

Civil Society in Cuba: Advancing through Moral Convictions and Public Connectedness

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Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies
University of Miami

By

Maria del Pilar Aristigueta

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Executive Summary

This research project explores the work of non-governmental associations in Cuba and their contribution towards civil society. The argument is made that the public connectedness among the groups in this study is organized and formal constituting civil society as opposed to social movements. Not with standing that some of the same individuals advancing civil society, engage in social movements as described in “Steps to Freedom” published annually by the Cuban Democratic Directorate. Hindering growth of civil society and transition to democracy in Cuba are the continuing success of government repressive tactics, involving overt physical methods and/or psychological warfare.

The findings from this study are that civil society groups in spite of significant human costs continue to exist through moral convictions and public connectedness. Public connectedness does not require formal institutions to be effective. Adding to public connectedness is the appearance of dissidents taking on multiple roles and increased international support. For example, there is evidence of an independent economist working with the independent librarians or independent physicians contributing to the independent journalists; librarians and journalists both receiving international support and visibility.

Intermediate outcomes gained from the civil society associations in Cuba include transparency, accountability, expansion of services, creation of new institutions, community strengthening, and volunteer leveraging. Most of the non-governmental associations operate outside of the realm of what the government considers legal; when conducting business within the legal constraints there are questions of how much gets to the Cuban public and how much is kept by government.

The associations currently influencing civil society in and outside of Cuba will be critical for a successful transition. Key human capital elements necessary for free association and civil society: trust, transparency, and reciprocity should be encouraged by all means possible. Trust will take a longtime to re-build in this society according to those interviewed. Transparency is viewed as very closely related to trust and possibly putting individuals in harms way. Reciprocity is better understood on the island, and may be reinforced by meaningful examples.

There are lessons to be learned from transitions in post-unification Eastern Germany and in post-communist Europe where the new institutions have been imposed with little consultation, agreement, or alliance with voluntary organizations. Recommendations include starting a working group of dissidents that are recent émigrés from Cuba and NGOs working or supporting work in Cuba. Areas to be explored by this working group include assisting the dissidents now and after the transition through external support from the foreign NGOs and internal assistance to the associations currently on the island.

Finally, a strong civil society in itself is no substitute for solid political and legal institutions in a democratic system. However, civil society is necessary for a deeply

rooted, legitimate, and effective democracy (see Diamond 1999 and Howard 2003). Civil society requires the legal protection afforded by democracy as defined and protected by the rule of law.

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Introduction

We look forward to a world founded on four essential human freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression--everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way--everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want--everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear--anywhere in the world.

-- President Franklin D. Roosevelt, January 6, 1941

downloaded from US Department of State website 3/6/04<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/27198.htm>

Roosevelt's 1941 quote remains an anomaly in totalitarian countries through out the world. In Cuba, the focus of this paper, we continue to witness prison sentences, harassment, and other forms of cruelty for those who dare to speak their mind, read what they desire, or simply follow their personal convictions. Although, with the exception of the Church there is little evidence of legal, formal, non-governmental organizations in this study there is substantiation of the moral convictions that override the fear of the dissidents and the public connectedness that is necessary to advance civil society in Cuba.

This research project explores the work of non-governmental associations in Cuba and their contribution towards civil society. Within Cuba's official bureaucracy most of these non-governmental associations are considered dissident activities. The qualitative methodological approach of this study required reviews of all organizations working in Cuba (United States as well as non-United States based), identification of those associations with offices in the United States willing to participate in interviews plus identification of individuals operating non-governmental associations¹ in Cuba available for interviews. This resulted in the identification of the following associations for the focus of this study: Religious, Mass Media, Librarian, Medical, and Environmentalist. The purpose was to understand the experiences of these groups under the current regime, their effectiveness as perceived from their accomplishments, the criteria necessary for their success, and the civil society's larger impact on the well-being of society. The hypothetical logic model depicted below demonstrates intermediate outcomes as providing the infrastructure necessary for transparency, accountability, representativeness, and respect for rights of others (see Brysk 2000). These will be used as preliminary criteria in this study with the expectation that others may surface. The end outcome or the preferred future is the impact on the well-being of society away from totalitarianism and towards democracy in the transition of Cuba.

Outcomes are defined as "the events, occurrences, or changes in conditions, behavior, or attitudes that indicate progress toward achievement of the mission and <goals> objective" (Hatry 1999, 15). It is not unusual for final outcomes to take a long time to materialize so intermediate outcomes, although not an end in itself, are also utilized to measure progress. Outputs are the products while inputs are the resources. These terms are included in the outcome charts, figure 1 and figure 2 (found later in this manuscript).

¹ The term non-governmental associations will be utilized through out this study to emphasize the informality of non-governmental organizations in Cuba.

Figure 1: Logic Model Depicting Expected Outcomes of Civil Society

<u>Inputs</u>	<u>Outputs</u>	<u>Intermediate Outcomes</u>	<u>End Outcome</u>
Civil society organizations	→	Provide Infrastructure	→ Impact the well-being of society
		Transparency Accountability Representative ness Respect for Rights of Others	Social Capital Trust Reciprocity Transparency Democracy Defined and Protected by Rule of Law

The beginning of this manuscript will explore the philosophical origins of civil society; its practice and applications under communism and democracy; and the application of non-governmental and civil society associations in Cuba. Governments throughout the free world are acknowledging difficulties with government as sole providers of service to complex social problems (Denhardt and Aristigueta 2002; Aristigueta 2004; Perry and Thomson 2004). However, under Castro's totalitarian system, the work of non-governmental organizations continues to be discouraged.

Green's (2002, 455) recent study views the "inherent contradictions of communism and its eventual collapse as a political system undeniably stimulating a resurgence of the civil society concept in social science research." Of particular importance is the research agenda focused on detailed, contextual study of the involvement of civil society in the policy making process. However, not all civil society will prove to be effective in having a voice in the policy making process and meeting the desired outcomes. Therefore systematic research must be conducted on the criteria or intermediate outcomes that provide the likelihood of having an impact on the well-being of society. More generally, this study intends to advance an earlier statement made by Fernández, "promoting a civic democratic culture will be the greatest challenge to the Cuban people, the Cuban state, the United States, and the international society...in a post-transition Cuba" (Fernández 2003).

Civil Society Defined

Civil societies arise from the increasing complexity of social and economic life and the proliferation and diversification of interests, identities, and causes. The presence or absence of a civil society is dependent to a great extent on the level of development of the polity and the nature of the political regime. It is essentially a political concept based on the centrality of the citizen in the social, political, and economic processes and

institutions of a society (Espinosa 2001, 12). This political dimension distinguishes civil society from non-governmental organizations and from most of the other institutions of the third sector. A distinction should also be made between civil society and social movements. Social movements generally consist of a combination of both spontaneous mobilization and loose organizations. On the other hand, civil society groups are formally organized (Howard 2003).

Non-governmental organizations are the most common form of third sector organization. However, the term non-governmental organization (or its frequently used abbreviation, NGO) denotes a structural formality and aspects of self-governance that are not found in totalitarian countries. Therefore, the term non-governmental associations will be used by the author instead.

Others define civil society in a broader context: “groups contributing to civil society may be social, cultural, economic, subsistence-based, anti-repression, or political in nature” (Oxhorn 1995, 83). Thus softball leagues, an anti-nuclear group, churches, farmers markets, are all threats in the fabric of civil society (O’Byrne 1999). According to Putnam (1993) societies are said to be well-endowed in terms of social capital when they manifest a rich associational life.

Raul Castro coined the term “socialist civil society” to refer to the realm of sanctioned associations in order to differentiate them from what the regime considered subversive organizations (Espinosa 2001, 15). Socialist civil society is defined by the government as “the totality of mass organizations and legal NGOs and associations registered under Law-Decree 54” (Castro, R. 1996, 16). The criterion for legality is as stated by the Cuban government, unquestioning political support for the regime. The following is from a statement made by the Cuban government to European NGOs operating in Cuba: “in Cuba, relations between government institutions and civil society do not have an objective or a subjective basis for the development of antagonism, but instead for a cooperative relationship” (CEE 1995, 8).

Research of NGOs in Cuba has had to address the issue of defining an NGO and even of the utility of the term in the Cuban case. “Studies often do not address the limitations on research imposed by the Cuban government and the majority of writers avoid applying definitions and instead focus on the unique context of Cuba” (Espinosa 2001, 156). An exception is the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) office based in Cuba which uses the United Nations definition for NGO: “An NGO may be defined as any non-profit organisation, group or institution that operates independently from a Government and has humanitarian or cooperative, rather than commercial, objectives. UNDP generally collaborates with NGOs representing poor and vulnerable groups and working in the areas of its thematic priorities (poverty eradication, sustainable livelihoods, natural resource management, gender equality and governance), as well as in emergency situations. UNDP favours collaboration in execution with national NGOs, but also works with international NGOs” (downloaded on 1/12/04 from <http://www.undp.org/csopp/CSO/NewFiles/policiesngo.html> @10:01 am).

Communism and Civil Society

Civil society is usually heavily repressed or “confiscated” in communist countries, as the party-state seeks to co-opt the roles once performed by civil society and suppress individual expression (Bendelsdorf 1994 and Colas 1995). Bendelsdorf explains that in classical Marxist theory, “the boundaries between state and civil society are thereby erased; indeed, the very need for such boundaries goes unrecognized or denied. The results... [include] the confiscation of civil society by the state: stratification rather than socialization” (1994, 6). After the Cuban revolution, “no institution or entity existed separate from, or independent of, the party state....A monostructural, tied set of institutions allowed no legally sanctioned loci of discussion, nor autonomous sites of social organization...” (Bendelsdorf 1994, 51). Gray attributes “the likely incompatibility between the necessities of the transition from totalitarianism to civil society and the preconditions of liberal democracy arises principally not from the cultural inheritances of the various post-communist states, but instead from the massive human and economic costs of liquidating the bankrupt economies which the post-communist regimes inherit” (as quoted in Rau 1990, 150).

In addition, the spread of alternative ideas depends on the mode of and openness of communications available². In communist polities, the party-state controls all media directly or indirectly. Poland was the great exception where the Catholic Church was able to keep a university, a newspaper, and several magazines. “Although discreet, astute, and infiltrated by state security, these outlets never came under the direct control of the Polish communist state” (Espinosa 2001, 99). A similar example did not occurred in Cuba where the government seized all forms of public expression: “The government supported the only domestic news agency, operated the radio and television networks, and was the sole important domestic producer of films and books... [It] exercised rigorous censorship over foreign information media and controlled the importation of books and periodicals” [MacGaffey, et.al. 1965, 333).

Although we witnessed the falling of communism in Eastern Europe in 1980s, five communist party-states survived what Jowitt coined the “Leninist Extinction”: China, Cuba, Laos, North Korea, and Vietnam. “Ironically, 3 of the 5 communist survivors, China, Cuba, and Vietnam, had more prominent dissident movements and a greater level of independent social activity in the late 1980s than did some of the victims of Leninist extinction” (1992, 2). The facts speak for themselves: civil society efforts in and of itself is not enough to counter totalitarianism. However, post-totalitarianism will be stable and irreversible only when the autonomy of its opposite, civil society, is defined and protected by the rule of law (Rau 1990).

In formerly totalitarian countries where civil society had its strongest presence: “Poland, Hungary, and the Baltic countries, the political and social transitions were more clearly

² Rau (1999; 166) notes that “the restoration of civil society can occur only if the Center’s monopoly over the channels of communication has been successfully challenged and the isolation of the individual has been overcome.”

defined as toward democracy, markets, and civil rights” (Espinosa 2001, 103). Poland’s solidarity movement during the 1980s is considered “...the first truly autonomous mass organization in communist Europe” (Holmes 1997, 70). The solidarity movement battled the Polish communist government for both political and economic reforms (O’Byrne 1999).

...In at least one country-Poland-the role of the dissidents in the emergence of significant political activity was clearly significant...The fact that some leading dissidents became popular heroes, and that citizens wanted them to play a major role in the politics of late communism and early post-communism, testifies to the widespread perception that several of them had played an important role in the delegitimation and then collapse of communism [Holmes 1997, 275].

Four stages of development to civil society were found in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, the descriptive model includes: “defensive, emergent, mobilization, and institutional stages” (Weigle and Butterfield 1992, 1). The four stages occurred in the following order: 1) the defensive stage began as a response to a systemic crisis that afflicted each country. The crisis involved both economic failure and loss of political legitimacy by the governing communist party. Dissidence increased among both the individuals who were dissatisfied and also within some small groups. 2) The emergent stage occurred as dissidents joined various groups or social movements and began to carve a public sphere. 3) The mobilizational stage included continued non-sanctioned opposition, presented as a political alternative. 4) This process culminated into the institutional stage. In this final stage, the publicly acclaimed political leaders re-established a legal framework of human rights and the autonomy of civil society, usually involving free elections.

It is important to note that “a strategy from below on its own has nowhere succeeded” (Cohen and Arato, 1992, 51; Oxhorn 1995, 225). Although sectors in civil society can influence government policy, “external linkages” to other actors are necessary to effectively change a repressive state (Fox 1996, 1094). The presence of “political opportunity structures” is essential to civil society success in spreading democratic messages in the public arena [Weigle and Butterfield 1992, 18]. Indeed the crumbling of socialism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has been attributed to incremental socioeconomic informality or the makings of civil society.

Democracy and Civil society

“Politics without Social Capital is Politics at a distance” (Putnam 2000, 341)

Associations, political or non-political, are necessary to maintaining a vibrant democracy (Tocqueville 1969, Berger and Neuhaus 1996). Associations and the social networks of civil society contribute to democracy externally and internally. Externally, associations, from churches and professional groups, to reading groups and social clubs, allow individuals to express their interests and demands on government and “to protect themselves from the abuses of power by their political leaders” (Putnam 2000, 338).

This point is expanded upon by Tocqueville: “When some view is represented by an association, it must take clearer and more precise shape. It counts its supporters and involves them in its cause; these supporters get to know one another, and numbers increase zeal. An association unites the energies of divergent minds and vigorously directs them towards a clearly indicated goal” (Tocqueville 1969, 190). Furthermore, associations are places where social and civic skills are learned, or as stated by Putnam “schools for democracy” (2000, 338). It is in these associations that members learn how to run meetings, speak in public, write letters, organize projects, and debate public issues with civility; it is here that social capital is developed.

According to Diamond, civil society, checks and limits the power of the state, “stimulates political participation, develops a democratic culture of tolerance and bargaining, creates additional channels for articulating and representing interests, generates cross-cutting cleavages, recruits and trains new political leaders, improves the functioning of democratic institutions, widens and enriches the flow of information to citizens, and produces supporting coalitions on behalf of economic reform,” all of which help strengthen and legitimize democracy (Diamond 1999, 227-240). “The performance of our democratic institutions depends in measurable ways upon social capital” (Putnam 2000, 347). The term social capital is broader than civil society, as it encompasses all types of relationships between people, not simply public activities in a democratic and legal setting.

In contrast, public connectedness does not require formal institutions to be effective. A study of democracy movements in East Germany before the collapse of the Berlin Wall, found that recruitments took place through friendship networks and that these informal bonds were more important than ideological commitment, fear of repression, or formal organizing efforts in determining who participated (Opp and Gem 1993). Conversely, studies of political psychology demonstrate that “people divorced from community, occupation, and associations are first and foremost among the supporters of extremism” (Kornhauser 1959, 73).

Democracy in Italy has been shown to be more effective in regions with greater social capital and active community organizations. In the Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany regions of Italy the citizens are engaged by public issue, not by patronage. In such regions, they are more likely to trust one another and to obey the law. In addition, social and political networks tend to be organized horizontally rather than hierarchal and solidarity, civic participation, and integrity are valued in these communities (Putnam 1993).

Putnam uses the French term *incivisme* to describe regions without a full functioning civil society—regions like Calabria and Sicily. In these regions, public affairs are someone else’s business and membership in social and cultural organizations is meager. Laws are made to be broken, and not trusting others, demands sterner disciplines. People feel powerless and exploited.

The disintegration of communist regimes towards democracy has three stages (Haraszti 1990, 85). In the first stage, groups take opportunities as presented by the government for free association, the opposition remains isolated and single-issue movements disassociate from denying the system's legitimacy. In the second stage, the post-totalitarian stage, civil society emerges as a significant contributor to the transition. The society experiences a falling apart of the party-state ideology and a general disenchantment with the official mythology spreads through out the society. The third stage is post-communism where true democracy emerges, building on the forms, energies, experiences, and pluralizations that were already given shape in civil society. Haraszti emphasizes that without the evolution of civil society in the preceding two phases, the transition cannot be successful.

Tismaneanu (2001, 982) concurs with Haraszti's earlier findings: "the truth is that even in countries like Romania and Bulgaria where civil society had been muzzled, the transition to democracy has permitted the acceleration of processes that in other countries took many years to develop." The difficulty comes about through a scarcity of independent associations or even individuals with pre-revolutionary credentials similar to those who were member of the Czech dissident movement Charter 77. He further views the future of pluralism in the post communist societies as linked to the consolidation of civil society initiatives, therefore preventing the slide into tyranny or anarchy. Powell (2004) offers hope to Cuba's emerging civil society as he observes the same determination to stand up for human rights that were witnessed in the Helsinki movement in the former Soviet Union and in the Charter 77 effort in Czechoslovakia. He further attests that the Cuban independent library movement reflects the same resilience and determination that characterized Poland's "Flying Universities."

Development of Non-governmental Associations and Civil Society in Cuba

The state confiscated civic organizations that were not within the revolutionary boundaries. As commonly stated by Castro, "Dentro de la Revolucion, todo; contra la Revolucion, nada" ("all within the revolution, nothing outside the revolution"). Some of the groups allowed to operate included the Federation of Cuban Women, the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, and the National Association of Small Farmers—all within the revolutionary boundaries.

In 1986, the regime permitted decompression in selected sectors of Cuba while maintaining its policy of repression in others. According to Espinosa (1999, 352) "among the most relevant political changes that affected state-society relations were: the creation of a Cuban non-governmental organization sector, an increase in the role of foreign NGOs and international agencies in Cuba, and the decision to allow religious believers to join the Communist Party." Gunn (1995, 1) views the support for NGOs as a matter of financial necessity: "As subsidies from Moscow declined in 1990, the government sought alternative resources." The registration process is governed by the 1985 decree-law Number 54 on "Associations and their Regulation," along with Articles 39, 396, and 397 of the 1985 Civil Code. An organization will not be accepted for registration if it violates the Cuban constitution or is believed to be infringing in the role

of the Cuban government. To be accepted for registration an organization must fulfill the following requirements (Gunn 1995, 3):

- Provide the names of thirty members, the names, addresses, telephone numbers and ages of the top leadership.
- Prove that the organization is self-financing.
- Submit a written statement of goals, together with an explanation of the institution's internal structure.
- Obtain a *negative certificate* from the Ministry of Justice stating that there is no other registered NGO with a similar purpose. If there is a duplicate organization, the new applicant must associate with the one already registered.
- Obtain the sponsorship of a "state reference institution" which affirms that the establishment of the NGO is in its interest. The reference institution subsequently has the right to attend the NGOs board meetings and inspect its accounts to confirm it is carrying out the stated purpose.
- If the NGO is subsequently determined to no longer be performing its original purpose, the Ministry of Justice has the right to dissolve it.

Non-governmental associations in Cuba may be classified as (adapted from Espinosa 1999, 352):

1. Socialist civil society (authorized)
 - These include associations recognized under decree-law 54.
 - Legal NGOs
2. Alternative civil society (not authorized or illegal)
 - Public groups not recognized legally by the state.
 - Pre-revolutionary institutions that remain outside official civil society.
 - Groups involved in dissident, opposition, or independent social activism.
3. Informal civil society
 - Personal networks
 - Spontaneous groupings for single purposes
 - Private associations with no outward manifestations toward the sphere of public interaction.

The Catholic Church and its work through CARITAS is the only group in this study that fully complies with government requirements. Independent Librarians, Physicians, other religious groups, and Journalists best fit the description of alternative civil society, while the Environmentalist would be considered a member of the informal civil society group.

Groups may be denied registration for a variety of reasons and anyone not in full support of the revolution is labeled a dissident. Dissidents immersed themselves in the discussions about Cuba's future as the number of new independent groups grew exponentially, from 50 in 1991 to 134 in 1993 and 214 in 1994 (Altuna 1995). Groups such as the National Association of Independent Cuban Economists (ANEIC) and the Christian Liberation Movement (Movimiento Cristiano Liberacion) made public proposals to deepen reforms and extend them to the political realm.

León (1997, 39) argues that “civil society <in Cuba> has defied government authority, that people of all walks of life have challenged government authority, most typically in nonpolitical ways, and that this has eroded the government’s capacity to maintain moral and political order.” Indeed, the crisis of the 1990s has weakened the pillars of totalitarianism. “The state’s repressive power has also been thwarted by the growth of international, bilateral and multilateral pressures, as well as the vigilance of human rights groups and the Catholic Church” (41).

There have been recent, visible, attempts to coordinate efforts made by the independent groups. The *Concilio Cubano*, Cuban Council, was a forum of some 140 unofficial groups including human rights groups, political opposition groups, and groups of journalists, lawyers, women, young people, economists, engineers, ecologists and trade unionists. It was established in October 1995 to work for political change through peaceful means. Its aims included an amnesty for political prisoners; respect for the Constitution; fulfillment of Cuba's international human rights obligations; lifting of labor restrictions; and movement towards more free and open direct elections. *Concilio Cubano* members were subjected to a government crackdown in late 1995 and early 1996; a planned national meeting scheduled for 24 February 1996 was eventually banned by the authorities. Many individuals were arbitrarily detained; though most were released shortly thereafter, four were sentenced to prison terms and were considered prisoners of conscience by Amnesty International (Amnesty International, downloaded 6 May 2004, <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR250172003>).

Another project coordinating efforts and calling for change was "**The Homeland Belongs to All,**" made public at a press conference on June 27, 1997 by members of the Working Group. They were detained and held by security forces for eighteen months without being formally charged. On February, 1999, after passing the “Gag Law,” the Group of Four were brought to trial and sentenced. Radio Marti broadcasted the text of the document several times when it was first released and after the trial, was broadcast over Cuban television many listeners have called asking for copies of the full text of the Working Group's statement. “There is no question that issuance of such a document is one of the most daring actions of dissidents in challenging the state monopoly of ideas, policies and public opinion” (Roberts et al 1999, 6).

The project with greatest visibility, the **Varela Project**, was lead by Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas of the Christian Liberation Movement in March of 2001 as a petition project to collect signatures from the population in request of a referendum. The Varela project has been named after the priest Felix Varela, one of the heroes of the Cuban fight for independence in the 19th century. The Varela Project seeks six basic reforms:

- freedom of expression,
- freedom of association,
- amnesty for political prisoners,
- the right to form private companies,
- new electoral law,
- and free election.

The project received the endorsement of almost 200 opposition groups in Cuba and submitted 11,020 signed petitions to the Cuban government's parliamentary body, the National Assembly in May of 2002. The petition surpasses the 10,000 signatures required by the existing socialist Constitution, article 88g, to request a national referendum. While visiting Habana, former President Jimmy Carter recognized the Varela Project on national TV making this the first time that many Cubans openly heard any mention of the signature-gathering campaign. The Cuban government did not address this petition directly, but rather, carried out its own signature drive to declare the 43-year totalitarian regime "irrevocable" (Cuban Democratic Directorate 2001 and 2002).

The Varela Project thrust the Cuban opposition movement into the spotlight by capturing international headlines. In 2002, Payá received from the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought and the National Democratic Institute's 15th Annual W. Averell Harriman Democracy Award. Today, promoters of the Project continue to collect signatures, insisting that the Cuban government listen to the voices of the thousands who are calling for change although activists for the Varela Project have been subjected to threats, short-term detention, summons, confiscation of materials and other forms of harassment by State Security agents. Indeed, several of the initiative's leaders were arrested in the March 2003 roundup.

Fernández (2000) refers to what one finds in Cuba as a proto-civil society with increasing number and visibility of small, and not so small, groups and institutions voicing different interests and identities internal and external to the framework of the party and the state. The growth is in part due to economic reform after Rectification³ which opened space for additional and alternative groups. The process has not been linear, however. After 1996, the state adopted a hard-line strategy in an attempt to eliminate pockets of civil society distressing some of the emergent groups, particularly the intellectuals and human rights activist. Many have suffered imprisonment and other forms of harassment, in particular the infamous "actos de repudio" through which the government unleashes groups of hoodlums to intimidate dissidents and their families.

In addition, as the government-organized non-governmental organizations (GONGOs) were creating support networks internally and externally to foreign NGOs, foundations, and academic institutions, the organizations of alternative civil society were doing the same thing with supporters in the Cuban diaspora and the international human rights community (Espinosa 2001). More discussion is to follow on these associations.

Foreign NGOs that have taken positions with which the Cuban government disagrees are not welcomed in Cuba. Their representatives have been expelled, asked to leave, or left of their own volition in frustration after having their staff harassed or their work interfered. Espinosa (2001) provides the following examples:

³ The Rectification Campaign called for an expanded role for ideology in daily life and economic management and, inaugurated an austerity program.

- Suzanne Bilello of the Committee to Protect Journalists was detained, interrogated, and deported by Cuban authorities on June 20, 1996.
- Pax Christi-Netherlands became a target of Cuba's international propaganda war after it published a critical report in 1991. Pax Christi Netherlands remains active in support for human rights in Cuba. In 1996, it organized a European Platform for Human Rights and Democracy in Cuba which included 15 NGOs.
- Doctors without Frontiers-Spain suspended its aid program in December 1999⁴ after months of interference and harassment. Cuban authorities reiterated "the need to control NGOs in Cuba" in meetings with the NGOs representatives.
- The Pablo Milanes Foundation (FPM), founded and run by a member of the revolution was closed in 1995 with its assets confiscated and redistributed. "The FPM will pass into history as the first governmental NGO dissolved by government for deviating from the official model and for being too autonomous" (Puerta 1996, 21).

Castro, guided by its desire to keep the economy and society under maximum control, has supported a shallow and timid transformation towards civil society. "The government and its single party do not appear to comprehend that under the present circumstances the state must either encourage the maturation and emancipation of the civil society or devour that same civil society" (León 1997, 50). This statement was made by León prior to the March 2003 crackdown.

Tolerance of the civil society movement by the Cuban government greatly diminished in March of 2003 with the arrest of 75 dissidents, many signers of the Varela Project, in the space of several days in mid-March. They were subjected to summary trials and were quickly sentenced to long prison terms of up to 28 years (Amnesty International 2003). "Despite the Cuban government's claims that such acts threaten national security and therefore warranted prosecution, the above activities constitute legitimate exercise of freedoms of expression, assembly and association, and cannot in themselves justify the authorities' repressive reaction" (Amnesty International 2003, 36). For a full listing of those arrested, reason stated for convictions, and sentence, please refer to Amnesty International (2003, 44-85). For full manuscripts of the trials in Spanish, please refer to Hernandez-Trujillo and Benemelis (2004). A partial list of charges brought against Cubans may be found below (as found in the US State Department website <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/27198.htm> downloaded 3/23/04):

- Buying toys for disadvantaged children with money from a Miami group; accepting the Hellman/Hammett Award from the non-governmental organization Human Rights Watch. **Victor Arroyo, 52, journalist, 26 years in prison.**

⁴In late 1999, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) made the difficult decision to discontinue its work in Cuba. Some MSF programs in Cuba were successfully completed and handed over to the Ministry of Health. But excessive administrative control by Cuban authorities and related problems with local supply channels made it difficult for the organization to continue running other projects independently and effectively, prompting the decision to withdraw. From the MSF 2000 International Activity Report <http://www.msf.org/countries/index.cfm?indexid=22D11AB5-BEC7-11D4-852200902789187E> downloaded 3/23/04.

- Maintaining ties to the international non-governmental organization Doctors Without Frontiers; visiting prisoners and their families. **Marcelo Cano Rodriguez, 38, medical doctor, 18 years in prison.**
- Forming the "illegal" and independent Teachers College of Cuba and criticizing the Cuban education system. **Juan Roberto de Miranda Hernandez, 57, 20 years in prison.**
- Speaking on a radio program about the Cuban economy. **Oscar Espinosa Chepe, 62, journalist, 20 years in prison.**
- Being paid for articles on Cuba and the Cuban system. **Ricardo Severino Gonzalez Alfonso, 53, journalist and correspondent for Reporters Without Borders, 20 years in prison.**
- Associating with Amnesty International and other international human rights organizations. **Marcelo Manuel Lopez Banobre, 39, tugboat captain, 15 years in prison.**
- Associating with the Florida International University; having a typewriter, fax, and books in his home. **Hector Fernando Maseda Gutierrez, 60, engineer and physicist, 20 years in prison.**
- Having "subversive" labor-related books and magazines in his home. **Nelson Molinet Espino, 38, independent trade unionist, 25 years in prison.**
- Having "aggressive and corrosive" leaflets and literature in his home, putting pro-democracy posters on the street, not paying dues to the official union, having an issue of the Miami newspaper *El Nuevo Herald* at his workplace. **Felix Navarro Rodriguez, 49, journalist and educator, 25 years in prison.**

“Overall, the March crackdown was met with an unprecedented international reaction, prompting a heightened level of scrutiny of Cuba’s human rights situation at many different levels. The impact of this in Cuba remains unclear” (Amnesty International 2003, 26). The costs of taking the risks are high, resulting in imprisonment, exile, and/or loss of employment, in addition to personal discredit. According to Fernández (2000, 135), “individuals pursued their goals largely out of personal affective and experiential motivations and normative convictions.”

All but one of the Cuban individuals interviewed for this study left Cuba prior to the crackdown of 2003. However, they all remain active on work in Cuba in their respective areas. The individuals were all educated; many with advanced degrees. With the exception of one that was currently studying, the rest were gainfully employed in professional positions. The methodology used for the study will be discussed prior to discussion on the specific associations.

Methodology

Cuba presents methodological challenges and others’ experiences assisted in determining the appropriate approach. “If you do it in the island, you are met with Cubans double-talking their way out of trouble with the regime. If you do it outside the island, you have

a sample that has already shown a bias by leaving the island” (Roberts et al 1999, 46). In studying public opinion among Cubans, Roberts et al uses as a surrogate for Cubans on the island by interviewing Cuban émigrés who have been in the United States for three months or less. From December 1998 to April 1999, interviews are obtained from 1023 persons. Their initial plan contemplated a small sample of direct phone calls to Cubans on the island as a way of validating responses of recent Cuban émigrés. However, with the passage of Law 88⁵, the idea was discarded in order to avoid jeopardizing Cubans participating in such calls. Other studies are qualitative in nature and consist of small number of interviews (see for example Reporters without Borders 2003). The smaller studies allow for richness in content although it presents reliability issues. “Qualitative research properly seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals that inhabit these settings” (Berg 1998, 7). Therefore, qualitative research provides the methods for this study to understand and get to the meaning of civil society currently in Cuba and the necessary ingredients for future success.

In focusing on this study, it is important to re-iterate its ambition: This research project aspires to understand the work of non-governmental associations in Cuba and their contribution towards civil society. The qualitative methodological approach involved the internet, library, and personal searches for individuals doing research on the subject of non-governmental organizations working in Cuba (United States as well as non-United States based)⁶ identification of NGOs found in the United States available for interviews and finally, identification of individuals operating non-governmental associations in Cuba available for interviews. Individuals were contacted by telephone and or e-mail to schedule interviews. Interviewees were asked for names of additional individuals or organizations that they would recommend for interviews. This resulted in the identification of United States organizations providing humanitarian aid with an emphasis in the following Cuban associations: Religious, Mass Media, Librarian, Medical, and Environmentalist. The purpose was to understand the experience that these groups have under the current regime, effectiveness as perceived from their accomplishments, the criteria necessary for success, and the civil society’s larger impact on the well-being of society.

Eighteen interviews were held at a time and place convenient to the interviewee; all were held in the United States and in the following cities: Washington, DC; Newark, DE; Baltimore, MD; and Miami, FL. Individuals representing the Cuban associations were recent arrivals to the United States, between two and five years. All of the interviews

⁵ Law 88 was quickly nicknamed the Gag law and implemented in February 1999. It target anyone who “collaborated in any way with foreign radio or TV broadcasts, magazines or other media” or “supplied information” considered likely to serve US interests and providing imprisonment for up to 20 years, confiscation of all personal property and fines of up to 100,000 pesos (Reporters without Borders, June 2003, p.8).

⁶ A partial list of US and non-US non-governmental organizations working in Cuba with address, telephone, fax, e-mail address, contact person, description, URL and category may be found in appendix. Included in the appendix are to US government organizations; Radio/TV Marti and U.S. Department of State.

were held in Spanish and translated by the author. The same questions were administered to organizations in the United States and to the individuals representing the Cuban associations. Two of the interviews of non-governmental organizations in the United States were held in English.

The interviews focused on what Perry and Thomson (2004) and Putnam (2000) had found to be qualities of successful programs in the area of civic service in order to gain an understanding of the structural approach and constraints to the non-governmental associations in Cuba. According to Perry and Thomson (2004, 30), “the nature of the evidence we currently have on service raises serious questions about the feasibility, or desirability, of developing universal effectiveness standards.” Instead, general attributes are most useful. The qualities of successful programs involved program management, member training, fiscal management, characteristic of the sponsoring agency, leadership, program visibility, and administrative burdens. Ingredients necessary for social capital—trust, reciprocity, and transparency—(Putnam 2000) were also discussed. Qualities of successful programs and social capital will be discussed separately as they are applied to the areas under study in the Cuban case.

The interviews were conducted after the literature review in order to understand the constraints under which non-governmental associations operate in Cuba. Notes from the interviews were written from notes taken during the interview and typed as soon as possible. A detailed, written summary of the interviews follow for each of the five groups: religious associations, mass media, independent libraries, independent physicians/clinics, and independent environmentalist. Information from the interviews was analyzed and coded for trends.

Religious Associations in Cuba

Religious life was interpreted as “dissident” in Cuba and the practice of all religion was viewed as a potent source of political opposition after the dissolution of civil society and the destruction of internal opposition (Alfonso 1985, Ramos 1989, and Short 1993). “Believers and their children were kept under special scrutiny and were denied access to a wide variety of educational and job opportunities” (Espinosa 2001, 180). Since to communism religion is the opiate of the masses, most communist countries encouraged atheism among their citizens. The largest organized religion in Cuba is the Roman Catholic Church. However, officially Cuba has been an atheist state for the most of the Castro era. Members of Christian churches were denied membership to some state run organizations such as the Cuban Communist Party.

A constitutional amendment on July 12, 1992, changed the nature of the Cuban state from atheist to secular. The relative thaw in state-society relations also encouraged elements of alternative civil society which had previously been repressed by the regime to seek a role in public life. The churches responded to a religious revival that began in the late 1980s and intensified with the onset of the ideological crisis of communism and the

material deprivation of the “Special Period in time of Peace” (this is the term used by Castro after the fall of the Soviet Union). The Catholic Church began to reclaim spaces and social role in the life of Cubans it had been forced to abandon during its withdrawal into the underground in the 1960s. It appealed for reforms and a national dialogue to solve Cuba’s crisis in the pastoral message, “*El amor todo lo espera*,” (“Love waits for All”) in September 1993. The regime responded by accusing the church of “treason” in an article in the government ran newspaper, *Granma* (Espinosa 2001, 133). Yet, the church persevered and began to allow its lay groups and publications to explore critical issues and reclaim the right of believers to be full participants in Cuba’s public life.

There were those who hoped that, in the wake of Pope John Paul II’s January 1998 visit to Cuba, the Church would experience a dramatic expansion in its social presence. This has not occurred, but at the same time, there is evidence the Church has become revitalized and has begun to develop a stronger presence in Cuban society. There are reports of increased attendance at Mass (particularly among young people), and even though there has been some drop-off since the immediate aftermath of the Pope’s visit, there is visibly more intense commitment by those new members who have continued to participate in Church activities. The Papal visit also infused the Church hierarchy and clergy with a new sense of energy and self-confidence. Observations from a Spaniard who visited Cuba on several occasions stated that the Church could be heard from time to time reacting to the government’s policies (personal conversation 12/03). Moreover, magazines such as *Vitral* and *Palabra Nueva* remain outspoken on religious and political issues. As a result some currently view the Catholic Church as most active and significant non-governmental association because of its national reach and its international connections (see Fernández 2000 for example). The Catholic Church, through the government, distributes food and medicine with the contributions from Catholic Relief Services.

In their survey, Roberts et al asked of the role of religion in a transition and whether the government would allow the Catholic Church in particular, any role. The responses were overwhelmingly negative. A significant majority (67 percent) thought unlikely that religion could play any role in the transition and an overwhelming majority (95 percent) rejected the notion that the regime would allow the Catholic Church any role (Roberts et al 1999, 43). The Popes message during his visit to Cuba in 1998 and the likelihood that these changes would take place were specifically questioned by the Roberts study. The results are found in table 1.

Table 1: Pope's Message and Likely-hood of Prevail in Cuba under Current Political System

Message	Unlikely to prevail (%)
Freedom of association	92
Freedom of assembly	92
Freedom of expression	91
Abandon the practice of abortion	81
That you should tell the truth	76
That you should not have fear	76
Children should be allowed to have a religious education	70
That the world should open to Cuba	58
Source: Roberts et al 1999, 26	

In a recent interview, Cardinal Jaime Lucas Ortega, the Archbishop of Habana, spoke to Catholics in Milan Italy on the limitations of the Church in Cuba particularly in providing education and media. He added “the Office of Religious Affairs of the Central Committee of the Communist Party is always hovering over us. It is an organ of control which limits the evangelizing action of the Church” (Milan, Italy 2003, ZENIT.org <http://www.zenit.org/> downloaded 10/8/03). He acknowledged during the interview that there had been growth at the religious level although people continue to leave the country, especially young people, which he attributes to “lost hope in our country”.

Protestant churches affiliated with the government-sanctioned Cuban Council of Churches (CCC) also expanded the repertoire of their activities. In addition, “the greatest institutional growth and increase in activity took place among the non-CCC evangelical churches” (Espinosa 2001, 134). Other groups found in the Island include the Cuban Ecumenical Council, the African religion association “Asociación Yoruba de Cuba”, a Jewish Association, “Casa de la Comunidad Hebrea de Cuba,” and the Masons (Puerta 1996). The Bible is the number one selling book in Cuba today (State Department 2004).

“Faith-based nongovernmental organizations currently conduct neighborhood humanitarian services, providing transportation, obtaining medical supplies, and providing meals. Church affiliated social services are permitted to receive educational, financial, and material support from sister organizations in the United States [and elsewhere]. In return, the Cuban government demands that church-affiliated NGOs on the island serve people without regard to their religious beliefs” (Babun 2001, 4).

Program Design

Interviews were held with representatives of programs using the typology for quality programs as determined by Perry and Thomson (2004) and Putnam (2000). The programs studied under religious were Catholic Relief Services (started as CARITAS Cubana in 1991 and partnered with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in 1993), Order of

MALTA (began funding humanitarian projects in Cuba in 1998), the Evangelical Christian Humanitarian Outreach for Cuba, Inc (ECHO-Cuba which started its programs in Cuba in 1989), a Cuban employee of a Catholic Church archdiocese, and a visiting professor from Spain; the last two asking to remain nameless. Of these groups, Catholic Relief Services was the only one in full compliance with the government and would be classified under Espinosa's typology as Socialist Civil Society and CRS's representative made it clear that understanding NGO's in Cuba requires recognition that they are linked to government somehow as there is no buffer between the government and the people. The other groups did find a buffer around the government and the people by "staying off the radar screen" and not registering with the government. All three groups see themselves as providing humanitarian aid. ECHO's focus is on emerging protestant churches with two objectives: To operate openly and to increase faith based NGOs in order to create civil society. CRS focuses on the poor and supports CARITAS Cubana in programs for children with Down Syndrome and the elderly. It is also working with a pig production program in Matanzas and a brick factory on the Isle of Youth to rebuild and repair homes after hurricane Isidore and Lili. The Order of MALTA has been funding feeding centers on the Island, funds seminarians, and provides medical supplies to Bishops for parish Clinics. MALTA has sent rosaries to Cuba in the past and is currently working on a retirement home for the religious.

All programs are evaluated based on numbers served. In ECHO's case this is provide through monthly reports. In addition, ministers and physicians collaborate to provide testimonies of improvements in health. MALTA receives periodic reports with number of people served (fed, clothed) and seminarians trained. Checks are sent in increments to pay for services. The Cuban government sends a report to CRS with information on the distribution of supplies.

Program Management

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the Order of MALTA receive their requests from the Catholic Church. In CRS's case, the requests come from CARITAS Cuba, while MALTA's come from the Church hierarchy in Cuba. In both cases, they spoke of having an open and good relationship with those making requests. CARITAS Cuba is affiliated with CARITAS Internationalis and the main office is housed in Habana and run by Maritza Sanchez. CARITAS Cubana has an office in every Dioceses in Cuba following the Bishops requests in 1991. The Archdioceses employee interviewed mentioned that his work although full-time, is without pay. ECHO has two representatives in Cuba: one in Habana and the other in Santiago. In addition, there are 15 project managers in charge of the different programs. These programs include hospice, nutrition, care of the elderly, crisis management, and tuition and computers for seminarians.

Member Training

Formal training is not provided by these groups. CARITAS Cuba does the hiring and training. In ECHO and MALTA'S case, only guidance is provided. Training is being

provided in Santo Domingo for Cuban Catholics. The employee of the Archdiocese hopes to take the students from Santo Domingo to Cuba in the near future.

Fiscal Management

ECHO's main source of funding is from private donations and faith based foundations. The organizations are able to choose the projects to fund. Individual donors are also given the option to adopt projects. USAID funds collaborations with others.

Catholic Relief Services receives all of their supplies through non-governmental donors. To date they have donated 22 to 23 million dollars worth of supplies. The shipment is also covered by the donor, if at all possible.

The Order of Malta has been established as a church affiliated foundation. All funding is provided through private donations; all donations are tax deductible.

The Archdiocese employee spoke of international support to participate in education and training overseas.

Characteristic of Sponsoring agency

Putnam's (2000) criteria are applied and consist of trust, reciprocity and transparency. ECHO finds trust among the faith based community inside Cuba or among the "hermanos o hermanas" (term used for brothers and sisters in Christ). Hermanos o hermanas are able to decipher who is part of the evangelical group after a very short conversation. Distrust is great among the society at large. MALTA says that trust is found among the Church leadership and provided anecdotal information that members from the "Comite de Defensa" make personal requests for medical supplies. Catholic Relief Services find a sense of trust and honesty with CARITAS Cubana.

Reciprocity is provided by ECHO through collaboration with University projects, including the non-funded. For example, independent libraries are provided with books. Catholic Relief Services finds reciprocity with local Catholic Church on a faith level. MALTA provides and is provided a non-threatening environment in which to provide funding for humanitarian aid.

All of these agencies provide transparency by publishing their work on the internet. Catholic Relief Services adds that there is a transparency of intentions in the relationship they harbor with CARITAS Cubana.

A somewhat different and interesting view was provided by the employee of the Archdiocese living in Cuba. He views trust as being difficult and continuing as difficult in Cuba for many years to come; a culture of distrust has been developed by the revolution. He views transparency as an element of trust: "there is a strong dependency

on trust for transparency so therefore it does not exist”. However, reciprocity is more present in Cuba and more possible in the future: “people are use to cooperating and coordinating in order to make ends meet”.

Leadership

ECHO provides the vision of a Christian Cuba; one that will be very active in the future and the religious will be involved in social programs. MALTA provides the vision of more space for the church; a parallel structure. Catholic Relief Services sees the vision as an opportunity to serve the pastoral needs of the poor.

Program Visibility

Openness is difficult for the Cubans; lack of liberty and funds are preventing growth for ECHO. The work of Caritas Cubana is known to the people of Cuba, but not necessarily Catholic Relief Services. MALTA does not have members living in Cuba, so they may not be as well known through out the Island. The individual from the Archdiocese was familiar with both CARITAS and MALTA. He also mentioned Ad Lethem.

Administrative Burden

ECHO finds it difficult to get financial reports from project directors; “some would rather loose funds than report for fear that the government will learn of the aid.” MALTA finds its administrative burdens in the license requirement from the Treasury Department. Catholic Relief Services prefers the term process to burden and talks of a 6 to 8 week time frame to complete the requests as approvals are necessary from the Cuban government and CARITAS Cubana. According to the employee of the Archdiocese, administrative burdens are mostly financial as all are dependent on donations. “CARITAS goes through the legal means and much is kept by the government.”

Mass Media

Cuba’s national constitution and press laws give the government an absolute monopoly of the written, broadcast, and online media. All belong to the state and require Journalists to belong to the Cuban Journalist Union, a political body under the authority of the communist party (Reporters without Borders 2003). Independent Journalists work outside of the government’s control; they distribute their work in the foreign based media (mostly through electronic means), Cuban-American radio stations, and Radio/TV Marti, funded by the U.S. government.

“The economic crisis weakened the government-controlled mass media” as the scarcity of paper and ink brought about by the crisis curtailed publication of a number of newspapers and journals (Aquirre 1998, 334). As the government curtailed their operation, a new electronic means of mass communication was forming outside of Cuba with contributions from independent journalists. Examples include radio and television communications transmitted through Radio (<http://www.martinoticias.com/radio.asp>) and TV Martí. CubaNet (www.cubanet.org) an independent, non-profit organization in Miami publishes national and international press reports on Cuban human rights and economic issues. The InterAmerican Press Association (www.sipisapa.org) also publishes on their website work of independent journalists, reports on the state of press freedom, and is dedicated to defending the freedom of expression of the press throughout the Americas. Nueva Prensa Cubana (www.nuevaprensa.org) publishes and transmits via radio work of independent journalists in Cuba. Cubaencuentro.com features Encuentro en la Red where it publishes from Madrid, Spain article on politics, culture, art, sport, interviews, and opinions on Cuba.

Wilfredo Cancio (2003), a Reporter with the Nuevo Herald and a previous journalism professor in Cuba, views the benefit to the independent journalists as doing away with the State’s monopoly on information. He further interprets the arrests of dissidents as a desperate attempt by the Cuban government to maintain control. Moreover, Cancio views as signs of a growing civil society not only the political dissidents, the independent journalists, and the signatures on the Varela Project, but also the many that are quietly opposed to totalitarian control.

Cason, Chief of the Mission, US Intersection in Cuba, also comments on the growth of the independent journalists:

The work of the independent journalists had matured rapidly over the last two years. What began as a few voices in the wilderness occasionally telephoning and faxing reports to contacts on the outside, burgeoned into associations of journalists with established contacts — including some with regular columns in U.S. and international newspapers — and in the case of one association, their own magazine. Several of these associations had even begun their own training programs.

<http://usembassy.state.gov/havana/wwwhcason.html> downloaded 3/12/04

The Cuban Catholic Church publishes about a dozen independent magazines, their content, distribution, and production is independent of the government. However, the “Church’s requests to have its own programmes on government radio and TV stations have always been refused, despite pleas from Pope John-Paul II when he visited Cuba in 1998” (Reporters without Borders 2003, 11). The best-known and most controversial magazine is Vitral from Pinar del Rio. The government waged a fierce campaign against its editor, Dagoberto Valdés provoking the Vatican to name him to its Justice of the Peace Commission. His magazine is also published electronically and contains the following description on its web-page (see www.vitral.org; notice that the center was started in 1/29/1993):

VITRAL is a Cuban sociocultural catholic magazine. A space for transparency and reflection in the pluralism and multicolour light the Civic and Religious Education Center offers, in the Pinar del Río Diocese. THE CIVIC AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CENTER (CFER by the Spanish initials) has the purposes of promoting to men and women as free, responsible and sharing persons. It contributes to the rebuilding and strengthening of the Cuban civil society, and thus to make a most democratic future. The reference for its inspiration is: the Emmanuel Mounier's personalism, the education in freedom of Paulo Freire, and the think-training school of Félix Varela.

Each diocese on the Island has its own magazine and it includes “Palabra Nueva” (New Word) published by the archdiocese of Habana, printing 10,300 copies in November 2002 (Reporters without Borders 2003). Two occasional magazines are also published by lay people independent of the Church hierarchy. Although the Catholic Press is an exception to the government monopoly on information, few magazines are printed and technical resources are limited.

Radio Martí began to transmit in May of 1985 from studios in Washington DC. These transmissions were the culmination of three years of bipartisan efforts that lead to the approval of the Act of Radial Transmissions for Cuba of 1983. Currently located in Miami, Florida, Radio Martí transmits seven days a week, 24 hours daily in short wave and average (A.M.). The transmissions include news, music, varieties and analysis. Information on listening habits based on interviews of Cubans arriving to the United States, indicates that Radio Martí is the most popular station with the respondents, with 58 percent listenership. “When the data was segregated according to number of hours of daily listening, the Radio Marti advantage became even greater” (Roberts 1999, 28).

Independent journalists, a highly visible group, had twenty-seven arrested during the crackdown of March 2003 with sentences of 14 to 27 years (Reporters Without Borders, June 2003). The list below appears on the Reporters Without Borders website with information on each of the independent journalists

(http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=6819 downloaded 5/12/04):

Name	Agency	Sentence asked for	Verdict
<u>Victor Rolando Arroyo Carmona</u>	Unión de Periodistas y Escritores Cubanos Independientes (UPECI)	Life	26 years
<u>Pedro Argüelles Morán</u>	Cooperativa Avileña de Periodistas Independientes (CAPI)	15 to 25 years	20 years
<u>Mijail Barzaga Lugo</u>	Agencia Noticiosa de Cuba (ANC)	15 years	15 years
<u>Carmelo Díaz Fernández</u>	Agencia de Prensa Sindical Independiente (APSIC, head)	15 to 25 years	15 years
<u>Oscar Espinosa Chepe</u>	Independent	20 years	20 years
<u>Adolfo Fernández Sainz</u>	Pátria	15 years	15 years

<u>Miguel Galván Gutiérrez</u>	Havana Press	Life	26 years
<u>Julio César Gálvez Rodríguez</u>	Independent	18 years	15 years
<u>Edel José García Díaz</u>	Centro Norte Press (CNP, head)	16 years	15 years
<u>José Luis García Paneque</u>	Libertad (head)	18 years	24 years
<u>Ricardo González Alfonso</u>	De Cuba (head) / Reporters Without Borders' correspondent	Life	20 years
<u>Alejandro González Raga</u>	Independent	18 years	14 years
<u>Ivan Hernández Carrillo</u>	Pátria	30 years	25 years
<u>Normando Hernández González</u>	Colegio de Periodistas Independientes de Camagüey (CPIC, head)	30 years	25 years
<u>Juan Carlos Herrera Acosta</u>	Agencia de Prensa Libre Oriental (APLO)	15 to 25 years	20 years
<u>Mario Enrique Mayo Hernández</u>	Félix Varela (head)	20 years	20 years
<u>José Ubaldo Izquierdo Hernández</u>	Grupo de Trabajo Decoro	20 years	16 years
<u>Héctor Maseda Gutiérrez</u>	Grupo de Trabajo Decoro	20 years	20 years
<u>Jorge Olivera Castillo</u>	Havana Press (head)	15 years	18 years
<u>Pablo Pacheco Ávila</u>	Cooperativa Avileña de Periodistas Independientes	22 years	20 years
<u>Fabio Prieto Llorente</u>	Independent	15 years	20 years
<u>Alfredo Manuel Pulido López</u>	El Mayor	15 years	14 years
<u>Raúl Rivero Castañeda</u>	Cuba Press (head)	20 years	20 years
<u>Omar Rodríguez Saludes</u>	Nueva Prensa (head)	15 to 25 years	27 years
<u>Omar Moises Ruiz Hernández</u>	Grupo de Trabajo Decoro	18 years	18 years
<u>Manuel Vázquez Portal</u>	Grupo de Trabajo Decoro	18 years	18 years

Prior to the crack-down, Reporters without Borders conducted a survey of a dozen foreign media correspondents: seven from French and British news agencies, four from French, British and Spanish newspapers and a correspondent for the Spanish TV station TVE. The foreign correspondents spoke of “restrictive visa policies, forbidden topics (including Fidel Castro’s health and dissidents), constant police surveillance, psychological harassment, official summonses and deportation” (Reporters without Borders 2003, 1). The foreign correspondents emphasized that this is all palling compared to what Cuban journalists encounter, some of which was witnessed in March of 2003.

Program Design

Cubamet, Nueva Prensa, and The Inter-American Society of Press (SIP abbreviations from Spanish title) were interviewed as umbrella organizations providing outlets for independent journalists. A Reporter with El Nuevo Herald who had been a journalism professor in Cuba until 1993 was interviewed. Radio Marti and TV personnel were also interviewed for contacts they have on the Island with the dissident groups. Again, all were interviewed using the typology for quality programs as determined by Perry and Thomson (2004) and Putnam (2000).

The concept for the Inter-American Society Association was developed in 1926. The mission of The Inter-American Society of Press (SIP) is an organization without aims of dedicated profit to defend the freedom of expression and press in all the Américas. They have as their main objectives to:

- To defend the freedom of press where it wants that it is opposed in the Américas
- To protect the interests of the press in the Américas
- To defend the dignity, the rights and the responsibilities of the media
- To encourage to elevated norms of professionalism and enterprise conduct
- To promote the interchange of ideas and information that contribute technical and professional development of the press. To encourage to an ample knowledge and a greater exchange of information between the towns of the Américas in support to the basic principles of a free society and of the individual freedom.

Nueva Prensa began in 1994 when Raul Rivero contacted Perez-Crespo proposing that the Independent Press would publish for pay.

Cubamet began in 1995 with electronic media in 1996. The mission of Cubamet is to provide support to the press and to independent cooperatives. They also publish and provide information for the libraries, but do not have much of a relationship with religious groups. They have two major goals:

1. To be known internationally.
2. To have impact inside of Cuba. For example, they published a story from an independent journalist about pollution. The government rectified the situation even though it was not one of their reporters.

Program Management

In addition to writing for other independent outlets, Raul Rivero was the manager of SIP in Cuba; he is currently serving a 20 year sentence. One of the individuals that claimed to be an independent journalist, providing articles to SIP, was a government informant. Written press is what is of major interest to SIP; its members are the newspapers, not the individuals. SIP receives news stories from Cuba via fax and often handwritten. They pay \$400 per month to Independent Journalists to cover expenses. Information may be found at informecuba.com. SIP has been around for 60 years. Every six months they have conferences to discuss the Hemisphere. Cuba is of importance, but one of the many countries they represent. On the other hand, Cubanet and Nueva Prensa provide support to the Cuban independent press exclusively.

Member Training

To provide training for journalist in Cuba, Cubanet is collaborating with Florida International University. In March 2003, there were 116 independent journalists registered for the distance-learning course offered by Florida International University's International Media Center. "The center had expected some dropouts and no further registrations. But the opposite has occurred: None dropped out, and 16 additional journalists registered" (Virtue, *deputy director of the International Media Center at Florida International University in Miami*, posted on Mon, May. 03, 2004 in The Miami Herald downloaded on <http://www.cubanet.org/CNews/y04/may04/05e8.htm>, 5/7/04).

Cubanet employees also provide advice and edit; these are shared with the Cuban independent journalists.

The Sociedad de Periodistas Marqué was formed in Cuba to provide training.

Fiscal Management

SIP charges an annual fee depending on the circulation of the newspaper, additional funds come from conferences. There are 10,300 newspaper members.

Cubanet sends money to the independent journalists via Canada, so that they can live and fax articles using a debit card. Three grants provide funding to Cubanet: 1) USAID which does not allow that money be sent to Cuba. This money is used for the Operation of the Center, employee's salaries. 2) National Endowment for Democracy--This money is sent to the journalist in Cuba to cover expenses such as faxing of articles. 3) Knights foundation—provides a 2 year grant for magazines, books, and equipment for Cuba's independent journalists.

Perez-Crespo has been supporting Nueva Prensa with proper money; this year she is applying for a grant.

Characteristic of Sponsoring Agency

“Paranoia is justified in this society” (Trotti during interview).

SIP had developed trust with Rivero with whom they had a relationship since 1994. No one from SIP is allowed in Cuba. Transparency does not exist in Cuba and all actions are anti-democratic. Reciprocity exists in some countries, but not in Cuba. SIP provided the example of Cuba, Venezuela, and Canada refusing to sign the Chapultepec treaty⁷.

Cubanet believes that they develop trust by publishing real stories, and building relationships based on shared values. Transparency is very important to Cubanet and all their work appears on the internet. Reciprocity is provided by others verifying stories and publishing articles overseas.

Nueva Prensa considers trust, transparency, and reciprocity concepts of a free world. In Cuba, people infiltrate the system to do damage.

The Reporter from el Nuevo Herald felt that trust is at its very early stages among Cubans. Transparency—independent journalists need opportunity for dialog in the interior, through radio, publication, but this is not yet available. He believes that an open society is needed for reciprocity. He added that “he remains optimistic of the future.”

Leadership

Consistency and persistency is the culture of SIP and it is reflected through their leadership. SIP has 60 Directors; 20 are rotated annually.

Program Visibility

Governments try to avoid SIP; Castro denies their work. As stated by Virtue on Press day (<http://www.cubanet.org/CNews/y04/may04/05e8.htm>, downloaded 5/7/04):

That Castro fears the independent journalists is evident by the fact that undercover agents from state security infiltrated the movement. Oscar Espinosa Chepe, Carmelo Díaz Fernández and Héctor Maseda were among the 18 independent journalists who participated in a clandestine workshop that I gave in Havana on Dec. 16, 2002. Three others later identified themselves as undercover agents. One of them, Manuel David Orrio, had been passing himself off as an independent journalist for 12 years.

⁷ The Declaration of Chapultepec is based on the concept that "no law or act of government may limit freedom of expression or of the press, whatever the medium" (retrieved from <http://www.declarationofchapultepec.org/> on 4/20/04)

The Director of SIP believes that international pressure is needed on Cuba. However, individuals serving jail sentences have helped to get attention and bring about change.

Although Cubanet publishes all views, does not work with political organizations nor declares political views; it is viewed as part of the “Cuban mafia” (the term coined by Fidel Castro for the Cuban diaspora). Berre explained that “even Gramma”, the Cuban government’s newspaper, is on their website. Although Cubanet has gained international credibility, Cuba has problems with the level of freedom Cubanet promotes.

Independent journalists in Cuba have been recognized by world organizations. For example, Raul Rivero was awarded the World Press Freedom Prize by UNESCO on May 3, 2004 in Belgrade. An international prize that honors those who promote freedom of expression; particularly those who risk their lives to do so, an activity that currently has him serving 27 years in jail and made him unable to attend the ceremony (See Miami Herald, May 3, 2004).

Administrative Burden

Administrative burdens are encountered on a regular basis. Cubanet provides the following examples of hardships that they encounter: getting the money to Cuba for the independent journalists, sending faxes from Cuba, and getting letters out of jail. There are currently 30 independent journalists in prison. When the journalists were jailed, the government took their fax machines, bank accounts, and even their furniture.

Nueva Prensa sees a need to assist independent journalists financially as fear keeps them from joining the independent press. Once journalists are labeled as dissidents, they lose their jobs, educational opportunities, their families are harassed, and they risk jail sentences.

The need continues for outlets and funding to be able to express oneself as an independent journalist in Cuba. Some of the independent journalists came from the political movements others were journalists. Of the 120 independent journalists, 30 are left; some have left the country and others are in jail. Many are women; the youngest is 16 and Feliz Navarro’s daughter. He is currently in jail for his work. The oldest is also a woman.

Independent Libraries

Ramón Colas and his wife Berta Mexidor began Cuba's Independent Library Project in Las Tunas in 1998. They were emboldened by a Castro speech proclaiming that, "in Cuba there are no prohibited books, only those we do not have the money to buy." However, when in 1998, Ramón Colás and Berta Mexidor began to encourage the reading of uncensored books and to promote public access to their small library in the town of Las Tunas, they confronted repression intended to crush their non-governmental initiative. The idea of the project, according to the founders, was "to promote reading not as a mere act of receiving understanding, but to form an opinion which is individually arrived at without censorship nor obligation to one belief" (www.bibliocuba.org also can be found in Cubanet www.cubanet.org). In the views of Mr. Cason from the U. S. intersection in Cuba:

The independent library movement has become one of the most pervasive and important elements of civil society in Cuba today. Several years ago, Fidel Castro said there were no banned books in Cuba, rather a lack of funding for some and unwillingness on the Government's part to purchase others. He clarified this by adding, "Nowadays they will print just about anything" -- I'll let you interpret what he meant by that. Since then, brave souls have taken this message to heart, and begun to open their homes and book collections to their neighbors. At the time of the crackdown, there were almost two hundred independent libraries throughout the country. Many remain. Some are a mere bookshelf. Others contain thousands of titles. Many are organized into associations, sharing their stocks as well as information and news (<http://usembassy.state.gov/havana/wwwhcason.html> downloaded 3/12/04).

Amongst the March 2003 prisoners, are 10 members of the island's pioneering independent library movement. They were convicted on vague charges of conspiring with U.S. diplomats to undermine Cuba's national sovereignty and, two indictments identified by the Friends of Cuban Libraries specifically accuse defendants of operating libraries containing "subversive" books. A surprise element at the dissidents' trials was testimony by 8 members of the Cuban human rights movement who exposed themselves as undercover agents of the State Security police; among the undercover agents were four independent librarians who testified against their former colleagues in the dissident movement (Friends of Cuban Libraries, April 30, 2003).

List of convicted librarians and their sentences as appears in the Amnesty International website (<http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/cuba/document.do?id=36E4149F1DC8594780256D3600529FEA>)

Víctor Rolando Arroyo, Reyes Magos Library (Pinar del Río): **26 years**

Ivan Hernández Carrillo, Juan Gualberto Gómez Library II (Matanzas): **25 years**

José Luis García Paneque, Carlos J. Finlay Library (Las Tunas): **20 years**

Ricardo González, Jorge Mañach Library (Havana): **20 years**

Roberto de Miranda, Father Félix Varela Library (Havana): **20 years**

Miguel Sigler Amalla, General Pedro Betancourt Library (Matanzas): **26 months**

Blás Giraldo Reyes, 20th of May Library (Sancti Spiritus): **25 years**

Omar Pernet Hernández, 20th of May Library II (Villa Clara): **25 years**

Raúl Rivero, Dulce María Loynaz Library Branch II (Havana): **20 years**

José Miguel Martínez Hernández, General Juan Bruno Zayas Library (Havana Province): **13 years**

Other groups supporting the independent librarians in Cuba include Friends of Cuban Libraries, founded in June 1999 as an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting intellectual freedom in Cuba. Members around the world have been especially concerned with defending the volunteers who are opening uncensored libraries throughout the island and the goal of providing public access to reading materials reflecting all points of view. The Friends of Cuban Libraries views the innovative creation of independent libraries to challenge a system of censorship is a uniquely Cuban contribution to the worldwide human rights movement (see www.friendsofcubanlibraries.org)

In 2004, a group of American librarians has launched a website in defense of the freedom to read, whose first effort is directed in solidarity with the independent colleagues in Cuba who have been imprisoned for 13 months. The website (<http://freadom.info>) was given the name of "FREADOM", combining the words "freedom" and "read" to reflect the main purpose of the project. The FREADOM campaign relies on the support of the American Library Association which, with more than 64,000 members, is the largest organization of its type in the world. The Friends of Cuban Libraries, based in the U.S., has openly criticized the ALA with complicity and hypocrisy regarding intellectual repression by the Cuban government. According to the organizers of FREADOM, this project is not affiliated with the Friends of Cuban Libraries, since the focus of the new group is viewed as completely different. The Independent Librarians in Cuba have also drawn international support as will be discussed under program visibility.

Program Design

The goal of the independent libraries movement in Cuba is to offer uncensored reading materials to the Cuban people. As of 2003, there were 103 independent libraries in Cuba, many operating out of homes. The total number of books in the libraries now exceeds 40,000; with 182,715 registered readers (Miriam Leiva/www.cubanet.org, HAVANA, January 16, 2003).

Program Management

Gisela Delgado is the national director of the independent library project with six members on the project's Executive Board.

Member Training

No formal training is provided.

Fiscal Management

All of their funding is through private donation and Colás is currently looking for public funds for consolidations of libraries. The independent libraries have expanded through donations made by sympathizers in Cuba and abroad. Many institutions and international foundations have provided significant support during the year, in addition, visitors from many countries bring books, magazines and other materials; this support is due to worldwide publicity about the Independent Libraries provided on the Internet and by supporters and friends from abroad. As a result, 16,000 new books were received in 2002 for the Independent Libraries collection in Cuba⁸.

Characteristics of sponsoring agency

Colás believes that trust is developed by “defending the territory” which in this case are the independent libraries. He places a high value on transparency and says that “an oppressive system cannot survive with transparency.” Indeed, “not being transparent is giving into the current oppression.” “Dictators need secrecy in order to survive”. Transparency make the independent groups “vulnerable [in Cuba], but it is important in order to achieve civil society.” Colás has been personally jailed for promoting free libraries in Habana and other provinces and has also been beaten twice. He has served time in the underground prison and in the maximum security prison. He left the Island with his family in 2001, prior to the latest crackdown, but some of his colleagues have 20 to 24 year sentences.

In spite of hardships, reciprocity is found in Cuba. Colás provided the example of traveling all over the island with borrowed clothes. There were also interchanges of books and foods among colleagues and friends. For example, he would take cheese to his friend in Habana, and his friends would reciprocate with other food items.

Leadership

⁸ See for example the Friends of Cuban Libraries website: <http://www.friendsofcubanlibraries.org/How%20Can%20I%20Take%20Books.htm> on how to take books to Cuba.

Ramón Colas and his wife Berta Mexidor were the founders of the Independent Libraries and continue their support from the United States. Leadership is currently provided in Cuba by the National Director of the association, and the six board members.

Program Visibility

Independent Librarians have received international awards. For example, Victor Rolando Arroyo, a Cuban journalist and the director of the Reyes Magos Independent Library, was named the recipient of the prestigious Hellman-Hammett Prize in 2002. The prize was awarded to Mr. Arroyo by Human Rights Watch, a New York-based organization which administers the estates of Lillian Hellman and Dashiell Hammett. The Hellman-Hammett grants focus attention on repression of free speech and censorship by publicizing the persecution experienced by the grant recipients (Friends of Cuban Libraries, <http://www.friendsofcubanlibraries.org> downloaded 3 May 2004).

The Independent Libraries in Cuba have received international attention. The following is an excerpt from Ms. Fabienne Keller, Mayor of Strasbourg and Mr. Robert Grossman, President of the regional communities of Strasbourg (download 4/23/04 from <http://www.friendsofcubanlibraries.org/Recent%20News%202.htm>).

Dear friends among the independent librarians of Pinar del Río,

Through the Free Cuba Solidarity Committee, of France, we learned about your work for the promotion of a free culture, and of your difficulties and the persecution of which you are victims. We salute your struggle for the free circulation of ideas: a key element for the reconstruction of a civil society in Cuba in the perspective of the recovery of democracy. It is for this reason that the municipality of Strasbourg (Eastern France) and the libraries of our city decided to sponsor the independent libraries of Pinar del Río....

With regard to the support that we want to give to the independent libraries of Pinar del Río, with the help of exiled writers and intellectuals in France we intend to organize activities in the municipal libraries of Strasbourg, explaining to those of us living in a democracy the significance of jailing poets and journalists and the prohibition of books. This will also give us the opportunity to listen to the voices of the intellectuals in Cuba, who can still be heard despite their imprisonment in horrifying jails.

Administrative Burden

Hardships include the lack of capacity to communicate freely and lack of funds. Conditions are very limiting. However, “the project continues, although people are in jail and libraries remain open even if books are burned”, according to Colás.

Independent Clinics/Physicians

Prior to the revolution, the Cuban health care system was recognized as one of the best in the Western Hemisphere, but it has been in shambles since the 1990s (Faria 2002). This is in spite of the low patient to physician ratio, estimated at one doctor of every 200 inhabitants (Betancourt and Grenier 1999). The health sector depends on hard currency

imports: "In 1989, Cuba imported an estimated \$227 million in health-related goods. Part of this value was in-kind or the result of bartering arrangements provided by the former Soviet Union. These non-monetary arrangements disappeared after 1989 with the loss of the socialist trade relations. By 1993, Cuba's health-related hard currency imports amounted to only an estimated \$67 million" (State Department 2004, 68). Characterizing the decline was an acute epidemic of blindness occurring in the early 1990s and labeled as a classic beriberi caused by the severe food shortages and rationing. Today, Cuban physicians lack the medicines and medical equipment needed for the proper care of the sick. Cubans suffer from high child and maternal mortality rates (the latter being four times that of the U.S.), while Cuba's homicide rate is high, its suicide rate is triple that of the U.S, being one of the highest in the world (Faria 2002). In addition, Castro's health care apartheid has two classes of patients, the *mayimbe* or *el pincho* class (the privileged communist elite) and the *liborio*, or working class, each receiving a different quality of health care.

The Politics of Psychiatry by Brown and Lago (1991) graphically documents the use of psychiatry for political purposes --- political repression, the crushing of dissent, and establishing conformity within the political structure and populace of the island by following the cases of 27 dissidents. In comparing Cuban psychiatry to that of the Soviet Union, psychiatrist Vladimir Bukovsky, who was a leading dissident in the Soviet Union during the 1960s and 1970s, spending twelve years in Soviet prisons, labor camps, and psychiatric hospitals and author of the *Introduction* to Brown and Lago's book, characterizes Cuba as a grotesque imitation of the Soviet Union. "Cuba," he wrote, "is unique only by the hasty pace of the disease: it covered in thirty-two years what the Soviet Union achieved in seventy-three. Within a single generation, Cuba advanced from "revolutionary justice" to "socialist legality," from liquidation of "class enemies" to "political re-education" and psychiatric treatment of those "apathetic to socialism" (Bukovsky in Brown and Lago 1991, 1).

Cuban "government prohibits physicians from engaging in private practice and pays them only about US\$20-\$30 per month...." (State Department 2004, 68). Achievements in health care are the pride of the Cuban regime; dissent among physicians is particularly embarrassing. Nonetheless members of the medical community have complaints about the current system (*Susannah Sirkin, deputy director of Physicians for Human Rights* http://www.phrusa.org/campaigns/colleagues/cuba_op-ed.html downloaded on April 26, 2004):

They are concerned with the government's tendency to limit health facilities for Cubans, alleging that resources are shifted towards dollars-only "health tourism," making medicines available only for people with foreign passports who can pay with hard currency. Irrespective of their political sympathies, physicians are worried that the extremely low professional salaries in Cuba are particularly dangerous for medical personnel, who must take extra jobs to make ends meet leading to absenteeism, overwork or poor work ethics.

Betancourt and Grenier (1999, 254-255) inquired from recent arrivals how they view the success of the revolution in improving health care. In addition, there are two aspects of health services in Cuba that have been controversial: One, the privileged treatment given

to government officials, who have hospital facilities reserved for their use and, two, the Medical tourism industry which creates medical enclaves for foreign visitors, where services are paid in dollars and, under the general apartheid policy the regime applies to tourist facilities, are out of bounds for Cubans. The results were as follows:

- Fifty-three percent had a favorable responses to improved health care and areas to maintain in future:
 - 71% desired maintaining free health care
 - 51% maintaining of quality medical training
 - 32% availability of hospitals
 - 16% the family doctor system
- Perceived deficiencies included:
 - 92% lack of medicines
 - 70% lack of equipment for tests
 - 64% long wait for surgery
- Reasons for resentment among the populous:
 - 72% foreigners having favored access to medicine in Cuba
 - 65% the need to pay in dollars to attain needed medications
 - 76% the privileged treatment for government officials

Cuba's young physicians must serve in international missions to assist Third World nations for propaganda purposes or what in the U.S. has been characterized as Castro's "Doctor Diplomacy." During the 2004 personal interview, Cancio estimates 10,000 doctors on diplomacy missions in Venezuela.

A Cuban physician on a "humanitarian mission" found to his dismay that in Guatemala, where he had been sent, common laborers and unskilled workers were paid between \$100-\$300 monthly. Guatemalan physicians earned well over \$1,000 monthly, while he, a Cuban surgeon, was paid less than \$25. While in Guatemala, the Cuban surgeon found himself relying on the good will and the financial aid of his humble Guatemalan patients. Likewise, Cuban physicians in Nicaragua are paid the equivalent of \$50 per month by the Cuban government. The Nicaraguan government has been forced to supplement the income of their intended benefactors with a subsidy of \$40 to \$70 per month, depending on the specialty, just to help Cuban physicians make ends meet.

([http://www.futurodecuba.org/Socialized%20Medicine%20in%20Cuba%202002%20\(Parts%20I%20and%20II\).htm](http://www.futurodecuba.org/Socialized%20Medicine%20in%20Cuba%202002%20(Parts%20I%20and%20II).htm) downloaded 28 April 2004)

According to dissident physician Dr. Hilda Molina Morejón, a Habana neurosurgeon and founder of the Colegio Medico Independiente de Cuba (Independent Medical Association of Cuba), "the main purpose of many hospitals in Cuba is to generate foreign capital, one way or the other the government assigns special budgets to those hospitals that serve foreign patients." For example, ordinary Cuban citizens are denied medical care at the Cira García clinic for foreign tourists. According to Dr. Desy Mendoza such cases are the rule rather than the exception. Furthermore, Dr. Mendoza (and Dr. Melgar during the

personal interview 2004) recounts the difficulties of obtaining even those medications and treatments prescribed for ordinary Cubans. Dr. Melgar explained that he received clear instructions to simply say to the patient that they did not need the medication or treatment if it was not available. Objecting to these instructions cost him the remaining of his education and his ability to practice medicine.

Dr. Mendoza was arrested at her home for the crime of investigating, revealing and forcing the communist dictatorship to admit the existence of a raging epidemic of dengue fever in the spring and summer of 1997. Dr. Mendoza was on the telephone with a Miami radio station communicating the details of the epidemic to the outside world when the Cuban State Security political police closed in: "There are approximately 13 dead, 2,500 hospitalized patients and 30,000 people afflicted!" Mendoza frantically declared, warning the interlocutor on the other side of the telephone line that the communication would be cut at any moment, as State Security had surrounded the house and was knocking on the door

([http://www.futurodecuba.org/Socialized%20Medicine%20in%20Cuba%202002%20\(Parts%20I%20and%20II\).htm](http://www.futurodecuba.org/Socialized%20Medicine%20in%20Cuba%202002%20(Parts%20I%20and%20II).htm) downloaded 28 April 2004).

Other cases are cited of patients with cancer who cannot get treatment because the medications have to be bought with dollars and not Cuban pesos. Pharmacies, like the specialized clinics, are authorized by the government to accept only dollars and are almost exclusively patronized by foreign tourists and the "mayimbe" class with access to dollars. The government agency SERVIMED, founded in 1989, is in charge of promoting tourism and medical apartheid

([http://www.futurodecuba.org/Socialized%20Medicine%20in%20Cuba%202002%20\(Parts%20I%20and%20II\).htm](http://www.futurodecuba.org/Socialized%20Medicine%20in%20Cuba%202002%20(Parts%20I%20and%20II).htm) downloaded 28 April 2004).

An Independent Medical Association started operating in November 2001. Physicians from across the island, some still in state jobs, others already "separated" from official medical institutions, joined forces to set up independent clinics and pharmacies where equipment and drugs prescribed by doctors from the state health system and sent from abroad, including from the Cuban Diaspora, are distributed free. The group's national coordinator was Dr. Marcelo Cano Rodríguez, President of the Cuban Independent Medical Society and currently serving 18 years in prison. Physicians and dentists are not exempt from jail term and on the March 2003 round, six were arrested and sentenced. The following appears in The World Medical Association website

(http://www.wma.net/e/press/2004_4.htm downloaded April 27, 2004):

DR. OSCAR ELÍAS BISCET GONZÁLEZ, 42 years old, president of the unofficial Fundación Lawton de Derechos Humanos, Lawton Human Rights Foundation. He has been detained more than two dozen times, charged with 'insult to the symbols of the homeland,' 'public disorder,' and 'incitement to commit an offence'. During his imprisonment he was considered by Amnesty International to be a prisoner of conscience. He is currently imprisoned in Prison Kilo 8 in the province of Pinar del Rio, sharing a cell with twelve other prisoners.

DR. MARCELO CANO RODRÍGUEZ, 38 years old, is National Coordinator of the unofficial Colegio Médico Independiente de Cuba, Cuban Independent Medical Association, an association of medical professionals in the island.

DR. JOSÉ LUIS GARCÍA PANEQUE, aged 38, is a plastic surgeon by training and also a member of the unofficial Cuban Independent Medical Association. He has been involved in journalism, as director of the independent news agency Libertad and member of unofficial Sociedad de Periodistas, Journalists' Society.

DR. LUIS MILÁN FERNÁNDEZ is a member of the Cuban Medical Association. In June 2001 he and his wife, also a doctor, signed a document called 'Manifiesto 2001,' calling among other measures for recognition of fundamental freedoms in Cuba. Together with other health professionals they carried out a one-day hunger strike to call attention to the medical situation of detainees and other issues.

ALFREDO MANUEL PULIDO LÓPEZ, aged 42, a dentist, worked as a journalist for the unofficial news agency El Mayor in Camagüey.

RICARDO ENRIQUE SILVA GUAL, also a dentist, is a member of the Christian Liberation Movement.

Program Design

The Independent Physician's mission is to serve the people regardless of affiliation: political, social, or citizenship. They practice no discrimination with the Cuban population. Independent Physicians do not charge patients for medications. They also do not provide services following Cuba's requirements for registration (see explanation under development of non-governmental associations and civil society in Cuba and the work of Catholic Relief Services). Dr. Melgar believes that services cannot be provided to the Cuban people via government's requirements.

Program Management

Independent Clinics receive medical equipment, literature, and medications with fewer side effects on a monthly basis from the United States (U.S.). Dr. Melgar discusses the project publicly in order to be able to acquire donations. Currently there are 25 physicians in the U.S. making donations and 2 hospitals, plus the NGO "Municipios de Cuba en el Exilio," and the country of Spain. Items include IVs, Insulin. All efforts are coordinated in the U.S.

Member Training

Member training is informal and provided through written materials.

Fiscal Management

All work is done voluntarily and supplies are provided through private donations.

Characteristics of sponsoring agency

Trust exists in the medical community with the patients.

Transparency exists via thank you letters acknowledging that the public knows the origins of the medication and equipment.

Reciprocity is provided through data from the physicians practicing in Cuba to publish reports.

Leadership

Dr. Hilda Molina was the founder of the Cuban Independent Medical Society as reported in 1997 (see <http://www.sigloxxi.org/Anexos-libro/anex-06.htm>) The most recent known President of the Cuban Independent Medical Society is Dr. Marcelo Cano Rodríguez, was part of the March 2003 crackdown and is currently serving 18 years in prison.

Program Visibility

Independent clinics and physicians have been created due to political pressure, lack of medicine, and equipment. The program visibility is sufficient to cause concern to the government as described below:

...Dismantling of an independent medical clinic in the town of Pedro Betancourt, 150km east of Havana. Over 150 officers and paramilitaries searched and ransacked the private home of Miguel Sigler Amaya and his wife Josefa López Peña, where the clinic was housed, confiscating 90 pounds of medicines: antibiotics, pain killers and vitamins. Police also seized a metered dose inhaler, an oxygen delivery system, a glucometer, some physiotherapy equipment, parental infusion appliances and topical applications. Family's own medications were confiscated too.

Environment

Although Cuba has many natural assets, the natural environment has suffered dilapidation: “Cuba <has> degraded soil, oil and decaying water and sanitation infrastructure, wildlife habitat destruction, and salt water intrusion into its fresh water supplies. It also lacks an independent non-governmental organization (NGO) sector that can advocate on behalf of environment and natural resources and serve as a mechanism to raise public awareness and bring new ideas and issues to the attention of policy makers for action” (State Department 2004, 361).

A few small civic environmental organizations have existed in Cuba, there are no major non-governmental associations to protest against government projects with a negative environmental impact. If environmental organizations oppose an official policy decision, they are deemed political dissidents (Leiva 1998).

In December 1995, ten years after he had submitted the relevant documentation, reportedly including 3,000 signatures supporting the group, lawyer Dr Leonel Morejón Almagro received a reply from the Ministry of Justice turning down his request to register an ecological organization called *NaturPaz* (NaturePeace). The reason provided was that another organization with similar aims already existed. According to Dr Morejón, the official organization to which the letter referred was established in 1993 after *NaturPaz*. Amnesty International believes that it was no coincidence that the rejection came at that time as since October 1995 Dr Morejón had been one of the leading members of a new coalition of unofficial groups called *Concilio Cubano*, Cuban Concilium, and has since then been imprisoned because of his activities with the coalition (<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR250141996?open&of=ENG-CUB> downloaded April 26, 2004).

Morejón was also informed that the existence of independent groups would not be permitted and that it was the task of the Cuban Communist Party to establish policies regarding peace and ecological matters. Nonetheless, in the spring of 1999, the unregistered *Naturpaz* challenged the constitutionality of a government plan to build a new international airport in ecologically sensitive Cayo Coco Island. Morejón, then a chief member of the group, said *Naturpaz* didn't oppose an increase in tourism and revenues the expansion would bring, but it felt the island environment off Cuba's north shore should remain protected. Largely because of *Naturpaz*'s protests, the airport plan was halted. The action set a precedent in the National Assembly.

In 1996, Eudel Eduardo Cepero a geographer and environmentalist founded the Agencia Ambiental Entorno Cubano (AAMEC) in Camagüey to protect the Cuban environment. Cepero is currently at the South Florida Environmental Center at Florida International University and has continued AAMEC's work in Miami since 1999. He was interviewed for this project and comments are found below.

Akin to the other groups in this report, environmental groups were not exempt from jail sentence as noted in the letter written by Cepero (<http://198.62.75.1/www2/fcf/env.statement82497.html> ,downloaded 26 April 2004,):

On Saturday, July 9th of this year, the Interior Ministry of the Republic of Cuba arrested in San Juan y Martinez, Pinar del Rio Province, Mr. Raul Pimentel, a member of the environmental group Alerta Verde (Green Alert).

The AAMEC deems that the best way to deal with environmental issues is with the participation of all concerned citizens, in accordance with the tenth principle of the Rio Declaration on the Environment and Development.

It is for this reason that AAMEC requests the immediate release of environmentalist Raul Pimentel, as well as a clarification of the reasons that led to this regrettable event.

At the same time, we call upon the environmental organizations and associations of the world to extend their solidarity to Mr. Raul Pimentel.

Eudel Cepero

AAMEC Coordinator *Cuban Environs Environmental Agency (Agencia Ambiental Entorno Cubano/AAMEC)*

Camaguey, Cuba, July 1997

Program Design

Cepero described his efforts as “personal” therefore exempt from Cuban laws on associations. He considered others who worked with him collaborators therefore he did not seek legal status while in Cuba.

Program Management

Cepero published the first report on ecological conditions in Cuba in 1997. All work was done from his home as he was not allowed to use his office space for such endeavors. He was working on his Master’s degree at the University of Camaguey but was dismissed on the basis that he was acting counter-revolution through his work on Cuba’s environment. He did not loose his job, but was not allowed to work although required to report to his desk for 8 hours per day.

He currently operates the website <http://ecoportal.net/ong/ongs/aaec.htm> offering a monthly publication, courses, an international directory of non-governmental environmental organizations, environmental legislations from around the world, and a glossary of terms.

Member Training

Cepero is currently applying with Colleagues at FIU for USAID funding to start ecology programs in Cuba. They are interested in sending videos, planting trees, and sending students. More specifically, the plan is to approach people in Cuba for ecological awareness, communicate, provide information, develop a GIS website with maps of Cuba, and every six months send people to Cuba.

Characteristics of sponsoring agency

Trust, transparency and reciprocity are highly limited.

Cepero said that he censored his own work in order to prevent problems. He also contacted an attorney to assist in censoring.

Cepero attributed the lack of involvement by his colleagues to fear.

Fiscal Management

Cepero's work in Cuba was not funded; people provided equipment and Spanish ecology groups sent information.

Leadership

AAMEC was not continued in Cuba when he left in 1999. However, he continues he continues to work with AAMEC in Miami. Likewise, Naturpaz had been operating in Cuba until Leonel Morejón Almagro, president of Naturpaz left the country.

Cepero explained that in 1994, everyone believed to be in opposition of the Cuban system could apply for the lottery to leave the country. The information was hand delivered to the U.S. Intersection as the mail could not be trusted. In 1999, his family received permission to leave as did other three activists.

Program Visibility

Visibility for this group is very limited, although AAMEC is currently on the web.

Administrative Burden

The patterns of understanding are different in Cuba. People have had to hide and lie to exist within the system. Equilibrium does not exist.

Summary and Findings

This research project aspired to understand the work of non-governmental association in Cuba and their contribution towards civil society. The findings from this study include that civil society groups in spite of significant human costs continue to exist through moral convictions and public connectedness. Most of the non-governmental associations operate outside of the realm of what the government considers legal; when conducting business within the legal constraints there are questions of how much gets to the Cuban public and how much is kept by government. Public connectedness does not require formal institutions to be effective. The argument may be made that the public connectedness among the groups interviewed for this study is organized and formal,

constituting civil society as opposed to social movements. Not with standing that some of the same individuals engage in social movements as described in “Steps to Freedom” published annually by the Cuban Democratic Directorate.

The findings from this study lead to inputs, outputs and additional intermediate outcomes requiring revisions to the logic model found as figure 1. The inputs of individuals in civil society associations in Cuba are their **moral convictions**, leading to the output of **public connectedness**. In the beginning of this study, transparency, accountability, representativeness, and respect for the rights of others were posed as the expected intermediate outcomes to provide infrastructure to civil society associations in Cuba. Evidence of representativeness and respect for the rights of others were not apparent. However, new intermediate outcomes surfaced. Intermediate outcomes derived from the civil society groups operating in Cuba and interviewed for this study include: **Transparency**, mechanisms are in place for transparency through the independent media. **Accountability**, NGOs are providing information to hold the Cuban government accountable, see for example, Friends of Cuba’s Independent Libraries, and Reporters without Borders. NGOs are also holding the recipients of humanitarian aid accountable by requiring reports, see religious organizations. **Expansion of services**, as seen through the church programs in providing nutrition and medical care in addition to and in spite of religious affiliation. **Creation of new institutions**, growth of independent libraries on the island is well documented. **Community strengthening** is achieved through multiorganizational arrangements. There is evidence of these arrangements among the independent libraries. Recommendations are made to seek more opportunities in this area. Finally, there is evidence of **volunteer leveraging**, most notably through the Varela Project. These are added to the logic model as intermediate outcomes providing the framework for the well-being of society.

Figure 2: Logic Model Depicting Outcomes of Civil Society in Cuba

Inputs	Outputs	Intermediate Outcomes	End Outcome
Civil society organizations→ Provide Infrastructure→Impact the well-being of society			
Moral convictions	Public connectedness	Transparency	
		Accountability	
		Expansion of services	
		Creation of new institutions	
		Community strengthening	
		Volunteer leveraging	

Preventing the end outcomes of social capital and transition to democracy (see figure 1) in Cuba are the continuing success of government repression tactics, involving overt physical methods and/or psychological warfare. The former type involves harassment, arrest, interrogation, imprisonment, torture, exile, and even executions of those opposing the state (Amnesty International 2003, Lago 1993, Bengelsdorf 1994, Eckstein 1994, del Aguila 1994, Schulz 1994a, Planas 1994). The psychological methods include the

government's attempts to undermine the groups' legitimacy in the eyes of the public; they are portrayed as traitors, U.S. puppets, and a minority of deluded individuals (del Aguila 1993, Planas 1994). Psychiatric "rehabilitation" as practiced in Cuba against political dissidents is torture --- this, despite the fact that in 1986, Cuba signed the International Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The communist government of Cuba uses psychiatry and torture to coerce dissidents into cooperating with the regime and discontinue their political activities, as well as to intimidate and demoralize them as to eradicate their political beliefs (Faria 2000).

One characteristic common to the civil society groups in Cuba is their fragmentation. This fragmentation maybe misread by observers from free countries where civil society can function enjoying the rights of association and assembly. Yet, time and time again there is evidence of infiltrated 'agents of the state' to monitor the work of independent groups. "In Cuba, the fragmentation occurs because members limit their association to small circles of acquaintances who, besides sharing their positions on relevant issues of common interest, they know well on a personal basis. It is one way of overcoming the relentless infiltration tactics of Cuban security agencies. This has not prevented the emergence of more organized challenges to state monopoly of power at higher levels of social organization, as reflected in the existence of Concilio Cubano and the Working Group of the Dissidence" (Roberts et al 1999, 9). The Varela Project may now be added to Roberts' list. Adding to public connectedness among the dissidents is the appearance of dissidents taking on multiple roles, for example an independent economist working with the independent librarians or independent physicians contributing to the independent journalists and the increased international support as demonstrated particularly in the independent libraries section.

Key human elements are necessary for social capital, an end outcome for impact on the well being of society: trust, transparency, and reciprocity. Trust is very difficult if not impossible, to achieve in a culture that depends on and promotes informants. As stated by Ricardo Trotti, an Argentinean, and the IAPA Director of the Inter-American Society of Press (SIP) in discussing the infiltration of an informant as independent journalist: "paranoia is justified" in this environment. Trust will take a longtime to re-build in this society according to those interviewed. Cubans are not alone on this issue, "today, as a direct legacy of communist experience, most people in post-communist societies still strongly mistrust and avoid joining any kind of formal organizations, even in the newly free and democratic setting (Howard 2003, 25).

Transparency is viewed as an element of trust by Cubans who emphasized that trust needs to exist for transparency. Yet media organizations like Cubanet, Nueva Prensa, Radio/TV Marti, and SIP are assisting in promoting transparency, if only by means of communicating news outside of that deemed worthy of news by the government. Individuals are also taking action in transparent and daring ways: "The Cuban people have a long-standing tradition of opposition to the Castro government mostly enacted in muted acts of defiance that occur in shadow institutions. Increasingly, however, these muted acts are transformed into non-secretive, open-to-the public antihegemonic acts"

(Aguirre 1998, 337). Although this has serious consequences for the participants, the acts continue in open and transparent ways.

Reciprocity, the last human element, is thought to be easier to achieve in this society by those living it. This is a society where people help each other to make ends meet. As stated by Colás founder of the independent libraries, he would be provided with clothing necessary to attend meetings, or there would be food exchanges to complement and expand the allotted ration. The reduction of the Cuban government's sphere of influence on the economy and the society encourages and strengthens the development of autonomous activities, practices of mutual help, and other forms of cooperation. "These cooperations served to strengthen families, neighborhoods, and occupational relations, and, in general particularistic relations entre socios or between partners" (León 1997, 41). Similar experiences were found in post-communist Europe, "because of the shortage of goods to buy in communist societies, *connections* played an essential role, whether the need was for spare parts to fix a car or for products that were rarely available in stores" (Howard 2003, 28).

On May 6, 2004, the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba released its report to President Bush. In a statement released by Secretary Colin Powell, "President Bush formed the U.S. Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba to explore ways we can help hasten and ease Cuba's democratic transition. As this report shows, the United States seeks to cooperate with neighbors in the hemisphere and nations across the globe to help Cubans prepare for democratic change" (<http://www.state.gov/>, downloaded May 7, 2004). The report consists of six chapters and close to 600 pages. Chapter 1 and 3 address civil society and some of their recommendations will be discussed in the policy options.

Policy Options to Support and Encourage Civil Society under the Current System

Pre-requisites for effective transition to democracy will depend upon policymakers finding organized groups in civil society who are willing to sponsor or pull in the "foreign design" (Jacoby 2000). Indeed, as expressed by Valdes, the author of Vitral, these concerns are being heard from the island:

"The ones who live in Cuba, who are part of civil society, must be respected and taken into account first than the ones who are not sharing our destiny and daily life"
(<http://www2.glauco.it/vital/english/sociales/socciv.htm#1> downloaded 3/10/04).

In the words of Noriega in order to advance the development democracy in the western hemisphere, "reach out to the opposition, civil society, and minority groups. Dialogue builds trust, and trust is the key element in encouraging real political participation and keeping the political pot from boiling over" (<http://www.state.gov/>, April 2004). This is not made particularly clear in the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba report, with the exception of Chapter 4, which calls for working in close consultation with the Cuban people (State Department 2004).

The associations currently influencing civil society in and outside of Cuba will be critical for a successful transition. Lessons may be learned from previous transitions; for example, in post-unification Eastern Germany and in post-communist Europe, the new institutions have been imposed with little consultation, agreement, or alliance with voluntary organizations. According to Jacoby (2000, 16-17) this is “primarily because of the unwillingness of West German policy makers to allow for a more flexible interpretation and adaptation of their own institutions.”

A working group of dissidents from Cuba and NGOs working or supporting work in Cuba should be started in Miami. As Cepero mentioned and was noticed through out the interviews, there are great numbers of educated and professional individuals who have worked with dissident groups in Cuba as refugees in Miami. Their interests and abilities should be explored with the idea of establishing a working group to provide policy advice to those working on the transition. Careful consideration should be given to The Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba report, as during the current administration, this is likely to greatly influence Cuban policy options. Perhaps the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies can serve as a home for this group. In the words of Cepero during the interview:

“Civil society will depend on what occurs...the anxiety of people is Cuba is to be free, independent. There is a need for freedom of expression, to respect others opinions. Conditions for civil rights that is independent of politics”.

A word of caution must be presented to the working group: beware of agendas with narrow bands of self interest. Participation on the committee should be an iterative learning process in developing an overarching community agenda (Glaser et al 2003).

Areas to be explored by this working group include assisting the dissidents now and after the transition. The recommendations that follow will include external support from the foreign NGOs and internal assistance to the associations on the island.

External Support

- Capacity Building of groups on the Island through external support and empowerment.
 - Diversification of funding should be sought by external groups.
 - Possibilities include soliciting philanthropic contributions, engaging with the corporate sector; hosting fund-raising events, and loans. In addition, the Commission for Assistance to A Free Cuba (will henceforth be referred to as CAFA) recommends the “creation of an international fund for the protection and development of civil society in Cuba” (State Department 2004, 23).
 - External groups may benefit from instruction on grant writing and reporting on their use.

- Investigate donor coordination mechanisms for private and public sector funds.
- Some of the groups need greater visibility and support from external groups. From this study, the medical and environmental groups will particularly benefit from greater linkages to NGOs, more information on the web, and greater media attention.
- As mentioned by González, the Malta representative interviewed for this study, licensing requirements from the U.S. Treasury Department are an administrative burden for NGOs working in Cuba. CAFA is recommending the streamlining of current licensing requirements for providing computers and other basic equipment to Cuban civil society groups (State Department 2004, 24).

Internal Support

Due to the limitations imposed by the oppressive system in Cuba it is reasonable to expect that the assistance to the internal groups will be less strategic and will be presented as questions worth of exploration:

- Education and Training-- The Florida International University (FIU) program for the press should be studied as a model for training of other groups. CAFA recommends the creating of a “Cuba Civil Society Education Project” to help provide the resources, training, and materials for education in democracy, civic values, and entrepreneurship at all levels (see State Department 2004, 57).
 - Training may also include the diversification of support from external NGOs. The independent libraries provide a good example.
- To strengthen civil society and assist in the transition it is important to improve economic conditions. In Cuba, this may be as basic as providing the essential so that ordinary citizens may devote time and energy to independent and voluntary activities that may cost them their current employment. To this end, CAFA is recommending “a robust U.S. assistance program to empower Cuban civil society” (State Department, 2004, 22). This includes an additional \$29 million to the State Department, USAID, and other US Government agencies to aid in training, development, and empowerment of a Cuban democratic opposition and civil society. However, U.S. funds may not be used to pay dissidents for their work so other sources of funding should be investigated.
- Financial resources for dissidents who loose their jobs or are jailed as a result of their activities. CAFA mentions educational funds for family members. What about resources for day to day existence?

- Are there ways to coordinate the giving in the community to allocate funds to independent groups? The CAFA report addresses this need and suggests the Foundation for Assistance to a Free Cuba as a possibility to coordinate the efforts of the Cuban diaspora. Another suggestion is the US Government creating a planning and coordinating team (see State Department 2004, 56). Is separating these efforts the most efficient and effective way for fund allocation? What other models are available?
- Dissemination of information is imperative for groups. Are there ways to facilitate the information sharing by other means that what is currently available?
- What are ways to promote moral support from external supporters to those on the Island?

Arenas Necessary for Democratization of Cuba: Towards a Relationship for Governance, Civil, and Economic Societies

The final section of this study discusses the arenas necessary for democratization of Cuba based on findings from this study. Strong civil society in itself is no substitute for solid political and legal institutions in a democratic system. However civil society is necessary for a deeply rooted, legitimate, and effective democracy (see Diamond 1999 and Howard 2003). Civil society requires the legal protection afforded by democracy as defined and protected by the rule of law.

The diagram below displays the institutions that will play a key role in this system: public administration to provide the structure for governance, civil society as a means for individuals to express their interests and protect themselves from abuses of power by their political leaders, and economic society based on free markets and economic opportunities for people from all walks of life. These will need to be shaped and strengthened by 1) the rule of law and 2) free elections through a representative multi-party system.

For a stronger civil society and a democratic transition to occur, it is important for policy makers to recognize the inherent benefits from active support of the state. This will require exploration of the role of government and civil society, more specifically: Unlike the system under Castro, plans must be articulated emphasizing the need for the state to treat civil society as its cooperative partner.

- A free Cuban government can and should play a crucial role in enabling, facilitating and encouraging the existence and flourishing of voluntary organizations (see for examples Skocpol 1999, Levy 1999, Padgett 2000, and Hall 1999).
 - Pass legislation that protects the rights of organizations.
 - Provide tax or other institutional incentives that encourage organizations to recruit more members.

The next two recommendations are seem crucial to a free Cuban government. They are adapted from a speech made by Roger Noriega for newly elected presidents in the western hemisphere, seeking a more perfect democracy (April 2004, <http://www.state.gov/>):

- Institutionalize transparency in government. Sunlight and fresh air are natural disinfectants--consider using electronic procurement for government contracts, sponsoring freedom of information legislation, and establishing an ombudsman office to monitor allegations of corruption.
- Deliver accountability of elected officials to their constituents. Politicians are more likely to behave responsibly if they can easily be held accountable by the voters from a defined district or are subject to judicial sanctions.

The outcomes displayed at the beginning of this manuscript are added to an adaptation of Howard's (2003, 3) model in order to display all of the elements necessary, please refer to Figure 3.

“figure 3 about here”

Finally, an independent and professional media will be instrumental in providing transparency for the political process. It will also provide transparency between the public administrators, civil society, and economic society leaders. Family and friendship networks will provide social capital for the society, but must remain as part of the private sphere in order to increase trust in the society at large and representativeness in the public sphere.

Conclusions

We are at a critical juncture in the history of Cuba. The independent movement is advancing in spite of all the road-blocks that are presented. The dissidents interviewed for this study, were young professionals; well educated, courageous, and have been able to overcome fear to subscribe to their moral convictions for freedoms of speech, and expression. Their work comes at high personal costs to them and their families.

All of the independent groups in this study have members in prison, with perhaps the exception of the church. The March 2003 crackdown incarcerated 75, and it is currently estimated by the State Department, that there are 300 political prisoners in Cuba. Reporters without Borders assert that Cuba is the largest jail for journalists in the world. These incarcerations have provided international attention to the work of the independent movements and international support and growth of these groups on the island continues. Many of those interviewed for this study have encountered jail terms, harassment, and loss of educational and financial opportunities as a result of their independent activities.

Members of the opposition have continued to leave the island as demonstrated by those interviewed. This causes concern to those left on the island. Yet, much productive, professional work is being produced by ex-patriots in exile. See for example, Colás with the independent libraries, Melgar with the independent clinics/ physicians, and Cepero with the environmental groups.

The more linkages these groups have with external non-governmental organizations and the more public connectedness on the island, the stronger and longer lasting they appear. Examples of strong associations are found among the religious groups, the independent librarians, and the independent journalists. The work of the independent physicians/clinics is often seen through religious organizations on the island.

Assistance to the independent sector should be encouraged and a transition should keep their efforts abreast. The independent groups should and will play a key role in the transition to a democratic government. More support should be provided to disseminate the work of these groups internationally and to assist the families of the independent sphere.

Key human elements necessary for free association and civil society: trust, transparency, and reciprocity should be encouraged by all means possible. The Castro culture of distrust has had a bearing on the level of comfort that people have in trusting others. Transparency is viewed by those interviewed as very closely related to trust and possibly putting individuals in harms way. Trust will need to be developed and one of the key ways will be to include those on the Island and recent émigrés in the transition planning. Reciprocity is better understood on the island, and may be reinforced by meaningful examples.

This study represents a small piece of a multi-dimensional puzzle. The difficulties with studying a close-system are many. It is hope that in combination with other studies progress will be made in the puzzle to understanding the situation in Cuba and the solutions for a free and democratic society.

Areas for Future Research

Finally, in addition to monitoring the progress of civil society groups on the Island, the following areas are made as suggestions for future research on civil society in Cuba:

- Extend of support from exterior.
- Work of other groups on the Island, such as the Independent Economists and Spouses of political prisoners.
- Training models for independent sector.

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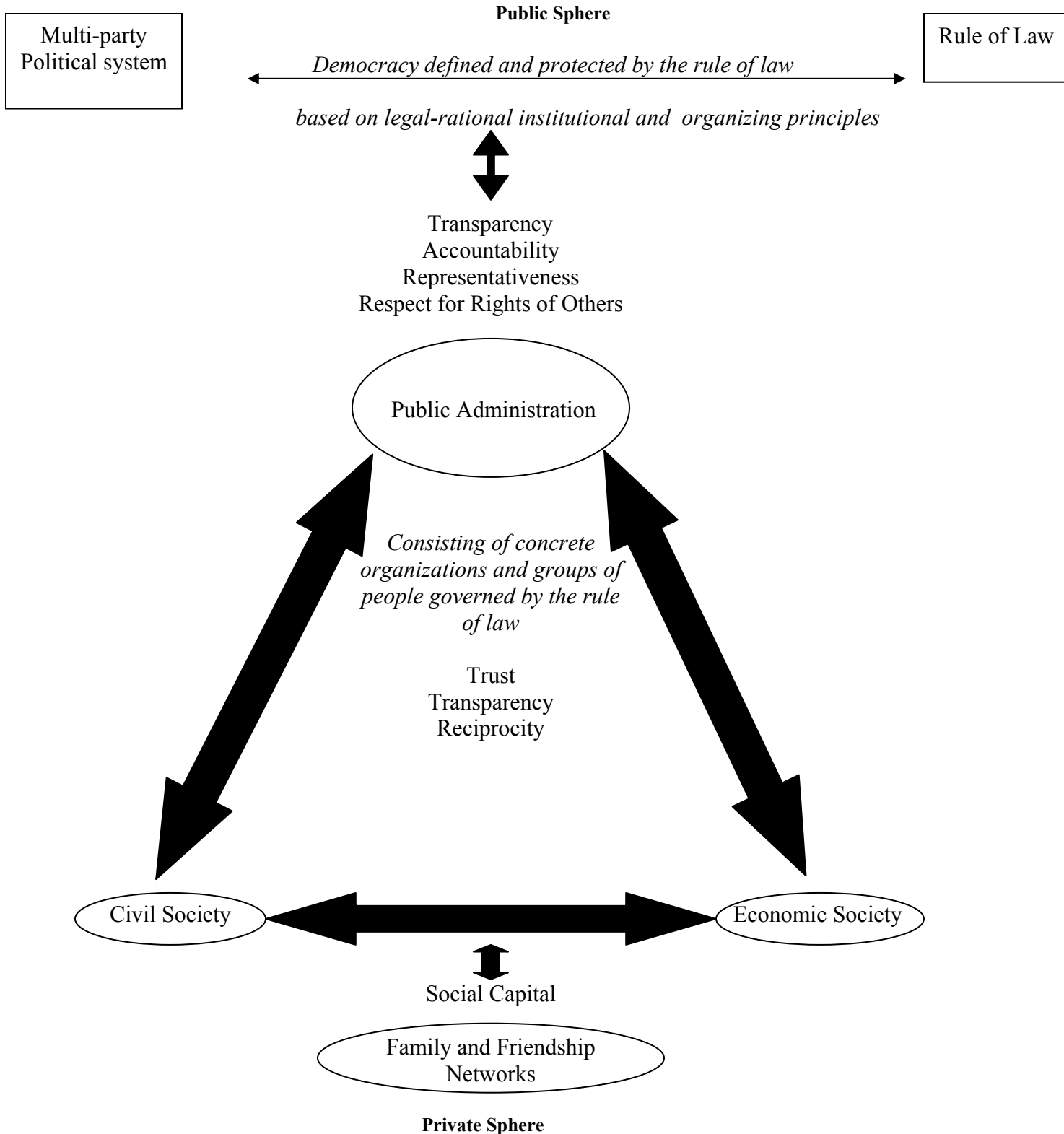
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Figure 3: The Arenas Necessary for Democratization of Cuba



Source: Figure adapted from Howard, Marc M. (2003). "The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe" United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, p. 33.

Appendix 1:

List of Interviewees conducted during December 2003, March and April 2004.

Religious Organizations

Dr. Teo A. Babun, Jr. National Executive Director, Evangelical Christian Humanitarian Outreach, Cuba

Brian Goonan, Country Manager Cuba Program, Catholic Relief Services

Emilio T. Gonzalez, Order of Malta

Name withheld as requested by the interviewee, Archdiocese in Cuba

Name withheld as requested by the interviewee, Visiting Professor from Spain

Independent Libraries

Ramon Colás, Independent Libraries

Independent Clinics

Alfredo Melgar, M.D. Independent Physicians

Mass Media

Rosa Berre, Editor-in-chief, CUBANET

Wilfredo Cancio Isla, Reporter, El Nuevo Herald

Jauna Isa, Reporter, Radio Marti

Alberto Mascaro, Chief of Staff, Office of Cuba Broadcasting

Nancy Perez-Crespo, Director, Nueva Prensa Cubana

Pedro Roig, Director, Office of Cuba Broadcasting

Ricardo E. Trotti, IAPA Press Institute Director, Inter American Press Association

Environment

Eudel Eduardo Cepero, Environmental Assessment Coordinator, Florida International University

Others

Frank Calzón, Executive Director, Center for a Free Cuba

Frank Hernandez Trujillo, Executive Director, Grupo de Apoyo a La Democracia

Janisset Rivero, National Secretary, Directorio Democratico Cubano

Appendix 2: Organizations Contacted for Study

A

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>Agencia Ambiental Entorno Cubano</i>
<i>Address:</i>	2984 SW, 123 Avenue
<i>City:</i>	Miami
<i>State:</i>	Fl
<i>Postal Code:</i>	33175
<i>Country:</i>	US
<i>Telephone:</i>	
<i>Fax:</i>	
<i>Email Address:</i>	cubaeco@aol.com
<i>Contact Person:</i>	Eudel Cepero
<i>Description:</i>	Organization dedicated to studying and promoting Cuban environmental issues.
<i>URL:</i>	www.ecoportel.net/ong/ongs/aaec.htm
<i>Category:</i>	Development

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>Amnesty International</i>
<i>Address:</i>	Southern Regional Office 131 Ponce De Leon Ave., NE #220
<i>City:</i>	Atlanta
<i>State:</i>	GA
<i>Postal Code:</i>	30308
<i>Country:</i>	US
<i>Telephone:</i>	404-876-5661
<i>Fax:</i>	404-876-2276
<i>Email Address:</i>	aisouth@igc.apc.org
<i>Contact Person:</i>	
<i>Description:</i>	
<i>URL:</i>	www.amnesty.org/index.html
<i>Category:</i>	Human civil rights

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>A Vision for a Christian Cuba</i>
<i>Address:</i>	P.O. Box 546135
<i>City:</i>	Miami
<i>State:</i>	Fl
<i>Postal Code:</i>	33154
<i>Country:</i>	US
<i>Telephone:</i>	305-884-8400
<i>Fax:</i>	305-868-3188
<i>Email Address:</i>	tbabun@visioncuba.org
<i>Contact Person:</i>	Teo A. Babun
<i>Description:</i>	Organized by a group of Christians from different denominations for the purpose of reaching the people of Cuba with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
<i>URL:</i>	www.visioncuba.org
<i>Category:</i>	Faith-Based

B

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>Brookings Institution</i>
<i>Address:</i>	1775 Massachusetts Ave. N.W.
<i>City:</i>	Washington
<i>State:</i>	DC
<i>Postal Code:</i>	20036
<i>Country:</i>	US
<i>Telephone:</i>	202-797-6000
<i>Fax:</i>	202-797-6004
<i>Email Address:</i>	
<i>Contact Person:</i>	
<i>Description:</i>	
<i>URL:</i>	www.brook.edu/
<i>Category:</i>	Policymaking

C

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>Catholic Relief Services</i>
<i>Address:</i>	209 W. Fayette Street
<i>City:</i>	Baltimore
<i>State:</i>	MD
<i>Postal Code:</i>	21201-3443
<i>Country:</i>	US
<i>Telephone:</i>	410-625-2220
<i>Fax:</i>	410-685-1635
<i>Email Address:</i>	webmaster@catholicrelief.org
<i>Contact Person:</i>	Brian Goonan
<i>Description:</i>	Catholic Relief Services supports the efforts of Caritas Cuba, the social service agency of the Catholic Church in Cuba, in three principal ways: institutional development through the training of Caritas staff at the national and diocesan level; development assistance in agriculture and health; humanitarian assistance through the donation of food, clothing and medicine.
<i>URL:</i>	www.catholicrelief.org
<i>Category:</i>	Faith-Based

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>Center for a Free Cuba</i>
<i>Address:</i>	1320 19th St. NW Suite 201
<i>City:</i>	Washington
<i>State:</i>	DC
<i>Postal Code:</i>	20036-1638
<i>Country:</i>	US
<i>Telephone:</i>	202-463-8430
<i>Fax:</i>	202-463-8412
<i>Email Address:</i>	freecuba@cubacenter.org
<i>Contact Person:</i>	Frank Calzon
<i>Description:</i>	The Center for a Free Cuba is an independent, non-partisan institution dedicated to promoting human rights and a transition to democracy and the rule of law on the island. The Center also assists the people of Cuba through its information outreach and humanitarian programs on the island.
<i>URL:</i>	www.cubacenter.org/
<i>Category:</i>	human civil rights

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>Cuban Research Institute</i>
<i>Address:</i>	Florida International University Park, DM 363
<i>City:</i>	Miami
<i>State:</i>	FL
<i>Postal Code:</i>	33199
<i>Country:</i>	US
<i>Telephone:</i>	305-348-1991
<i>Fax:</i>	305-348-3593
<i>Email Address:</i>	crinst@fiu.edu
<i>Contact Person:</i>	Lisandro Perez
<i>Description:</i>	The CRI's mission is to create and disseminate knowledge on Cuba and Cuban-Americans. The CRI has a program of academic exchange and research collaboration with Cuban scholars. It supports trips to and from Cuba by FIU faculty and their colleagues in the island.
<i>URL:</i>	www.fiu.edu/~lacc/cri
<i>Category:</i>	academic

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>CubaNet News, Inc.</i>
<i>Address:</i>	145 Madeira Ave. Suite 316
<i>City:</i>	Coral Gables
<i>State:</i>	FL
<i>Postal Code:</i>	33134
<i>Country:</i>	US
<i>Telephone:</i>	305-774-1887
<i>Fax:</i>	305-774-1807
<i>Email Address:</i>	cubanetn@aol.com
<i>Contact Person:</i>	Rosa Berre
<i>Description:</i>	CubaNet is a non-profit organization that fosters free press in Cuba. They cover national and international press reports on Cuban human rights and economic issues.
<i>URL:</i>	www.cubanet.org
<i>Category:</i>	Press

D

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>Directorio Revolucionario Democratico Cubano</i>
<i>Address:</i>	P.O. Box 110235
<i>City:</i>	Hialeah
<i>State:</i>	FL
<i>Postal Code:</i>	33011
<i>Country:</i>	US
<i>Telephone:</i>	305-264-2917
<i>Fax:</i>	305-279-0488
<i>Email Address:</i>	director@netside.net
<i>Contact Person:</i>	Orlando Gutierrez
<i>Description:</i>	The Directorio's mission includes the fostering of the identification of the new generation of Cubans and Cuban-Americans with the Cuban nation and the promotion of freedom and democracy in Cuba.
<i>URL:</i>	www.directorio.org
<i>Category:</i>	academic cultural

F

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>Florida International University Media Center</i>
<i>Address:</i>	AC 2 - 311 3000 NE 151th Street
<i>City:</i>	North Miami
<i>State:</i>	FL
<i>Postal Code:</i>	33181
<i>Country:</i>	USA
<i>Telephone:</i>	305-919-5672
<i>Fax:</i>	305-919-5498
<i>Email Address:</i>	greenc@fiu.edu
<i>Contact Person:</i>	Charles Green
<i>Description:</i>	The International Media Center is a not-for-profit research and education center established by the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Florida International University in Miami. The center operates several international programs designed to strengthen professional communication media in Latin America and elsewhere.
<i>URL:</i>	http://www.fiu.edu/~imc/
<i>Category:</i>	Library- Human rights

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>Freedom</i>
<i>Address:</i>	
<i>City:</i>	
<i>State:</i>	
<i>Postal Code:</i>	
<i>Country:</i>	
<i>Telephone:</i>	
<i>Fax:</i>	
<i>Email Address:</i>	nice librarians at freedom.info
<i>Contact Person:</i>	
<i>Description:</i>	Promote the freedom to read everywhere.
<i>URL:</i>	http://freedom.info
<i>Category:</i>	Library- Human rights

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>Friends of the Cuban Libraries</i>
<i>Address:</i>	
<i>City:</i>	
<i>State:</i>	New York
<i>Postal Code:</i>	
<i>Country:</i>	
<i>Telephone:</i>	
<i>Fax:</i>	
<i>Email Address:</i>	Rkent20551@cs.com
<i>Contact Person:</i>	Robert Kent
<i>Description:</i>	An independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting intellectual freedom in Cuba. Includes news, documents on Cuban independent libraries, links, and others.
<i>URL:</i>	www.friendsofcubanlibraries.org
<i>Category:</i>	Library-Human rights

I

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies</i>
<i>Address:</i>	University of Miami 1531 Brescia Ave
<i>City:</i>	Coral Gables
<i>State:</i>	FL
<i>Postal Code:</i>	33124-3010
<i>Country:</i>	US
<i>Telephone:</i>	305-284-2822
<i>Fax:</i>	305-284-4406
<i>Email Address:</i>	iccas@miami.edu
<i>Contact Person:</i>	Jaime Suchlicki
<i>Description:</i>	The Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies (ICCAS) is part of the School of International Studies at the University of Miami. ICCAS serves as a world-class academic center for the research and study of Cuban and Cuban-American topics.
<i>URL:</i>	www.miami.edu/iccas
<i>Category:</i>	academic

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>The Inter American Press Association</i>
<i>Address:</i>	1801 SW Third Avenue
<i>City:</i>	Miami
<i>State:</i>	FL
<i>Postal Code:</i>	33129
<i>Country:</i>	US
<i>Telephone:</i>	305-634-2456
<i>Fax:</i>	305-635-2272
<i>Email Address:</i>	info@sipiapa.org
<i>Contact Person:</i>	Ricardo Trotti
<i>Description:</i>	Organization dedicated to defending freedom of expression and of the press throughout the Americas. The Cuba site contains reports from journalists working for the independent Cuban news agency Cuba Press, op-ed pieces on press speech issues, the regular IAPA reports on the state of press freedom, resolutions and the legal context in which the Cuban press operates.
<i>URL:</i>	www.sipiapa.org
<i>Category:</i>	Press-Human Rights

L

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>Lexington Institute</i>
<i>Address:</i>	1600 Wilson Blvd, Suite 900
<i>City:</i>	Arlington
<i>State:</i>	VA
<i>Postal Code:</i>	22209
<i>Country:</i>	US
<i>Telephone:</i>	703-522-5858
<i>Fax:</i>	703-522-5837
<i>Email Address:</i>	mail@lexingtoninstitute.org
<i>Contact Person:</i>	
<i>Description:</i>	Their goal is to inform, educate, and shape the public debate of national priorities in those areas that are of surpassing importance to the future success of democracy, such as education reform, tax reform, regulatory policy, and national defense. Includes articles on Cuba.
<i>URL:</i>	www.lexingtoninstitute.org
<i>Category:</i>	Policy Organization

M

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>Military Order of Malta</i>
<i>Address:</i>	FEDERAL ASSOCIATION, USA 1730 M Street NW, Suite 403, , DC
<i>City:</i>	Washington
<i>State:</i>	DC
<i>Postal Code:</i>	20036
<i>Country:</i>	USA
<i>Telephone:</i>	
<i>Fax:</i>	
<i>Email Address:</i>	info@smom.org
<i>Contact Person:</i>	
<i>Description:</i>	The Order of MALTA has been funding feeding centers on the Island, funds seminarians, and provides medical supplies to Bishops for parish Clinics
<i>URL:</i>	http://www.smom.org/
<i>Category:</i>	Faith-based

N

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>Nueva Prensa Cubana</i>
<i>Address:</i>	
<i>City:</i>	Miami
<i>State:</i>	Florida
<i>Postal Code:</i>	
<i>Country:</i>	US
<i>Telephone:</i>	
<i>Fax:</i>	
<i>Email Address:</i>	npc@nuevaprensa.org
<i>Contact Person:</i>	Nancy Perez-Crespo
<i>Description:</i>	Supports independent journalists in Cuba. Articles written by Cuba's independent journalists are available through this website.
<i>URL:</i>	www.nuevaprensa.org
<i>Category:</i>	Press-Human rights

O

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>Oxfam-America, Inc</i>
<i>Address:</i>	26 West Street
<i>City:</i>	Boston
<i>State:</i>	Ma
<i>Postal Code:</i>	02111
<i>Country:</i>	US
<i>Telephone:</i>	617-482-1211 (Alternate Phone: 800-77-OXFAM)
<i>Fax:</i>	617-728-2595
<i>Email Address:</i>	info@oxfamamerica.org
<i>Contact Person:</i>	Minor Sinclair
<i>Description:</i>	Oxfam supports partner organizations in Cuba in sustainable development activities and educates the U.S. public on Cuba-related issues.
<i>URL:</i>	www.oxfamamerica.org
<i>Category:</i>	Humanitarian

P

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>Physicians for Human Rights</i>
<i>Address:</i>	100 Boylston Street Suite 702
<i>City:</i>	Boston
<i>State:</i>	MA
<i>Postal Code:</i>	02116
<i>Country:</i>	USA
<i>Telephone:</i>	(617) 695-0041
<i>Fax:</i>	(617) 695-0307
<i>Email Address:</i>	phrusa@phrusa.org
<i>Contact Person:</i>	
<i>Description:</i>	Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) promotes health by protecting human rights.
<i>URL:</i>	http://www.phrusa.org/about/index.html
<i>Category:</i>	

R

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>Radio/TV Marti</i>
<i>Address:</i>	
<i>City:</i>	Miami
<i>State:</i>	FL
<i>Postal Code:</i>	
<i>Country:</i>	USA
<i>Telephone:</i>	
<i>Fax:</i>	
<i>Email Address:</i>	
<i>Contact Person:</i>	Pedro V. Roig
<i>Description:</i>	Radio/TV news and entertainment
<i>URL:</i>	http://www.martinoticias.com/
<i>Category:</i>	Mass Media, Human rights

<i>Organization Name:</i>	Reporters Without Borders
<i>Address:</i>	5, rue Geoffroy-Marie
<i>City:</i>	Paris
<i>State:</i>	
<i>Postal Code:</i>	75009
<i>Country:</i>	France
<i>Telephone:</i>	33 1 44 83 84 84
<i>Fax:</i>	33 1 45 23 11 51
<i>Email Address:</i>	rsf@rsf.org
<i>Contact Person:</i>	
<i>Description:</i>	The association defends journalists and other media contributors and professionals who have been imprisoned or persecuted for doing their work.
<i>URL:</i>	www.rsf.org
<i>Category:</i>	Press-Human Rights

U

<i>Organization Name:</i>	United Nations Development Programme
<i>Address:</i>	One United Nations Plaza
<i>City:</i>	New York
<i>State:</i>	NY
<i>Postal Code:</i>	10017
<i>Country:</i>	USA
<i>Telephone:</i>	
<i>Fax:</i>	(212) 906 5364
<i>Email Address:</i>	
<i>Contact Person:</i>	
<i>Description:</i>	Their focus is on helping countries build and share solutions to the challenges of: Democratic Governance • Poverty Reduction Crisis Prevention and Recovery • Energy and Environment • HIV/AIDS
<i>URL:</i>	http://www.undp.org/
<i>Category:</i>	Development and human rights

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>United States Department of State</i>
<i>Address:</i>	2201 C St. NW
<i>City:</i>	Washington,
<i>State:</i>	DC
<i>Postal Code:</i>	20520
<i>Country:</i>	USA
<i>Telephone:</i>	202-647-4000
<i>Fax:</i>	
<i>Email Address:</i>	
<i>Contact Person:</i>	
<i>Description:</i>	Agency is responsible for promoting diplomacy, democracy, and human rights.
<i>URL:</i>	http://www.state.gov/aboutstate/
<i>Category:</i>	US Federal Agency

W

<i>Organization Name:</i>	<i>World Medical Association</i>
<i>Address:</i>	13, ch. du Levant
<i>City:</i>	CIB - Bâtiment A
<i>State:</i>	01210 Ferney-Voltaire
<i>Postal Code:</i>	
<i>Country:</i>	France
<i>Telephone:</i>	Phone: +33 4 50 40 75 75
<i>Fax:</i>	Fax: +33 4 50 40 59 37
<i>Email Address:</i>	e-mail: wma@wma.net
<i>Contact Person:</i>	
<i>Description:</i>	Medical society
<i>URL:</i>	http://www.wma.net/e/index.htm
<i>Category:</i>	Humanitarian

About the Author

Maria del Pilar Aristigueta is an Associate Professor and Program Director of the Public Administration program at the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy in the University of Delaware. She is also an Associate Policy Analyst with the Public Administration Institute at the same University. Her teaching and research interests are primarily in the areas of public sector management. She has authored two books: *Managing for Results in State Government*. Westport, CT: Quorum Books, 1999 and *Administrative Behavior in Public Administration*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002 (with Robert Denhardt and Janet Vinzant Denhardt) and numerous journal articles and book chapters.

Prior to joining the University of Delaware, Dr. Aristigueta was on the faculty at the University of Central Florida, and had administrative and consulting positions in federal, state, and local governments in the areas of program evaluation, performance measurement, and strategic planning. She has a doctorate in public administration from the University of Southern California.