifth of the population. Since 1990, downward social mobility greatly outstripped instances of upward social mobility; the mix further deepened inequalities. As before 1959, social class will likely have an impact on voting behavior but will also be an unlikely basis for a principally class-based party. Since the 1960s, the Cuban Communist Party (PCC, est. 1965) has appealed broadly for national support, not just for support from the proletariat or income-disadvantaged groups. The government's emphasis on universal rights of access to education, health care, and welfare subsidies stresses the commonality of Cubans in their nationhood (Espina Prieto 2004; Espina Prieto and Togores González 2012; Togores and García 2004). Cubans have never responded predominantly to partisan appeals based on social class differences.

The government and the PCC confronted organized religion, and especially the Roman Catholic Church, in the 1960s. A half-century later, the controls on organized religion had relaxed and the Cardinal Archbishop of Havana, Jaime Ortega, played an important role in 2011 to facilitate the freeing of most remaining prisoners of conscience. Various Catholic dioceses publish magazines and there is increasingly open missionary work. Yet, interviews with leading church figures suggest that the proportion of Cubans who attend Roman Catholic mass on a regular basis remained a single-digit number, though perhaps 15–20 percent of the population identified with some community of faith (Centro de Investigaciones Psicológicas y Sociológicas 1993). Only the Roman Catholic Church has the territorial organization to pose a civil society challenge to the PCC but the number of priests remains only about 300 in a country of just over eleven million people. Moreover, led by Cardinal Ortega for a third of a century until 2016, the Bishops have resisted behaving as a party or becoming its sponsors. A Catholic Party still seems unlikely, though more Catholic associations would likely spring up.

Cuba's racial circumstances have changed over the past several decades. By the early 1980s, racial differences between blacks and whites

had disappeared in estimates of life expectancy and high school completion – outcomes far better than in other racially heterogeneous societies such as Brazil and the United States. Racial differences persisted in the geography of housing and the likelihood of imprisonment (Meerman 2001; de la Fuente 2001: 309–316). And, at the start of the 2010s, there were two other underaccomplishments. One was membership in the key political institutions, such as the Political Bureau of the PCC chosen in 2016 (five Afro-Cubans out of seventeen members) and the executive committee of the Council of Ministers (none of the eight is Afro-Cuban). The other was explicitly expressed racial prejudice. In a comparative study of such discursive behavior, Sawyer et al. (2004) found that such racism was significantly higher in Cuba than in the United States, Puerto Rico, or the Dominican Republic. Since the start of the 1960s, Cuba's official leadership claimed to have solved the race problem; hence, it became counterrevolutionary to discuss it in public.

Cuba's official silence on race prevented the lawful formation of independent civil society Afro-Cuban associations as well as the construction of race-based parties. It delayed by a half-century a Cuba-wide conversation on race. Yet, at the margin of official Cuba, such a conversation has begun, and Afro-Cuban identity affirmation has strengthened through music, the plastic arts, literature, Afro-Cuban religiosity, and to some extent (Cubans have very limited access) via the Internet (de la Fuente 2012). There is, however, no race-based opposition political movement. There are Afro-Cuban leaders and members of human rights, dissident, and opposition organizations, but they demand their rights as citizens, less so as minorities with race-dependent rights. Loyal intellectual critics of aspects of official policies (Morales Domínguez 2007) want the political and social regimes to live up to their principles in order to strengthen, not to topple, them. Past the poof moment, a race-based political party is unlikely.

The comparative evidence in this book bolsters this conclusion. No chapter discusses Afro-Latin parties in other Latin American countries. Raúl Madrid's thoughtful chapter (Chapter 11, this volume) on ethno-populism focuses on indigenous communities in their wider contexts in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Guatemala, but not on Afro-Ecuadorans who are numerous but do not coalesce in a party. Latin America's most likely locale for a racially based party is Brazil, yet in this book you will not read about Afro-Brazilian parties. Scott Mainwaring's magisterial study of party systems, with special attention to Brazil, allocates less than a page to the possibility of race-based parties in Brazil (1999: 46). The

most intellectually stimulating study of a race-based political party in Brazil – Brazilian Black Front, or *Frente Negra Brasileira* – explains why the party was so short-lived, why it collapsed, and why it was never revived (Fernandes 1969; see also Telles 2004). Race in Latin America has not produced race-based parties, nor are such parties likely.

In conclusion, the patterns from the prerevolutionary and revolutionary time periods are likely to endure. Past the poof moment, Cuba will likely remain bereft of parties that frame mass appeals based on region, religion, social class, or race, even if some parties will draw greater or lesser shares of support from these social categories.

#### FROM A “PARTY OF POWER” TO THE FOUR FACES OF THE PCC

Any thinking about Cuba’s partisan future must examine its Communist Party (est. 1965). Opposition contestation in Cuba has been remarkably limited for a half-century. The most effective Cuban opposition politician, capable of gathering thousands of signatures on a petition for political reform, Oswaldo Payá, died in 2012. No other Cuban opposition politician, party, or political organization has been able to mobilize more than a few hundred adherents. Chapter 1 of this volume looks out for new party formation under authoritarian rule, but Cuba’s authoritarian regime – unlike Brazil’s from the 1960s to the 1980s or Mexico’s for seventy decades – has made opposition party construction unsafe and impossible.

Absent significant contestation, the Communist Party, under its own or a different name, is likely to be a “party of power,” as in Russia and China – ideology may slacken, policies and party names may change, but the leaders of the former Communist Party hold onto power. Russia’s Vladimir Putin well exemplifies the establishment of such a party. The Russian Communist Party, as such, is in the opposition to Putin but many of the former elites of the once-ruling Communist Party – Putin among them – have joined the new “party of power,” no matter the changes in its name (Colton 2007). One of Putin’s political resources has been the restoration of pride in nation and Russia’s role in the world. Ideology otherwise matters little and policies are pragmatic. The Chinese Communist Party is another “party of power,” which has successfully changed economic policies dramatically, transited to a political system that has brought prosperity to many through its adoption of many market economy features, won nationalist support, earned a leading place in world

politics and economy, and not hesitated to repress opposition or civil society (Friedman 2008). China’s is an economically transformed still-authoritarian political regime. Russia’s is a more open but still semiauthoritarian political regime with many fewer economic accomplishments. In both, a “party of power” rules, and opposition electoral prospects are weak.

The PCC already resembles such a “party of power,” holding together various tendencies that promote or resist market-oriented policy changes, seek or repel accommodation with the United States, and embrace or shun the liberalization of social and political rules toward homosexuals. As with the contemporary Chinese Communist Party, and Putin’s rule, the Cuban Communists are proud of having defied the United States and upheld Cuban sovereignty notwithstanding adversity, played an outsized worldwide role, outlived the collapse of the Soviet Union and East Central European communist regimes, constructed a feeling of pride in being a Cuban, and built the means of social cohesion through various social policies, including the narrowing racial gaps noted above. Cuba’s Constitution (Article 5) describes the PCC as the “organized vanguard of the Cuban nation.” In 2013, Raúl Castro announced that he would step down as Cuba’s president in 2018 and designated Miguel Díaz Canel (born 1960) as his first vice president and successor. Thus the party’s most likely near-term future, still seeking to avoid a freely competitive election, is to consolidate as a de-ideologized party of power, enacting further market reforms in the search for prosperity, and sustaining a few politically liberalizing initiatives to defuse conflicts.

Past the poof moment, however, this party of power will face options with regard to its future and also face internal fissiparous strains. What may be learned from the experience of communist parties in East Central Europe that transited toward democratic political systems? “One of the bigger surprises of the communist collapse in East Central Europe in 1989,” writes Anna Grzymała-Busse, “was the persistence of the former ruling political parties ... In all but Estonia and Latvia, these parties survived, competed in democratic elections, and in some cases reinvented themselves as moderate democratic parties that went on to win elections, govern, and successfully oversee both economic and political reform” (Grzymała-Busse 2008: 91). The likelihood of such an outcome, she argues, is enhanced if the Communist Party had started along this path before the transition to democratic politics. Pragmatic reformers, accustomed to political negotiations, thus acquired a “usable past” for the time after the regime change transition; in East Central Europe before

1989, the Polish and Hungarian Communist Parties had experimented the most with market mechanisms and, within the context of a communist political regime, were the most “liberal.” They made among the most successful transitions to become social-democratic-enough parties after the regime change, embracing both economic and political change (see also Grzymala-Busse 2002).

Led by President Raúl Castro since 2006, the PCC has embarked on a process of significant but gradual reforms. The most politically noteworthy changes are the rise of private agriculture and of small and medium sized businesses; the number of “self-employed” persons nearly tripled from September 2010 to July 2014, reaching 471,085 in a population of 11.2 million people (Pérez Villanueva 2016: 37). These changes remain contentious within the party. Thus far, Raúl Castro is their main supporter under his official slogan, a “prosperous and sustainable socialism,” with socialism understood as central planning and state property, and prosperity and sustainability with market policies and disciplined budgets. On the side of political liberalization, policies that once repressed homosexuals have been cancelled, and there is wider space for academic debate in universities and think-tanks and less censorship of magazines published by Roman Catholic Bishops. On the economic side, this is far less than the changes enacted in Poland or Hungary before regime transition at the end of the 1980s, or in China since the end of the 1970s. On the political side, the changes also fall far short compared to the Polish or Hungarian experiences before the transition.

“Third wave democratization,” Samuel Huntington (1991: 182) once argued, “moved forward on the false confidence of dictators” that they could win a competitive election. Indira Gandhi in India in 1977, Augusto Pinochet in 1988, Wojciech Jaruzelski in Poland in 1989, Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua in 1990 – all of these and others made these mistakes.

Since its postrevolutionary foundation in the 1960s, the PCC has not developed the skills to solicit the votes of citizens. Its organization is designed to rule; it has run many campaigns in support of the rulers but it lacks the experience of democratic competitive elections. However, at the municipal level, there have been multicandidate single-party elections since the mid-1970s. Research on these elections shows that only 2 percent of 150 voters surveyed mentioned membership in the Communist Party as a “desirable” quality in a municipal assembly candidate. The main motivation of voters in local elections was whether local candidates had a reputation for honesty, good neighborliness, and humane sensibilities. Cubans voted for their friends and neighbors. It is noteworthy,

therefore, that most elected local officials are party members, held in high regard even if the PCC as an institution is not (Dilla, González, and Vincentelli 1992). This is not good news for the PCC but it is for party members likely to be elected no matter on which party name they run.

Within the framework of Chapters 1 and 3 of this volume, the Cuban Communist Party’s brand adds little value on election day. Suppose, therefore, this Cuban party of power makes a similar mistake and holds a free election. It may lose because the Party lacks experience to elicit voter support in competitive elections, the brand attracts few voters, and its potential candidates may defect given the brand’s weakness. The party could splinter into its various tendencies, whereupon the party’s four faces are likely to emerge.

A partisan core would struggle to remain the indispensable party of power in any political coalition – not unlike the prerevolutionary Liberal Party – but this party of power would not have the monopoly clout that the PCC has hitherto had. The social democrats long harbored in the PCC, and motivated by a wish to take quicker advantage of the US market for economic growth, may be one splinter, perhaps evoking the traditions of Cuba’s prerevolutionary Communist Party. For these social democrats, Raúl Castro has been constructing a usable past of market-oriented policies and some social and political liberalization.

Two other responses are possible, as Daniel Ziblatt (1998) and John Ishiyama (1999), among others, have noted for East Central Europe. One is “leftist retreat” (Czech Communist Party), which involves the successor party privileging its historic ideology, rejecting the free market, repudiating US influences, and becoming an antisystem party in the new democratic regime. Another is the “national-patriotic” response, common in the Balkans and the former Soviet Union, with an emphasis on the defense of the nation and deep suspicion of external influences. Fidel Castro and those most committed to his personal legacy illustrate both tendencies. To the very end of his presidency, he deemphasized market mechanisms, relied upon public exhortations and mass mobilizations, and railed against US imperialism on behalf of Cuba’s honor everywhere. National-patriotic or principled-leftist Fidelista offshoots of the Communist Party are plausible. The first may seek to prevent US dominance. The second would relaunch the intransigence of the prerevolutionary Ortodoxos. (Fidel Castro would never associate with the word “retreat” but he may cherish a leftist intransigence.)

It is easier to imagine a coalition between the party of power and the social democrats and an alternative coalition between the national-patriots



and the leftist-intransigents. The first would be the legacy of Raúl Castro's search for prosperity. The second evokes two slogans that Fidel Castro made famous, respectively, early in revolutionary rule and immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union: "Fatherland or Death" and "Socialism or Death." Both might evolve as niche parties, as Greene presents them in Chapter 6 (this volume). But, as a hypothesis, the party of power could coalesce with any, given that principles do not restrain it.

#### THE POPULAR BASES OF THE POSTPOOF PARTIES AND THE ELECTORAL LAW

The party of power, the national-patriotic party, and the leftist-intransigent parties would compete for a demographically well-defined segment of Cuba's population. At the start of the second decade of the twenty-first century, the largest Cuban quinquennial cohort was between ages forty-five and forty-nine; the size of this cohort was nearly twice the size of the cohort age five and below. Over a quarter of Cuba's population will be above age sixty by 2025. In 2011, life expectancy at birth was seventy-eight years (Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas e Información 2012: Cuadros 3.2, 3.12, 3.17). In short, Cuba will be a paradise for a party that represents the rights of pensioners. But Cuba's prospective elderly may not just be greedy for pensions. Cubans already in their sixties were socialized as young revolutionaries during the 1960s, the most formative moment of the country's and their own experiences. Cubans from the lead quinquennial cohort ages 45–49 witnessed the relative economic prosperity of the 1970s, the consolidation of successful state policies in health care and education, and the global spread of Cuban influence during the 1970s and 1980s. As embodied in the designated successor, First Vice President Miguel Díaz Canel, they may want to fix the problems with government policies, not overturn the political regime. And, in a postpoof Cuba, they could readily support any of the three parties closest to the Cuba of their youth.

If Cuba's elderly split their votes between the leftist-intransigents, the national-patriots, and the party of power – the pensioners voting for the latter's efficacy, the more ideologically motivated dividing their votes between the two other parties – Cuba's future social democrats may have a chance to win a disproportionate share of voters born after 1985, which was the last year of a period of sustained economic growth. The social democrats may be able to coalesce with the party of power. (As with the prerevolutionary Liberals, or the Institutional Revolutionary

Party in Mexico after 2000, or the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB) in Brazil since 1985, the party of power need not be the largest party – the key is that a government coalition is very difficult to sustain without its partnership.) If so, the prospects for wider and deeper political and economic liberalization look good.

Cuba has had a large diaspora, geographically concentrated in southern Florida, which has become both economically prosperous and politically influential. The Cuba Research Institute from Florida International University has been polling the southern Florida Cuban-origin population for two decades. In 2014, its poll showed that 84 percent of respondents preferred to get their news in Spanish. Compare two categories. One is US citizen Cuban-Americans long resident in the United States; only 23 percent of these would "invest in a private business in Cuba if given the opportunity" and only 21 percent of them are likely to "return to Cuba to live" under "a more democratic form of government." The other category is the immigrants who arrived since the US–Cuban 1994 migration agreement; 56 percent of these would invest in a private business in Cuba and 34 percent of the total would return to live in Cuba (Cuban Research Institute 2014). In terms of the wisdom of investing, the Cuban diaspora is already divided. In terms of the likelihood of returning to Cuba to live, the diaspora is rather homogenous: no.

Miami elites have long sought to influence events in Cuba and would likely seek the same in the future. They will support market policies and sustained political liberalization. As in Miami today, so too in Cuba's future, they are likely to split between a center-right politically and economically "business" or "liberal" party versus a revanchist party that seeks the recovery of properties expropriated by the revolutionary government in 1959–1961 and to indict, convict, and imprison agents of the old regime. Because the diaspora is, by definition, not in Cuba, its influence is likely to be indirect, spending on television advertising and programming and funding the campaigns of new parties, some staffed by the minority of Cubans who would repatriate. One or both diaspora-supported parties could be large because some significant fraction of Cuban voters will look to Miami in search of economic growth.

Finally, Cuba's postpoof electoral law would have to change to permit free competitive elections. One feature could persist, however. Even in the February 2013 National Assembly elections in which the number of candidates equaled the number of posts to be filled, Cuban electoral districts are multimember. A voter may vote for the "united slate" (the Communist Party's preference), or vote blank or null or selectively. In

the 2013 election, 23.5 percent of voters cast a nonconforming vote, that is, they voted null, blank, or selectively, for example, for some but not all of the candidates on the ballot (calculated from *Granma* 2013). To be elected, a deputy candidate must receive half of the votes. Thus a multiparty system could develop, resting on open-list proportional representation – what Cuban voters already face in multicandidate municipal elections with runoff options. Runoff provisions may help the party of power, the social democrats, and the center-right Miami-supported party, to the detriment of the left-intransigents, the national-patriots, and the revanchists.

#### THE POSTPOOF TRANSITION

In this chapter, I have stayed close to the knowable empirical evidence as informed by comparative political science. It is likely, however, that the specific paths to be followed may be greatly affected by the yet unknowable details of the postpoof transition. Consider three paths that comparative scholarship highlights.

One is a conflict path. Suppose the US government (under a post-2016 US president who reverses the US policy opening toward Cuba authorized in December 2014) and the revanchist political minority of the diaspora sustains a hardline. Suppose the post-Chávez political leadership in Venezuela can no longer bankroll Cuba's party of power. Would an economic crisis in Cuba intensify conflict, weaken the party of power severely, and leave a stark political confrontation between national-patriots, left-intransigents, and revanchists – for example, a domestic Cold War? Would such conflict, as the book's introduction and conclusion suggest, deepen polarization, heighten cohesion for each party, and lead to a few but strong successful parties, each espousing a clearly defined brand? Or would a persisting confrontation with a revanchist diaspora and the US government prevent the fractionalization of the ruling PCC and sustain its cohesion even longer?

The second approach constructs an electorally competitive dominant party. Suppose, instead, the Raúl Castro reforms raise economic standards and prolong the rule of the party of power. Would it delay a full transition to competitive democratic politics? Or would an economically stronger PCC follow a concede-to-thrive strategy, that is, from a position of newer economic strength further open up the political system in order to compete more successfully in prospective democratic elections, hoping

to win and rule, even if no longer in authoritarian fashion (Slater and Wong 2013)?

A third option is a more open democratic transition. Levitsky and Way (2010) argue that competitive authoritarian regimes, which Cuba's may have become by that time, are more likely to democratize if there is high transnational linkage without many sanctions (i.e., carrots, not sticks). Suppose the US government, building on President Barack Obama's December 2014 policy shift toward the Cuban government, and the non-revanchist center-right of the Miami diaspora invest in Cuba and become the bankers of the economic transition. Would the ties of family affection and the rising high linkage of economic interest improve the opportunities for a democratic coalition between the social democrats and the center-right?

I do not know which of these scenarios is correct. But the general argument presented here implies a gradual political economic and political transition, already under way, en route to a splintering of the Communist Party because the social democrats want to accelerate the political and economic transition through economic growth linked to the US market, which other factions would resist. The alternative scenarios, above, could derail this process by weakening the party of power much earlier or discrediting a Cuban party excessively friendly to the US government or the diaspora. The concede-to-thrive strategy is to some extent also already under way, but it is unlikely to speed up the political opening. The PCC resisted the geopolitical shock of the collapse of the Soviet Union as well as the repeated shocks of economic slowdowns – two likely triggers of the concede-to-thrive strategy. From this ruling party's perspective, and certainly under Raúl Castro's presidency, "slow" is the approach. Yet, Raúl Castro is also constructing a "usable past" for the party of power and the social democrats still in its midst. His partisan offspring may be electorally competitive.

#### CONCLUSION

Juan Linz asked the right questions. Look at social and political cleavages before the installation of the authoritarian regime. Look at societal changes that may have affected such cleavage formation and development. Examine the political parties before the revolution. Look to comparative experiences. Consider possible implications of the electoral system and the electoral institutions with which voters are familiar. Applying this approach to Cuba, it seems highly likely that a key feature

of the prerevolutionary political system would resurface, namely, Cuba will likely not have significant parties that frame their principal appeals based on politicized social cleavages such as region, religion, race, or social class.

The interaction between prerevolutionary traits and the experience of a half-century of PCC rule under Fidel and Raúl Castro is likely to sustain a party of power that will use and abuse state resources to get its candidates elected, and also a social democratic offshoot that supports reform. There may be a significant minority of the Cuban electorate that is nationalist, leftist, and intransigent under the legacies of the Ortodoxos and their once deputy candidate, Fidel Castro.

PCC-originated candidates have a high chance of being elected in a postpoof Cuba but the PCC brand seems weak, making it possible for the party to splinter into its principal tendencies. The demographics of the Cuban electorate give an edge to prospective social democrats and to a "party of power," with the latter remaining indispensable for government formation.

The Cuban diaspora, wealthy and politically engaged, will most likely be influential in Cuba's postpoof future but it is already split. A significant fraction of Cuban-origin Miami residents will likely engage with Cuba in business but the diaspora is unlikely to be the public face of the party that will next govern Cuba.

The most open question is whether the actual process of regime transition will witness intense conflict, a dominant party emphasis, or a more open process of change. Consistent with the introduction and conclusion to this book, the intense conflict path may be the more likely to lead to successful parties. Yet, in contemporary Cuba, one thinkable alternative is that Raúl Castro has been constructing a "usable past" for a more moderate big "center" of Cuban politics, designed to outlive him, a "party of power" along the lines noted in Loxton's chapter (Chapter 9, this volume) regarding conservative parties. And if he succeeds, then his legacy on Cuban politics may linger longer than his brother's.