Social Control in Cuba

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ABSTRACT

Why has the Cuban government been so successful in its system of social control, and why might that system’s effectiveness now be on the wane? This study argues that Cuba combines formal and informal systems of control that simultaneously emphasize openness and rigidity. The formal system is geared to block all antihegemonic acts, particularly those that, if left unchecked, could become symbolic acts encouraging similar behavior that the authorities deem undesirable. The system favors reactive rather than proactive approaches, as exemplified by the rapid action brigades. Noninstitutionalized collective behavior is also taking place, as is the emergence of civil society.

Despite the enormous economic crisis Cuba experienced after the 1989 disappearance of the Soviet Union, the authoritarian regime still persists. The system of social control in the island has so far minimized the number of people who participate in political protests, the number and variety of places in the society where these overt political acts occur, and the institutions of civil society that would provide support for political alternatives. It has virtually eliminated all iconic dissident leaders and rendered difficult communication and coordination among members of dissident groups and publics. The system has also succeeded in reducing people’s conceptual sophistication about the ideologies of resistance, the knowledge of these alternative ideologies, the awareness of governmental abuse, and the ability of citizens to claim ownership of the central constitutive historical experiences, beliefs, values, and myths of the nation independently of the interpretative scheme provided by the government.

This study will argue that this formidable list of successes is not attributable solely or primarily to the operation of formal social control mechanisms, despite their effectiveness. Instead, it is the result of a combination of both freedom and restraint that characterizes the social control system, and of what was initially an auspicious economic situation, now gone.

A vast number of methods are used to direct the behavior of citizens and subjects of modern state polities, from political institutions to gossip. For the purpose of this study, it is useful to limit the analysis to methods of social control used by dominant elites in one-party states to maintain themselves in power. The ideal type of system for that purpose is the
totalitarian political system, as interpreted by Hannah Arendt (1951), Raymond Aron (1965), and C. J. Friedrich and Z. K. Brzezinski (1965), among others. This system provides a model, only partially applicable to specific historical cases such as Cuba, that helps explain the broad contours of social control in these societies. Turner and Liebeskind (1996) summarize its characteristics. It is a political system in which

- One party has the monopoly on political activity.
- The ideology does not admit competing interpretations; it represents the "absolute official truth of the state," which gives the government total authority.
- The state has a monopoly on the means of coercion and mass persuasion, including formal education.
- The economy is subservient to the state, so that most economic activities and institutions become part of the state and are thus influenced by its reigning ideology.
- Social life tends to be politicized, so that all social behavior becomes subject to political interpretation and state regulation.

This study uses the Cuban case to show how the macrosocial and microsocial perspectives on social control must be reconceptualized to correspond to the realities of these political systems. The macrosocial perspective emphasizes formal controls derived from the action of institutions, law, powerful organizations and associations, along with explicitly designed planning, programs, and professional staff acting to maintain political stability. The microsocial perspective stresses internalization and the production of politically nondeviant social actors as outcomes of custom, socialization into the dominant ideology and acceptance of prevailing institutional arrangements, gossip and other forms of group censure, and the creation of consumption needs through advertising (Berger 1990).

This analytic distinction between external, formally constituted programs of social control and internalized systems of control becomes more problematic than usual in understanding societies like Cuba, where a political party and a state apparatus actively (and often successfully) attempt to transform the organization of the society and culture. In such societies, the formal system of social control—the police, the repressive apparatus of the state—forms an integral part of the informal, internalized system, and vice versa. Both are part of an all-inclusive attempt to bring about cultural change and maintain political domination throughout the society.

Cuba is an excellent case study of a national political system that combines formal and informal systems of social control into a hegemonic ideology, a national political culture, and a centrally planned society. Its government has been in uninterrupted power for more than 40 years,
long enough to create institutions, collective memories, and "facts" or explanations of how the world operates, as part of a more or less cogent national cultural policy. It has total command of formal education and the mass media on the island and a near-monopoly on the information and interpretations Cubans use to make sense of their social world. The government, moreover, assiduously provides explanations and norms to shape people's beliefs about the exercise of political power, explanations that become the "officially imagined worlds" that lend the government political legitimacy (Berger 1990, 29). Both types of control enact and, in turn, are legitimated by an ideology, a system of symbols and meanings employing rhetorical devices, used by the government "to establish and sustain relations of domination" (Thompson 1990, 56).

The fundamental characteristic of the system of social control in Cuba is that it combines openness and rigidity. The seemingly contradictory concept of a dynamic mold captures its essence: it is dynamic in its openness to the people and its encouragement of their participation in the officially approved activities and programs; it is a mold in its rigidity, its defining and limiting functions, and its insistence on preserving the principles the government identifies as key elements for maintaining political hegemony. The current crisis, the so-called special period, can be understood not as a collapse of this fundamental quality of social control but as a relative loosening of the government's ability to direct citizens' participation. This loosening increases the likelihood of the emergence, at the micro, small-group level, of alternative explanations to the official worldview. People's private, small-group worlds gain autonomy from the government and develop alternative answers—that is, become legitimated—even as government practices and programs continue to set the broader context of social control.

**Mixing of Formal and Informal Controls**

The analogy of the dynamic mold finds expression in all settings of organized social life in Cuba. One example is the institution of education (Aguirre and Vichot 1998). In Cuba, the absence of independent professional associations for teachers combines with the dominance of the state bureaucracy and its central planning. Public education is the only system of formal education available; the national state is the only employer. The state groups educational workers into a syndicate; but their syndicate is not a mechanism of interest politics but a part of the socialist state apparatus. It has direct representation in and direction from the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party (CCP) as part of its Education, Science, Culture, and Sports directorate.

Educational workers' initiatives to change educational practices must first receive recognition and approval from school principals. Typ-
ically, at the pre-university level, the school principal often must make these decisions along with the school's assigned CCP representative and a student leader, who belongs to the Federation of Middle-Level Students (FEEM). Workers' initiatives that pass this first screening are referred to the municipal office of the Ministry of Education, which also must approve the initiative or change it to conform to established policy. If the initiative (most likely modified) successfully passes this second screening, it then proceeds to the ministry's national offices for evaluation and, after a third screening, to the CCP Central Committee. Alternatively, the Education Ministry can advise its municipal office to present the initiative to the next national congress of educational workers, another route to national-level evaluation. If the initiative lands in the congress's final set of recommendations, it will then reach the Central Committee and may become official educational policy.

This example shows that even as the process encourages participation by the mass of people, only a very narrow range of local initiatives to change educational practices ever become national policy. The successful claims first must "fit" the government's larger plans in some fashion. The consequence has been that some topics of great importance to the teaching profession, such as improvements in teachers' salaries, work hours, and other working conditions, or the standards used to promote students, are outside the range of "appropriate" topics for policy discussion. Instead, these matters may be considered in the national development plan devised and executed by the state.

While the initiative process encourages participation, moreover, it also monitors and surveys persons as they interact. Members of the security services are everpresent at the officially approved gatherings, obtaining information on individuals that becomes part of official records or dossiers and that may, at some undetermined moment, become important determinants of life chances. Their presence, whether real or assumed, overt or covert, informs the participants' behavior. Thus the school and municipal assemblies and the national congress are all gatherings controlled by the CCP and the appropriate, topically related mass organizations of the state (some of the most important being the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, or CDRs; the Federation of Cuban Women; the Union of Communist Youth; and the Confederation of Cuban Workers).

Residence

Social control also operates in terms of residence, or changes in the use of space. Whatever else it has done, the ongoing national economic crisis has transformed the physical and spiritual spaces of people's lives, with paradoxical consequences. The average cost of public transporta-
tion has risen while its accessibility has dropped, so that on average, people travel less and live in smaller physical areas. This reduction, in turn, increases the ability of government agents to survey them. Yet the crisis also has reduced the number and efficiency of government institutions at the local level, such as schools, health care centers, and workplaces providing decent employment and satisfactory salaries (Dilla Alfonso et al. 1994).

One response has been an increase in people's interdependence with members of their intimate circles, friends, neighbors, and family members residing nearby. Neighborhood identity and relationships thus become more important and, in some instances, facilitate the mobilization of people against official actions. The special period is thus marked by greater surveillance as well as by an increase in the importance of private life as a means of surviving the crisis, resulting in an increasing tension between the private and the public spheres (metaphorically, the interior and perimeter of the dynamic mold) set by the government.

**Humor**

As is probably true in most societies, humor is used in Cuban culture to express political skepticism and complaints. Humor is a genre for the anonymous expression of political dissent that includes grumbling, rumors, gossip, and anonymous written statements (Scott 1990). Part of this genre is the *chiste*, or joke, in Cuba one of the most important ways humor is expressed.

Some *chistes* belong to the genre of black humor, although most lack a sense of the grotesque. Many center on the lack of food: "The four phases of the special period are few, very few, nothing, and nobody." "What is the similarity between the government's food plan and God? Everyone speaks of it but no one has seen it!" "A drunk is on a street corner screaming 'Fidel, degenerate, assassin, you are killing me with hunger!' The police arrive and beat him for insulting the Commander-in-Chief. The drunk protests, 'Why do you hit me? There are many Fidels.' 'Yes,' says the police officer, 'but there is only one with those characteristics'" (Arocha 1994).

The *chiste* is particularly well adapted for negotiating the private-public sphere in Cuba. The subject of its derision is removed from its speech production. The *chiste* is produced in an encounter through normal speech patterns, and most do not involve specialized sequences of behavior. Its locus can be any aspect of culture. As a cultural object, the *chiste* has an anonymous origin. It is diffused by word of mouth. It can be enacted in ephemeral, short-lived, small-group interaction involving a narrator and an audience. The narrator initiates the *chiste* and decides whom to share it with.
The *chiste* is a humoristic device through which people learn to trust each other. Through the *chiste*, they may discover that they share an antiestablishment point of view. This process of mutual self-discovery is risky, but it is aided by the *chiste*'s inherent ambiguity. As a presumed anonymous expression of popular wit, the *chiste* confers on the interaction sequence an air of political innocence and distancing that protects the actors whenever they misjudge the political perspective of others in the circle of interactants. Here again, the social control system effects people's behavior even as they are free to select the material of the joke, the style of delivery, the listeners with whom they share it, and its timing and spatial location.

**Myth and Ritual**

One of the most important parts of the system of informal social control is its language (Barthes 1972; see also Friedrich and Brzezinski 1965, chapter 2). A language of reconstructed myths and rituals supports the continuation of Cuba's political regime (a topic on which scholarship is scant). True to the principle of freedom and restraint, it is a language in which people participate freely and also within the constraints of the official reconstructed versions.

In Cuba, the most important myths and rituals uphold the armed struggle against the dictator Fulgencio Batista, the internationalism of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, the myth of national origins around José Martí, Antonio Maceo, the wars of independence (1868 and 1895), the sinking of the U.S. battleship *Maine* in 1898, and the purported evil intent of the United States. These are reconstructed purposefully by the regime and reenacted in ritualized pageantry at appropriate intervals (Aguirre 1984) to lend support to the regime's ideology and increase its legitimacy.

The importance of the reconstructed versions of myths and rituals to the government is perhaps revealed most clearly by contemporary struggles over their control. Such is the case with symbols and myths associated with the nineteenth-century founding of the nation, the republican period (1902–58), and the post-1958 revolutionary period. There is also conflict over the definition of objectionable symbols. Recurrent concern is expressed in the Communist Party newspaper, *Granma*, about the presumed lack of patriotism of some Cuban youngsters shown by their use of the U.S. flag to adorn their clothes (Cubanet 1997h; Arocha 1997).

Nowhere is the struggle better exemplified than in the controversy over control of arguably the most important symbol of the Cuban nation, its most exalted founder, José Martí. The government emphasizes Martí's anti-imperialist writings to justify its own fear and distrust of the United States. It justifies the lack of a multiparty political system in Cuba by
pointing out that Martí created one revolutionary party as he organized Cuba's war of independence against Spain. Rhetorically, over the years, Fidel Castro has been projected as the embodiment of Martí, his privileged interpreter and seer. Cuba's dissident activists, on the other hand, point to Martí's magnanimous humanism and his emphasis on human rights and freedoms (Cubanet 1995f, 1997k; Piñero Llera 1981).

Although both emphases are reflected in Martí's writings and revolutionary praxis, the real political issue and social conflict is whether the dissidents' view will resonate widely among the Cuban people. At stake is the granting of legitimacy for an alternative vision of the nation's history and destiny. Government repression tries to stop dissidents from celebrating Martí's birthday, January 28 (Cubanet 1997k), commemorating his death, May 19 (Cubanet 1995d), and quoting from his writings. Furthermore, in an unusual twist, the government conducts mass rallies for its army and security personnel in which officers sign declarations reaffirming the validity of the government's interpretation of Martí (Cubanet 1997r).

Attempts at repressing people's use of José Martí as a symbol, however, have failed. Martí is the rallying point of civil society and the dissidents. Independent journalists claim Martí's approval of their duty to inform the nation (Cubanet 1997l). The dissidents' most important effort so far, the Concilio Cubano (Cuban Council), scheduled its first national conference for February 24, 1996, in remembrance of the date in 1895 of the beginning of the war of independence organized and led by José Martí. Groups incorporate his name in theirs: for example, the Liga Cívica Martiana (Martí Civic League) and the Organización Juvenil Martiana por la Democracia (Prodemocracy Martí Youth Organization). Masses are conducted throughout the country to celebrate Martí's birthday (Cubanet 1997g), and organizations are founded on that date, such as the Ex Club Cautivo (Club of Ex-prisoners). Then, on subsequent anniversaries, they celebrate their founding while venerating Martí's memory (Cubanet 1997c).

While many of these myths and constitutive symbols are now in dispute, it is doubtful that the government has succeeded in imposing its own interpretations. One of the most celebrated recent clashes involved a document titled La patria es de todos (The Homeland Belongs to Us All, Cubanet 1997z). The four authors, members of the Working Group of Internal Dissidents, disputed the published platform of the Fifth Congress of the Cuban Communist Party (titled "The Party of Unity, Democracy, and the Human Rights that We Defend"). They reminded people of the disastrous effects on their liberties of the CCP's emphasis on unity, the government's chronic mismanagement of foreign assistance and the public good, the need for a multiparty political system, the present-day national economic impoverishment, and the lack of freedoms
and legal protections. Characteristically, all four authors were arrested almost immediately after the press conference in which they expressed their opinions, prompting a worldwide alert by Amnesty International (Cubanet 1997ab).

Another effort is by a group representing a surviving faction of the Concilio Cubano. As others have done before and since, they asked the Council of State for a national plebiscite in which the Cuban people could vote on whether to establish a multiparty political system and constitutionally protected civil rights for minorities (Cubanet 1997aa). Government security was quick and effective in repressing these attempts to voice well-thought-out alternative visions of Cuba, making it very doubtful that a significant proportion of the people of Cuba ever learned about the details of these proposals.

The result is that no alternative exists to the government's ideology, which is widely broadcast among the Cuban people. The two most likely options are Christian ethics and some version of the liberal democratic ideology that informed the Cuban Constitution of 1940. It has been difficult, however, for Cuban intellectuals, many of them former Marxists, to accept these alternatives, for the government taught that this was the constitution of the U.S.-dominated republic and of the exiled gusanos (worms), as this presumed class of "enemies of the people" was once labeled. Until recently, laws and government policies were militantly and openly antireligious. It has proven difficult to counter the well-established secularism of the culture or to escape the effects of this ideological war against the ideals of the republic. What is taking place, however, is that the dissident movement is gradually gaining legitimacy, and a civil society is emerging to provide alternative interpretive schemes to that of the government, yet without a clear, coherent ideology.

Charismatic Authority

Social control in Cuba also comes from the charismatic authority of Fidel Castro. That charisma is inculcated partly as people are socialized and as they internalize Castro himself as a myth. From a perspective such as that of Barthes (1972), Castro is the central living myth of the Cuban government. The myth derives partly from a longstanding official policy and program of hero worship, a seldom-studied form of institutionalizing charisma. It is reflected in myriad ways, such as the slogan Fidelidad a la patria, a la revolución, y a Fidel (Fidelity to the homeland, the revolution, and Fidel) or, much earlier, amid the urban reforms of the early 1960s, in the popular saying Fidel, ésta es tu casa (Fidel, my house is your house). The work of deconstructing this central myth is still to be done, so that, as Barthes recognizes in all myths, confusion reigns about what is nature and what is social about the Cuban leader.
Castro's public rhetoric can best be understood through the metaphor of melodrama. The formal aspects of melodrama as a genre of theatre are well understood (Hatlen 1992). The action centers on a grave conflict bringing tremendous difficulties, such as physical impairment, economic and material exploitation, dangers, and moral sufferings. Key to melodrama is the life-and-death struggle between good and evil. There is a villain and a morally pure, vulnerable victim. Then there is the hero, weak in material resources but a giant in virtue. In melodrama the emphasis is never on exploring the psychological underpinnings of human action; instead, it is on the external conflicts among the characters and the predictable resolution favoring the weak over the strong, the good over the bad. There are no surprises or changes in the pre-ordained pattern, no escape into other forms of resolution, for the outcome of the struggle is assured.

Melodrama provides a useful metaphor to understand the unchanging underlying structure of Castro's public speeches and official actions over more than 40 years in power. The substance of his speeches reflects a studious understanding of his audiences, their history, and their collective hopes and present-day struggles. Indeed, one of Castro's undeniable gifts, and perhaps an important reason for his continued charisma, is his ability to adapt the changing substance of history in the making to the unchanging form of melodrama. In doing so he creates memorable theatrical spectacles.

The melodramatic form also shows in Castro's behavior as a political actor. An example is the international incident surrounding the repatriation of the young rafter Elián González in 2000. Castro's implicit portrayal of the situation fit the melodramatic framework, with himself as the hero, responding to the Cuban people's clamor for justice; the justice in this case was the return of the young child to his father in Cuba. This is the interpretation of events that the propaganda system made to prevail in Cuba and that gained credence in the United States. More abstractly, Fidel as living myth is the signifier, the Cuban people are the signified, the central symbol and value in the relationship between the two is the fatherland, and the relationship is dominated by the theme of eternal struggle and inevitable victory.

Repeated in myriad contexts of social interaction, social control shapes the quotidian, taken-for-granted world of the Cuban people. This "natural" world limits, in most cases, the need for explicit political repression, which becomes relevant at the margin, directed against the few recalcitrant dreamers who refuse to conform. Yet despite the limited use of official repression, the existence of the formal system and its mode of operation, unrestrained by constitutional guarantees, must weigh heavily in any attempts to understand life in Cuba.
At the heart of the internalized policing—the residue of experience with the state's social control instruments and the resulting self-censorship, recently acknowledged by, among others, the authors of *La patria es de todos*—is political repression. Cuba's system of formal control is geared to block all antihegemonic acts of individuals and organizations. These include acts that, if left unchecked, could become symbolic acts, encouraging similar behavior patterns that the authorities perceive as undesirable. (For an extended treatment of this principle of formal social control, see Sztompka 1994, 250–58.) It is also geared to destroy autonomous organizations, their cadres, and their leaders. It has destroyed or rendered harmless dissident organizations and fledging professional and voluntary associations.

In the early 1990s, Cuba's repressive system sporadically used mass terror. Its use recalled the mass arrests that took place throughout the country during the Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961. While in the past its purpose was to render oppositionists incapable of organizing and threatening the state (Salas 1979), in the early 1990s the unprecedented level of popular discontent brought the use of more drastic measures, such as mass arrests and isolated killings by police officers of civilians in the streets (Bureau 1991q, 1991e, 1992h; Cubanet 1997d, 1997v, 1997ac), prisons (Bureau 1992f, 1992l), rural areas (Bureau 1991r, 1991b; Cubanet 1997e), and parks (Bureau 1991k). While effective in the short term, these and other relatively broad-gauged repressive measures created similar experiences among thousands of victims and their families and a shared sense of injustice that helped develop a dissident movement and sporadic protests on the island.1

Cuba's security systems use a wide array of means to repress the members of dissident organizations. These means are incarceration, house arrest, surveillance or its threat, misinformation, public discredit, illegal procedures, forced exile from the country of dissident organizers and leaders, limiting the mobility and communication inside the country of perceived dissidents, banishment to or from areas of the country, physical force (sometimes administered in the streets by anonymous state agents dressed as civilians; see Cubanet 1997a), verbal threats, warnings, economic injury, and infiltration of groups and organizations by security agents to create demoralization, conflict, and distrust among participants. (For an important social science statement about many of these repressive tactics see Marx 1979; see also Schulz 1993; for a recent account of victims see Correa 1995.) Cuba's Ministry of the Interior (Minint) continues to work closely with the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) throughout the island to repress all opposition to the regime (Aguirre 1984; Rodriguez Menier 1994, 46).2
These techniques show the enforcers' understanding of the variations in people's willingness to accept risk. In Cuba there are both primary and "surrogate" subjects of social control. The surrogate subjects are family members, friends, or other persons who are or can be sanctioned by the security systems to make the primary subject of the repression recant. Not only activists but also their spouses and other kin are fired from their jobs (Bureau 1992i; Cubanet 1995e, 1997p), threatened with prison (Bureau 1991p), or requested to divorce the dissidents (López 1997).

During the present crisis, military officers have been in charge of institutions and state organizations (Aroca 1995). Thus in 1990, for the first time, an army general was made national coordinator of the CDRs, and the mass organization was made part of the Ministry of the Armed Forces (Minfar). A plethora of new or reactivated social control agencies with a military element or influence have been created, recreated, and at times consolidated. They include the Territorial Troop Militia and the Armed Forces National Defense College, the latter opened in 1991. The National Social Prevention and Attention Commission was created in 1986 to improve the vigilance of the CDRs, while the vigilance brigades started in Santiago de Cuba in 1991, the same year as the peasant vigilance detachments. The National Revolutionary Police Auxiliary Forces, the Unified Vigilance and Protection System (1991), the rapid action detachments (1991), worker guards, and People's Councils are also prominent (Bunck 1994, 69-70, 178-79).

The most important post-1989 change in the formal system is the comparatively greater importance given to reactive rather than proactive approaches. The regime can no longer command control of time and space coordinates in Cuba (Aguirre 1984); that is, it cannot construct, maintain, and enforce tight schedules for people's lives. Instead, it now aggressively attempts to control spaces where unauthorized gatherings take place.

The control of these mostly public spaces occurs by various means, including officially sponsored instances of demonstrations, mass rallies, and other forms of collective behavior. Recurrently, as the Elián González episode demonstrates, the government mobilizes people by inciting moral outrage based on mass fears of U.S. imperialism (Cubanet 1995b). It also uses more conventional forms. It scheduled a children's festival along Havana's Malecón (seawall) on July 13, 1995, the first anniversary of the drowning of boat passengers by Cuba's coast guard, and followed it with mass demonstrations the next day. This effectively precluded protest activities to mark the anniversary (Valdés 1995; Cubanet 1995c). The 14th World Festival of Youth and Students in Havana concluded on August 5, 1997, the anniversary of massive riots that took place in 1994. Proactive repression, such as acts of repudiation against perceived dissidents, takes place particularly before events
that the state cannot manipulate entirely, such as festivals, games, and other large gatherings of foreign guests (Cubanet 1997y).

The Rapid Action Brigades

Perhaps the most important new social organization carrying out this type of official repression is the rapid action detachments or brigades. The brigades are designed to repress forcefully the occurrence of all verbal, written, or social interaction that is interpreted as counterrevolutionary dissidence. They first operated in Havana during the 1991 Pan American Games, when the regime feared that the presence of international mass media covering the events would precipitate a wave of protest demonstrations (Bureau 1991i, 1991j).

The brigade members are young men, armed and acting with the support of the police. Most are CCP members, Minint officers dressed as civilians (Arriete 1997), workers, and members of the Union of Communist Youth (UJC). The brigades are mobilized at the request of the CCP or whenever a situation demands an immediate response from the authorities (Bureau 1991k). There are training schools for brigade members (Bureau 1991l) and permanent Minint bases for the groups (Fogel and Rosenthal 1994, 473).

The brigades engage in a limited variety of repressive activities (see, for example, Bureau 1991h, 1992, 1992c, 1994d; Cubanet 1997m, 1995a, 1997o). Sometimes their actions are predominantly verbal attacks (but see Alfonso 1994), as in many actos de repudio in which the target's location—for example, a human rights activist's residence—has been established for some time before the brigade is mobilized. In other instances, however, the attacks are predominantly physical, as when the brigades attack gatherings that the authorities perceive to have claimed unauthorized control over a public space, such as a park or a beach.

Thus the elite rapid action brigade Contingente Blas Roca Calderio supported a special police brigade and forcibly evicted crowds of handicapped people and their helpers who were peddling in a park across from the main train station in Havana (Cubanet 1997t). Another example occurred when brigades attacked members of the Democratic Cuban Workers Federation (CTDC) at the conclusion of a mass at the Sacred Heart Church in downtown Havana; 15 workers were injured, and others were arrested. Officials of the Cuban government legitimate the activities of the rapid action brigades.

The rapid transformation of the systems of repression has not occurred without cost. The use of brigades creates divisions and conflicts among citizens who support the revolutionary government (Bengelsdorf 1994, 174; Fogel and Rosenthal 1994, 291). During the comparatively tranquil years
of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the CDRs and other mass organizations that had been important mechanisms of social control gradually settled into routine activities on behalf of the revolution, such as vaccination campaigns (Aguirre 1984). Nowadays, conflict often arises between those older "stationary" systems of social control and the new "ambulatory" systems that operate throughout the country. In the older systems, people's sense of loyalty was to a place for which they were responsible and to their neighbors or co-workers. That place has been invaded by collectivities of strangers who act against members of the neighborhood or the workplace.

Examples of the ensuing conflict abound in the record (Bureau 1992a). Human rights activists are one of the brigades' main targets (Bureau 1992k, 1992g, 1994d; see also Hidalgo 1994, 303–18); in a number of instances, their neighbors have defended them against their attackers (Bureau 1992k; see also Bureau 1994d, 1991a). Other episodes of resistance by neighbors have occurred as they defended independent journalists (Cubanet 1997j, 1997x; see also El Nuevo Herald 1997) and labor union members of the CTDC (Cubanet 1997i). In similar fashion, neighbors sometimes succeed in stopping police from evicting people from their homes (Cubanet 1997q, 1997f).

**Weaknesses in the System**

The system of social control in Cuba channels the ongoing emergence of a civil society and a culture of opposition. Contemporary state-sponsored collective behavior events are less frequent and generally smaller than they were in the period up to the 1980s (Aguirre 1984), while non-institutionalized collective behavior is increasing. Most of this behavior occurs in predictable socio-organizational contexts and shows a finite set of dominant interpretative schemes.

Although information is scarce on their relative degree of planning and spontaneity, the various instances of collective behavior reveal the importance of four analytical properties: space, time, function, and dynamics. In terms of space, collective behavior events occur most often in public places—neighborhoods, workplaces, streets, parks, beaches, churches—and the areas surrounding official locations, such as the U.S. Interest Section headquarters in Havana and CCP and police headquarters. Many of these spaces are associated with struggle and contention, in which the culture of opposition is practiced.

The timing of collective behavior events often coincides with changes in the pantheon of remembered national heroes and the schedule of national patriotic celebrations. As in Hungary in 1988 and 1989 (Szabo 1994; Szoboszlai 1991), the Cuban state is losing the power to control this key dimension of political culture. Indeed, the pantheon itself and the schedule of commemorations are gradually returning to those in vogue during the
prerevolutionary period (see Aguirre 1984). Functionally, collective behavior events often arise out of conflict regarding fundamental necessities of life threatened by the crisis: health care, food, shelter, clothing, and personal safety from the police and the other repressive agencies of the state. Collective behavior also occurs as a result of the very activities of the security systems and of the weakening of institutions of government.

Protests Against Official Brutality

The continued effective repression and neutralization of social movement organizations by the state security systems and the comparatively weak presence of independent associations and civil society make noninstitutionalized collective behavior, generically known as loosely structured collective conflict (Oberschall 1980), the primary means with which the people of Cuba may demand changes in the political system. One of the most important is the brutality-generated protest. The operational crudeness of the state repressive system unwittingly creates antihegemonic, hostile collective political participation.

The state's excesses usually result from breakdowns in the internal organization of repressive bureaucracies and lack of supervision of lower-echelon officials. In Cuba, many official actions have been unnecessarily violent, such as the killing of returning veterans from the African campaigns (Bureau 1991j; see also Bureau 1991m). As in Northern Ireland and Palestine, killings by police officers or other official representatives of the regime are followed by funeral processions that become protest marches (Bureau 1991f; see also El Nuevo Herald 1994a; Bower 1994; compare Peretz 1990).

Police brutality can provoke public protests that vary in their length and complexity. In prototypical fashion, a gathering of people protests the killing of a citizen by the police and is met with violent acts of repression from special units of the Minint and rapid action brigades (Bureau 1994e). Two such community protests occurred in the town of Regla in the early 1990s: the first on November 20, 1991, when a police officer killed a 20-year-old man (Bureau 1991n); and the other on October 15, 1993, after coast guard officers beat to death a 23-year-old man attempting to flee the country by sea (Bower 1994; see also Bureau 1994c). In July 1993, a similar incident occurred in Cojimar, a town east of Havana (El Nuevo Herald 1994b; Bower 1994). Through this process, local "traditions of protest" are being created, and the dissident organizations gradually are gaining credibility and legitimacy as they become involved in denouncing official actions.

The August 5, 1994 riots in Havana are arguably the best-known and most recent instance of this form of protest (El Nuevo Herald 1994c; for a firsthand account see García Suárez 1996; Fogel and Rosenthal 1994, 552–54; Bureau 1994l, 1994h, 1994j, 1994k). This episode is also
the most serious brutality-generated hostile collective action that has occurred since the beginning of the socialist administration.

Approximately three thousand people of all ages and social classes reportedly participated in this daytime event, which lasted less than eight hours. Disturbances occurred all over the city. Government security forces that were mobilized to repress the protesters included police, members of the CDRs, and rapid action brigades. The Contingente Blas Roca Calderio was prominently involved in the repression and in the government-sponsored counterdemonstration the next day. Reportedly, some of the police units were brought into the capital from other parts of the country and were dressed in civilian clothes. There were 3 dead, 100 injured, and more than 225 arrests (Bureau 1994l, 1994h, 1994j).

As is typical, the protest was not planned or organized by social movement organizations (SMOs); the government did not accuse dissident SMOs of causing it (Amuchástegui 1994). Initially, more than one thousand people congregated at the Malecón. They had heard a rumor that a ferry-boat would pick them up to take them to the United States. Their gathering attracted police forces, which clashed with the crowds (Bureau 1994k; see also Miami Herald 1994c). Protest activities included chanting “Down with Fidel” and “assassins.” Participants also threw stones and bottles at store windows, singling out stores catering exclusively to tourists, part of the unpopular official policy of de facto economic apartheid. Most of these stores were in Havana’s downtown shopping district.4

Rumors play an important part in these collective events. A preview of August 5 was the disturbance that occurred on February 11, 1994, in front of the U.S. Interest Section, in which the rumor was that the Interest Section was giving out U.S. visas to would-be emigrés (El Nuevo Herald 1994b). The rumors often correspond to preexisting collective interpretive schemes or shared beliefs and are linked to specific precipitating events.

As in similar confrontations in other countries, the violence that so often characterizes collective action in Cuba is caused primarily by the activities of the state's organs of social control rather than by the protesters. It has been relatively low-intensity violence, one-sided (the government has overwhelming force at its disposal, including weapons, communication, and preplanning), and determined by the microdynamics of street confrontation of protesters and social control personnel. Brutality-generated protests have also occurred in the public spaces surrounding police stations and prisons (for examples see Bureau 1991s, 1991c, 1992b).

Scarcities

The lack of food and other essentials and the inflation of food prices cause a great deal of suffering. The fear of starvation at times informs incidents of collective behavior. There is considerable variety within this
category. For example, in the town of Guanabacoa, people assaulted a truck carrying bags of rice in front of a school and threw the sacks of rice to the people in the street before escaping (Bureau 1991g). On July 4, 1992, in the town of Guines, a gathering attacked a train carrying thousands of oranges. Similar attacks on trains carrying food occurred in the municipality of San Nicolás de Bari and nearby (Bureau 1992d). Police detachments also assaulted trains in search of food. They stopped a train coming from the Town of Morón just before it arrived at Camagüey, systematically searched the passengers, and took the food the passengers had bought from farmers in the surrounding countryside (see Bureau 1992e).

A number of attacks on foodstores have occurred. In the Havana Nueva neighborhood, a group of people waiting in line outside a butcher shop rushed inside and illegally took chicken and other meats; they were afraid of not receiving their assigned rations (Bureau 1991g). Disturbances also occur when the food and beer distribution stops (Bureau 1994f). The lack of essentials affects more than just the general population: hundreds of students from Mozambique protested the lack of food, clothing, and other essentials at their school on the Isle of Pines. They damaged classrooms and dormitories; Cuban security forces sent to stop them killed 1 student and injured 17 (Update on Cuba 1991).

Some disturbances have occurred when the government shut off electricity to conserve energy. More than 20 incidents of this sort occurred throughout Cuba in the early 1990s. They included looting of official stores, stoning of official vehicles and shops, marches by people shouting antigovernment slogans. A particularly case is the hundreds of mothers with their infants who congregated in front of the electric generating plant in Havana. There was one case of a fire bombing of a factory near Havana's airport (Whitefield and Wasserman 1993). These protests stopped when the blackouts were rescheduled during daylight hours. Vandalism also occurs during the cover of night. Ten public telephones were vandalized on October 15, 1990 (Update on Cuba 1990). Vandals also destroyed newspaper stands. On October 16, 1990, a van drove through Havana and dropped thousands of leaflets asking for the release of long-term political prisoners (Update on Cuba 1990).

Mass Behavior

Beyond these reactive, mostly unorganized and unplanned collective behavior events largely unrelated to social movement organizations, the system of social control in Cuba cannot contain mass behavior—parallel behaviors by individuals who share similar goals but act independently and without a clear, formal agreement among themselves, but who nevertheless react in similar ways to shared collective symbols, rumors, experiences, and mass media information.
One of these mass behaviors is the expression of political criticism through oblique symbols (see Scott 1990). Fashions in dress, adornment, body language, gestures, words, and presence in places where the culture of opposition is practiced, such as the Malecón (Fogel and Rosenthal 1994, 11) and El Periquitón in La Ceiba, a popular place for illegal sex (Cubanet 1997ad; Arenas 1992, 130), form part of the persecuted shadow world of alternative realities in Cuba. Fernández (1993) mentions the evocative anti-establishment power of the phrase *teque teque*, used by Cuban youth to characterize the tired, stilted phraseology of state bureaucrats; and the liberating power of the word *frikis* (freaks), an identity conferred on youths who do not identify themselves with the official vision.

Mass behavior also occurs inside the institutions of the state as people misuse them. One such manifestation is the increase in disability-based retirements and social security payments as workers adjust to present-day currency devaluation, unemployment, and labor displacements. Social security payments rose from approximately 4 percent of the gross national product in 1982 to 15 percent by 1997; 38 of 100 workers obtained a medical certificate of total physical incapacity that allowed them to retire permanently (Cubanet 1996b, 1997s).

Another example is the nonpayment of union membership fees by members of the state-controlled *Central de Trabajadores Cubanos* (Cubanet 1997u). Yet another is the refusal of many young university graduates to work in their specialties, preferring instead to work in the tourist industry with access to dollars. The decimation of the national cattle herd, partly as a result of illegal slaughtering, is also relevant; the head of cattle per capita ratio rose and fell from 0.71 in 1952 to 0.83 in 1968 and 0.38 in 1994 (Bureau 1996a, 10).

People protest during elections. In poor neighborhoods, a high proportion of the ballots cast in the December 1992 national elections for delegates to People's Power (*Poder Popular*), the nationwide system of political representation at the local level, were filled out incorrectly (Bureau 1993). Approximately 30 percent of the ballots in a Havana district were spoiled (Evenson 1994, 27; Amuchastegui 1995a, b). Similarly, people write antigovernment messages on the face of Cuban paper pesos (Bureau 1994f).

**International Links**

The social control system cannot stop the institutions of civil society from using electronic means of communication and thereby forging relationships with international associations. Despite the effective censorship of the Internet inside Cuba, electronic tools are playing a key part in facilitating mass behavior, energizing and transforming the organizations and affinity groups that are emerging on the island. These groups
do have access to the recently improved international telephone services. Increasingly, they also have representatives and affiliates outside Cuba that can use the Worldwide Web.

Once contacted via telephone, these transnational organizational resources broadcast their needs, experiences, and information to other Cubans via radio and the international community. Using this simple communication system, independent journalists in Cuba practice their profession (Rivero 1997; Cubanet 1997i; Ackerman, 1996). Likewise, anonymous individual Cuban citizens report events and state actions (Cubanet 1996a; Daley 1997).

Changes in Institutions and Civil Society

Still other changes inside the state institutions should be mentioned. One is the concerted, professionally based activism of lawyers (Evenson 1994, 41–59) and economists (Bureau 1994g). In the aftermath of the revolutionary takeover in the early 1960s, the legal profession lost its independence from the state. By 1973, all practicing lawyers belonged to *bufetes colectivos* (collective law offices) under the supervision of the Ministry of Justice. In 1974, these law firms organized into the *Organización Nacional de Bufetes Colectivos*, a professional association with considerable legal and financial independence from the government. Under its guidance, the number of *bufetes colectivos* grew. In the 1990s, reflecting the muted presence of dissent in this association, lawyers are asking for changes in civil and criminal law, court procedures, and legal practices (Murray 1994; Evenson 1990, 1994, 49–51).

Lawyers from different *bufetes colectivos* formed a quasi-SMO called *Corriente de Pensamiento Jurídico Agromontino*, which called for the reestablishment of the Court of Constitutional Guarantees, which would limit the operational freedom of the state security systems (Bureau 1994a). The National Association of Small Farmers is another example of an official mass organization that has recently gained considerable autonomy for its members (Puerta 1996). ANAP has been successful in reopening farmers' markets and establishing other members' rights.

Much more difficult to regulate are the shadow institutions, an important segment of civil society in Cuba. As in Poland and other Eastern European countries before the fall of the Soviet Union, there is an important contradiction between the institutional practices and the rhetorical fantasy of the regime (Bormann 1985; Staniszkis 1984). Officially sanctioned institutions commingle with their dual, deviant shadows. Most Cubans welcome these extra-institutional shadows that are not supposed to exist, for they ameliorate the failures of the legitimate institutions. Although unsanctioned, shadow institutions are not independent of the institutions they complement. They offer opportunities
for surreptitious activities rather than explicit, open acts, which would represent demands for political change.

As in the former Soviet Union, in Cuba there is a socialist economy and a shadow secondary economy; dollar and peso currencies; a socialist constitution and an officially approved, state-organized shadow system of illegal and criminal practices that violate the constitution. Until very recently, official atheism coexisted with the persistence of the sacred; a one-party national political system with centralized and stratified power exists beside a micro, local plurality of power and social practices captured in the term *sociolismo*, roughly translated as social interaction based on mutual trust and self-interest. A state housing program designed in the 1960s continues amid an extraordinary housing crisis and an illegal housing market resulting from the program's failure, as documented in part by the scarcity of housing and the deterioration of the housing stock in cities like Havana. Another state program designed to maximize the equal social and economic development of all the provinces failed to prevent an unprecedented immigration to the city of Havana, more recently by people from the province of Oriente searching for a better way of life (Cubanet 1997w; Bureau 1997a, 10, 1997b, 9).

In these and many other instances, the failure of "official" institutions explains the presence of their shadow counterparts. In Cuba, as in Poland, the inherent waste and mismanagement of a centrally managed economy paradoxically accounts for the political stability of the society (Staniszkis 1984).

In Cuba, shadow institutions socialize people into a deviant culture and social practice. They are the dominant institutional form of civil society. They provide institutional spaces in which people create and enact alternative subcultures. An example in Cuba is black market practices (Alonso and Lago 1995; Fogel and Rosenthal, 1994, 396–403). Participants engage in collective deviant acts in awareness of others and in protected spaces. They always face risk, for the official acquiescence that usually makes their activities possible is typically an unstable, negotiated outcome. Their economic criminality obtains meaning and justification from an antihegemonic collective definition in which the powerless produce and share with others alternative interpretations of their motivation, its historical antecedents, and their society (Scott 1990).

Anecdotal evidence indicates that the forced deviance caused by the failure of official institutions engenders a generalized cynicism in the population and detachment from, if not opposition to, the ideology and programs of the ruling party (Fernández 1993; Puerta 1996; Valdés 1996; Cubanet 1997b; for Eastern European countries before the disappearance of the Soviet Union see Sztompka 1994, 246–58; Dahrendorf 1990). It creates marginalized subcultures, such as groups of intellectuals, urban youth, the self-employed (*cuentapropistas*), and small businesspeople.
Reforms created in 1993 allowed people to establish businesses independently of the state. Approximately four hundred thousand Cubans, or 10 percent of the labor force, became legally or illegally self-employed. The reforms were not completely carried out, however, and the government is now increasingly opposed to the new class of entrepreneurs. Indeed, self-employed small entrepreneurs are under constant scrutiny by the police. They face major obstacles: the legal stipulation that they cannot hire workers outside their own family; their lack of legal credit, housing, transportation, supply of materials, and middlemen; and very high taxes. Tellingly, the majority of the cuentapropistas use the black market as the supply source of materials for their businesses (Jatar-Hausmann 1999).

Two further elements of the emerging civil society are the subcommunities participating in prostitution and other illegal economic activities (Fogel and Rosenthal 1994, 396–403; Puerta 1996, 29). Prostitution is often the only way young people have to frequent places such as restaurants and stores that demand hard currencies and are thus reserved for the use of foreigners and their guests. Prostitutes' services at Varadero Beach and elsewhere, however, could not occur without the authorities' cooperation (Fisher 1997).

Despite repeated official claims that the revolution eliminated prostitution, its widespread occurrence today represents an unsolvable contradiction between formally sanctioned public morality and de facto public practice. The contradiction is facilitating the redefinition of deviance and the transformation of the social meaning of the jineteras, as female prostitutes are known. Many Cubans show empathy toward these young women, redefining their deviance as a "natural" adjustment to the national crisis (Fernández Martínez 1996; Cifuentes 1996; López 1996).

Other illegal economic activities involve clandestine exchanges among the economic production units of the state, a practice known as cambalache. As in China, this is a means for administrators of the legal economic enterprises, such as factories, to resolve the rigidities inherent in the centrally planned economy. It involves managers' keeping multiple accounts of the enterprise and reserving a percentage of production for illegal barter exchanges with other state enterprises. Often these exchanges benefit the workers, securing commodities and services that otherwise would not be generally available to them. The unprecedented post-1989 national economic crisis has probably increased the occurrence of these illegal economic activities.

**Conclusions**

The political economy in Cuba, with its undeniable elements of totalitarianism, affects social control in the island. This study has argued that the
useful distinction between external and internal mechanisms of social control becomes blurred in societies like Cuba, where both are made part of a state-sponsored, centralized, planned program for preserving the legitimacy of the ideology of the leading class and its domination over the society. In this context, it is useful to adopt Berger's (1990) characterization of political legitimation as the prevailing sense of knowledge that exists in a given society at a given time, not only the knowledge of intellectuals but also the "ethnoknowledge" of the folk. In Cuba, the ability of social control systems to neutralize social movement organizations has pushed dissent and civil society into less-organized and less-institutionalized forms, such as mass behavior, riots, and rumors.

Most present-day theoretical perspectives on collective action do not sufficiently emphasize the analysis of states' social control programs, technologies, and activities. This is true of the resource mobilization approaches to social movements (McCarthy and Zald 1977), new social movement theory (Johnston et al. 1994, 3-10), frame analysis of social movement activities (Snow et al. 1986), and models of political opportunity (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Munck 1994). In one-party states that have not experienced increases in constitutional protections, these theories are less useful to understand collective action and the tentative nature of civil society.

The exceptions are the works of Piven and Cloward (1978, 1992) and Fox and Stam (1997). These authors emphasize the importance of the "cultural politics of protest" (Fox and Stam, 3) and of emerging cultural understandings of the subjective meanings and structural imports of antihegemonic collective political participation. Such antihegemonic collective action is the result—and the means—through which a shared symbolic understanding of selves and collectivities occurs in the absence of revolutionary upheaval and under the rigors of state repression and control. Thus, it is a useful theoretical perspective for understanding the Cuban case, for Cubans' collective protests are not part of normal politics or of interest group politics. Instead, their participation in collective action and the emergent civil society is risky behavior undertaken in an unsupportive political climate.

Why has Cuba been so successful in its system of social control, and why is the system's effectiveness now waning? The answer to this key question is the coda to this study. Other countries with strong civil societies and active dissident voices have had more pervasive and severe formal controls than Cuba's. Few governments, moreover, have had to contend with the turmoil and distraction caused by a powerful enemy so close to their borders and a committed and powerful exile community clamoring for political change. Instead of this line of reasoning, however, this writer believes that the combination of freedom and restraint in Cuba's system of social control provides the answer, along
with the foreign aid from the Soviet Union that for many years permitted the political system to deliver to a majority of the people what they considered was a satisfactory standard of living.

Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Cuban economy was viable. The resulting opportunities for upward social mobility created the material foundations for the pro-state public opinion of a segment of the population. Contrary to the case in Hungary, for example, in which the state allowed people a degree of social and economic progress within the socialist regime, the Cuban state's inability to create effective solutions to the present unprecedented crisis is bitterly resented by many of its former followers. They can no longer point to the previous assumed social welfare and other benefits of the revolution (Fogel and Rosenthal 1994, 248).

People who until recently supported the government and belonged to its leading cadres can no longer offer a rhetorical defense (Bormann 1985) of their revolutionary "selves." Nor can they continue to profit from the system. The contemporary economic crisis has destroyed the operational capability of institutions throughout Cuban society that provided public services and a livelihood for many people. Thus, for example, Popular Power is widely discredited (Bengelsdorf 1994).

The crisis has also brought about the onset of widespread unemployment and underemployment throughout the society, with estimates that in the early 1990s the unemployed amounted to between 18 and 25 percent of Cuba's labor force. Particularly hard hit are the poor and those without relations outside Cuba providing them with assistance. Ironically, they constituted the strongest source of support for the government, and are now increasingly alienated from it. Poor neighborhoods in Havana, for example, are places where disorder and protests occur (Fogel and Rosenthal 1994, 488–97). Although the government encourages limited business dealings with capitalist firms (Puchala 1992; Frank 1994), the majority of the population is systematically excluded from these profitable economic activities and from the use of the facilities and services created by them. Those with access to dollars, among them Cuban officials who derive illicit profit from their offices' monopolistic control of business relationships with international capital (El Nuevo Herald 1995), profit from the continuation of the Castro regime even as it frustrates their illegal behavior through sporadic arrests and harassment (Betancourt 1995, 2).

In the aftermath of the disappearance of the Soviet bloc and the ongoing, chronic economic crisis, the emergence of civil society and the increase in the occurrence of noninstitutionalized collective behavior are indications of a fundamental break in the "contract" between state and nation. Returning to our analogy of the dynamic mold, we can expect the regime in the near term to increase formal social controls. Yet the
effectiveness of such measures will lessen as Cubans continue to develop their own individual (marginal and criminal) solutions to the crisis.

Perceptive Cubans, when trying to make sense of the present situation, call it un sistema trancado (a jammed system) to allude to its contemporary paralysis. Because the stability of the Cuban political system was never and cannot now be based solely on force and violence, the long-term solution to the impasse will not come from keeping the mold rigid. More than a decade after the initiation of the "special period in time of peace," it is clear to this observer that it also will not come—while Castro is in power—from a planned transition like that of Eastern Europe. Much more likely is that an unexpected turn of events will bring a new government dominated by a segment of the reigning elite, which will create new solutions and thus gain greater acceptability from the international community and from the Cuban people.

APPENDIX: METHOD AND SOURCES

The literature on the topic of social control in Cuba is sparse; two examples are Salas 1979 and Clark 1990. This paper concentrates on the post-1989 period and looks at all manifestations of social control. Among several sources, it uses information from the archives of the Miami-based Information Bureau of the Human Rights Movement in Cuba <http://www.infoburo.org>. The bureau is an important source on post-1989 collective behavior events, social movements, and social movement-like organizations and activities. Its electronic files are available on request; they are identified in this paper by year of inclusion and title, as they appear in the bureau's electronic archives.

The bureau is also a good source of information on human rights, but it underrepresents unplanned street actions, emergent collective behavior, unorthodox and sudden transformations of complex organizations, and the seemingly unplanned and often counterproductive collective behavior of police and other social control collectivities.

The information in the bureau's archives and in Cubanet appears to be both reliable and valid. The internal reliability checks are satisfactory; the names of leaders of social movement organizations coincide over many separate reports; the youth of most victims is a near-constant in the records; and the names of the prisons reappear. Similar patterns are found in the reasons for their repression, techniques used by state security to neutralize opposition groups and leaders, and other matters that would be almost impossible to fake. Reports are usually very detailed, giving information about the names of the persons involved, the places and dates of the incidents' occurrences, the types of abuse, and other characteristics of the incidents. Altuna de Sánchez's independently drawn, participant observational analysis of social movement organizations and their members (n.d.; see also Endowment for Cuban American Studies, 1993) provides partial external validity to the information on these sources about social movements. Forty of the 52 social movement organizations and quasi-organizations mentioned in the bureau's reports are also included in Altuna de Sánchez's list of 103 social movement organizations.

This information was cross-checked and augmented with general information from other sources:

- In-depth cultural analyses published by *Cubanews*, a newsletter on Cuba published by the *Miami Herald*
- Systematic search through all post-1988 news items on Cuba included in the *National Newspaper Index*
- Occasional hearings and reports on Cuba from the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (see Endowment for Cuban American Studies, 1993; for its links to material on human rights go to <http://www.canfnet.org/linksmain.htm>), the U.S. Congress, and the U.S. State Department
- Other information on human rights available from *Of Human Rights* <www.ofhumanrights.org>; see also <www.freecuba.org>; and from the 1997 annual report of the Interamerican Commission on Human Rights (General Secretariat, Organization of American States)
• Electronic news items selected from CubaWorld <www.cuba-world.com> and Habaguanex Ciboney <diversity.csusb.edu/dvlinks/dirs/Area-Studies/Latin-America/E-Journals/55113711.htm> with news and information from various social movement organizations
• Papers in the annual proceedings of the Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy (ASCE) <www.lanic.utexas.edu/project/asce/transition.html>

Amnesty International and these other sources repeatedly document all the Cuban state's social control procedural patterns and practices and many of the experiences of citizens and communities presented in this paper (as well as many other similar cases not included here).

This study lacks information on germane matters, such as the sex ratio of victims of state repression, and on individual-level variables, such as perceived grievance, that is customarily ascertained in research on collective action and on the likely causes for many of the social patterns described. The recent nature of these protests in Cuba limits the insights of this study. Despite its disciplinary importance (Minkoff 1993), the historical fluctuation of the patterns described here is also outside the scope of this study. At some unknown time, many of these patterns were permanently suppressed and probably no longer exist, while others have taken their place. Perhaps most crucially, the study is limited by the present-day inability to conduct, in Cuba, interviews with participants and field observations of antihegemonic political participation and of the participants in the emergent civil society. Researchers of collective action cannot make good-faith guarantees to respondents regarding their protection as human subjects; moreover, they are vulnerable to the actions of state security.

The generalizations in this article about selected aspects of Cuba's system of formal social control are based on many reports by Cuban journalists and other observers. They should be expanded by the results of longitudinal studies and further information, as it becomes available, about control of individual and collective acts of protest, such as boycotts and strikes, for which literally nothing is known at present. Prison, police, and court records; the archives of social movement organizations; and the organs of state security contain invaluable yet unavailable information that would undoubtedly allow more nuanced understandings.

NOTES

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ranks Cuba 7 (lowest) on a 1–7 scale in both political rights and civil liberties, except for a civil liberties rank of 6 for the year 1988. More recently, Milner (1995 and personal communication), using worldwide comparative information from Amnesty International for 1980–87, gives Cuba a rank of 3 (on an ascending scale of 1 to 5). He duplicates this ranking using U.S. State Department information (except 4 for 1986).

2. Partly through its use of the CDRs, partly through its own agents, Minint can obtain information on the daily activities of every person in Cuba. Minint is divided into three departments: the Department of Technical Investigations (DTI), the National Revolutionary Police (PNR), and the Department of State Security (DSE), which handles political crimes. Each department has units operating throughout the country. There are 266 prisons; 167 are correctional institutions and 45 are high-security prisons (Cubanet 1997p).

3. The concept of a culture of opposition, most fully developed by Scott (1990), highlights how groups of people, subjected to political domination, express their opposition to it in the form of protests, riots, and mass behaviors, and their hopes for the future. For an extended discussion of Cuba's culture of opposition, see Aguirre 1998.

4. The rumor that brought people to the Malecón corresponded with the generalized wish among many Cubans to emigrate to the United States, and was made credible by the tacet post-1989 shift in official practice that relaxed restrictions on illegal emigration to the United States. Other confrontations that fueled the mood of protest included that of July 13, when 72 would-be emigrants hijacked an old tugboat from Havana Bay. Government boats pursued, collided with, and sank it (Miami Herald 1994a, b; for victims' accounts see U.S. House Committee on International Relations 1994). Subsequently, on July 17, hundreds of people participated in a memorial for the victims, akin to a testimonial of solidarity (Aguirre 1984). It was organized by the Movimiento de Madres Cubanas por la Solidaridad and other dissident SMOs (Bureau 1994i, 1994b).

5. Existing institutions, such as mass organizations and workers' collectives, have not gained autonomy from the state (Mediaceja 1994; on the repression of the state-directed Fundación Pablo Milanes, see Puerta 1996, 21–22). The possible exceptions are quasi-religious organizations, such as Cáritas, the service organization of the Conference of Cuban Catholic Bishops; Centro Félix Varela; the Cuban Ecumenical Council; the Yoruba Cultural Association; the Casa de la Comunidad Hebrea de Cuba; and the Masonic Lodge (Puerta 1996; cf. Gunn 1995). In theoretical terms, Cuba is in a pretransitional stage in which civil society is undeveloped (O'Donnell et al., 1986; Munck 1994).

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