

El ejército cubano de batas blancas:
The Political, Economic and Diplomatic Impact of Cuban Human
Capital Exportation

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Table of Contents

Abstract – Page 6

Acknowledgements- Page 7

Introduction – Page 9

Chapter I: Cuban Human Capital Exportation: Definition, Depiction and Historical Context – Page 13

- 1.1 Terminology – Page 14
- 1.2 Historical Introduction to Fidel Castro’s Foreign Policy – Page 14
- 1.3 Roots of Human Capital Exportation – Page 16
- 1.4 Modern Manifestation of Programs – Page 18
- 1.5 Cuba as a “Small State” – Page 20
- 1.6 Characteristics of Contemporary, Lucrative Model – Page 21
- 1.7 Brief Overview of the Scope and Terms of HCE programs – Page 22
- 1.8 ALBA – Page 24
- 1.9 Conclusion – Page 25

Chapter II: An Interpretive Account of Post-Revolutionary Cuba: The Pragmatic Pursuit of Centralized State Power

- 2.0 Introduction – Page 28
- 2.1 Survival at all Costs: Extractive Institutions, Innovation and Authoritarianism – Page 29
 - 2.1a Internal Contradictions – Page 30
 - 2.1b The “Gatekeeper” state and Economic Stasis – Page 31
 - 2.1c Political Domination of the State – Page 33
- 2.2 Pragmatism – Page 34
- 2.3 Populism – Page 36
- 2.4 Sovereignty – Page 37
 - 2.4a Intelligence – Page 37
 - 2.4b Economic Sovereignty- Page 38
- 2.5 Conclusion of Chapter II – Page 41

Chapter III: Scalpels as Swords: Human Capital Exportation as Power

- 3.0 Introduction – Page 44
- 3.1 Translating Foreign Policy Goals Page – 45
- 3.2 The Power of Healing: HCE at intersection of aid and transaction – Page 48
 - 3.2a Soft Power – Page 50
 - 3.2b Disaster Relief – Page 51
- 3.3 Hard Power - Page 52

- 3.3a HCEPs as Clientelism - Page 53
- 3.3b Recipient State Political Upside and Cuban Leverage- Page 53
- 3.3c Incentive for Recipient Nations to be Opaque About Cost – Page 56
- 3.3d Cuban HCE as means of expanding scope of ALBA – Page 57
- 3.3e Intelligence Functions of HCE – Page 58
- 3.3f Subversive Functions of Doctors – Page 59
- 3.3g Summary of Hard Power- Page 60
- 3.4 Empirical Evidence of Impact – Page 61
- 3.5 Conclusion – Page 65

Chapter IV: “The Shield”:Construction of a Narrative of Legitimacy Based on Solidarity

- 4.0 Introduction – Page 66
- 4.1 Challenges facing the Cuban Government
 - 4.1a Political Repression/ Human Rights Abuse – Page 68
 - 4.1b U.S. Aggression – Page 69
 - 4.1c Non-Democratic Nature/ Politics – Page 70
 - 4.1d Economic Challenges – Page 71
 - 4.1e Obstacles: Summary and Takeaways – Page 72
- 4.2 Construction of a Narrative
 - 4.2a Victimization – Page 73
 - 4.2b Symbolic Value of HCE and Construction of a Narrative – Page 76
- 4.3 Qualitative Evidence of Effectiveness of Cuban Medical Internationalism – Page 77
 - 4.3a Latin America – Page 77
 - 4.3b Europe – Page 79
 - 4.3c China/ Asia – Page 80
 - 4.3d Africa – Page 80
 - 4.3e Global Leadership Positions – Page 81
- 4.4 Diplomatic Benefits of Medical Internationalism
 - 4.4a Empirical Evidence – Page 82
 - 4.4b Alternate Explanations – Page 85
- 4.5 Conclusion – Page 86

Chapter V Human Capital Exportation and Domestic Cuba

- 5.0 Introduction – Page 88
- 5.1 Overview of Enabling Factors for Human Capital Exportation – Page 88
- 5.2 Free, Quality Medical Education – Page 88
- 5.3 Cuban Underdevelopment: Low Wages and Few Employment Options – Page 92

5.4 Centralization of Power and Lack of Labor Rights – Page 95

5.5 Demand Amongst Recipient Countries – Page 96

5.5a Financial Services from PAHO-WHO – Page 98

5.6 Unifying Trends from Inputs – Page 98

5.7 How HCE Addresses Cuba's Economic Needs – Page 99

5.8 Conclusion – Page 105

Conclusion – Page 107

Appendix 1: Methodology for Table 3.1 – Page 115

Appendix 2: Methodology for Graph 4.1 – Page 119

Works Referenced – Page 120

Figures, Graphs and Tables

Figure 1.1: Map of Where Cuban Medical Professionals Work (2012) – Page 23

Figure 1.2: International Health-State Power Feedback Cycle – Page 26

Figure 2.1: Domestic Positive Feedback Cycle - HCE and Power in the State – Page 42

Graph 3.1 : UN Affinity Voting by Medical Exchange (1998-2012) – Page 62

Table 3.1: Regression of Cuban Affinity Voting in UN General Assembly (1998-2012) – Page 63

Graph 4.1: Proportion of Nations Denouncing the U.S. Embargo Against Cuba in the UN General Assembly (1992-2012) – Page 75

Graph 4.2: Cuba-Dyad Affinity Voting Score (Adjusted) – Page 83

Graph 5.1: Medical Graduates by Specialization of Cuban Citizens (1980-2012) – Page 90

Graph 5.2: Number of Students Studying in Cuba by region (1998-2012) – Page 91

Table 5.1: Cuban Salary Comparison – Page 93

Graph 5.3: Physicians per 1000 Residents, Various Groups (1960-2013) – Page 97

Graph 5.4 Cuban Service Exports (in thousands of U.S. Dollars) – Page 100

Graph 5.5 : Cuban Balance of Payments (1989-2010) – Page 101

Graph 5.6: Estimated Total Payments from Venezuela to Cuba – Page 104

Figure 6.1: Interdependence Flow Chart – Page 112

Abstract

This thesis examines the influence of Human Capital Exportation on Cuba's political economy from 1998 through the present. Human Capital Exportation represents the convergence of the Cuban state's greatest triumphs--education and healthcare--unified through Cuban state planning. Through the exportation programs, Cuba sends individuals with technical expertise, the majority of whom are medical professionals, to developing states around the world. The Cuban state describes the programs as products of proletarian solidarity, but they are also pragmatic. Human Capital Exportation serves important macro-economic and diplomatic goals. Although Human Capital Exportation programs have had a positive impact on Cuba's balance of payments, they have served to indirectly sustain Cuba's extractive institutional economic structure. By providing access to hard capital and a source of diplomatic power, these programs have stabilized the centralization of power in the Cuban state, and prevented economic and political liberalization.

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Introduction

“When our physicians go to help in other countries, although their mission is to work for medical attention, they are also bearers of our values and our ideas of solidarity. This is the essence of the Battle of Ideas.” – Abel Prieto¹

Mario Teran, a stocky, 68-year old Bolivian man living in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, was on the verge of blindness for years because of the development of a cataract. An honorably discharged sergeant of the Bolivian military, he never had access to the operation he needed for much of his adult life, despite the surgery being routine in the developed world. In 2007, his vision was restored when he was treated as part of a joint venture between the Cuban and Venezuelan governments known as *Operación Milagro*. Mr. Teran was not alone: he was just one of an estimated 1.5 million people treated globally through the joint Venezuelan-Cuban venture through March 2009.²

According to declassified U.S. government documents, Mr. Teran was a sergeant in the 2nd Rangers, a special Bolivian unit trained by the Green Berets that, on the fateful day of October 8th 1967, captured the famed revolutionary, Ernesto “Che” Guevara. The next morning, a full three hours after Bolivian President Barrientos publically announced Argentine icon’s death, Mr. Teran was given the order to execute Guevara.³ According to his biographer, Guevara’s last, ominous words may have been “Shoot, coward, you’re only going to kill a man.”⁴

¹ Steve Brouwer. *Revolutionary Doctors* (New York: NYU Press 2011), pp 180.

² John Kirk and Michael H. Erisman. *Cuban Medical Internationalism: Origins, Evolution, and Goals*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2009) pp 14.

³ Details from this paragraph from two declassified documents: “CIA Debriefing of Félix Rodríguez, June 3rd, 1975” and Walt Rostow. “White House Memorandum, October 11, 1967” (see bibliographic entry).

⁴ Jon Lee Anderson. *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life*. Page 796.

Granma, a Cuban government-controlled newspaper named for the private fishing vessel that carried Fidel Castro and the rest of the *Movimiento 26 de Julio* revolutionary forces from Mexico to southeastern Cuba, reported that "four decades after Mario Teran attempted to destroy a dream and an idea, Che returns to win yet another battle."⁵ Che's legacy, the article insinuated, was a grand ideological battle against poverty and illness in line with his vision of the "revolutionary doctor...a man who utilizes the technical knowledge of his profession in the service of the revolution and the people."⁶

The dramatic metaphor of Che's symbolic vengeance demonstrates how Cuban government rhetoric has shifted significantly in the half century since the Cuban Revolution. Gone are the days of guerrilleros, cigars and armed insurrection. Today, Cuba wages its ideological battles with bandages and scalpels, and the soldiers on the front lines are primary care physicians and nurses. This thesis seeks to understand how, to what effect, and why.

To some sympathetic observers, ever conscious of the caustic externalities of the ruthless free market, Cuba exemplifies both the costs of defying the prevailing global winds and represents the possibility of an alternative political model. The Castro regime is widely denounced for human rights violations while being simultaneously celebrated for its domestic social services. The state remains undemocratic, opaque, and bureaucratically inefficient in a way that calls to mind a 20th century Latin American military regime, but the Cuban leadership has demonstrated a distinctive ability to remain in power. The Cuban state is, if nothing else, an enigma.

This study provides a framework with which to understand this deeply polemic regime and the vivacious nation that it represents. While my own politics cannot be fully excluded, the

⁵ Roy Carroll. "Cuban doctors restore sight of Che's killer" *The Guardian*.

⁶ Ernesto Guevara. "On Revolutionary Medicine."

purpose of this work is not to offer a normative interpretation of the Castro regime but to contextualize, explore and, hopefully, better understand the contemporary Cuban government and its policies. My research focuses on the role of one particular policy, which I refer to as Human Capital Exportation (“HCE”), examining its evolution, its significance and its implications.

This work will explore how social, economic and political forces have converged to create contemporary Cuba’s keystone policy, Human Capital Exportation, which will be presented as both a product of and, increasingly, a defining feature of the Cuban state. Human Capital Exportation programs not only reflect the medical and educational achievements of socialist Cuba, they both depend on and perpetuate the state’s inefficiencies. I will demonstrate why the very survival of the Cuban government is integrally connected to the program, indeed dependent on it, and why such a program could have flourished nowhere else.

The first chapter will define Cuban Human Capital Exportation, put it in historical context of Cuban Medical Internationalist programs, and situate the programs in the context of the modern Cuban state. Chapter II will offer an interpretative account of Cuba’s historical domestic and foreign policy, proposing overarching priorities of the Cuban government that will serve as the base for subsequent analysis. The third and fourth chapters will evaluate Human Capital Exportation programs as a diplomatic tool. The fifth will evaluate the domestic impact of the programs in Cuba, focusing on the economic implications of the program. Finally, the conclusion will summarize and connect the other elements of the paper to a unified narrative.

Human Capital Exportation grows out of the convergence of the Cuban state’s greatest triumphs – education and healthcare – but it is more an innovative adaptation to the Cuban state’s structural inefficiency than a reflection of Cuban dynamism. By serving disparate macro-

economic and diplomatic goals, HCE programs serve to perpetuate the very institutional inertia that necessitated them. Although HCE programs have had a positive impact on recipient communities and have fundamentally changed the Cuban state's relationship with the global community, they are also the primary lifeline sustaining Cuba's extractive institutional structure.

Therefore, Cuban central leadership and its Human Capital Exportation programs are trapped in a mutually reinforcing dependency in which Cuba cannot meaningfully reform its political economy without undermining the viability of its keystone policy. It is institutionally implausible for there to exist a democratic, prosperous Cuba that continues to supply medical services to marginalized communities around the world on the scale of today. In this way, Human Capital Exportation, despite its positive trappings, may be the ultimate leverage in sustaining the political status quo in Cuba.

Chapter I

Cuban Human Capital Exportation: Definition, Depiction and Historical Context

1.0 Introduction

This chapter will provide an introduction to the contemporary structure of Cuban Human Capital Exportation to give the reader an image of the relatively obscure, but important, programs, as well as providing background information necessary to understand the arguments proposed in subsequent sections. I also provide a brief historical introduction to contextualize the Revolutionary government in Cuba. The chapter makes the case for differentiating between post-1998 Human Capital Exportation and Cold War-era medical diplomacy. Finally, it gives a snapshot of what Human Capital Exportation looks like today, exposes the reader to the tone of government rhetoric describing the program, and gives a sense of both the geographic reach of Cuban medical exchanges, and the human scale of the Human Capital Exportation programs.

This chapter begins to provide the framework necessary to assess the big-picture impact and implications of Cuban Human Capital Exportation. It seeks to push the literature that has thus far explored Cuban Medical Internationalism, by unifying a number of theoretical elements surrounding both Cuba's medical exportation and Cuba's political economy. At its core, this thesis aspires to provide answers to one core question: How has Cuban Human Capital Exportation affected the Cuban political economy? In order to shed light on this question, this chapter seeks to answer in broad terms, "what is Cuban Human Capital Exportation?"

1.1 Terminology

For purposes of clarity, it behooves me to define the two pieces of terminology that I use throughout this piece. “Cuban Medical Internationalism,” the term often used in academic literature to refer to Cuba’s exportation of doctors, has been used by a number of scholars to refer to both Cold War-era and post-1998 medical programs abroad.⁷ I argue in this thesis that the programs that emerged after 1998 are fundamentally distinct from those that predated the fall of the Berlin wall, but have remained institutionally consistent since. I refer to the contemporary manifestation of Cuban Medical Internationalism as “Cuban Human Capital Exportation programs” (or “HCE programs,” as they will be referred to as well). Though the majority of Cubans working abroad through these bilaterally negotiated governmental exchanges are medical professionals, this is not always the case as educators, intelligence specialists, policymakers, engineers and other trained individuals work abroad under comparable conditions. I also coined the term “Human Capital Exportation” to emphasize the fundamentally economic nature of the programs.

1.2 Historical Introduction to Fidel Castro’s Foreign Policy

Fidel Castro and the new revolutionary government cautiously attempted to negotiate with the United States in the early days of the revolution. By 1961, the year of the Bay of Pigs attack on *Playa Girón* and Fidel’s proclamation of the “socialist” nature of the revolution, Cuba’s foreign policy evolved in opposition to that of the United States, serving to both challenge U.S. imperialism and to insulate Cuba from the United States hegemony.

⁷ Using this definition, and estimated 124,112 medical professionals have worked abroad in a total of 103 countries since 1960. María C. Werlau. “Cuba Business of Humanitarianism: The Medical Mission in Haiti” *Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy*, 40 (2011) pp. 194

Cuba pursued an aggressive foreign policy that not only challenged the hemispheric domination of its northern foe, but aimed to attack the very economic system on which regional relations were based. In 1960, Fidel argued in the United Nations that developing states, “have been exploited for a long time. The form of exploitation may have changed, but [we] are still being exploited.”⁸ Fidel Castro was also highly critical of U.S. interventionism, noting, “In this hemisphere...the Government of the United States has always imposed its own law – the law of the strongest.”⁸ Cuba therefore saw itself as holding a natural alliance with weaker states that shared the experience of being subject to imperialism. Just as the guerrillero July 26th movement painted themselves as liberators from the tyrannical reign of the U.S.-backed Batista regime, so Cuba thrust itself onto the global stage as the righteous ally, and even representative of, the exploited developing world.⁹ Anti-imperialism became central to Cuba’s foreign policy and political identity, which saw as its goal a new age of man in which economic exploitation through imperialist means, the root of modern conflict, would be extinguished.¹⁰ The rhetorical framing of Cuban Human Capital Exportation continues to reflect this narrative.

⁸ Fidel Castro. “The Problem of Cuba and its Revolutionary Policy.” Speech. September 26th, 1960.

⁹ “There will be no mea culpa [for our actions abroad]. We do not have to ask anyone's pardon. What we have done, we have done consciously, and above all, fully convinced of our right to do it.” *Ibid*.

¹⁰ “Do away with the philosophy of plunder and you will have done away forever with the philosophy of war! [Audience applause] Do away with the colonies, wipe out the exploitation of countries by monopolies, and mankind will have reached a true era of progress!” *Ibid*.

1.3 Roots of Human Capital Exportation

Some authors have made the astute case that modern “Cuban Medical Internationalism” has roots in Cold War era “Doctor Diplomacy.”¹¹ While the Cold War policies are likely the source of the conceptual underpinnings of the modern policy, it is important that we apply a theoretical division between the utilization of medical diplomacy in the Cold War and post-Cold War periods, because the context of these apparently similar programs was different in critical ways. The mechanism by which HCE programs developed is not a story of gradual evolution from the days of Cold War diplomacy, but of innovation based on economic and diplomatic necessity.

Interspersed with conceivably ideology-driven policies¹² were contexts in which Cuba’s interest in advancing underlying military, political and economic goals were clear. For example, Cuba deployed more non-medically trained Cubans abroad (146,631) than medical professionals (124,112) through 2008, reflecting an interest in militarism rather than humanitarianism.¹³ In addition, even though many states around the world were poor and in need of medical assistance, the largest groups of Cuban development professionals worked in countries such as Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Nicaragua, each of which were integrally involved in Cold War geo-politics.¹⁴ To lump these Cubans serving abroad with the largely apolitical HCE workers is incongruous.

Cuban developmental aid services rendered during the Cold War, although appearing similar to contemporary HCE policies, were distinct in critical ways. First, the funding models

¹¹ The term “Doctor Diplomacy” and some of the most compelling research about Cold War era exportation of Cuban doctors is from: Julie Feinsilver. “Cuba as a ‘World Medical Power:’ The Politics of Symbolism” *Latin American Research Review* 24.2 (1989), pp. 2.

¹² For example, as today Cuba used to send response teams to sites of natural disasters, beginning with a horrific earthquake in Chile in 1960. In the 1980s, it also offered 18,000 scholarships to students of various African nationalities. These practices are certainly comparable to contemporary programs, but are distinct for the reasons listed in the following paragraph. John Kirk. “Cuba’s Medical Internationalism: Development and Rationale” (2009), pp 500.

¹³ Werlau “Cuba Business of Humanitarianism...Haiti”, pp. 9.

¹⁴ Feinsilver (1989), pp 2; Kirk, Erisman *Cuban Medical Internationalism* (2009), pp 68-69.

are distinct: before the 1989, the Soviet Union subsidized or funded all these initiatives as part of its Cold War efforts, while the contemporary programs are contract-based and profit-driven.¹⁵ In addition, the contemporary model of Human Capital Exportation was fundamentally distinct after the founding of the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM), which marked the beginning of the critically important educational component of HCE.

Regardless of whether ideological considerations continue to play a explanatory role in Cuban state behavior – it is plausible that a state which puts such an emphasis on ideology does, indeed, value what it espouses¹⁶ – to discern no difference between Cold War era diplomacy and contemporary, transactional Human Capital Exportation makes little sense and, worse, is analytically misleading. It is for these reasons that I make a sharp distinction between the Cuban Medical Internationalist policies of the Cold War era and those that arose after 1998.

¹⁵ There are two exceptions to this statement, to my knowledge. Cuba signed two deals in 1979 with the Libyan and Angolan governments, whereby Cuba lent labor and technical expertise to assist in building infrastructure for a total of \$200 million dollars [Kirk, Erisman. *Cuban Medical Internationalism* pp 67].

¹⁶ It is important to note that Cuba did display some level of independence from U.S.S.R. foreign policy during this era, especially with regard to Medical Diplomacy and the Angolan invasion. This makes a solidarity driven explanation of the Angolan invasion, for example, more plausible[Dominguez, Jorge. "Cuban Foreign Policy"].

1.4 Modern Manifestation of Programs

I date the end of Cold War-era Medical Diplomacy and the transition to Human Capital Exportation to the 1990s, with elements of the contemporary model arising most notably in 1998. While there were indeed some Cuban medical professionals working abroad during the "Special Period" of the 1990s, 1998 was the year the expansion of programs began in earnest. It was also the year that Hugo Chavez, the greatest benefactor of Cuba's HCE programs, was elected.¹⁷

In 1998, the devastating Hurricanes Mitch and George killed a total of 30,500 people and caused an estimated \$12.1 billion in damage across Central American and the Caribbean, crippling health infrastructure and leaving more than 3 million people homeless or seriously affected.¹⁸ Although Cuba had no diplomatic relationships with the countries most impacted by the storms - Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Haiti – Fidel Castro vowed to take “revenge” on the storm. His “revenge” would serve as the proof of concept Human Capital Exportation, and soon gave birth to the highly profitable industry.¹⁹

Cuba offered to deploy 2,200 doctors to Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Belize and Haiti to treat the victims and build long-term public health capacity, each of whom, thanks to “free” medical scholarships to the newly created ELAM (“Latin American School of Medicine,” translated from Spanish), would be replaced by domestic nationals who would receive their full medical training in Cuba.²⁰ Guatemala and Honduras would both reestablish

¹⁷ BBC. “Profile: Hugo Chávez.”

¹⁸ Kirk and Erisman, *Cuban Medical Internationalism*. 2009. pp. 129

¹⁹ “The idea came about when newswires released that hurricane Mitch had uprooted the lives of 40,000 people in Central America. We proposed to send a medical force capable of saving a life for each that was destroyed by the hurricane.” Author’s translation. Fidel Castro. August 20th, 2005.

²⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 129- 132

diplomatic ties with Cuba for the first time since the 1960s in 1999 and 2002 respectively.²¹ The initiative was a turning point in Cuban foreign policy, the beginning of a diplomatic boon that will be explored in Chapters III and IV. It marked the beginning of a long-term commitment to Caribbean and Central American healthcare, including providing long-term medical support, public health capacity building, and medical education scholarships.

Divorced from the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union, Cuba's role in the post-Cold War world became less about the ideological defense of socialism and more about Cuba's economic and diplomatic interests. In an effort to undermine the Castro regime, the U.S. Congress passed The Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (Libertad) Act of 1996, referred to as the "Helms-Burton Act" for its legislative co-sponsors, which codified the Cuban embargo (previously just an executive order) and made U.S. opposition to Cuban membership in international financial institutions explicit. The bill authorized the United States government to impose sanctions against states and businesses with even minor economic relations with Cuba.²² The effect has been to ensure Cuba's isolation from U.S. markets and those of U.S. allies, simultaneously estranging the Cuban state and creating a well of sympathy for the Cuban people (as Chapter IV will explore).

Human Capital Exportation policies offered a vehicle through which Cuba could reassert its status as a Third World, Latin American nation, as opposed to a Soviet satellite state. The subsequent reestablishment of diplomatic relations with a number of Latin American states – including recipients of its hurricane relief – reflected the first diplomatic victory of the Human Capital Exportation program. The programs were not simply a diplomatic endeavor, however, growing to represent a vitally important role in Cuba's economy.

²¹ AP. "Honduras extends diplomatic ties to Cuba." January 29, 2002; AP. "Guatemalan President Returns Home After Forging New Ties with Cuba" October 6, 1999.

²² Bearden, Tim. "Helms-Burton Act: Resurrecting the Iron Curtain" June 10, 2011.

1.5 Cuba as a “Small State”

As a relatively small, economically underdeveloped state, Cuba’s ability to advance its interests in the global realm through traditional means is limited. It has long had trouble maintaining its balance of payments, has poor infrastructure, and has even had issues profitably exporting its core commodities, from sugar²³ to domestically extracted metals, such as Nickel and Cobalt, at global market prices.²⁴

Understanding Cuba’s limitations as a small, economically underdeveloped state is critical to understanding the emergence of its exportation of medical services. HCE programs are best conceived of as an opportunistic diplomatic and economic strategy to find niches in the global community in which it can compete. Like many small states, the Cuban government employs an unorthodox economic approach towards meeting non-traditional demands of states with whom it negotiates economic exchanges.²⁵ For example, it uses its ability to allocate surplus national resources, medical professionals in the case of Human Capital Exportation programs, to meet the particular needs of recipient states rather than competing in the global market by price.

Because of its insistence on the unassailable right of sovereignty at the state level, and its unwillingness to recognize basic economic rights of its citizens, Cuba can undercut wages *within* recipient states by restricting its workers’ salaries well below what they would earn independent of the Cuban government. In so doing, it provides employment for its workers, and allows developing nations that could not otherwise afford such services to have access. This competitive

²³ For more in Cuba’s woes in the Sugar industry, see Xianglin and Breña (2007) and McCollum (2002).

²⁴ Reuters. “Low Prices Take Toll on Cuban Nickel Revenues” (2013)

²⁵ This insight draws heavily on this passage “Small states are able to use their sovereignty and political status, rather than their economic influence, to advance their cause. Here, they often resort to using non-market solutions or non-orthodox approaches, such as relying on their power to negotiate aid and derogations in international systems, as well as emigration, which provides and outlet for its population.” Andrew F. Cooper and Timothy Shaw. *The Diplomacies of Small States: Between Vulnerability and Resilience* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2012), pp 43.

advantage of state-planning, combined with its relatively small size, allows Cuba to fill niches other states or firms cannot, exemplified best by Human Capital Exportation.

1.6 Characteristics of Contemporary, Lucrative Model

Just as the Cuban government's policy of aiding revolution has faded from relevancy in a post-Pink Tide Latin America, Cuba's exportation of doctors has taken a markedly less ideological, and more status quo-tolerant nature. HCE programs today are intended to complement existing government health institutions, serving two primary roles. First, Cuban specialists lend expertise in implementing Cuba's world-renowned prevention-focused, community-based public health model and, second, Cuba sends medical professionals to staff underserved, generally poor and rural, areas of recipient countries.

Although there are cases where Havana has provided these services at no charge to recipient countries, as is the case in Haiti, the Cuban state does get compensated for their programs in many cases. Unfortunately, neither Cuba nor most recipient nations publish the exact terms of deals, obfuscating the details of the agreements. Cuba actively plays up the humanitarian, altruistic elements of its policy while failing to mention its lucrative nature. For example, Cuban government rhetoric tends to emphasize that the programs reflect solidarity or humanitarianism, suggesting the programs are free for poor recipient nations. As Cuban Foreign Minister Pérez Roque commented in June 2007: "We don't give out our leftovers; instead we share what we have," insinuating that the programs reflected Cuban *sacrifice*.²⁶ Promotions for the Latin American School of Medicine suggest programs arise from "the importance of public health, accompanied by an ethic of help and collaboration with the poorest and most in need

²⁶ Kirk, John. "Reflections on Medical Internationalism" (2009) page 139.

countries in the world.”²⁷ This rhetoric has fueled the public misconception that the services are provided for free.

1.7 Brief Overview of the Scope and Terms of HCE programs

Even poor countries (though not all countries) pay for the Cuban programs, although evidence suggests that the terms of deals vary on a case-by-case basis. It has been reported that Namibia paid \$2,784 per month per doctor through 2012, while Angola and Venezuela each have long paid \$5,000 per month per doctor, most of which goes directly to the Cuban government. Though not publically disclosed by Cuba, estimates suggest that depending on in-country cost-of-living, Cuban doctors receive a monthly stipend of between \$150 - \$500, and a monthly paycheck of \$72 to \$145, far greater than the \$20-\$30 paid to public employees in Cuba.²⁸ Anything above this amount is taxed by the Cuban government, accounting for around \$6.2 billion dollars in revenue in 2008²⁹ and a projected \$8.6 billion in the 2014.³⁰

²⁷ Translated by author: una alta sensibilidad por la salud pública...acompañada por una ética solidaria de ayuda y colaboración con los países más pobres y necesitados”. From: Escuela Latinoamericana de Medicina de Cuba - Facebook Page, “Encuentro Internacional de Egresados ELAM 2012”

²⁸ All payment and wages estimates from Werlau, María. Cuba’s Health-Care Diplomacy: The Business of Humanitarianism (2013), page 3.

²⁹ Werlau, María. “Cuba’s Business of Humanitarianism...”, page 196.

³⁰ Sabo, Eric. “Cuba Forecasts \$8.2 Billion From Doctors Abroad This Year”

Figure 1.1: Map of Where Cuban Medical Professionals Work (2012)



Source: *Ministerio de Salud Pública, República de Cuba (Cuba). "Anuario Estadística de Salud (2012)" April 2013.*

Map Generated at WorldMapMaker.com

Though government documents do not release the exact number of doctors serving abroad in total or by country every year, Human Capital Exportation has grown from an estimated 3,600 in 1999 to 38,544 Cuban health professionals working abroad in 2008, of whom 17,697 were certified doctors.³¹ In 2007, this meant that one in every 374 Cubans was working abroad.³² The

³¹ Kirk, John M., and H. Michael Erisman, 2009. Page 12.

³² *Ibid.* Page 15, Table 1.3.

Cuban government reports sending medical professionals to a peak of 69 countries in 2008,³³ with the most recently released figures reporting bilateral health relationships with 60 countries in 2012.³⁴ In comparison, there are more than 11 times as many Cuban doctors working abroad as M.D.s working through Doctors Without Borders (though total staff working in the field is roughly equivalent).³⁵ The majority of Cubans working abroad (roughly 30,000) work in Venezuela through the *Barrio Adentro* program or as government advisors.³⁶ In addition to the medical professionals in the field, the number of medical students educated in Cuba has had a similarly meteoric rise: in the 2012-2013 year, 14,263 foreign students were enrolled in Cuban medical universities.³⁷ For an economically underdeveloped country with a population barely above 11 million, the scope of Human Capital Exportation is truly remarkable.

1.8 ALBA

The expansion of Cuban Human Capital Exportation was funded in large part by the Chavéz administration in Venezuela, which provided funding for the program as part of a regional solidarity and trade pact known as *Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra America* (The Bolivarian Alliance for Latin America³⁸ or, as it will be referred to throughout this piece, “ALBA”). The alliance between Venezuela and Cuba was purportedly born through a closeness between Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez, who shared an ideology of proletarian solidarity and the

³³ Other sources claim there were 73 bilaterally negotiated deals, though this figure is 4 more than the government reported number. From: Kirk, John and Michael H. Erisman, . Cuban Medical Internationalism: Origins, Evolution and Goals. Page 188.

³⁴ Werlau, María, “Cuba-Venezuela Health Diplomacy...” page 2.

³⁵ This estimated was calculated using 2008 estimates for doctors working abroad (see footnote 33), compared to MSF’s row in the HR summary section labeled “Medical pool” and “Field positions” [Medecins Sans Frontieres. “International Activity Report 2012”, page 99]

³⁶ Werlau, María, “Cuba-Venezuela Health Diplomacy...”

³⁷ “Cuba. Ministerio de Salud Publico”, Page 189

³⁸ The translation used in the text is the one that is typically used in government documents; however, a more accurate translation would be “The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America.” The name is a play on words in spanish, as “Alba” translate to “dawn.” [Britannica Online Encyclopedia. “Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA)”]

vision of a bloc of united nation-states powerful enough to protect the sovereignty of member-states against the influence of the regional hegemon, the United States.³⁹ Formally established in 2004, ALBA is a distinctive union for its rhetorical emphasis on ideological solidarity and its emphasis on facilitating “in-kind” exchanges. Though it primarily serves as an economic union, the bloc has quickly become central to Cuban and Venezuelan foreign policy.⁴⁰

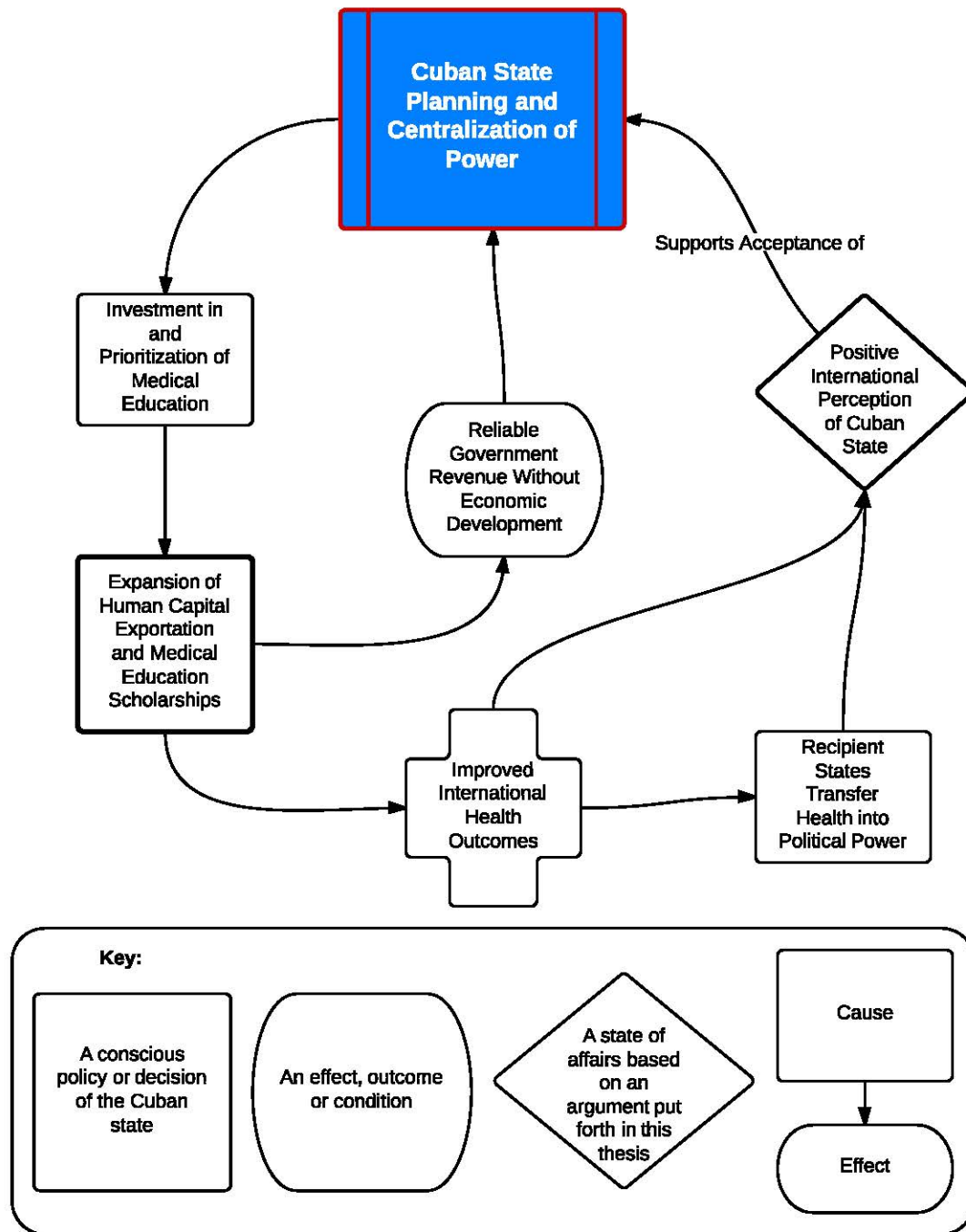
1.9 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to expose the reader to key concepts and details of Cuban Human Capital Exportation, in order to lay the groundwork for the central arguments of this thesis. It has provided a broad overview of the roots of Cuban Medical Internationalism, offered a preliminary account of what Cuban Human Capital looks like in the contemporary era, and introduced the importance of Cuba’s relationship to Venezuela. It has principally concerned the international aspects of HCE programs to lay the groundwork for the following explanation of why Cuban Human Capital Exportation indirectly prevents institutional reform in Cuba. I will lay this argument out in broad terms, allowing subsequent chapters to clarify, defend and deepen the argument.

³⁹ Britannica Online Encyclopedia. “Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) (international organization)”

⁴⁰ Kirk and Erisman, *Cuban Medical Internationalism*. pp 13, 109.

Figure 1.2: International Health-State Power Feedback Cycle



Cuba's HCE programs, by providing the state a source of substantial, dependable income, counterintuitively prevents institutional change that could allow Cuban growth. In fact, because the programs help marginalized communities around the world, the program also fosters goodwill for the authoritarian Cuban state. This international acquiescence to the centralization of power within Cuba protects the government from international pressure to democratize. The combination of these economic returns and the diplomatic functions of Human Capital Exportation has created a positive feedback cycle, which has, in turn, strengthened the Cuban state. The logic of this process is demonstrated in figure 1.1 (previous page).

Upcoming chapters will elaborate on how this positive feedback cycle works in greater depth, and connect the international and domestic impacts of Cuban Human Capital Exportation. Many questions remain unanswered that will guide the analysis of subsequent chapters. Why is the Cuban government unique in its relative capacity to export highly trained medical professionals abroad? How has Cuba's unique geo-political and economic identity shaped the development of the programs? Upon what domestic and international factors does the program depend? These questions will drive the analysis presented throughout the rest of this thesis. The following chapter provides a broad interpretive account of the history of the modern Cuban state, providing the institutional, historical and strategic context in which the Castro regime has operated in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Chapter 2

An Interpretive Account of Post-Revolutionary Cuba:

The Pragmatic Pursuit of Centralized State Power

*“The Republic... should not be the unjust predomination of one class of Cubans over the rest, but the open and sincere equilibrium of all the real forces of the country, and of the free thought and desire of all the citizens... We have no desire just to leave one hypocrisy just to fall in another.”*⁴¹ – José Martí

2.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to establish an institutional depiction of the Cuban state and provide an interpretation of the behavior of its central leadership, identifying in broad terms how the post-Revolutionary government has structured Cuban society and what its primary underlying goals have proven to be. This chapter also provides a descriptive interpretation of Cuban political economy to establish an analytical base upon which this thesis will build in the following three chapters.

Cuba, despite its incredible social achievements, is institutionally structured such that power resides in the hands of few. The socialist government is steadfastly committed to the preservation of its power, defending its authority from both domestic and international intervention. It draws on its socialist orientation as a source of both domestic legitimacy and a rhetorical justification of its unchecked centralized power.

⁴¹ Orlando Fondevila. “El ideal de equilibrio de José Martí” *Revista Hispano Cubana* (2000). pp 52-53.

I first make the case that the primary function of the Cuban state is to perpetuate its own survival, which combines authoritarian political institutions with extractive economic institutions to maintain absolute domestic power. The following section makes the case that the best ideological interpretation of the Castro regime's actions is not dogmatic Marxism, but political pragmatism. I then investigate Cuban populism, arguing that equity plays a critical role in the state's legitimacy. Finally, I comment on Cuba's unrelenting protection of its sovereignty, best exemplified by its unwillingness to integrate with global markets, thereby effectively sacrificing growth for sovereignty. The domestic and foreign policy of the Cuban state is interconnected through one central goal that underlies the institutional make up of Cuban society: the survival of the political status-quo.

2.1 Survival at all Costs: Extractive Institutions, Innovation and Authoritarianism

The survival of the post-revolutionary Cuban government throughout the second half of the 20th century reflects its pragmatic resilience. In post-revolutionary Cuba, society may have been the product of well-intentioned revolutionaries, bent on the admirable pursuit of a better Cuba that avoids the ills of free-market capitalism. However, this does not mean it has been effective for the Cuban people.

It is useful to theorize the Cuban political economic model as a response to the ills of pre-revolutionary Cuba and to the chaos of the international system it inhabits. Cuban institutional development can be interpreted as a response to the perils of the anarchic international system, in which stability as a small state amidst subversive foreign influence is only possible, one could argue, by institutionalizing centralized power. Long characterized by instability, the centralization of power within the government and the Cuban Communist party can be

interpreted as a reaction to Batista's subversion of Cuban politics through military control in the 1940s and 1950s.

Cuban sovereignty has long been compromised by its dependence on sugar markets, with the U.S.-imposed Platt amendment representing a particularly poignant example of the imperialistic behavior of Cuba's powerful neighbor. The Revolution's focus on equality can be perceived as a reaction to the imposition of racial inequality by Spanish colonists through slavery and rigid, hereditary conceptions of class. Revolutionary Cuba was theoretically constructed in dialectic relationship to its post-independence period of uncertainty and abuse.

2.1a Internal Contradictions

The Cuban government draws its legitimacy from the principles of equality amongst people and the prioritization of the collective good above that of individuals. But its authority is also the product of the institutionalization of absolute, centralized power with no mechanism of accountability to the will of the people. The reality of the Cuban political economy is that, ideology aside, the institutions established by the Castro regime are highly extractive. They are comparably extractive to colonial institutions of old, except that the income expropriated from the masses, rather than going to Spanish coffers, funds the state and its social services. Though abject poverty has been effectively eliminated through this model, the state is held accountable by no-one and the people are kept poor. These institutions have maintained unchecked, centralized power within the central government for over half a century.

What makes the Cuban case truly enigmatic, however, is that the principles with which the Castro regime defined itself upon its rise to power remain relevant, unlike in many Latin American dictatorships. International observers laud the social achievements of the Revolution.

State-dispensed social services have achieved universal literacy, high quality public health, and even a vibrant cultural sphere. Although undoubtedly more socially just than in Martí's era, Cuba's political economy nonetheless fails to live up to Martí's aspiration of an "open and sincere equilibrium." Instead, it is characterized by the predomination of an opaque government bureaucracy. Cuban central leadership has sacrificed economic growth for sovereignty, individual liberty for centralized power, efficiency for equity, and democratic accountability for stability. The Cuban people have next to no means of influencing these strategic decisions.

2.1b The "Gatekeeper" state and Economic Stasis

Creative destruction, key to innovation and rising efficiency, is largely absent in Cuba, because government-controlled monopolies dominate uncompetitive industries. The government sets the terms of labor with no mechanism to hold it accountable to the will of workers. Entrepreneurship is legally constrained to preserve the central leadership's role as the "Gatekeeper" of the economy.⁴² The restriction of economic activity, the lack of available capital, and the tight control of foreign investment allows government industry to remain unchallenged, thereby preventing the emergence of any upwardly mobile, middle class.

Cuban leadership has prevented the rise of a competing political class by suffocating any sign of a bourgeois. Private wealth is almost non-existent, and private property is not robust. For example, the dual currency system serves as the highest labor tax in the world, "an effective...tax of [95%]," keeping the people poor and the government with the ability to redistribute all income as they see fit.⁴³ With no private competition, government industry has no need to increase efficiency. In this sense, Cuba reflects the economic traits of Acemoglu and

⁴² Corrales, Javier. "The Gatekeeper State: Limited Economic Reforms and Regime Survival in Cuba, 1989-2002" (2004) page 35-36.

⁴³ Feinberg, Richard (2012), page 14.

Robinson's concept of a state with extractive political and economic institutions: "[In e]xtractive institutions there [is] no technological change or creative destruction ... Economic growth [is] not created by technological change, but by reallocating labor and by capital accumulation."⁴⁴

Recent reforms of private property and the legalization of *cuentapropistas* (self-employed small business owners) are characterized by many in the international media as indicating the liberalization of Cuba's economy. However, little meaningful structural reform has actually taken place as the government continues to unilaterally (and unpredictably) set the terms of business. Raul Castro's reforms are born more of economic necessity (public deficits) than willingness to share power, as exemplified by the ongoing crackdowns against benign private businesses.⁴⁵ In 2013, Cuba established a ban on private commercialization of imported goods, undermining any semblance of a merchant class.⁴⁶ Misguided popular notions of a "Post-Castro Cuba"⁴⁷ or the emergence of a Deng Xiaping-style socialist transition only serve to obfuscate the reality of "stealth [economic] statism".⁴⁸ Cuba continues to strangle disruptive technology rather than allow for the development of more efficient, but less-easily controlled, modernization.

⁴⁴ Acemoglu and Robinson (pages 126-127)

⁴⁵ AP. "Cuba cracks down on private cinemas, game salons"

⁴⁶ *ibid.* "Cuba also recently announced a ban on private commercialization of imported goods, and... small business owners who have been selling products brought from overseas will have [two months] to liquidate their inventories."

⁴⁷ Sweig, Julia E. "The Post-Castro Era is Today."

⁴⁸ Corrales (2004), page 45.

2.1c Political Domination by the State

The lack of truly democratic elections allows the central leadership to maintain power through its control of the Communist party, leaving no inclusive form of influence over the direction of the state.⁴⁹ Purportedly democratic elements of the state are mostly an illusion. For example, Raul Castro has already tapped his successor, Miguel Diaz-Canel, who will assume power in 2018 or before.⁵⁰ Loyalty is demanded of government officials at the cost of technocratic expertise.⁵¹ All legal forms of media in Cuba are subject to government censorship and propaganda. Cuban leadership not only censors the internet, but effectively restricts access to the web to all but tourists and state employees by charging almost a week's government wage for an hour of internet time at publically-run internet cafes.⁵² Three interconnected bodies, the Communist party, the military and the security apparatus, are able to dominate domestic politics through a mutually beneficial political alliance, thereby maintaining the status quo.⁵³ So long as the state is able to unify these powerful bodies and constrain the emergence of a politically inclined bourgeois class, the state is secure. Its social achievements notwithstanding, institutionally, Cuba is authoritarian state.

⁴⁹ Although there are actually elections in Cuba, the electoral choices are pre-determined by the central government, ensuring that only party loyalists can be nominated to run for office.

⁵⁰ Orsi, Peter. "Cuba President Election: Parliament Gathers To Name Leader"

⁵¹ Corrales (2004). Pages 41-42.

⁵² "More than two years ago [2011], Venezuela confirmed that an undersea fiber-optic cable between the two countries was "fully operational." However, the cable only began to carry traffic earlier this year [2013], which "suggests that infrastructure, though weak, is not the primary factor in Cuba's digital isolation." (Gupta 2013); The Associated Press. "Cuban Centers to Offer a Costly Glimpse of the Web."

⁵³ Corrales (2004), page 36.

2.2 Pragmatism

The revolution's ultimate ideological framing was as much a product of its historical context as the belief system of Fidel Castro, primarily concerned with the still unstable and uncertain base of support for the Revolution. Herbert Mathews, a New York Times columnist who interviewed the Cuban rebel in the Sierra Maestra, described his movement as "vague and couched in generalities...the real core of its strength is that it is fighting against the military dictatorship of President Batista."⁵⁴ The biographer of Che Guevara, Jon Lee Anderson agrees that one of the greatest appeals of the revolutionary movement was its contrast with Batista:

"To Cuba's new generation of nationalist idealists, exemplified by Fidel Castro, Batista was little more than a pimp, selling off their country to degenerate foreigners, compounding the resentment they already felt over [the time when] Washington had governed Cuba like a vessel state."⁵⁵

For those who imagine Fidel Castro to have always been the ideologue he has come to be known as, what emerges from these accounts is not his dogmatism, but his pragmatism. This interpretation is reflected in the values dictated in his Sierra Maestra Manifesto, in which Castro avoided labeling his movement as either socialist *or* capitalist, instead using the vague classification "humanist".⁵⁶ Indeed, "ideology or doctrine was secondary for Fidel; he was a man of action and had no need to tie himself down to any creed."⁵⁷ Though it is not, and may never

⁵⁴ Mathews, 1957. "Cuban Rebel is Visited in Hideout: Castro is Still Alive and Still Fighting in Mountains"

⁵⁵ Anderson, 2010 page 170.

⁵⁶ Castro, Chibas. "Manifesto Sierra Maestra"

⁵⁷ Lattell, page 87

be clear exactly what Castro believed, he was clearly willing to tailor his rhetoric to his audience and to his political convenience.

This pragmatism has characterized the Cuban regime throughout its existence and is still a fitting characterization of the regime today. Raul Castro's rule has not proven to be a meaningful departure from that of Fidel, largely because the institutional underpinning of the power of Cuba's central leadership has not changed. Nor is there reason to believe Raul's vision for Cuba differs significantly from his brother's, having been Fidel's confidant, advisor, and the leader of the armed forces since the early days of the revolution. He was considered the "lynchpin in [Fidel's] succession plan ...consulting regularly, discussing policy options and priorities." Some, including former CIA analyst Brian Lattell, argue that Raul's steady, if brutal, hand in controlling the armed forces has been "the guarantor of political stability in Cuba."⁵⁸

Raul has avidly protected the centralization of power in the state, arguing that "only socialism is capable of overcoming our difficulties and preserving the gains of the revolution" and that, despite his proposed reforms, "planning will be paramount [to the economy], not the market."⁵⁹ In this context, one can read "socialism" and "planning" as code for not only "free education and healthcare", but also "government-owned monopolies" and "high taxation." Raul's limited reforms, such as slashing the state payroll and encouraging the development of a constrained private sector, rather than representing a fundamental change to Cuba's economy, actually mirror the limited reforms that Fidel implemented during the "*Periodo Especial*" (which were ultimately reversed).⁶⁰ They are practical responses to economic necessity that do not require meaningful institutional change. That Cuba is marginally closer to a liberalized economy should not be interpreted as a trend. Cuban central leadership is therefore best understood as

⁵⁸ Latell (2007), page 24

⁵⁹ "Raúl the pragmatist", *The Economist*, November 11th, 2010

⁶⁰ Julia Sweig. "Fidel's Final Victory" (2007), pp. 44-46.

willing to bend Revolutionary ideology for the sake of the integrity of the power of the “Revolutionary coalition” (the Communist party, the military and the security apparatus).

Since the revolution, power has not resided exclusively with the Castro brothers, but their behavior reflects the broader functioning of centralized power within Cuba. They are obstinately committed to the preservation of centralized power, but have proven to be ideologically pragmatic in achieving that end.

2.3 Populism

Cuban central leadership has remained loyal to the equity-based social contract established early in the revolution. Whether the prioritization of social funding reflects political calculus, sincere consideration for the welfare of the Cuban people, or both, the government has never wavered in prioritizing social services. Despite a lack of political or economic liberty and institutional accountability to the public will, education has remained free, food rations have remained available, and public health is excellent relative to countries of Cuban development standards. Government social programs have persisted even in times of economic hardship, exemplified by the “special period”.

Today, medical Human Capital Exportation is also a key input to the legitimacy of Cuba’s ideology, perhaps giving Cuban citizens the psychic benefit of global relevance. The Cuban state’s revealed preferences are, in this sense, very much in line with their rhetoric: social spending is seemingly untouchable, even if the government remains politically unaccountable to the masses. Populist appeals, manifested through both the consistent rendering of high-quality domestic social services and international proletarian solidarity, serve as the central premise of legitimacy for the Revolution.

2.4 - Sovereignty

“The principle strategic objective of [our revolution] ...is the conquest of national sovereignty” – Che Guevara⁶¹

The final key interest that has defined post-Revolutionary Cuba is a dogmatic appeal to, and zealous protection of, Cuban sovereignty - especially from the United States. Appealing to Cuba’s long history of foreign exploitation, Cuban leadership has made domestic sovereignty one of its defining interests, despite independence often coming at a cost.

2.4a Intelligence

Cuba has actively sought to protect its sovereignty through the buildup of a powerful intelligence apparatus. Developed and hardened during the Cold War, Cuban intelligence has garnered a strong international reputation, including being recognized as sophisticated by internal correspondence of the United States government.⁶² Fabian Escalante, purportedly Fidel Castro’s former bodyguard, wrote a book about the many times U.S. assassination attempts on El Comandante were foiled, suggesting an effective intelligence infrastructure.⁶³ Perhaps its most notable role has been in suppressing domestic dissent, including allegedly exporting repressive “best practices” to the Maduro regime in Venezuela.⁶⁴ This apparatus serves to shield the government from both domestic and international threats.

⁶¹ “Soberanía política e independencia económica” March 20th, 1960. Author’s translation from: *“[Nuestra revolución] tiene como principal objetivo estratégico, y hay que recalcarlo constantemente, la conquista de la soberanía nacional.”*

⁶² Downs, Robert. “Cuba/ Venezuela Axis of Mischief: The View from Caracas” (2006).

⁶³ Campell, Duncan. “638 ways to Kill Castro”

⁶⁴ See section 3.3e for more information.

2.4b Economic Sovereignty

The goal of sovereignty is best demonstrated through Cuba's economic policies. In the words of Che Guevara, "our revolution understands that political sovereignty is intimately connected to economic independence."⁶⁵ All too aware of its pre-revolutionary dependence on international sugar markets, Cuba's alliance with the Soviet Union served to insulate it from the global economy. Integration with the "Second World" was not just an ideological and military alliance, but a means toward relative economic sovereignty. The vast majority of Cuban trade during the 1980s (roughly 85%) was conducted with fellow socialist states,⁶⁶ preventing Cuba from building levels of internationally held debt as comparable to other Latin American states during the so called "lost-decade."⁶⁷ This accumulation of debt by Latin American states and the resultant defaults, currency devaluations, and imposed Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) arguably contributed to regional instability in the 1980s and 1990s. In 2000, Fidel Castro even argued that "We were able to survive because we don't belong to the IMF," describing the institution as "the executioner which pulls the string so that the guillotine's blade falls on the heads of Third World nations."⁶⁸ Cuba's heavy emphasis on trade within the Soviet Bloc suggests its unwillingness to allow international institutions or the United States to infringe upon its sovereignty vis-à-vis leveraging its debt.

Even though Cuba has expanded foreign investment substantially since 1989, the terms facing investors remained rigid, reflecting Cuba's prioritization of maintaining sovereignty over

⁶⁵ Che Guevara. "Soberanía política e independencia económica" March 20th, 1960. Original Spanish text: "nuestra Revolución...sabe que soberanía política está unida íntimamente a soberanía económica"

⁶⁶ These exchanges were made through an artificial currency called "rubles," with the deficits of such exchanges being financed through Soviet subsidies or low-interest loans and financing packages. Because rubles were not convertible, the debt was non-transferable. Pérez-López (2000), page 141

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Pascal Fletcher. "Castro says Cuba lives free of IMF 'executioner.'" Reuters. January 29, 2000

attracting capital.⁶⁹ Indeed, the Cuban government maintains the ability to dictate the terms of foreign investment, ensuring that investment terms are, in the words of Fidel Castro, “designed by hand [to] occup[y] just the space that most suits the country.”⁷⁰ The state allows exclusively public-private mixed ventures and mandates that public institutions receive, tax and distribute salaries, which, based on the convoluted dual-currency system, results in an effective labor tax of over 95%.⁷¹ Investments have been almost exclusively large-scale,⁷² and were generally limited to areas that either had positive externalities on Cuba’s economy, like agreements to build luxury hotels (to increase tourist spending), or in the energy sector, as in the case of a recent \$50 million oil exploration initiative with Repsol YPF.⁷³

Cuba has kept the details of most such deals private, not publishing a capital account since 2001.⁷⁴ Cuba justifies its lack of transparency by arguing that the U.S. Treasury might pressure or act punitively towards Cuba’s business partners.⁷⁵ Foreign investment, seen as a threat to the greatly valued concept of sovereignty, has therefore served primarily as a means of bolstering the Cuban state’s domestic monopoly, rather than acting as competition. Indeed, “President Fidel Castro and other senior officials never concealed their intention to keep foreign ownership...at a minimum...insist[ing] that foreign investment is a complementary measure aimed to strengthen... the state-run socialist system, not destroy it.”⁷⁶

⁶⁹ Sanguinetti (2013) pp. 268

⁷⁰ Fletcher (2000)

⁷¹ Feinberg (2012), pps. 13-14

⁷² Feinberg (2012), pp. 22.

⁷³ Paolo Spadoni. “The Current Situation of Foreign Investment in Cuba” *Roger Thayer Stone Center for Latin American Studies at Tulane*. (2004), pp. 130.

⁷⁴ Feinberg (2012), pp. 19. It is worth noting, however, that the government began publishing Annual Reports including hard currency balance of payment statistics in 1982, though these reports did not include Cuba’s trade within the Soviet Bloc, which were not done in hard currency. [Pérez-López (2000), page 141]

⁷⁵ Feinberg (2012), pp. 19

⁷⁶ Spadoni (2004) pp. 131

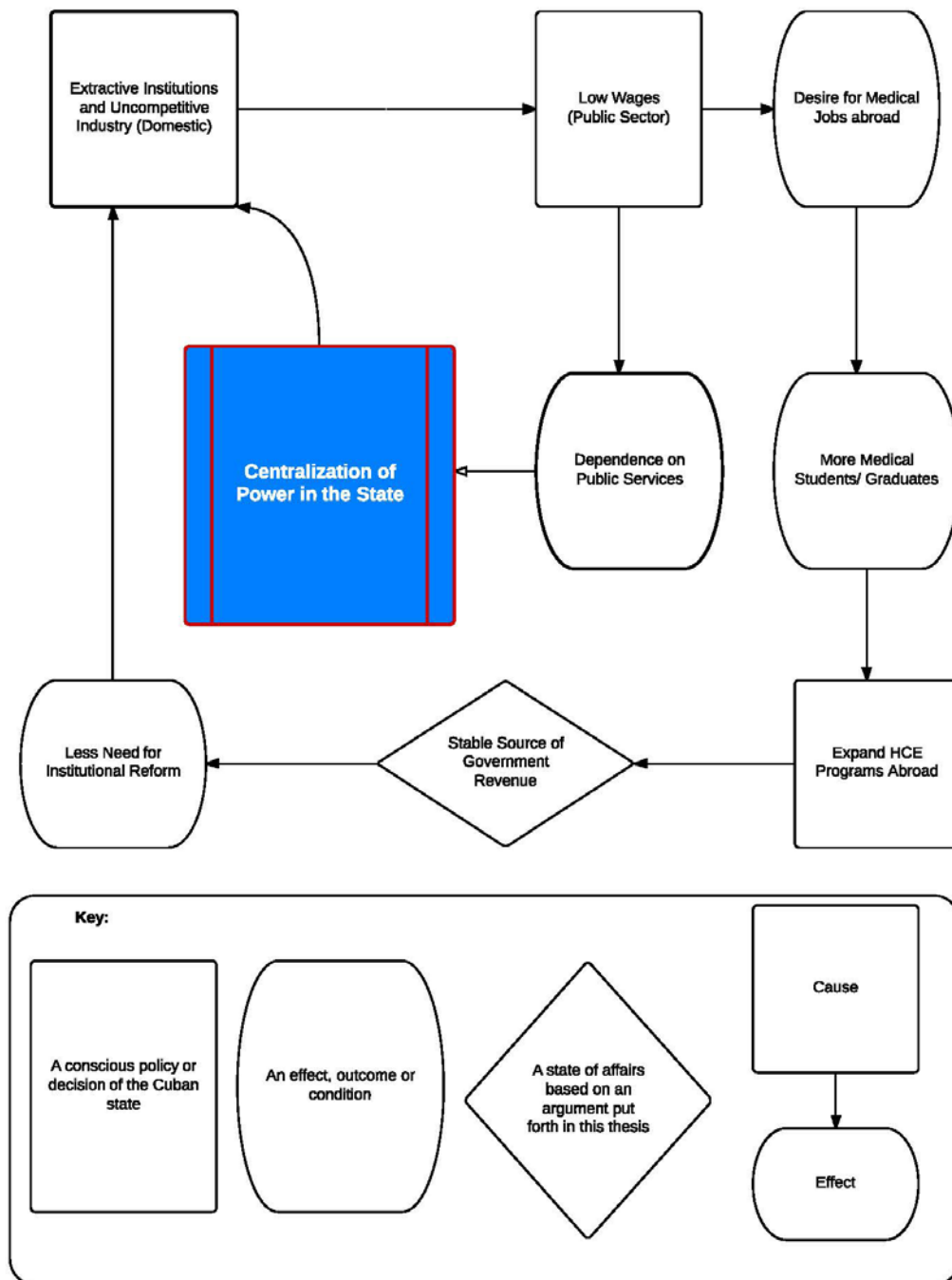
Even at the cost of profitable foreign investment and legitimate trade, Cuba instead distributed licenses to investors in majority state-owned monopolies so as not to allow for foreign influences to undermine Cuba's domestic sovereignty. The alliance with the Soviet Union during the Cold War can be interpreted as not just an ideological and military alliance, but also a means of insulating the regime's power from international influence. Cuban leadership chooses to preside over a stable, easily-manipulatable and inefficient economy rather than joining the rising tide of globalization and market capitalism.

2.5 - Conclusion of Chapter II

Contrary to the deeply ideological rhetoric employed by the Cuban state, throughout the history of the Castro regime, centralized *realpolitik* has served the three unassailable Cuban government priorities: stability, sovereignty, and populism. Each of these priorities, in turn, serves the Cuban government's greater goal of perpetuating the political and economic status quo. Supposed reform has obfuscated the reality of economic statism, used only as a means of staving off the collapse of the socialist bureaucracy.

Human Capital Exportation programs serve the same pragmatic function of addressing economic shortfalls and structural inefficiencies that Cuba's prior "reform" policies have. Because the state controls the medical exchanges, the emergence of HCEs has only strengthened the centralization of power in Cuba. As this study has argued, the Cuban government jealously defends its power by preventing economic development; however, because its social services are central to its legitimacy, the government must be able to maintain adequate revenue to provide these services. Human Capital Exportation fills this void: it is a government controlled enterprise that does not require internal economic efficiency but still earns revenue. By offering higher wages to doctors working abroad, it ensures that it always has a pool of workers working abroad who generate revenue the state can tax. These taxes, in turn, maintain the social services essential to supporting its extractive institutions at home (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Domestic Positive Feedback Cycle - HCE and Power in the State



The main difference from prior reforms – and why HCE programs are misinterpreted by outside observers – is that the programs are cloaked in socialist rhetoric extolling proletarian solidarity, thereby depicting what is actually a continuation of Cuba’s extractive political economy as altruistic. Whether or not humanitarian intentions are an additional motivation for the HCE programs, considering a humanist motivation for the policy serves little theoretical purpose, because there is ample justification for HCE programs to serve purely self-interested functions of perpetuating the centralization of power in Cuba. Its socialist framings aside, the Cuban political economy has progressed from pre-Revolutionary military control and U.S. manipulation of sovereignty, in the words of José Martí, “just to fall in another [hypocrisy].”⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Fondevila (2000)

Chapter III

Scalpels as Swords:

Human Capital Exportation as Power

Cuban Medical Internationalism serves as “a shield for its decisive role in defense in the face of the corrosive avalanche of hegemonic globalization, and a sword for its exceptional capacity for universal influence.”

- former Minister of Culture Abel Prieto ⁷⁸

3.0 Introduction

At any given moment, there are upwards of 40,000 Cuban professionals working abroad through government-facilitated exchanges.⁷⁹ By all accounts, they help patients and prevent unnecessary deaths. But does their presence abroad help the Cuban state that sent them there? How? Do the programs serve any diplomatic function? This chapter argues that Cuban Human Capital Exportation programs have served to increase both Cuba’s “soft” and “hard” power by building goodwill with, and leverage over, recipient states.

In Chapter I, I described the scope of HCE programs abroad and provided details about how they operate. This chapter applies that analysis, exploring how particular aspects of the programs have served important diplomatic functions. I will apply the interests of Cuban leadership identified in Chapter II, demonstrating how populist ideology, centralization of power, and Cuba’s sovereignty are advanced and preserved through Human Capital Exportation programs.

⁷⁸ Candace Johnson. “Health as Culture and Nationalism in Cuba” *Canadian Journal of Latin American Studies*. 31.61 (January 1, 2006) pp. 94

⁷⁹ Agence France-Presse. “Cuba nets billions each year by hiring out its doctors to Asia, Africa and Latin America.”

Human Capital Exportation programs have not only built goodwill with recipient governments, but can be – and I argue are – used as negotiating power. Because the Cuban services offer value to recipient governments in terms of domestic political upside and external state legitimacy, HCE programs can be employed by Cuban state representatives as both inducements and punishments to coerce states to act in accordance with Cuban interests. Cuban Human Capital Exportation, therefore, serves an offensive function in the diplomatic realm – Cuba’s metaphorical “sword” – with which it subtly coerces states to serve its own diplomatic ends.

3.1 Translating Foreign Policy Goals

As detailed in Chapter II, Cuban state interests can be grouped into three broad categories: maintaining the distribution of power in the highly centralized socialist state, employing populist sentiment as a source of regime legitimacy, and strengthening state sovereignty, especially from the “imperialist” interests of the United States. How does Cuban Medical Internationalism reflect these principles and contribute to achieving them?

Cuba’s reestablishment of diplomatic alliances with its neighbors can be largely traced to the Cuban government’s use of Human Capital Exportation. Diplomatically isolated in the Western Hemisphere following the collapse of the Soviet Union, developing allegiances with its neighbors was an important interest of the Cuban state as it needed regional support in order to build economic linkages and political allies. Being able to offer medical services to potential allies has played a key role in building stronger regional diplomatic relationships at the state-

state level.⁸⁰ Indeed, Cuba has seen its relations with its neighbors improve substantially since the end of the 1990s, when the contemporary model of Human Capital Exportation began to emerge.

Cuba also has a strong interest in integrating itself in international institutions, such as the UN, CAPRICOM and other economic, political and military organizations. Though certainly not unique in its non-democratic political organization, Cuba's authoritarian, economically manipulative institutions pose an obstacle to inclusion. Therefore, developing relationships with potential advocates is critical to Cuba's aspirations of membership and the associated benefits of membership in such organizations. For example, access to mediation through sympathetic international institutions can protect Cuba from the influence of coercive actors. Membership also gives Cuban central leadership an opportunity to contribute the regimes' ideological viewpoint into international discourse. There are also auxiliary benefits, such as Cuba's use of the UN Pan-American Health Organization to transfer compensation for its services rendered abroad.⁸¹

There is a vitally important economic element to Cuban diplomacy. Because of its structurally inefficient economy, reflected by extremely low labor productivity and non-competitive exports,⁸² Cuba is in dire need of international credit and other financial services. It is also highly dependent on Venezuelan oil subsidies that, given mounting political pressure in Venezuela,⁸³ effectively make Cuba fiscally dependent upon uncertain Venezuelan domestic politics. Nonetheless, if it were not for its relationship with Venezuela, centered on HCE programs, Cuba's economic situation would be far worse. Because Cuba has few industries that

⁸⁰ The election of left-leaning administrations in Latin America in the 2000s, termed the "Pink Tide," has also played a role in Cuba's increasingly warm reception in the region.

⁸¹ For more information, see section 5.5b.

⁸² Jorge A. Sanguinetti "Cuba's Economic Policies: Growth Development or Subsistence?", page 267

⁸³ As of the writing of the piece, political uprising and the Maduro regime's use of repression against dissidents was ongoing.

can compete in the international sector based on price, it must depend on diplomacy to negotiate the investments it needs to grow its economy.⁸⁴

Even with major inflows of Venezuelan subsidies, Cuban balance of payments remains a pressing issue. As a “fundamental” source of hard currency,⁸⁵ in the words of Raul Castro, growing HCE programs will be “give[n] absolute priority” as part of the Cuban leaderships’ intention “to plan a balance of payments without deficit.”⁸⁶ The role of HCE programs in achieving Cuban fiduciary health is twofold: medical exportation programs serve as both a means of acquiring capital through transfers from recipient governments and sympathetic funders, and a tool for accessing key financial services, such as access to cheap credit or investment from recipient states and international institutions.⁸⁷

There are critical political elements served by HCE programs as well. Maintaining absolute, centralized power within an institutional framework that suppresses dissent contradicts the principles of national self-determination, which is viewed as essential to international legitimacy – especially in a post-Cold War, largely democratic hemisphere.⁸⁸ If Cuba’s undemocratic nature were perceived as undermining its regional legitimacy, there would be domestic ramifications as well. A democratic movement deemed legitimate by the international community could pose a major challenge to Cuba’s political status quo. Therefore, the ability of the state to project itself as legitimate to partner states – and to the international community as a

⁸⁴ See section 1.5

⁸⁵ “el ingreso fundamental del país en estos momentos obedece al trabajo de miles de médicos prestando servicios en el exterior.” (Castro, Raul 22 February 2014)

⁸⁶ Castro, Raul. Aug 1 2009

⁸⁷ An example of a “sympathetic funding state” is Norway, which has funded Cuban health services in Haiti. Norway has also signed economic agreements with Cuba that one author argued were the direct result of their relationship as medical funders. Werlau “Cuba’s Business of Humanitarianism...Haiti”, page 204.

⁸⁸ For example, Paraguay’s removal from the economic bloc Mercosur (Common Market of the South) and the key regional political block Unasur (Union of South American Nations) on the condition of a new, fair election, demonstrates the importance of democracy to regional legitimacy. MercoPress. “Brazil conditions Paraguay’s return to Mercosur to approval of Venezuela’s membership.”

whole – is essential to the preservation of the centralization of power within the state. How, then, does the Cuban government negotiate the allegiances it needs to receive foreign investment and loans, be a member of international institutions, and be perceived as legitimate within Latin America and the Caribbean?

The current Cuban government has constructed a rhetorical ace in the hole: sympathy for the international poor. Because few credible observers deny that Cuban doctors save lives and improve the quality of life of for the marginalized poor that they serve, Cuban medical services rendered abroad offer a humanitarian counter-point to critiques of the legitimacy of the Cuban state. Productive, if compensated, humanitarianism is a distinguishing factor of the Castro regime that, in addition to Cuba's excellent social services, makes its centralized rule for the better part of the decade appear more justified.

3.2 The Power of Healing: HCE at intersection of aid and transaction

How can Cuba's "*ejército de batas blancas*" (army of white coats) actually influence individual states to support the issues that matter to Cuba? How does providing doctors to work in marginal communities in other countries influence the diplomatic linkages between government leaders, or stabilize Cuba's socialist government? This section explores the answers to these questions, analyzing how the programs shape the relationship between the Cuban government and recipient states.

Cuban Human Capital Exportation is a very distinctive set of programs, residing between "aid" and the traditional notion of an exportable commodity, thereby resulting in a complex linkage between Cuba and recipient states. Though commonly portrayed as "aid" by the Cuban government and international media sources, one report estimates that just shy of two-fifths of

recipient nations fully compensate the Cuban government for its services.⁸⁹ However, this statistic is misleading, as the vast majority of Cuban doctors work in Venezuela and Brazil, both of which compensate the Cuban government. Therefore, the vast majority of doctors sent abroad are yielding economic returns for the government. The Cuban government has done little to dispel – and has even promoted – this misperception.⁹⁰ For example, Fidel Castro has lauded the “volunteers” and the services performed “for free.”⁹¹ Only recently has Raul Castro openly acknowledged the profitable nature of the programs.⁹²

In this sense, the Cuban state is providing a *compensated* social service not dissimilar from traditional economic exchanges. However, because the service is humanitarian in nature, it can still be classified, theoretically, as aid if the comprehensive service to the recipient state is of equal or greater value than the price paid to Cuba. For this reason, this thesis considers the Cuban programs as a hybrid transactional-aid service, both providing revenue and building goodwill in recipient states.

⁸⁹ Though it was impossible to verify these numbers, the French news agency *Agence France-Presse* reported in 2013 that Cuban Medical Services provided abroad are “charity in some cases: Cuba gives doctors’ services to 40 countries that cannot afford to pay for them for free...[while] 26 nations are paying the Cuban government to send them doctors, at a salary level determined by the Cuban government.” [Agence France-Presse. “Cuba nets billions each year by hiring out its doctors to Asia, Africa, and Latin America”].

⁹⁰ Werlau 2011, page 198.

⁹¹ Werlau, Maria. “Cuba’s Health-Care Diplomacy: The Business of Humanitarianism,” page 2. Part of this misperception, I speculate, is that patients receiving the treatment pay no cost (except through tax dollars). Fidel Castro also spoke of the “sacrifices [Cuban Medical professionals] have made, and the dangers they have endured to have been able to provide medical services for tens of thousands of [patients].” Authors translation. Fidel Castro. “Discurso pronunciado...en [ELAM].” December 3rd, 2002.

⁹² “el ingreso fundamental del país en estos momentos obedece al trabajo de miles de médicos prestando servicios en el exterior.” (Raul Castro. February 22nd, 2014)

3.2a Soft Power

Joseph Nye defines “soft power” as “the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment.”⁹³ The diplomatic merits of HCE programs are often conceptualized through this perspective: providing medical services to recipient states, either for free or at globally competitive prices, is likely to result in goodwill between the two states. This interpretation is well established in the literature.⁹⁴ The lack of transparency in the agreements, such as the amount of compensation or other terms of the agreements, has led to the mistaken generalization that the Cuban state is not compensated for most of its doctors sent abroad.

This misperception aside, the theoretical basis for humanitarian actions as a means of increasing Cuba’s soft power is well established.⁹⁵ The image of altruistic doctors motivated by solidarity, colored by Che’s conception of the “New Man,” is a critical element in framing Cuba’s preferred image to a world.⁹⁶ This nurturing of goodwill has served meaningful, if unquantifiable, benefits in Cuba’s relations with over 100 states around the world,⁹⁷ as part of Cuba’s broader effort towards achieving international legitimacy.

⁹³ Nye, Joseph (2008), page 1

⁹⁴ See Kirk and Erisman (2010), Feinsilver (1993, 2010), Blue (2010) or more)

⁹⁵ See, for example, Kirk (2009), Feinsilver (1989 and 2006), Kirk and Erisman (2009).

⁹⁶ Also important to this image, although not particularly relevant to this undertaking, is the promotion of Cuban cultural productions, such as film, theater, and music. See, for example: Johnson (2006), Moore (2006), and Bustamanta and Sweigh (2008).

⁹⁷ Data Collected by author from Cuban Annual Health Statistics Reports (1998-2012).

3.2b Disaster Relief

Perhaps the best example of Cuban soft power arises from the moment of conception of the contemporary manifestation of Cuban Medical Internationalism, the Cuban response to Hurricanes Mitch and George in 1998.⁹⁸ The Cuban state has assisted countries around the globe following natural disasters, including Sri Lanka, Indonesia and a number of small Pacific Islands in 2004,⁹⁹ Pakistan in 2005, Peru in 2007,¹⁰⁰ and Haiti in 2010. The Henry Reeve brigade was established in 2005 to respond to emergency situations following natural disasters, even being offered to the United States during Hurricane Katrina.¹⁰¹ These efforts to help countries in times of need garnered Cuba significant international recognition, and enhanced the prestige of its medical services.¹⁰² These emergency programs may or may not have been funded by external actors. However, reports indicate that in the case of the 2010 earthquake disaster in Haiti, the costs of medical services provided by Cuba were fully compensated by outside donors, including the U.N. Pan-American Health Organization, Venezuela, Brazil, Norway and a number of independent NGOs.¹⁰³

⁹⁸ See section 1.4.

⁹⁹ Fawthrop, Tom. "Impoverished Cuba sends doctors around the globe to help the poor."

¹⁰⁰ Fitz, Don. "Cuba: The New Global Medicine"

¹⁰¹ Gorry, Conner. (2005)

¹⁰² My experience following the media coverage of Cuban doctors, especially with regard to the 2010 Haitian earthquake, has been that press has acted with outrage that the programs did not receive more international recognition. For example, Al Jazeera published an article with the headline: "Cuba's aid ignored by the media?"

¹⁰³ Werlau, María. "Cuba's Business of Humanitarianism: The Medical Mission in Haiti" pages 206-207.

3.3 Hard Power

In contrast to the substantial literature on the soft power implications of Cuban Medical Internationalism, literature concerning Human Capital Exportation as "hard" power is less developed. If power is the ability to get others to act in accordance with one's preferences, I define hard power as getting the other to do something they are reluctant or unwilling to do through coercion, whether by threat of punishment or a positive inducement. Medical exchange programs can be leveraged as a means of coercion by either threatening to withdraw or deny services (a "stick") or offering medical services as an inducement (a "carrot"). Recognizing the coercive function of HCE programs is often overlooked, as commentators may be distracted by their humanitarian effect. As one scholar notes, "humanitarianism tends to elude critical analysis," a means of obfuscation for states who qualify "their own activities as 'humanitarian,' even when they are warlike."¹⁰⁴ Although not enough information is available to make a strong statement as to the actual health impact of Cuban HCE programs, even assuming they have had universally positive health impacts does not mean they are not employed as leverage toward political entities or states behind closed doors.

¹⁰⁴ Brotherton 2013, page 129. I do not mean to imply that Cuban services rendered abroad *are* war-like, rather that they have an element of self-interest.

3.3a HCEPs as Clientelism

Cuban Human Capital offers not only health benefits to citizens, but political benefits to recipient administrations. If previously underserved patients tend to support administrations that improve their health services, employing Cuban doctors stands out as a highly effective way to rally political support in rural and marginalized areas. Especially in relatively accountable democracies, Cuban services can be politically valuable for the party that takes credit come election time. In effect, hiring Cuban doctors is a form of clientelism, in which public funds serve recipient communities in exchange for (private) electoral support. Because Cuban medical professionals are mobile and require little capital investment (unlike more permanent forms of public health infrastructure), they can be withdrawn and redeployed at little cost. They can therefore be used by the central government to reward or punish communities for voting behavior.¹⁰⁵ Nowhere is this political upside exemplified better than Venezuela under Hugo Chavez, who used the *Barrio Adentro* program to solidify his domestic political power.

3.3b Recipient State Political Upside and Cuban Leverage

The fact that HCE programs are so valuable to foreign constituents gives Cuba substantial leverage when negotiating terms of the agreements. For example, Cuba can force recipient nations to pay price increases or expect other types of concessions that are beneficial to Cuba. Therefore, soft power is important, but is not the whole story: despite the humanitarian veneer and pronounced health impact on recipient populations, at the state-to-state level, Cuban HCE programs can serve to leverage domestic political vulnerability. With a finger on the scale of domestic politics in more than 60 countries around the world, Cuban medical services reflect *realpolitik* of the Cuban leadership more than altruism.

¹⁰⁵ Hicken (2011), page 289.

The cases of Namibia and Ghana demonstrate this dynamic. In 2012, the Namibian press reported price increases for Cuban medical services of more than 50%,¹⁰⁶ despite allegations that the price hikes were arbitrary rather than the result of market forces.¹⁰⁷ Knowing Namibia had no alternative recourse for training doctors, Cuba increased the cost of its medical education programs to around \$705,000 per full scholarship, reaching a \$70 million deal to train 100 Namibian doctors in Cuba.¹⁰⁸ Though comparable to the price paid by other sub-Saharan African nations – in the same year, Ghana agreed to a \$160 million deal for the education of 250 doctors¹⁰⁹ – the increased costs, given Namibian budget limitations, came at the expense of funding alternative health programs or health infrastructure investments.¹¹⁰ Although Cuba is indeed in dire need of hard capital and its rates, by global standards, are competitive, this example demonstrates Cuba’s leverage over the nations with which it does business.

Because of brain drain and inadequate domestic medical training programs, Namibia and Ghana’s reliance on Cuba’s medical education force both governments to bear price increases. They both exemplify how an administration seeking to maintain power is willing, even if costly from a national budgetary standpoint, to fund Cuban HCE programs year after year. Despite cries that such funding could be spent more efficiently elsewhere,¹¹¹ such as improving domestic

¹⁰⁶ The cost of a year-long work stint of a Cuban physician increased from \$34,000 to \$75,000, [Havana Times. 2012. “Cuba Ups Price for its Doctors in Namibia”]

¹⁰⁷ “The fees Cuba wants to charge Namibia for medical personnel from that country ‘have no relation whatsoever with the prevailing market rates applicable in the public service within southern Africa as a whole” [Kisting, Denver. “Namibia: Cuba Offers Pricey Deal].

¹⁰⁸ Kisting, Denver. “Namibia: Cuba Offers Pricey Deal”

¹⁰⁹ Nonor, Daniel. “Ghana: Red Flags Over Cuban Doctor’s Scholarship.” Note: The Ghanaian president Mahama contested that reported figure as too high, but did not offer a figure as to the true price [NPP Communications Directorate. “Afuko-Addo Exposes Prez Mahama on 250 Cuban Trained Doctors”]

¹¹⁰ This critique became particularly salient in Ghana amidst presidential campaigning [NPP Communications Directorate]

¹¹¹ Nonor, Daniel. “Ghana: Red Flags Over Cuban Doctor’s Scholarships”

medical training programs or investing in public health infrastructure, President Mahama of Ghana negotiated the aforementioned \$160 million dollar deal before he even assumed office.¹¹²

The case of Brazil's *Mais Medicos* program, implemented by Dilma Rousseff, also demonstrates Cuba's leverage in these exchanges. Whether through goodwill garnered through the programs, as the Brazilian administration might suggest, or because of Cuba's threat to withdraw the over 7,300 doctors currently serving Brazil's rural populations, the Rousseff administration responded with trepidation to the increasingly vocal protests of defecting Cuban doctors seeking asylum within Brazil.¹¹³

The Brazilian government found itself walking a fine line between affronting Havana by granting asylum to the Cuban doctors – who have a legitimate labor grievance according to Brazilian law, being paid less than 25% of their Brazilian counterparts' salaries – and alienating local constituencies who are being served by the doctors. Some argued the labor situation of Cuban doctors under the *Mais Medico* program was “analogous to slavery.”¹¹⁴ In contrast, poor Brazilians strongly support the programs, because few Brazilian doctors migrate from major cities, leaving rural populations underserved. To mediate the labor grievance, the Brazilian government unilaterally footed the bill for a 25% wage increase for the Cuban doctors.¹¹⁵ That Cuba bore none of the costs for this reconciliation demonstrates the island's leverage in the exchange, even with such a powerful ally as Brazil.

¹¹² Ghanaweb. “Akukfo-Addo exposes Prez Mahama on 250 Cuban trained doctors.”

¹¹³ Affairs Today. “Brazil-Cuban doctor exchange Mais Medicos under pressure”; Boadle, Anthony. “Cuban doctor defects in Brazil over pay, seeks asylum”

¹¹⁴ Translation from Portuguese: “uma situação de trabalho que é análoga à escravidão,” afirma Florentino Cardoso” [UOL Noticias. “Primeira médica cubana a desertar do Mais Médicos recebe asilo nos EUA” 4/1/2014.]

¹¹⁵ Affairs Today. “Brazil-Cuba Doctor Exchange ‘Mais Medicos’ under pressure.”

3.3c Incentive for Recipient Nations to be Opaque About Cost

The absence of government or media accounts of the details of HCE exchanges suggests the both Cuba and recipient states have the incentive to hide the terms of the agreements. The cases of the Chavez administration in Venezuela and the Mahama administration in Ghana illustrate this dynamic. Both nations had incentives not to be transparent about the costs of the Cuban services (though in both cases cost estimates did eventually surface).

Importing medical professionals represent a quick, but arguably non-sustainable fix to structural public health and medical education shortcomings, the recognition of which could be seized as political fodder by political opposition. Alternative investments in domestic medical education programs, one could argue, would be better for the long-term sustainability of the public health system. Media sources made such critiques in Ghana in 2012¹¹⁶ and Brazil in 2014,¹¹⁷ to take two examples. However, similar accusations (or revelations, depending on one's point of view) have not happened in most countries where such terms remained secretive. Therefore, it is theoretically in the interest of both the Cuban and recipient governments to be opaque about the terms of the agreement.

¹¹⁶ Nonor, Daniel. "Ghana: Red Flags Over Cuban Doctor's Scholarship."

¹¹⁷ Affairs Today. "Brazil-Cuban doctor exchange Mais Medicos under pressure

3.3d Cuban HCE as means of expanding scope of ALBA

The political upside to recipient states of employing doctors to serve previously underserved communities has been actively leveraged by the Cuban and Venezuelan governments in their joint regional trade and political union, the *Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra America* (ALBA).¹¹⁸ ALBA was originally conceived of as a socialist alternative to the Free Trade Area of the Americas, a Bill Clinton-proposed free trade zone that sought to unite the Western Hemisphere.¹¹⁹ It was conceived as a political union powerful enough to defy U.S. interventionism, and a trade union that favored the sustainable development of its members, rather than embracing neoliberalism. Though it is well funded thanks to Venezuelan oil revenue, its success depends on attracting a critical mass of regional states beyond its two founding states, Cuba and Venezuela.¹²⁰ Cuban human capital services are used as “carrots” to recruit other states to join the bloc.

Cuban Medical teams are working in each member state of ALBA, improving their social services and the reputation of the governments that agree to membership in the bloc. For leaders looking for domestic legitimacy and to live up to electoral promises of improved health care, these inducements prove tempting. For example, immediately upon being elected in 2006, the offer of Venezuelan-financed, Cuban doctors working in the underserved areas of Bolivia – among other benefits offered by ALBA – proved irresistible to the populist Evo Morales. In return, Morales agreed to tax breaks for Venezuelan and Cuban investments in Bolivia, as well as allowing for ALBA state investment in extracting mineral deposits and raw materials.¹²¹ From

¹¹⁸ See section 1.8 for more information on ALBA.

¹¹⁹ Hirst, Joel D. “What is the Bolivarian Alternative to the Americas and What does it do?”

¹²⁰ Solón, Pablo. “The popular tendencies that led to ALBA remain as relevant today as they were at its creation.”

¹²¹ Harris Aziz (2006), pages 6-7

2007 to 2009, five more states, including Nicaragua and Ecuador, joined ALBA; today, there are 9 member states and 3 observer states.¹²²

3.3e Intelligence Functions of HCE

One of the reasons that I coined the term “Human Capital Exportation” is that the skills that are exported are not limited to medicine and public health, as the commonly used term “Cuban Medical Internationalism” implies. Perhaps the most important non-health related capacity that Cuba exports is intelligence, most notably to Caracas. A cable released by Edward Snowden documents how Cuban intelligence and surveillance expertise has contributed to the formation of a new surveillance model employed by Venezuela’s Directorate of Intelligence and Prevention Services. Cuba also purportedly provides expertise in domestic political indoctrination and operational experience in censorship and repression.¹²³ Reports suggest that Cuban intelligence officials are highly trusted confidants, reportedly having direct, unvetted access to Chavez himself.¹²⁴ This Cuban presence has increasingly been a source of protest in Venezuela since the Maduro administration has been actively repressing dissent,¹²⁵ using practices that some have argued are borrowed directly from the Cuban consultations.¹²⁶ Cuba may also supply its own intelligence to Venezuelan leadership, as the classified U.S. diplomatic cable notes the

¹²² Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the U.S. “St. Lucia to Become Ninth Member of ALBA”

¹²³ “Cubans openly trained Venezuelan intelligence officers in ‘both political indoctrination and operational instruction’ [Downs, Robert. “Cuba/ Venezuela: The View from the Axis of Mischief”]

¹²⁴ Downs, Robert. “Cuba/ Venezuela: The View of the Axis of Mischief”

¹²⁵ Protestors were well aware of the role of Cuba in their own government, with the New York Times report including an interview with a man named Carlos Rasquin who stated “Everyone knows that the Cubans control military intelligence, police intelligence” and the coordination of military forces. [Burnett and Newman. “Protesting in Venezuela, With Antipathy Towards Cuba’s Government.]

¹²⁶ This example is one of the reasons I use the term “Human Capital Exportation,” instead of “Medical Internationalism,” as neither government denies the presence of Cuban specialists in Venezuela.

substantial value that Cuban specialists provide to the Venezuelan government regarding their ability to monitor U.S. activities.¹²⁷

Because of the enormous number of Cubans employed in Venezuela and the valuable oil-subsidies offered by the Bolivarian government, the HCE connection with Caracas may be Cuba's most important foreign policy interest. Cuban intelligence officers therefore have a double incentive, both their own interests and that of their employer, to keep the sympathetic Maduro administration in power.

3.3f Subversive Functions of Doctors

Doctors serving abroad may be tasked with various auxiliary missions to their health functions. There are allegations that Cuban doctors deployed to Venezuela must gather intelligence while in the field, with some even receiving training by Cuban intelligence services.¹²⁸ They are said to be "indoctrinated, compromised and turned into (political) collaborators," and serving as informants.¹²⁹ There are also reports of restrictions imposed upon the doctors, which prohibit "expressing opinions against the government, the political regime, the healthcare system or any institutions of [Cuba]" or having any relationship with defectors or Cuban emigrants.¹³⁰ These allegations are unverified and their credibility is unclear.

Through a number of interviews with students studying at ELAM (The Latin American School of Medicine) and Cuban medical students in Havana, I found that although Cuban medical educators emphasized the ethical expectations of doctors, no student mentioned

¹²⁷ "Venezuelan intelligence services lack the expertise that Cuban services can provide. Cuban intelligence routinely provides...intelligence reports about the activities of the [United States Government]." [Downs, Robert. "Cuba/ Venezuela: The View of the Axis of Mischief"]

¹²⁸ Werlau, Maria. "Cuba's Health-Care Diplomacy: The Business of Humanitarianism" page 8.

¹²⁹ Werlau, Maria. "Cuba's Business of Humanitarianism: The Medical Mission in Haiti" page 209-211. She cites a document titled "Disciplinary Rules for Doctors in Venezuela..." which was purportedly obtained from a defecting doctor.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.* page 211.

complicity with Cuban government interests, nor the presence of Cuban intelligence in their educations.¹³¹ While it is plausible that Cuban medical professionals serve subversive political functions abroad, there is little evidence for such a role beyond Venezuelan borders. Further information is needed to weigh in on the issue more meaningfully.

3.3g Summary of Hard Power

Thus far, this chapter has aimed to elaborate upon the basic premise that because Cuban HCE programs have value to recipient nations, the Cuban government has leverage over those states. Whether through clientelist distribution of Cuban medical services, an increase in state legitimacy as a product of rapid public health improvement, or by deploying an internal intelligence network, Cuba has proven to offer a valuable product to political bodies around the world. I have also demonstrated Cuba's ability to impose price increases (in Namibia) and avoid bearing costs (in the Brazilian case) as a sign of its leverage. I also acknowledged the value of relationship building with recipient states in increasing Cuban soft power. In the following section, I evaluate evidence that the leverage identified in this chapter can – and is – applied to the diplomatic realm to support the Cuban interests identified in section 3.1.

¹³¹ Authors personal research.

3.4 Empirical Evidence of Impact

This section reviews the available evidence of Cuba employing its Human Capital Exportation programs for diplomatic gain at the state-state level. The evidence reviewed in this section does indeed suggest that states that receive Medical Human Capital programs are more likely to vote in accordance with Cuban interests in the United Nations. This section lays out a brief description of my methodology, reviews the available evidence, and then enumerates takeaways in the conclusion.

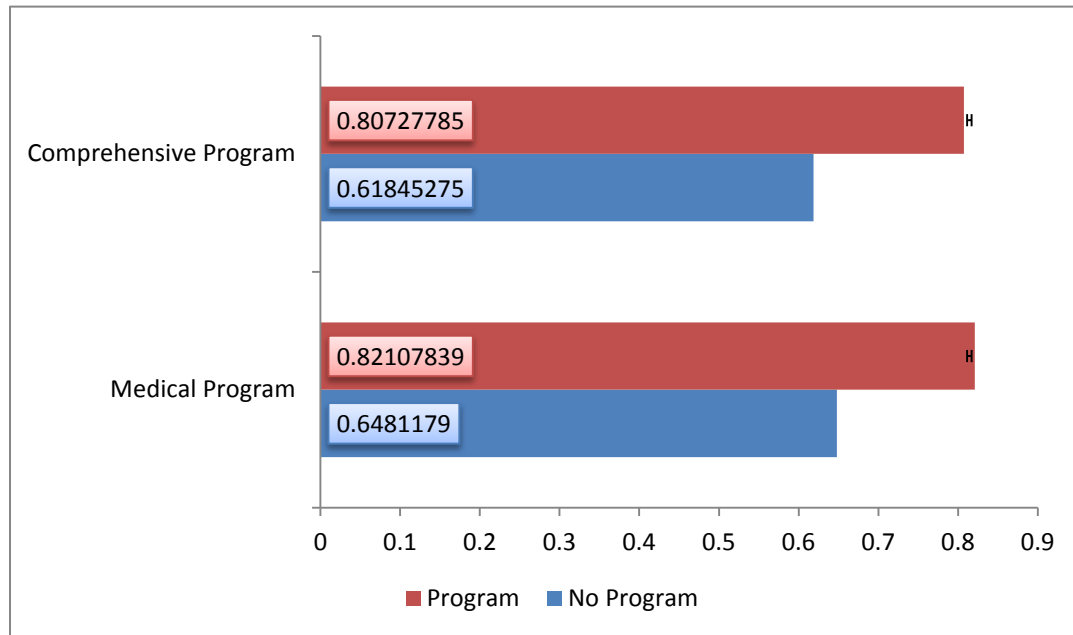
My approach is intended to supplement the qualitatively based interpretations in the proceeding pages with quantitatively based evidence that draws on publically available data to serve as proxies for state behavior. Using U.N. Affinity Voting Data, which measures the extent to which an individual state's voting behavior in the U.N. General Assembly supports another state's interests,¹³² I paired each state with Cuba and divided the period from 1998-2012 into four, three year segments.¹³³ I split those dyad-state groupings in two ways: states that received Cuban Medical Human Capital and those that have no such relationship with the Cuban government.¹³⁴ I found a statistically significant difference (p-value of <0.0001) in voting behavior between the pairings.

¹³² Anton Strezhnev and Erik Voeten. "United Nations General Assembly Voting" *Harvard Dataverse Network*. October 9, 2013. For more information, see Appendix 1.

¹³³ I decided to evaluate these three year intervals to minimize the annual fluctuation of overall U.N. affinity voting, and because my number of cases was large enough to do so without compromising my sample size. The time period begins with 1998 because it was the year in which modern Cuban Human Capital Exportation emerged, as detailed in Chapter 1. It runs through the latest year for which data was available, 2012.

¹³⁴ Note: I did not have data for non-medical Human Capital Exportation, as Cuba only publishes info on medical services. This is a limitation to our ability to extrapolate to the broader basis of Human Capital Exportation programs.

Graph 3.1 : UN Affinity Voting by Medical Exchange (1998-2012)



Sources: *Anuario Estadística de Salud (1998-2012)*; Strezhnev and Voeten “United Nations General Assembly Voting”; author’s calculations.

It is important to note what these results do *not* mean: they do not tell us which, if any, of the proposed mechanisms of influence result in these differences. They could also reflect selection bias; perhaps Cuba only negotiates deals with countries that are sensitive to its interests in the first place.¹³⁵ These limitations notwithstanding, this data supports the hypothesis that goodwill and/or Cuban negotiating leverage, generated through HCE programs, have an influence upon state voting behavior within the U.N. The metaphor of the “sword,” of Cuban Medical as power in the international realm, remains a plausible explanation for the findings.

If we control for other factors that might provide alternative explanations of the difference between these terms, the results are no less compelling. I controlled for two political

¹³⁵ Because of the substantial revenue earned in these exchanges and an informal purusing of the list of states with which Cuba has such an agreement, this strikes me as unlikely; however, it cannot be ruled out.

factors: Civil Liberty scores, which are intended to account for the possibility that Cuba tends to agree to medical exchanges with repressive governments, and Political Rights scores, which account for an underlying bias in voting behavior of fellow undemocratic or authoritarian regimes. I also controlled for GDP per capita based on the hypothesis that only poorer countries with inadequate public health and educational infrastructure have a need for HCE programs, biasing the results. Finally, I controlled for the influence of the United States, by controlling for U.S. aid received by each country. Each of these variables that were previously uncontrolled for (with the exception of only U.S. aid), proved to be statistically significant; however, the medical international exchanges remained the strongest predictor of U.N. affinity voting between Cuba and other states (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Regression of Cuban Affinity Voting in UN General Assembly (1998-2012)

Average UN Affinity	Coefficient	Standard Error	t	P> t	[95% Confidence Interval]
Medical Program Existence	0.1465	0.0158	9.2700	0.0000	[0.1155, 0.1775]
Civil Liberty Score	0.0353	0.0130	2.7100	0.0070	[0.0097, 0.0609]
GDP per Capita	-2.12E-06	1.15E-06	-1.8500	0.0650	[-4.38E-06, 1.32E-07]
Political Rights Score	0.0230	0.0102	2.2600	0.0240	[0.0031, 0.043]
US Aid (annual)	1.78E-11	3.55E-11	0.5000	0.6160	[-5.19E-11, 8.75E-11]
constant	0.4955	0.0250	19.7900	0.0000	[0.4463, 0.5447]

Number of Observations	657
F(5, 651)	47.7400
Prob > F	0.0000
R-squared	0.2683
Adjusted R-squared	0.2627
Root MSE	0.1972

Source: See Appendix I

This empirical analysis says nothing about the impact of the “depth” of medical exchanges – that is, if sending more doctors to a given state has a greater impact on its voting than a smaller scale program. There are other shortcomings as well, such as a sample size of only 14 years and questions about the ability to extrapolate beyond UN voting impacts, using the data as a proxy for overall state behavior;¹³⁶ however, these quantitative findings support the interpretation that Medical Human Capital Exportation has a meaningful impact on recipient states’ diplomatic behavior. Though this method cannot clarify the means by which this diplomatic impact was achieved – whether by coercion, the building of goodwill between governments, or both – this finding is consistent with my theoretical argument: Cuban Human Capital Exchanges are associated with furthering Cuban diplomatic interests between states. Abel Prieto’s assertion that Medical International programs serve as “a sword for [its] exceptional capacity for universal influence” and a central component of Cuba’s ability to express its will, remains plausible.

¹³⁶ See Appendix 1 for further discussion

3.5 Conclusion

It is a broadly agreed upon in scholarly literature that Cuban Medical Internationalism generates “symbolic capital” (soft power),¹³⁷ which my analysis affirms.¹³⁸ This chapter, however, departs from the literature in placing a greater emphasis on Cuban hard power. The combination of qualitative and quantitative evidence corroborates the hypothesis that Cuban Medical programs serve as a “Sword” with which the Cuban state influences the behavior of other actors to promote its interests in the international realm. Though masked in a humanitarian veneer, Cuba offers desirable services to other states that lack fully developed medical and educational infrastructure. Such a service is valuable enough to recipient states, that the Cuban government can leverage that offering to quietly coerce states in small, but significant ways.

¹³⁷ Feinsilver (1989), page 3.

¹³⁸ Further investigation of the soft power impacts of HCE programs in Chapter IV.

Chapter IV

“The Shield”:

Construction of a Narrative of Legitimacy Based on Solidarity

*"In a period where basic democratic practices remain a litmus test of a country's acceptance in the international community...Cuba's public diplomacy, indeed its soft power, has been instrumental in helping Havana wield a degree of international influence far out of proportion to the size and relative strategic importance of the country"*¹³⁹

4.0 Introduction

It has been repeatedly noted in the literature that Cuba's influence on world politics is exceptional for a small, economically underdeveloped state.¹⁴⁰ Cuba has contributed to international discourse in meaningful ways through critiquing the dominant neoliberal discourse and United States imperialism. What is remarkable about Cuba's ability to exert international influence is not only its size, or economic underdevelopment, but its ability to frame itself as a legitimate global actor despite its authoritarian, unaccountable governance. Widely known for domestic political repression, centralized control, censorship of the press, and a lack of democratic institutions, how has Cuba been able to occupy such a prominent role in international politics? In short, its international legitimacy and acceptance is largely the product of its medical services rendered abroad.

¹³⁹ Brotherton page 130

¹⁴⁰ Feinsilver (1989), page 2.

Maintaining absolute, centralized power within an institutional framework that suppresses dissent contradicts the principles of national self-determination, which is viewed as essential to international legitimacy – especially in a post-Cold War, largely democratic hemisphere. If Cuba's undemocratic nature were perceived as undermining its regional legitimacy, there would be domestic ramifications as well. However, the current Cuban government has leveraged consideration for the international poor as a means of increasing its own acceptance in the international community.

What makes Cuba different is its ability to construct and disseminate a narrative that has largely overcome critiques of Cuban authoritarianism. This narrative takes Cuba's greatest diplomatic liabilities – its hostile relationship with the United States, its authoritarian governance, its diplomatic isolation following the collapse of the Soviet Union, and its non-competitive economy – and frames Cuba as victimized, but defiantly committed to social justice. This framing defuses the expectations of the global community as inapplicable to the Caribbean state, due to its unique political economy. What makes the narrative compelling is that Cuban health care and education programs are exceptional, and its Medical Internationalism lends credibility to its Marxist rhetoric of solidarity. Therefore, the ability of the state to project itself as legitimate to the international community is essential to the long-term centralization of power within the Communist party.

4.1 Challenges facing the Cuban Government

4.1a Political Repression/ Human Rights Abuse

One means by which the Castro regime maintains control is strict ideological control of the media, censorship of alternate viewpoints, and even detaining dissidents – all policies that expose the Cuban government to international criticism. Such violations of international norms undermine the regime’s credibility in the international community. Beyond the executions of roughly 2,000 anti-revolutionary dissidents in the decade following the Cuban Revolution,¹⁴¹ political repression in Cuba remains pronounced in the modern era. A sudden crack-down in 2003 on 75 dissidents, including independent journalists, was among the more notable incidents.¹⁴² More recently, the Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation reported 6,424 arrests of government critics [in 2013 alone].¹⁴³ According to Human Rights Watch, “Imprisonment is only one of the many tactics the Cuban government uses to repress fundamental freedoms. Dissidents who try to express their views are often beaten, arbitrarily arrested, and subjected to public acts of repudiation. The government monitors, intimidates, and threatens those it perceives as its enemies.”¹⁴⁴ Bloggers such as Yoani Sanchez have made similar claims.¹⁴⁵ Nonetheless, Cuba once served as the head of the Committee on Human Rights in the U.N. How could these two conflicting facts be simultaneously true? The

¹⁴¹ Historical Atlas of the Twentieth Century. “Minor Atrocities of the Twentieth Century: Full Source List.” The source cites [Gilbert, Martin, A History of the Twentieth Century (1997)] and [“WHPSI”: The World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators by Charles Lewis Taylor] for this figure

¹⁴² Lauria et al. “Cuba’s Long Black Spring” (2008)

¹⁴³ Amnesty International. “Cuba Steps Up Repression on eve of the CELAC Summit.”

¹⁴⁴ Human Rights Watch. (November 2009), page 1. It is worth noting that the authors go on to specify that the report “does not intend to suggest that there are no outlets for dissent whatsoever in Cuba. The last three years have, for example, witnessed the emergence of an independent Cuban blogosphere, critical lyrics by musicians, and most recently a series of government-organized public meetings to reflect on Cuban socialism,” clarifying, however, these examples demonstrate the strictly “circumscribed spaces of dissent” (Page 3).

¹⁴⁵ See her blog, “La Generación Y.”

key insight to understanding this apparent contradiction is the narrative to which HCE programs have helped lend credibility.

4.1b U.S. Aggression

One of the most challenging issues facing the Cuban state is its powerful enemy, the United States. Given the U.S. government's distaste for the Castro regime, garnering international support to denounce subversive actions by the U.S. is vital to the stability of the regime, making efforts to increase its legitimacy in the international realm direly necessary. The U.S. economic embargo and the Helms-Burton Act had a crippling economic impact on Cuba. The Castro regime's suspicions of U.S. intervention in domestic affairs are entirely justified, according to Fabian Escalante, Fidel's former head of security, who claims the U.S. has attempted to assassinate Fidel dozens of times.¹⁴⁶ The U.S. also spent roughly \$40 million in 1990 and 1991 alone to fund U.S.-funded propaganda through "Radio Martí" and "TV Martí" in an attempt to bring down the regime.¹⁴⁷

If there is any doubt there remains anti-Cuban sentiment in the U.S. government, reports of a U.S. AID funded, information sharing network called ZunZuneo - essentially a simplified Twitter that operates using just text messages - demonstrate the ongoing U.S. intervention. The platform was intended not only to subtly disseminate anti-Castro messages and foment popular protests, but to classify a large swath of Cuban society based on their political beliefs, using apparently benign questions about music and the arts.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Campell, Duncan. "638 ways to kill Castro."

¹⁴⁷ Joseph Proglar. "American Broadcasting to Cuba: The Cold War Origins of Radio and TV Martí", pages 169-170

¹⁴⁸ AP. "US Secretly Created 'Cuban Twitter' to stir unrest."

4.1c Non-Democratic Nature/Politics

The Cuban government's insistence on maintaining its unchecked political control complicates acceptance of the Cuban governmental legitimacy in the international realm. Though Cuba is far from the only undemocratic state in the world, few states have maintained one party rule for any stretch rivaling that of the Castro regime's rule, let alone a small state bordering the U.S. In addition, Cuba's active fomentation of leftist revolutions during the Cold War, from Bolivia in 1966, to Angola in 1975 to 1988, to Ethiopia in 1978 is essentially unique among states of comparable military strength. Cuba is the only socialist or communist state which has remained politically stable despite no regional, communist allies.

Within the Western Hemisphere, democratic accountability is seen as an increasingly important condition for credibility and acceptance. For example, Cuba's status as a non-democratic state excludes it from the Organization of American States, which "require[s] the political organization of [member] States on the basis of the effective exercise of representative democracy."¹⁴⁹ Given the Cuban government's unwillingness to democratize, constrain its power in any meaningful way, or appease the regional hegemon, regional political acceptance is challenging for the regime.

¹⁴⁹ OAS. Charter of the Organization of American States.

4.1d Economic Challenges

The final obstacle facing Cuba in being accepted in the contemporary global community is its unwillingness to relinquish its absolute control over the domestic economy. Though Cuba has recently experimented with various economic reforms, such as permitting joint ventures with foreign investors (largely within the tourist sector), it has never forfeited a few key stipulations of economic activity. First, all payments to Cuban workers must go through the Cuban state, rather than directly to workers. Cuba's dual currency is a means of levying the heaviest labor tax in the world, "an effective devaluation or tax of 24-to-1,"¹⁵⁰ making hiring Cuban labor both very costly and bureaucratically intensive.

Second, the government remains unwilling to allow unrestricted foreign investment in Cuba. As one scholar notes, this has constrained access to capital and foreign investment, necessary inputs for increasing efficiency: "the [Castro] regime's political and social goals always dominated economic policy; security of the revolution trumped productivity." The result has been that "Cuba has received remarkably small inflows of foreign investment, even taking into account the size of its economy," slowing Cuban economic growth.¹⁵¹

Third, although recent reforms by Raul Castro have allowed citizens to exchange some types of property, such as cars and real estate, with fellow Cubans and permitted small, family-owned private businesses, the Cuban government has never acknowledged a robust notion of private property.

In an era of hegemonic capitalism and free-trade driven prosperity, these conditions – in addition to its undemocratic governance and the U.S. imposition of the embargo – have made Cuba's economic development slow, and its production capabilities inefficient. Government

¹⁵⁰ Feinberg, Richard (2012), page 14.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.* page 1.

domination of industry and extractive taxation has played a critical role in limiting Cuba's ability to profitably export goods and maintain an even balance of payments.

4.1e Obstacles: Summary and Takeaways

These obstacles make the Cuban government's priorities – the stability of centralized of power in the state, political and economic sovereignty, and socialist orientation – seemingly incompatible with acceptance in the international community. It faces a world hostile to undemocratic states, and perhaps more hostile still to states that do not embrace free-market ideology. It has made an enemy of the most powerful state in the world. The Cuban government has also held absolute control over the press, repressed dissidents, constrained the spread of technology– most notably the internet – that threatens to democratize access to information, limited religious freedom, prohibited unauthorized emigration (until recently), and watched over a grossly inefficient economy and structural deficit in balance of payments. Nonetheless, it has managed to maintain centralized control of power for over half a century.

How has the Cuban state managed to maintain power in spite of all these factors? More shockingly still, how has such a regime been lauded by UN General Secretary Ban Ki-Moon as having “given the world ... a vision of generosity, solidarity and global citizenship?”¹⁵² Cuba's diplomatic “shield,” its aptly constructed narrative, offers the best explanation to the paradoxical stability of Cuban regime. This narrative centers on two key factors: Cuba's victimization at the hands of the U.S., and its humanitarian solidarity, as expressed by Human Capital Exportation.

¹⁵² UN News. “In Cuba, Ban spotlights sustainable development...” January 28, 2014.

4.2 Construction of a Narrative

4.2a Victimization

Key to maintaining Cuba's legitimacy in the face of these aforementioned challenges is the construction of a narrative that portrays Cuba as adaptive and resilient, rather than a failure of socialism. Redirecting blame for Cuba's economic underdevelopment from the government to forces beyond the state's control is important for Cuba's perception, both abroad and domestically.

A key element of this narrative is that Cuba is framed as victimized by U.S. oppression, allowing it to present itself to the international community as "a nation under siege" or "embargo-stricken," thereby making its international health services seem "valiant," and reflect "genuine sacrifice."¹⁵³ Cuba's relative weakness is strategically valuable. It allows Cuba to frame its "international outreach [as] less threatening, while being no less strategic."¹⁵⁴ This arousal of sympathy for the Cuban state became clear in the first years of the "Special Period" in 1991, when a majority at the U.N. General Assembly voted for the first time to denounce the American embargo against Cuba; that vote has been reaffirmed a total of twenty-two consecutive years.¹⁵⁵ Within this narrative, Cuban shortcomings in development are perceived not as state failures, but as obstacles imposed by external factors that the state has overcome.

Undoubtedly, the embargo has slowed Cuban development, but dysfunction and uncompetitive industry have also played roles in slowing development. The U.S. is (justifiably) demonized as an imperialist bully, but the extent to which Cuba beats the nationalistic war drums is simultaneously hyperbolic. Nationalistic propaganda, long-standing (though now reversed)

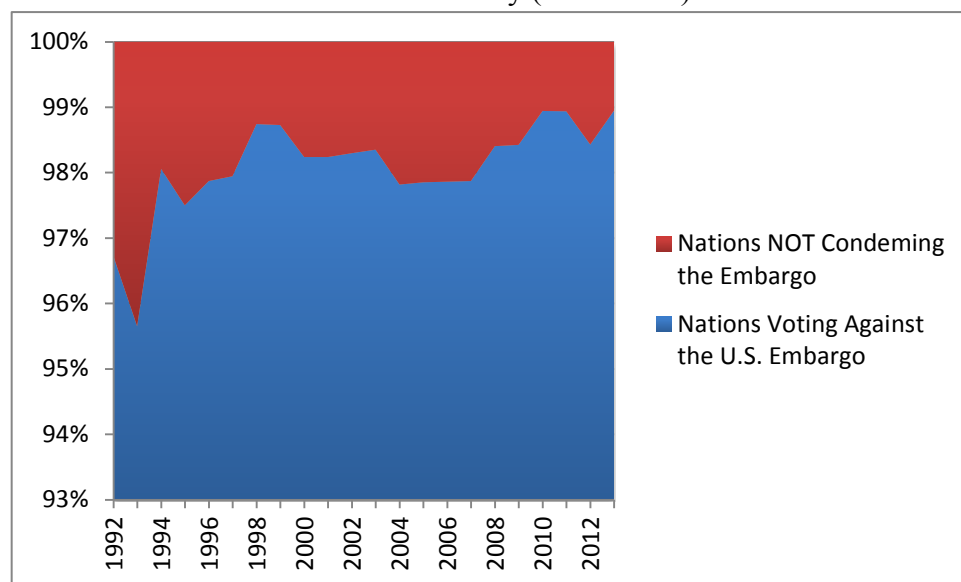
¹⁵³ Bustamante and Sweig, page 237

¹⁵⁴ Bustamante and Sweig page 241

¹⁵⁵ UN News Centre. 2013.

restrictions on emigration,¹⁵⁶ the control of the media, and limited internet access¹⁵⁷ allow the government to drown out critiques of its failures. Inadequacies are dismissed as lessons, and systematic shortcomings are framed as bumps in the road of Cuba's socialist experiment. Such rhetoric, employed ubiquitously in major speeches and the press, allows the Cuban state to "fall back on well-established and widely accepted narratives of its victimization at the hands of the U.S. empire,"¹⁵⁸ thereby shifting responsibility away from the regime itself.

Graph 4.1: Proportion of Nations Denouncing the U.S. Embargo Against Cuba in the UN General Assembly (1992-2012)



Source: *Blum (2013)*

¹⁵⁶ Miroff, Nick. "Cuba To Lift Travel Restrictions But Not For All" (2012).

¹⁵⁷ "More than two years ago [2011], Venezuela confirmed that an undersea fiber-optic cable between the two countries was "fully operational." However, the cable only began to carry traffic earlier this year [2013], which "suggests that infrastructure, though weak, is not the primary factor in Cuba's digital isolation," (Gupta 2013).

¹⁵⁸ Bustamante and Sweig page 241

UN General Assembly resolutions denouncing the U.S. embargo against Cuba support this narrative of victimization, as seen in Figure 3. The huge majorities that denounced the U.S. embargo emerged immediately following Cuba's economic downturn, known as the "special period."¹⁵⁹ Overwhelming support has held remarkably steady to the present day. This trend suggests sympathy for Cuba, seen as exploited by the United States, which has likely only increased since the Helms-Burton act of 1996 and Washington's unrelenting stance of maintaining the embargo. This is only part of the story, however. The contemporary Cuban narrative also is dependent on its commitment to solidarity *despite* its victimization.

4.2b Symbolic Value of HCE and Construction of a Narrative

The second key element of the narrative relies on the symbolic value of Cuba's domestic and international health services. Cuba frames Medical International Programs as embodying principles of "proletarian internationalism," repeatedly offering that the government is simply repaying the rest of the world for the support it received in the time of the revolution.¹⁶⁰ The programs demonstrate the righteousness or "power of Socialism" as a viable alternative to capitalist political economic models, through concrete actions rather than rhetoric.¹⁶¹ It follows that Cuba's just, empathetic leadership is responsible for the unfolding of this vision out of the sincerity of their ideology, thereby pardoning the half-century of authoritarian rule in Cuba.

¹⁵⁹ The downturn was initiated when Cuba was cut off from Soviet subsidies following the great power's collapse.

¹⁶⁰ Feinsilver (1989), page 2

¹⁶¹ "the [former Cuban] diplomat concluded, Cuba wanted to demonstrate that socialism was about promoting solidarity, not about forcing people to embrace a political agenda against their will. Cuba used actions, not words, to demonstrate the power of socialism, he asserted" Brotherton, page 133.

The Cuban state strives to present its Human Capital Exportation programs as reflecting philanthropic humanitarianism, when the truth is that most (if not all) of these services are compensated, although not always by the recipient state. For example, although Havana and independent news reports claim that Cuba provides free health services to Haiti, the estimated price tag of the health services, roughly \$170 million, is funded by Venezuela, Brazil, Norway and other donors.¹⁶² Indeed, Cuba even receives some collateral benefits from these partnerships, such as bilateral agreements with Norway in oil and fishing.¹⁶³ Nonetheless, Cuba's depictions of its program remain the dominant image, reflected by sympathetic and uncritical sources in the media "echo chamber."¹⁶⁴ The misconception of the true transactionary nature of HCE programs colors much of the literature about Cuban Medical Internationalism.

4.3 Qualitative Evidence of Effectiveness of Cuban Medical Internationalism

But how do we know that the international community actually does accept Cuba more than a comparable authoritarian state? While claims about Cuba being a "World Medical Power" are rampant,¹⁶⁵ what evidence is there that Cuba is perceived more positively by states *other* than the states with whom it has Human Capital Exportation agreements?

Because measuring "diplomacy" is unquantifiable, it is challenging to demonstrate the impact of Cuban foreign policy on the hearts and minds of government leaders. However, we can get insight into Cuba's evolving perception abroad by analyzing UN General Assembly voting records and its increasing linkages to the various international actors. Following its relative isolation during the Cold War and the early 1990s, Cuba became increasingly globally

¹⁶² Randel Archibold. "Cuba Takes Lead Role in Haiti's Cholera Fight."

¹⁶³ Werlau "Cuba's Business of Humanitarianism... Haiti" page 208; Werlau, María. "Cuba's Health-Care Diplomacy: The Business of Humanitarianism", page 5.

¹⁶⁴ Werlau, María. "Cuba's Health-Care Diplomacy: The Business of Humanitarianism", page 6.

¹⁶⁵ Feinsilver (1989), page 1.

interconnected by expanding its diplomatic linkages, joining economic and political unions, and partnering with major International NGOs.

4.3a Latin America

One example of Cuba's diplomatic resurgence is its increasing integration within the Western Hemisphere where, with the exception of the U.S., Cuba has normalized diplomatic and trade relations with every nation.¹⁶⁶ In 2009, Cuba was invited to join the Organization for American States, despite ongoing U.S. pressure to enforce its 1962 exclusion.¹⁶⁷ Despite the substantial leverage wielded by the United States because of its status as the majority funder of the OAS,¹⁶⁸ there was such strong opposition to Cuba's continued exclusion that the U.S. was forced to compromise.¹⁶⁹ Although the ultimate agreement held up the language in the founding charter that members must be democracies (thereby excluding Cuba), the vote was a symbolic victory for the Cuban regime.¹⁷⁰ After years of exclusion, this symbolic victory reflected a regional political shift towards the left,¹⁷¹ known as the "pink tide,"¹⁷² in which Cuba was increasingly accepted within the region, despite its lack of liberal democracy.

¹⁶⁶ LeoGrande, "The Danger of Dependence"

¹⁶⁷ Organization of American States. "OAS Member States".

¹⁶⁸ Thompson (2009)

¹⁶⁹ LeoGrande, "The Danger of Dependence"

¹⁷⁰ Cuba turned down the offer of inclusion because its membership was contingent on democratic transition. The language from the OAS reads: "The 2009 resolution states that the participation of the Republic of Cuba in the OAS will be the result of a process of dialogue initiated at the request of the Government of Cuba, and in accordance with the practices, purposes, and principles of the OAS." [OAS Member states].

¹⁷¹ "The relative hemispheric isolation of the 1990s came to an end and the newfound allies, especially Venezuela, delivered concrete economic benefits and also gave Cuba renewed confidence in a Latin American future not fully dominated by U.S. power and ideology " (Dominguez and Prevost, page 135)

¹⁷² Such progressive leaders elected in Latin America include Hugo Chavez in 1998, Nestor Kirchner in Argentina (2003), Evo Morales in Bolivia (2005), Rafael Correa in Ecuador (2006), Luiz Inacio da Silva in Brazil (2002 + 2006), and Tabre Vasquez in Uruguay (2004) and more. (Dominguez, Prevost, page 135)

Beyond the OAS, however, Cuba began joining a number of international organizations since beginning its contemporary model of Human Capital International Exportation programs. For example, Cuba has become a member in the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), Latin American Economic System (SELA), The Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM),¹⁷³ and The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).¹⁷⁴ Raul Castro was even elected chair of CELAC in 2013, which counts the entire Western Hemisphere except Canada and the United States among its membership.

Cuba's perception amongst the peoples of the Americas is mixed but relatively positive. Pluralities in Bolivia, Argentina, Peru, Canada and self-identified Venezuelan Chavez supporters believe that Fidel Castro has been "good" for Cuba according to a 2007 poll. In contrast, majorities in Venezuela and Mexico and a plurality in Chile believed Fidel Castro was "bad" for Cuba, according to the same poll.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Dominguez, Prevost, page 125

¹⁷⁴ LeoGrande, William. "The Danger of Dependence: Cuba's Foreign Policy After Chavez"

¹⁷⁵ Richard C. Auxier. "Global Views on Castro and Cuba"

4.3b Europe

Europe's stance on Cuba has also shifted notably since the introduction of Cuban Human Capital Exportation programs. In 1996, the European Union's "Common Position," reaffirmed a similar sentiment to the United States, stating the EU's objective in its relations with Cuba were principally pushing the nation to "transition to a pluralist democracy."¹⁷⁶

Since the advent of Cuban Human Capital Exportation, however, Europe has backed away from the ongoing U.S. animosity towards Cuba. For example, despite imposing migration sanctions on Cuba in 2003 for Human Rights abuses, Europe suspended the sanctions just two years later and ended them entirely by 2008, despite objections from the U.S. that there was not "any kind of fundamental break" with the regime headed by Fidel Castro.¹⁷⁷ More recently, Cuba and Europe agreed to explore opening up bilateral trade, declaring their hope to sign a bilateral agreement by the end of 2015.¹⁷⁸ This development could be critical both for the Cuban economy and in sending a strong message against the U.S. embargo.¹⁷⁹ Cuba's growing ties with Europe, which now accounts for roughly 21% of Cuba's exports (20% of total trade) and fuels much of Cuba's tourism sector,¹⁸⁰ has proved valuable both economically and diplomatically for the Castro regime, as a counter weight to ongoing U.S. economic and diplomatic hostility towards Cuba.

¹⁷⁶ LeoGrande. "The Danger of Dependence..."

¹⁷⁷ BBC. "EU lifts sanctions against Cuba"

¹⁷⁸ BBC. "Cuba agrees to open EU talks on bilateral relations"

¹⁷⁹ BBC. "Cuba agrees to open EU talks on bilateral relations"

¹⁸⁰ European Union External Action. "EU Relations with Cuba."

4.3c China/Asia

Cuba also has made major inroads in Asia, where it has found critical trade partners, most notably China. China has long been a major importer of Cuban nickel, Cuba's greatest source of hard currency other than HCE programs and tourism.¹⁸¹ BioFarmaCuba, a state owned but independently managed initiative structured to emulate a private sector corporation, has signed a major strategic alliance with Chinese Pharmaceutical company Meheco.¹⁸² The number of Chinese students studying in Cuba has increased markedly since the mid 2000s as well.¹⁸³ Other Asian states, including North and South Korea, and Vietnam have ignored the Helms-Burton Act, providing rice imports and electronic consumer goods to Cuba.¹⁸⁴

4.3d Africa

During the Cold War, Cuba actively intervened in the Angolan civil war for a decade, and supported leftist groups in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Libya. Today, Cuba's relations with African states are quite close. In fact, Africa is the region with the most Human Capital exchange agreements by number of states (though not by number of doctors working abroad). Cuba deployed doctors to 28 African states in 2012, 22 of which also received medical scholarships to ELAM. In the most recent U.N. General Assembly vote against the embargo, Ethiopia represented the African Union in denouncing the embargo against Cuba, noting in particular the value of Cuban health programs in the region.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ Reuters. "Low prices take toll on Cuban nickel revenues"

¹⁸² Reuters. "Pharmaceutical firm China Meheco signs strategic alliance with Cuba's BioCubaFarma"

¹⁸³ Dominguez, Prevost, page 153. The author can also personally attest to meeting Chinese students studying Spanish in Cuba, as well as briefly visiting a large dormitory, ostensibly full of only Chinese students between Alamar and Playa Santa Maria del Mar.

¹⁸⁴ Dominguez and Prevost, page 125

¹⁸⁵ UN News. "UN News - UN General Assembly renews call for end to US embargo against Cuba"

4.3e Global Leadership Positions

Cuba's inroads in major diplomatic entities include a number of leadership positions. It has been elected to the UN Human Rights Council in 2013 despite being classified as "not-free",¹⁸⁶ was named the Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement in 2006,¹⁸⁷ and, as of April 2014, became the chair and host of the second summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).¹⁸⁸

These examples demonstrate that Cuba had successfully emerged from its prior isolation following the collapse of the Soviet Union. It had embassies in 98 different countries in 2008, more than ever before in Cuban history, and an additional 20 diplomatic, consular or interest sections abroad. Cuba has economic relationships with 150 countries around the world, and has signed 170 joint ventures between the adoption of Helms-Burton and 2008.¹⁸⁹ All of these figures are substantial increases from the mid-1990s, and while these advances are the result of a confluence of factors, Cuban Human Capital Exportation – residing at the center of Cuba's foreign policy and economic activity – played a critical role in changing Cuba's perception abroad, allowing the government to facilitate increasing interdependence.

¹⁸⁶ UN Watch. "European MPs: 'Suspend Russia and other dictators from UN human rights council'"

¹⁸⁷ BBC. "Profile: Non-Aligned Movement"

¹⁸⁸ UN News. "In Cuba, Ban spotlights sustainable development, human rights, gender-based violence"

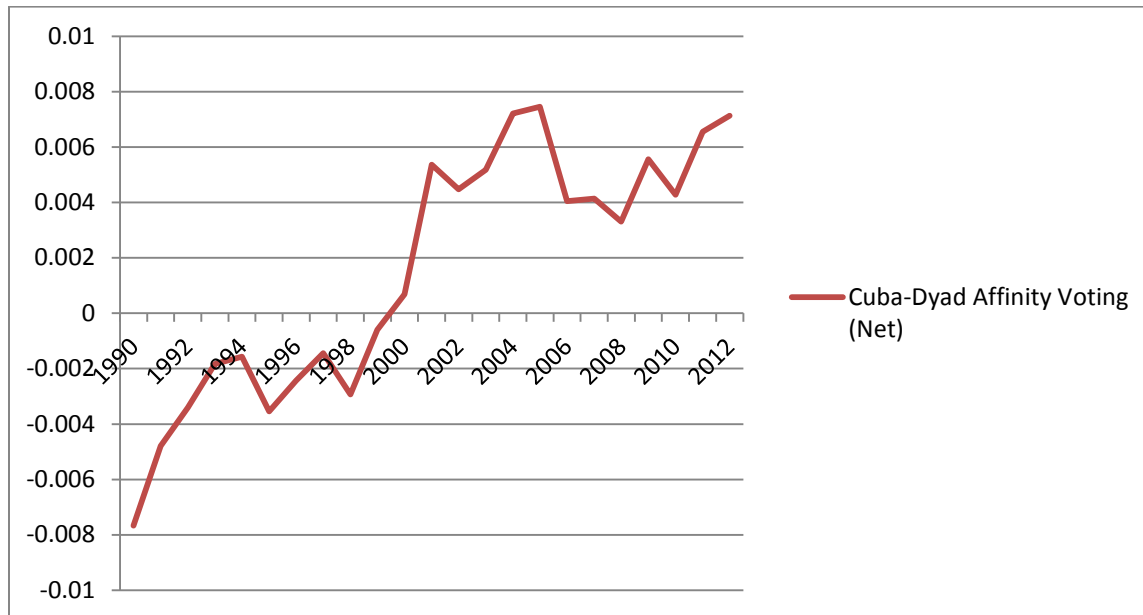
¹⁸⁹ Dominguez and Provost (2008). Page 126

4.4 Diplomatic Benefits of Medical Internationalism

4.4a Empirical Evidence

Havana's increasing integration within the international community supports the view that its HCE programs have changed how states perceive Cuba, but does not necessarily indicate a more *positive* perception amongst other states. It is plausible that the international community simply no longer sees any upside to isolating Cuba. In order to test that states are not only associating with Cuba, but in fact act more positively towards Cuba – a reflection of Cuban soft power – I investigated the extent to which states supported Cuba's interests within the U.N. General Assembly. While trade agreements could be explained by mutual self-interest or Cuba bargaining more proactively in the international realm, UN affinity voting provides a meaningful proxy for state behavior towards Cuba and her interests. My empirical findings support the interpretation that the Cuban government has successfully advanced Cuban interests within the U.N. through Human Capital Exportation programs (see graph 4.2).

Graph 4.2: Cuba-Dyad Affinity Voting Score (Adjusted)



Source: *Strezhnev and Voeten "United Nations General Assembly Voting." See Appendix 2 for methodology*

There are three primary reasons this chart supports the hypothesis that HCE programs, central to Cuba's evolving narrative, played an important role in changing the UN voting behavior of the world towards Cuba. The first is directional; if the narrative constructed by Cuba has indeed influenced Cuba's perceptions abroad, we would expect affinity voting in the U.N. to move in a positive direction (when controlling for overall shifts in U.N. affinity voting). Although the effect is not particularly large, it is not negligible and the direction is indeed positive. One key value for interpreting this chart is that zero on the y-axis has been controlled to represent average affinity voting in the U.N. for that given year. That the programs are consistently below average in terms of affinity voting prior to 2000, and consistently above average following 2000, demonstrates that, relative to other states, Cuba shifted from a below

average affinity value to an above average value. This is in line with the predictions of my proposed hypothesis.

The second is timing. If it was Cuban Human Capital Exportation and not another factor that explains the shift, one would expect to see a marked increase in affinity voting following the period in which the contemporary model of Human Capital Exportation began: roughly 1998-2000. Moreover, this effect should remain relatively consistent through the present. The graph reflects this prediction. By including the years 1990 through 1996, we have a clear basis for comparison of the pre- and post-expansion of Human Capital Exchange programs, as well as a point of comparison from 2001-2012, which demonstrate that, some fluctuations aside, the gains in affinity remained relatively consistent. This evidence lends credence to the hypothesis that Human Capital Exchange programs have played a significant role in shifting the state behavior toward the Cuban state.

Finally, we look to see if there are other fluctuations that would suggest that the trend we are recognizing is spurious. The only other major fluctuation, the marked increase in affinity voting from 1992-1994, might be explained by two other factors. First, the dissolution of the Soviet Union may have made Cuba seem less threatening, causing states to warm up to Cuba. Second, states may have become more sympathetic to Cuba following the harsh economic downturn it suffered when Soviet-subsidized fuel became unavailable, as I argued in section 4.3a.

While this graph certainly does not *prove* that Cuban Medical Internationalism changed other states' attitudes toward Cuba, it does not contradict that interpretation. Thus, while we cannot make a definitive causal claim, this quantitative evidence is consistent with the argument

laid out in this chapter. The claim that Cuban Medical Internationalism has positively influenced Cuban diplomatic efforts is plausible.

4.4b Alternate Explanations

What alternative explanations might account for the trends found in graph 4.2? First, perhaps affinity towards Cuba owes more to its perception of being “victimized” by the United States than its Medical programs. I do not find this hypothesis compelling for two reasons. First, the Helms-Burton Act – the act that further isolated Cuba from U.S. markets and gave “teeth” to restrictions aimed at businesses and states engaging with Cuba – was passed in 1996, while affinity remains relatively constant for the three years following that period. If victimization were more important than the effect of its medical programs, one would expect to see a sharp increase in affinity voting following 1996.

Second, one central element of the victimization narrative, the Castro regime’s rhetorical emphasis on the injustice of the detainment of the Cuban Five,¹⁹⁰ did not reach global consciousness until after the statistical effect had already taken place. It was not until 2005, with the release of a documentary detailing the episode, “*Misión Contra el Terror*” (a play on the U.S. “War on Terror”), that the detainment of the spies became globally relevant. Victimization remains an important component of Cuban rhetoric, but the case for it explaining the shift in Affinity voting is not very strong. While analysis beyond the scope of this thesis could reveal other plausible explanations for the shift, the evidence presented here lends credibility to the

¹⁹⁰ The “Cuban Five” are five spies who were purportedly gathering information on anti-Revolutionary terrorists within the Cuban Diaspora in as part of Fidel Castro’s “Wasp Network” in South Florida. They were arrested and sentenced to prison by U.S. forces for espionage in 2001. Two of five have been released and sent back to Cuba [AP. “‘Cuban Five’ spy ring member released from US prison.”]

interpretation that Medical Human Capital Exportation programs played a major role in helping Cuba achieve its foreign policy objectives.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined two mechanisms by which the state advances its diplomatic goals. By drawing on evidence of increasing Cuban diplomatic integration with other states, Cuba's growing membership (and even leadership) in key international institutions, I demonstrated Cuba's recent re-insertion into the international political, economic and diplomatic community. This trend was paralleled by affinity voting in the U.N. towards Cuba, suggesting that Cuba's perception has changed markedly since the 1990s.

The careful branding of Cuba through a narrative of socialist exceptionalism, victimization, resilience, and solidarity – manifested principally through the medical internationalism programs – has shifted global perceptions of Cuba in the 21st century. This narrative has insulated the Cuban government from demands for democratic reform, and served as the metaphorical “shield” tasked with preserving the Cuban state's stability and sovereignty. Cuban Human Capital programs therefore have initiated a positive feedback cycle that has improved Cuba's economic outlook and helped prolong the rule of the Castro regime.

The following chapter explores the intersection of Cuban Human Capital Exportations and Cuba's domestic sphere, examining the relationship between these programs and the fiscal and fiduciary challenges it faces. It seeks to relate the international dynamics explored in chapters III and IV, with domestic factors.

Chapter V

Human Capital Exportation and Domestic Cuba

5.0 Introduction

This thesis has explored the underlying foreign policy motivations of the Cuban government, evaluated what Cuban Medical Internationalism looks like today and explored the value of Human Capital Exportation as a diplomatic tool. This chapter seeks to identify the implications of Cuban HCE programs to the Cuban domestic sphere. It contextualizes HCE programs within the broader contours of the Cuban economy, and identifies what structural factors both enable and limit these programs. It explores the major economic challenges facing the Cuban government and identifies how Human Capital Exportation has affected Cuba's ability to cope with those challenges. I make the case that Human Capital Exportation is Cuba's sole vibrant economic sector, but that its success has actually perpetuated the very structural factors that hinder Cuban economic development, paradoxically both the saving grace of Cuba's economy and one of its greatest impediments to reform.

Central to Cuba's overall stability, and the government's ability to maintain control is that its people have enough to survive and make lives for themselves, and that the government remains solvent, with an ability to balance its spending with revenue. Even though Cuba's central leadership displays a high level of sovereignty and is not directly accountable to the will of its people, it is bound by basic economic constraints. This chapter argues that Cuban Human Capital programs exist largely because of economic necessity. Therefore, only by situating Human HCE in the context of Cuba's unique political economy can one best appreciate their impact on Cuba as a whole.

5.1: Overview of Enabling Factors for Human Capital Exportation

The underlying story of the Human Capital Exportation programs, however, is quite complicated. Successful medical Human Capital Exportation is contingent upon a number of aspects of the Cuban political-economic model, without which it would not have emerged or continue to function as it does. This section enumerates and examines those underlying factors and investigates their implications to illustrate the interdependence of the Cuban government and its Human Capital Exportation programs.

Four overarching factors have enabled these programs and remain critical to their continued growth. The first factor is Cuba's expertise in the provision of social services, specifically medical education. The second is Cuba's underdevelopment; specifically its lack of industry, unproductive agriculture and overall labor inefficiency. The third is the Cuban government's centralized power. The final factor is demand for the programs abroad.

5.2 Free, Quality Medical Education

One of the critical inputs for Cuban Human Capital Exportation is Cuba's incredible capacity to provide medical education, demonstrated in two key aspects. The first is Cuba's ability to train enough Cuban medical professionals to treat both the domestic population and provide surplus doctors for export. In contrast to states like the United States in which organizations like the American Medical Association actively restrict the number of Medical Licenses available to ensure high wages,¹⁹¹ the Cuban government is not constrained by such special interests. The second aspect – fundamental to its “Comprehensive Medical Programs” – is providing medical educations for foreign students both in Cuba and abroad. Cuba has aggressively expanded its

¹⁹¹ Dalmia, Shikha. “The Evil-Mongering of the American Medical Association”

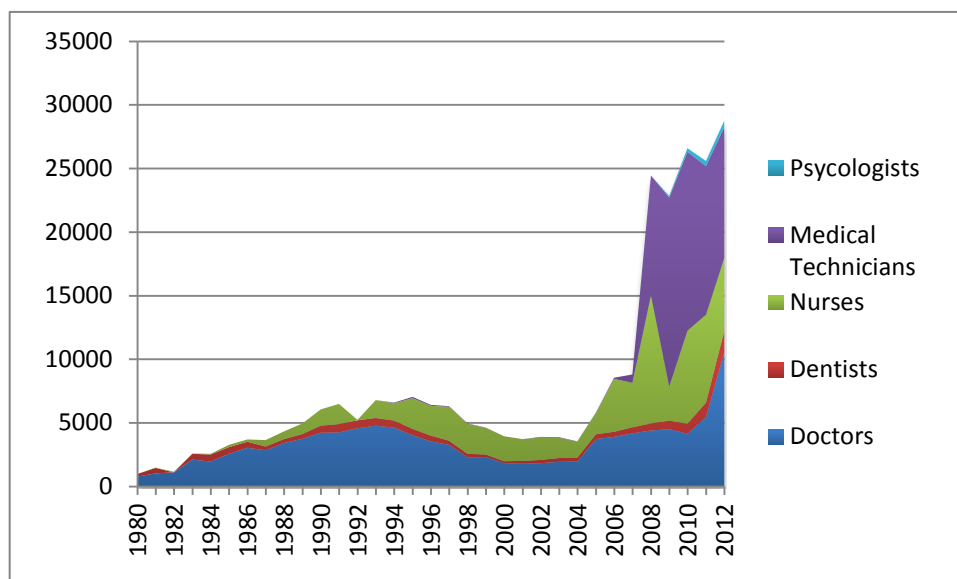
medical education infrastructure at an unrivaled scale to serve both Cuban and international students.

The Cuban medical education system has been explored in great depth elsewhere, but the capacity to absorb so many students, both Cubans and foreign students, is truly impressive. One reason it has been able to do so is substantial investment by the state: Cuba has dedicated 12.9% of GDP to education from 2006-2012, the highest relative spending in the world over that period.¹⁹² This spending allows access to free medical educations for all academically qualified Cuban students. They have expanded their medical education capacity by constructing new schools and by dual-purposing the *policlinicos* that serve as the bedrock for domestic Cuban healthcare, to serve both treatment and educational purposes.¹⁹³ Although the absolute number of doctors Cuba educates has increased – especially when the students who enrolled in 2004 and 2005 began to graduate from their six year degrees – much of the increase of medical graduates has been amongst nurses and medical technicians, who play vital roles in Cuba’s human centered model of healthcare (see Graph 5.1).

¹⁹² United Nations Statistics Division “UN Data: Cuba”

¹⁹³ Kirk and Erisman. *Cuban Medical Internationalism*, page 42.

Graph 5.1: Medical Graduates by Specialization of Cuban Citizens (1980-2012)



Source: *Anuario Estadística de Salud 2012. Cuadro 145, page 174.*

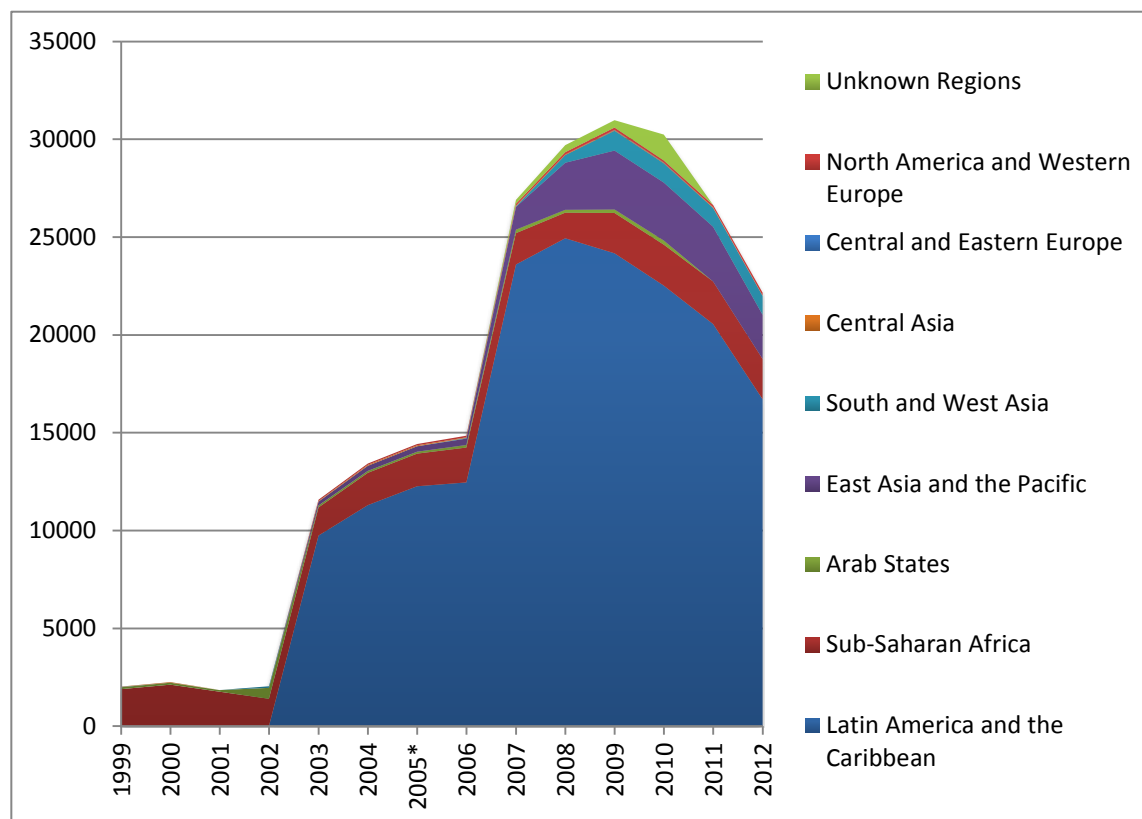
Perhaps the most impressive aspect of Cuba's medical education system is the number of foreign students studying in Cuba, which exploded from essentially zero in 1998 to over 30,000 students per year in 2009 and 2010. The majority of these students study medicine; in 2012, 19,125 of the 22,580 international students studying in Cuba were pursuing medical degrees, about 85% of students.¹⁹⁴ The capacity to receive these students has led to an important source of revenue for Cuba; although there is not enough information available to accurately estimate how much profit the Cuban government made by supplying these educations, I estimate its revenue to be roughly \$2.4 billion dollars in 2012.¹⁹⁵ Perhaps related to Cuba's unconventional medical

¹⁹⁴ ICEF Monitor. "Changes to Cuban education sector could bring shift in student mobility patterns."

¹⁹⁵ This estimate is subject to considerable uncertainty and may not be accurate. The previous chapter noted that in 2012 the Namibian and Ghanaian governments agreed to pay \$705,000 and \$640,000 per full scholarship, respectively. Using \$650,000 as an average price yields the estimation that Cuba received about \$14.4 billion dollars per scholarship. I adjusted for the six year duration of Cuban medical educations, giving Scholarship price estimates from: [Kisting, Denver. "Namibia: Cuba Offers Pricy Deal"] and [Nonor, Daniel. "Ghana: Red Flags Over Cuban Doctor's Scholarship"] for Namibia and Ghana respectively.

curriculum¹⁹⁶ or the international prestige of its domestic public health services, demand for these educations increased in the period from 2002 to 2010 (see graph 5.2).

Graph 5.2: Number of Students Studying in Cuba by region (1998-2012)¹⁹⁷



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Data Center. Education: Inbound Internationally Mobile Students by Region of Origin (Cuba). *The 2005, Latin America value is estimated (see author).

¹⁹⁶ See Brouwer, Steve. *Revolutionary Doctors*, page 117-120 for more information.

¹⁹⁷ There was one notable issue with the data involved in generating this chart. After the year 2005, there were no data entries for the “North America...” category, but the difference between the sum of all the other regions and the total given appeared to adhere closely to reasonable values for the number of students from the Americas, which are the values above in red, after the year 2005. The totals given by the UNESCO statistics were comparable to totals found from other sources; for example, the South African ministry of Health’s report affirmed the UNESCO 2012 figure (Motsoaledi 2013).

5.3 Cuban Underdevelopment: Low Wages and Few Employment Options

From the perspective of a prospective doctor, as important as the draw of the profession itself, is the alternate options available to that student. The combination of lack access to lucrative employment opportunities within Cuba (I estimate the average Cuban wage in 2014 at \$20.13 a month, or \$0.66 a day)¹⁹⁸ and free medical education has pushed many students to pursue degrees in medicine, in part because those working abroad make far more than any government wage (see Table 5.1). Although Cuban doctors have not been paid substantially higher wages than other Cuban workers, there is a culture of admiration and respect for doctors that does not exist to the same extent for other professions in Cuba. The result of this incentive structure is that many young people are choosing medicine over other professions, supplying the talent inputs necessary for Cuban HCE programs. Counterintuitively, this demand for jobs abroad has created a “race to the bottom effect” that allows the Cuban government to impose harsh labor conditions; because wages are so high relative to other professions in Cuba, however, many Cuban workers are willing to accept these terms.

As remittances from Miami and tourist dollars have become increasingly important sources of income to select Cubans, an inverted social pyramid has evolved in which doctors are actually out-earned by those with careers in the tourist sector such as bartenders, taxi drivers, guides, and successful entrepreneurs.¹⁹⁹ The one exception has been doctors serving abroad, who not only are paid far better (see Table 5.1), but can buy goods unavailable or highly taxed in Cuba, either for themselves or to resell upon returning to Cuba. The radical salary difference for

¹⁹⁸ Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas (ONE), Republica de Cuba. Table 7.4 “Average monthly salary in state-owned and mixed entities for each type of economic activity” (2011). I estimated the 2014 figure by applying a annual wage growth of 2.02%, which had been constant from 2005-2011.

¹⁹⁹ I regularly came into contact with Cubans who had renounced their medical professions for jobs as entrepreneurs; for example, one man I spoke with claimed to earn in a day what he used to earn in a month as a doctor running a business printing student papers for five cents a page.

doctors abroad – *internacionalistas* earn 38 times more per year abroad than the highest medical wage in Cuba, and 52 times as much as the average Cuban worker (before factoring differences in cost of living) – meant serving abroad became a highly attractive employment opportunity. Though wages were still shockingly low by international standards because the Cuban government taxed payments at an estimated rate of 72%,²⁰⁰ the remaining total earnings are still enormous by Cuban standards.

Table 5.1: Cuban Salary Comparison

Comparison of Medical Salaries to Alternative Employment in Cuba	Annual Salary in Dollars (2013)	Percentage of Average Salary in Cuba (2011)	Proposed Salary in dollars (2014)	Percentage of Average Cuban Salary (2011)
Specialist - With Two Specialties	\$313.50	137.80%	\$800.00	351.65%
Specialist - First Grade	\$286.50	114.37%	\$730.00	291.42%
Nurse Specialist	\$281.00	101.63%	\$470.00	169.98%
Basic Nurse	\$160.00	70.33%	\$297.50	130.77%
<i>Internacionalista in Brazil*</i>	\$12,000.00	5274.73%	\$14,940.00	6567.03%

Source: Martínez Hernández, Leticia. “Aprobó Consejo de Ministros incremento salarial para el sector de la Salud”; ONE. “Anuario Estadística de Cuba (2011)” – Table 7.4; Sabo, Eric. “Cuba Forecasts \$8.2 Billion from Doctors Abroad this Year;” and Cowley, Matthew “Cuba to Raise Pay of Doctors Working in Brazil.”

In February 2014, Raul Castro announced drastic pay increases for domestic medical workers in Cuba, which are reflected in the table above. This decision reflected the increasing importance of medical professionals to the Cuban economy. In a pragmatic shift from the ideology of equality of pay, Raul Castro noted that wages would be determined based on the principle that people should be compensated by their capacity and the amount of work they do.²⁰¹ In order to distribute wealth, he argued, it must first be created, pointing out the

²⁰⁰ This figure is from Brazil but likely roughly estimates tax rates for all doctors serving abroad. Of the \$4,430 paid by the Brazilian government per month, only \$1,245 actually goes to the doctor working abroad, even after the most recent pay increase of just under 25%, an effective taxation rate of roughly 72%. (Figures from Cowley 2014)

²⁰¹ From Castro, February 22nd: “Coincido plenamente con ustedes en que el actual sistema salarial no se corresponde con el principio de distribución socialista “de cada cual según su capacidad a cada cual

importance of doctors serving abroad to Cuba's economic sustainability.²⁰² The wage increases were funded, in part, because the Cuban government had been laying off doctors since 2010 as part of its broader policy of trimming public budgets.²⁰³ As of mid-2014, approximately 109,000 doctors had been trimmed from the public budget.²⁰⁴

The wage hikes will likely incentivize even more Cubans to become doctors, which in turn will contribute to Cuba's capacity to meet domestic healthcare needs and maintain its current level of services abroad or increase them further.²⁰⁵ These wage increases illustrate how Cuba has gradually reoriented its political economy around its medical exportation programs.

Cuba's extremely low domestic wages have allowed the government to simultaneously undercut the global price for medical professionals *and* to tax the Cuban doctor's earnings at an astronomical 72% rate. Because doctors working abroad earn far more than most Cubans, the exorbitant taxes and conditions²⁰⁶ imposed on Cuban workers are relatively tolerable because no other source of employment offers a competitive wage. This incentive structure is only possible in an economy that is underdeveloped and where the state enjoys tight control over the terms of labor.

según su trabajo", o lo que es lo mismo, no garantiza que el trabajador reciba según su aporte a la sociedad."

²⁰² *Ibid.* "el ingreso fundamental del país en estos momentos obedece al trabajo de miles de médicos prestando servicios en el exterior"

²⁰³ Raul Castro announced 38% of the Cuban labor force, or 1.5 million state workers, was essentially redundant. Sanguinety, Jorge A. "Cuba's Economic Policies: Growth, Development or Subsistence?", page 269.

²⁰⁴ Sabo, Eric. "Cuba Forecasts 8.2 Billion From Doctors Abroad This Year"

²⁰⁵ Perhaps the most notable of the salary increases is amongst Medical residents, who will immediately make more than the vast majority of other Cuban workers, receiving overnight pay increases of 164-178% (depending on year). These raises are likely to have a substantial effect of pulling students looking for a better source of income towards medicine. Figures derived from author's calculations using data published in Martínez Hernández, Leticia. "Aprobó Consejo de Ministros incremento salarial para el sector de la Salud."

²⁰⁶ There are many examples of contestable labor conditions, such as the stipulation that 60% of income (after taxation) be collected in a Cuban bank account that is accessible only upon return to Cuba. [Werlau, María. "The Business of Humanitarianism", page 211].

5.4 Centralization of Power and Lack of Labor Rights

The Cuban government has one competitive advantage that states with more liberal economic and political institutions cannot match: the ability to apply central planning and coercive state control over the nation's economic activities and citizens towards a desired result. For example, the Cuban state restricts the mobility of its citizens, deciding when and where they can work, to what laws they are subjected, and how much their income is taxed. The central government can negotiate the terms of its HCE deals without the representative of medical professionals, who have no independent institutional mechanism to express labor grievances.

By limiting migration of Cuban doctors, Cuban government wages do not have to compete with international standards. Though Cuba dismantled its ban on foreign travel in January of 2013,²⁰⁷ travel restrictions still apply to medical workers serving abroad. Limiting mobility is not the only restriction on labor rights: Cuban workers cannot strike, bargain collectively, or form to unions, with the state-run CTC (Central of Cuban Workers) left as the only labor organization in the country. Instead, the state maintains the right to unilaterally settle any and all labor disputes.²⁰⁸ Based on this power it can impose harsh labor conditions. For example, to prevent defection, the Cuban government withholds a substantial part of earned wages until the medical professional working abroad repatriates to Cuba. In addition, the state will deny any request for legal documentation of education or professional experience for

²⁰⁷ BBC Mundo. "Cuba elimina permiso de salida para viajar al exterior." The change in law notwithstanding, the low wages of Cuban workers all but maintains a de facto ban on air travel that is not funded by the Cuban government.

²⁰⁸ Werlau, María. "Cuba-Venezuela Health Diplomacy: The Politics of Humanitarianism", page 153, footnote 78.

defectors²⁰⁹ and will even revoke citizenship.²¹⁰ These labor rules may violate international treaties to which Cuba has formally agreed.²¹¹

5.5 Demand Amongst Recipient Countries

Human Capital Exportation services are contingent not just on Cuba's ability to supply medical services, but the demand for its services. This demand, in turn, requires that importing nations must be both poor *and* rich: there must exist a gap in the provision of medical services (or some other need), and have a government that is willing and able to pay for the services.

Take Brazil, for example. While a relatively wealthy country by per capita GDP (\$12,100 in 2013), it is deeply unequal, boasting the 17th highest level of inequality in the world (by Gini coefficient ranking). Despite its flourishing economy, a shocking 21% of the Brazilian population lives below the poverty line, and roughly 8.5 million Brazilians live in extreme poverty.²¹² Its physician per 1,000 people ratio is 1.9, lower than Mexico (2.1), the United States (2.5), and Uruguay (3.7) and, because healthcare is largely privatized, medical services are highly concentrated in cities where they can demand higher wages. This situation leaves huge swathes of Brazilian society with inadequate health care. It is a country with deep pockets and a profound need for medical professionals. The Venezuelan case is similar: although Venezuela's wealth arises from oil, not developed manufacturing and service industries, wealth is concentrated in the hands of a relatively small upper-class, while the poor lack access to adequate public health services.

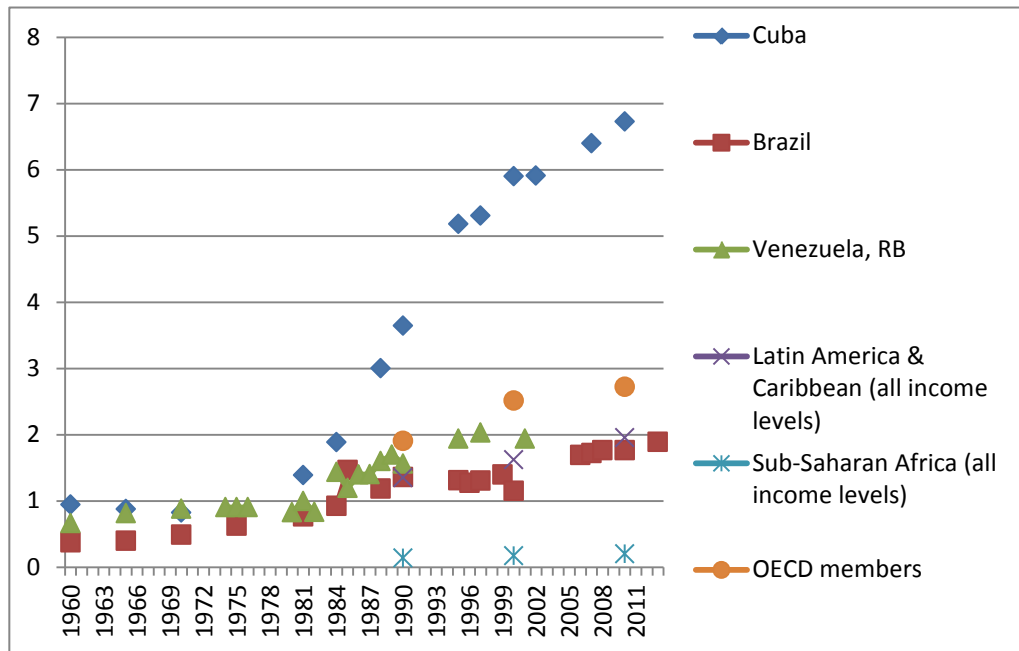
²⁰⁹ Werlau, María. "Cuba's Business of Humanitarianism", page 211

²¹⁰ This is true with the exception of Brazil in the year 2014 and beyond, where this practice has been ruled illegal according to Brazilian law. [Cowley 2014]

²¹¹ *Ibid.* page 153-154. The source clarifies the specific acts of international law, including the ILO Convention on the Protection of Wages of 1949, ILO Convention No. 29 Concerning Forced or Compulsory Labor and The Trafficking in Persons Protocol (of which Cuba is not a signatory).

²¹² Central Intelligence Agency. "The World Factbook: Brazil"

Graph 5.3: Physicians per 1000 Residents, Various Groups (1960-2013)



Source: World Bank “Physicians (per 1000 people)” - WHO, *Global Atlas of the Health Workforce*

Because both states are democracies, the administrations in power are dependent on public support for re-election and domestic legitimacy;²¹³ thus, importing Cuban doctors can have important political benefits in regions where patients are underserved. Good health indicators also influence the prestige of states in the international realm, as discussed in the case of Cuba in Chapter IV. For these reasons, Brazil is aiming to recruit a total of 13,000 Cuban doctors in 2014 in an effort to improve public health services for 45 million Brazilians, while Venezuela continues to employ roughly 30,000 Cuban medical professionals each year.²¹⁴ These

²¹³ This is, of course, less true in Venezuela than Brazil, as issues of widespread gerrymandering and election abuse by Hugo Chávez and widespread repression by his successor Nicholas Maduro make the term “democracy” rather incongruous.

²¹⁴ Cowley, Matthew. “Cuba to Raise Pay of Doctors Working in Brazil”

two states collectively represent where the majority of Cuban medical professionals work abroad.

5.5a Financial Services from PAHO-WHO

In order to satisfy demand, however, there must be a mechanism by which payment can be transferred without facing punitive U.S. sanctions. The Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) plays a critical role in facilitating the transfer of payments from foreign governments to Cuba. Though the PAHO has funded Cuban efforts themselves, as in the case of Haiti, but the institution's capacity to financially circumvent sanctions from the Helms-Burton act has proven even more valuable to the Cuban government.²¹⁵ For example, to receive compensation for its services in Haiti and Brazil, the funding party will pay PAHO, who then transfers the capital to Havana who, in turn, pays the doctors.²¹⁶ This support is the product of the Soft Power dynamics explored extensively in Chapter IV.

5.6 Unifying Trends from Inputs

The critical take-away from looking at the factors that enable Cuba to operate Human Capital Exportation programs is that, when looked at collectively, they apply nowhere but Cuba. There is no state that boasts such expansive medical education infrastructure with such an underdeveloped economy. There are few states with such centralized political and economic power whose citizens cannot negotiate their own terms of labor. There are fewer still that receive such valuable support from international organizations like the PAHO to get around structural impediments, despite Cuba's wholly undemocratic and unaccountable political system. Cuba's

²¹⁵ Werlau, María. Cuba's Business of Humanitarianism: The Medical Mission in Haiti," page 202

²¹⁶ *Ibid*, page 199; Bevins, Vincent. "Brazil's president imports Cuban doctors to ease shortage"

Human Capital Exportation, simply could not exist absent these structural factors, which is why it is globally unique.

Therefore, some of the inputs for this apparently just service can be interpreted as unjust. The consequences of Cuban medical professionals working abroad may be overwhelmingly positive for recipient communities, but the success of these programs in earning Cuba valuable revenue and international prestige counterintuitively, further institutionalizes the inputs elaborated upon above.

5.7 How HCE Addresses Cuba's Economic Needs

Despite being perceived as charity, Cuba's Human Capital Exportation programs have blossomed into what is far and away the most lucrative aspect of the Cuban economy. These programs benefit the Cuban economy in three primary ways.

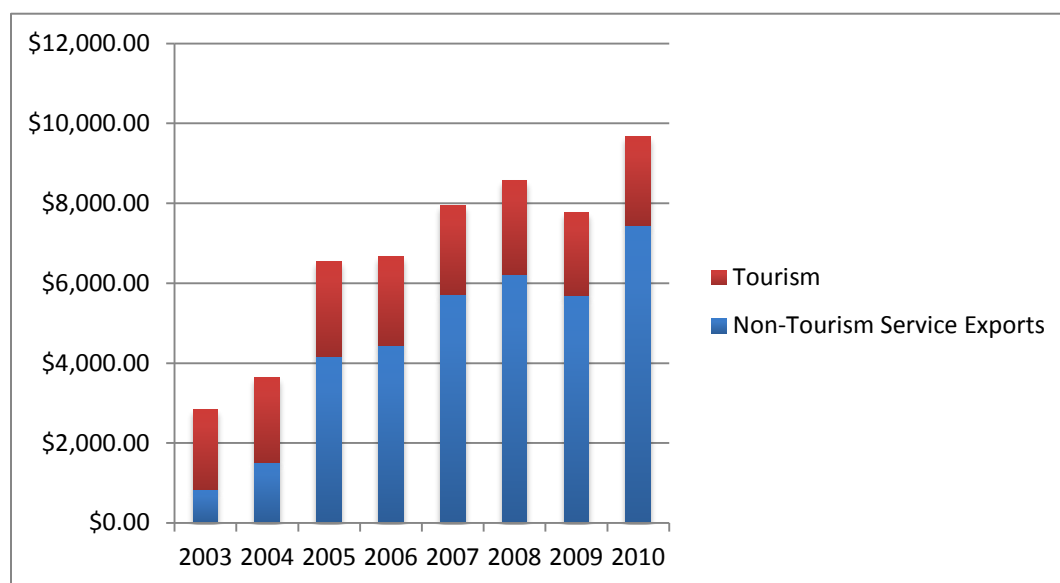
First, HCE programs provide a source of direly needed hard currency to the government, which has had a chronic balance of payments issue. HCE programs alone will net the Cuban government a forecasted \$8.2 billion dollars in the year 2014, or 64% of Cuba's services economy.²¹⁷ This is particularly important given the state of Cuba's economy, allowing it to maintain growing service export levels despite stagnating tourism revenue (see graph 5.4). The growing services industry²¹⁸ is the *only* well-functioning component of the Cuban economy: agricultural output and the sugar industry both decreased from 2000 to 2010, and manufacturing and construction collectively accounted for only 15% of GDP growth over that same period.

²¹⁷ Sabo, Eric. "Cuba Forecasts \$8.2 Billion from Doctors Abroad This Year"

²¹⁸ Some Cuban growth – especially in services – is an accounting illusion, because Cuba values its service exports higher than standard UN national accounts. The result is an absurd and inexplicable 80% spike in GDP of the Health and Service sector in 2005 alone. This is not the only way Cuban accounting sleight of hand has led to misleading statistics: they count students not as economically inactive, but as fully employed in national employment statistics and "an unknown but significant share of state employment has virtually zero productivity." (Hernández-Catá 2011, page 90).

Public health and education spending, in contrast, represented 47% of GDP growth over that period.²¹⁹

Graph 5.4 Cuban Service Exports (in thousands of U.S. Dollars)



Source: Maria Werlau. “Cuba’s Health-Care Diplomacy”, Table 1.

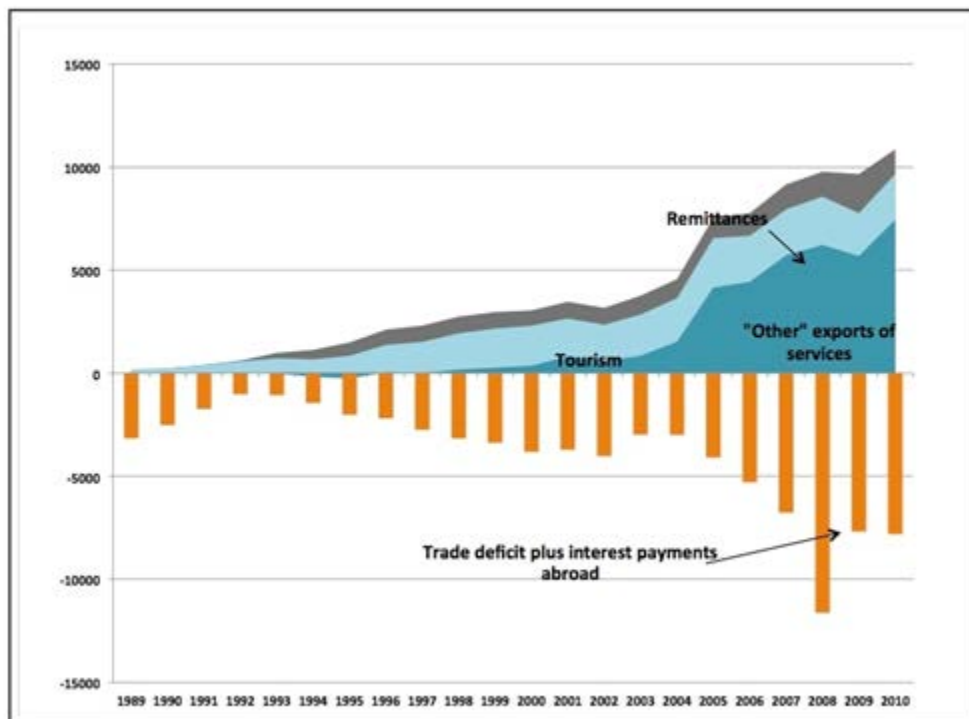
The decline in absolute agricultural output and efficiency has resulted in greater dependence on imported foods. Ongoing dependence on other imports, such as chemical products, machine inputs for construction and mining, and mounting interest payments on Cuba’s debt have created a structural budgetary deficit for the Cuban government.²²⁰ Cuba has suffered a long-term trend of deteriorating balance of trade and increasing ratio of Cuban Government Debt to GDP, *despite* Human Capital Exportation revenues (see graph 5.5). This

²¹⁹ Hernández-Catá, Ernesto. “The Growth of the Cuban Economy in the First Decade of the XXI Century: Is It Sustainable?”, page 89.

²²⁰ Simoes, Alexander et. al. “Products Imported by Cuba (1995-2011)” The Economic Complexity Observatory: An Analytical Tool for Understanding the Dynamics of Economic Development. Workshops at the Twenty-Fifth AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence. (2011)

trend explains why hard capital is such a high priority of the Castro regime, as Raul has publically acknowledged.²²¹

Graph 5.5 : Cuban Balance of Payments (1989-2010)



Source: *Hernández-Cáta (2012), Figure 4, page 98.*

Yet, Cuba's economic troubles run far deeper than debt. Despite the developed state bureaucracy and high levels of education, Havana's non-service exports include very few value-added goods. Raw metal exports accounted for 42.65% of its net export profile in 2011 (88% of which was Nickel). Even in Nickel, one of Cuba's most profitable sectors, production inefficiency is glaring: almost a third of Nickel revenue still comes from unprocessed Raw

²²¹ Castro, Raul. "Discurso de Raúl en la CTC: Para distribuir riqueza, primero hay que crearla." February 22nd, 2014.

Nickel, rather than value-added Nickel Matte.²²² In 2013, Cuban Nickel revenues were 26% lower than expectations because the efficiency of production was too low to be profitable at global prices.²²³

Cuba's only other industry of note, chemical and medical exports, is aided significantly by connections with HCE programs. Cuban state-run industry cannot compete in the free market with cheap generic pharmaceutical producers like Brazil and India, or high-end production in the U.S. and Europe, so it must rely on negotiating markets for its generic pharmaceuticals. Most relevantly, as part of the HCE, Cuba often stipulates that generic drugs used for treatment must come from Cuban production facilities. It is unclear what proportion of its chemical exports are consequences of such terms,²²⁴ but domestically manufactured medicine accounted for 15.82% of gross exports.²²⁵

There are potential areas of growth for Cuban chemical and medical exports. For example, Cuba hopes that the establishment of ALBAMED, a strategic alliance with ALBA states, will double its pharmaceutical exports by 2018.²²⁶ BioFarmaCuba's recent agreement with the Chinese company Meheco is also promising for increasing exports.²²⁷ What all this amounts to, essentially, is that Cuba has little value-added or productive efficiency. Cuba direly needs more foreign investment, but given its reluctance to ease regulations or relinquish either control or

²²² Authors calculations by dividing the Gross income from Raw Nickel (6.47%) by Nickel Matte (20.61%), from Simones et al. (2011).

²²³ Frank, Marc. "Low prices take toll on Cuban nickel revenues"

²²⁴ Werlau, María. "Cuba's Health-Care Diplomacy: The Business of Humanitarianism"

²²⁵ Chemical and medicine accounted for only 5.84% of net exports in 2011 because of Cuba's ongoing need to import a number of medications it does not have capacity to produce. All figures in this paragraph from Simones et. al. (2011).

²²⁶ Cochetti, Chiara. "ALBAMED: A new regional pharma hub in the Americas?". Also, "This new regulatory setting [ALBAMED] is also forecasted to improve the volume of Cuban exports on a regional level, which now stands at USD500 million per year, and is expected to double to USD1 billion by 2018 (source: BioCubaFarma, 2013"

²²⁷ Reuters. "Pharmaceutical firm China Meheco signs strategic alliance with Cuba's BioCubaFarma"

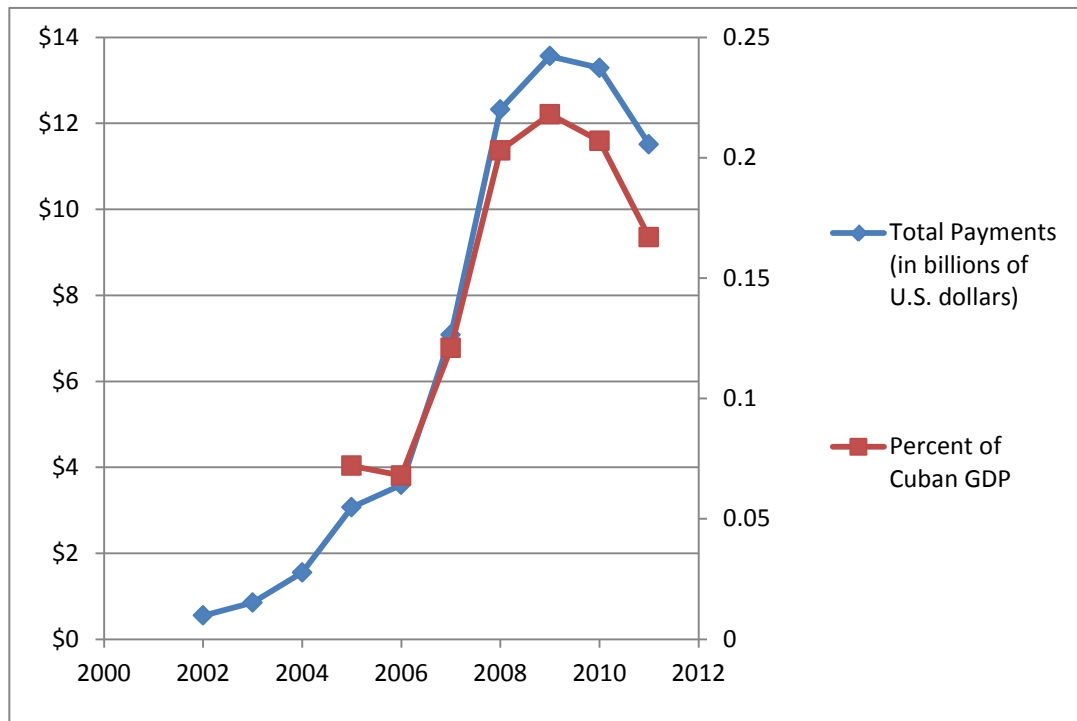
majority equity of economic activity, the prospects for such efficiency boosting investment remain poor.

Given Cuba's economic reality, how does the Cuban state continue to survive? The answer lies with Venezuela, which has been sending enormous payments to Cuba since 2002, ostensibly in return for HCE services, although some scholars allege that Caracas pays far more than market rate.²²⁸ Because exact figures are unavailable, it is unclear. The following graph shows one scholar's estimates of Venezuelan payments to Cuba and its citizens, through both cash and subsidies, representing a total estimated transfer of \$67.38 billion dollars from 2002-2011 (see graph 5.6).²²⁹

²²⁸ Two such examples are Hernandez-Cata (2012), page 96 and Castañeda, Rolando H. "Algunas implicaciones del ensayo sobre relaciones políticas, comerciales y económicas entre Cuba y Venezuela de Romero"

²²⁹ *Ibid*, Table 3, page 7. The author notes in the paper that "The estimates presented in this paper are subject to significant errors and omissions, but they are probably reasonably good approximation of the truth." [page 1]

Graph 5.6: Estimated Total Payments²³⁰ from Venezuela to Cuba



Source: Hernández-Catá, ““Cuba’s Dependence on Venezuelan Assistance: A Quantitative Assessment”, Table 1, page 1.

Venezuelan payments accounted for as high as 20% of total Cuban GDP in the period from 2007-2009, reflecting dire dependence on Venezuela. The reliability of such funding has been called into question given the death of Hugo Chavez and domestic political instability that has characterized Venezuela under the Maduro administration. Though Cuba has extended its medical programs across the globe, actively seeking to reduce its dependence on Venezuela, most of its service exports are still funded by Venezuela. While the Brazilian deal offers hope for HCE’s economic feasibility beyond Venezuela, Cuba’s economic situation remains uncertain. Despite enormous Venezuelan transfers and subsidies, Cuba has never been able to achieve a net

²³⁰ This figure includes estimates for payments to the Cuban government, oil subsidies to the Cuban government, preferential import subsidies, payments to Cuban citizens and other smaller transfers.

balance of trade. This suggests that without the revenue from its Human Capital Exportation programs, the Cuban government likely would have defaulted years ago. Indeed, an end to Venezuelan subsidies and transfers could have an impact comparable to the Cuban “Special Period” of the 1990s.

5.8 Conclusion

In Cuba, the need to be opportunistic in finding income is embodied by the expression “*la lucha*” or “the fight.” Through the informal economy and remittances from abroad, most Cubans have some source of income beyond their state employment, which Raul Castro acknowledged as insufficient to cover the cost of living. In a sense, the Cuban government relies on the same principles: it acts as an entrepreneur born of necessity.

Human Capital Exportation does reflect Cuba’s resilience, ingenuity and tact, but it does not reflect strength. Human Capital Exportation programs were born of, and continue to be based on, Cuba’s desperation and vulnerability. Therefore, the most accurate way to view these exchange’s existence is not as a socialist vision of humanitarian solidarity across borders. Rather, they are an innovative solution by a small state facing a paucity of vehicles to acquire hard currency, and structural impediments to productive efficiency. Cuba remains structurally dependent on foreign benefactors, namely Venezuela, and without major institutional change it will continue to be so. The success of Human Capital Exportation programs has only slowed Cuba’s transition to sustainable development.

Returning to the overarching principles of the post-Revolutionary government’s interests from the second chapter – economic and political sovereignty, socialist/populist framing of the state, and stability of the highly centralized, undemocratic status quo – it is important to note

what is not among this list: growth and prosperity. Maintaining centralized power within the Cuban government is not contingent on growth; in fact, the rise of a productive, upwardly mobile class could pose a threat to state industries. The Cuban government oversees an extractive political institution in which creative destruction necessary for widespread innovation is repressed, taxes consume the majority of the income of Cubans, and the liberty of domestic groups is intentionally limited so the rule of the regime remains unchallenged. Like the Soviet Union in the 20th century, the growth of Cuban Human Capital Exportation is not driven by increasing efficiency, but increasing scale. Cuba's socialist model may ultimately be doomed to a similar fate once Cuba can no longer rely on massive transfers of wealth from foreign allies; for now, however, the deal in Brazil has given the Revolutionary government one more foothold.

HCE programs have served to stabilize the government's rule, and strengthened Cuba's resilience against U.S. efforts to democratize the state. But they are also entirely dependent on the institutional context from which they emerged; thus, their maintenance requires political stasis. For example, expanding worker's rights would not only cut into government profits, but would likely reduce the number of patients reached by Cuban doctors. The services are deeply interdependent with the Castro regime's socialist-authoritarian political and economic model.

Cuban Human Capital Exportation programs clearly fill a need in the global market. However, they are not a sound long-term development strategy because they are not adaptable to an economically prosperous or democratic model. In fact, their success has only prevented internal reform that could have emerged in Cuba. The programs are a clever adaptation to structural weakness that, paradoxically, has largely served to legitimize the institutional source of that weakness: absolute control by the government.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis has been to explore the nature, context and impact of Cuban Human Capital Exportation. It has asked why the main agents that comprise the program – the Cuban state, recipient states, and Cuban doctors – participate. It has explored how HCE has influenced the power dynamics between Cuba and recipient states, as well as how HCE has changed Cuba's relationship with the international community. It contextualized the program's emergence within the history of Cuba, and has described the role of Human Capital Exportation as it relates to Cuba's contemporary economic reality. In evaluating these questions, it has sought to answer two central, interconnected questions:

- 1) What purpose does Human Capital Exportation serve for the Cuban state?
- 2) What impact does Human Capital Exportation have on Cuba's political economy?

This thesis has sought to fill a gap within the academic literature concerning Cuban Medical Internationalism: the lack of a comprehensive evaluation of Human Capital Exportation that unifies disparate diplomatic, economic and political impacts into an unified narrative that makes sense of HCE programs. By connecting an institutional analysis of the Cuban state with multidisciplinary perspectives on Cuban Human Capital Exportation programs, this project has proposed an interpretation that furthers our collective understanding of the multifaceted impact of Cuban Human Capital Exportation on Cuba.

This conclusion provides a summary of the findings of the other chapters of this thesis, extracting key takeaways provided therein. It then comments on the theoretical implications of

these findings. A brief section comments on the limitations of my findings and offers recommendations for further research. Finally, it will re-state the central argument of this thesis.

The Cuban state, I have argued, is structured such that power effectively resides solely within the central government as a result of conscious design. Cuba is best understood as an authoritarian state because it lacks democratic institutions or mechanisms of state accountability to the will of the people. Government censorship, widespread diffusion of propaganda and the repression of dissent are evidence of constricted civil liberties and political rights. The reason for this is that the Cuban government's central priority is protecting its own power and, by extension, the status quo.

The Cuban state protects its economic sovereignty absolutely, preventing both domestic and foreign competition to its domination of the domestic economy. Though it provides quality social services, it funds them through highly extractive policies that institutionalize reliance on those very services. It actively prevents the rise of a bourgeois class to prevent challenges to its power. It levies astronomical taxation rates on its medical workers deployed abroad, an estimated 72%.²³¹ State employees receive wages of less than \$1.00 a day on average, while those paid by foreign enterprises are taxed at an effective rate of 95%.²³² Capital accumulation outside of the government is essentially impossible, and credit is unavailable. Entrepreneurship is constrained to protect government industry, and foreign investment is strictly controlled to ensure the government maintains absolute economic power. Supposed "reforms" have never meaningfully reduced the state's power, and therefore have served mostly to obscure the underlying political stasis in Cuba. Cuban central leadership has sacrificed growth to ensure power remains in its hands.

²³¹ See section 5.3b, page 93, footnote 201.

²³² See section 2.1b, page 31.

The Cuban state has a number of competitive advantages that have contributed to the strategic development of Human Capital Exportation. For example, because it has an established precedent of not being transparent and has the ability to both insert propaganda and censor unfavorable content, it has been able to rhetorically mask the Human Capital Exportation programs with what I referred to as a “humanitarian veneer.”²³³ Its history of free medical education meant that it had a relatively large number of medical professionals to deploy abroad at the outset of the programs, and its prestigious prevention-centered, human capital-intensive public health model gave its programs international legitimacy. Human Capital Exportation, I have argued, is best understood as an innovative adaptation to Cuba’s contemporary challenges, rather than the product of a gradual evolution of Cold War-era “doctor diplomacy.”

The Cuban state has diverted an enormous amount of resources towards its medical services abroad, opening new medical schools (such as ELAM), diverting numerous domestic medical professionals away from their communities to work abroad, and even expanding the functionality of its network of *políclínicos* to include both treatment and education. Because Cuba is not constrained by the need to respect labor rights, it does not need to offer wages competitive to those in the country to which the Cuban workers are exported. In addition, by offering those who work abroad very high wages relative to domestic Cuban wages,²³⁴ the positions are highly competitive; this competition allows the Cuban government to impose harsh labor conditions with the knowledge that there will be always medical professionals willing to accept the state’s terms.

Chapter III argued that although Human Capital Exportation programs tend to be analyzed through a soft power lens, they can also serve meaningful hard power purposes. For

²³³ See section 3.5.

²³⁴ See Table 5.1, page 93.

example, they can be used for clientelist exchanges (trading medical services for votes) or be otherwise leveraged for political purposes. They may also create dependency, allowing the Cuban government to unilaterally impose higher costs on importing states. I observed statistically significant results that states that import Cuban medical services have higher U.N. affinity voting with Cuba than states that do not, even when potential lurking variables were controlled for. This quantitative analysis yielded the predicted results, supporting my hypothesis that Cuba exercises power through its HCE programs.

Chapter IV argued that although its authoritarian, repressive governance is an impediment to Cuba's warm reception in the international community, Human Capital Exportation programs – framed by Cuban government rhetoric – have changed how the international community treats Cuba. Pointing to the timing of its reestablishment of diplomatic relations with Latin America, its inclusion in a number of global and regional political and economic unions, and its adoption of global leadership positions, I argued this shift was due, in part, to the rise of HCE programs. I presented a chart that shows global affinity voting towards Cuba shifting from consistently negative to consistently positive immediately following the emergence of HCE programs, which is in line with the predictions of my hypothesis. I found it plausible that Cuban Human Capital Exportation plays a role in garnering the Cuban state goodwill internationally and to the international acquiescence to Cuba's authoritarian political structure.

Chapter V makes the case that Cuba's economy, beyond Human Capital Exportation, is inefficient and structurally dependent upon imports. HCE programs are now Cuba's most important export, with revenue from Venezuela alone representing as high as a one-fifth of

Cuba's GDP in 2007-2009.²³⁵ I made the case that the Cuban government is highly dependent on HCE revenue, and that without that revenue, it could have already defaulted on its debt, given its consistently negative balance of payments. Inability to meet the state's fiduciary responsibilities is a major threat to its power,²³⁶ which suggests that the state is dependent on the revenue from HCE programs.

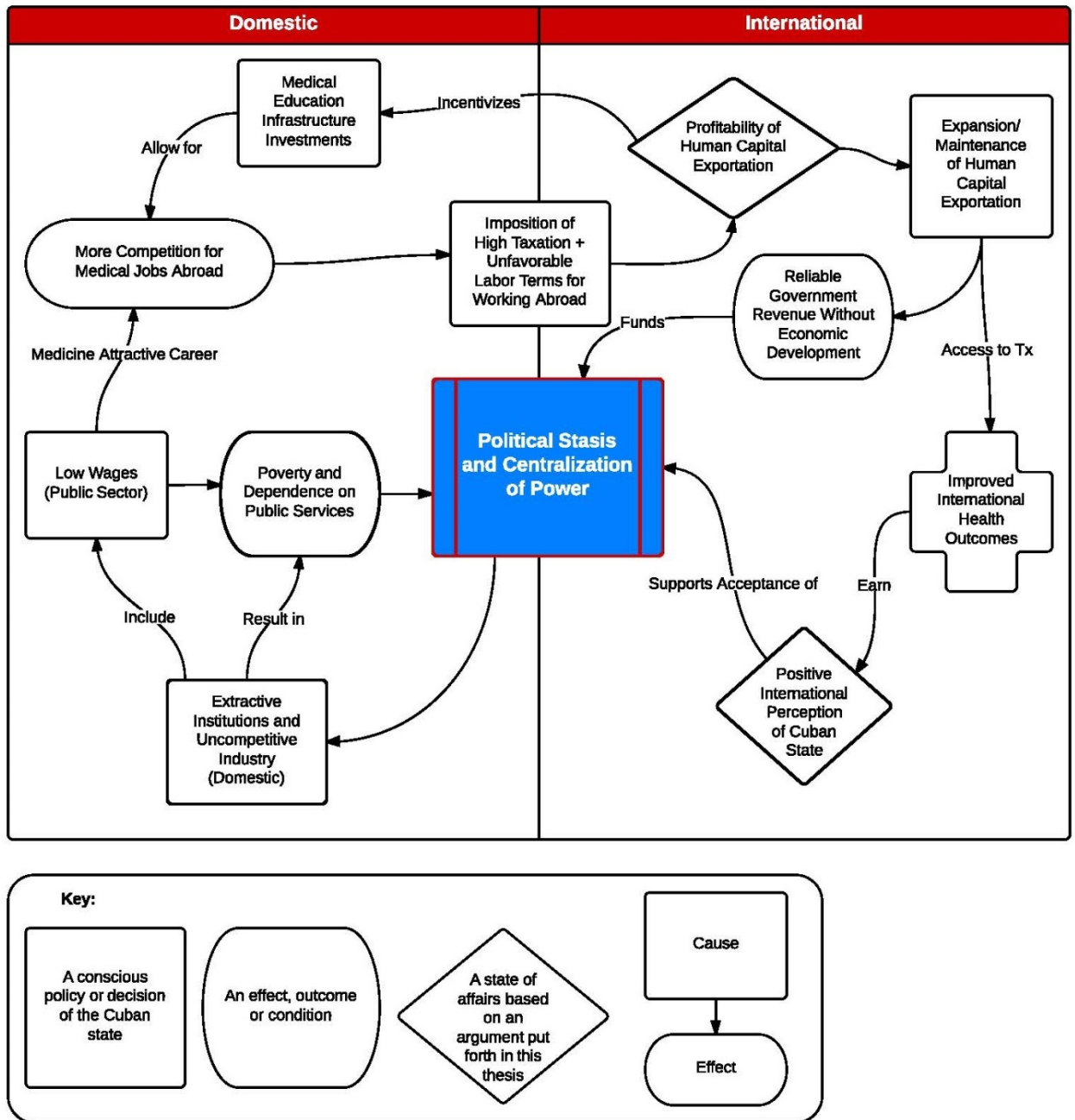
The Cuban state has proven to be either disinterested or highly incapable of growing the domestic Cuban economy, but it is exceptional at managing poverty. By maintaining impressive social indicators, it is insulated, to some extent, from critiques of its ongoing underdevelopment. However, by fueling these health and education achievements through centrally administered, non-fungible services, it can simultaneously keep its people poor and dependent on the state. By preventing the emergence of an economically engaged class, Cuban central leadership protects the centralized power within the state. Human Capital Exportation, in turn, depends on political stasis and economic underdevelopment.²³⁷ Therefore, there is a dynamic of mutual dependency between HCE programs and ongoing centralization of power in the government (depicted in figure 6.1).

²³⁵ See Graph 5.6. This figure is a rough estimation and is subject to uncertainty.

²³⁶ See section 2.4b.

²³⁷ I made the case for these insights in sections 5.3 and 5.4, respectively.

Figure 6.1: Interdependence Flow Chart



The implications of the mutual dependency between the Cuban government and its Human Capital Exportation programs are profound. If this work is correct in asserting that: a) HCE programs have led to international acquiescence to Cuba's political economy, b) HCE programs cannot exist without Cuba's political and economic status quo and c) the Cuban government would fall deeply into debt without HCE revenue, thereby threatening its sovereignty and power, then the emergence of HCE programs has created a positive feedback cycle that perpetuates Cuba's political and economic status quo. Even if the revenue of the programs were to increase drastically (thereby enriching the state), the underlying power imbalance in the Cuban domestic economy would remain and even be strengthened. In addition to – and arising from – the diplomatic and economic benefits of Human Capital Exportation for the Cuban state, the most meaningful impact of the programs for the Cuban people is that the centralization of power in the undemocratic state is made more robust as a result of Human Capital Exportation.

It is impossible to predict how the Cuban government will respond in the coming years, as a number of factors and contingencies have the possibility to alter the underlying dynamics of the Cuban political economy. For example, a trade deal with Europe could come with conditions of reform. Alternatively, the fall of the Maduro regime could drastically alter Cuba's critical relationship with Venezuela. Finally, loosening restrictions on migration, remittances, or even trade with the United States could have a transformational impact on Cuban society. My intention is not to predict Cuba's future, but to identify an underlying dynamic which, barring substantial change, will continue to operate for the foreseeable future.

There are important questions about the impact of Cuban Human Capital Exportation on recipient nations that remain unanswered. For example, there is no definitive evidence available

that Cuban doctors have significantly positive health impacts on recipient communities. Although I am logically inclined to believe there is a positive health impact, its cost-effectiveness is unclear and there is no empirical evidence supporting that belief. Analysis of the role of imported Cuban medical workers within recipient public health systems would be valuable in order to explore whether importing Cuban medical professionals creates dependence in recipient nations. Finally, having more data regarding the terms of HCE agreements could add nuance to our understanding of the diversity of types of Human Capital Exportation.

Human Capital Exportation has not only increased the power of the state in Cuba, it has indirectly tied international demand for, and support of, its programs to the ongoing centralization of power within the state. If the Cuban central leadership's primary goal is to maintain power and the political status quo within Cuba, Human Capital Exportation appears to serve this purpose well. Despite their rhetorical presentation as being driven by "solidarity," Human Capital Exportation programs are best understood as serving economic and diplomatic functions that entrench the Cuban state's extractive institutions, preventing the structural reform necessary for Cuba's revitalization. The very policies that are bringing doctors to marginalized communities across the developing world are perpetuating the domestic hegemony of the Cuban state.

Appendix 1:

Table 3.1: Regression of Cuban Affinity Voting in UN General Assembly (1998-2012)

Sources and Explanations of Variables:

Variable Name/ Type	Type	Source
MedPro (“Existence of Medical Program”) Explanatory Variable	Dichotomous; 1= Existing program during corresponding timespan.	Coded personally; data from GDP per capita, PPP (current international \$) The Cuban Annual Health Survey for each given year (available here: http://bvscuba.sld.cu/anuario-estadistico-de-cuba/).
CompPro (“Existence of Comprehensive Medical Program”) Explanatory Variable	Dichotomous; 1= Existing program during corresponding timespan.	Coded personally; data from GDP per capita, PPP (current international \$) The Cuban Annual Health Survey for each given year (available here: http://bvscuba.sld.cu/anuario-estadistico-de-cuba/).
CivLib (Score rating Civil Liberties within a nation; 1-7 scale) Control Variable	Ordinal variable with non-integer values; from 1-7.	From Freedom House Index. More info here http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2011/methodology
PolRight (Score rating Civil Liberties within a nation; 1-7 scale) Control Variable	Ordinal variable with non-integer values; from 1-7.	See above
GDP (“GDP per capita, PPP (current international \$)”) Control Variable	Continuous quantitative variable.	http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/reports/tableview.aspx
USAid (“Net bilateral aid flows from DAC donors, United States (current US\$)”) Control Variable	Continuous quantitative variable.	http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/reports/tableview.aspx
ID	ID Variable	Based on Correlates of War Country Code.
Year (Three year stretches)	Time series range; five ranges, each three years (1998-2012).	Personally coded. Range9800 = 1998-2000; Range1012 = 2010-2012.
AvgAffinityUN (Average of state affinity voting with Cuba over specified	Continuous quantitative variable; from –	Personally recoded. Data from: Anton Strezhnev; Erik Voeten, 2013, "United Nations General Assembly Voting Data", http://hdl.handle.net/1902.1/12379

three year range) Dependent Variable	(1,1)	UNF:5:s7mORKL1ZZ6/P3AR5Fokkw== Erik Voeten [Distributor] V7 [Version]
<u>DeltaAffinityUN</u> (Change in state voting affinity with Cuba from beginning to end of specified three year range) Dependent Variable	Continuous quantitative variable; from – (1,1)	Personally recoded. Data from: Anton Strezhnev; Erik Voeten, 2013, "United Nations General Assembly Voting Data", http://hdl.handle.net/1902.1/12379 UNF:5:s7mORKL1ZZ6/P3AR5Fokkw== Erik Voeten [Distributor] V7 [Version]

Hypothesis:

Ha (alternate hypothesis): UN General Assembly voting behavior (measured with UN Affinity voting data with Cuba) during years in which Cuban Medical International programs are in place will tend to be higher (i.e. reflect greater ideological affinity with Cuba) in Medical International Program recipient nation than affinity voting for non-recipient states and states not currently involved in a Medical International Program. I also hypothesize that this effect will be even more pronounced in states with Comprehensive Medical Programs.

Ho (null hypothesis): State voting behavior and medical cooperation with Cuba are not related.

Diagnostic Tests:

Normality of Errors: My calculations indicate that the errors are not normally distributed. This observation is confirmed by investigating the sktest, which allows us to reject the null hypothesis that the data is normal. This is logical and expected: there is no mean parameter around which countries Affinity, GDP, or any of the other variables spread. I must continue my analysis with the understanding that I cannot assume normality, limiting my ability to use ANOVA, ttests and other statistical tools. For this reason, my final regression used in the paper was Robust.

Skewness/Kurtosis tests for Normality					
Variable	Obs	Pr(Skewness)	Pr(Kurtosis)	adj chi2 (2)	joint Prob>chi2
AvgAffinit~N	894	0.0000	0.0000	.	0.0000
MedPro	952	0.0000	.	.	.
CivLib	953	0.0003	0.0000	.	0.0000
PolRight	953	0.0000	0.0000	.	.
GDP	877	0.0000	0.0000	.	0.0000
USaid	741	0.0000	0.0000	.	0.0000

Outliers: After running all the tests for outliers, I decided that there was only one country I classified as a clear outlier: Israel. It was such a heavy outlier because of its intimate relationship with the United States regarding voting, remaining the only state other than the U.S. not to condone the U.S. Embargo against Cuba (it had some of the only negative affinity scores). I also excluded the United States from the regression. Finally, I excluded Kiribati, Palau and Micronesia as well because a) all three were highlighted when I ran outlier tests (see below) and b) they were such small countries that I did not find their departure from the pack to be particularly valuable as an impact. These exclusions notwithstanding, my n value was very high (because each nation's voting records were divided into four, three year stretches).

Final Regression

```
. reg AvgAffinityUN CompPro CivLib PolRight GDP USaid if Countries==0, robust
```

Linear regression

Number of obs = 653

F(4, 647) = .

Prob > F = .

R-squared = 0.2095

Root MSE = .20304

AvgAffinit~N	Robust		t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
	Coef.	Std. Err.				
CompPro	.0952401	.015042	6.33	0.000	.0657031	.1247772
CivLib	.0292009	.012878	2.27	0.024	.0039132	.0544885
PolRight	.0240717	.0093534	2.57	0.010	.005705	.0424385
GDP	-1.65e-06	1.16e-06	-1.43	0.154	-3.92e-06	6.22e-07
USaid	2.52e-11	1.59e-11	1.58	0.114	-6.07e-12	5.65e-11
_cons	.5496011	.0308831	17.80	0.000	.4889578	.6102443

This final regression therefore is a) statistically significant, b) has a strong R-squared value (roughly 0.21) and has a large n size (n=653). It is robust because of the finding of non-normal error.

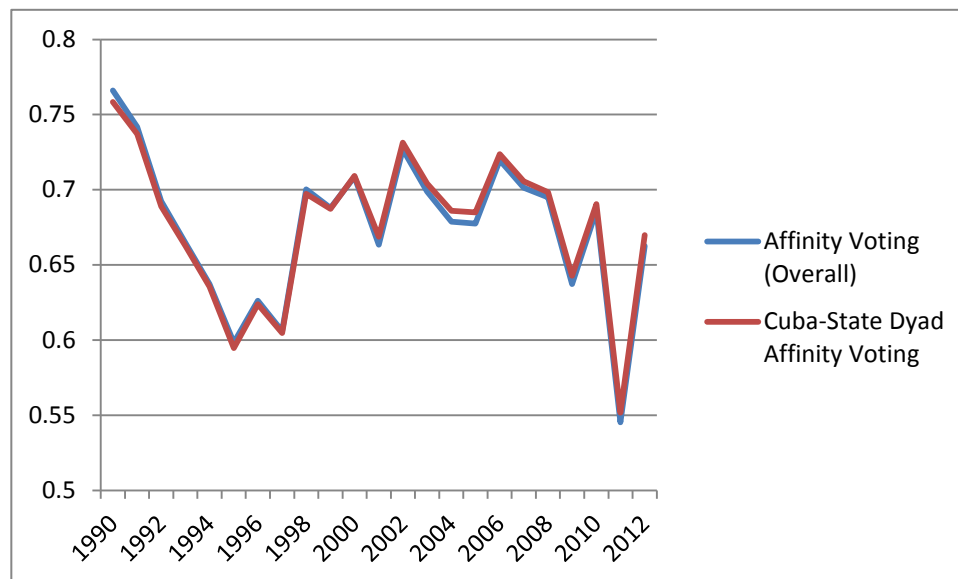
Note: This work drew heavily upon a project I completed for PSCI 0368 with Professor Yuen, Professor Dickinson and Professor Mezini.

Appendix II

Methodology for Graph 4.1: Cuba-Dyad Affinity Voting Score (Adjusted)

Graph 4.1 was generated from two manipulations of the same Affinity Dataset used above.²³⁸ The first took Cuba-State Dyad Affinity voting scores for all states for each given year (shown in red) and the second took the overall Affinity Voting within the entire UN (in blue).

Although I initially intended to use the Cuba-State Dyad info, when I plotted it against the overall Affinity voting it was clear that the two were so closely associated because of the variability of the topics or issues voted in the UN General Assembly from year to year, I was interested in the *difference* between the Cuban and Overall figures (thus why the chart is noted as adjusted). As is seen below, Cuba went from being below the average overall Affinity voting to slightly above. The difference is what is depicted in Graph 4.1.



²³⁸ Anton Strezhnev; Erik Voeten, 2013, "United Nations General Assembly Voting Data",

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