A Space in Which to Breathe

Civil Society and the State in Cuba: The Transformation of a Relationship?

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Colleen and José Marín,
and to the memory of my grandparents
who each, in their own way,
taught me to be tenacious

Abstract

State-civil society relations represent a major challenge for Cuba, yet relatively few studies consider their dynamics. Those that do, tend to approach the subject either using stereotypes based on the recent experiences of 'regime transition' in Eastern Europe, or in ways that reinforce the ideological positioning which has characterised studies of the Cuban Revolution. In contrast, this research analyses the transformations in the relationship between civil society and the state during Cuba's post-1990 'Special Period' using a fresh conceptual and methodolgical approach.

Drawing on a Gramscian interpretation of state-civil society relations for inspiration, a conceptual framework has been developed for the purpose of analysing the case. In order to appreciate the historical evolution of this relationship, the framework has been applied to the first three decades of the Revolution, a period in Cuba's history which has not conventionally been analysed using this optic, but one that holds the key to the changes undergone by the Cuban state and civil society during the 1990s. For rather than explaining these changes with reference solely to Cuba's new economic circumstances, this study suggests that a more coherent understanding requires the analysis of underlying political factors. Of these factors, the historical struggle for political hegemony, both between social classes within Cuba and between Cuba and the United States, is identified as the most influential. Such struggles have variously created or constrained the spaces available for Cuba as a counter-hegemonic alternative within the world system, and for potentially counter-hegemonic alternatives within Cuba. It is argued that the dynamics of state-civil society relations and struggles for political hegemony are two processes which simultaneously shape each other and as such are inextricably interrelated.

Given the notable absence of Cuban voices from many externally-generated studies, it has been an objective of this research to incorporate within the analysis the perceptions of key stakeholders from the Cuban state and civil society. Social research methods including semi-structured interviews and participant observations were used during fieldwork on the island in 1999 and 2003 in order to access a broad spectrum of opinions within and across stakeholder groups. It has been on the basis of data generated during this empirical research that the conclusion that there has been a qualitative transformation in state-civil society relations during the Special Period has been reached.

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During one of the interviews conducted for this study a UK government official bemoaned: "Cuba takes up far more of our time than it should." Having spent the best part of the last decade studying the island's politics, I can empathise with this feeling, albeit for very different reasons and with a good deal more pleasure! I am certain that my family will also be able to relate to this point, for they have consistently and selflessly given up their own time (and much more besides) in order for me to spend mine 'on Cuba' and complete this thesis dissertation. Moreover, I have the suspicion that the words "Cuba" and "takes more time than it should" may well conjure up some thoughts for my supervisors, Dr Laura Tedesco and Dr Jonathan Barton. It is to Laura and Jonathan and to my parents, that I would like to offer my very deepest thanks. Not only have they shared in my enthusiasm for this research, they have unfailingly believed in and supported me at every point in my journey. I especially want to recognise and thank each of them here.

I am also extremely grateful to the individuals and organisations both in Cuba and the UK who have assisted me. All gave generously of their time and expertise. Of those organisations to which I am indebted, I would like in particular to thank the School of Development Studies at the University of East Anglia for the award of a research studentship which funded part of my period of study and the Institute of Philosophy, Havana, for acting as my official sponsor in Cuba during 2003 and providing me with so much more than the correct set of 'permissions'. In addition, the Cuban Ministry of Finance and Prices kindly opened many doors and facilitated interviews in Havana and Cienfuegos.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and express a debt of gratitude to Dr Adrian Leftwich and Dr Haleh Afshar of the Department of Politics at the University of York. My enthusiasm for politics and development studies was fuelled by their teaching and although a fascination with Cuba developed later, in many ways it can be traced back to their classes.

A Note on the Title

Recently, there has been less space in which to breathe
(Arturo Arango interviewed 23 April 2003, UNEAC, Havana)

One cannot describe reality; only give metaphors that
indicate it. All human modes of description (photographic,
mathematical and the rest, as well as literary) are
metaphorical. Even the most precise scientific description
of an object or movement is a tissue of metaphors
(John Fowles, 1999,p.17)

I have chosen to use the idea of 'breathing space' in the title of this dissertation in order to unify two themes which have emerged strongly from the data collected during my research. Initially, I labeled these themes 'spaces' and 'oxygen'. I discovered that time and again they appeared in the interview transcripts either alone or else combined in some way, as the above quotation taken from an interview with the Cuban writer Arturo Arango demonstrates. Although at first I noted them and was intrigued by their occurrence, I did not foresee the influence that they were eventually to have on the thesis presented in this dissertation.

It is perhaps not surprising that the idea of space was frequently employed by respondents. After all, the use of spatial metaphors to describe the state and civil society as 'areas', 'domains' or 'spheres' is common in both the English and Spanish language literature. Given this, we might reasonably conclude that when asking someone to reflect on their interpretation of the relationship between civil society and the state in Cuba, as I have done in this investigation, we are likely to hear reference being made to 'spaces' in their reply. However, quite apart from the number and diversity of respondents who have referred to this theme in their discourse, a point which in itself is worthy of note, what has fascinated me as I have analysed and interpreted the data has been the range of ways in which the idea of space has been used and its versatility and effectiveness in communicating the ideas which have been expressed. I hope to have retained something of this spirit in the following chapters. Taking this into account, I have used the theme throughout the dissertation in headings and sub-headings as a device to provide focus and help orient the argument.

As for the theme of oxygen: the "need for oxygen," "for air," to be able to "breathe a little," were metaphors which emerged spontaneously during interview conversations. This group of metaphors added a descriptive intensity to the interpretations constructed by many who explained to me that recently, in their perception, there had been a "tightening" a "restriction" or "stifling" in Cuba following a period of "opening" during the early 1990s. Voices which had been heard were being silenced, and the spaces in which they had been articulated were being "closed down." In this political climate, there was less opportunity for

individuals and groups to air diverse views, to 'breathe', to have a voice. The image was also used to describe the need felt by many to travel, or leave Cuba temporarily, in order to have a "breathing space." This space was to be found in "the exterior," in the world beyond the island's shores. A world which, for a variety of reasons, is difficult for Cubans to access. Again, the imagery was strong. But it was not until I read an article by the Cuban academic (now living in the Dominican Republic) Haroldo Dilla, on my return from Cuba in June 2003, that I felt the full force of the ideas captured and expressed within the figures of speech that had arisen in the interviews. Quite by chance while reading Dilla's text, I came across an extension of these ideas. When taken together, the metaphors which Cubans used in their conversations with me and the image raised by Dilla in his article, form a powerful representation of the situation in contemporary Cuba. Dilla writes of the future possibility of the Cuban government "opening a little the windows of this smoke filled room" (Dilla, 2003a, p.13).[1] In evoking the idea of a confined space, in this case a room saturated with smoke, Dilla suggests the discomfort of its inhabitants. Their powerlessness to open for themselves those 'windows' which would enable the effects of the stifling atmosphere to be alleviated, is implied by the need to wait for the government to act. The salience of the 'air' and 'oxygen' metaphors which were developed by respondents and the need to 'breathe' or to have a 'breathing space' that many expressed, becomes fully apparent when seen within the context of Dilla's 'smoke filled room'.

I have found that there are many levels at which the metaphors work. Historically, the Cuban nation has had little space in which to breathe freely. First the Spanish and then a long series of North American administrations have constrained and inhibited the Cuban people's ability to respire independently, in both an economic and political sense. Since 1959 the United States has attempted to asphyxiate the Revolution through the use of direct and indirect aggression. The tightening of the economic blockade in the 1990s and the introduction of Track Two[2] has been described to me by Cubans as a form of "slow strangulation." Even the Soviet Union's influence from the 1960s until its collapse in 1991 was, according to many, "essential" yet "suffocating." From this it can be seen that the idea of breathing space is not confined to domestic politics in Cuba but can also be applied to the external relationships that have influenced and shaped the course of the island's development.

This dissertation presents a study of the dynamics of the relationship between the Cuban state and civil society at the end of the twentieth century. A time, described to me by one Cuban academic as an era of "opportunity and danger."[3] A time during which, for some, it has become increasingly difficult to breathe. It is against this backdrop that the thesis is set.

NOTES

[1] All translations of Spanish-language texts in this dissertation are my own unless otherwise indicated.

[2] *Track Two* refers to the U.S. Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 which was designed as a 'two track' policy combining economic sanctions (track one) with engagement (track two). The law has become the framework for U.S. policy regarding Cuba (see Diaz, 2002).

[3] Maricela Perera, interviewed 16 April 2003, Havana.

Introduction

The relationship between civil society and the state is not a concern which can be abandoned, nor even underestimated or marginalised … that would be a grave error
(Isabel Monal,[1] in *Temas* 1999,p.171)

We are conscious that the main challenge we have is state-civil society relations
(Lázaro Barredo, National Assembly delegate, interview, 29 April 2003, Havana)

This study analyses the relationship between civil society and the state in Cuba during the era known as the *período especial en tiempos de paz* (special period in time of peace) [2] which began in September 1990. Although the Special Period continues to date, the main focus of the study is the decade of the 1990s, a time during which Cuba experienced not only a profound economic crisis but also a crisis of the underpinning socialist paradigm which has guided its development since the 1960s.

The research explores whether a redefinition of state-civil society relations occurred on the island during the 1990s that amounted to a qualitative change or transformation in the nature and dynamics of this relationship. Following Kaufman (1997,p.5), 'transformation' is defined as a "substantial and qualitative shift" in relations, "not simply a quantitative or linear improvement." For several reasons, the Cuban case does not fit the standard neo-liberal paradigm of transition (see Miller, 2003; Jackiewicz and Bolster, 2003), which tends to reduce the complexity of economic and political change and assumes a predetermined endpoint (see Smith and Pickles, 1998). In contrast, the concept of transformation suggests a new form of relationship within the context of socialist rule during a reorientation period which has been characterised by a search for new alternatives while preserving revolutionary ideals and socialist principles.[3]

In order to understand and evaluate changes undergone by the Cuban state and civil society during these years, an historical analysis of the 1959-1989 period has been essential. For although the Special Period may represent one of the most dramatic phases in Cuban history since the triumph of the Revolution in 1959, patterns of continuity and transformation in contemporary state-civil society relations "can only be revealed through a study of the historical context from which they have emerged" (Espina, interview, 9 May 2003, Havana). It has been through such an analysis that the underlying political factors influencing the relationship between the Cuban state and civil society during the Special Period have been exposed. The two most important political factors identified in this thesis both concern the exercise of political hegemony. One represents an endogenous dynamic: the process by which a political class emerged following the Revolution to establish itself as a hegemonic force. The

other requires us to look beyond domestic politics in Cuba to consider what Skocpol (1985,p.8) describes as "the ways in which states are conditioned by historically changing transnational contexts." Given this, the second, exogenous, dynamic identified is the impact of the hegemonic influence of the United States (and to a lesser extent the Soviet Union) on internal relations. Taken together, these dynamics enable a more coherent understanding of the changes that have occurred in state-civil society relations within the new context of the 1990s than would be possible using, for example, an analysis that solely examines the effects of the economic or political reforms that occurred during this period.

The diversification of forms of property, emergence of new social actors, decentralisation of the state and increase in spaces for the market have all had crucial ramifications for state-civil society relations on the island during recent years. However, the argument put forward here is that without an awareness of the processes by which political hegemony has been established, threatened, re-articulated and maintained in Cuba, the complex web of social relations which represent the state and civil society can not adequately be understood. Further, it is suggested that changes in the nature and dynamics of state-civil society relations, and the on-going articulation of a political class's hegemony, are reciprocal processes which are inextricably interrelated and interactive. To use the language of Lincoln and Guba, they involve a "mutual simultaneous shaping" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.150).

As the quotations at the top of the previous page demonstrate, the theme of state-civil society relations is of critical importance to social scientists and policy makers in Cuba today. Although a discussion about contemporary state-civil society relations began on the island during the early 1990s, as part of a debate about civil society (itself an off-shoot of a wider debate which arose in response to the need to find solutions to the economic crisis), it remains an area that requires additional consideration (see Hernández, 1996). As a theme for investigation it raises a number of issues which are dealt with more fully in later chapters but which are useful to highlight here. Firstly, there is the problem of applying the state-civil society conceptual framework to the Cuban case, particularly to the historical period between 1959 and 1989 when 'civil society' rarely appeared in the conceptual vocabulary of either Cuban or non-Cuban analysts.[4] Secondly, there is the issue of timing. Given that many of the processes influencing state-civil society relations in the 1990s are still in train, consideration must be given to the concern expressed by some (Recio, interview, 26 February 2003, Havana) as to whether sufficient time has passed for the necessary critical distance which adequate analysis and reflection require. Certainly such an analysis poses particular demands on the researcher but its justification, as well as its potential liability, lies in its timeliness. Thirdly, and particularly for the foreign researcher, there is the additional complication of gathering reliable data in Cuba (see Hernández, 1999; Kapcia, 2000; Miller, 2003 on this theme).

A general weakness of the small number of recent studies which examine civil society in Cuba has been their tendency to leave the complex patterns of interaction between the state and civil society largely unaccounted for.[5] Through a combination of theoretical and historical analysis, together with new empirical data gathered in the setting, this research attempts to redress the balance and offer a fresh approach to the study of Cuban politics. In particular, it aims to provide an alternative to the "ideological positioning" which has traditionally dominated Cuban Studies.[6] Hence, while the thesis challenges the dominance of the interpretations and postures of 'Cubanology',[7] it is also intended as an alternative to the "defensive posture" described by Bengelsdorf (1988,p.222) found among those scholars sympathetic to the Revolution whose "blind enthusiasm" (Kapcia, 2000,p.2) serves to portray an unrealistic image of the island.[8] To this end a contemporary political science approach, that is, one that makes explicit the concepts, theoretical perspectives and methods which have guided the inquiry (see Marsh and Stoker, 1995), has been employed. This is not intended to suggest that a greater degree of 'objectivity' has been achieved.   Rather it is an acknowledgement of the fact that every aspect of this study - from the definition of the research problem and the selection of concepts used to deal with it, to the analysis of the material gathered in the field and the argument and conclusions eventually reached - has been shaped by the value preferences which underpin it. Preferences which, according to Valdés (1988), are rarely disclosed, much to the detriment of the field.[9] Such an approach has also enabled insights from politics, political philosophy and the study of the politics of development to be assimilation into the analysis of the Cuban case. Gleaned from both the theoretical literature and empirical studies of the state and civil society in other contexts, such insights are intended to sharpen the arguments developed and strengthen the thesis. Moreover, it is hoped that by linking Cuban Studies to mainstream political science, both will be enriched.[10]

Central to the approach has been the aim to incorporate Cuban stakeholders' perceptions into the analysis. These actors' perceptions of state-civil society relations, gathered during interviews conducted during visits to the island between 1999 and 2003, are the basis of the interpretation that is offered in the chapters which follow. In addition, texts produced by Cuban authors living on the island and writing for a national audience have been a valuable source of data and have offered unique insights into the themes under investigation. The inclusion of this literature has enabled not only the discourse of the party-state but also that of other voices from within Cuban civil society (which can be heard if we are prepared to listen) to be captured and counter-posed.

This is not to negate the importance or influence, both positive and negative, of externally produced literature 'on Cuba'. Nor is it intended to advocate a simple synthesis of indigenous Cuban literature for the English language audience. Rather, it is a recognition of

the need to focus attention and orient analysis towards those interpretations constructed by Cubans living and working within the Revolution that are, at worst, often unavailable to foreign researchers or, at best, difficult to access outside of the island. It may well be for this reason that so many contemporary publications from the U.S. and Europe fail to mention a range of Cuban sources in their bibliographies.

Such an omission serves only to reinforce two views which have become stereotypes. Paradoxically, both are interrelated and together they do much to hamper our understanding of Cuban politics and tend to reinforce precisely the kind of ideological positioning which has been described as being so detrimental. First, there is the view held by many outside of Cuba: essentially that Cuban thought is characterised by its homogeneity, the so-called 'official perspective', and little else. Second, the view put forward from within the island: that non-indigenous researchers ignore the work of Cuban analysts who continue to 'live' the Revolution due to their (presumed) lack of "independence" and only consider "credible" that literature which is produced by "dissidents" or by those of Cuban nationality who live in the exterior (see Hernández, 1999, p.12-13).[11]

There is a need to move beyond the stalemate (and the stereotypes) in order to work together to consolidate a new image of Cuba. This involves an approach which is sensitive to the nuances that exist within Cuban publications, themselves a reflection of the diversity to be found in Cuban thought.

To this end, the study has four objectives:

1. To challenge the notion that a civil society-state conceptual framework has little utility in the Cuban context by developing a new framework for the purposes of analysing the case.
2. To examine the nature and dynamics of state-civil society relations in Cuba during the 1990s using an approach that is sensitive both to the historical evolution of this relationship from 1959 onwards, and to the multiple endogenous and exogenous influences that have shaped state-civil society relations over time.
3. To analyse the responses of the state and civil society to the economic crisis of the early 1990s and to discuss the implications for their respective roles.
4. To evaluate the nature and character of the relationship that developed between the state and civil society in Cuba during the 1990s.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The thesis is divided into two parts. *Part One* deals with issues of theory, methodology, and historical background. It provides the conceptual, methodological and contextual framework that is necessary in order to engage with the case for analysis. *Part Two* examines the nature

and dynamics of state-civil society relations in Cuba during the 1990s. The six chapters of the thesis are split equally between the two parts and are organised in the following manner:

Since the civil society-state relationship is so central to the argument of the thesis, *Chapter 1* selectively surveys some of the main approaches to the relationship found within the theoretical literature. It is concerned with uncovering normative understandings regarding the desirable relationship between civil society and the state and the particular type of civil society and state required for such relationships to function. These understandings enable a specific conceptual framework to be developed for the purposes of analysing the Cuban experience. Throughout the dissertation the terms 'state' and 'civil society' are used in the singular for heuristic purposes, however in this chapter a more complex view of the state and civil society is discussed which is developed in subsequent chapters in relation to Cuba.

Chapter 2 is devoted to issues concerning methodology. It provides a description, explanation and justification of the methods used to generate data in this study and discusses the epistemological position that underpins them. Following Oliver (2004), the tone of the chapter is reflexive and it includes a detailed account of the research carried out in Cuba during 2003.

Given the importance of appreciating the historical context which has conditioned state-civil society relations in the 1990s, *Chapter 3* provides an historical analysis of the development of the relationship between civil society and the state in Cuba between 1959 and 1989. Through the application of the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 1, the nature and dynamics of state-civil society relations are explored during a period of history which has not traditionally been analysed using this optic. The chapter begins by examining why this has been the case before focusing on the transformation of the Cuban state and civil society following the Revolution and the new relationship that was established between them. Particular emphasis is given to the processes by which a political class emerged to establish both a hegemonic position within civil society and control of the state. The impact on state-civil society relations of this class's control of the revolutionary process and the manner in which it defended the Revolution from alternative forces inside and outside of Cuba, are key to the discussion. Also critical to the analysis are the bilateral relationships between the United States and Cuba and the Soviet Union and Cuba. The chapter concludes with an assessment of the nature of state-civil society relations on the eve of the Special Period.

Chapter 4 is the first of three chapters that focus on the 1990s. It begins with a brief description of the economic crisis that developed in Cuba following the loss of its trade partners in Eastern Europe during the late 1980s and the withdrawal of Soviet aid in 1990. It goes on to analyse the ways in which not only the Cuban state and civil society but also the United States responded to the internal crisis and how the interaction of their responses

generated a complex combination of economic and political circumstances on the island. It examines how these response strategies were continuously adapted in order to accommodate the contradictions and distortions which emerged during the decade. Finally, the chapter considers how the reactions of the state and civil society provoked intended and unintended changes with regard to their respective roles and the implications of this for their relationship.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to a closer examination of Cuban civil society in the 1990s. It begins by surveying the landscape of civil society and provides a brief taxonomy of its associations and actors. The rest of the chapter is devoted to an analysis of the debate about civil society that emerged in public spaces in Cuba from approximately 1994 onwards. Arising within the context of the political and economic transformations initiated by the economic crisis and adjustment, and fuelled by external discussions on the theme, the debate is understood as an example of the interaction between civil society as an idea and civil society as a process. The various ways in which different types of social actors articulated notions of civil society and the means they employed to do so are central to the analysis. The opening of a space for the debate and the new opportunities for political expression which this opening signified are discussed, as are the reasons for its closure. In essence, the chapter demonstrates how state-civil society relations were simultaneously re-defined at the conceptual and empirical levels during this period. It is for this reason that the chapter is located in Part Two of the dissertation as opposed to Part One where non-Cuban perspectives on civil society are reviewed.

Chapter 6 answers the central question posed by the thesis: Has a redefinition in state-civil society relations occurred in recent years that amounts to a transformation in the nature of this relationship? It evaluates the dynamics of state-civil society relations throughout the 1990s and brings the study up to date by examining state-civil society relations in the early years of the twenty-first century. It argues that the main barrier to the transformation of this relationship has been the influence of, and interplay between, hegemonic politics inside and outside of Cuba.

The final chapter concludes the thesis by revisiting the ideas introduced in the *Note on the Title*. It summarises the main findings and draws together the threads developed in the preceding chapters before considering the implications of the thesis for both Cuban Studies and the academic field more widely, and suggesting avenues for future research.

[1] Isabel Monal is a researcher at the Instituto de Filosofía (Institute of Philosophy), Havana and editor of the journal *Marx Ahora*.

[2] Hereafter the term 'Special Period' will be used to refer to this period.

[3] Altvater's (1998) view that 'transformation' is a preferable term to 'transition' is followed here. He argues: "There is no simple transition from 'there' to 'here' following the binary logic so familiar in neoclassical writings and modernisation theory, but a complex and articulated transformation of social, political and economic forms, not to mention changes in individual habits, social culture .." (Altvater, 1998,p.595).

[4] Dilla and Oxhorn (2001,p.161) argue that save for a "handful of creole Gramscians," civil society was not on the agenda for Cuban social scientists during these years.

[5] I am referring here to literature produced by Cuban academics, mainly on the island (see Chapter 5). To my knowledge there are very few externally produced studies which are dedicated to an examination of state-civil society relations in Cuba (a notable exception is Chanan, 2001). This issue is discussed more fully in Chapter 3.

[6] On this point see Hollander, 1981; Zimbalist, 1988; Bengelsdorf, 1988; Kapcia, 2000; Gott, 2004.

[7] Following Rodríguez (1988) and Valdés (1995), the term 'Cubanology' pertains here specifically to that group of scholars who play a central role in the studies of Cuba in the context of the ideological and political battle mounted against the Revolution. This group holds an essentially negative vision of the political, economic and social evolution of the Revolution, one which is closely tied to U.S. foreign policy. It is *not* used to refer to all those who study Cuba.

[8] Over twenty years ago Carmelo Mesa-Lago (1981,p.1) stated that "the Cuban Revolution continues to polarise opinion, being a source of uncritical admiration, passionate criticism, and intriguing curiosity." This reflection remains pertinent today.

[9] See his critical assessment of Cuban Studies (Valdes, 1988).

[10] The concern to locate the study of Cuba within the tradition of political science and the politics of development more widely reflects my disciplinary background in Politics and Development Studies. On the importance of establishing links between area specialists and political scientists see Leftwich (2000).

[11] For a fascinating example of one 'dissident's' work, see Graham-Yooll's interview with Guillermo Cabrera Infante, in Graham-Yooll, (1991,pp.192-205).

PART ONE

Theory, Methodology and Historical Background

Chapter 1

Approaches to the Relationship between Civil Society and the State

INTRODUCTION

The question of the relationship between the state and civil society needs to be placed into a precise conceptual framework if it is to aid the analysis of the empirical components of the thesis. In this chapter some of the main approaches to state-civil society relations found in the academic literature are surveyed in order to facilitate the construction of a conceptual framework for the purpose of analysing the case. In this way the chapter plays a key role as a theoretical scaffold for the thesis. More specifically, it acts as a precursor to Chapter 3 where the relationship between the state and civil society in Cuba during the period 1959-1989 is examined, and also as a foundation for Chapter 5 which critically analyses the public debate about civil society that took place in Cuban intellectual and political circles during the 1990s and reviews Cuban perspectives on 'civil society'.

The chapter is divided into four sections. In the first, some of the key issues for this study which have arisen from the theoretical literature are discussed. The second section briefly examines two of the main approaches to the state-civil society relationship: the Liberal and the Marxist approach. Having sketched the key elements of these broad approaches, the third section reviews specific contributions within these traditions, with the aim of establishing some points of reference within the debate. Using insights from the previous analysis, the fourth section is devoted to the creation of a new conceptual framework based on a Gramscian approach. In this final section of the chapter the theoretical discussion is related to the Cuban context. The main concepts which are drawn upon in this study are defined and the manner in which they are used clarified.

1.1. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE LITERATURE

A range of approaches to the relationship between state and civil society developed within the 'Western tradition' of political thought (Kaviraj, 2001) are explored in this chapter. The intention is not, however, to undertake a conceptual odyssey of either the concept of civil society (see Cohen and Arato, 1992; Ehrenberg, 1999; Hall, 1995; Keane, 1988; Kumar 1993; Seligman 1992; Tester, 1992) or that of the state (see Jessop, 1982; Held, 1983, 1989; Elster, 1985; Evans et al, 1985; Skocpol, 1985; Dunleavy and O'Leary, 1987; Leftwich 2000). Rather, attention is directed towards how these two 'essentially contested concepts' (Gallie, 1956) are seen in relation to each other by some of the most important contributors to the debate, both past and contemporary.

The precise relationship of the state with civil society remains a matter of some controversy both empirically and in normative terms. Here, the aim is to map out and explain the relationship in

terms of the conceptual encounter between ideal-types, as opposed to an analysis of the ways in which civil society-state relations have been articulated or promoted 'on the ground'. There may be some overlap, because it is often necessary to extract the former from the latter in much of the contemporary literature where the two are closely intertwined.[1] The relationship is examined from the civil society side so to speak, insofar as it is the literature that takes civil society as its principal theme, as opposed to literature that focuses primarily on the state, which has been reviewed in order to examine the relationship. At this point a qualification must be added, for although such a distinction may be appropriate for more recent contributions, it is of less relevance when applied to the political thought of, for example, Locke, Hegel, Marx, Weber and Gramsci; whose ideas inform both state theory *and* the idea of civil society. Moreover, and as Kaviraj (2001) stresses,

> … 'civil society' appears to be an idea 'strangely incapable of standing freely on its own: it always needs a distinctive support (i.e., support by being one half of a distinction) from a contrary term (Kaviraj, 2001,p.288).

The Cuban philosopher Jorge Acanda (1999) recently put it in the following terms: "whenever [we] talk of civil society, [we] are also wanting to reflect on the state" (Acanda, 1999,p.160). If this position is accepted, it can be argued that the literature devoted to civil society of necessity contains reflections on the relationship with the state, even if these reflections are not the primary focus of analysis.

This aside, the decision to use the civil society literature has been motivated by two concerns which directly relate to the objectives of the thesis. The first recognises the need to strengthen understanding of how the concept of civil society can be applied to an 'unconventional' case (see Hann, 1996; Kaviraj, 2001) and how such understandings can in turn enrich theory. Such a stance is intended as a response to the position represented by Kumar (1994), who finds the idea of civil society: "confusing and redundant … seductive but perhaps ultimately specious" (Kumar, 1994,p.130)[2] and as an antidote to the reification of civil society as a natural and historically inevitable component of a developed capitalist economy. The second relates to the observation that the idea of civil society has travelled from its re-emergence in academia in the late 1980s and its adoption by scholarly circles engaged in Cuban political studies in the 1990s, through the development discourse of donor agencies and international non-government organisations, to the vocabulary of Cuban state officials and organised social groups in Cuba. An analysis of local uses of the term in contemporary Cuban discourse is the subject of a subsequent chapter (see Chapter 5). By providing the theoretical antecedents for this later analysis, the focus on civil society established here is intended to facilitate the investigation and comparison of perspectives within competing discourses in the Cuban context.

The academic literature on civil society is vast and, as mentioned above, has flourished since the 1980s when the concept was 'rediscovered' as an analytical tool within the context of the

rise of social movements against communist states in Eastern Europe (Anderson, 1992, Cohen and Arato, 1992, Djilas, 1985; Gathy, 1989, Glenny, 1990; Havel 1990, 1992; Konrád, 1978, 1984; Konrád and Szelényi, 1979; Marín-Dogan, 1994; Michnik, 1983, 1985, 1992; Miller, 1992; Pelczynski, 1988; Poznanski, 1992; Prins, 1990; Tismaneanu, 1992).[3] Since then, it has also been deployed extensively in analyses of Latin America (Stepan, 1985; Castañeda, 1993; Fernández, 1993) and the Caribbean (Choup, 2003; Quintero, 2002). Moreover, the recent global expansion of democracy has been articulated explicitly in terms of civil society (Huntington, 1991; O'Donnell et al, 1986), as has the relationship between representative democracy and civic engagement (Putnam, 1995). The concept has also become central to understandings of development (see Leftwich, 1996; 2000; Howell and Pearce, 2001) and in recent publications it has been linked to the process of globalisation (Baker, 2002; Kaldor, 2003), marking a new trend which, according to Bohman (1997), takes its inspiration from the philosophy of Kant. For those analysts working on this last theme, civil society is no longer confined to the borders of the territorial nation-state but can be found in formal organisations linking national institutions (parties, churches, unions, professions, educational bodies, media etc.); in the linkages between informal networks and movements (e.g., women's, gay, or peace groups and movements); and in global organisations (e.g., Amnesty, Greenpeace, Médecins sans Frontières) which are established with a specifically global orientation, global membership and activity of global scope (Lipschutz, 1992; Shaw, 1994; Kaldor, 2003). As a result, the concept of 'global civil society' is high on the agenda of contemporary political thought (see Keane, 2003; on Latin America see Friedman *et al*, 2001). The degree of interest in civil society suggests that its analytic relevance, normative significance and political potential remain relevant.

Given the extent of the literature and the ubiquitous nature of the concept of civil society within such a range of debates, a comprehensive review is beyond the scope of this chapter. The perspectives discussed here represent a selection of those which are most relevant for the purpose of this thesis; whether as helpful guides for the inquiry or as examples of unhelpful usage. Following Seligman (1992), the application of civil society as a 'slogan' is passed over as an ephemeral, journalistic use of a complex concept.[4]

In the introduction to this study one of the issues raised for later discussion was the suitability of the state-civil society framework for an analysis of the Cuban experience. It is a point worth considering at this juncture, although it is one to which we shall return in this chapter and in the chapters which follow. Like the concept of 'state', 'civil society' is an idea whose provenance lies within Western theorising and particularly the European tradition (see Gellner, 1994; Mamdani, 1996; Chatterjee, 2001). This heritage and the potential for Eurocentralism which it implies, raises a number of concerns with regards its application to the Cuban case. Doubts and objections, particularly from anthropologists such as Hann (1992, 1996) and Kubik, (2003), but also from

social philosophers such as Gellner (1994), about the relevance of a concept born in Europe and inextricably associated with the development of capitalism (Black, 1984; Wood, 1990), for the analysis of non-European cases, whose historical trajectories and social characteristics have been very different, are particularly pertinent to this inquiry. Most concerns raised by anthropologists relate to the ethnocentric character of a concept that is the product of a specific phase in the development of Western civilization. However, with regard to this particular point there are arguably less grounds for scepticism and the case against the use of the civil society framework in this study is weaker. Cuba has not been a society remote from Western tradition or culture.[5] Situated in the Western hemisphere and with a history - however dependent and dysfunctional - of capitalist development and liberal democracy, by Latin American standards Cuba was one of the most Westernised and developed nations in the region even before the Revolution of 1959 (see IBRD Report, 1951). As a consequence, some of the dangers which Gellner (1994) highlights, are not relevant to the Cuban context. Moreover, many of the structural conditions traditionally seen as critical for the emergence and growth of a civil society, for example: the high density of associational life; socio-economic class formation and differentiation; the existence of voting rights; formal legal codes; high levels of urbanisation and the extension of education (Rueschemeyer et al, 1992), are well developed in Cuba (see August, 1999; Miller, 2003). These issues aside, there remains the thorny question of the island's post-1959 socialist development model and the traditional association of 'civil society' with capitalism. Hann's argument that "the discourse of civil society, particularly when linked to an extreme model of market economy, is an ideological product alien to most citizens [in Eastern Europe]" (Hann, 1992,p.152), could equally well be applied to post-Revolutionary Cuba. For those, and they represent the mainstream (see Howell and Pearce, 2001), who delineate a simple linear relationship between the market, liberal democracy and civil society, the idea of civil society in Cuba would seem to be an "oxymoron" (Dilla and Oxhorn, 2002,p.14). After all, Cuba has an economic system that has only recently offered limited openings to the market, a political system which exhibits a high degree of concentration of authority and a sole political party. Moreover, the relationship between state and society in Cuba has traditionally been regarded by Cubanologists as an authoritarian and highly unequal one, marked by the absence of a clear division between the state and non-state (see Valdés, 1988; Suchlicki and Horowitz, 1995). Given the weakness of domestic capital and the predominance of party and state in social and political life, advocates of this perspective assume civil society in contemporary Cuba to be at best weak and at worst non-existent (Pumar, 1999; see Saney 2004 for a recent critique). Objections to the use of the term are by no means confined to external sources. As we shall later see, within Cuba many activists and analysts (not to mention the political leadership) have been reluctant to adopt the concept due to the way in which it has been co-opted and "flattened out"

(Kaldor, 2003,p.14) by the neo-liberals, and manipulated by the United States as part of a strategy to promote regime change on the island (see Robinson, 1996; Diaz, 2002).

However, as Howell and Pearce (2001) point out, there are a diversity of meanings in historical and contemporary discourses of civil society. The question is whether within or between them a conceptual framework can be found that could usefully be applied to the Cuban case. The answer to this question depends in part on the position adopted in the debate about universalism and relativism which underlies any such query. If we are prepared to negotiate an intermediary path between these extremes, one which involves the rigor of a relatively 'hard' analytic definition of civil society which can be applied cross-culturally with a sensitivity to specific local conditions and discourses, then a useful conceptual framework can be arrived at. By using such an approach we need neither to resort to the search for "analogues" (Hann, 1996,p.22) and "functional equivalents" (Kubik, 2003,p.1) for civil society, nor to universalist liberal-individualist understandings which see civil society as a concrete and quantifiable 'thing'. In addition, an approach of this kind would help to reduce philosophical parochialism and improve the prospects for a unified and comparative political science, applicable to developed, developing and underdeveloped societies alike. After all, as Dogan and Pelassy (1984) suggest, the strength of a conceptual framework lies precisely in its ability to 'travel' (see also Collier, 1993).

It is in order to construct such a framework that some of the key approaches within political thought on the theme of civil society and its relationship with the state are analysed below. The ways in which both civil society and the state are defined by each perspective are examined and the particular type of civil society and state required in order for the desirable relationship between the two phenomena to function is also discussed. Kaldor (2003) suggests that the contemporary theorist has a broad range of concepts, taken from centuries of philosophical thought, from which to derive his or her own version of civil society. However, "remembering the dead," as John Keane puts it, is always selective; it necessarily involves forgetting as well as remembering (Keane, 1988b,p.31). The selection covered in the following sections reflects this compromise.

1.2. APPROACHES TO THE STATE-CIVIL SOCIETY RELATIONSHIP

The theoretical literature on this subject is dominated by two major traditions. The first and older tradition derives from Liberal political thought, while the second stems from the Marxist tradition. A brief sketch of the key elements of these traditions is necessary before some of the landmark contributions within each tradition are examined in more detail in order to construct a framework from these perspectives (rejecting some and developing others). Although the focus in this section is on summarising general tendencies and themes, it is important to note that neither tradition

represents a homogenous body of thinking. Both contain a range of different historical influences that coalesce into broad, but distinct, visions of how society should be organised.

1.2.1 The Liberal Tradition

Within the liberal tradition, civil society is conceived as a socio-economic space which is separate from both the state, on the one hand, and the privacy of the household, on the other. As such, it refers to a wide range of associational activity outside of, and usually in opposition to, the state. The attempt to define a private sphere independent of the state and to free civil society from political interference while simultaneously delimiting the state's authority, lies at the heart of this tradition. In its classic expression Liberalism[6] places great emphasis on the desirability of the reduction of state powers and protection from the state (Ehrenberg, 1999). By stressing the separation of civil society and the state, Liberal thought positions the concepts in binary opposition to each other.

In much of the recent literature in this tradition and particularly in that devoted to an analysis of Eastern Europe, civil society is allotted the role of 'saviour' while the state is cast as 'sinner'.[7] This conceptualisation of both the state and civil society has its roots in the philosophy of early liberals such as Paine (1791/1985) who saw civil society as essentially 'good' while the state was to be tolerated as a 'necessary evil'. Contributions which promote this simplistic classification and avoid exploring the heterogeneous and destructive interests within civil society, have been criticised by others writing within the tradition who indicate the problems of an 'uncivil society' (Keane, 1998,p.114) or "bad civil society" (Chambers and Kopstein, 2001,p837).[8]

The Liberal tradition's features include: the idea of the coherent human subject; the privileged position of individual interests; free association of individuals including the right to contract; the right to acquire and dispose of private property freely; privacy; the formal equality of individuals; and open and robust public discourse. So conceived, civil society reflects a vision of the human community as an ideal market place. For liberal theorists the market has long been considered to be a necessary condition for the existence of a civil society. Likewise, a liberal democratic system, preferably one that includes a wide range of civil and political liberties, rights and access to decision-making processes, has commonly been identified as the most propitious environment for its full development. Whether as a precondition for democracy or as its later companion (Alexander 1998a; Gellner 1994; Putnam, 1993), here a healthy civil society requires strong markets and weak states (see Hayek, 1944).

The liberal tradition has been drawn upon heavily by those who favour a "mainstream" (Howell and Pearce, 2001) or "conventional" (Kasfir, 1998) approach to civil society. According to Whitfield (2003), this strand within the discourse of civil society has become hegemonic in recent debates, a view endorsed by Howell and Pearce (2001). The conventional approach limits its

definition of civil society to specific kinds of non-state organisations in public life engaged in organisational activity. Moreover, it perceives civil society as an instrument to make states more democratic, transparent and accountable (see Diamond, 1994; Schmitter, 1997).

A result of the tendency to separate the state from civil society has been that most conventional liberal approaches do not focus on the relationship between civil society and the state in a positive sense, that is, in terms of how the phenomena *interact*, but rather focus negatively on the *distinction between* the state (and its military, policing, legal, administrative, productive and cultural organs) and the non-state (market-regulated, privately controlled or voluntarily organised) realm of civil society. As a consequence, there is a greater tendency in this literature to refer to both the state and civil society as distinct and opposed ideas.

1.2.2. The Marxist Tradition

An alternative approach to the above has a distinct set of intellectual roots which are closely tied to the Marxist tradition. A Marxist approach holds that the nature and structure of capitalist civil society necessarily arise from class relations within society and the forces of political coercion and domination. Inequality and social differentiation are embedded in civil society, which is a conflictual realm rather than a harmonious arena of social interaction. Civil society is theorised as a chaotic sphere of production, interest and inequality and as such the internal dynamics of the economy are subject to scrutiny by those writing within the tradition. Modern socialism rests on the extension of democracy into the economy. Ehrenberg (1999) claims that this orientation has rested at the heart of all socialist theories of civil society:

> … from the mild re-distributive policies advocated by some to the full-blown abolition of the market preferred by others, equality and democracy seemed to require the use of state power to interfere with private property and the logic of commodification (Ehrenberg, 1999,p.174).

The Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, challenged and creatively re-worked the orthodox Marxist position which identified civil society closely with the economic factor. Gramsci emphasised the *reciprocal* nature of the relationship between civil society and the state (see 1.3.7., below) and initiated a movement away from the sterile conception of state-civil society relations articulated within mainstream Liberal discourse. For example, Robson (2000,p.215) recognises the "at times unsteady" and "occasionally fractious" relationship between state and civil society while emphasising their integration. Within alternative non-liberal approaches, stress is placed on beliefs, values and everyday practices (see Hann, 1996) which act as an antidote to the impoverished understanding of social relationships characteristic of the Liberal tradition. Howell and Pearce (2001) emphasise an understanding of civil society as an intellectual and associational space in which to reflect openly and critically, and to experiment with alternative ways of organising social, economic and political life; a space in which to imagine the world could be different. This

approach puts forward a more inclusive understanding of civil society which is not defined negatively, in opposition to the state, but positively in the context of the ideas and practices through which cooperation and trust are established in social life. Contrary to the opinion of many liberals that civil society is reducible to values or behavioural norms such as 'civility' or 'civic-spirit' (Gellner, 1994), an alternative approach stresses that the essence of a powerful civil society lies in collective rights and collective action in pursuit of the goals of sociopolitical inclusion shared by actors (Dilla and Oxhorn, 2001).

An essential difference between the two main approaches is noted by Ehrenberg (1999) who argues that while Liberalism "developed a theory of civil society because it wanted to democratise the state," Marxism "developed a theory of the state because it wanted to democratise civil society" (Ehrenberg, 1999,p.174). For Marxists, the state was to be used to transform civil society. For Liberals, civil society would curb the power of the state.

1.3 CENTRAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE STATE-CIVIL SOCIETY RELATIONSHIP

Many features of contemporary theorising on the relationship between the state and civil society can be traced back to the early articulation of this relationship in classical political thought.[9] In recognition of this, contemporary accounts of the idea of civil society tend to begin with some form of conceptual archaeology. Starting with an 'original story' (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999), a chronological epic of ideas and authors is usually revealed, layer by layer, as the history of the idea is sketched and traced (see Keane, 1988; Tester, 1992). As a result, the recent literature is dominated by tales of myth, genesis and genealogy (Kaldor, 2003). To remedy this and to justify their focus on the contemporary debate, White *et al* (1996, p.3) argue that, "too many theoretical moths fluttering round a light tend to obscure it." Yet without considering the theoretical antecedents of these recent debates, rather than being "spared" another review of this "compendious literature" (White *el al*, 1996,p.3), the reader is left disoriented.

Few social and political concepts, notes Pelczynski, have "tavelled so far in their life and changed so much" (Pelczynski, 1988,p.363). The changing meanings of civil society concepts over time has been linked to the evolution of forms of political authority and, in particular, to state formation (see Kaldor, 2003). Although some argue that there is a "good case" for going back to the ancient Mediterranean world, where the terms which are central to these debates (civil/civic, society, politics, community) found their earliest expression (see Hann, 1996,p.25),[10] most scholars trace the story of the idea of civil society back to early modern European political thought and more specifically to the concept of a private legal realm as it emerged in the work of Hobbes (1651) and Locke (1690) in England. The issues raised in their texts have been fundamental to subsequent

theorising and it is therefore appropriate that this chronological[11] review begins with their scholarship.

1.3.1. Hobbes and Locke: Civil Society and the State of Nature

For seventeenth century thinkers like Hobbes and Locke, civil society was defined in contrast to the state of nature (Kaldor, 2003,p.17; Bobbio, 1988). This was the beginning of the tradition of describing civil society as part of a binomial which has since become characteristic of the dominant contemporary civil society discourse. All the early civil society theorists had their own version of the state of nature. Perhaps most famously Thomas Hobbes described it as the "warre, as is of every man, against every man," a condition of: "continuall fear, and danger of violent death" in which "the life of man is solitary, poore, nasty, brutish and short" (Hobbes, 1651/1991,p.89). Like Hobbes, and in contrast to Rousseau, Locke regarded the state of nature as a conflict-ridden zone, prone to war.[12]

While the idea of civil society was counter-posed against the state of nature, there was no clear distinction between civil society and the state. Civil society was a society characterised by the rule of law, based on certain fundamental individual rights, which were enforced by a political authority, also subject to the rule of law. Here, civil society is essentially a generic term for a secular constitutional order. Its use came to prominence during the transition from absolutist monarchies to the modern state and was linked to the concept of 'civility'. In Europe, civil societies were associated with those forms of political authority that were beginning to displace the absolutist monarchies (Kaldor, 2003). Early usage of the term in early modern England, the birthplace of capitalism, far from establishing an opposition between civil society and the state, conflated the two (Wood, 1990). Although the term was not distinguished from the state, the importance of checking state power as a condition for civil society was emphasised from the seventeenth century onwards.

Hobbes saw security or internal pacification as the fundamental characteristic of civil society, something which was compatible with a powerful state or *Leviathan*. In Hobbes's view a competitive civil society had to be constituted by sovereign power. Locke, however, insisted that absolute monarchy could not be equated with civil government. For Locke, supreme power was based in the legislature. The separation of the legislature from the executive as well as the right of free public expression were therefore conditions for civil society in Locke's interpretation. Kaviraj (2001) argues that it is Locke who: "opens up the conceptual possibility of distinguishing between the conceptual spaces and functions of society and the state" (Kaviraj, 2001 p.292). Locke's contribution is central to liberalism as it shows that the state is both essential *and* needs to be limited. Although Locke does not use the concept of civil society in the more modern form, *against* the state, the outline of arguments which have since become characteristic of the liberal tradition are discernable in his thought (Kaviraj, 2001; Taylor, 1990). The state, or government, is conceived as

one sphere which exists against another sphere composed of all other associations. This sphere is distinct from the body politic and has moral claims independent of, and sometimes opposed to, the state's authority (Wood, 1990). It is this space which is collectively called 'civil society' in later stages of the liberal tradition, and it is the mass of associations in civil society which check the state's power by keeping it within limits, not allowing it to encroach on activities perceived as legitimately beyond its remit. It was Locke who introduced the notion of private property as a condition for civil society, in so doing locating individual interest at the heart of his theory. Hence, from this early stage, the evolution of the concept has been bound up with the development of private property as a distinct and autonomous locus of social power.

1.3.2. The Scottish Enlightenment Thinkers: Civil Society and the Market Economy

Locke's emphasis on private property was elaborated by Adam Smith and the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers, including Ferguson, who stressed the development of a market economy as the basis for civil or civilized society. Both Smith (1776) and Ferguson (1767) saw civil society as superior to the state (Cohen and Arato, 1992). For them, the essence of civil society was private property and the rule of law, both of which served to limit the growing state. This group of thinkers tried to regulate individual strivings with an innate moral sense, however Adam Smith's qualms about the market did not prevent him from expressing the period's general confidence that a social order populated by individual interest-maximizes could be organised by the 'invisible hand' (Ehrenberg, 1999). Hann (1996) claims that in the work of Ferguson, we find the tensions and paradoxes that have remained critical to the usefulness of the term 'civil society' to this day: the fundamental tension between particular and universal interests; between the selfish goals of individual actors; and the need for some basic collective solidarity in a moral community (see Hann, 1996; Seligman, 1992). Ferguson discussed relations between civil society and the threat of political despotism, preparing the ground for the subsequent examination of tensions between civil society and the state. This theme was developed further by Paine (1791), with his emphasis on the value and empirical possibility of a naturally regulating society and the conditional right of the formally constituted state. The Scottish Enlightenment thinkers are also noteworthy as the first scholars to talk about civil society as a living reality that could be studied empirically rather than just an ideal (see Ferguson's *Essay on the History of Civil Society*, 1767).

Smith and Ferguson's emphasis on private property and the market was later taken up by Marx (see below). Marx followed Smith in identifying civil society primarily with economic interaction through the market. The crucial difference being, according to Marx's perspective, that the apparent freedom of action that civil society seems to grant to the individual disguises the underlying realities of class exploitation.

1.3.3. Hegel: The Distinction between State and Civil Society

In the same way that the thought of Hobbes marked a point of transition between a commitment to the absolutist state and the struggle of liberalism against tyranny, Hegel's thought marks a similar transitional moment in the intellectual lineage of the idea of civil society. Hann and Dunn (1996) argue that the ground for the dominant modern tendency to draw a very sharp dichotomy between civil society and the state (as opposed to merely the 'conceptual possibility' of such a distinction that was identified in Locke's scheme) was laid out in the philosophy of Hegel (1821). Femia (2001) corroborates their position, arguing that it was Hegel who introduced the formal distinction between 'state' and 'civil society'.

The distinction between civil society and the state, that is to say, the shift between civil society defined in contrast to the state of nature to civil society defined in contrast to the state, is associated with the rise of what Tilly (1975) calls the 'nation state' in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This process involved a growth in the functions, extensiveness and centralisation of state power, a shift in the status of individuals from "subjects" to "citizens" and an increase in the extent of democratic control, at least theoretically, over states (Kaldor, 2003,p.18). It was a period when state bureaucracies were developed and when public institutions were established, such as central banks, professional armies and education systems, which were clearly separated from the private interests of rulers. Wood (1990) argues that it was conditions in England, and specifically the system of advanced property relations and capitalist appropriation together with a highly developed market mechanism, which made possible the conceptual opposition between state and civil society that was witnessed by Hegel and can be seen in his thought. Hence, Hegel's construction of the conceptual dichotomy was a result of a historically specific social form, and the modern economy was its essential condition (Wood, 1990). Strongly influenced by the Scottish political economists (Kaldor, 2003), for Hegel the possibility of preserving both individual freedom and the 'universality' of the state, instead of subordinating one to the other as earlier societies had done, rested on the emergence of a new class and a whole new sphere of social existence: a distinct and autonomous 'economy'. It was in this new sphere that public and private, particular and universal, could meet through the interaction of private interests, on a terrain which was neither household nor state but a mediation between the two. As a network of social relations standing apart from the state and rooted in individual interests, in Hegel's interpretation civil society links self-serving individuals to one another in a chain of social connections (Ehrenberg, 1999,p.126).

Critical in Hegelian thought is the positioning of civil society as a distinct area between the family and the state, an area which Hegel defined as: "the realm of difference, intermediate between family and state" (Hegel, 1820/1996,pp.185-6). Though a distinct area, civil society was

"simultaneously the sphere of individual commercial relationships and of the new social bonds of individual economic actors" (Howell and Pearce, 2001,p.23). Showstack (1994) argues that:

> In Hegel, die bürgerliche Gesellschaft, or civil or bourgeois society, as the realm of individuals who have left the unity of the family to enter into economic competition, is contrasted with the state, or political society. It is an arena of particular needs, self-interest, and divisiveness, with a potential for self-destruction. For Hegel it is only through the state that the universal interest can prevail, since he disagrees with Locke, Rousseau or Adam Smith that there is any innate rationality in civil society which will lead to the general good (Showstack, 1994,p.82)

As Showstack suggests, Hegel saw civil society as riven by conflicts, as a realm of contradiction, in need of close regulation and surveillance by the modern state which was the mediator of these tensions. As such, Hegel perceived civil society standing in an intimate relationship with the state. He idealised the state as a realm of universal, rational principles and objective interests. It represented the immanent unity of society capable of transcending the conflicts with which it was afflicted and both embodied and maintained the orders and forms of rational civilized life. For Hegel, the realisation of human freedom and potential depended upon the state. The state's functions were to promote the universal interest and, essentially, to keep civil society civil. The employees of the state, the civil servants and the professional military, were defined as a universal class who acted on behalf of the public good. Despite being rehabilitated in the work of Cohen and Arato, many later scholars have considered that Hegel over emphasises the role of the state as the guarantor of civil society (see Kaldor, 2003).

Hegel's work represents a pivotal point between the liberal and Marxist strands within the civil society literature. It was Marx's critique of Hegel's theory of civil society and the state that led him to the (1848) *Communist Manifesto*. His critique culminated in "the modern era's most powerful understanding of civil society as a problematic and undemocratic arena of egoistic competition" (Ehrenberg, 1999,p.110).

1.3.4. Marx: The Theatre of History

For Marx, civil society is the "true focal point and theater of all history" (Marx and Engels, 1970,p.57). It is where the "real relationships" of history (Marx and Engels, 1970,p.57), rather than the "high sounding dramas of princes and states," take place (Bobbio, 1988,p.82). Defined by Marx as the site for crass materialism, of modern property relations, of the struggle of each against all and of egotism, civil society arose, he insisted, from the destruction of medieval society. For Marx, civil society conceptually precedes the state (Reidy, 1992,p.171). It is an arena fully realised only in social formations dominated by the capitalist mode of production and alongside the existence of the bourgeoisie: "civil society as such only develops with the bourgeoisie" (Marx and Engels, 1970, p.7). Civil society is where the bourgeoisie as a class exercises its social and economic power.

The fragmented, conflictual, nature of civil society with its exploitative property relations made necessary a type of politics which did not reflect this conflict but was abstracted and removed from it. Hence, the modern state was made necessary but was at the same time limited by the characteristics of civil society (Showstack, 1994). The state gave true freedom only to those who owned the means of production.

Marx's critique of Hegel rests in part on his mistrust of the power of the state to correct and balance the "sectional over-enthusiasm" of civil society's class strife (Kaviraj, 2001,p.300). Though reflecting the structure of Hegel's vision, Marx transformed Hegel's distinction between the state and civil society by denying the universality of the state and insisting that the state expressed the particularities of civil society (now read as bourgeois society) and its class relations. Marx believed that civil society would overwhelm the universalistic principles of the state and that the class which was dominant in the economic sphere would use the state's machinery for its own interests. Hence, in contrast to Hegel, for Marx the state was subordinate to civil society.

Marx famously used a base-superstructure distinction in his analysis. However, Kaviraj (2001) argues that:

> … perhaps one of Marx's false moves was to link the problematic relation between civil society and the state to the unpromising metaphor of the base and superstructure … To see political relations as superstructure was to withdraw from them any serious causal powers, and to reduce them misleadingly into 'epiphenomenal' insignificance' (Kaviraj, 2001,p.301).

Unlike Smith, for Marx, civil society is an illusion that needs to be unmasked (Bobbio, 1988) and his "great project" was his critical analysis of bourgeois civil society (Ehrenberg, 1999,p.174). In Marx's scheme, instead of resolving the tensions of civil society, the capitalist state merely cements the power of the ruling class. Citizens are fragmented and alienated from each other as well as from the means of production and the product of their labour.

The conceptual differentiation of state and civil society was an essential precondition for Marx's analysis of capitalism. Marx's focus on the class-related features of civil society directed attention away from many of the features of civil society that earlier liberal thinkers had outlined. With Marx's contribution, the status and role of civil society as a central component of the societal whole was reduced. Productive of contradiction and conflict, civil society was regarded by Marx as an entity "to be transcended and reproduced at a higher level of social development" (Lewis, 1992,p.5). It was a stage towards the telos of communism. For Marx, the 'withering away' or abolition of the state and its re-absorption by civil society, represented the final stage on the road to the end of the division between political and civil society, itself an expression of the alienation of human beings. As Miliband (1965) stresses: "true, the state is necessary during this period. But the only thing which, for Marx, makes it tolerable is popular participation and popular rule" (Miliband, 1965,p.293). Authentic human emancipation, what Bengelsdorf (1994,p.31) calls "dis-alienation," would be achieved only with the fusion of political and civil society. Democracy, in

Marx's terms, meant the end of the state and, with it, of all such institutions. By direct implication, questions concerning the state in post-capitalist society are of minor importance, consideration of the boundaries between civil society and the state becomes:

> … an irrelevant exercise, and with it, the need, for example to think about the institutions that might guarantee the individual continuation of procedural rights - freedom of speech, assembly - won in earlier periods. State intrusion upon, or elimination of, these rights is, after all, by definition impossible (Bengelsdorf, 1994, p.31).

Given the significance of Marx's understanding(s) of the state for later state theory and analysis in modern political science, a brief sketch of the key elements of his approach is necessary here. Two main conceptions of the state in Marx (and Engels) have been identified (Jessop, 1982; Elster, 1985; Held, 1989). The first and classic conception is found in *The Communist Manifesto* (Marx and Engels, 1848/1985). Its central thesis is that the state and its institutions are essentially the agents or 'committee' of the dominant class in capitalist society, the bourgeoisie, the class which owns and controls the means of production. The state and its coercive agencies act explicitly to further bourgeois interests over and above those of other classes, especially the proletariat, in advanced (or advancing) capitalism. This conception can be traced through Lenin (1918/1992) to more recent Marxist theorists such as Miliband (1969).

The second and less familiar Marxist conception has its fullest expression in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (Marx, 1852/1958). In contrast to the view expressed in *The Communist Manifesto*, in the second of Marx's theories of the state, the state is recognised as having the potential, at certain stages in its historical development, to be independent from, or 'autonomous' of, the dominant class. This position was facilitated by a more or less temporary equilibrium in the class struggle; a situation which was alleged to have occurred in the absolutist states of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Second French Empire under Louis Bonaparte and Bismarck's German Reich (see Engles, 1884/1972, p.231). Marx wrote: "only under the second Bonaparte does the state seem to have attained a completely autonomous position" (Marx, 1852/1958.p.333). Here the state and its bureaucratic apparatus is presented as largely autonomous of narrowly bourgeois interests although still constrained by the imperatives of capitalism, whose general interests it promotes. This second conception was later elaborated by Poulantzas (1973).

1.3.5. Tocqueville: The Habit of Association

No less significant than the previous contributions are those associated with Alexis de Tocqueville. As a key figure in the modern liberal-individualist approach, Tocqueville was a democrat who extolled the virtues of the 'habit of association' in his *Democracy in America* (1831/1988). In his study Tocqueville argued that the guarantee of individual liberties was to be found in what he called 'democratic expedients'. These included local self-government, the separation of church and state, a free press, indirect elections, an independent judiciary but above all 'associational life'. Although

Tocqueville did not specifically use the term 'civil society' in his work, the importance he attributed to associationalism, self organisation and the private relationships between citizens and their myriad non-political associations, makes his contribution an important one to note. As we shall see, his emphasis on a sphere of independent non-state associations, and the role of an active voluntary sector as a check on state power, has become central to many contemporary accounts of civil society.

1.3.6. Weber: Sectlike Society

Weber's politics of civil society share essential features with those of Tocqueville and, like Tocqueville, Weber was influenced by a visit to America.[13] However, Weber does not accept a simple celebration of associational life for its own sake (see Sung Ho Kim, 2000). Weber argues that the cultivation of certain types of self, what he called a 'man of vocation', is critical for the continuing vitality of a modern liberal democratic polity. Moreover, that such a self can be fostered only in a specific context of civil society that he calls 'sectlike society'. For Weber, the decline of civil society and concomitant denigration of the liberal self must be restored as one of the central agendas for late modern politics.

Weber is sensitive to the fact that the simple presence of a vibrant associational life does not, in and of itself, offer a coherent guarantee against what Keane calls the problem of 'uncivil society' (Keane,1998). According to Weber, not all forms of civil society are conducive to a robust liberal democratic polity, in fact some are detrimental to it. When Weber calls for the revival of civil society, he is calling for the resuscitation of a peculiar mode of civil society; as the site where his liberal politics of voluntary associational life and the modern self intersect and interact (Sung Ho Kim, 2000,p.199). Weber's civil society is both a disciplinary and transformative site in which certain moral traits and civil virtues are cultivated via collective emphasis on individual achievement and ethical qualities. Weber was interested in many forms of associational life, ranging from bowling clubs to political parties, but was particularly intrigued by the organisational strength of religion in America. He was critical of the nature of German associational life which he believed bred mostly passive and conformist personalities.

The goal of Weber's politics of civil society is to cultivate a moral self capable of taking defiant moral action. This kind of self is constantly empowered and disciplined in an associational life. Weber posits a mutually reinforcing relationship between the purposeful and disciplinary nature of sectlike civil society and open contestation, competition, struggle and even conflict in the political arena.

What is necessary, in Weber's view, is an active and highly alert citizenry that is ready to take autonomous, principled, defiant action. Such character traits can be inculcated only in a small-scale associational life that emphasises purpose and discipline through various means of

membership selection and sanctions. Weber recognises that liberal democracy cannot be sustained in a robust form without a unique sociocultural environment that can cultivate a unique kind of individual character. For Weber, the most critical issue in revitalizing civil society is to preserve and magnify the elements of contestation in our 'iron cage' of society. Weber argues that modern individuals need to be engaged in various associational activities in order for them to be able to challenge and compete with each other in concrete everyday contexts in which they will be constantly required to define, redefine and choose their ultimate values and to take disciplined moral actions based on their choices. The cultivation of defiant individual autonomy is crucial in Weber's civil society. It is a pluralistically organised civil society (his sectlike society) that is expected to cultivate these moral dispositions and civil virtues.

Although Weber may be less well known for his contribution to the literature on civil society, he shares with Marx the distinction of having precipitated one of the two main traditions within state theory. Weber, distinguishes between the modern state and other prior forms of state found in some pre-capitalist societies. Under patrimonial rule state power and authority was characterised by personal rulership which, in its most extreme form, Weber (1964,p.341) described as 'Sultanism'. In contrast, Weber defines the modern state as an organisation, composed of numerous agencies led and coordinated by the state's leadership (executive authority) that has the ability or authority to make and implement the binding rules for all the people as well as the parameters of rule making for other social organisations in a given territory, using force if necessary to have its way (see Weber, 1964,p.156).

In this ideal-type definition Weber distinguishes three major features of the modern state: bureaucracy, territoriality and the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence. According to Weber, their peculiar configuration in the modern state is what distinguishes it from other political systems. The state here embodies a set of organisations invested with the authority to make decisions using force if necessary. The core of Weber's definition of the modern state is this idea of the state's legitimate use of force. On this point, he writes:

> A compulsory political organisation with continuous operations will be called 'state' insofar as its administrative staff successfully upholds the claim to the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force in the enforcement of its order (1978,p.54).

Central to such a modern state was Weber's ideal-typical bureaucracy which, for him, typified 'legal-rational authority' (see Weber, 1964, pp.333-4).

Theoretical discussion about civil society emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the works of other sociologists such as Tönnies (1887/1955) and Durkheim (1893/1964), (see Howell and Pearce, 2001). While Tönnies (1887) gave the famous *Gemeinschaft* versus *Gesellschaft* framework definitive articulation, Durkheim's work centered on the notion of 'anomie' and the concomitant importance of professional organisations in binding an atomising society

together. Like Tocqueville, he stressed the importance of associations of people, but in the face of the growing power of the market rather than the excesses of the state. However, it required the work of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci to reformulate and revive the concept of civil society as a central organising principle for socialist theory. Writing in the early twentieth century, Gramsci wanted to know why European capitalism had survived a devastating world war, the Russian Revolution and a deep economic crisis. Let us now consider his contribution.

1.3.7. Gramsci: The Integral State

Gramsci's thought challenges the assumption that the state and civil society are necessarily two separate phenomena. Having studied advanced capitalist economies, Gramsci believed that they could no longer be reduced to simple dichotomies between civil society (class relations and the structure of capitalism) and the state. In particular, he was against the tendency to fetishize structures such as the state and argued for the dissolution of reified separations of state and society (Boggs, 1976,p.32; Rupert, 1995,p.28). By considering the state and civil society as *interrelated spheres* as opposed to "two bounded universes, always and forever separate" (Crehan, 2002,p.103), Gramsci enables dualist notions of the two to be overcome (Robinson, 1996p.28). Gramsci's approach allows the state to be studied in such a way that does not require it to be abstracted from its context: its links to, and fusion with, forces in civil society. For Gramsci, the distinction between political society (state) and civil society was purely methodological. In one of his many Notes attacking economism he talks of the "theoretical error" of:

> .. a distinction between political society and civil society which is made into and presented as an organic one, whereas in fact it is merely methodological … in actual reality civil society and State are one and the same (Gramsci, Selection from the Prison Notebooks,[14] 1971,p.159-60).

Hence, whereas Marx insists on the separation of state and civil society, Gramsci emphasises their interrelationship. He argues that although the everyday narrow use of the word 'state' may refer to government, the *concept* of state includes elements of civil society. Hence, for Gramsci, civil society is never "outside" political society, in the same way that political society does not end in the state (Acanda, 1999,p.160). Gramsci recognises that in any actual society the lines of demarcation between civil society and the state are blurred. Having recognised this, he argues against attempts to equate or identify the two in ways which fail to recognise the interconnections between them. Furthermore, while warning against the danger of perpetuating "statolatry" or state worship (SPN,1971, p.268), he accepts a role for the state in developing civil society.[15] In fact, the withering away of the state is redefined by Gramsci in terms of a full development of the self-regulating attributes of civil society.

Rather than simply counter-pose state and civil society, Gramsci constructs a "much richer conception" (Acanda, 1999, p.159) of the phenomena. This is his *integral* or *extended* state (see

Rupert, 1995,p.28). The concept of the integral state enables both the distinction and unity of political and civil society to be captured. Together, political society and civil society constitute an 'extended' state. Crucially, the state here is "political society *plus* civil society" (Robinson, 1996,p.28, my emphasis). Gramsci defines the state in the following terms:

> .. the State is the entire complex of theoretical and practical activities with which the ruling class not only maintains its dominance, but manages to win the consent of those over whom it rules … [The state is] political society plus civil society, hegemony armoured by coercion.
> (Gramsci, (SPN), 1971,p.262).

It is important to note that the 'is' connecting the state and political society plus civil society does not indicate that the relationship is one of predication such that the state leads to civil plus political society. Gramsci encapsulated his idea of the integral meaning of the state in his famous formula: the state is "dictatorship + hegemony" (see Öncü, 2003). In this formula Gramsci highlights the importance of ideology by considering that the state's tasks are to combine hegemony and coercion, persuasion and force, consent and dictatorship.

In contrast to Liberal thinkers, Gramsci does not conceive the state as simply a 'negative and repressive' force but also as 'positive and educative'. The state encompasses repressive organs such as the military and police but also legislatures and educational systems. In this way it unites with the 'trenches of civil society' to organise and structure interests in accordance with the preservation of the social order. The apparatus of state coercive power enforces discipline in those cases where spontaneous consent has failed. As Gramsci assumes that no regime could sustain itself primarily through organised state power alone, he considers the scope of popular support or legitimacy as a key factor contributing to stability, particularly during times of stress or crisis. Therefore, in his approach, state power is intimately linked to the correlation of forces in civil society.

For Gramsci, once a given 'historic bloc' (a constellation of social forces with a hegemonic class or class fraction in the leadership) has achieved hegemonic order, those classes or groups who have achieved hegemony (in civil society) effectively exercise state power, whether directly or indirectly. Given this, according to Gramsci, "the correlation of forces in civil society is at least as important as who actually holds state power, maybe more so" (Robinson, 1996,p.28). Crucially, by viewing power both through the lens of the state apparatus *and* as the forces within civil society, it is possible to examine the complex convergence of interests between groups. In this way, Gramsci's scheme draws us to examine the interactions between state and civil society as well as the way in which each mutually shapes and influences the other.

Claiming to have derived his definition from Hegel as opposed to Marx (see Bobbio, 1988,p.83), Gramsci appropriated the concept of civil society to mark out the terrain of a new kind of struggle which would take the battle against capitalism not only to its economic foundations but to its cultural and ideological roots in everyday life. His conception of civil society was

unambiguously intended as a weapon against capitalism, not an accommodation of it. Gramsci emphasised the need for political activism in the realms of education, media and other organisations of civil society precisely because it was here that the capitalist state reinforced its social control.

Gramsci understood civil society to be internally related to 'political society'. Whereas the latter designates the coercive apparatus of the state more narrowly understood and corresponds to the formal state apparatus (i.e., what most literature refers to when it discusses 'the state' and what we might recognise as its classically Weberian aspect, see above), the former represents the realm of cultural institutions and practices in which the hegemony of a class may be constructed or challenged. Gramsci uses the concept of 'civil society' to designate an area of cultural and ideological linkages between class relations in the economy and explicitly political aspects of the state. Civil society for Gramsci includes the family, political parties, trade unions, churches, voluntary and civic associations of all kinds education, journalism, art and literature, which disseminate the ideology of the dominant class thus ensuring its cultural and spiritual supremacy over the subordinate classes who consent to their domination (Robinson 1996,p.22). Far from an autonomous sphere of voluntary associations, Gramsci's civil society is as constituted by class power, market relations and the commodity form, as any other sphere of capitalist society (Ehrenberg, 1999).

Accredited with having reformulated and revived the concept of civil society as a central organising principle for socialist theory, most significantly for Marxist thought, Gramsci broke with tradition and located civil society in the realm of the superstructure rather than in the sphere of economic relations (the structure), where, in the classical Marxist tradition, the totality of material conditions and relations are found. This re-positioning was motivated by Gramsci's notion that civil society comprises all ideological-cultural relations and the whole of spiritual and intellectual life. Essentially, it was Gramsci's new focus on ideological and cultural matters that sparked what Ehrenberg calls "an important superstructural theorization of civil society" (Ehrenberg, 1999,p.208). Likewise, Bobbio argues that Gramsci's innovation is the "fundamental point upon which the whole of his conceptual system hinges" (Bobbio, 1988,p.82). In the following passage from one of the most important texts in the Prison Notebooks, Gramsci describes his scheme:

> What we can do, for the moment, is to fix two major superstructural 'levels': one that can be called 'civil society', that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called 'private', and that of 'political society' or the 'State'. These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of 'hegemony' which the dominant group exercises throughout society, and on the other hand to that of 'direct domination' or rule exercised through the State and the juridicial government (SPN, 1971,p.12).

Civil society is an arena in which the state attempts to persuade the exploited classes to accept the way in which society develops under capitalism as natural and legitimate. It was to convince them (rather than coerce them) through the use of hegemony.

Exactly what Gramsci meant by 'hegemony' has been a source of contention (see Crehan, 2002) but there seems to be a general consensus that Gramsci uses the concept of hegemony to "explore relations of power and the concrete ways in which these are lived" (Crehan, 2002, p.99). By hegemony Gramsci meant the permeation throughout civil society of an entire system of values, attitudes, beliefs, morality, etc., that are in one way or another supportive of the established order and the class interests that dominate it. Hegemony in this Gramscian sense may be defined as a relation between classes in which one class or fraction of a class exercises leadership over other classes and strata by gaining their *active consent*. A Gramscian hegemony involves the internalization on the part of subordinate classes of the moral and cultural values, the codes of practical conduct, and the worldview of the dominant classes or groups: in sum, the internalisation of the *social logic* of the system of domination itself. This logic is embedded in ideology, which acts as a cohesive force in social unification, to use Gramsci's phrase, the "cement" or the "glue" (Robinson, 1996,p.30) that sustains social control under consensual arrangements. With the shift from coercive to consensual forms of social control the importance of ideology in maintaining social order increases. Ideology is critical in the Gramscian approach as it orients and sets limits on human action by establishing generalised codes of conduct which organise the entire population. Hence, social control in Gramsci's scheme takes place at two levels: in civil society and through the state:

> (t)hese two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of hegemony which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the other hand to that of 'direct domination' or command exercised through the State and 'juridicial' government (Gramsci, SPN, 1971,p.12).

There is a reciprocal relationship in the sense that the state (here narrowly conceived as government) is protected by hegemony organised in civil society, while the hegemony of the dominant class is fortified by the coercive state apparatus.

In the same way that the state is neither simply negative nor repressive, for Gramsci, civil society is far from benign. It is a vibrant realm. The importance of civil society for Gramsci is immediately evident. For it is in civil society that the hegemony of a ruling class or "class fraction" (Robinson, 1996,p.42) is exercised, as distinct from the coercive role of the state. As has been mentioned above, civil society is the arena for those social relationships which are based on consent. Gramsci shows that a range of institutions (the church, the press, schools, unions, political parties, art, literature etc.,) that appear to be private, turn out to be public; fulfilling the reproductive functions of hegemony. Acanda (1999) reminds us that, according to Gramsci:

> when we talk of civil society we are not referring to individuals … because then civil society ends up being society or civil society ends up as everything that is not the state. In civil society there are structures, values, concepts that legitimate the hegemony that exists (Acanda, 1999, p.161).

Gramsci's interpretation, that civil society is the location for the production of ideology and the arena of ideological-political debate, that is, for the ideological struggle for hegemony, is crucial for our purposes (see below).

A criticism which has been leveled at Gramsci is that his account of the relationship between the state and civil society is not entirely consistent and can at times be unclear. In a number of passages from the Notebooks, civil society is *outside* of the state, but elsewhere he refers to a 'general notion' of the state, comprising both political and civil society. The former usage also occurs whenever he wants to use 'civil society' as an analytic tool for explaining the difference between the East (Russia) and the West (including Italy). Gramsci argues that in Russia, prior to the revolutionary events of 1917, social order was maintained by force since the "State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous" (SPN, 1971,p.238). In the West however, "there was a proper relationship between State and civil society, and when the State trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed" (SPN, 1971,p.238).

Although Gramsci uses "shifting definitions" of the state and civil society in order to understand particular manifestations of power (see Crehan, 2002,p.103), his apparent lack of consistency should not be interpreted as confusion. Rather it reflects his perception that actual power relations take very different forms in different contexts. For Gramsci, the dynamic nature of phemonema require a flexible conceptual approach. Again, Crehan (2002) is helpful in stressing that Gramsci did not believe in a structure-less world which is always in flux,

> … but that the phenomena of which useful theoretical concepts are, as he puts it, 'an expression' are never bounded entities in any simple or straightforward way. Rather, they are shifting, overlapping sets of relationships whose boundaries change according to the standpoint from which they are being viewed (Crehan, 2002,p.29).

One of the reasons why Gramsci's approach is so useful is because it recognises the historical complexity of the social world and the need for those concepts with which we attempt to understand it to be sufficiently ductile to perform the task. Gramsci shows us that rigidity and conceptual sclerosis are unhelpful characteristics in the explanatory devices which we draw upon in our efforts to illuminate an ever changing world.

Gramsci uses a range of metaphors to describe both civil society and the state, as well as the relationship between them, in specific historical contexts. By drawing on various metaphorical devices, he underscores this need for conceptual fluidity. A fully developed civil society is presented as a "trench system" able to resist the "incursions" of economic crises to protect the state (SPN, 1971,p.235). While elsewhere, in a Note contrasting Russia in 1917 with countries of the West, the state is described as an "outer ditch" behind which stands a sturdy and powerful system of defence in civil society: "a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks" (SPN, 1971, p.238). Gramsci also talks of the "molecular diffusion of the state in civil society," and of the way in which the state "filters through the pores of civil society" (quoted in Acanda, 1999,p.161). By stressing

the 'diffusion' or 'filtering' action of the state in civil society, Gramsci enables us to move beyond the idea of an impermeable interface between state and civil society. Power, as Foucault later saw it, spreads throughout the social system in a complex capillary fashion, as "something which circulates" (Foucault, 1980,p.98). Such corporeal references may be intended to remind us of another point which Gramsci emphasises in his work: that the state and civil society are created and held together by living, breathing human beings (Boggs, 1976,p.32). The rhetorical devices which Gramsci employs sit comfortably with the metaphors used in this study. They exhibit a similar emphasis on the human factor and the need for 'oxygen' in order to breathe, in order to find a 'breathing space'.

Aspects of Gramsci's work were later extended not only by Poulantzas (1973) but also by Adorno and Horkheimer (1972). The latter focused their attention on the increasingly independent capacity of culture and ideology to organise civil society. Jürgen Habermas (1989) was a student of Horkheimer and Adorno and it is his contribution that is examined next in this survey. In his critical history of the idea of civil society Ehrenberg (1999) argues that "no contemporary thinker has been more influential in trying to specify the public sphere as a series of mediations between civil society and the state than Jürgen Habermas" (Ehrenberg, 1999,p.219).

1.3.8. Habermas: The Public Sphere

Habermas's contribution to contemporary theories of civil society is linked to his historical account of the rise of a 'discursive public sphere'. By the 'public sphere' Habermas refers to "a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed" (Habermas, 1989a,p.136). According to Habermas (1989b), the liberal public sphere was conditioned by the development of capitalism and early forms of commodity production. Protected from both the state and market forces of civil society, it was an arena in which civil liberties and universal values could be expressed. However within this public sphere, new associational bonds were created by those limited few who occupied it. It is these associational bonds, within a distinct and autonomous public sphere, which are described as 'civil society'. They are the origins of new forms of social solidarity or integration that "reconcile the individual pursuit of self-interest with a common or public good" (Howell and Pearce, 2001,p.30). Habermas has attributed the erosion of the public sphere's autonomy to the commodification of modern life. He argues for a wide array of institutions to be exposed to public scrutiny and democratic supervision. Interest groups, political parties and other centres of power must reveal their internal organisation, source of funds, investment decisions and use of power. Habermas writes:

> This sphere of civil society has been rediscovered today in wholly new historical constellations. The expression 'civil society' has in the meantime taken on a meaning different from that of the 'bourgeois society' of the liberal tradition, which Hegel conceptualized as a 'system of needs', that is, as a market system involving social labor and commodity exchange. What is meant by 'civil

society' today, in contrast to its usage in the Marxist tradition, no longer includes the economy as constituted by private law and steered through markets in labor, capital and commodities. Rather, its institutional core comprises those nongovernmental and noneconomic connections and voluntary associations that anchor the communication structures of the public sphere in the society component of the lifeworld. Civil society is composed of those more or less spontaneous emergent associations, organizations, and movements that, attuned to how societal problems resonate in the private life spheres, distill and transmit such reactions in amplified form to the public sphere. The core of civil society comprises a network of associations that institutionalize problem-solving discourses of general interest inside the framework of organized public spheres. These 'discursive designs' have an egalitarian, open form of organization that mirrors essential features of the kind of communication around which they crystallize and to which they lend continuity and permanence (Habermas, 1996,pp.366-7).

Writing in the context of the collapse of 'actually existing socialism' in the 1980s, Habermas was sceptical of the potential of civil society to transform the political system, arguing that "civil society can directly transform only itself" (Habermas, 1996,p.372). To this end, Ehrenberg notes: "it is important not to expect too much from civil society … at best, its private groups, voluntary organizations, and new social movements can help by placing issues on the public agenda" (Ehrenberg, 1999,p.223). Habermas identifies an important democratic potential for civil society. It is through the associations of civil society rather than through the mechanisms of state power that many of the problems of contemporary public life - from civil rights to environmental issues, human rights, sexism, nuclear weapons and the like - are raised:

> Moving in from this outermost periphery, such issues force their way into newspapers and interested associations, clubs, professional organizations, academies, and universities. They find forums, citizen initiatives, and other platforms before they catalyze the growth of social movements and new subclutures. The latter can in turn dramatize contributions, presenting them so effectively that the mass media take up the matter. Only through their controversial presentation in the media do such topics reach the larger public and subsequently gain a place on the 'public agenda' (Habermas, 1996,p.381).

The extension of rights to cover issues like domestic violence or the repression of homosexuality has been an important dimension of this contemporary version of civil society. Unlike earlier definitions, the family is not excluded since what were formally considered private issues have become part of the debate. However, the degree to which Habermas's scheme can operate in an environment of material inequality has been questioned by some. As Ehrenberg comments: "if civil society and the public sphere are thoroughly commercialized, it remains to be seen if they have any autonomous democratic potential" (Ehrenberg, 1999,p.224).

Recently, Fraser (1996) has developed Habermas's idea of the public sphere. Regarding the public sphere as an arena conceptually distinct from both the state and the economy, she writes: "It is not an arena of market relations, but rather one of discursive relations, a theatre for debating and deliberating rather than buying and selling" (Fraser, 1996,p.110) For Fraser the discourses that are produced and circulated in the public sphere can, in principle, be critical of the state. In this conception there is still a link to the economy, and transformations of the economy produce

transformations in civil society (and in the public sphere) but civil society can not be reduced to the economic, which is only one of its aspects and not necessarily the determining factor.

In contrast to Habermas's position, there is a more conventional view in contemporary thought in which civil society is considered more passively, less of a check on the state and on capitalism and more as a complement to, or even as a substitute for, the state and the market. In this neoliberal version, civil society is the realm between the state, the market and the family. Kaldor (2003) writes: "it is the realm of stability rather than struggle, of service provision rather than advocacy, of trust and responsibility rather than emancipation" (Kaldor, 2003,p.22). The ideas of another contemporary theorist, Robert Putnam, have contributed to this conception of civil society. It is to Putnam's notion of 'social capital' that we turn.

1.3.9. Putnam: Social Capital

Robert Putnam's work has grown in influence since the 1990s. Putnam made connections between conclusions drawn from his study of Italy (1993) and the decline of social capital in the United States (Putnam, 1995). His investigation revealed that effective political institutions depend on a developed civil society of intermediate associations and a civic culture.

There are many echoes of Tocqueville in Putnam's work. For Putnam (1995,p.66), social capital is a nonpolitical quality which he describes as, "features of social organisations such as networks, norms and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit." He argues in his more recent book, *Bowling Alone* (2000), that community-based social decline is a product of a lack of social networks, social trust, and reciprocity. Rather than joining in with group activities, Putnam suggests that people are increasingly "bowling alone," reducing their access to social capital as a resource in times of need. Putnam believes that North American civil society (so well thought of by Weber) is weakening because her social capital is declining. Like many contemporary theorists of civil society, Putnam treats social capital as an informal set of norms that arise and decline in a sphere largely unaffected by the state, or the market. However, it has been state activity, as Skocpol (1996) observes, that has often been the stimulus for many of the apparent 'grass-roots' responses which Putnam and his followers illuminate. Echoes of Gramsci can be heard in Skocpol's insistence that a long tradition of state activity has created, worked with, and strengthened the local and voluntary associations that make up civil society (Skocpol, 1996). Ehrenberg expresses this sentiment in the following terms:

> 'Civicness' and 'social capital' cannot explain civil society apart from the influence of state-building, state strategy, and economic trends. Indeed, the sort of civil society Putnam describes might strengthen *any* regime's effectiveness; after all, northern Italy has seen monarchist, fascist, republican, socialist, and communist governments. Civil society may be linked to institutional capability in general rather than to any particular state formation, a possibility obscured by Putnam's failure to consider how it is constituted by politics and economics (Ehrenberg, 1999,p.231).

Many of the recent contributions to the civil society debate have, like Putnam's neo-Tocquevillian revival, conceptualised the state-civil society relationship in ways which strengthen the hegemonic tendency to view the state with alarm and civil society as an instrument to make states more democratic, transparent and accountable. White *et al* (1996) sum up the situation:

> … as the currency of the term 'civil society' has spread since the 1980s, the number of different constituencies across the political spectrum that find it appealing has increased, its meaning has become embroiled in ideological struggles, functioning often as the idealised counter-image of the state, an embodiment of social virtue confronting political vice: the realm of freedom versus the realm of coercion, of participation versus hierarchy, pluralism versus conformity, sponteneity versus manipulation, purity versus corruption (White, *et al*, 1996,p.2).

As can be seen from the above analysis, the idea of civil society may provide a "shared language" (Whitfield, 2003,p.379) but it is one which obscures fundamental differences between approaches and perspectives. Historically, the concept of civil society has been linked with efforts to limit the power of the state, the growth of an autonomous market, ethics and the alienation of the individual in the process of rapid socio-economic change and the development of a capitalist economy. But it has also been linked to inequality, class and social differentiation, conflictual social interaction and a realm for the contestation of dominant values. Given the multitude of nuances and interpretations in normative understandings of what *ought* to be the relationship between civil society and the state in historic and contemporary discourses, it would appear to makes little sense to claim one relationship between state and civil society.

In order to make the transition from the discussion of normative ideals to the analysis of empirical phenomenon, the most salient elements of the approaches reviewed above are incorporated into a conceptual framework for the purposes of analysing the case. This framework is anchored by its links to prior theory, but it is also shaped by a sensitivity to the specific nature of the case under investigation. Hence, the following section begins with a brief discussion of some contemporary writings on civil society-state relations in Cuba, before the concepts of state and civil society are reconceptualised. The use of the state-civil society conceptual framework is not simply a revival of what has gone before, but implies a reformulation of prior theory in such a way as to make it applicable to the Cuban case.

1.4. TOWARDS A NEW CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

At both the theoretical and empirical levels controversy persists regarding the historical conditions considered necessary, if not sufficient, for the civil society-state distinction to be used in the analysis of particular social systems. The relationship between the state and civil society has been defined in the literature in many ways, some fairly compatible with the Cuban context, others much less so.

1.4.1. The Cuban Context

Following the collapse of the European socialist camp in the late 1980s and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, a number of outside observers turned their attention to an examination of the potential 'emergence' of civil society in Cuba during the decade of the 1990s (Espinosa, 1999; Pumar, 1999). Using understandings similar to those applied to the Eastern European cases, these analysts looked for the existence of an opposition movement in Cuba which would fight for political and economic 'liberty' as indication of the presence of civil society (Aguirre, 1998). Given the common assumption that the market facilitates the appearance and development of civil society, the key question for these scholars was the following: how are the market reforms which have been introduced in Cuba as a result of the economic crisis affecting the emergence of civil society? Emphasising the significant number of civil associations which were created since 1989, the presence of development NGOs on the island, the revitalization of religious groups and social movements engaged in community projects, and the high-profile visit of the Pope in 1998 (see Azicri, 2000; Alonso, 2002), scholarly interest focused on assessing the properties and strength of civil society on the island (see Dilla and Oxhorn, 2001). The dominant tendency amongst those who contributed to this literature was a high degree of speculation over the democratising impetus of civil society and its potential to challenge the one-party system on the island (see ASCE, 1999; Whitehead, 2002). For many analysts, a potential change of system, or transition from socialist rule, was the main focus of interest, particularly in the early 1990s (Halebsky et al, 1992; but see also Dilla's 1999c analysis).[16]

In the Cuban academic world the term 'civil society' also began to gain currency in the 1990s (see Valdés and Estrella, 1994; Azcuy, 1995; Hernández, 1993, 1994, 1996; Acanda, 1996; Recio, 1997, 1999; Alonso, 1996, 2000). Banished from official discourse since the 1960s, due to the influence of the Soviet interpretation of Marxism on the island (Martínez, 2003, and see Chapter 3), the sudden diffusion of the term created a impact that was felt beyond academic circles (see Hoffmann, 1998) as the idea of civil society that had initially entered through the discourse of the academic and NGO community, filtered into the vernacular of local actors and organisations. By 1996 state officials and politicians who had long denied the phenomenon began to appropriate the concept and spoke of the existence of a 'socialist civil society' in Cuba (see Chapter 5).

Mirroring the preoccupation of those non-Cuban observers concerned with tracking an 'emergent' civil society, the 'reconstitution' of civil society, as an empirical reality following the transformations of the early 1990s, was identified by some influential Cuban analysts as the key factor in precipitating the internal debate (Acanda, 1999; Dilla, 1999a). However, in contrast to the approach taken in most non-Cuban studies, the Cuban debate about civil society tended to emphasise civil society as a space for the rearticulation of consensus as opposed to a potential arena for contestation and opposition (see Recio, 1997; Dilla and Oxhorn, 2002).

As indicated above, there are some fundamental questions which lie beneath any analysis of the relationship between civil society and the state in Cuba. Prior to an understanding of the intricacies of this relationship, there is the need to justify the use of the "binomial" state-civil society (Limia, 1997,p.1), particularly when applied to a socialist context, and to explore whether there *is* such a thing as 'civil society' in Cuba. As López (1997) points out, "from the outside, what many people do not have clear is whether there is, or is not, a civil society in Cuba" (López, 1997,p.17). However, others insist that the very act of posing such questions as: "Is the concept of civil society a Marxist category?" or "Does civil society exist in Cuba?" in itself highlights the ideological orientation of the inquirer and demonstrates the paucity of their knowledge of the concept, its relevance for the Cuban case, and the "actual situation" on the island (Acanda, 2002,p.326).[17]

The predominance particularly, although not exclusively, in the external literature of a stereotype which reduces the relationship between the Cuban state and society to the formula: 'strong, repressive state plus [more often *versus*] weak, repressed society' (see for example Pérez, 2002) has been particularly detrimental to understandings of the Cuban context. Ironically, such interpretations have contributed to the "idolatry" of the state as the "only and exclusive subject of the Revolution" (Acanda, 2003,p.168) and form part of a trend discernable within studies of social revolutionary processes, that places the state at the centre of analysis (see Huntington, 1968). By privileging the state in this negative way, it is implicitly suggested that there have been no social processes occurring in Cuba which could be described as 'civil society' prior to 1989 (Dilla, 1999c). Where civil society is mentioned, it is either equated with the mass organisations (Saney, 2004) or identified by its absence. The weaknesses of these interpretations are readily apparent. Above all, they provide a fundamentally static representation of civil society and the state. The complexity of the relationship between them, its dynamic nature, its tensions - what Gramsci (1971,p.366) calls its "discordance" - and contradictions are lost. What is left is an a-historical representation of state-civil society relations which gives the impression that rather than having evolved, the relationship has remained constant, stagnant even, since 1959 (Nuccio, 1999). In fact, the suggestion of a relationship between state and civil society, where 'relationship' is understood to mean mutual dealings or connections, as opposed to mere position, in itself appears problematic for those who seek primarily to establish (measure) the degree of autonomy between state and civil society (Pumar, 1999). For such theorists the state and civil society are two unconnected realms whose structural architecture (represented by institutions as opposed to power dynamics between a shifting constellation of social forces) can be mapped and plotted. The application of such a scheme raises a number of difficulties in the Cuban context. Dilla (1999a,p.164) describes the problems encountered when attempting to 'position' institutions and organisations within either civil society or the state:

It is difficult to place one or another structure, institution or social actor within or outside of civil society, within or outside of political society or the state … What are the Popular Councils that have developed participative experiences and processes of popular education: civil society or the state?

The conundrum is aptly described by Dilla as "not knowing whether the doorway to the house is part of the house or the pavement" (Dilla, 1999a,p.165).[18]

The use of stereotypes, such as those mentioned above, does much to limit our understanding of Cuba. Rather than illuminating the relationship between state and civil society, they distort our vision, blinding us to the extent that we are no longer able to 'see' this relationship in all its complexity, or as a process. Under the hostile glare of attention that the Cuban state receives, little else is visible.[19]

This study seeks to challenge some of these stereotypes and adjust the focus of analysis in order to accommodate an alternative vision of the relationship between the post-revolutionary state and civil society, not only during the 1990s but also from 1959 to 1989. Hence, the Cuban context requires a conceptual framework that is versatile enough to be used to discuss the entire post revolutionary period to date. Such a strategy is essential if the antecedents of the present relationship and those dynamics which have shaped it in the past (and continue to do so to this day) are to be understood. Moreover, it allows the longitudinal comparisons which are so critical for this analysis to be made.

One of the aims of this study is to cast an analytical search light back over recent Cuban history, with the intention of revealing and illuminating the "tangled knot of power relations" (Crehan, 2002,p.103) that represent the "shifting," "overlapping," and essentially *reciprocal* relationship between civil society and the state (Crehan, 2002,p.29), and which are so often missed precisely because they lie beyond the reach of the conceptual beams which are shone onto the past. These 'search lights' have conventionally been adjusted at a 'Liberal angle' to enable theorists to look for and distinguish "distinct arenas where citizens voluntarily assemble independently of the state," or to highlight "dissident and opposition groups" (Pumar, 1999,p.370). Such an approach is essentially reductionist and works by breaking down and partitioning complex processes into easily definable categories without looking at the links between them or questioning whether the imposition of artificial boundaries is problematic.

Whether the concept of civil society enables us to explain what has been happening in Cuba, very much depends on how civil society and its relationship with the state is understood, and the standpoint from which they are viewed. Clearly, to 'capture' more a new conceptual framework is required.

1.4.2. Using a Gramscian Approach to Build a New Framework[20]

Having examined some of the main theoretical approaches to the state-civil society relationship, a Gramscian perspective is considered to be the most appropriate conceptual foundation for our purposes. Gramsci's work has the advantage of lying within a tradition of Marxist thought that critiques the crudely materialist, positivistic and mechanically economistic interpretations of Marxism (see Rupert, 1995,p.25) that share epistemological similarities with Liberal perspectives (Acanda, interview, 13 April 2003, Havana). In addition, his thought is currently enjoying a renaissance in Cuba (see Acanda, 2002, 2003; Chanan, 2001; Giacommi, 2001; Alonso, 2003; Hernández, 2003; Piñón, 2003; Martínez, 2003; Núñez, 2003) and it is no coincidence that the 'appropriateness' and 'ideological fit' of Gramsci's political thought for this study was recognised by many of those interviewed. This "return to Gramsci" (Acanda, 2002,p.313) lends legitimacy to the conceptual approach chosen. For although writing about social politics in advanced capitalist societies of the twentieth-century, Gramsci's approach is helpful in myriad ways for an analysis of Cuba's recent past. The emphasis that Gramsci places on human actors as "the centre of the revolutionary process" (Rupert, 1995,p.26), the importance of "transformations in the consciousness of [these] actors" through education (Boggs, 1976,p.16), his insistence on the need for revolution to "assume a national character" in order to become truly popular (Boggs, 1976,p.18), his "commitment to internationalism as a basis of political solidarity and long-range struggle" (Cox, 1996,p.133; Boggs, 1976), and the importance he places on the personal qualities of the leadership (Robinson, 1996), all echo and are resonate with aspects of the Cuban revolutionary process and the ethos which has guided it (see Kapcia, 2000). But it is Gramsci's understanding of the relationship between civil society and political society (the State) together with his approach to the role of civil society in the articulation of hegemony which are of most relevance to this study.

1.4.3. Reconceptualising Civil Society and the State

Since much of the argument which follows hangs on a conception of civil society and the state which differs radically from that embraced by the mainstream, it is necessary at this point to define what is meant by these concepts. Firstly and following Gramsci, civil society is conceptionalised here as the site of hegemony, the arena where ideas are battled over and the state seeks to rule by consent. Civil society is premised on, and a reflection of, economic and political inequalities but is also the organisational and public forum where these imbalances are expressed, struggled over and renegotiated. It is a site of heterogeneity and conflict, where all ideological and cultural relations and the whole of spiritual, cultural and intellectual life takes place. In this conception, civil society is not so different from Habermas's public sphere.

The state tends to be confused with the organs of government and the repressive organs, but we have seen that there is a much broader vision of domination that identifies the state as all the

instruments that serve to legitimate a social order, a hegemony. Accordingly, the state is understood here as the "entire complex of theoretical and practical activities whereby the ruling class maintains its dominance, but manages to win the consent over those whom it rules" (Gramsci, 1971,p.262). It is a form of class domination which is defined in its integral meaning as "dictatorship + hegemony" (Gramsci, 1971,p.239) or "hegemony protected by the armour of coercion" (Gramsci, 1971,p.262). Hence the state is the locus of both the hegemony and dictatorship of the ruling class. Moreover, both the form of the state and its activities rest upon the hegemony of this dominant class. "A social group," says Gramsci (1971, p.57-58), "becomes dominant when it exercises power." He then immediately adds, "but even if it holds [power] firmly in its grasp, it must continue to lead as well." The hegemony of a class therefore derives from the social pressure for it to lead in order to remain dominant. Hegemony is defined as the spontaneous and freely accepted ethical values of the dominant class; a claim to "intellectual and moral leadership" over the totality of social existence (Bobbio, 1988). In this sense, hegemony is the dominant class' project to attain leadership. It originates in the economy yet stretches out towards the organisation of all political and cultural institutions. Ruling-class hegemony may be challenged at any time by dominated groups and classes, since the claim to legitimacy and the belief in it are always the product of a process of 'cultural fabrication' (see Öncü, 2003,p.308).

In this study Gramsci's idea that while civil society is methodologically distinguishable from the state, in any actual society the two are essentially interrelated and the lines of demarcation between both are blurred as both interpenetrate each other, has been followed. State and civil society are not regarded as two separate realms so much as the same social configuration seen under different aspects. In fact, there is an important role for the state in developing civil society; in creating specific spaces for participation and inclusion. Civil society is not isolated from the state, neither is it necessarily hostile toward the state, instead they exist in mutual relation to each other. The relationship between them is organic. Here, civil society is never outside that which is political in the same way that political society does not end in the state. Hence, questions of its degree of autonomy or differentiation vis-à-vis the state are of less relevance than questions about the correlation of forces within and between civil society and the state. Autonomy, understood as independence from the influence and leadership of the dominant classes and groups, cannot originate from the state but neither can it be identified with civil society. Instead, autonomy resides in the agency of historically situated actors who contest the established hegemony within the state and civil society. These counter-hegemonic forces are the key to an understanding of autonomy in this context.

It will be clear that civil society, on this definition at least, is far removed from those 'ideal type' definitions that identify civil society as:

.. an intermediate associational realm, situated between the state on the one side and the basic building blocks of society on the other (individuals, families, firms), populated by social organisations which are separate, and enjoy some degree of autonomy form the state … formed voluntarily by members of society to protect or extend their interests or values (White, *et al*, 1996,p.3).

Features such as 'autonomy', 'spontaneity', 'voluntariness' and 'self-regulation', have traditionally been the defining qualities of civil society and a harsh public-private distinction has generally underpinned analyses of state-civil society relations (see Howell, 1996). Neither these features nor such a distinction sits comfortably with the conceptual framework outlined above. Such a framework entails moving beyond a way of thinking which is grounded upon an uncritical acceptance of a clear-cut oppositional dichotomy between state and civil society which oversimplifies the relationships between these two spheres. Moreover it requires the abandonment of the idea that civil society is 'all that is not the state'. Transcending this dualism also implies challenging the assumption that civil society is made up of a mass of like-minded people and organisations, unified in purpose, and constituting a political actor in its own right. What is crucial is not so much the balance of power between the state and civil society but the underlying configuration of power relations which permeate and interpenetrate both sites of rule. Having shifted the analytical focus away from the distracting 'state versus civil society' dichotomy to consider the dynamics of power relations we are now much better placed to address the question of the nature of state-civil society relations in Cuba.

For civil society-state relations can not adequately be studied by examining fixed, static, sets of institutions and organisations. Instead, these relations need to be understood as historical processes. Such processes can be examined by identifying and describing the dynamic and contested nature of civil society and how it serves as a site for negotiation and struggle over power. In the context of Cuban history, civil society as a process is characterised by the actions and reactions of politically mobilised social groups seeking either to challenge or support the existing distribution of power. As shall be seen in Chapter 3, the history of struggles for hegemony in Cuba reveal how, and in what ways, the state and civil society shape one another.

Finally, a caveat: there is a danger when discussing state-civil society relations in making the state seem anthropomorphic, as if it were motivated solely by the will of a single individual leader, and this is particularly the case in the literature that takes the Cuban Revolution as its theme. Migdal (1988) recognises that reference to the state leadership or executive authority as if it *were* the state or, worse still, reference to *the* state without regard to differences within it could be "downright misleading in certain circumstances" (Migdal, 1988,p.20). It is hoped that the Gramscian approach adopted in this thesis will mitigate this danger. It is also hoped that such an approach will facilitate the adjustment of the state-centred focus which has dominated studies of the Cuban Revolution and which privileges the state in a negative way. To this end, Gramsci's idea that

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state power is intimately linked to the correlation of forces in civil society will be a crucial for the analysis of the Cuban case from 1959 onwards.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter a selection of normative theories about the proper form of relationship between the state and civil society have been reviewed and their respective approaches to state-civil society relations contrasted. Social scientists cannot escape the problem that facts do not simply "speak for themselves" but have to be interpreted (Held, 1983,p.3). The framework brought to the process of interpretation determines what is 'seen', what is registered and noted as important (Held, 1983). Keeping this in mind, a conceptual framework based on the work of Gramsci has been developed for the specific purposes of interpreting the Cuban case. In the chapters that follow an attempt is made to charcterise actual phenomena and events using this framework. First, though, some of the methodological issues and challenges involved in this research are discussed. This is the theme of the next chapter.

NOTES

[1] See for example the tendency in the literature that emerged in the late 1980s and 1990s that took East European transformations from communist rule as its theme. For instance, Griffith, 1989; Banac, 1992; Lewis, 1992; Anderson, 1992.

[2] See also Cox (1999) and Hawthorn (2001) for critical comments on the uses of the concept of civil society in the context of developing countries.

[3] Most notably Solidarity in Poland, and later, the various people's movements which contributed to the demise of communist regimes in Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

[4] This is not to deny the force of this usage. Gellner (1994) recognises the power of the term as a "shining emblem" (Gellner, 1994,p.1) and Sampson (1996,p.2) suggests it has been part of the "magic" of transformation in Eastern Europe.

[5] Culturally Cuba has had strong ties with the United States both historically and today (see Hernández, 2000c). In an interview for this study, a Cuban National Assembly delegate argued: "North American culture is part of Cuba's cultural life" and mentioned the impact on the population of the huge number of North American and European films that are screened on Cuban television (Barredo, 29 April 2003, Havana). At a recent public discussion held by the Havana-based journal *Temas* (24/04/2003) the subject for debate was the immensely popular game of 'American' baseball (see *Temas*, No.37-38, 2004,pp.106-118). Participants commented on the enduring and close cultural ties with the United States that this sport represented (for a fascinating analysis see Félix Julio Alfonso's 'Juego Perfecto' in *La Gaceta de Cuba*, March-April, 2003, pp. 12-18). In a further interview with a stakeholder from the Cuban Ministry of Justice, the significance of the Roman-French roots of the Cuban legal system were emphasised, as was the impact of the U.S. Presidential model in the political system during the period of the Republic (1902-1958), (interview with Bulté, 23 April 2003, Havana).

[6] Following Held (1983) 'liberalism' is used here to signify the attempt to define a private sphere independent of the state and thus to redefine the state itself, i.e, the freeing of civil society - personal, family and business life - from political interference and the simultaneous delimitation of the state's authority (see Held, 1983,p.3).

[7] See Hann's (1996) description of the way in which civil society has been cast in the role of David against the Goliath of the modern state, epitomised by the bureaucratic apparatus of sate socialism during the unravelling of superpower conflicts at the end of the cold war (Hann, 1996,p.6-10). On symbolic classification within the discourse of civil society see Alexander, (1998b).

[8] See Sung Ho Kim (2000 and 2004) for a fascinating analysis of Weber's sensitivity to the possibility of a 'bad' civil society.

[9] The term 'classical' is used here to refer to great thinkers and not to antiquity.

[10] In the ancient Greek polis, where the citizenry was perceived to participate fully in the management of public affairs, civil society and the state were deemed one and so civil society was equated with political society. Women, slaves and 'foreigners' were, however, excluded from participation in the political arena and did not form part of the citizenry.

[11] The chronology is not strictly maintained, for example de Tocqueville's (1831) contribution is discussed after that of Marx (1848/1852), but for the most part a chronological sequence is followed.

[12] In contrast, Rousseau's state of nature is a world in which man lived for his sensual pleasures in a state of idleness, guided both by self-preservation and sympathy for others, where he does not fear death because he has no conception of death and where he has no conception of morality but he does no harm (Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality* (1755/1984).

[13] Weber visited North America in 1904, travelling extensively throughout the country during his trip (see Sung Ho Kim, 2000).

[14] Hereafter, SPN.

[15] It is this idea which makes Gramsci's approach so useful in the analysis of the Cuban case, as shall be elabourated below.

[16] As the decade wore on, analysts began to suggest that Cuba represented a case of 'non-transition' (del Aguila, 1999; Hawkins, 2001) or of a 'slow transition' (Nuccio, 1999) or, more cautiously, of an 'uncertain' transition (Whitehead, 2002) or even a 'transition en trompe-l'oeil' (Machover, 2001).

[17] While I readily accept the point that Acanda makes and agree with the sentiments which lie behind it, I still consider questions of this nature to be analytically important ones. Furthermore, they are questions which have preoccupied Cubans interested in this theme and as such are important for the present analysis.

[18] See Chapter 2 for an analysis of my own difficulties regarding this issue.

[19] An example of such distorted focus is found in the U.S. State Department Country Reports on Cuba, see all years.

[20] My understanding of Gramsci's political thought has undoubtedly been aided by having had the opportunity to attend the M.A. course module *History of Marxism* run by the Faculty of Sociology at the University of Havana, from January - February 2003. The course was taught by Dr Jorge Luis Acanda whom I was also able to interview on numerous occasions. I am indebted to him for his help and insights into Gramsci's thought, as well as for his enthusiasm for this project.

Chapter 2

Methodology

> *If intellectual inquiry is to have an impact on human knowledge, either by adding to an overall body of knowledge or by solving a particular problem, it must guarantee some measure of credibility about what it has inquired, must communicate in a manner that will enable application by its intended audience, and must enable its audience to check on its findings and the inquiry process by which the findings were obtained.*
> (Erdlandson *et al*, 1993,p.28)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a detailed description, explanation and justification of the methods used in this study. By openly revealing the methodological approaches and design decisions which have underpinned it, the aim is to introduce an element of transparency which is often missing from Cuban Studies (see Valdés *et al,* 1988 and on social science more generally, see Marsh and Stoker, 1995; Hart, 1998). As Burnham (1997) warns, a lack of explicitness contributes to a sanitized, idealised image of the research process which is essentially misleading. The knowledge claims made throughout this dissertation and upon which the overall thesis is based, are contingent on the quality and reliability of the data that have been gathered and the collection techniques employed. The reliability, validity and trustworthiness (Erdlandson *et al*, 1993) of the methods used in data collection, along with the data itself and its subsequent analysis, can only be verified if they are made public. Researchers are better positioned to defend their choice of methods and the epistemological position which lies beneath them, by making these preferences clear as opposed to shrouding them in secrecy. To this end, the first part of the current chapter discusses the theoretical and practical aspects of the research design and data collection strategies. In acknowledgement of the growing awareness in the social sciences of the importance of individual interpretation on the part of the researcher (see Steier, 1991; Fairburn and Winch, 1991; Oliver, 2004), a reflexive account of the fieldwork conducted in Cuba is included in part two.

2.1 METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

Often dismissed as 'soft' or 'impressionistic' by those associated with a positivist tradition (Franzosi, 1997), qualitative methods of the type that have been used in this study deserve to be 'seen'. Although no approach is without its limitations, Seidman (1998) and Janesick (1998) propose that the 'value' of an approach can be judged by considering how well it suits the purpose and objectives of a particular study. In recognition of this, the overall purpose and objectives of this research were

kept closely in mind when deciding which methods would be the most appropriate to use (Marsh and Stoker, 1995).

2.1.1. Relating Research Methods to Objectives

This study is an analysis of a specific case at a particular historical moment. Like many recent approaches to research in the social sciences, the emphasis is on contextuality and heterogeneity of knowledge (Kvale, 1996). Borrowing Erdlandson's terminology, the findings are considered to be "nongeneralizable" (Erdlandson, *et al*, 1993, p.12). Hence, although it is hoped that the research might provide insights into how other cases could be studied and understood, there is no "goal of universal generalizability" (Kvale, 1996,p.289) behind the research objectives. Rather, the purpose of the research is interpretive: it aims to develop a plausible understanding of state-civil society relations in Cuba, based on key stakeholders' perceptions of these processes.[1]

Given that the perspectives of such actors are often missing from analyses of this kind, the aim has been to bring their voices to the very forefront of the research. As the impression is commonly given that there is only one 'official' perspective in Cuba, it has been particularly important to incorporate *alternative* voices from within and beyond the party-state nexus into the analysis. Although the focus is ostensibly on internal politics, it was recognised that external factors have influenced domestic politics in Cuba in dramatic ways (see Migdal, 1988). As a result, it has been necessary to explore how and in what ways contemporary stakeholders perceive both the internal and external political context to have shaped state-civil society relations on the island.

The decision to ground the research in the subjective perceptions held by strategic individuals engaged in, or fundamentally involved with, the processes under analysis, led to the use of qualitative methods and techniques. This ensured that the methodological orientation of the thesis was consonant with its objectives. According to Rose (1982) and Bryman (1988), qualitative methods capture meaning, process and context; three qualities which would be essential if the detailed narrative accounts of people's perceptions and experiences which it was planned would be gathered in the field, were to be interrogated for evidence that would deepen understandings of state-civil society relations.

The construction of the research problem which this study addresses has not followed a series of smooth consecutive steps. Rather, identifying, formulating and refining the problem has been an on-going and challenging process. As the focus of the research has evolved and become sharper and as data have been interpreted and explained with reference to wider theoretical debates, the problem for analysis has been honed and progressively narrowed. Given this, objectives and research questions have been reformulated, adjusted and refined throughout the research process, as have methods and research design.[2] As the objectives of the study have already been outlined in the

introduction to the thesis, here the aim is to relate issues of methodology and research design to specific objectives in order to highlight, briefly, the coherence between them.

The first objective outlined in the introduction (see p.16) involves a challenge. It seeks to question the reluctance of some analysts to apply a state-civil society framework to the case of Cuba, particularly when examining the 1959-1989 period. To meet this challenge it has been necessary to review and analyse a body of theoretical literature with the aim of constructing an alternative conceptual framework of a kind more appropriate to the study of Cuban politics. As well as the literature, understandings gleaned from semi-structured interviews and participant observations conducted in Cuba during fieldwork have been important in generating the type of knowledge required to meet this objective.

The second objective that has been identified suggests the need to draw on an understanding of the historical context in which state-civil society dynamics are set in order to examine how and it what ways internal and external political factors have shaped the relationship between the Cuban state and civil society. The use of the verb 'evolve' in the wording of this objective implies that social change is a process. Furthermore, the emphasis on interdependent endogenous and exogenous influences suggests a dialectical interpretation of change which has been influenced by the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985). To fulfil this objective an analysis of relevant literature and archive materials has been undertaken, along with interviews and participant observations.

The third objective calls for an analysis of the response of both the state and civil society to the economic crisis of the early 1990s. To meet this objective, interviews with primary and secondary stakeholders were conducted in the field together with participant observations. An analysis of a range of literature gathered both in the setting and in the UK was made and economic data obtained from Cuban government sources were also consulted and used to support the analysis.

The final objective focuses on evaluating changes in state-civil society relations over the decade of the 1990s. This has required interpretative work. Data created during interviews and via participant observations were crucial in constructing an interpretation which would enable this objective to be met. Again, an analysis of literature from both Cuban and non Cuban sources was central to this process.

As the same method of data collection can be used within the framework of different epistemologies (Oliver, 2004), it is important to clarify the specific epistemological context of the study. Hence, before discussing the qualitative methods that have been used in more detail, the epistemological stance which underpins the thesis, and which essentially links the aims of the research to practical methodological issues, should be made explicit.

2.1.2. The Epistemological Approach

If, as is pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, analysts have been loath to discuss methodological issues explicitly in their research (see Devine, 1995), then revealing their epistemological commitments and ontological preferences appears to have been met with even greater reluctance (Marsh and Stoker, 1995). Guba and Lincoln (1998,p.195) encourage researchers to "dig deeper still" and reflect on questions of paradigm: "the basic belief system or world view that guides the investigator, not only in choices of methods but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways." Revealing these prior, latent, orientations is not only a 'healthy medicine' for the individual researcher, as Huberman and Miles (1998) suggest below, but also essential when it comes to sharing and discussing research within and between communities of researchers and other interested groups, an issue which has recently been acknowledged by the ESRC (2003b), and one which highlights the importance of audience in the production of knowledge. Huberman and Miles (1998 p.181) put it in the following terms:

> It is healthy medicine for researchers to make their preferences clear. To know how researchers construe the shape of the social world and how they mean to give us a credible account of it is to know just who we have on the other side of the table. When, for example, a realist, a critical theorist, and a social phenomenologist are competing for our attention, it matters a good deal to know where each is coming from. They will have diverse views of what is real, what can be known, and how these social facts can be rendered faithfully.

Positioning the epistemological stance taken in this study on the wide spectrum of opinion which ranges from positions held by positivists at one extreme, to those of relativists at the other, it would be fair to say that it lies closest to the latter group; somewhere among the critics of positivism and close to the proponents of constructivist approaches. Those within this group question notions of objectivism, empirical realism, objective truth and essentialism. Instead, they are committed to the view that what is taken to be 'objective knowledge' and 'truth' is the result of perspective. As a result, they challenge the idea of some objective basis for knowledge claims and instead examine the process of knowledge construction. Schwandt (1998,p.237) argues that it could be said that we are all constructivists: "if we believe that the mind is active in the construction of knowledge."

For constructivists, knowledge is *created* by the mind rather than discovered. The emphasis is on the world of experience as it is lived, felt and undergone by social actors. Consequently, the "goal" for those working within this approach:

> … [is one] of understanding the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it … the world of lived reality and situation-specific meanings that constitute the general objective of investigation is thought to be constructed by social actors (Schwandt, 1998, p.221).

Such a position sits comfortably with the ethos of this study. Afterall, the constructivist believes that to understand the world of meaning one must interpret it, that is, the inquirer must elucidate the

process of meaning construction and clarify what and how meanings are embodied in the language and actions of social actors. "To prepare an interpretation is itself to construct a reading of the construction of the actors one studies," argues Schwandt (1998, p.222), indicating the need to remain sensitive to the layers of meaning that are involved in any interpretative work.

Although falling within the relativist camp, the epistemological approach which guides this study is not one of extreme relativism. Such positions, as Devine (1995,p.140) warns, run the danger of what she calls the "relativist trap." Few analysts take the immoderate position that there is no external reality but only a socially constructed reality in which conscious people attach subjective meaning to theory and actions and interpret their own situation and the situation of others. In one of the interviews conducted for this study, a respondent argued for a "more balanced epistemological approach" (Sotolongo, interview, 24 March 2003, Havana). For this respondent, not all interpretations are worth the same ("this would be relativism") but a "dialectical counter-posing of interpretations" could, he believed, lead to "contextual truths." It has been towards the discovery of such contextual truths that this research has been aimed.

Whether explicitly acknowledged or not, epistemological positions heavily influence methodological decisions and research design (Oliver, 2004). A positivist epistemological position has traditionally been closely associated with quantitative methods, an experimental situation, explanation and prediction. In contrast, qualitative analysis tends to derive from a relativist position. Both, however, share a concern with discovering the individual's point of view:

> Both qualitative and quantitative researchers are concerned about the individual's point of view. However, qualitative investigators think they can get closer to the actor's perspective through detained interviewing and observation. They argue that quantitative researchers seldom are able to capture the subject's perspective because they have to rely on more remote, inferential empirical materials. The empirical materials produced by the softer, interpretative methods are regarded as unreliable, impressionistic and not objective (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p.10).

Franzosi (1997) explains that it has been the desire to get away from the "murky waters of personal interpretations in the social sciences" which has driven many analysts towards "exact measurements and formal constructs" (Franzosi, 1997,p.135). However, guided by Gramsci's critique of positivism and his call to place human actors - particularly transformations in the consciousness of these actors - at the centre of analysis, it has been precisely such 'murky waters' (in fact the murkier the better) that this research has set out to navigate and explore.

2.1.3. The Methodological Approach

Working, then, from the assumption that knowledge is created and negotiated between human beings, it was decided that a valid approach to resolving the research problem and meeting the objectives discussed above involved the use of qualitative data. Such data are, as Lincoln and Guba (1998,p.198) argue, particularly useful for uncovering emic or "insider" views (Lincoln and Guba.

In order to secure data of this kind an "arsenal" (interview Sotolongo, 24 March 2003, Havana) of qualitative methods have been employed. The use of the comparative method and historical analysis, together with the review and analysis of literature, archival materials and relevant legislation, as well as fieldwork involving interviews with stakeholders, participant observation and ethnographic work, have all contributed to the process of creating data. Drawing on a range of methods and associated techniques in order to meet the requirements of each stage of the research process, has ensured a high degree of methodological pluralism within the framework of a qualitative approach. By combining methods in this way, the intention has been to enhance the rigor of the research.[3]

Before discussing what counts as data and the processes used to generate data in the context of this study, it is necessary to clarify the use of the terms 'stakeholder' and 'stakeholder analysis'. Grimble *et al* (1995,pp.3-4) have defined stakeholder analysis as: "an approach for understanding a system by identifying key actors or stakeholders in the system, and assessing their respective interests in that system." ODA guidance describes stakeholders as "persons, groups (or) institutions with interests in a project or programme" (ODA, 1995,p.1). In this thesis, the term 'stakeholder' is used specifically to describe individuals. In order to differentiate between stakeholders, individuals are classified as either primary or secondary stakeholders. Primary stakeholders are those individuals who in their formal employment[4] have the capacity to influence directly, or have a significant bearing on, the central themes of the investigation, through political or administrative decisions or via the articulation of political ideas. This includes not only those people who plan, execute or evaluate policy, strategy and plans in the sector in which they work, that is, people who have the possibility to decide over the course of their sector, but also those who have an interest in and who publicly tackle aspects of the research themes in the public sphere. Secondary stakeholders are all others who potentially have an interest in the research or are linked to the issues under investigation, for example, local community residents, formal and informal group leaders. Again, following ODA (1995) guidance, these secondary stakeholders could be described as "indirect" stakeholders. As the guiding principle of the research was one of inclusiveness the aim was to gather and include as many views and narratives as possible from a diverse range of stakeholders into the analysis.

Keeping in mind Gramsci's assertion that distinctions between state and civil society are possible at the methodological level, initially three broad primary stakeholder groups were identified for this study:

i. *Cuban 'party-state nexus'* (Including professional politicians, those in posts within the party or state bureaucracy, military, state media or mass organisations at the national level).

ii. *Cuban 'civil society'* (National NGO staff, community organisers, church leaders, social investigators, academics, writers, independent journalists, artists).

iii. *External sector interests* (Foreign business staff and diplomatic staff, foreign journalists and NGO workers, foreign investigators or academics based in Cuba or the UK).

The rationale behind the use of this trinity of stakeholder groups was the need to test whether traditional understandings of state-civil society relations, which tend to regard the state and civil society as separate spheres within a nation-state, could be applied to the Cuban case or whether they would prove problematic. Putting this classificatory scheme into operation immediately revealed some important problems. For example, it quickly became clear that the groups would not be discrete as individual stakeholders were likely to lie on the cross section between them, as can be shown in Fig.2.1 below.

Fig. 2.1

Diagrammatic Representation of Primary Stakeholder Groups
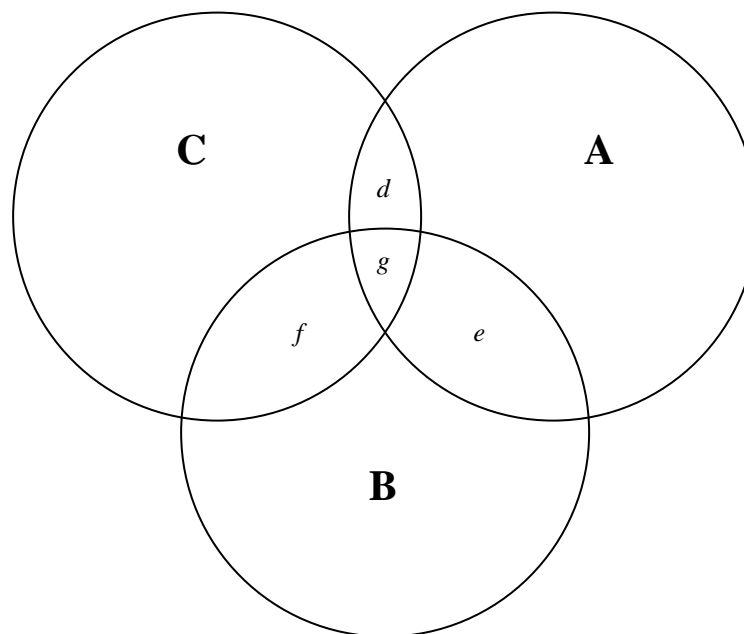
Key

Example

A = Party State Nexus (PSN) ………………National Assembly Delegate, Party official
B = Civil Society (CS)……………………… Cuban-NGO worker
C = External Sector (X)…………………….UK diplomat, foreign journalist working on/in Cuba

d = PSN / X…………………………………… Cuban joint-venture company worker
e = PSN / CS………………………………….. Mass organisation staff, academics in state institutions
f = CS / X…………………………………….... International NGO worker
g = PSN / CS / X ………………………….. Individual who works for United Nations, as Cuban state planner and academic

Of all the groups, the 'external sector' was the least problematic and most straightforward as a discrete category. Presenting the most difficulties was the group labelled 'Cuban civil society', reflecting the conceptual problems that arise when the state-civil society dichotomy is applied to Cuba (see Chapter 1) and indicating that consciousness of a collective identity as 'civil society' was low among those interviewed. As fig. 2.1 shows, it proved difficult to 'place' certain individuals in just one group. Take for example the difficulties involved in placing a social scientist working at Havana University who is also a government policy advisor. At first it would appear that as an academic s/he could be classified as belonging to 'civil society'. However, given that each academic faculty and research centre is under the direct control of a particular government ministry in Cuba, and moreover that the academic in this hypothetical example works in a policy making capacity, a dilemma arises as to whether the researcher should in fact be absorbed into the party-state nexus grouping. In actual cases such as this, the individual was asked which group they considered best represented them. On one such occasion a stakeholder who worked for the UN as a consultant, as well as for the Cuban government as a key economic policy maker *and* as an academic at Havana University, made it clear that he was: "talking as a representative of the Cuban state," before we had begun the interview, suggesting his own awareness of the potential contradictions between his roles.

It is not then surprising that within the sample there was ambiguity in respect to the artificial divisions that had been constructed between groups. According to the multiple roles they perform, some stakeholders participate in all groups, as the above example shows. In these cases, a decision was taken in consultation with the individual as to whether a person's work as a functionary in the Party, for example, was of more relevance, say, than their academic role. This proved to be an interesting exercise as it revealed insights both into how individuals self-identified and their perceptions of their different institutional roles.

The fact that many individuals could be positioned on the interface between groups was in itself an important finding. It highlighted the very blurred nature of the boundaries that exist in Cuba between the state and civil society and the fluidity with which individual actors moved within and between them. Moreover, it indicated that an alternative conceptual framework to that which has traditionally been used to represent state-civil society relations (as two distinct spheres) would be required in order to analyse the Cuban case, prompting a return to theoretical considerations and indicating that Gramsci's understanding of the state and civil society could indeed provide a more appropriate basis for such a framework.

Though flawed, the organisation of primary stakeholders into groups that could be represented diagrammatically, was a strategy which nevertheless had important advantages in terms of initial research design. It facilitated decision making regarding the coverage, range and number of individuals that would be needed for the sample within and across groups. It also highlighted the

social context in which people were located, a point stressed by Sixsmith *et al* 1993 as critical in qualitative research, by emphasising the links within and between groups (see below). These links were extremely useful in gaining an understanding of the complex interactions underlying the social context. Moreover, and as indicated above, difficulties encountered in 'placing' stakeholders highlighted problems with the conceptual approach which were important to explore and rectify. The scheme was not intended to be rigid but rather a flexible tool which could be modified (and even abandoned) as the study evolved.

2.1.4. Data and Processes Used to Generate Data

Data were derived from key human sources in various social settings in Cuba and the UK and enriched with data from documents, records and artefacts. *Primary data* were obtained through interviews and participant observation, and from unpublished documents, transcripts of speeches, government reports and legislation, decrees, official slogans, symbols and images, personal communications and from the research journal and field notes made during fieldwork. *Secondary data* were derived from the analysis of texts, archival documents, daily and weekly Cuban newspapers, periodicals and other literature. Valdés (1988,p.207) notes that a fairly large portion of those studies which focus on the Revolution "tend to rely on content analysis of printed matter, as well as secondary sources" as scholars "as a rule do not have access to … primary sources." As a result, within Cuban Studies and Cubanology there is not a well developed tradition of research based on broad opinion generation social research methods across groups and interests. In itself, therefore, this study is a sign of changing times.

a) Sources of Data

Both "stable" and "dynamic" sources of data were used in this research (Erdlandson, *et al*, 1993,p.101). Stable sources included documents and artefacts, while interviews and participant observation were the principle dynamic sources of data. As the dynamic sources are discussed in more detail below, here the use of documents and artefacts is briefly considered.

Documents used in this study have included historical or journalistic accounts, works of art, poems, photographs, memos, records, newspapers, television transcripts, brochures, meeting agendas and notes, audio and videotapes, budget or accounting statements, notes from participants and other case studies. An unconventional source of evidence involved the material artefacts of the research setting. Of these, the cityscape itself was an important source of physical evidence that provided insights into the relationship between state and civil society. The transformations observed in the physical environment of the city of Havana provided a literal backdrop to the research.[5] The physical regeneration of old Havana, made possible by UNESCO funding and the work of the *Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad* (Office of the Historian of the City), presented a

stark contrast with other parts of the city, and indeed other provinces, where transformations were less visible (see Chapter 4).[6] The ever-present signs and slogans which 'announce' the Revolution and serve to remind its citizens of their national and revolutionary heritage as well as the discourse of the party-state, were important pieces of the jigsaw puzzle that the research attempted to interpret and understand. These stable sources of data gave a sense of how those in power wish Cuba to be perceived both by their internal audience and, since the expansion of tourism and foreign investment in the 1990s, by the important 'external' audience that resides - however temporarily - within the island. The portrayal of leading public figures from the past and present on road-side hoardings, and the way in which activities and events which have become symbols of the Cuban nation and its Revolution are projected into the public domain, provide an alternative representation of state-civil society relations to that found in the literature. Aside from the images and 'sound-bite' discourses which define the leadership's message (*socialismo o muerte* 'socialism or death', *hasta la victoria siempre* 'ever forward to victory', *tenemos y tendremos* 'we have and will continue to have [the Revolution]', *en cada barrio Revolución* 'Revolution in every neigbourhood'[7]) it is noticeable that there are few officially sanctioned spaces for alternative discourses in the cityscape.[8] The visual images that the political class uses to reinforce its message touch values which are emblematic of the Revolution and with which the vast majority of Cubans identify (social justice, national independence and anti-imperialism). They also play on common fears: the fear that the social advances made by the Revolution will be lost; the fear that Cuba's independence will again be threatened by the hegemonic aspirations of the U.S. in the region; and the fear of a return to the type of capitalism that was anathematised after 1959. Ownership of these images and the discourse which lies behind them, is vital to the leadership's perpetual task of constructing (and reconstructing) a hegemonic world view (see Chapter 3). The impact of the revolutionary image as a communicative event and the privileged 'space' of the official slogan as a discursive device within it, is discussed more fully in Chapter 6.

b) Data Generation Processes

Three main processes were used to generate data: the review of relevant literature; interviews and participant observation.

    Literature Review. The review of literature has been an on-going process throughout the entire cycle of the research project. Theoretical literature was accessed mainly via academic institutions in the UK but also during fieldwork in Cuba (see below). In the UK, several bodies of literature from multi-disciplinary sources[9] were reviewed including: literature on the state and civil society; transition theory literature (sometimes called 'transitology'); literature which takes democratisation as its theme; and literature of both an historical and contemporary focus dealing specifically with Cuba. A review of comparative literature was also conducted which included

cases of socialist transition (particularly China and Vietnam but also the Soviet Union and East European examples), as well as studies of regime change in Latin America. During fieldwork in Cuba a wide bibliographic search and review was made of available social science literature, including contemporary cultural and social science journals published on the island as well as national newspapers and periodicals. In addition, unpublished academic papers and Master's and Ph.D. thesis dissertations were consulted. Internal reports from the Ministry of Finance and Prices also provided useful material. In addition, various versions of the Cuban Constitution and relevant laws and codes were reviewed as were a wide range of archival materials from collections held at the document centre of the Federation of Cuban Women (*Federación de Mujeres Cubanas*, FMC), Centre for the Study of Cuban Youth, Centre for the Study of the Cuban Economy and the National Library of Cuba.

Interviews. Whether we think of them as a "conversation with a purpose" (Dexter, in Erdlandson *et al*, 1993,p.85), a "construction site of knowledge" (Kvale, 1996,p.14) or simply a "speech event" (Briggs, 1995,p.xiii), interviews are "a valuable method of gathering data about contemporary subjects" (Stedward, 1997, p.151). They have been the primary method of investigation in this study and were regarded as the "most appropriate" (Siedman, 1998,p.xxii) means of gathering data which would enable a better understanding of the problem at the centre of the investigation to be reached. As well as enabling 'dynamic' data concerning the contemporary issues which lie at the heart of this project to be accessed, interviews have also provided opportunities to analyse and interpret with respondents the political factors that have evolved throughout Cuba's unique history and which continue to influence Cuban politics today. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) point out: "interviews allow the researcher and respondent to move back and forth in time; to reconstruct the past, interpret the present and predict the future" (quoted in Erdlandson 1993,p.85). Briggs (1995) concurs: "we use interviews in exploring people's beliefs about the future … as well as their recollections of the past" (Briggs, 1995, p.1). This ability to move between historical periods during interviews has been vital for this study.

Kvale's (1996,p.159) interpretation of an interview as a conversation in which data arise in an interpersonal relationship which is "co-authored and co-produced" by interviewer and respondent underpins the understanding of the interview used in this research. Recently, linguistic and discourse analysis have focused greater attention on the study of interview conversations (Briggs, 1995) but within the social sciences generally, interviewing has become an increasingly popular method (see Stedward, 1997). As a consequence, the term has been used to cover a wide range of research activities from the most informal open-ended conversations, to formal structured interviews where interactions between interviewer and respondent are mediated by the use of a standard questionnaire.

In this study the defining features of an interview have been that the collection of data occurred in a face to face situation,[10] the interaction occurred in a research context, and it involved the posing of questions by the investigator to a respondent.[11] Although an interviewing technique that was highly structured or predetermined - as would be the case with a closed inflexible questionnaire - was not considered appropriate, neither was a completely unstructured approach with nothing prepared ahead of time. Instead, what Merriam (1988) describes as the "most common" approach was taken: "the semi-structured interview that is guided by a set of basic questions and issues to be explored, but neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is predetermined" (Merriam 1988, quoted in Erdlandson *et al*, 1993,p.86). The aim was to achieve a dialogue which was a mixture of purposeful conversation and embedded questions. It became apparent from the pilot study (see reflexive account below) that serendipitous comments from respondents often proved to be the most fascinating and it was therefore important to create an atmosphere which would facilitate such remarks.

The interviews were intended to provide opportunities to probe and ask questions appropriate to the respondent's knowledge. They were designed to reveal what people thought, how one person's perceptions compared with another's and how those varying responses could be situated within "the context of common group beliefs and themes" (Erdlandson *et al,* 1993) gleaned from other interviews, observations and the literature.

In total, over the course of the research, 115 semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted within and across stakeholder groups with 87 respondents. Where possible, an attempt was made to secure interviews with the same respondent (each meeting being counted as a separate interview). Of the 87 respondents, 15 agreed to more than one interview (see Appendix A). As Seidman (1998) warns, interviewers who: "propose to explore their topic by arranging a one-shot meeting with an 'interviewee' whom they have never met," risk treading on "thin contextual ice" (Seidman, 1998,p.11). In view of this, even those respondents who were only interviewed once had, in the majority of cases, been contacted prior to interview (at times on various occasions) in order to provided as strong a contextual foundation as possible for the conversation (see reflexive account below for details).

Interviews for this study were conducted in four phases in Cuba and the United Kingdom.[12] The first phase of interviews conducted in Cuba during November 1999 concentrated on a sample of respondents from a range of functional roles within the Cuban bureaucracy and government at national, provincial and municipal levels. The sample also included interviews with community workers, NGO staff and academics. This early phase of the research provided an invaluable context for enriching understanding of the institutional dynamics operating between the central Cuban state and local government, as well as an awareness of the role and space for other social actors and organisations.

The second phase of interviews (between September and December 2002) was conducted in the UK. The aim was to focus on the perceptions held by external sector stakeholders of the dynamics and implications of recent changes in Cuba, and what these 'told' them about the new relationship between the state and civil society on the island. A series of interviews with UK government officials involved in political and economic relations with Cuba (FCO and Trade Partners respectively) were arranged. In addition, private sector consultants whose work involved the preparation of economic forecasts and political reports for global and UK investors wishing to do business with Cuba were interviewed.

The third and most important phase of interviews was undertaken as part of fieldwork carried out in Cuba during the first half of 2003. During this time, interviews were conducted with a range of primary and secondary stakeholders. This phase of the research is described in detail in the reflexive account.

The final phase of interviews, from June 2003 onwards, was with a miscellaneous group of UK based (or visiting) respondents, including academics and diplomatic staff at the Cuban Embassy in London, who had been unavailable at other times.

Participant Observation. An important method of collecting data while in the field was via participant observation techniques. The origins of these techniques lie in the disciplines of anthropology and sociology, where they were traditionally used to study other cultures (Powdermaker, 1966) or sub-cultures (Whyte, 1955). Participant observation involves the researcher immersing her/himself in the social setting in which s/he is interested, observing people in their usual milieux and participating in their activities. On this basis, the researcher writes extensive field notes. The participant observer depends upon relatively long term relationships with informants, whose conversations are an integral part of these field notes (Lofland and Lofland, 1984). Such notes have been part of the raw data that were analysed in this investigation and have complemented the data created through the interviews. The difficulties of gaining access to a particular setting have meant, Devine (1995) argues, that the participant observation technique is associated increasingly with extensive observation and in-depth interviews. The issues of negotiating and securing access to the research setting as well as the conditions of entry that had to be met for this study to take place are discussed below.

2.1.5. Establishing Trustworthiness and Credibility

Data were triangulated in a number of ways by using different and multiple sources, theory and methods. As shown above, sources of data have been primary and secondary, human and non-human, stable and dynamic. In order to ensure trustworthiness and credibility, different sources of data that could provide insights into the same events or relationships were sought. Theoretical triangulation was achieved through the use of several perspectives in the analysis of the same set of

data. Engagement with multiple perspectives ensures that: "we are not blinded by our own biases," as Lincoln and Guba (1985,p.55) put it. As well as *within* method triangulation (for example between interviews) *between* method triangulation was also used in order to strengthen the research strategy. Guba and Lincoln (1989) advise that single items of information contribute little to understanding of a context unless they are enriched through triangulation. According to these researchers, each piece of information in a study should be expanded by at least one other source, for example, a second interview or a second method (Lincoln and Guba, 1989) and an attempt has been made to triangulate in this way.

Although this study focuses on a single case, a comparative methodology which draws on the analysis of other political systems that are appropriate comparators, as well as longitudinal comparisons within the case, have been used to strengthen triangulation further and enhance credibility. Cross-national analysis may be hidden from sight, in the sense that it is not an overt focus, but its influence must be acknowledged. It has been as a result of consulting analyses of other cases and comparing and contrasting them with that of Cuba, that ideas have been refined and tentative hypotheses formulated.[13] In this way, a comparative focus has been achieved. Although undoubtedly an "exceptional" case (Whitehead, 2002), studies of Cuba such as the present one may potentially provide useful insights into other contexts or feed into understandings of the central themes in politics, not only in the developing world but beyond.[14]

2.1.6. Interpretation and Analysis of Data

Researchers have great influence over decisions regarding what part of the data collected will be reported and how it will be reported (Fontana and Frey 1998). In this study it has been important, where possible, to interpret data with respondents in order to mitigate, or limit, such bias. At the same time it has been necessary to remain mindful of the danger of imposing interpretations or constructions on respondents and, conversely, of the variety of ways in which the respondent influences the ideas of the researcher towards data analysis. Hence, the analysis and interpretation of data began at the time of collection and proceeded afterwards. Having transcribed the interviews, and written up field notes and relevant research journal entries, a process of reading through all of the data and coding it commenced. The coding procedure used involved a simple reference in the text to indicate emergent themes which were later sorted into units which eventually related to chapter divisions. By reading and re-reading the data, responses were compared and contrasted in the search for consistencies, discrepancies, anomalies and negative cases. As theories emerged from the data that had been collected, an inductive stage of the research process began. Patterns began to take shape and themes materialised that could be identified and categorised. Many of these categories emerged spontaneously from the interactions with the data as it was organised and as a search was made for patterns within it. Seidman (1998) argues that the

researcher must "come to the transcripts with an open mind seeking what emerges as important and of interest from the text" (Seidman, 1998, p.100). However, the influence of ideas and themes that had been identified earlier in the research process must also be recognised. By searching for "the dramatic," "idiosyncratic" or "characteristic" as well as the "connective treads" among the experiences of the respondents, Seidman believes that a synthesis may emerge (Seidman, 1998,p.109-10). The aim of this study was not to find consensus among the multiple perspectives that had been gathered but rather to capture a diversity of opinion that could lead to a synthesis of the kind mentioned by Seidman (1998). The final interpretation offered in this thesis dissertation is the result of a dialectical process of engaging with the material that the respondents have spoken and data from participant observation, and analysing this data by applying, as Erdlandson *et al* (1993) put it, both intuition and intellect to the process. Essentially, asking of the data: How do these findings relate to the literature? Are there elements of consistency or inconsistency? In this way new data were interpreted with reference to wider theoretical debates and set in the context of these debates. The themes that were developed from the data have a synergistic relationship with each other. Together with the theory, they form the basis of the argument that is advanced within this study.

2.1.7. Limitations, Sources of Error and Remedies

Some potential sources of 'error' which could compromise the data collection strategies or the reliability of the data (and as a consequence, the research findings), have already been highlighted in this chapter. Others are discussed in detail in the reflexive account (see 2.2 below) and in the conclusion to the dissertation. As far as possible, an attempt has been made to safeguard against limitations and errors and although, as in all studies, areas of weakness may exist, strategies have been employed in order to minimise any disadvantages for the research. The use of a qualitative approach is not considered to be an 'error' and as such a comparison with quantitative research methods, with their reliance on surveys with large samples and standard questions that act as checks and controls against bias, can not be used to highlight the potential pitfalls in the approach chosen here.[15]

The aim of the semi-structured in-depth interviews was to capture a diversity of views as opposed to complete representation. There are weaknesses associated with this method of generating data, including the difficulty in ascertaining the covert interests and agendas of stakeholders, the problem that information may be factually incorrect or even intentionally inconsistent (see below). In addition, ethnography depends very much on the researcher establishing intimate contact with the research field. Given this, a lack of neutrality on the part of the researcher and over familiarity with respondents could, potentially, have been problems. However, an endeavour was made to avoid both partisanship and 'going native' (see Ellen, 1984).

Although the phased nature of the interviewing process was as much a response to pragmatic issues[16] as a clearly planned strategy, there have been advantages associated with this approach. Principal among them was the opportunity it has afforded for changes in the setting to be examined over a period of time. This longitudinal triangulation has been particularly useful given the difficulties involved in conducting research on processes which are still in train. According to Dilla (2000) conducting an empirical study in Cuba is difficult because: "it is both incipient and vertiginous, causing the researcher to be overtaken by events" (Dilla, 2000,p.35). Another benefit of the phased time scale was that it enabled a degree of familiarity with the setting and its stakeholders to be built up gradually. However, and as Kapcia (2000,p.258) notes,

> … any Cuba-watcher must be well aware of the problems of accurately assessing Cuban responses to an outsider who, however familiar with the system and linguistically able to communicate, is nonetheless still a foreigner.

As this issue is dealt with more fully below, it will suffice here to draw attention to it and to recognise its importance as a potential limitation.

In order to avoid or (where this has not been possible) to learn from 'errors', an attempt has been made to remain sensitive and reflexive throughout the investigation.[17] Issues of research design have been continually revisited as the study has progressed. Although the objectives of this investigation have been modified as it has proceeded, findings from each stage of the research process have been integrated into the thesis, fortifying the final product. In qualitative work of this kind there is the potential danger of misrepresenting respondents or of constructing biased interpretations of the data. By jointly interpreting or checking with respondents those interpretations that had been made, it is hoped that such dangers have been avoided.

Finally there is the issue of being able to represent only a fraction of views. In a study of this kind only a relatively limited number of respondents can be accessed through interviews, although the number carried out exceeded expectations (see below). However by using a range of methods (participant observation, interviews, literature reviews) together with a wide range of fieldwork experiences, the range of 'voices' that have been listened to and integrated into this study has been increased. The way in which these views are presented is also problematic. Selective quotation, of the kind used here, runs the risk of presenting data in an 'uncontextualised' manner, with the added danger that quotations are selected (either from texts or from interview transcripts) which support or enhance the existing text. It has been for this reason that an attempt has been made to contextualise the research and to present alternative arguments and view points which emerged during data collection. As there was the possibility that alternative, potential, arguments might exist in discarded data (given the volume of the data set) it has been important to revisit the data throughout the 'writing-up' process in order to scan for any arguments which might have been missed during earlier readings. To some (mainly quantitative) analysts the use of selective

quotation would be regarded as a form of 'data mining'. Here, however, the strategy has been chosen and used as a positive tool which enables the perceptions of those interviewed to be privileged in the text. While unable to offer a complete representation of perspectives, it has enabled differences and contestation on selected themes to be seen.

2.1.8. Ethical Considerations and Dilemmas

Given the amount of overseas fieldwork involved in this study, it was decided that the disciplines of Sociology and Social Anthropology could be used to inform understanding of the particular ethical implications of cross-cultural research. An additional benefit of this "interdisciplinary triangulation" (Janesick, 1998) was the insight it offered into the advantages and disadvantages, dangers and opportunities that can be afforded by a range of positions and perspectives within and between cognant, yet usually discrete, disciplines. Recently (November 2004) the International Development Ethics Committee of the School of Development Studies (UEA) has produced an ethics statement to help researchers embarking on fieldwork overseas but these guidelines were not available during the active phase of this research.[18] However, even at this late stage the new policy has been a useful device with which to evaluate the procedures that were put in place to ensure that ethical issues were adequately addressed.

Given the above, the guidelines for research ethics in social anthropology, as laid down by the Association of Social Anthropologists, proved invaluable for this study. Like most ethical guidelines for researchers, the need to respect, consider and attend to the rights of others are stressed in the Association's guide to best practice. As acknowledged by the ESRC (2003a) in their training guidelines for research students and providers, privacy and confidentiality, the attribution of ideas, intellectual property rights and informed consent are all essential ethical considerations for researchers. Moreover, an ethos of care, sensitivity and respect must underpin any interaction with others participating in research. During the research undertaken for this study a conscious attempt was made to operate within this code of conduct at all times.

Taking measures to protect all participants and minimise their vulnerability was crucial. The possibility of a respondent, or the organisation to which they belonged, suffering negative repercussions as a result of participating in the study was a serious consideration during fieldwork and it is one which has important implications for the dissemination of the research findings (see below). As Erdlandson *et al* (1993,p.89) stress:

> … it is not uncommon for the researcher and respondent to form a type of relationship that gives the researcher privy information that could cause damage to the individual or group.

Although, the researcher is necessarily intrusive on the environment and persons being researched (however careful and well-meaning s/he intends to be), as an outsider s/he has a responsibility

towards those in the setting under investigation. During this study this responsibility was kept firmly in mind. Erdlandson *et al* (1993,p.89) express it in the following terms:

> The researcher's goal is to get behind the data being collected and to see through them the constructed realities of the respondent. After having been allowed into this very private world of the respondents, what possible right can the researcher claim to harm or destroy it?

The issue of preserving respondents' anonymity raised particular issues. When planning the interviews, it had been decided that the identity of all respondents should be concealed in the final text by using a coding convention which would relate to the position of the respondent within a stakeholder group. However, as the vast majority of respondents gave their consent to be named directly within the text, this universal coding system was abandoned. The convention finally adopted has been to refer to individuals *who gave their consent to be named in the text* using their surnames, although full names and relevant details are listed in Appendix A. The fact that most people were willing to be named may, in part, be due to the fact that once conditions of entry into the research setting had been met, a tacit form of 'political clearance' was bestowed on the research. Moreover, the institutional support of a host organisation during fieldwork in Cuba lent legitimacy to the study and moved it into the official public domain. Alternatively, and given this, it could indicate that respondents were guarding their "private worlds" and did not share opinions that would leave them vulnerable. It would appear that a combination of both reasons is most likely: respondents who agreed to 'official' interviews knew that the process was a public one and adjusted their discourse accordingly.

Those who did not give their consent to be named directly were asked how, if at all, they would like to be referred to in the dissertation. It is for this reason that at certain points first names or job titles (the two preferred codes) have been used. None of the details are fictional. In such cases an * sign has been used to alert the reader to incomplete details. There are very few cases where it has been necessary to use this device, indicating that where respondents were reluctant to give their names they were also more likely to exercise their right to speak 'off the record'. Any off the record comments or requests for anonymity have been scrupulously respected. Incomplete details have been used more extensively to conceal the full identity of a respondent in Chapter 6, where data has been more closely related to the subject as, for example, in the discussion regarding homosexuality.

Respect for the persons participating in this study (it is important to note that participation in the study was entirely voluntary) either as a respondent in an interview or in some other capacity, has included making clear to them the motives and intentions behind the research as well as the study's purpose and the anticipated use of the data (see reflexive account for details). It would be important to consult those whose views are represented in the text should the findings of this study be published in formats other than a research dissertation.

2.2. A REFLEXIVE ACCOUNT OF THE RESEARCH

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to a reflexive account of the research carried out in Cuba.[19] The account begins by considering the pilot field trip before the main fieldwork is discussed. Where appropriate reflections on the UK based phase of the research have been incorporated into the account, but in order to avoid repetition the principle focus is the overseas fieldwork. Following Sixsmith *et al* (2003) the view is taken that the researcher almost inevitably has an effect upon research participants in the collection of data. In order to discuss the complexities of these interactions the first person or active voice is used throughout the account.[20]

2.2.1. The Pilot Field Trip

In November 1999 I spent a month in Cuba. During this time I conducted a series of interviews with public officials, bureaucrats, academics and community activists both in Havana and in various locations within the Province of Cienfuegos (for full details see Appendix A). I was hosted by the Cuban Ministry of Finance and Prices, who organised a business visa and provided institutional support for my research. I had previously visited Cuba in March-April 1996 as part of research funded by the University of York and it was as a result of the contacts I had made both in the UK and Cuba at that time that I was able to return in 1999 to conduct a pilot study for this research.

Hence, I already had some knowledge of the cultural and historical background of the area, an understanding of contemporary economic, social and political developments in Cuba (through a review of published literature, attendance at various academic and trade events, and the 1996 research trip) and an awareness of the regional and global factors that are part of the local development process on the island. However, the 1999 pilot visit gave me a greater appreciation of the problems of cross-cultural research and a deeper awareness of potential difficulties. Aside from the issues of gaining access to the setting and key stakeholders within it, the norms and conventions of social interaction in a different cultural context (Stedward, 1997) and the ethical concerns pertaining to political and social mores that are peculiar to Cuba, presented particular complications. Hence, in addition to providing essential information as to 'how things typically worked' in the research setting, the pilot study highlighted the specific problems surrounding data acquisition that I was likely to face as a foreign researcher and the skills that I would need in overcoming them. Given the visa requirements for travel to Cuba, and the immigration laws for foreigners working in Cuba as opposed to visiting the island, it became clear that identifying and negotiating conditions of entry with certain institutions and individuals within them would be essential if I was to be able to carry out fieldwork over a number of months. I became aware that the way in which I presented myself and my research, as well as who I approached to request institutional support for my investigation, were of critical importance if my project was to be successful. Many of the interviews that I conducted in 1999 were organised by gatekeepers in the

Ministry of Finance and Prices who, following an initial meeting with me, drew up and contacted a list of individuals whom together we agreed I should interview. Given time limitations and the relatively small pool of contacts that I had independently established, this approach provided an opportunity to access quickly an important group of stakeholders, but it also had considerable disadvantages associated with it. For example, my respondents were hand picked for me and on many occasions officials from the Ministry sat in on the interviews. Despite these issues (and in some cases because of them) I was given a fascinating insight into the workings of this Ministry and its dealings with its local organs. Moreover, contacts with key personnel provided access to high-ranking Ministry officials (bureaucrats and party 'bosses') and gave me an appreciation of the internal politics between communities of bureaucrats and party officials within the structure of the Ministry. The maneuvering I observed between parallel yet interdependent Party and government bureaucracies highlighted the strength of the nexus between the Party and state in Cuba.

As well as the interviews which had been arranged for me, I had the opportunity to organise an 'alternative' series of interviews with community workers and academics. At this time my objective was to develop an understanding of the nature of the relationship that existed between the local state and civil society in Cuba and, like many other researchers during the 1990s (see Rossett and Benjamin, 1994), I concentrated my efforts on examining the peri-urban organic agricultural projects that had emerged during the early 1990s. I also collected literature which I had been unable to access outside of Cuba and a range of unpublished documents from the Ministry's own archive. In general, I familiarised myself with the setting. Crucially, I left Cuba knowing that I had sufficient proficiency in the language not only as an idiom but as a cultural discourse which I would need to use and understand in order to successfully negotiate and conduct elite interviews. Also, that I had the ability to cope with the difficulties facing foreign researchers working in Cuba (see Hernandez, 1999; Aguirre, 2000; Kapcia, 2000; Miller, 2003), a realistic idea of the budget required for a prolonged research trip and a clearer idea of the type of fieldwork which would enable me to answer the research questions and potential themes for analysis which were forming in my mind.

2.2.2. The Main Fieldwork

The main fieldwork for this study was undertaken in Havana from the beginning of January to the end of May 2003. The limited time scale presented considerable pressures in terms of getting 'results', which was why the pilot trip was essential. Without it, I would have been unable to get 'up to speed' in the short amount of time that I planned for re-familiarisation prior to the start of the interviewing. As it turned out, I was quickly operational. Freilich (1970) makes an important distinction between two phases of fieldwork. The first involves learning to "survive physically, psychologically and morally in a strange setting," while the second is "an active phase when the fieldworker attempts to obtain data" (in Ellen, 1984,p.95). The experience gained from both the

1996 visit and the pilot trip of 1999 enabled me to move into the "active" phase that Freilich describes soon after arrival.

Having carefully considered an invitation to return to Cienfuegos, I decided to focus my time in Havana. Despite recent efforts to decentralise, Migdal's assertion that states are "centred in their capitals" (Migdal, 1988, p.181) can still be applied to Cuba and as the majority of the stakeholders I had identified were therefore to be found in the capital, my decision to remain there was taken on this basis. However, I was aware that it had costs associated with it which could potentially represent limitations for the research.

a) Negotiating Access to the Setting

Having considered the advantages and disadvantages of obtaining a visa via my contacts at the Ministry of Finance and Prices, I decided that on this occasion I would attempt to gain access through an academic institution. I hoped that this would facilitate greater flexibility for myself as a researcher and enable me to access a wider range of stakeholder groups. I also felt that preconceived ideas and perceptions about my project held by gatekeepers in the Ministry, might prove to be difficult to correct or adjust. I was conscious that my ability to explain my interests during this phase of the research could potentially involve first having to rectify these (mis)conceptions and even disappoint the expectations of some people who were keen to see my research follow their own agendas. However, there was a risk that the study could be jeopardised in another way. During the pilot trip I had identified individuals connected to the Ministry who could potentially disrupt my work or at least affect it negatively and I wanted to avoid this.

It is a legal requirement in Cuba that foreign researchers are affiliated to a national institute or organisation. It is from such a 'host' that a letter of invitation can be obtained enabling the correct visa to be issued prior to travel. Having unsuccessfully attempted to secure an affiliation via FLACSO-Cuba in the Summer of 2002,[21] I approached the *Instituto de Filosofía* (Institute of Philosophy). Based in Havana, the Institute comes under the auspices of the Ministry of Science and the Environment. Although at times it did not appear to be the case, this direct relationship between research centre and ministry made the process of seeking permission to conduct research in Cuba less complex than it could otherwise have been. I had made contacts with researchers at the Institute in 1996. As a result of this link, I received an invitation in late 2002 to attend an international conference due to be hosted by the Institute in early January 2003. Having heard my plans regarding the fieldwork, the Institute requested a copy of the research proposal that I had previously sent to FLACSO and soon afterwards agreed to act as my institutional host for the duration of the fieldwork. As there was insufficient time to organise an academic visa prior to travel, a business visa was arranged which entitled me to travel to Cuba and stay for one month. I

was assured that this visa could be extended more easily once I was in Havana. In practice, things were not so simple.

b) Conditions of Entry

Conditions of 'entry' and the extension of my permission to stay and conduct research in Cuba were continually adjusted during my time in the field. In the end, the process of negotiating and re-negotiating access was ongoing, complex, frustrating and costly. It involved over thirty separate meetings with international relations staff at the Institute and at least as many telephone calls during the course of the five months that I was in Cuba. On one occasion, mid-way through my research trip, I was told that I would have to leave the island temporarily in order to comply with visa regulations.[22] Although, at the eleventh hour, I was informed this would not be necessary it caused a good deal of stress and disruption to my work. Even after I had been granted an extended residency and research permit I continued to face problems, including, ironically, when I came to leave. Linked to the problems surrounding my migratory status was the issue of accommodation. Such issues may appear trivial but without resolving them it would have been impossible to proceed with the research and in themselves they offer an insight into the relationship between the state, civil society and the 'external sector'.

In November 2002, following a tightening in the application of laws relating to the accommodation of foreigners, a new directive was issued by the Cuban government which emphasised the need to clampdown on the illegal housing of foreign nationals in unlicensed, private, residences. The Institute stressed the importance of my finding suitable accommodation which was legal within this new interpretation of the law. Without a 'legal' address, I would be unable to work as I would not qualify for the correct visa and permissions. Without these, I would not only be breaking the law but would also potentially be endangering any Cuban nationals with whom I came into contact in my capacity as a researcher. The dilemma I faced revolved around costs. Accommodation classified as legal (tourist hotels, licensed bed and breakfast or self-catering arrangements) was prohibitively expensive. It would also mean that I would be unable to live as a member of the community, which was one of my aims. After a week in a hotel, I was invited by a family known to one of the tutors at the Institute to stay with them as a 'friend of the family', a legal option available to Cuban citizens twice a year. This circumvented the issue of formally renting accommodation (which required a license), and resolved both my own needs and those of the family who would benefit from an (informal) additional source of income.[23] However this option involved an enormous amount of paperwork, bureaucracy and considerable 'problems' for the family concerned. Cuban Immigration required a copy of the title of the property along with a letter of invitation from the homeowner (an elderly grandmother) inviting me to stay in her home as a guest. Any kind of official contact worried the family and the idea that their names and details were being

recorded with Immigration and the Ministry of the Interior was stressful for them and distressing for me (the cause of their stress) to witness. Later, coping with being interviewed myself by the Cuban authorities and discovering from the President of the neighbourhood CDR that the reason for this was that someone had 'denounced' the family with whom I was living (falsely believing that I was staying with them illegally) was stressful. Concerns about the family in terms of their own position vis-à-vis the law raised difficult moral dilemmas. These unanticipated 'problems' were demanding to cope with. Compared with them, the difficulties of living and working in Cuba - the continuous power and water shortages, little or no internet or computer access - were minor. As Punch (1998) argues: "fieldwork is definitely not a soft option, but rather represents a demanding craft that involves coping with multiple negotiations and continually dealing with ethical dilemmas" (Punch, 1998,p.159). Difficult though it was on occasions, I consider my time living with this family to have been as important as the formal interviews that I conducted for my research. Without this ethnographic experience of participating in daily life, listening to the stories and narratives of members of this family and their friends, and becoming involved in the local community, much of the richest part of the fieldwork would have been lacking and my understanding of the context in which my research was set would have been the poorer for it.[24]

Another condition of entry into the setting involved an analysis of my political orientation. Although I am not sure how exactly this was achieved I assume, following conversations with UK diplomatic staff, that my involvement in the Cuban Solidarity organisation in the UK and the fact that I was already known to academics at the Institute and the Ministry of Finance and Prices helped. However the two conditions which were of critical importance in the Cuban authorities decision to grant me permission to undertake research related to my funding and the use of my research findings. Both need to be considered keeping firmly in mind the intentions of Title II of the United States 1996 Helms-Burton Act. Cubans are rightly concerned that research may be influenced by interests intent not only on discrediting their system but also on promoting regime change within the island. Given this, it was of crucial importance to my Cuban sponsors and hosts that my funding was not tied to UK government sources.[25] When we consider that on 26 March 2003, USAID announced authorisation of funds of $1 million for Miami University's *Cuba Transition Project* it becomes clear that the scrutiny of funding sources is not without foundation. In my case, I had been awarded a scholarship by my academic department which although not completely independent of government funding[26] was for the purposes of independent research and was not tied to any government agenda. Moreover, the findings of my research were purely for academic use as part of my doctoral research. Once satisfied on these counts, the Institute appointed an academic supervisor who would oversee my research,[27] an international relations officer and a secretary who would be responsible for any problems arising during my stay. It was essential that I established a good rapport with these key individuals, in particular the secretary who

liased between myself and not only her immediate colleagues but also other stakeholders in a variety of institutions. On many occasions her 'approval' of me and the understanding which developed between us, ensured that papers did not languish in desk draws for weeks on end and that telephone calls were made to request (and re-request) interviews, access to research centres, or information. In addition, her personal knowledge of the machinations of other institutes and organisations proved to be a great help. Her influence over decisions relating to my work at times appeared disproportionate and proved to show the vulnerability of my research. It also highlighted the need to identify continuously *who* could potentially harm the investigation, *how* and *why* and, conversely, who could offer a degree of 'protection' and support. Identifying interests and agendas was difficult. It involved carefully piecing together information and 'reading' the atmosphere either within and between groups or directed towards myself. However, these interpersonal dynamics were themselves important in illuminating aspects of the research questions that I sought to explore through my observations and participation. They also highlighted the "psychological stress" and "sense of isolation and alienation of living in a place but not being part of it" (Ellen, 1984,p.87;p.94. On Cuba, see Rosendahl's *Preface* to her 1997 study). At varying times I was both outsider and insider to the community I had accessed: acting as an 'outsider' who sought respondents at every available opportunity, and a 'semi-insider' involved in the ethnographic approach of "being there" (Whyte, 1955) as an active contributor to community life. This dual role complicated the process of managing social relationships.[28]

My tutor and the international relations officer were also pivotal in ensuring that others understood and accepted my research project. As well as being a well-known academic, my tutor was a respected leader in the community and had served in a number of public roles: as local delegate to the National Assembly and President of the local *Consejo Popular* (Popular Council), among others. Moreover, his wife was President of their CDR and a respected Party official. Like many of their generation, both had been educated in Moscow. In many cases the mere mention of my supervisor's name was enough to gain entry to an institution or to be granted an interview. In this way a chain of trust was built. Anchoring myself to a stable, respected, figure in the community enabled me, an 'unknown' and therefore potentially dangerous foreigner,[29] to extend the range of individuals whom I could approach with requests for interviews. By building up such relationships I was effectively cantilevering my way into the community; reinforced at one end by a solid structure which consisted of institutional and personal support.

While in the UK, I had asked my supervisors to write a short formal letter of introduction in Spanish on official letterhead introducing myself and my research and vouching for my position as a research student at a British University. Once in Cuba, I was quickly provided with a similar letter bearing the Institute's official stamp which explained the nature of my research, my institutional and academic affiliations, and requested that I should be helped by whomsoever

received the letter during the course of my stay. This letter enabled me to gain admittance to libraries and research centres and lent not only academic respectability and bureaucratic approval to my requests but also a form of political 'clearance'.

However, it was not until I received my Cuban ID card that I was in a position to approach people independently for interviews without the concern that they may suffer negative consequences as a result of contact with me. Once in possession of this almost mythical emerald-green booklet, my research took on a new dynamic as I attempted to interview as many people as possible within and across my stakeholder groups. It was from this point onwards that my research blossomed, with requests for interviews being accepted thick and fast.

I can not emphasise enough two further (interrelated) factors which facilitated my entry and acceptance within the research setting. The first is that I did not need an interpreter in order to carry out my research. I was totally self-sufficient in this respect. The second is that I am half Spanish. I am convinced that this seemingly inconsequential fact has proved to be of great help in my research. Time and again, when people delved into my own background and realised that we shared a Spanish ancestry this coincidence was interpreted positively as a common bond which overrode any initial response to a British researcher (which at times could be one of suspicion or non-cooperation). I make this highly subjective point because so often during the course of the interviews this issue of my own identity and the importance of a 'shared' identity was mentioned to me. Although I have no way of judging whether this did play a part in the nature of the relationships that I built with people, or the success of the interviews, I do think that it helped a rapport to develop between myself and my respondents which added to the quality of the interpersonal relationships that I formed. It also implicitly points to an arguably more interesting fact: that the vast majority (in fact over 90%) of the primary stakeholders whom I interviewed described themselves as 'white' with Spanish ancestors (most commonly a grandparent or great grandparent).[30]

c) Identifying and Accessing Stakeholders in the Setting

I identified most of the people whom I eventually interviewed once in the setting. However, careful preparation in the UK had been crucial. Prior to my arrival in Cuba I had drawn up a list of individuals whom I wished to interview, as well as organisations from which I was interested in interviewing someone but did not have a contact name. As I had interviewed a range of UK based stakeholders in the Autumn of 2002, I had been able to take advantage of 'snowballing' in order to generate a small sample in Havana prior to travel. Another important means of identifying key individuals was through the literature which I had reviewed. I was particularly keen to interview Cuban social scientists working on similar themes to myself. I had made some approaches via email from the UK but it was not until I was in Cuba that the process of identifying stakeholders

took on momentum. During my initial contact with the Institute I was asked to provide a list of individuals and/or organisations from which I would like to interview a member of staff. In a follow-up meeting it was explained to me which interviews were, and which were not, possible. The only group which was immediately rejected was the army but as I show below, I did find ways in which, partially, to circumvent this 'problem'. I requested interviews at nearly all of the Ministries, particularly those created after the re-shuffle of the early 1990s, as I was interested in examining the differences in perspective among staff within and between Ministries. Of those that I had identified, some were immediately dismissed by my advisors as "unsuitable" and I was discouraged from pursuing others. From the beginning I had made it clear that I wished to interview someone from the Ministry of Economy and Planning and this was eventually agreed. As I became more established in the setting, I used other networks to access stakeholders in those Ministries which I considered central to my research but which the Institute had vetoed. In addition, some of the 'personalities' on my list were regarded by Institute staff to be "too difficult to access" or "unnecessary" to approach for interviews. Again, as I show below, I relied on an improvised range of alternative strategies to capture the perspectives of these individuals.

Of those strategies that I had prepared prior to arrival in Havana in order to facilitate access to stakeholders were the following: arranging to deliver letters and literature on behalf of other UK based researchers to their contacts and colleagues in Cuba (these personal letters introduced me to key stakeholders and included a request for their assistance); organising attendance at a conference scheduled for the first week of my field trip (this enabled me to network with other social scientists, community workers and government bureaucrats attending the event); following up the approach to FLACSO-Cuba which I had made from the UK (again, this was intended to build networks); re-establishing dialogue with previous contacts in Havana; and arranging interviews with British diplomats working in Havana. This last strategy proved to be controversial. Given the politically sensitive nature of my research topic, particularly in light of the internal situation that unfolded while I was in Cuba, I made a point of explaining to staff at the Institute that I had arranged interviews with diplomatic staff, including the Ambassador, at the British Embassy. Each time that I visited the UK Embassy I first informed the Institute, for fear of upsetting or embarrassing my hosts should my visits be noted or regarded as inappropriate. I considered this issue of protocol to be important as I was first and foremost a guest in Cuba. Concerns regarding protocol, respect for my hosts and issues of personal safety also influenced my decision to decline an invitation to meet with a U.S. congressman who was visiting Cuba in March 2003. In the light of the arrests of dissidents later that month (see Chapter 6) and the cooling of EU-Cuban relations following well-founded accusations by the Cuban state that European embassies based in Cuba had hosted dissidents (Rubido, interview 19 June 2003, UK), these considerations were important.

Once in Havana, I was able to ask my tutor for advice in identifying potential stakeholders and on more than one occasion he was able to make approaches on my behalf. In addition, I attended a wide variety of events at which stakeholders (whom I knew but with whom I had yet to secure an interview) or potential stakeholders (whom I did not know) would be present.[31] At one such event - an open lecture organised by the department of Anthropology of the University of Havana - there was an opportunity for questions from the floor. By putting a question to the guest speaker, Aaron Cicourel, I found that I had an opportunity to talk about my research and my research plans in front of a large audience. After this lecture I had offers of help from fellow researchers who enabled me to access new networks of stakeholders. This form of networking was invaluable as it quickly enabled me to be accepted and recognised by a group of people from within the academic community who were important for my research. Participating at these events enabled me not only to seek out new contacts and firm up offers of interviews but also to observe stakeholders interacting and discussing issues which were of relevance to my research. Quite quickly, I found that I was recognised by individuals and this facilitated my requests for interviews. I found that the pool of key people in Havana was relatively small and that people often knew each other directly or via someone who could act as a link. In short, my approach was to be as proactive and energetic as possible in seeking out ways of identifying and accessing stakeholders. In order to achieve a holistic picture I sought the perceptions of a wide array of people within and across the stakeholder groups that I had contrived.

The process of identifying and negotiating access to stakeholders while I was in Cuba was on-going. I kept both a 'running record' of this process and notes relating to the biographical details of key respondents as well as their attitudes, orientation and position at work as I considered these factors to be important in shaping their interpretations of the processes that interested me. I also kept a 'map' of the connections between stakeholders. Mapping the relationships between individuals and keeping information on biographical details, institutional affiliations and social position was extremely useful. Not only did it enable me to place interviewee's attitudes and behaviours in a specific context, it also enabled me to discover that the 'chains' between stakeholders were often not very long and that most people were only a few 'links' away from each other on these maps, further indication that the elite group concentrated in the capital is a relatively small one. It also suggested the existence of a group (or political class) comprising individuals from *both* the state and civil society as opposed to (or, as well as) separate elites. Given this, the distinction between elite / non-elite was potentially extremely relevant, more so perhaps than the state-civil society distinction. This is a point to which I return in the conclusion.

A working knowledge of the constellation of relations between people within and across my stakeholder groups enabled me to build an overview of elite networks within and between the party-state, civil society and the external sector in Cuba. Most importantly, as the 'gaps' in these

maps became obvious, I could take measures to fill them. The chart below represents a summary of the means that I employed to secure interviews in Havana during the Spring of 2003 and the corresponding yield.

Figure 2.2

Summary of How Interviews Were Secured in Cuba 2003	
Means	Yield
♦ Through the Institute (institutional broker)	5*
♦ Through contacts in the UK	6
♦ Cold calls / direct approaches once in Havana	10
♦ Through friends / personal acquaintances (personal broker)	30
♦ Through stakeholders during interviews (snowballing)	11
♦ Individual Invitation (stakeholder approached me with offer)	3
	Total: 65
NB. * of these five, two were with Institute staff.	

The most interesting category both in terms of the convoluted sequence of contacts whose help it was necessary to draw upon in order to secure interviews, and the category yielding the highest number of secured interviews, was that of 'friends / personal acquaintances'. It was not unusual for two, three or even more gatekeepers to be involved in the chain between myself and the stakeholder whom I wished to access. This sometimes meant that I was not directly involved in all of the phases of the complex negotiations that were involved in a request for an interview. Where this was the case, the initial gatekeeper can best be described as a 'broker', although no financial transactions were involved in those arrangements involving friends and acquaintances. All of the 'brokers' were gatekeepers, although not all of the gatekeepers were brokers. Those that were acted on my behalf as an 'agent' or 'co-ordinator' for purely altruistic reasons, as did those stakeholders who suggested further contacts to me during an interview (snowballing). However, the Institute certainly acted as a broker in the more conventional sense and here money was exchanged for their services. There was a contract between myself and staff at the Institute but the terms of this contract were at times unclear and both the amount that I needed to pay and the 'help' that this secured fluctuated.[32] The most motivated brokers were those people whom I knew personally or had met socially. They worked tirelessly to request that a 'friend-of-a-friend-of-a-friend' might help me. The Institute's interest and level of activity on my behalf dipped according to the ebb and flow of the work which they had themselves to deal with. Over time an institutional fatigue seemed to set in and there

appeared to be less urgency to set dates for meetings and it appeared that more obstacles were put in my path.[33] In our early conversations, staff at the Institute had told me that they would organise all of the interviews that I had requested. Later they informed me that they did not consider interviews to be necessary for my research and that I should instead consult literature and visit document and archive centres. After I explained that the main objective of my work was to gather people's perceptions through in-depth interviews and that they had know this since November 2002 when I had submitted my research proposal, they reluctantly organised a small number for me (see fig.2.2). I made them aware that I would continue to contact people myself in order to request interviews. They asked that I supply a list of the names of all of those people with whom I came into contact. This presented an ethical dilemma which finally I 'resolved' by presenting a list of only those people who had agreed that I could pass on their names. Although I was not therefore able to provide a full list, I did manage to keep Institute staff abreast of my activities and was cautious not to appear obstructive.

The use of 'brokers' presented a number of problems. The most significant involved the issue of how my research interests were being presented to potential respondents. I tried to counteract possible distortion by providing a clear idea of my research objectives to my 'broker' and also by contacting each respondent directly prior to an interview. This enabled me to outline briefly the nature of my research and draw attention to the particular way in which their expertise or knowledge might assist me. I had found from the pilot study that once a perception has been formed in the mind of a respondent as to the aim of the interview it is extremely difficult to change these assumptions at a later date by introducing a new approach or focus. I did not want to close down possible avenues of investigation by gatekeepers misinterpreting my objectives and wrongly communicating them to potential respondents. Clarity of purpose and expression when dealing with stakeholders were, as Stedward (1997) notes, essential and I tired to remain consistent and clear in my message. As well as more mundane issues such as the confirmation of dates, times and locations for the interview, another important reason for personally contacting a respondent prior to an interview was to address any concerns they might have regarding issues of confidentiality and how the data would be used. It also provided an opportunity for the respondent to ask any additional questions that they might have regarding the research and the dissemination of the findings.

I was wary of approaches made to me by individuals offering unsolicited interviews and as a consequence I declined three offers to interview journalists. I also decided not to accept an invitation to take part in a televised interview about my work on the daily morning news programme *Buenos Dias* as I was concerned that this might have negative repercussions. I had only one experience of a very negative response to my request for an interview which came after a 'cold-call'. Both the UK FCO and Cuban academics working on the theme of religion in Cuba had

recommend I should speak to the Bishop of Havana. Again, domestic politics may have played a part in the response I received to my telephone request, but I felt that I had perhaps been hasty in trying to arrange this interview directly and had made a protocol gaffe. With hindsight it might have been advisable to have used a broker.

In one case I used three different means of approaching a key stakeholder who was particularly difficult to access. I asked the Institute to make an official approach for me, I contacted a range of people whom I knew and who also knew this individual either directly or indirectly and finally I networked at a conference late in my research trip and was introduced to colleagues of the individual in question. It was through these colleagues that introductions were subsequently made. When we finally met, this stakeholder immediately agreed to an interview, commenting that half of Havana was trying to get him to agree to see me and that he admired my tenacity. There is of course a fine line between being motivated, persistent and tenacious and being a nuisance. On another occasion, a key respondent was asked on the 21st January for a interview (which he agreed to grant me) but it was not until 13th May that I actually managed to conduct the interview, after literally months of careful 'chasing up'.

d) The sample

My sample of respondents was generated by a combination of purposeful and opportunistic sampling procedures which continued throughout my time in the setting. According to Merriam (1988), sociologists speak of a "good respondent" as an informant who "understands the culture but is also able to reflect on it and explain to the researcher what is going on" (in Erdlandson *et al*, 1993,p.91). Arguably my most important 'job' while in the field was to select good informants. I made decisions regarding whom to approach on the basis of what I desired to know and from whose perspective I wished to learn that information. Merriam (1988) argues that this means engaging in *purposive sampling:* "selecting individuals on the basis of what they can contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon under study" (Merriam, 1988, in Erdlandson *et al*, 1993,p.91). The 'opportunistic' element of sampling procedure was also important. By taking advantage of opportunities as they arose I greatly enriched the range of individuals available to me for interview. I tried to remain flexible and responsive to unexpected 'leads' but also to balance these against my plans regarding which stakeholders I needed to access. It was important to make decisions as to whom *not* to interview in order to keep an integrated sample and to protect my time. This process of elimination was necessary for my research to remain relevant and manageable. As my aim was to conduct in-depth semi-structured interviews, I was primarily concerned with the depth and quality of the interviews I conducted (judged in terms of the range of respondents accessed and 'information richness' of our conversations). However a good yield in terms of quantity was also a concern. Prior to travel, my supervisors had discussed this issue with me and, based on time

available and the need for a diverse sample, we had agreed upon a target figure of fifty interviews that were (as far as possible) to be spread equally across stakeholder groups.

e) Accessing 'Inaccessible' Stakeholders: Second Best Solutions

During my time in the field I had to bear in mind that there is "a realistic limit to what someone will tell a foreign university student" (Erdlandson, *et al*, 1993,p.135). I also had to be realistic about the fact that it was likely that not all of the stakeholders whom I wished to interview could be accessed. Top of my list of apparently 'inaccessible personalities' was of course Fidel Castro himself, closely followed by Ministers from his government and leading party officials. I did however manage to hear and record Fidel as he spoke to delegates at a three day international conference towards the end of my research trip. While on another occasion, he unexpectedly walked into a meeting which I was attending at the Writers' Union (UNEAC), hosted by the Ministry of Culture. Approximately thirty people were present and he spoke and answered our questions from 10pm until the early hours of the following morning (see plates 3,4 and 5, Appendix A). This was, I thought, a unique opportunity but more followed and in total I have over eight hours of tape containing Fidel's impromptu speeches and reflections at various conferences and meetings. I also have those of Abel Prieto (Minister of Culture), Ricardo Alarcon (President of the National Assembly), Pedro Ross Leal (General Secretary of the CTC), Miguel Limia David (President of CITIMA, Ministry of Science and the Environment) and Carlos Martí Brenes (President of UNEAC) among others (see Appendix A). Although these were not interviews, they *were* opportunities during which I could hear the perceptions of key figures in Cuba's party-state nexus as they publicly debated the past experiences and future plans for the island.

Another 'personality' whom I wished to interview was the Cuban intellectual Fernando Martínez Heredia. A leading figure in the Cuban social scientific and cultural world, Martínez has written extensively on the theme of civil society and the state in Cuba (see Chapter 5) and represents an important voice within Cuban academic circles. Although I was introduced to him while attending a literary event, and subsequently had opportunities to talk to him when we met by chance on a number of occasions, due to his busy schedule I had been unable to secure an interview. As a compromise he suggested that I pass on my questions to a mutual friend who was himself intending to interview him about the 2003 World Social Forum that he had attended in Porto Alegre. It was agreed that the interview, which in total lasted three hours - of which an hour was dedicated to my questions - could be taped (see Appendix A). Using a third party in this way to conduct an 'indirect' interview may not have been ideal, but it presented an effective solution to the problem of capturing the perspective of such an important stakeholder.

Of the 'inaccessible' stakeholder groups the military, as mentioned above, was the most obvious example. It was made clear by the International Relations officer at the Institute that

interviews with military personnel were "not appropriate" for my research and although the reason for this was never explicitly articulated, it was intimated that such a request would involve security protocols which were beyond the Institute's reach. I attempted to circumvent this problem by asking questions about the military to other stakeholders whom I was interviewing but this very much depended on whether I felt it was appropriate to do so. I also gleaned snippets of information from informal conversations which enabled me subsequently to pose more directed questions to those respondents whom I considered might be able to provide insights during interviews.

Another group that I had identified as important to interview prior to arriving in Cuba were those academics who had been discredited by the Party in 1996 (see Chapter 5). The research centre in which they had worked, the *Centro de Estudios sobre América* (CEA), had been closed down by the state and those who had worked there were either absorbed into other institutions or had left Cuba to work abroad (for example Haroldo Dilla who now works for FLACSO in the Dominican Republic). In 1999 I had been told that it was not advisable to contact members of this group but in 2003 I was able to meet with and interview a number of them.

f) The Interviews

Preparation

The type of interviews that I conducted are often referred to by political scientists as 'elite' or key informant interviews (Stedward, 1997; Devine, 1995) because some person of status or influence is chosen as the respondent. The interviews were all semi-structured. Respondents were prepared for the interviews in the ways which I have discussed above. On only one occasion during this phase of the research was I asked to submit questions in advance. Aside from planning the logistics of getting to the interview site, most of my time was spent on preparing and running through my questions, 'learning my lines' would be a good euphemism for these 'dress rehearsals'. It was important for me to have committed my questions to memory as I wanted as far as possible for the interview to follow the form of a 'natural' or 'less contrived' conversation. Although I did take my questions and a list of themes with me, in case I found myself floundering and in need of a guide, I did not want to have to rely on this list. As I needed a clear idea of what I hoped to achieve from each interview this meant that I had to do as much background research as possible on my respondent and his or her role within the setting. I was conscious that elite interviews require particular skills of the interviewer (see Stedward, 1997). As well as needing to manage the interview in such a way as to be able to gain insights into the themes under investigation, one of my aims was to take advantage of respondents' spontaneity and to create an environment in which unanticipated avenues for discussion could be explored rather than stifled. I realised that I would also be judged and potentially open to scrutiny. The circles in which my stakeholders moved were quite small and it was important that my reputation was not damaged in any way if I was to secure

interviews throughout my time in Havana, or if I was to be able to return to Cuba as a researcher in the future. As many of my respondents had published articles or books, I made sure that I had read and was fully familiar with their work and any peer reviews related to it or controversy surrounding it. This strategy proved to be a good way of quickly establishing a rapport with a respondent as it showed that I was interested in their work and able to comment on it.

Translating Research Questions into Interview Questions

The process of translating research questions into interview questions is, as Kvale (1996) points out, both a critical and demanding craft. I approached this task by first organising my research questions according to the central themes that interested me. I then constructed open-ended interview questions which would assist in illuminating these themes and 'guiding' the conversation with my respondent. As I aimed to ask each respondent some questions which were the same, as well as others that were specific to them, I kept in mind the types of questions that people could cover regardless of position (see Appendix A for a list of general questions). Hence, despite my intention to remain flexible and responsive to the directions which respondents wished to take during our conversations, the interviews were not completely free of structure. The list of questions which I had prepared in advance was designed in order to enable me to evaluate different perspectives, interpretations and understandings of the same themes (a form of triangulation). I wanted to strike a balance between encouraging the respondent to talk at length and elaborate on his/her views and ensuring that we did not go off on tangents which were too far removed from my objectives. I aimed for the discussion of issues to flow 'naturally' in the hope that in this way I would be able to understand the logic of a respondent's argument and the associative thinking that led them to their particular position and conclusions. These processes would have been entirely lost if a highly structured interview format had been followed based on a questionnaire and closed questions of the type used in survey research. In addition, I was interested in the metaphors respondents chose to describe state-civil society relations. Erdlandson *et al* (1993) note that "metaphors [catch] in an uncanny way the constructed realities that … respondents [are] unable to describe directly" (Erdlandson, 1993,p.116). By exploring these metaphors with respondents I began to comprehend and share in some of their constructed realities.

Kvale (1996) argues that interview questions should be evaluated with respect to both a thematic and a dynamic dimension: "a good interview question should contribute thematically to knowledge production and dynamically to promoting a good interview interaction" (Kvale 1996,p.129). He argues that one *research* question can be investigated through several *interview* questions and, conversely, that one *interview* question might provide answers to several *research* questions. I found this to be the case. While in Cuba I asked a native social science researcher to help me by checking the wording and tone of my interview questions. In the *Foreword* to Briggs'

(1995) text, Cicourel comments that Briggs's book: "forces the reader to recognise that non-native ethnographers often enter a society lacking the background necessary to obtain or elicit information according to native communicative competence" (Cicourel, 1995,p.x). I hoped to tap into the 'necessary background' in native communicative events through the help of this researcher and in so doing avoid making cultural or political blunders which might cause offence or even threaten my project. I followed the advice I was given, and subtly changed the wording of some questions. From this exercise, I discovered that my questions were far too direct for a Cuban audience. This exercise in 'self-censorship' was in itself fascinating. It provided an insight into which discourses were generally considered to be 'acceptable' and 'appropriate' in particular public arenas and how researchers sensitively modified their language accordingly (a theme to which I return in Chapter 5).

The interview questions also needed to be constructed in such a way that respondents could quickly recognise both my level of preparation and the level of response that I was looking for from them. These signals would, I hoped, avoid replies which contained little analysis or critical reflection. I did have experiences in which this happened and it was sometimes difficult to change the dynamics of an interview once it was in flow. But I managed to avoid some of the worst experiences of my 1996 and 1999 field trips when at times I had found myself listening to lists of statistics or pre-prepared 'lectures'. In general I avoided multiple questions, that is, questions that are really a series of interconnected questions. I also tried to avoid 'leading questions' and certainly did not want to ask closed 'yes/no' style questions which would have had little value for my purposes. In one case, I found myself providing an answer to the question that I was asking, which I realised was something to be avoided.

Conducting the Interviews

In her classic text, Powdermaker (1966) reflects on one of the ways in which she used open-ended questions in her fieldwork: "I use no interview schedule, but I had well in mind the problems to be discussed, and the interviews tended to follow a general pattern" (Powdermaker, 1966, p.156-7). As I have mentioned, my interview questions were also committed to memory. During the interviews I introduced them in whatever order I felt was most appropriate for the particular interview that I was conducting. On one occasion I made the mistake of posing one of my more 'sensitive' questions too early in our conversation. I had (wrongly) assumed that my respondent would be comfortable with this as we had talked at length on the telephone before the interview, but my insensitive and naïve ordering of questions unsettled the respondent and it took a while before the interview could 'flow' again.[34]

Although the ordering of questions was flexible, the pattern that most interviews followed was the following: I began by thanking the person for agreeing to the interview, explained my

motives and intentions and, if necessary, clarified my immigration status and institutional affiliation. Once these matters had been settled, I started by asking broader interview questions and gradually became more specific. Towards the end of the interview I went back over some of the key points that we had discussed and checked with the respondent to ensure that they were in agreement with my interpretation of them. This also gave me the opportunity to correct any errors of fact. I made a point of asking respondents to help me to identify other people whom they considered it would be to my advantage to interview. In particular, I asked if they could suggest people with views that they knew were at variance with their own. On many occasions as well as suggesting possible candidates, offers were immediately made to contact them on my behalf. I also asked about respondents' affiliations in order to build up as complete a picture as possible of their position for my stakeholder matrix. Closure, often followed a clue from the respondent that we were out of time. I tried to ensure that closure was never complete and continue to maintain contact via email with many of my respondents.

Although the ethos that motivated my approach to the interviews was that there should be a space in which respondents could follow their lines of thought and tell me what *they* felt was relevant without heavy intervention on my part, I was mindful of maintaining productivity. I kept a check on the list of topics that I was interested in covering and on some occasions I had greater input in the conversation in order to ensure that these themes were included. By far the 'best' interviews, in terms of the data generated, were those in which my opening question precipitated a response that was reflective, detailed and relatively lengthy. On such occasions I used a combination of non-verbal body language (encouraging gestures) and verbal "pumps" (encouraging noises / words: *ah-ha*, s*í, así mismo, por supuesto* etc.,) to signal my interest and involvement (Seidman, 1998,p.75). I later returned to key points to seek elaboration from the respondent or to probe particular aspects of their arguments or even to suggest alternative interpretations that we could discuss together before jointly re-formulating our ideas. I often chose to challenge the view and interpretation put forward by my respondent by using an alternative perspective from the literature published on the subject under discussion. This was an effective strategy which not only avoided my personal bias from influencing the respondent but also avoided my behaviour being misinterpreted as 'inappropriate', 'discourteous' or 'disrespectful'. Given that almost all of my respondents were older than myself, and many were in a positions of responsibility, this situation could have arisen. On the subject of the interviewer's role Siedman (1998) comments:

> An interviewer who is intrusive, who constantly reinforces responses he/she may like, who is really looking for corroboration of personal views rather than the story of the participant's experience - is not being fair to the purpose of in-depth interviewing (Seidman, 1998, p.93).

The extent to which I could 'discuss' issues with a respondent very much depended on the particular dynamics of the relationship which developed between us. Establishing a rapport with a respondent

was essential but it was also important for the conversations to remain purposeful. I found during one interview that the rapport I had established was so 'good' that it was actually impinging on the quality of the interview. On this occasion I decided to use the experience to build and strengthen my friendship with the respondent and to request another opportunity to meet her in a more formal capacity at a later date. By 'abandoning' my original interview and re-scheduling I felt that I would be better able to 'rescue' the interview. This separation of 'interview' from 'chat' was vital. Overall, the strengths of in-depth interviewing are summed up by Seidman (1998):

> .. through it we can come to understand the details of people's experience from *their point of view*. We can see how their individual experience interacts with powerful social and organisational forces that pervade the context in which they live and work and we can discover the interconnections among people who live and work in a shared context (Seidman, 1998,p.112 my emphasis).

Here Seidman effectively captures the relationship between structure and agency which is expressed by Giddens in his structuration theory (Giddens,1984; Cassell, 1993).

On several occasions respondents and I jointly interpreted theoretical perspectives and discussed literature and research carried out by others. Often respondents were themselves authors and the specific questions oriented towards their work were fruitful in eliciting detailed responses. The interviews that were most rewarding to conduct involved a high degree of personal interaction between myself and the respondent during certain parts of our conversations. However, as I have mentioned, the interviews which produced the most data of quality were those in which there was little verbal input from myself. Silence, as Kvale (1996) suggests, can be employed to further the interview. There were instances during which I had to stop myself from stepping in and talking during pauses in the conversation for precisely this reason. At times respondents refined their thoughts within the interview and needed the space to do so. In those cases where a series of interviews was conducted with the same person, there were opportunities to revisit issues in our later discussions and this greatly aided the construction of a plausible interpretation of them.

An issue which cropped up in many interviews concerned the difficulties of writing in and about Cuba, for both native and non-native researchers. While recognising the problems facing foreign analysts, many respondents stressed the importance of 'hearing voices from the exterior'. I took part in some interesting conversations about the importance of the interaction between etic and emic views. One respondent told me: "the issue of being a foreigner could have some important advantages for you and a another perspective in Cuba is always a help" (Toirac, interview, 5 February 2003). This view was echoed in an email received after my return to the UK from another respondent:

> If it is true that to write about a country that is not your own and always under conditions of insufficient information is very difficult, then it is also the case that a reflection from outside, from another context, permits different readings of the situation from those that are generated from within. Often these 'views from the exterior' show problems that are rarely visible from the interior - that is their strength (email received 26/09/03 from Mayra Espina).

However, Guba and Lincoln point out that the etic theory brought to bear on an inquiry by an investigator (or the hypotheses proposed to be tested) may have little or no meaning within the emic view of studied individuals, groups, societies or cultures (Guba and Lincoln, 1998p.198). I found this to be particularly the case with 'transition theories' produced by external analysts to explain transitions from socialist rule. In Cuba the term 'transition' is widely perceived to refer to the change of system *from* capitalism *to* socialism as opposed to vice versa as 'transitologists' would have us believe. In my experience, advocates of a reverse dynamic, that is, towards capitalism (and liberal democracy) receive scant support in Cuba.[35]

Recording Data

My tools for recording data were the legal pad and pen and a tape recorder. Data were recorded during the interview and immediately afterwards. I made a point of asking respondents for their permission to record the data we created and found that there was a tacitly acceptable point in the first few minutes of the interview during which I could introduce the idea of how to record the information. Only one person very strongly refused my request to tape and even insisted upon looking at the equipment.[36] No one, however, objected to my making notes which I took down in English, simultaneously translating from Spanish.[37] In the case of taping, if I missed this 'window of opportunity' I found that it was almost impossible to introduce the idea at a latter stage in the conversation. Once we had begun, the flow of the interview and even the interview itself could be jeopardised by posing such a question, especially if the reply was negative. In interviews in which I was granted permission to tape, I also made notes in case I later found that the sound recording had not been successful. Taping had a number of advantages but I discovered that so too did this tangible set of interview notes. In many interviews, background noise (traffic, farm animals, loud music, maintenance work) obscures the speaker's voice and where this is the case my notes have been an essential fall back. Also, the tape can not capture the visual sub-text of the interview, the atmosphere that is created by the interplay between spoken and visual forms of communication.

On those occasions when I had not been able to tape during the interview I immediately afterwards spoke onto tape myself adding any additional information that I recalled. I found this to be an effective and quick way to capture information following the interview. I also used the technique if it proved difficult to find a suitable place to make notes. These transcripts could then be written up and added to the information that I already had. Regardless of how I had recorded the interviews, after each one I noted down as much contextual information as possible including my impressions of the setting and the person interviewed and adding any relevant points or areas of weakness in my own approach which could be improved upon. By creating a "thick" description of the interview I found that later I was able to recall each individual interview with relative ease (see

Lincoln and Guba, 1985). I recorded the *feel* of the interview by using a system of abbreviations. In some of the more formal interviews (particularly those organised by the Institute) I found that respondents performed what I referred to in my notes as an 'spc', meaning 'a set piece to camera'. This was used to indicate my feeling that I was being told the 'institutional line' which, though in itself interesting, was important to differentiate from personal views and perspectives, although these could of course overlap. The issue was not so much to do with a matter of substance but rather the fact that a device was being employed to transmit an 'acceptable' message and deflect attention from individual (alternative) interpretations that were, for some reason, being concealed. Although they are difficult to uncover, an awareness of hidden agendas and potential sabotage by respondents is important. Seidman (1998) acknowledges that during elite interviews, participants may sign a consent form yet "having signed it, take other steps to avoid giving real insight into their perspectives" (Seidman, 1998, p.61). Given this, Seidman warns that interviewers must:

> … listen for "inner voice" as opposed to an outer, more public voice. An outer, or public voice always reflects an awareness of the audience. It is not untrue it is guarded (Seidman, 1998, p.63).

On one occasion, a respondent was trying to tell me that his organisation was part of 'civil society' but could not remember the name of the concept and looked to me for help. When I offered the term, he said: "yes, yes, civil society, that's it! That is what we are!" and laughed. This incident provided an important insight into the respondent's 'inner voice'. Critically, for my findings, it also revealed that consciousness of a collective identity as 'civil society' was not well developed among certain social organisations which nevertheless professed to be part of it in Cuba.

During the interview situation respondent and researcher effectively play the role of audience for each other and hence it is not surprising that it is the 'outer voice' that is most often heard. While an awareness of audience is crucial, when audience plays a dominant role "rather than concentrating on what to say … every sentence [may be filtered] through the screen of what is *expected* and what will be *acceptable*" (Siedman, 1998, p.24, my emphasis). It is for this reason that strategies to establish and maintain trust and credibility are of paramount importance (see Lee, 1993).

All of the interviews were completely different experiences. Mainly, they were carried out one-to-one and in private. Some however, were conducted in open plan offices. One difficulty which arose was that I often had no control over the location in which the interview was to be conducted. Locations ranged from offices in government buildings, to a veranda overlooking a busy main road, but gardens, kitchen tables, UNESCO offices, protocol lounges, patios, restaurants and even a car were also venues. In much the same way, but not necessarily proportional to the nature of the setting, the style of the interviews ranged from the formal to the highly informal. Some were conducted in air-conditioned state rooms, sitting at huge conference tables with staff discretely entering with drinks as I fretted silently that the tape recorder, positioned in the centre of

the immense table, would be unable to catch my respondent's words. While others began in rooms so hot that we had to abandon them in favour of a cooler spot in a corridor or on the stairs. On several occasions there were power cuts during the interviews and, memorably, on one such occasion we persisted with the interview despite the fact that eventually neither of us could see the other and only the sound of our voices broke the darkness.

In terms of duration, the interviews ranged from one exceptional case that lasted for over four hours to the shortest of one hour. The average time was two hours. An interview of this length could generate an enormous amount of data. For example the transcript of my interview with Miguel Limia (12 May 2003) is close to 10,000 words, which has important implications for data management and navigation (see Erdlandson *et al* 1993). As I knew what I wanted to ask (and why) and had planned and tested *how* I should ask my questions, I found that I could conduct relatively short interviews which were rich in meaning (Kvale, 1996). I made sure that I did not timetable interviews too tightly but on one occasion I found myself having to leave a conference on the outskirts of Havana in order to rush across the city to conduct an interview before later returning to the conference venue to network with delegates.

Reciprocity

Many researchers have mentioned the inherently reciprocal nature of the interview interaction (Stedward, 1997; Seidman, 1998) and some discuss the offer of an incentive to secure an interview (Stedward, 1997). In the case of those interviews organised by the Institute an incentive in the form of a payment was made to this institutional broker but individual respondents were not offered any kind of financial incentive. Most of those interviewed told me that they were pleased to find someone from 'the exterior' who was interested in their perceptions and opinions. This supports Seidman's view that the 'type of listening' that the interviewer brings to the interview is in itself form of reciprocity:

> … the reciprocity that I can offer in an interview is that which flows from my interest in participants' experience, my attending to what they say, and my honouring their words when I present their experience to a larger public' (Seidman, 1998, p.92).

People were incredibly generous with their time and support for my project. On a couple of occasions when I returned for follow-up interviews I took with me some photocopies of literature which I knew a respondent wanted to access, but this was always my choice and never an expectation, obligation or inducement.[38] I returned the favour of the researcher who helped me with my interview questions by translating some letters into English, an arrangement which worked well for both of us.

2.2.3. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

During the course of my fieldwork I had the opportunity to listen to and participate in a wide variety of events including: conference debates, seminars, lectures, discussion groups, book and journal launches, local government nomination and election meetings, 'rendering of accounts' sessions and CDR meetings. I visited government ministries, NGOs, libraries, research centres, church groups, University faculties and research institutes. I took part in marches and rallies to experience these events first hand and was able to observe and participate in a variety of Afro-Cuban religious ceremonies. I was invited by the Ministry of Education and a German NGO to visit sites involved in their joint project to improve conditions in boarding schools in towns around Havana. I attended two thesis defence presentations (which are public in Cuba) and monthly meetings organised by the journal *Temas,* which provided opportunities to listen to groups of academics and policy makers discuss a range of topics pertinent to my research. I visited research and document centres and discussed issues informally with staff there. In addition, I attended MA course units within the faculties of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Havana. One of my most fruitful experiences resulted from an invitation to join an afternoon workshop for MA students taking a course in Politics[39] at the University of Havana which was run by my tutor. The students were all already highly qualified and in full-time employment, for example, with the Army, as state bureaucrats and technocrats, social workers and teachers. Many came wearing their army uniforms. The topic for discussion was *The Strengths and Weaknesses of the Cuban Political System*. The workshop ran for four hours and during that time I was able to listen to, observe, and participate in what were at times heated debates.[40] It was a fascinating and unique experience and through this workshop I was able to access a group of people who would otherwise have been beyond my reach and listen to them exchange views. Having gained their consent to do so, I recorded their personal details, specific positions within the debate, dialogues, and areas of contestation and agreement.

It was also through participant observation at a conference that I was able to access an important group of stakeholders whom I had been unable to interview as I had previously been unable to find an access route. This group was the trade union movement. The participant observation I undertook not only at key events but in general, provided depth and a greater level of contextual understanding to my research. It also strengthened my relationships with other participants and potential key informants.

During participant observation in public fora I openly took notes and/or taped proceedings. There were however occasions when note taking would have sealed me off from access to the source of information. For example, it would at times have been completely inappropriate to take notes while talking to people in certain social settings. In these cases I always went home or to a quite place in order to reconstruct what I had experienced or seen. This raises an important ethical dilemma: should these sources of information be used as data, given that personal conversations are

not usually undertaken with the caveat (and consent) that they could potentially be used as part of a research investigation (see Punch, 1998). While I have not made public any of these 'private' conversations, they have had an influence on the interpretation and analysis of other data. At the end of each day I wrote-up my thoughts and observations and worked on the tentative hypotheses and themes which evolved during my field experience, adjusting them or developing them in the light of new evidence and experience. My aim was to capture as complete a picture as possible of my research setting. My own field notes, journal and even the poetry and descriptive pieces that I wrote while in Havana, have all helped me to recreate the setting in my imagination as I have interacted with the data gathered during the analysis and 'writing-up' process.

As mentioned above, an ethnographic dimension was added to my research by living with a Cuban family. An important part of my informal research process in the field involved getting to know the research setting though taking part in everyday family life and, where possible, community activities. To ensure inclusion of more marginalised peoples in my sample, I used the ethnographic strategy of "being there" (Whyte, 1955). This involved building a bridge to various sub-cultures (homosexual, black and youth cultures, see Chapter 6) that also made up the community. As Sixsmith *et al* (2003) argue, in such circumstances it is important that we use our own experiences to create a "platform" of empathy born of common understandings. It is important to note here that the interviews with this group of respondents were not formally planned but arose spontaneously as a result of participant observations. Most of the subsequent interviews were conducted at the same location, often within a matter of hours after the request had been made. This raised particular ethical dilemmas as normally a greater degree of advanced warning was given to respondents. In such cases it was important to ensure that the potential respondent fully understood what was being asked of them.

Living with a family helped to contextualise my understanding of Cuban society, it also meant that I was never 'off duty' as a researcher. Every interaction with another person, every image, building or text, was a research opportunity that I wanted to soak up. I 'collected' anecdotes, stories, jokes and oral histories, all of which were fragments which I believed might, together, help me to understand the context in which I was immersed. I agree with Erdlandson *et al* (1993) that the questions that constantly revolve in your mind while in the field are the following: *What is happening here? Why are things the way they are? What does this tell me? How can I make sense of this?* (Erdlandson *et al*, 1993,p.16).

2.2.4. Final Reflections on the Research Process

It was not possible to fully specify design elements of my investigation a priori. On reflection I am aware that hunches and tentative hypotheses guided my 'accidental' discovery of valuable data. While in the field I was plagued by anxieties of the *'what would have happened if ...'* type and it

was not until I afterwards looked back on the process that I realised that the seemingly 'accidental' was perhaps less a matter a chance and more a matter of these guiding 'hunches'. Commenting on these issues Ellen (1984,p.96) notes:

> … every field situation is different and initial luck in meeting good informants, being in the right place at the right time and striking the right note in relationships may be just as important as skill in technique .. Indeed, many successful episodes in the field do come about through good luck as much as through sophisticated planning and many unsuccessful episodes are due as much to bad luck as bad judgement.

This view is echoed by Miller (2003) in her study of uses of the past in 'Castro's Cuba'. She comments that the material she has 'chanced upon' reflects the 'necessarily fragmented nature of any research undertaken in Cuba' (Miller, 2003,p.157).

Prior to the collection of data, my work had been driven by deductively arrived at tentative hypotheses and theories which had arisen as a result of interaction with the (mainly non-Cuban) literature. These deductive a priori theories played an important role in guiding my investigation, particularly during the early stages. When inductively arrived at theories began to emerge from the data during collection and analysis stages of the research process, I found that rather than abandoning my earlier deductive phase, the two methods of theory production proceeded in tandem. At this point inductively arrived at theory was privileged but deductive theory formation continued to drive my interaction with the data as I tested and developed my working hypotheses. Essentially, there was an oscillation between the two forms of theory creation.

A number of dramatic "critical incidents" occurred while I was in the setting. I am referring here to the arrest and detention of 75 'counter revolutionaries' in late March and early April 2003 and the execution of three men following the hi-jacking of a ferry on 2 April, 2003 (see Chapter 6). Erdlandson *et al* (1993) describe such events as: "events that highlight the normal operations or contrast sharply with them" (Erdlandson *et al.* 1993,p103). These incidents had a direct bearing on my position as a researcher and also the security of the research itself, although at the time at which they were happening I did not have sufficient critical distance to appreciate this. The events acted as 'trigger points' and highlighted many aspects of the relationship which it was my aim to investigate. In themselves these events generated a wealth of data which I gathered from televised speeches by key members of the government, daily newspaper reports and special issues of the PCC organ *Granma*.

I left the field in late May 2003. By this time I had found that certain stakeholder pools had reached saturation point. However others still offered huge potential for research. As I have maintained contact with many gatekeepers in Cuba closure has not been final, and as I indicate in the conclusion to this study, there are many potential avenues for future research which I would like to explore.

CONCLUSION

Both social scientists (Marsh and Stoker, 1995) and Cuba specialists (Valdés, 1988) point to the fact that there is a need for greater transparency in the production of knowledge. In this chapter I have declared my methodological and epistemological premises rather than 'hiding' them "under the rug," as Franzois, (1997,p.135) puts it. Through the use of a reflexive approach I have discussed the strengths and shortcomings of my investigation. In the next chapter, I return to the theme of the relationship between the state and civil society. The focus of the chapter is historical and the context for analysis is Cuba between the years 1959 and 1989.

NOTES

[1] See below for clarification of the use of the term 'stakeholder' in this study.

[2] Siedman (1998) argues that there is a danger of "overemphasising the 'emergent' nature of research design in qualitative research," adding that: "it can appear to minimise the need for careful preparation and planning" (Siedman, 1998, p.29).

[3] In this chapter I aim to demonstrate how the two tendencies can be balanced. On the issue of "rigor" see Franzosi (1996, 1997).

[4] I stress this point as each stakeholder potentially has a plethora of (sometimes contradictory) roles. They may be, for example, a worker in a state organisation, a Party member, an active member of their CDR (Committee for the Defence of the Revolution) and the FMC (Federation of Cuban Women), a mother, a carer for elderly relatives and also a person engaged in some income generating activity in the informal sector (this example is that of a fifty three year old woman interviewed in Havana in 2003).

[5] I have had the opportunity to observe these changes over almost a decade as my first research trip to Cuba was in 1996 (see below for details).

[6] See Plate 1, Appendix A.

[7] See Plate 2, Appendix A.

[8] See Jackiewicz and Bolster's (2003) analysis of the role of *jineteros* as informal 'advertisers' for illegal *paladares* (in-house restaurants) which are not permitted to advertise. Even legal paladares are limited to a small, discrete, banner on the outside of their establishment.

[9] Including political science, development studies, anthropology and political philosophy as well as literature dedicated to Cuban studies.

[10] Telephone conversations, for example, have not been included in this definition as I classify them separately. Neither have e-mail 'interviews'. On the opportunities and constraints of e-mail interviews see Murray and Sixsmith (1998).

[11] Seidman (1998,p.8) points out that the word that the researcher chooses to refer to the person being interviewed is in itself significant. 'Participant', 'interviewee', 'co-researcher', 'informant', 'subject' are all possibilities. However, following Erdlandson, *et al*, (1993), I have chosen to use 'respondent'.

[12] For full details of the interview schedules see Appendix A.

[13] For example, studies such as those by Jude Howell (1993) and Gordon White *et al* (1996) on the case of China and Stepan's (1978) seminal analysis of state-society relations in Peru, have generated a great many ideas which I have tested out in the Cuban context.

[14] On the importance of interchange of this nature and in particular the need for a fuller re-integration of politics with the study of development, see Leftwich (2000).

[15] See Franzosi, (1996), for an analysis of the 'rhetoric of quantification'.

[16] For example, stages during which I was registered part-time at the University and also working full time in order to fund my studies which precluded the possibility of long overseas research trips.

[17] See Franzosi's (1997,p.135) "plea for self-reflexivity."

[18] The policy is available at http://www.uea.ac.uk/dev/research/ethics.html.

[19] Arguably, as such an account is not methodology per se it might be expected to be found in an appendix as opposed to the main text of the dissertation. It is included here as it complements the previous discussion and provides insights into issues which are discussed in more detail in later chapters. Its prominent position is also intended to highlight the importance of reflexive accounts in social science research and to introduce a greater degree of transparency regarding the research process.

[20] On the issue of the appropriateness of the use of the first person see Oliver, 2004.

[21] After having established an initial contact, FLACSO did not reply to my later emails or faxes. It was not until I was in Havana that I was able to ascertain that they had in fact arrived.

[22] This was due to the fact that my second (academic) visa was for three months. Apparently it was unable to be extended. My options were to apply for a new six month academic visa which would involve changing my migratory status to that of a temporary resident in Cuba or to leave the country and travel to Jamaica or Mexico for a few days before re-entering. The Institute was keen that I should take the latter option as the former involved a considerable amount of work for them. However, had I done this I would have had to re-enter Cuba as a 'tourist'. This would have jeopardised my entire research as, had I continued to conduct research, I would have then been working illegally. Eventually I received a new (six month) academic visa. A lack of clarity over these issues and the constant need to resolve problems relating to the visa beset my field trip. Other researchers have had similar experiences (Kath, pers.com. 17 October 2004).

[23] I paid the family $8 per day for full board. They did not refer to this as "rent" (which would be illegal) but as "a contribution" or "help towards expenses." In this way we were (legally) able to take advantage of a loop hole in the law.

[24] For a recent ethnographic study of 'everyday life' on the island see Rosendahl's (1997).

[25] Given the UK's 'common position' with the EU regarding Cuba-US-EU relations (see Diaz, 2002).

[26] UEA is a public University whose basic funding is via the UK government's HEFCE.

[27] My supervisor was Jesús García Brigos. It is interesting to note that Jesús has also helped and collaborated with the following researchers: Arnold August (1999); Ken Cole (1998); Peter Roman (1999) and Isaac Saney (2004). In fact, both Roman and Cole visited Havana while I was there.

[28] On the complexities of the insider-outsider relationship see Jewkes and Letherby (2001).

[29] Several articles of the Cuban *Codigo Penal* (penal code) are devoted to the protection of internal order and security. Sanctions encompass acts aimed at overthrowing the government, undermining Cuban independence and sovereignty, and working in collusion with a foreign power to affect Cuban domestic affairs, including the dissemination of enemy propaganda and sedition, for example: Article 94 (Assistance to the Enemy); Article 95 (Revealing State Secrets) and Article 103 (Enemy Propaganda) (*Ley 87/99*, 1999).

Also, the 'state of dangerous' provisions in the *Codigo* (under article 75) encompass "connections or relations to persons who are potentially dangerous to society, other persons, or the social, economic and political order of the socialist state" (1999). See also Evenson, 1994 and Saney 2004.

[30] The issue of racial identity is a complicated one in Cuba. When asked to comment on this issue in the Cuban press, Herrera stated: "no one is white in Cuba" (in Olavarria, 2002,p.30). However in a country where some official documents consider mulattos white and many mestizos self-identify as white Herrera's response is controversial.

[31] These included journal and book launches, open academic thesis defences, discussion groups, occasional lectures, seminars and art exhibitions. I also audited a unit of the MA degree programme in Sociology at the University of Havana (see Appendix A for full details).

[32] On arrival in Havana I was told that in order to receive academic and institutional support I would be charged U.S.$250,000. In the months that followed I paid a further $300,00 in total as I extended my time in Cuba. I was always given receipts for these fees. Initially, I paid for visas and legal stamps in U.S. dollars but when I received my Cuban ID card, which entitled me legally to use national currency (U.S.$1 = 26 Cuban pesos), the Institute informed me that I would no longer be required to pay 'external rates'. As I was on a tight budget this was extremely important for me. It enabled me to attend conferences run by the Institute which otherwise would have been prohibitively expensive.

[33] However, it must be noted that the domestic political climate became more difficult during my time in Cuba and this may have affected their ability to help me regardless of good intentions.

[34] Something which I had not foreseen was that respondents could be extremely nervous. On one occasion despite having organised the interview carefully and having spoken at least twice on the telephone, when we eventually met, the respondent was anxious about my background and for whom I was working. It was not until we discovered (by chance) that we shared a mutual acquaintance in the UK that he relaxed. Prior to this, we had reached a fragile point in our conversation during which he had commented that he was not prepared to talk about a range of issues which I had suggested for discussion.

[35] There is some support for such perspectives among the small dissident community on the island, which is reflected in journals such as the Madrid-based *Encuentro con la Cultura Cubana*, which can be collected from the Spanish Embassy in Havana.

[36] Despite (perhaps because of) having great experience in interviewing others, this respondent was ill-prepared psychologically for finding himself in the position of being interviewed.

[37] While mindful of Vgotsky's (1987) warning that: "The issue of finding the right word in English or any other language to represent the full sense of the word the participants spoke in their native language is demanding and requires a great deal of care" (quoted in Seidman, 1998, p. 88), I found that this was the only way that I could comfortably conduct the interviews. It had the advantage of allowing me to immediately ask if I needed further clarification, as the act of translating highlights areas of ambiguity or confusion which might otherwise go un-noted (see also Kvale, 1996; Briggs, 1995, on the theme of linguistic interpretation).

[38] I returned after one interview with a photocopy of the respondent's own work. She had mentioned in our conversation that she had been unable to access an article which she had written as the book it was published in was *agotado* (sold out) and she had given away all of her own copies.

[39] There is not a faculty of Political Science at Havana University but politics options are available in the discipline of Sociology (see Chapters 3 and 6 for a discussion of the closure of the Politics faculty).

[40] I was introduced at the beginning of the seminar and had an opportunity to explain my research to the group. I asked for consent both to record the proceedings and to take part as a participant/observer.

Chapter 3

The Relationship Between Civil Society and the State in Cuba 1959-1989

> *Note on historical studies:*
> *[S]uch analyses cannot and must not be ends in themselves (unless the intention is merely to write a chapter of past history), but acquire significance only if they serve to justify a particular practical activity, or initiative of will (Gramsci, SPN, 1971,p.185)*

INTRODUCTION

This chapter picks up the discussion with which Chapter 1 concluded: the problem of state-civil society relations in Cuba. It examines the dynamics of the relationship that developed between the Cuban state and civil society during the period 1959-1989 and uncovers the antecedents of the debates that were to define the decade of the 1990s. Using the testimony of those who have both lived through and written about these years,[1] together with secondary analyses, it offers an interpretation of state-civil society relations during an historical period which is not conventionally analysed using this optic. By applying a Gramscian understanding of civil society and the state to the "first three decades of socialist construction" (Limia, interview, 12 May 2003 Havana), aspects of the relationship that evolved between them, which other interpretative schemes often fail to capture, are revealed.

In order to apply Gramsci's approach a device is required which enables the synthesis of structural and behavioural levels of analysis. Using qualitative criteria and guided by the primary and secondary data collected from Cuban sources, nodal points or critical 'moments' (to echo Gramsci's Hegelian language) in the process of Cuba's political history have been selected and presented for these purposes. Encapsulating the dialectical interplay or "mutual influencing" (Cox, 1996,p.132) between structure and agency, these moments share the capacity to illuminate powerfully and in multifarious ways, the relationship between civil society and the state. In Gramscian terms, they represent potential spaces for the emergence and articulation of alternative counter-hegemonic discourses, while at the same time presenting opportunities for the dominant group's existing hegemonic discourse to be reconstructed and promoted while alternatives are restricted. Such moments are, therefore, simultaneously both "threatening" and "stimulating" (Davies, 2000,pp.116-7).

It has been for methodological and analytical purposes that these moments are detached from the "shifting confusion" (Crehan, 2002,p.28) of their historical context. By highlighting them it is not intended that they should be viewed as a series of discrete or separate 'events'. According to one interpreter of Gramsci's work, Gramsci: "always viewed the revolutionary

process as a totality, even though he often chose momentarily to focus his theoretical lenses sharply on one element" (Boggs, 1976,p.96). It is this balance: the ability to focus sharply on specific examples while maintaining a sensitivity to the complexity of the wider process within which they are embedded, which the current chapter seeks to achieve.

The chapter offers new insights into the relationship between the Cuban state and civil society between 1959 and 1989 by applying an original conceptual focus to historical data which has not previously been analysed in this way. Moreover, it brings to the analysis of this data new interpretations based on the perspectives of key actors who were themselves involved in these processes and who, with the critical distance of hindsight, offer retrospective views of them.[2]   Through this analytical "archaeology" (Foucault, 1972), processes which have previously been hidden have been uncovered.

In terms of organisation, the chapter is divided into four parts. The first offers a justification for examining state-civil society relations in Cuba during this period. It examines the tendency in the Cuban literature to ignore this relationship and suggests some reasons for this. The second, third and fourth parts of the chapter are devoted to the historical analysis. Guided by the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 1, they describe the evolution of the relationship between the state and civil society on the island. Part two begins by briefly examining state-civil society relations in Cuba during the period of the Republic (1902-58). It then goes on to cover the years 1959-1969 in more detail. Part three focuses on the decade of the 1970s, while part four discusses state-civil society within the framework of the Rectification Campaign that was launched in the mid 1980s. Finally, some conclusions are offered which are intended to facilitate analysis in subsequent chapters and provide the basis for longitudinal comparisons within the study.

3.1. JUSTIFYING THE APPROACH: WHY LOOK AT THIS RELATIONSHIP DURING THESE YEARS?

Should we be concerned with examining the relationship between civil society and the state in Cuba between the years 1959 and 1989?   If we accept Dilla's claim that the concept of civil society "was never crucial for explaining anything that was occurring in Cuba before 1989" (Dilla, 1999a, p.162) due to the "compressed" nature of civil society and the "omnipresence" of the state (Dilla, 1999a, p.163), it might appear that the answer to this question should be: No.

Certainly, there is little evidence in the literature to suggest that the relationship should merit our attention. For example, there is no well developed tradition of research, either in Cuba or beyond the island's shores, that uses the state-civil society prism when analysing these years. Moreover, that literature which does make explicit reference to the existence of

something called 'civil society' in Cuba during the first three decades of the Revolution, does so only in passing and has largely been written in the last ten years (Chanan, 2001; Dilla and Oxhorn, 2002). This retrospective application of the concept to the 1959-1989 period can also be found, for example, within certain contributions to the debate on civil society that emerged in Cuba during the 1990s,[3] or as part of those studies offered by outside observers who have examined the possibility of a transition from socialist rule.[4] This recent trend may explain the facility with which the concept was used by many non-academics during our interview conversations, though for others (see the example in Chapter 2, p.94), 'civil society' was obviously an idea which was new and relatively unfamiliar. In both the Cuban and the external literature, where the concept 'civil society' has been employed for historical comparative purposes, its treatment has been largely unsystematic and somewhat cursory.

That an analysis of state-*civil* society[5] relations prior to the crisis of the 1990s has not been an overt research priority does not, however, mean that the existing literature offers no insights into this relationship. For despite the lack of direct scholarly attention given to the theme, it is 'there', so to speak, embedded within the general literature on the Revolution.[6] Though by no means sign-posted, if we are prepared to look, evidence can be gleaned from a scattered range of sources that date from the late 1960s up to the present day (see Fagen, 1969; Chanan, 1985; Bengelsdorf, 1994; Kapcia, 2000; Miller, 2003).

Why, then, has it been that the dynamics of state-civil society relations in Cuba during the first three decades of the Revolution have occupied so little analytical space in the literature? One reason is quite simply that other issues have preoccupied researchers and have therefore taken precedence within their publications. External studies of post-revolutionary Cuban politics have been dominated by analyses of other important relationships. For example, the relationships between: Cuba and the United States (Bonsal 1971, Bender 1975, Plank 1975, Welch 1985, Morley 1987, Franklin 1992); Cuba and the Soviet Union (Mesa-Lago 1974, Domínguez 1978a, Levesque 1978, Duncan 1985, Zimbalist 1985, Fitzgerald 1988); Cuba and the 'Third World' (Domínguez 1978b, Mesa-Lago 1979, Gunn, 1980, LeoGrande 1980, Pérez-López 1980, Roca 1980, Hollander 1981, Erisman 1985) and; Cuba and Latin America (Goldberg 1965). Where internal politics have been the focus, the figure of Fidel Castro has persistently occupied a dominant position on the research agenda of many analysts (see Kapcia, 1996; Saney, 2004 for a discussion of this trend). As a result, a large swathe of studies have been dedicated to the nature of his rule.[7]

Another reason for this omission is that prior to the disintegration of the Soviet bloc, interpretations of state-society relations in Cuba were heavily influenced by the approach adopted by Western scholars in their studies of the Soviet Union. Cuba-analysts transferred the lexicon of 'transmission belts' and 'democratic centralism' to their study of the island's socialist

transition.   Kapcia (2000,p.2) points out that what has been studied has largely "corresponded to … European and North American criteria and values."   Moreover, he notes that many publications have been inspired by "émigre bitterness" (Kapcia, 2000, p.3).[8]   It has not only been the particular themes on the agenda, but also the manner in which they have been studied which has been influenced by this bias (see Zimbalist *et al*, 1988).

In Cuba itself, it was not until the 1990s that 'civil society' began to be regarded as a concept with any value or relevance for the analysis of the revolutionary process (see Chapters 1 and 5). Prior to this moment, "only a handful of creole Gramscians" had used the term and these theorists were read by an "extremely limited" audience (Dilla, 2001,p.161). A review of the literature produced within Cuba since the Revolution supports this claim.   Gramsci's writings were first translated into Spanish in Argentina in 1958 and rapidly reached Cuba where his thought was influential during the 1960s (see Martínez, 2003; Alvarez, 1999; also 3.3.1 below).   However, it was his philosophical contributions as opposed to his political theories which were the subject of attention (Acanda, 2003).   Those who taught and studied his work during the brief aperture in which it was tolerated were regarded as "heretics" (Martínez, 2003,p.80) whose rejection of the dogmatic Marxism of the Soviet Union and Eastern European Socialist states, which was becoming established as the dominant interpretation in Cuba at the time, marked them out for censure. For the small group of scholars who wished to consider alternatives to this position, Gramsci's writings were "oxygen for thought" (Martínez, 2003,p.81).   However, by the beginning of the 1970s this particular source of 'oxygen' was subject to restrictions (see 3.3.3 below).   Thereafter, Gramsci "remained in the shadows" or was "no longer mentioned" (Martínez, 2003,p.86) until his revival in the 1990s when innovative groups in the social sciences once again had "their moment of glory" (Dilla, 2002,p.2; see also Chanan, 2001; Acanda, 2002).   As a consequence, Hernández (2003,p.137) reflects: "debate was not very abundant within Cuban thought from the end of the 1960s until the second half of the 1980s" (see also Alonso, 1995a; Arango, 2002).   According to Martínez (2003,p.77), prior to this point there had been a "profusion of debates" (see also Alonso, 1995a; Acanda, 2003). Many were covered in the media, particularly by newspapers such as *Revolución* and *Hoy*, but also by the cultural press.   These debates formed part of the early "battle of ideas within the Revolution" (Martínez, 2003,p.78).   We shall see below (3.3.1) that by the beginning of the 1970s, the battle between 'radical' and 'conservative' elements had been largely 'won' and for the next two decades Cuban thought was dominated by the dogmatic variant of Marxism favoured by the political class which had, by then, established both its hegemony within Cuban civil society and its control of the state (see Alonso, 1995a; Arango, 2002).

Although alternative perceptions and interpretations of socialism *within* the Revolution were not officially tolerated during this period (see below), this does not mean that they did not

exist. They are easy to overlook precisely because many were not published at the time and have only recently come to light.[9] The hegemonic position of the political class and its interpretation of Marxism constrained the extent to which alternatives could co-exist and compete. Foucault's (1980) analysis of the relationship between knowledge and power, as one where knowledge is in the service of power, is instructive here. An interesting paradox can be discerned during the first decade of the Cuban Revolution which has since become a characteristic of the process. It is essentially this: that although the entire revolutionary project in Cuba has itself been "heretical" (see Bengelsdorf, 1994), the Revolution was quick to develop an intolerance towards its own 'heretics' or those amongst its supporters who, in the spirit of Rosa Luxemburg, wished to exercise the liberty to "think in other ways" (see Acanda, *et al* 2001,p.67).

What, then, was published in Cuba between the early 1960s and the end of the 1980s? Can any patterns be identified which might act as a tentative classificatory scheme? Various Cuban scholars have recently offered answers to these questions, writing from the perspective of their respective disciplines.[10] Drawing on these analyses for verification but using primary data collected during interviews as the principal guide, it would seem that most studies in the social sciences produced in Cuba between 1959 and 1989 fell into a number of broad categories.

Following Ibarra (1995), Cuban historiography was one of the most important of these categories. Miller (2003) argues that the rich academic historiography produced under the revolutionary government barely touched upon the post 1959 period, but was concentrated instead on analyses of the nation's past and the celebration of its heroes. Studies of Cuban culture, national identity and the history of Cuba prior to 1959 (see Le Riverend, 1971, 1975a, 1975b; Pérez de la Riva, 1975; Pino Santos, 1964; Portuondo, 1965), as well as works examining the history of philosophical thought (see Departamento de Filosofía, Universidad de la Habana, 1971) dominated academic output.

In the 1960s and 1970s it became fashionable for key contemporary figures within the academic community to produce prologues to Marxist-Leninist classics. These prologues were written to accompany the publication in Cuba of fundamental texts such as Marx's *Capital*, Lenin's *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* and Mao's *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions*. In recent years such prologues have themselves become of interest to researchers and there has been a move to collate and publish examples written by leading figures within the intellectual community (interview, Marrero, 8 March 2004, UK). They represent an important, if unconventional, category.

Manuals of Marxist-Leninist instruction produced in the post revolutionary period represent a more widely recognised category. Works such as the *Manual de Historia de Cuba*

(Guerra, 1971) and the *Manual de Capacitación* (Departamento de Instrucción, Ministerio de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias) were used for the ideological formation of revolutionaries. This was particularly the case in the Schools of Revolutionary Instruction (see Fagen, 1969) where there was a heavy dependence on translated Soviet sources produced by the Soviet Union's Academy of Sciences. This was largely due to the paucity of indigenous material generated by the Revolution itself.[11] Alonso (1995a) notes that debate over the utility of such manuals took place in the journal *Teoría y Práctica* between 1966 and 1967 but for an analysis of the problems of *manualismo* see Fagen (1969).

Falling within another important category were the economic studies produced particularly between 1963 and 1964 and published in the periodicals, *Nuestra Industria, Comercio Exterior* and *Cuba Socialista*. The study and debate over the thought of Che Guevara was intense during the late 1960s but, as occurred with Gramsci's thought, by the end of the decade it had largely disappeared and did not reappear in Cuba until the late 1980s (again, like Gramsci, see Alonso, 1995a).

Studies of 'socialist themes' that illustrated the role of workers, peasants, women and blacks in social struggles of the past emerged as a seam which defined the social sciences during the 1959-1989 period. Echoing the point Miller (2003) makes regarding historiography, it is important to note here that again it was the *past* rather than the contemporary period which was the focus of analysis. Following Cuba's military involvement in Angola (1975) and Ethiopia (1978) the theme of socialist internationalism was also stressed and the history of the international workers' movement was given precedence in publications. Critical analyses of those themes which were of concern to intellectuals internationally were published mainly in the journal *El Caimán Barburdo* from 1966 to 1967 and in *Pensamiento Crítico* between 1967 and 1971 but also in *Teoría y Práctica* and *Cuba Socialista* (Martín,1999).

Finally, the critiques of cubanology which were published principally between 1983 and 1990 (see Rodríguez Chávez, 1995) represent an important category. Rodríguez Chávez (1995) claims that the studies of most influence were those by José Luis Rodríguez (see the collection edited by Zimbalist and published externally in 1988) but the studies which comprise this category were carried out by academics from diverse institutions.[12]

While far from comprehensive, this brief survey gives a flavour of what was published and offers some interesting insights into Cuban politics. The themes which preoccupied Cuban intellectuals, at least those which were publicly discussed during these years (see Rodríguez, 1995; Ibarra, 1995), reflected the priorities of the political leadership. Given this, what is absent is as important (if not more so) than what is present or at least, 'visible' within the official literature. Rodríguez (1995,p.82) argues that there was a "total absence of works on certain themes that were sensitive for the political situation," particularly themes which touched

on "national problems" (Rodríguez, 1995,p.83).[13] In his analysis of the study of historiography after the Revolution, Ibarra (1995,p.8) describes how some academics during the period 1970-1985 "worked in silence" on themes which were politically unacceptable in a climate in which the "creative liberty within the community of historians and social scientists suffered" (Ibarra, 1995,p.8).   Miller (2003) claims that despite maintaining a "watchful eye," the Cuban government's active sponsorship and promotion of historical research gave a "new lease of life" to the community of scholars in Cuba. It was not, however, without costs:

> This section of civil society received sponsorship in return for allowing itself to be drawn in under the umbrella of the state, and the dangers that became all too manifest as the regime began to cast a long shadow over intellectual freedom in the early 1970s, largely because of the implementation of Soviet-style economic and political organization (Miller, 2003,p.151).

According to Miller's analysis, it would appear that the new lease of life was quantitative as opposed to qualitative. Ibarra's (1995) analysis, supports this interpretation. For example, he suggests that from 1970-1985 the Faculty of History at the University of Havana imparted a strongly ideological and monolithic vision of history. The government issued lists of authors banned from publication and very few were allowed to travel abroad, even to attend conferences. Key figures deemed by the regime to be controversial were prevented from receiving their doctorates (Ibrarra, 1995; Miller, 2003) while, conversely, doctorates were freely given out to bureaucrats (Dilla, 2002)

In contrast to the debates of the 1990s, which have tended to be analyses "of the decade from within the decade" (see Alonso, 2000a; also interview with Recio, 25 February 2003, Havana), between 1959 and 1989 academic analysis, in the main, did not focus on contemporary processes. The nexus between social science and revolutionary ideology was particularly tight during these years and research priorities reflected this (for a detailed discussion of this theme, see *Temas* No.1, 1995, entire issue). Despite this trend, Miller notes the emergence within the discipline of History of a new generation of researchers and the creation of new spaces for them following the foundation in 1976 of the Ministry of Culture. The primary debate in Cuba was, and remains to this day, the debate about socialism. All other debates occurred within the matrix of this fundamental debate about what socialism was, how it was to be built, and the ways in which it could be maintained and perfected (interviews with: Acanda 25 February 2003; Bulté 23 April 2003; Basail 17 January 2003; Hernández 11 March 2003, all Havana). As we shall later see, how socialism was *defined* had wide-reaching effects.

Embedded within the dominant ideology and discourse of the political class which had achieved hegemony after 1959, were definitions of key political, economic and philosophical concepts. As this class ascended, a process began whereby particular definitions themselves became hegemonic and were broadly accepted by the academic community as 'legitimate'. Within the context of the ideological stand-off between the United States and Cuba, concepts

were claimed as "ours" or "theirs" (interview, Marrero, 15 February 2003 Havana). Speaking in 1999, former Minister of Culture, Armando Hart reflected that: "[o]ne of the main errors of the socialism that disappeared [in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union] was that of renouncing words, of having fear of words, when in fact they are 'our' words" (in *Temas*, 1999, pp.156-7). Despite offering a critique of this tendency in the Soviet-bloc, Hart did not mention Cuba's similar preoccupation with this form of censorship.

The concept of civil society had quickly been branded 'bourgeois' following the Revolution, despite its alternative Marxist lineage (see Chapter 1) and, as we have seen, was considered of little utility in explaining the post-revolutionary reality (see Dilla 1999a above; Acanda, interview, 25 February 2003, Havana). This abandonment of 'civil society' mirrored the disappearance of the term in orthodox Marxist debate, particularly in the Soviet Union (see Chanan, 2001). In contrast, it is impossible to ignore the influence of the concept of *pueblo* when considering state-civil society relations in Cuba following the Revolution. Essentially, the relationship which is given conceptual form in the binomial 'state-civil society' could, in the early years post 1959, be expressed using the formula 'leadership-pueblo', for at this point neither a new state nor a new socialist civil society had been given institutional expression; both, in this sense, were nascent. *Pueblo* was certainly the term favoured by those in power who, following Fidel's treatment of the concept in his speech *History will Absolve Me* (1953/1967), frequently used the concept in their discourses (interview, Suárez, 15 April, 2003. See also Tablada 2001; and Martínez 1999, for a discussion of 'pueblo'). However, subsuming Cuban civil society into the concept of 'pueblo' is an option which offers weaker analytical insights into the processes we wish to illuminate. Little internal differentiation and a low level of reflexivity is implied by the term which, like 'society', is not sufficiently focused for our purposes.

Echoing the point made earlier regarding the external literature, although explicit reference to the nature of the interactions between state and civil society are not discernible in the literature published in Cuba during these years, nevertheless valuable insights into this relationship can be found in alternative Cuban sources. Of these, the speeches of Fidel and Raul Castro and other members of the leadership elite, are revealing. They clearly show how social interests are embedded in discourses.[14] Other sources, particularly from the 1960s, include: newspapers and journals such as *Revolución* edited by Carlos Franqui and its weekly cultural supplement *Lunes de Revolución* which was edited by Guillermo Cabrera Infante until publication ceased in 1961 (see Chanan, 1985,p.107); the *Gaceta de Cuba* (the journal of the writers' union, UNEAC) in which cultural debates were subsequently published; *Cuba Socialista* and the Communist Party newspapers *Hoy* and later *Granma*; the armed forces' journal *Verde Olivo*; and the journal *Casa de las Américas*, the organ of the Revolutionary

literature institute of the same name, founded in 1960 by Haydee Santamaría. Another source of information which provides fascinating insights into the relationship, but one that is often overlooked by studies of the period, can be found in the films produced by the post-revolutionary Cuban film industry (interview Pedraza García, 3 February 2003, Havana). In his fascinating study of Cuban cinema, *The Cuban Image*, Chanan (1985) makes the following recommendation:

> Historians of the Revolution would do well to watch these films carefully: they serve as an excellent guide to what many, if not all, of [the] issues were, and at the same time indicate the lines that were being drawn at each moment for the next phase [of the Revolution]. For since films take time to make, they are also evidence of how closely the leadership at ICAIC[15] was integrated from the outset with thinking at the centre of gravity within the revolutionary leadership.
> (Chanan, 1985,p.98)

According to Chanan, the subjects and themes of the films produced, "were chosen according to the needs of the ideological struggle in the revolutionary situation" (Chanan, 1985,p.98). Bearing this in mind, it is hardly surprising that during the 1960s films covered subjects such as: the Agrarian Reform (*Esta tierra nuestra,* This Land of Ours), urban reform (*La Vivienda*, 'Housing'), racial discrimination before the Revolution (*El negro*), the opening of the island's private beaches (*Playas del pueblo*, The People's Beaches) and the Literacy Campaign (*Historia de una batalla*, History of a Battle).

That Cuban cinema needed to capture the speed and depth of revolutionary change was recognised both by key figures within the industry itself, such as Alfredo Guevara and Julio García Espinosa (both one-time heads of the ICAIC) but also by those in the political leadership, notably Camilo Cienfuegos and Ernesto 'Che' Guevara. The revolutionary leadership manifested from the outset an awareness of the importance of mass communication. During their time fighting in the Sierra, the Rebel Army had occupied Radio stations and arranged for the publication of newspapers (see Bengelsdorf, 1994) and this was a trend which continued after victory (see below). The role of the media was recognised as essential in the establishment of ideological hegemony and as such was manipulated politically to brilliant effect (see Chanan, 1985). By the 1970s, fictional films such as *De Cierta Manera* (One Way or Another) offered a sophisticated inquiry into the ethics of the Revolution. Commenting on this film Chanan writes:

> It is as if the film is an inquiry into the extent to which revolutionary ethics have generalised, entering even the more informal, more enclosed, less public spaces in which people live out their private lives, spaces where it is much more difficult to root out the old values (Chanan, 1985,p.291).

Clearly, the Cuban film industry played a leading role in the cultural politics of the Revolution during this period (see Fornet, 2001). As a "mirror for Cuban culture, in which society and politics have been reflected" (editorial, *Temas*, No. 27, 2001,p.3), Cuban cinema provides an

additional, if unconventional, seam which can be mined for information about the relationship between state and civil society in Cuba. It is one to which we return later in this chapter and again in Chapter 6.

3.1.1. Analysing the Historical Context Using Critical Moments

Although this chapter is concerned with history and has a strong sense of chronology in its organisation, it does not give primacy to the recording or recounting of past events as a string of facts which tell a story in a linear fashion. Instead, it aims to uncover and discuss those nodal points or critical moments in the process of socialist transformation in Cuba, when the dynamics of the state-civil society relations can be 'seen' clearly and in their complexity. It has been argued (Davies, 2000) that it is during such moments that there arise possibilities for competing discourses to emerge and challenge the ideological hegemony of the dominant discourse. Essentially, these moments offer the prospects for a counter hegemony to emerge. They are also important because they show actors displaying their agency, not only those actors (many of whom are still in power in Cuba today) who have come to define the 1959-1989 period (interview with Rausberg, 04 May 2003, Havana), but also less well known actors from within Cuban civil society. The nodal points chosen are those which at the time of their occurrence provoked debate or revealed conflict between different political trends *within* but also, at times, outside of the Revolution. The debates which occurred within intellectual and political circles were related to and embedded within a particular historical context. Moments from within this context have been chosen that have functioned as focal points or axes, around which debates have been spun. In Gramsci's historical materialism (which he was careful to distinguish from what he called 'historical economism' or a narrowly economic interpretation of history), ideas and material conditions are always bound together, mutually influencing one another, they are not reducible. As Cox (1996, p.132) argues:

> Material circumstances include both the social relations and the physical means of production. Superstructures of ideology and political organisation shape the development of both aspects of production and are shaped by them.

The identification and selection of these moments has been guided by the data collected from both primary and secondary Cuban sources. During one interview, Hernández stressed the importance of looking for what he called those "nodal points in history" in which contradictions had arisen between "political culture and the dominant ideology" (11 March, 2003, Havana). Another Cuban academic put it a different way:

> There are multiple layers [of history] that need to be analysed. Moments of crisis during which different currents of thought have surfaced. You need to look for and examine these nodal points (Marrero, interview 24 February 2003, Havana).

Without doubt, the choice of nodal points or critical moments is as controversial as it is artificial. Although the potential number of choices is vast, qualitative as opposed to quantitative criteria have motivated the selection. The justification for inclusion lies in the illuminating capacity of each of the examples chosen, as opposed to the frequency with which they are mentioned in either the secondary literature or interview data, although these factors have been taken into account.

Given that the aim is to discuss the period in terms of state-civil society relations, the following questions have been 'asked' of each moment: W*hat does this example tell us about the relationship between state and civil society? What does it reveal which we did not previously 'know' about state-civil society interactions and the ways in which a dominant group reproduces its hegemony? Does the moment chosen 'highlight the normal' pattern of relations, to use Erdlandson's (1993,p.103) terminology, or 'contrast sharply' with it?* Furthermore, to join the category the example needed heuristic properties. Following Lincoln and Guba (1985), the rule used in the selection has been: "unless it is heuristic it is useless, however intrinsically interesting" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985,p.345).

As a category, the critical moments chosen may not appear to share much in common. Some highlight the interplay of endogenous and exogenous forces, while others tell us more about internal politics. All, it is suggested, tell us something about the way in which state and civil society have interacted and the character and dynamics of that interaction. The examples are not taken from political history alone but also from cultural politics. Some may appear in themselves to be insignificant, for example, the closure of a journal or the decision to re-name a University Faculty. Their significance lies in their capacity to throw light on aspects of the relationship between state and civil society and the nature of its transformation, which often fall beyond the reach of conventional approaches. How, though, are such moments to be ordered within the chapter? This question leads us to issues concerning the division of history into appropriate periods.

3.1.2. Constructing an Appropriate Periodisation

Although the debate about periodisation and how the division of history into periods influences generalisations (see Kelly, 1977 in Tuchman, 1998) is not one in which we should become detained, it merits consideration. As Espina notes, it is only by constructing a periodisation, however tentative, that we can "reveal the dynamics of continuity and rupture, of permanence and change, in social processes such as the Cuban Revolution" (Espina, interview 09 May 2003, Havana). Miller (2003,p.161) concurs with Espina's insistence that periodisation is a key issue and adds: "the insistent teleology of official history has eclipsed debate about rupture and continuity in all periods of Cuban history." The Revolution has certainly exhibited a strong

tendency to 'periodise', to name years and label significant campaigns and processes (see Díaz, 2001; Rundel, 2001). The celebration of anniversaries (for example, in 2003 the 150th anniversary of José Martí's birth and the 50th anniversary of Moncada[16]) is felt in the social sciences where research agendas tend to be framed by these topics. However they are also opportunities for the Revolution to consider reflexively phases in its evolution and to assess critically its own development through an on-going process of 'rectification'.

Deciding on an appropriate periodisation has proved to be a difficult task. The triumph of the Revolution itself in 1959 and the crisis of the Special Period which was officially inaugurated in September 1990,[17] represent the historical 'buffers' at the beginning and end of this chapter. One was a "transformative moment" (Gramsci in Boggs, 1976,p.36) involving massive upheaval and conflict as one system was being superseded by something qualitatively new. The other represented a critical juncture in the process of socialist transition, a moment when the continuation of socialism was by no means inevitable or certain. Hence, the dates 1959 and 1990 both indicate a dividing line, or a significant break, "after which everything was different" (interview, Barredo, 29 April 2003, Havana). This in itself is a way of conceptualising the past but it is a simplification of a complex process. To imply that between 1959 and 1989 the relationship between civil society and the state had not changed would be to give a fundamentally static interpretation of the history of a relationship which has been dynamic and contradictory. By suggesting that before the Special Period 'everything was different', we would be implying that the crucible for interpreting the Cuban reality would remain forever the Cuba of 1959. This would be to discount the *process* of change, the "motion," as Saney (2004) puts it, of the Revolution. Certainly there are important discontinuities between pre and post 1990 Cuba, but there are also important continuities (see Rundel 2001, also Bengelsdorf 1994).[18] The general periodisation adopted in this chapter is a conventional one: three phases are identified through which the Revolution has transited between 1959 and 1990, each approximately corresponding to a decade.

Gramsci believed that theoretical propositions must be verified in concrete events and circumstances (temporally, spatially and longitudinally), just as he thought that all good theory must be able to move down to concrete application and back to theoretical abstraction (Robinson, 1996,p.10). It is in this spirit that we now move to the "concrete reality" of Cuban history (Crehan, 2002,p.28) and attempt to apply the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 1 to the Revolution's first three decades.

3.2. STATE-CIVIL SOCIETY RELATIONS AS HISTORICAL PROCESS

The Cuban Revolution triumphed on the 1st January 1959 amid widespread popular support. During the months and years that followed, every aspect of the old capitalist order against which the revolutionaries had fought was destroyed. In its place a new order was created which, by 1961, was declared 'socialist' by its leaders.[19] Within this context, there evolved a very different kind of state and civil society, whose relationship was unlike any which had gone before. Although our main focus is the 1959-89 period, a brief review of state-civil society relations prior to the Revolution will facilitate this discussion.

3.2.1. State-Civil Society Relations During the Period of the Republic (1902-58)

During the period of the first Republic (1902-58)[20] state-civil society relations in Cuba were mediated by a political and economic system that was little more than the child of a distorted and corrupt political class (Boorstein, 1968). Alienated from its national interests as a result of an almost total structural integration (O'Connor, 1970) into the economy of the United States, this class, the Cuban bourgeoisie, along with the "parody" of a state which represented its interests (Bengelsdorf, 1994,p.69), was heavily compromised by its collusion with the U.S (Fagg, 1965). So complete was the Cuban bourgeoisie's dependence, that it lacked any cohesion as a class in the Marxist sense (Blackburn, 1963; Bengelsdorf, 1994). It was, according to Boorstein (1968.p.13), "weak and small" and lacked a "creative ideology of its own making" (O'Connor, 1970,p.24). Throughout the period, a series of U.S. administrations, in concert with U.S. capital, acted as extraterritorial agents that determined the functioning of the Cuban economy more effectively than any other group within Cuba (Blackburn, 1963). Even the structure and major actors in the state apparatus were influenced directly by the U.S. (Dominguez, 1978a), whose neo-colonial domination of the island was epitomised by the Platt Amendment that was subsequently incorporated into the 1901 Constitution (Beals, 1933; Aguilar, 1972). Between 1901 and 1934 the Amendment granted the U.S. the right to intervene in Cuba's internal affairs "at any moment it was deemed necessary to protect the property and lives of its citizens" (Dominguez, 1978a,p.13).

Despite a Constitution (1940) that appeared inclusive, deep social inequality and racism excluded the majority from full and effective participation in public life (Basail, 1999). Although, as López (1997) points out, there was a long tradition of organisation within Cuban civil society and an extensive variety of associations - ranging from coffee growers' associations to associations for all types of traders (including the National Association of Sugar-Cane Juice Vendors which, according to López had some 700 members by the late 1950s) - most were dominated by the interests of the economically powerful. By 1958 the form

of dependent, peripheral, capitalism that had developed on the island, together with the illegality and brutality of the Batista regime had destroyed the legitimacy and credibility of the Cuban state and its political institutions.[21] State-civil society relations during this period were characterised by the state's attempts to repress civil society groups which, despite brutal campaigns to stifle them, were capable of acts of protest and organised opposition (Raby, 1975). That student, labour and political organisations were active during these years, and popular discontent widespread (see Kapcia, 2000), indicates a weakening of the state's coercive power. In a climate of lawlessness, 'gangsterism', assassination and torture, violence dominated political life (Dubois, 1972; Thomas, 1983). It was from this context that the struggle which began in 1953 as an armed movement against a dictatorial regime had, by 1959, become the "Socialist Revolution of National Liberation" (Martínez, 1999,p.92 and Martínez, interview, 21 April, 2003 Havana).[22]

The theme of *lucha* (struggle) that the political victory of 1959 represented was not a new one for Cuba. Rather, it was part of the Cuban people's centuries-long "battle against all odds" for national independence, social justice and equality (Barredo, interview, 29 April, 2003, Havana; see also Díaz, 2001). The dynamics of rebellion, protest and revolt within civil society and against the state, can be traced back from 1959 through the decades of the first Republic, then back still further to the Wars of Independence of the nineteenth century (1868-78 and 1895-98), and deep into the Spanish colonial period beyond (see Le Riverend, 1995; August, 1999; Miller, 2003; Saney, 2004). Although January 1st 1959 represented a pivotal point in the trajectory of this struggle, there had been other critical moments which marked its course, among them: the Protest of Baraguá of March 1878; the second war of Independence launched on the 24 February 1895; the fight against the dictator Machado in the 1930s; the Moncada attempt of 1953; the landing of *Granma* on the 30th November 1956; the assault on the Presidential palace mounted by the urban revolutionary group *Directorio Revolucionario* on the 13th March 1957; the Rebel Army's fight in the Sierra and the clandestine movement in the cities. [23] Together they contributed to the victory of January 1959. Hence the final battle for liberation was not the first, nor has it been the last, battle of the Revolutionary struggle. In this sense, the Cuban Revolution can best be interpreted as "an accumulation of different fights and struggles" (Suárez, interview, 15 April, 2003, Havana) rather than the point at which the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista ended and the leadership of the Revolutionary government, with Fidel Castro at its helm, began.

3.2.2. Revolution from Below
The Cuban Revolution was not a change of regime (Hernández, 1994) or a take over by a political party with a clearly articulated ideology (Bengelsdorf, 1994). Instead it represented

the aspirations of a coalition of forces with a collective sense of purpose that had emerged from within civil society. Sufficiently well developed during the decades of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, to survive "the intense if inefficient onslaught of the Batista regime" (Miller, 2003,p.115), "it was Cuban civil society," Alvarez (1999,p.159) argues, "that produced 1959 in all its valiant, violent, clandestine, insurrectionist and political ways."

While the Revolution may have come from civil society, its subsequent evolution depended on the "fracturing" and "total convulsion" of the very capitalist civil society from which it had emerged and the construction of a new, revolutionary, civil society (Bulté, interview, 23 April 2003, Havana). In the following excerpt from an interview transcript, Bulté explains this process in more detail, comparing the Cuban case with those of Eastern Europe,

> The Cuban Revolution, when it triumphed in 1959, was a Revolution which transformed Cuban civil society. It was not simply a change in the apparatus of state power. It was not a simple change of politics, of the mechanisms of political domination. *It was a total convulsion and a total reconstruction of civil society* … This is one of the characteristics that separates the Cuban process from many of those in Eastern Europe, with the exception of the USSR which had made its own profound Revolution. In contrast to Cuba, the political process in Eastern Europe was imposed from above. Liberation was with Soviet tanks. Most of these cases stayed as transformations of the apparatus of power, that is of politics and the state, but without a corresponding change in civil society (Bulté, interview, 23 April 2003, Havana, my emphasis).

The Revolution moved quickly against those structures of civil society associated with the previous order, "dissolving almost all of its associations" (Valdés Paz, interview, 30 April, 2003, Havana). A good number of organisations were immediately declared illegal, due to their links with the previous dictatorship, and these disappeared rapidly. Others, including some of the unions, experienced fundamental changes but were retained, while others still were created afresh (see below). By eliminating, merging or adapting organisations that appeared potentially threatening to the Revolution's goals the revolutionary leadership reshaped the associational sphere (see López, 1997 for an analysis of this process). The destruction of civil society's institutional fabric and the "ideological erosion" of the bourgeois order via an attack on the beliefs, values, symbols and kinds of behaviour that had sustained it (Fagen, 1969), were intended both to emasculate those social forces, customs and institutions that were considered to have held back development, and to enable social control to be established by the new forces in power (Bulté, interview 23 April 2003, Havana).

Hence, in the months following the political victory the state and civil society underwent rapid and profound transformations involving destructive and constructive dynamics[24] which completely recast their relationship. In the early post-Revolution period the administrative structure of the state was still very much nascent and although both the state and civil society required time to develop, and neither at this point had a definitive 'shape', it was civil society that took the lead:

> Civil society had a dynamic of transformation which was much more accelerated than that of the political apparatus ... The state was slower. The state in its adjustment and readjustment - to become comfortable in its reconfiguration following the Revolution - was much slower. Civil society pushed forward and the state apparatus lagged behind. The state needed to catch up (Bulté, interview, 23 April, 2003, Havana).

Following decades of corruption and abuse, little of the previous political order remained undenigrated or respected (Basail, 1999). Bengelsdorf (1994) argues that the lack of inherited structures from the former regime (what Valdés (1975) has labeled the "institutional vacuum" that existed) meant that Cuba's new leaders were free, in theory at least, to mold state structures to meet their needs and vision. In practice, the process of giving institutional shape to the state began well over a decade after the Revolution came to power. It was not until 1974 that the state, in this sense, was able to 'catch up' with civil society (see section 3.3.1).

Whilst the relationship that had existed between the Cuban state and civil society was being systematically undermined, the process of building a new relationship also began. The configuration of power relations between state and civil society started to shift, provoking a re-patterning of their relationship. In the period leading up to the Revolution the power of civil society had progressively grown while what Mann (1986) calls the 'infrastructural power' of the state had gone into steep decline. Despite having retained a high level of 'despotic power' (Mann, 1986) late into 1958, by early 1959 rather than having to be 'smashed', as Lenin had argued, the old capitalist state simply crumbled away (see Selbin, 1999; Bengelsdorf, 1994); its capacity to structure outcomes practically non-existent.[25] In contrast, those social forces which had been an alternative project now found themselves in power and the ideology which underpinned their once counter-hegemonic project, was in a position to aspire to be hegemonic (see Kapcia, 2000). Gramsci proposes that any crisis of the established order which might open the way to revolutionary transformation must follow a crisis of ideological hegemony in civil society. This would involve the undermining of traditional social and authority relations, cultural patterns, and life styles. In most cases, such a process would entail a long-range struggle between competing systems. Given this, the main political task of a socialist movement would be to create a counter-hegemony in order to break "the ideological bond between the ruling class and various sectors of the general population" (Boggs, 1976,p.40). According to Gramsci, the ideological struggle for supremacy and leadership must take place in the realm of civil society *before* the issue of state domination can be resolved (Boggs, 1976,p.52). Let us now consider the nature of this struggle in the Cuban context and its implications for state-civil society relations.

3.2.3. The Struggle for Hegemony Following the Revolution

The struggle for ideological supremacy and leadership which began in the period before the triumph of the Revolution continued after the political victory. As this struggle is critical to the analysis of state-civil society relations developed in this study, it is important to explore this process in more detail. To this end, two dimensions of the struggle have been identified for analysis. In order to facilitate the discussion they are presented here separately. However, it is important to stress that they are, in fact, interdependent.

a) Political Hegemony

Suárez's idea of the Revolution as an *accumulation* of different fights and struggles (see 3.2.1 above) explains not only the longitudinal nature of the revolutionary struggle but also the heterogeneous character of those groups that joined together to rid Cuba of Batista. As such, it was a fragile coalition of social forces that took power in January 1959. In its composition, the new government reflected the broad constellation of forces that had united against a common enemy. It was soon evident, however, that it was Fidel Castro's group who were not only perceived to be in command (Díaz, 2001) but who controlled the Council of Ministers, "in whom all legislative authority was vested" (see Evenson, 1994,p.11). Early on, frictions began to develop between radical and conservative elements of the coalition, represented respectively by Fidel Castro and Manuel Urrutia (see Buch and Suárez, 2002, also Núñez, 2003).   In addition, supporters of the Revolution from the previous order's upper and middle classes, the "Second Movement" (Chanan, 1985,p.90), started to fall away and form an opposition as the radical nature of the changes implemented became apparent.

Although the new revolutionary government concentrated sufficient power and autonomy at its centre to put in train a series of structural reforms whose explicit developmental objectives, it was believed, would lead to a complete transformation of social life, this process was hampered by the cleavages between groups. In short, the 'government' was not a cohesive whole.

Despite his key position as leader of the Rebel Army,[26] Fidel Castro did not immediately take a formal place within the new government. Instead, major positions passed to those members of the former bourgeoisie who had worked against Batista and who, as a consequence, carried prestige.[27]   Linked to the few legitimate elements of the previous order, these figures represented an element of continuity in a time of turmoil and upheaval. They were all moderates and it was from this group that opposition to the new reforms and laws that had been proposed was voiced (for details of the legislation see 3.2.4, below). Unsurprisingly then, it was also this group that was the first to be removed during the internal struggle which ensued as different forces jockeyed for power in the early months of the Revolution. It was

from this struggle that the political leadership that was eventually to control the new state emerged. At its head and acting as indisputable leader was Fidel Castro Ruz: Commander of the Forces of Air, Sea and Land and, by February 1959, Prime Minister of the Republic. Having placed Urrutia in the presidency, Fidel waited the short time until Urrutia had no alternative but to name him Prime Minister (see Selbin, 1999). Six months later, Fidel forced Urrutia out of office by resigning as Prime Minister in protest against his vacillation (see Chanan, 1985, also Buch and Suárez, 2002).

Immensely charismatic, in the Weberian sense,[28] and a skilful and adept strategist, Fidel was successful in concentrating social control and eliminating alternative social organisations that might have applied conflicting rules of the game. Consistent in exerting his dominance over the shifting revolutionary power structure, he was adept at "constructing political formulations" that out-maneuvered not only the liberals within the government but also revolutionary sectarians (Chanan, 1985,p.105). Having dealt with the last of the bourgeoisie, Fidel turned his attention to other groups in the revolutionary coalition. His strategy was to allow contending groups to implode. Whether this was achieved by allowing them to discredit themselves in the eyes of the people, as occurred with the Revolutionary Directorate (see Díaz, 2001) or by their alienating themselves from popular support, as was the case with the old Communist Party which had become the PSP (Selbin, 1999), was immaterial. What mattered was that potentially competing forces were made impotent, dispersed, filtered and brought back together again in a different but united form. Even Fidel's own group, the 26 July Movement (M-26-7), disappeared in the form that it had existed prior to victory as Fidel moved against 'dissidents' within his own organisation.[29] Showing considerable ability to integrate diverse elements of the power bloc, once they had been rendered impotent, Fidel managed to control what could potentially have become dangerous centrifugal forces and channel them into a powerful centripetal force. In a climate of potential fragmentation, the absence of division became an essential goal. In March 1962, Fidel made two famous speeches denouncing sectarianism which were greeted with overwhelming popular approval (Chanan, 1985) and in so doing set a trend which was to define Cuban politics over the next three decades and beyond. "Unity," as Suárez recently pointed out, "was to become the sacred value of the Revolution" (interview, 15 April 2003, Havana).

In 1961, the three main political groups that had been involved in the insurrection against Batista were merged into a unified structure, the Integrated Revolutionary Organisations (ORI). The ORI was comprised of the M-26-7, the Revolutionary Directorate and the Popular Socialist Party (PSP). Because PSP cadres had organisational experience,[30] construction of the ORI was entrusted to former PSP secretary Aníbal Escalante. Escalante moved rapidly to place PSP members in the country's emergent institutions and began to have

tremendous influence over the fundamental policies of the Revolution. Drawing on what Selbin (1999,p.43) refers to as "Stalinist tactics" he used bureaucratic methods to try to split the Revolution's leadership. Fidel's response was to remove Escalante. The ease with which Escalante was deposed and the ORI 'reorganised' into the United Party of the Socialist Revolution (PURS), demonstrated the strength of Fidel's authority. In many respects, the creation of the ORI had been the first attempt to give institutional shape to the Revolution and its lack of success doubtless influenced the decision to move more cautiously towards institutionalisation in the future (see Díaz, 2001).

b) Ideological Hegemony and the Cultural Struggle

Competition between discourses over the agreed alternative project continued throughout the 1960s. There was fierce debate over what kind of Revolution the process might become and the direction of political change (see Martínez, 2003). As Fagen (1969,p.27) notes, there was "plenty of in-fighting." Although newspapers remained separatist until 1965 when they merged, there was a struggle to control intellectual spaces. By closing cultural magazines such as *Lunes de Revolución* the dominant group effectively constrained the opportunity for alternative groups to exercise ideological hegemony (for a recent discussion of the issues surrounding the publication of this weekly see González, 2002). Debates about the relationship between culture and politics reached a peak over the film *PM* which was banned from public exhibition at the end of May 1961. Chanan (1985) argues that it was the film's portrayal of blacks which made it unacceptable, while Cubans interviewed for this study pointed overwhelmingly to the issue of the film's frivolous representation of Havana night-life which, given its release at the time of Girón (see below), made the film unacceptable.[31] Where there is agreement is that the conflict over *PM* brought the entire cultural sector to "boiling point" (Chanan, 1985,p.105). A series of meetings were held in the National Library between the 16th and 30th June 1961, with practically the entire intellectual and artistic community present. But it was Fidel's closing speech, his *Words to the Intellectuals* as it became known, which was crucial. In this speech Fidel tackled the issue that lay at the heart of the intellectual community's concerns: the fear that the Revolution could asphyxiate art and stifle freedom for artistic creation and expression. Fidel's responded with the following:

> .. whether or not that doubt would be present in truly revolutionary writers and artists, I believe not … the field of doubt is left to the writers and artists who are not counterrevolutionary, but who do not feel themselves revolutionary either .. (Castro, *Palabras a los Intelectuales*, 30 June 1961).

Fidel argued that it was correct for artists who were neither revolutionary nor counterrevolutionary to feel the Revolution was a problem. Only the "dishonest and mercenary" found no problem in it and knew where their interests lay (Castro, 1961). This led

him to the formula: *"dentro de la Revolución todo; contra la Revolución, nada"* (within the Revolution everything; against the Revolution, nothing). Nothing against the Revolution would be tolerated because:

> The Revolution also has rights, and the first right of the Revolution is the right to exist and no one can stand against the right of the Revolution to be and to exist. No one can rightfully claim a right against the Revolution since it takes in the interests of the people and signifies the interests of an entire nation (Fidel Castro, *Palabras a los Intelectuales,* 30 June 1961).

The role of intellectuals in the Revolution and the "tense dialogue" between power and intellectuality which was to characterise later decades (see Chapters 5 and 6) had begun (Arango, interview 23 April 2003, Havana; see also Arango, 1995/2002). Dilla (2002) argues that it is important to consider the context in which Fidel made his remarks: the grave threats to the revolutionary project from forces within Cuba and from the U.S., yet he also draws attention to the "trap" contained within the formula (Dilla, 2002,p.2). The trap, according to Dilla, is the definition of 'the Revolution' that is adopted. If, he explains, 'the Revolution' is defined as a project of social justice, anti-imperialism and democracy, this would suggest a good deal of space (and even more reasons) to be 'within' it. However, if it referred to precise policies:

> … the narrowing would be such that the only way to be within it was by making a performance of an inexhaustible political loyalty, a distressing complicity of silence or simply to resign oneself to being opaque … (Dilla, 2002,p.2).

It was not only in the cultural arena that problems emerged. Within the leadership itself a range of positions spanning a spectrum from 'radical' to 'conservative' can be discerned at this time. Conservative forces, often linked in some way to the PSP and represented by individuals such as Blas Roca Calderío, promoted a dogmatic interpretation of Marxism which contrasted sharply with the ideology of Che Guevara, for example. Arguably one of Fidel's greatest strengths was his pragmatic ability to navigate a course between these two extremes by using both radical and conservative ideas where politically expedient (see Selbin, 1999). The problem of 'the appropriate path' that socialist development should take in Cuba created uncertainties. The fact that there was uncertainty regarding the way head "created a sufficient vacuum" (Kapcia, 2000,p.120) for a determined, disciplined and ideologically coherent organisation to operate with disproportionate influence; widening the critical gap between formal power and real power. Such an organisation was the Rebel Army.

The style of government following the political victory was in effect an extension of the leadership style of the M-26-7 but in particular that of the Rebel Army (see Bengelsdorf, 1994 and Chanan, 1985). The lessons learned from the experience fighting in the mountains and the methods that had brought Fidel and his group to power, were subsequently continued and applied to the task of transforming Cuban society. While in the Sierra, the Rebel Army had demonstrated their principles. They had established order in the territories under their control,

occupied radio stations and arranged for the publication of newspapers (see Chanan, 1985; Selbin, 1999). In short, they were 'poised' to engage in the political tasks created by victory (Chanan, 1985). The most coherent, united and popular pole was Fidel's group. It was this group that began to dominate ideologically as the fusion of revolutionary forces became increasingly focused under a single leadership. Rausberg notes: "the role this group played in the period following the triumph was fundamental, and has remained so to this day" (interview, 4 May 2003, Havana).

The revolutionary leadership employed what Selbin (1999,p.41) describes as a "highly egalitarian populist style of government." However, even at this early stage, serious contradictions were emerging between the declared goal of the socialisation of power and what was to become the gradual appropriation of that power by a bureaucratic layer tied to the dominant group. Initially, what remained of the previous regime's bureaucracy was riddled with Batista collaborators and although no permanent institutional framework for the state was introduced at this point, an emergent structure was formed using those patterns adopted to administer the liberated areas of the Sierra Maestra prior to 1959. During the years of struggle, the M-26-7 high command had created 'departments' which were charged with administering separate areas and it was these departments - Justice, Health, Social Security, Agriculture and Peasant Affairs, Construction, Industry, Social Construction Services, Education and Finances - which were the embryos of the state's future ministries (Díaz, 2001).

These new institutional structures were established in parallel to those existing ministries and courts which had been carried over from the previous order, "enabling Fidel to maneuver around the old bureaucratic structures with greater flexibility" (Evenson, 1994,p.12). One of the most important was the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA) which implemented land reform (see below) and agricultural policy. Directed by Fidel, Guevara and ex-PSP activist Antonio Núñez Jiménez, INRA was the main medium for rural radicalization, collectivisation, reform and education (Kapcia, 2000). According to Evenson (1994), INRA was relatively autonomous from the council of Ministers and was able to interpret and apply the law with creativity and flexibility.

During the 1960s, only transitory political forms were developed and 'experimentalism' was very much a feature of the period (see Fagen, 1969). Idealism and impulsiveness made for a creative social engineering process. The reluctance to create anything of permanence was in part a reflection of the belief that an institutional framework might constrain the degree of flexibility deemed necessary to move rapidly in changing society. Paramount, however, was the fear that the structures themselves might destroy the content and purpose of the Revolution. Rejecting the conventional formulas of Marxism-Leninism, Che Guevara in particular argued that the creation of formal institutions for decision-making carried with it the risk of

bureaucratisation, a "blight" that he believed should be "avoided, fought against and ultimately eliminated" (Bengelsdorf, 1994, p.67). Having studied other cases, the revolutionary leadership was convinced that in Russia, China, Mexico and Bolivia, institutionalisation had derailed and destroyed the social revolutionary process.[32] It was considered that bureaucracy and institutions would only interfere with the relationship between the revolutionary leadership and the population.[33] Hence, the decision was made to actively avoid institutionalisation and focus instead on the process of consolidation. However, the absence of institutionalisation during the first decade and its subsequent uneven introduction, did create problems, as we shall see (see also Selbin, 1999).

There was, however, a further reason for the leadership's avoidance of creating permanent state structures. This consideration related to issues of defence. The constant external threat posed by the region's hegemon, the U.S., which wished to resume its role as a decisive actor in Cuba's internal affairs, "played a key part in the decision to postpone giving institutional shape to the new state" (Barredo, interview, 29 April 2003 Havana). The nature and extent of the physical and economic threats generated directly by the United States toward the Cuban Revolution in its first decade and beyond are well documented (see Cole, 1998; Diaz, 2002) and as such shall only briefly be mentioned here.

The Revolution's early years were dominated by a series of crises in U.S.-Cuban relations: the collapse of economic and diplomatic relations with the United States on 3 January 1961; the CIA-sponsored invasion at Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs) in 1961; and the October Missile Crisis of 1962. What came to be known as Playa Girón deserves particular mention. On 16 April 1961 Cuban exiles began an invasion of the island which ended as a fiasco for the U.S. and thwarted the hopes of the more conservative elements of the Cuban exile community. Girón had been an overt effort to undermine the Revolution. It was an attempt by an external power to resume its imperialist role as an internal actor in the island and an attempt by the hegemonic group of the previous order to reassert its domination through the use of force.

The victory of the young Revolution, and particularly the speed (less than 78 hours) with which the U.S. backed forces were crushed by the Rebel Army and popular militias, represented a turning point. It demonstrated to the Cuban people their strength as they stood against imperialism. Moreover, the strength of the organisations of Cuba's new civil society to resist and overcome the aggression of their mighty neighbour to the north had been tested and they were found to be sturdy (see Martínez, 1999),

After the Missile Crisis of 1962,[34] U.S. strategy to destabilise the Revolution operated largely in the realm of economics and diplomacy, in the form of a continuing economic embargo[35] with the intention of effecting an international isolation of Cuba from Latin America

and Western Europe (Diaz, 2002). Covert U.S. activities did not, however, cease after October 1962 and continuing support was given to the development and maintenance of an active anti-Castro counter-revolutionary force throughout the 1960s and into the decades that followed (Robinson, 1996).

The Lack of a Credible Internal Threat

Quite early on, the Revolution was successful in taking over and occupying the entire national and social space. Fagen (1969) argues that the Cuban leadership was able to "consolidate and maintain its hold on society with considerable ease, capturing almost intact the socio-economic resources of the island and subsequently expending little on civil strife" (Fagen, 1969,p.28). There was however what Martínez (1999,p.86) describes as a "limited but painful civil war" which included counter revolutionary attacks such as the explosion in Havana harbor aboard *la Coubre* of March 1960 (see Núñez, 2003; Chanan, 1985). Pockets of resistance had remained following the political victory but with the defeat of counter-revolutionary forces in the Escambray Mountains, overt and counter-revolutionary activity had been almost completely wiped out, or driven underground, by the end of 1962 (Fagen, 1969), largely because it had no social base (Dilla, 2003a,p.9). In contrast to the experiences of many countries in Latin America, very soon the reach of the revolutionary government extended throughout the territory. This process involved both the appropriation of political spaces abandoned by groups who were opposed to the Revolution, and the subsequent 'closing off' of those spaces which had been won from competing groups or factions.

It was in this context that the division between 'the Revolution' and 'the counter-revolution' formed, and it was along this fault line that the contours of inclusion and exclusion were subsequently drawn.[36] The political opposition was quickly identified as a 'counter-revolutionary' force lying on the wrong side of this divide and, as such, was associated with the worst of the previous order. Just as the virtues and heroism of the revolutionaries were made clearer by this comparison, so too were the "vices" and "cowardice" of the opposition which lacked popular support (interview, García Brigos, 9 January 2003, Havana). Those anti-Revolutionary institutions and personnel that remained from the old order were stained and stigmatised by their complicity in the events that had brought Cuba to the position in which it found itself by 1958[37] and as a result did not provide an effective base from which a challenge to the revolutionaries could be organised and mounted. What opposition there was, was fragmented and had little potential for a concerted attack on the new state (Martínez, 1999).

Furthermore, the Revolution swiftly constructed a significant symbolic arsenal with which to defend itself from ideological attack. It manipulated this 'arsenal' with great skill in order to establish and later sustain its hegemonic position. By laying claim to, and associating

itself with, the country's rich heritage of nationalist struggle against foreign domination and oppression, it effectively left the internal resistance with few sources of legitimacy. In short, the Revolution's definition of its 'project' affected the possibilities for the opposition (see Stepan, 1985). Added to this, newly created Revolutionary Tribunals which operated independently of, and in parallel to, the ordinary courts were established and after July 1959 were given jurisdiction to try those accused of counter-revolutionary activity.[38] It was these special tribunals which tried hundreds of Batista collaborators accused of committing acts of assassination, torture and other abuses (De Luis, interview, 14 January 2003, Havana). Mass arrests carried out throughout the island during 1961 rendered any remaining opposition incapable of organising and threatening the new state. Hence, through a process of eliminating, merging or adopted organisations which potentially threatened the Revolution, the state maintained and extended its power. By using a combination of coercion and persuasion, the new state ensured that very quickly an effective opposition on the island ceased to be an option. With the repression of counter-revolutionary elements, antagonistic forces in conflict with the state largely disappeared from Cuban civil society (see Fagen, 1969,p.27; Dilla, 2003a) and its role as an arena for any kind of opposition was severely diminished. For Suárez this process represented the "earliest expression of the institutionalisation of socialist civil society" (interview, 15 April 2003, Havana).

3.2.4. Radicalisation: Esta Tierra Nuestra (This Land of Ours)[39]

Far more than an armed movement against a dictatorial regime, the Cuban Revolution was an attempt to fundamentally transform society (see Castro, 1953/1968). As a process of transformation it had at its core a social project "driven by the ideals of national liberation, social justice and equality, and motivated by intense anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist sentiments" (interview Barredo, 29 April 2003, Havana). High on the Revolution's initial agenda was the need to effect a fundamental change in property relations. Seen as essential if the social and economic order was to be transformed in such a way as to lead to the eventual eradication of those social differences which had previously characterised and divided Cuban society,[40] radical structural changes were intended to fulfil two functions which would occur simultaneously: the destruction of those social relations and structures that had defined the old order, and the creation of the conditions necessary for initiating and establishing the new social, political and economic configuration that was to define post-revolutionary Cuba.

Of the plethora of laws and reforms that the Revolutionary Government introduced,[41] the Agrarian Reform Law of 17 May 1959 was arguably the most symbolic (Espina, 1997; Díaz, 2001; Tablada, 2001). It was, as Fidel Castro has recently put it, "a truly *radical* reform" (his emphasis, Conference, 8 May 2003, Havana) which immediately placed some 40 per cent

of land into state hands (see Espina, 1997; Tablada 2001, p.32) and initiated the structural change that enabled the rise of new economic and social actors (Tablada, 2001) and a reconfiguration of the social structure (Espina, 1997). The new protagonists were the peasants and the working class (Bulté, interview, 23 April 2003, Havana); an alliance which has been "crucial to the process of constructing socialism" (Marquetti, speech, 21 February 2003, Havana). The law symbolised the radicalism of the Revolution at a point when, for many participants or observers at least, this was not readily apparent (see Alfredo Guevara's commentary in Chanan, 1985,p.92). In an impromptu speech in May 2003, Fidel Castro told those gathered his recollections of the first Agrarian Reform:

> … the Agrarian Reform of the 17th May was made in the first year of the Revolution and it was a *radical* reform. We were arguing about it for a few days and while we were on the plane - we were going to go to the Sierra to sign the law - I added something to it. I added the cooperatives because even in the speech in which I defended myself,[42] even there, I had spoken of cooperatives, but the cooperatives were not mentioned (in the draft of the law). Although the law was very radical, someone said that it was 'rubbish' because people could still hold up to 100 caballerías of land, that is 1340 hectares, if the land was to be well cultivated. So, a maximum of 100 caballerías if cultivated and if left uncultivated up to 30 caballerías. At the time there were enormous North American enterprises, like the United Fruit Company and others, who had up to 200, 000 hectares of land and others with 170, 000 or 180,000 … so land was highly concentrated in the hands of foreign or national enterprises. The fact that the law was radical permitted, from the first moments, an improvement in the lives of the peasants (Fidel Castro, speaking at conference, 8 May 2003, Havana, his emphasis).

The Reform represented a turning point in the Revolution. It was the first piece of legislation to expropriate North American property and as such pushed U.S. toleration of the new Cuban government to the limit. The Reform clearly showed the revolutionary leadership's orientation towards the *campesino* (Chanan, 1985; Selbin, 1999; Bulté interview, 23 April 2003, Havana) but it was also a tangible expression of their commitment to improve the situation of the majority of Cubans (see Fagen, 1969).

In terms of its function in the establishment of hegemonic control by Fidel's group, the Agrarian Reform and the process of radicalisation which it represented, was critical for three principal reasons. Firstly, and as we have already seen, it offered an opportunity for Fidel's group to deal with those *within* the Revolutionary coalition who opposed more radical moves. Secondly, the Reform precipitated an out-migration, or "draining off" as Fagen (1969, p.7) calls it, of discontent and opposition and, thirdly, it represented an opportunity to capture the support of the majority of the population: the Revolution's social base. Let us look at the issues of out-migration and popular support in more detail and examine their influence on state-civil society relations.

3.2.5. Fracturing Geographically: Civil Society and Out-Migration

Between 1959 and 1960 the Agrarian Reform Law, together with the nationalisation of large industrial, commercial and banking enterprises, was decisive in prompting the disappearance of the national bourgeoisie and curtailing capitalist relations of production on the island. Believing their economic and social survival to be threatened, the majority of the Cuban bourgeoisie were against the Revolution yet incapable of developing vehicles of class mobilisation and protection. As Bengelsdorf (1994,p.69) puts it:

> … nothing captures the alienation of the Cuban bourgeoisie from their own national interests quite as well as their refusal, or inability to react to the Castro threat.

Making no attempt at self-defense, the bourgeoisie simply left on masse[43] and with their exodus an entire class was effectively eliminated from the social structure. In fact, one of the singularities of the Cuban Revolution was that after 1959 Cuban civil society fractured geographically as well as structurally. With the emigration and exodus of large sections of the bourgeoisie in the early months and years of the Revolution, and their establishment principally within the United States as a community vehemently in opposition to the new government on the island, yet still tied emotionally and culturally to their homeland, a 'civil society' of opposition began to function externally.

These displaced and dispossessed sectors of the 'old' civil society were heavily associated with Batista and fully expected to be able to return and resume their former lives in Cuba once the new government had been removed. In this they looked to their traditional ally, the United States, for help:

> Their dependence on the United States had reached such an extreme that they naturally turned to the United States to bail them out … expecting the United States to enter the fray momentarily, clear out the rebels, and permit them to return without any risk to their own lives (Bengelsdorf, 1994,p.69).

Increasingly disaffected, due to the escalating threat to their own positions and comforts, those anti-Batista elements of the former upper and middle classes who had initially supported the Revolution and remained in Cuba, gradually chose to abandon the island in much the same way as the ex-*batistianos* had before them. Hence, according to Kapcia (2000,p.102) migration "proceeded in stages," with a "politically motivated exodus preceding the economically driven departures." Chanan (1985,p.88) describes these "waves of migration" in the following terms:

> The biggest fish fled immediately, followed by a growing flood of frightened rich, the incorrigibly bourgeois and the retinue of professionals, operatives and technical engineers who depended on them.

The atmosphere of the period was captured and portrayed to Cuban audiences by Jesus Díaz's (1982) film *Polvo Rojo* (Red Dust), the story of a technician at a North American owned nickel plant who remains in Cuba to run things after the other technicians and administrators, and even his own family, leave for the United States. *Polvo Rojo* highlights the dilemmas and

traumas faced by many Cubans whose families "fractured along ideological fault-lines" following the Revolution (Bulté, interview, 23 April 2003, Havana).

The fact that those who were against the Revolution could and did leave had a number of important consequences for state-civil society relations. Mass migration was, for example, a vital factor in dislocating and weakening traditional forms of social control and allowing new forms to emerge. In the conclusion to his seminal study *Strong States and Weak Societies*, Migdal (1988) illustrates the importance of out-migration by contrasting the Cuban case with that of Chile:

> In Cuba, the Revolution itself probably was not sufficiently widespread or brutal to undermine existing social control; however, out-migration made the difference. The emigration of approximately one million Cubans – especially the first fifth or so who controlled key resources in Cuban society – out of a total population of less than eight million gave important opportunities to those who had seized the state apparatus to concentrate social control. One Chilean official of the deposed Allende regime acknowledged the importance of such migration for Cuba when he suggested that Chile's socialist experiment failed because Chile did not have a Florida only ninety miles away (Migdal, 1988,).

As Migdal points out, the fact that Cubans had somewhere to go and, moreover, somewhere that *welcomed* them, was critical.[44] Speaking recently on this theme, Fidel Castro commented:

> If five million Mexicans cross the frontier (into the U.S.) they are *immigrants*, if they are Cubans, they are *exiles*. There is not one single Cuban who lives in the United States who is not an 'exile' (Fidel Castro, speaking at conference, 8 May 2003, Havana, his emphasis).

Migration has continued to be a critical issue for Cubans and one which has been associated with manifestations of discontent, famously the Mariel boatlift of 1980 (see Kapcia, 1995). As we shall see in Chapter 6, more recently the politics of migration were seen when three Cubans were executed in April 2003 after having hijacked a boat in Havana habour with the intention of reaching the U.S. (on the issue of migration, see CEAP, 1996 and *Temas* no.26, 2001. See Dilla (2003a) for an analysis of the issues surrounding the April 2003 executions).

Fagen (1969,p.28) argues that the flight of Cuban exiles was a "blessing" for the Revolutionary government. For despite "the loss of much needed skills and capital" (interview, García Brigos, 9 January 2003, Havana), their departure "purified and strengthened" the Revolutionary movement by "removing those of questionable loyalty" (Fagen, 1969,p.28). Hence, part of Bulté's idea of the "total convulsion" of civil society (see above) involved the "disappearance" of not only those institutions that had defined civil society during the period of the Republic, but also sectors of those social classes which had defined pre-Revolutionary civil society (Bulté, interview, 23 April, 2003; also Dilla, 1999a; Suárez, interview, 15 April 2003, Havana).

Cuban civil society may have divided geographically in the 1960s but the role of the newly formed 'external civil society' as an opposition which sought to influence domestic politics in Cuba continued (interview Suárez, 15 April 2003, Havana). Further complicating

the situation, this dispossessed sector of the old regime's capitalist civil society began, on arrival in the U.S., to function as part of north American civil society, simultaneously pressurising and complying with the U.S. state (see Diaz, 2002 for details of the Cuban lobby). In effect there was a total inversion of the previous order. For whereas in the past the Cuban bourgeoisie had been alienated from its national interests, post-1959 those among its members who were territorially located within the U.S. suddenly discovered their 'national' roots and, as an exile community, began to identify strongly with a Cuban national interest. Kapcia (2000,p.34) notes: "the development of a parallel *cubanía* (ideology) outside Cuba after 1959, not least in the largest émigré community in Florida." But while civil society in Cuba underwent a dynamic adjustment following the Revolution, both in its own development and in its relationship with the state, this exiled 'civil society' remained psychologically located in the Cuba of 1958 and dependent on the United States.

Thus "with the radicalisation of 1959," as Bulté points out, "a significant part of society went. But the main part stayed with the Revolution" (Bulté, interview, 23 April, 2003). It is to the experiences of 'those who stayed' and the leadership's success in gaining their support and acceptance of its project that we now turn.

3.2.6. Winning the People's Soul[45]

Despite being one of the reforms most opposed by Washington and the former Cuban bourgeoisie, the land reform of May 1959 was received by the majority of Cubans as one of the most popular measures undertaken by the Revolutionary government. After the premiere of the film *Esta tierra nuestra* which had been produced by the Rebel Army's Cultural Directorate in order to explain the reform to the Cuban people, there was a standing ovation, a response which was repeated at subsequent screenings throughout the country (Chanan, 1985). This united demonstration of support acts as a metaphor for the general degree of enthusiasm felt for the reform. Although the elections which had been promised were not held,[46] Alfredo Guevara, head of the ICAIC reflected that, "each showing of the film had the same significance as a plebiscite" (Guevara, in Chanan 1985,p.94). The reform ensured that very quickly the working class and peasantry identified with the Revolution and that a strong alliance was forged between these classes and the political leadership. In this way, the first political acts of the new regime enabled it to secure its social base among the popular classes.

The *nuestra* or 'ours' in the title of the film was highly significant. For the first time in the history of the Cuban nation 'ours' meant *the Cuban people's*, as opposed to a foreign power's or an elite's. Very quickly, the re-definition of ownership which 'ours' represented became tied to an idea of socialism. In the following fragment, taken from a recent speech, Fidel Castro makes this point clearly:

I remember a discussion at a huge meeting of workers and delegates representing all the tendencies. Many there were from the Socialist Party (PSP) but others were from our Movement. They were agitating and the agitation was very significant. In the sugar industry there were only three shifts and so the agitation was for the introduction of a four shift system. I had promised to talk to these people. I did not have the slightest doubt that we had to say 'no' to their demands but, up until the moment that I arrived there, they were still agitating for four shifts. *I already had an idea of socialism, and I thought that what we were about to do, if we agreed to these workers' demands, was ruin the sugar industry. If the sugar industry was to be **ours**, why ruin it?* And so I had to defend the idea that unemployment could not be resolved by re-distributing the employment that already existed, but by creating new sources of work and I stopped there in front of those thousand and something agitators and on-lookers, and patiently explained to them why it was that what they were asking for was not possible (Fidel Castro, speaking at conference, 7 May 2003, Havana, my emphasis).

Thinking beyond gaining the support of these workers by satisfying their immediate demands, Fidel clearly had an idea that the industrial base was to be nationalised early in 1959. However, it was not until October 1960 that the Nationalisation Law was passed, a measure which nationalised nearly every important private enterprise (see Espina, 1996). Besides the first Agrarian Reform and the Nationalisation Law, a plethora of other laws and reforms were introduced.[47] Of the major laws, the Urban Reform Law (October 1960), the Nationalisation of Education Law (June 1961) and the Second Agrarian Reform Law (October 1963) were fundamental. In a formal sense, the government was very legalistic, which is perhaps not surprising given that many in the new administration, including Fidel, were lawyers (Bulté, interview, 23 April, 2003, Havana). No action was taken without first declaring a law, even if the laws were modified numerous times as circumstances required. "These decrees," writes Evenson (1994), "(were) in essence the dictates of a small elite, but their legitimacy emanated from the unfolding revolution which enjoyed massive popular support" (see Evenson, 1994,p.12).

Accounts of this period describe an overriding sense of urgency with regards the speed with which changes were introduced (Fagen, 1969; Chanan, 1985). The 'magnitude', 'pace', 'speed' and 'rate' of the revolutionary process are stressed in many, as are the 'bewildering' and 'confusing' nature of the changes (see Fagen, 1969,p.2; Díaz, 2001). However, the urgency to solve problems which had taken centuries to develop, to "make up for fifty lost years" as Díaz (2001,p.107) puts it, and the haphazard and spontaneous nature of the changes introduced, also produced a feeling of chaos. In her evocative, and highly detailed analysis of the Revolution between 1959 and 1962, Díaz (2001) captures both the frenetic pace and resulting disorder of the period (see also, Chanan, 1985). She describes how ministers were named for ministries which had not yet been created and authorisation was given for policies which were either not introduced until months later, or never at all. In May 2003, Fidel Castro reflected on this time:

I remember when we made the first economic plan in Cuba. You must understand that it is a delight for me to remember this, because there were some *compañeros* from the Socialist Party [PSP] *(he says this chuckling)*, who were supposed to have some notion of this, they were those who apparently had more of an idea. I remember some *compañeros* such as Carlos

Rafael (Rodriguez), who was known as an intellectual, as intelligent. A few of them got together to make the first plan. So, our first economic plan! … There was no administrative capacity at that time, there was no system for directing the economy and there was a debate over whether to use a budgetary formula or a self-financing formula. Che [Guevara] defended the budgetary formula - he was Minister of Industry, in fact he was minister of various things due to his huge talent and his dedication to the tasks that were entrusted to him, for his exemplary conduct, although he was 'allergic' to the system - while Carlos Rafael was in favour of the system of self-financing. They were arguing and because I did not feel capable of deciding which of the two systems was the best, it occurred to me to say to them, look, Che, you try your method in industry and you, Carlos Rafael, you use your system of self-financing in agriculture (Fidel Castro, speaking at conference, 07 May 2003, Havana).

Two things come across clearly from this passage. Firstly, the sense of cohesion that existed at the heart of the state in the early days of the Revolution. Far from being autonomous of the political elite, top state planners were themselves political leaders; essentially a dedicated, highly motivated, and ideologically well-prepared group. Secondly, Fidel's role and the degree to which power was concentrated in his hands, even at this stage, is striking.

The situation was a highly contradictory one, containing elements of both chaos and order. Above all the impression given by interpretations of this period is one of intense dynamism and great fluidity, a 'helter-skelter' of change and transformation captured by the expression *por la libre* which Cubans used to describe the 'free-wheeling' quality of the era. The situation required swift, pragmatic decisions, with little time to reflect on their consequences. Again, remembering the improvisation of the early years of the Revolution, Fidel recalls, "everything was done like this [*moving his hands to indicate a rolling motion*]: we tumbled forward day-by-day-by-day" (Fidel Castro, speaking at conference, 7 May 2003, Havana).

Moves to dismantle small-scale urban private property were initiated in the early 1960s and by the time of the Revolutionary Offensive in 1968, it had been all but eliminated, its presence tolerated only in the transport sector and even there it was not significant (see Espina, 1995,p.87). The Second Agrarian Reform law of 1963 maintained and deepened the strong and accelerated rhythm of change. Both the act of 1959 and that of 1963 targeted large agricultural landholdings for expropriation and redistribution. Within five years of the Revolution coming to power, the state controlled almost 100 per cent of industry and minor commerce, and 70 per cent of agricultural production (Espina, 1997,p.86-7).

In line with the ideals for which the Revolution had been fought, measures were introduced to improve the situation of all sectors of the population and moves were made to promote a process of social levelling (Basail, 1999). The aim was to transform the social and economic order in ways which would lead to the eventual eradication of those social differences which had previously characterised and divided Cuban society (Limia, interview, 12 May 2003, Havana). Again, the changes introduced encapsulated both destructive and constructive tasks: destroying those social relationships and structures which defined the old

order, while creating the conditions necessary for initiating and establishing the new social, political and economic configuration that was to define post-Revolutionary Cuba (Limia, interview, 12 May 2003, Havana).

Rising social mobility was encouraged through state programmes (see Dilla, 1999c,p.229). Welfare activities were expanded, and the state took over responsibility for health and education. Measures to root out corruption and suppress gambling were particularly popular (Fagen, 1969). As were moves to reduce the price of medicines, telephone calls, electricity and rents (see Chanan, 1985). By the end of the decade, all the means of production, with the exception of small farms, were in state hands. A profoundly uneven playing field was being levelled as patterns of economic development and the country's social and political systems were transformed (Dilla, 1999c).

These transformations were expressed in the new social contract that was negotiated between the state and civil society. The contract hinged on the issue of rights. The Revolution offered, and to a large extent delivered (see Saney, 2004), a range of social and economic rights to the population (see Cole, 1998). The delivery of these rights, that is, the state's side of the bargain, implied a completely new role for the state and represented a dramatic reconfiguration in state-civil society relations. In contrast to what had gone before, political rights were defined in relation to new social and economic rights.[48] In this climate, democracy became synonymous with equality, national unity, social justice and the development of the economic capacity to satisfy society's needs. Accordingly, "democracy would exist when the needs of the population were satisfied or, if this could not be achieved, in the equality of opportunity and sacrifice" (Basail, 1999,p.2-3). This understanding was the central component of the new social contract and it was this which gave legitimacy to the political system (Valdés Paz, interview 30 April, 2003, Havana).

The foundation of the Revolution's social contract was the state's ability to deliver a basket of social and economic rights. With their delivery came the promise of an end to the uncertainty and precariousness of existence that had characterised the pervious order. Commenting on the state's obligation to provide a secure and stable environment for all Cubans, Fidel Castro explains: "we got rid of the lottery so that people no longer put their trust in chance and luck for their prosperity" (Fidel Castro, 8 May 2003, Havana). While the old (dysfunctional) system of competitive party politics was replaced by participation, mobilisation and united rule under the guidance of a single party (see below).

The contract implied the existence of an economy with the capacity to generate sufficient wealth in order to make these social and economic rights tangible. However, the new state had to organise the conditions for economic growth within a context of domestic and

international capital flight. In this difficult context "a circumstance which helped," as Fidel Castro put it, was:

> … the luck that the socialist camp and principally the USSR existed, and that there was a man there who was called Khruschev who indulged us like a grandfather with his grandchild … If it had been Stalin in power, not even one ton of petroleum would have arrived nor would he have bought one ton of sugar from us (Fidel Castro, speaking at conference, 7 May 2003, Havana).

If the existence of the Cold War had "created a space" for the Revolution (Fagen, 1969,p.31), it was essentially the Soviet Union which "underwrote" social development on the island (Kapcia, 2000). The Soviet mission arrived in Cuba in February 1960 and trade and credit agreements were hastily signed (see Cole, 1998). By April 1960, Cuba had began to purchase crude oil from the USSR, a move which outraged Cuba's US-owned refineries which refused to process the oil. In response, the Cuban government decided to take over the refineries, a move which was immediately countered by U.S. President Eisenhower, whose retaliation came in the form of the sugar quota (see Cole, 1998).

Not only was the ownership of land and the social contract between state and civil society undergoing a radical redefinition at this time but so too was the idea of the Cuban state. For the state was no longer to be perceived as the creature of an economic class. Rather, the revolutionary leadership wished to inculcate the perception that the state was acting in the interests of the new civil society that was being created, a civil society that was, for the first time, to include all Cubans regardless of class, gender or racial background. According to this interpretation, the Cuban state and civil society had the same objectives, for they shared a common project and vision of the future. That the realisation of this project would be a struggle was accepted because the struggle, like the 'dream' (Kapcia, 2000) upon which it was built, was a shared one. In fact, one of the major achievements of the Revolution in its earliest days was the way in which this common objective, 'the project', was taken up and identified with by so many people, particularly within the working class and peasantry.

The ease with which the new government was able to gain acceptance of its project by the popular classes could be attributable to four factors. First, the disequilibrium and violence in the period immediately preceding the Revolution and the psychological legacy of an authoritarian past which was "never to be repeated" (Dilla, 1999a,p.165). Second, the fear of U.S. invasion and a recomposition of the old order which engendered a "sense of siege" (Kapcia, 2000,p.101) on the island. Third, the nature of the project itself, and fourth, the qualities of the leadership. The fact that Cuba's new leaders were capable of articulating their vision in a manner that was accessible to the ordinary citizen was crucial to the Revolution's consolidation. On this point Selbin (1999,pp.127-8) makes the following observation:

> The core of consolidation is the population's response to these efforts, the degree to which the individuals who constitute the broader population accept the efforts of the leadership and shape them into their reality.

The Cuban people's perception of the nature of their new leaders was fundamental. In Gramsci's terms, a class making a bid for hegemony must acquire intellectual and moral leadership. The acceptance of the leadership's new world view was in part based on the popular perception of the moral qualities of this group. As noted above, perception and image had been important to the Rebel Army prior to victory. It explained their awareness of the importance of mass communication and the seriousness with which they used the media in the territories they administered, not only to disseminate information, but also to project a positive image of their cause. This concern continued after the political victory (see Chanan, 1985; Kapcia, 2000). In particular, Fidel's ability to appear to be "everywhere at once" added to his "mythical status" (see Fagen, 1969,p.29; also Kapcia, 2000,p.212), while Che Guevara's gift for linking ideology to practice, at finding ways of bringing the message to the people, was key to his popularity. Guevara reportedly explained to Sartre in 1961 that "a neat swing of the machete, cutting the stalks like a pro, will do more than a long speech" (in Sartre, 1961, p.51). Fagen (1969,p.89) takes up this point in his argument that the "ceremonial and symbolic aspects of voluntary cane cutting ... contribute(d) more to the revolution than conventional methods." In stark contrast to those in power before them, sheer will and sacrifice along with a "determination to change Cuba" were the hallmarks of the leadership's ethos (Barredo, interview, 29 April 2003, Havana).

In the egalitarian atmosphere following the political victory, spheres of Cuban life which had been the purview of an elite were now accessible to the entire population including,[49] for the first time, access to their leaders. Communication was personal, informal and spontaneous, based on mass rallies and meetings. There has been a trend, noted by Karol (1971) and Bengelsdorf (1994), among Western European and U.S. analysts to interpret the relationship between state and civil society as one of 'direct democracy' at this time. These scholars base their interpretations on the huge public rallies and the constant tours of the island by Fidel and other leaders and their involvement in solving problems at even the most local of levels (Sartre, 1961; Karol, 1971; LeoGrande, 1978). Rabkin (1991), however, suggests that in practice these forms of direct democracy resembled the old paternalism of the *patrón* for his employees. While Selbin (1999,p.166) concedes that such an atmosphere is plausible, he argues that these 'employees' do not appear to be constrained by the traditional bounds of such a relationship "in their questions, statements, and demands," a point supported by Chanan's (1985,p.194) who notes a "total absence of fear" in encounters between "ordinary people and their leader."[50]

This relationship is given visual form in surviving photographic records and archive footage. The mass rallies of the period show graphically the nature of the relationship that formed between the state and civil society. The presentation of official discourse by the leadership to the listening crowd, who respond to rallying cries and slogans with one united voice, offers a powerful representation of the relationship and show the "intricate rapport" between the leadership and the people (Salkey,1971). These patterns of call and response reflect the differentiated roles that were developing between state and civil society.[51] As well as symbolising the coherence of civil society, these images and discourses represent the personification of the state-civil society relationship. "All we ask of the people," declared Fidel at the launching of the Revolutionary Offensive Against Bureaucracy in March 1968, "is to trust their leaders and their revolutionary government" (Castro in Bengelsdorf, 1994,p.95). The role allotted for civil society was clear: it was to be supportive yet passive, trusting and patient. It was equally, however, to be ready to mobilise itself when this was required (see 3.2.8).

The seeds of the paternalistic relationship between the state's leaders and civil society which was to characterise the 1970s and 1980s began to develop during the 1960s. Decision-making was in the hands of a small elite. At its centre or, more accurately, at its apex and surrounded by a close circle of advisors, was Fidel. This elite acted as civil society's guardians, making policy and communicating decisions to the population. Quite soon, the group and those connected to it, began to form a political class which was to dominate both the state and civil society. Hence, the tendency towards centralisation of decision-making and the verticalisation of power which has characterised Cuban politics was clear by the end of the 1960s. At the same time and acting as a counter-balance, there were collective political actions which not only involved civil society but were opportunities for civil society agency in political activities, crusades and discussions. Horizontal forms of participation such as the literacy campaign of 1961, the health campaigns, the voluntary labour projects and the neighbourhood committees are the best known examples of this. By linking civil society to the state through such participation the class which was becoming hegemonic sought to win the active consent of those over whom it ruled.

If those involved in the struggle against Batista had been relatively few in number (see Bengelsdorf, 1994,p.67), on achieving power the popular character of the Revolution became evident in the euphoria and exhilaration with which it was met. Accounts of this period speak of the "infectious" and "intoxicating" atmosphere (Díaz, 2001; Fagen, 1969) and the "enthusiasm," "zeal" and "optimism" felt by so many, not only in Cuba but also in the international community (see Hollander, 1981, also Hennessy, 1993). As Fidel Castro explains:

... we were a mere three thousand men at arms in the decisive moments, that is, where the combat that was decisive took place, at the end of December (1958). But within six, eight, ten weeks, the number of soldiers who had joined the people in our Movement was forty thousand! ... When they came from the barracks to join us we knew that this flow could not be controlled. In fact, after the final victory all along the entire route from Oriente to Havana I was stopping to be greeted by people who were there to show their support, it was impossible to do anything else. It took us eight days to reach Havana! (Fidel Castro, speaking at conference, 8 May 2003, Havana)

Chanan (1985) describes the masses of people on the streets who greeted the rebels as they entered the capital and the nation-wide strike which was held in an attempt to frustrate the attempts of the old order to grab back power. In the months that followed and as the former bourgeois opposition to the dictatorship opposed every piece of legislation, the masses filled the squares in huge rallies to show their approval for the Revolution. As Martínez (1999) explains, the majority of the population had spontaneously united in their repudiation of the old regime and their support for the general vision of the future projected by the new (see Martínez, 1999).[52]

Yet to some extent this early consensus masked the diversity of hopes and demands contained within "the popular collective" (see Díaz, 2001,p.105), comprised as it was of groups and individuals whose cohesion, as already indicated, might better be attributed to a shared fear of violence, the memory of the brutality of the recent past, together with the hovering menace of a new threat from the U.S., as well as the prospect of improving life situations, than to any allegiance to a particular cause or ideology. Initially, as Kapcia (2000) points out, popular unity was defined more by what it was opposed to than by what it supported. This 'negative' popular support needed to be transformed into support *for* the new government and its programme. The leadership recognised that "shared collective memories, new visions and structural changes" were "important in binding civil society together," but not enough (Limia, interview, 12 May 2003, Havana). As Gramsci argues, de-mystifying the old consciousness did not necessarily bring with it new forms and it became clear to the leadership that a revolutionary consciousness would have to be built.

To achieve this, ideological substance needed to be given to the nebulous sense of popular unity. This 'substance' can be identified in the new political, economic and social actor which was created. Fashioned from the disparate social classes and sectors of the population and made up of millions of people, this actor, Cuban civil society, was both the subject and object of the revolutionary process, as well as the source of its legitimacy (see Tablada, 2001; Martínez, 1999). In short, it was to be the "socio-political subject of social transformation and national self-defence" (Dilla, 1999c, p.230).

When the leadership spoke, they talked 'to' civil society but, as we have seen, while they talked about it and identified for it its protagonistic role, they did not use the term 'civil society' in their discourses, preferring instead to refer to the Cuban *pueblo* and in so doing

evoke a sense of unity among the previously exploited and oppressed. By putting in train structural changes which would lead to the diminution and eventual eradication of the social differences which had previously divided society, the Revolution's leaders attempted to build a unitary social subject that was as much the worker and peasant, as the poor, the young, blacks, women, the elderly, those without work, in short: all Cubans who wished to participate in, and fight for, the vision that was the Revolution. Such a civil society was to be "inclusive, homogenous and harmonious" (Suárez, interview, 15 April 2003, Havana). Importantly, it was also to be well educated; a quality which was to generate "profound contradictions" in later decades (Limia, interview, 12 May 2003, Havana).

If a united civil society was vital in the formation of an identity for the new social subjects of the Revolution, it was also important as an expression of a newly emergent social force which was organic to the new order. Tablada (2001, p.36) describes this relationship as "a dialectic in which [civil society] dictated the rhythm of the advance for its total liberation." Although this interpretation captures the spirit of the first decade, it obscures those tendencies which were already developing and which would come to define this relationship (interview, Bulté, 23 April, 2003). For the leadership's perception of itself as a guiding force and civil society's recognition of this was starting to form. So too was the idea that civil society's interests were identical to those of the state and that a vanguard could best interpret these interests. By 1965 this vanguard had become organised into the Communist Party of Cuba, the PCC.[53] The Party was to act both as a catalyst and as a guide. Essentially, its purpose was to liberate and empower civil society, but at the same time it sought to control and transform it (interview, Valdés Paz, 30 April 2003, Havana). This ideological tension was to make for a complex relationship between the civil society-Party-state trinity; one which has also been noted by Howell (1993) in her analysis of China. At one and the same time part of civil society *and* the state, the Party's position and role "as an institution diffusing values, principles and norms" (Acanda, interview, 6 March 2003, Havana) reflects Gramsci's idea of a political party. It also highlights the potential problems with an approach popular among some Cuba watchers, which "excludes the idea that what is in civil society can, at the same time, be in political society" (Acanda, 2003,p.167). The idea of a single, unifying, Party has an impeccable lineage in Cuba, for it was José Martí who recognised the importance of such an organisation when, in 1892, he created the PRC (interview with García Brigos, 4 March 2003, Havana). Over seventy years later, the PCC was essential in establishing an ideological bond between the political class and the popular classes.

3.2.7. The Changing Architecture of Civil Society

Although during the 1960s there was an aversion on the part of the leadership to the creation of new permanent state institutions, in the civic realm a rapid process of associational 'institutionalisation' was initiated. Having destroyed those associations which defined the period of the Republic (Suárez, interview, 15 April, 2003), the leadership recognised that new social spaces and settings were required in which behavioural and attitudinal changes could be affected among Cuba's new social actors (Fagen, 1969). The fundamental transformation in the socio-political character of the citizen was to take place in the "crucible of action" (Fagen, 1969,p.7) and the social and mass organisations, as they came to be known, were crafted with this objective in mind. These organisations were to be the "motors" of civil society (Hart, 1999,p.158) and an arena in which the state could both define its relationship with civil society and create opportunities for civil society to participate in the Revolution.

The landscape and architecture of this new associational world took shape around a limited number of organisations which were either newly established or, in exceptional cases, carried forward from the old order, as occurred with the CTC (*Confederación de Trabajadores de Cuba* - Confederation of Cuban Workers)[54] and the FEU (*Federación Estudiantil Universitaria* - Federation of University Students).[55] New organisations included: the CDRs (*Comités para la Defensa de la Revolución* - Committees for the Defence of the Revolution) which were established in October 1960 and entrusted with the civil defence at the neigbourhood level; ANAP (*Asociación Nacional de Agricultores Pequeños* - National Association of Small Farmers) established in January 1961 to unite those remaining private farmers who had survived the 1959 land reform, before later absorbing those who remained following the 1963 reform; the FMC (*Federación de Mujeres Cubanas* - Federation of Cuban Women) which was set up in August 1960; the FEEM (*Federación de Estudiantes de la Enseñanza Media* - Federation of Students of Intermediate Education) and the OPJM (*Organización de Pioneros José Martí* - José Martí Organisation of Young Pioneers). In addition, numerous professional and cultural associations were established in order to represented the specific interests of other sectors, for example, Cuba's writers and artists who, after 1961, were organised into UNEAC (*Unión Nacional de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba* - National Cuban Writers' and Artists' Union).

In addition to these social and mass organisations, there were a number of military organisations. By mid-1959 the Rebel Army had became the FAR *(Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias* - Revolutionary Armed Forces) and in October 1959 the MNR (*Milicias Nacionales Revolucionarias* - Revolutionary National Militias) were created to absorb thousands of "civic soldiers" (Domínguez, 1978a, p.341) who were not serving as regular soldiers. The CDRs were launched on the 28th September 1960 by Fidel Castro as a defence against the counter revolution or "enemy within" (Fagen, 1969,p.71), and as a bulwark against

the return of the old order. At their inception, their main task was outlined as a "programme of vigilance at the neigbourhood level" (García Torres, interview 26 March 2003, Havana). They were to report suspicious activity to the police and protect and defend the young Revolution against terrorist and counterrevolutionary acts. Membership was voluntary and by the late 1980s, 92 per cent of the population over the age of 14 had been integrated into the CDR structure (García Torres, interview 26 March 2003, Havana). Suárez argues that at first, the CDRs "were not really a mass organisation" but "gradually became one" (interview, 15 April, 2003, Havana). He explains:

> After the Revolution the agenda, the goal, was the defence of the project which was menaced from day one, from ten minutes of being in power. This menace is what united people. At first the CDRs were really a case of a couple of people defending each block – a couple of Dads with guns! (Suárez, interview, 15 April 2003, Havana).[56]

Before long, the CDRs were serving as the primary revolutionary institution, providing contact with, and access to, government. They transmitted the messages of both the base and the leadership and supported the government's commitment to health care and education, enabling the provision of previously unobtainable social and medical services and economic assistance. They brought the government to the neighbourhood in every sense, functioning as the state's "eyes and ears" (García Torres, interview, 26 March 2003, Havana); a role which has frequently earned them a negative reputation among those commentators hostile to the Revolution. As well as the prevention of acts of violence and sabotage aimed at the Revolution, their responsibilities included promoting and channeling the population's energy and involvement in the transformation of society. Essentially, they served as "the integrative and mobilising arms of the social revolutionary process, driving institionalization and promoting consolidation at the same time" (Selbin, 1999,p.18). Fagen's (1969) analysis of the CDR system is particularly worthy of note. He writes:

> … because of its capillary organisation throughout the nation, the CDR system appeared almost from its inception to be an administrative arm of the state (Fagen, 1969,p.91).

Here Gramsci's idea of the state filtering through the pores of civil society is clearly echoed. The permeability of the state-civil society divide and the interpenetration of the state in civil society and civil society in the state is made evident.

The social and mass organisations had a monopoly of representation for selected interests. The key axes along which interests were officially recognised and organised were defined by these functional organisations. People were categorised into broad groups as 'women', 'workers', 'farmers' or 'students'. Given the increasingly homogeneous social subject that was emerging as a result of the state's efforts to promote equality (Espina, interview, 09 May 2003, Havana), and the desire to incorporate all sectors and previously marginalised groups (rural as well as urban) into nationally coordinated groups, the integration of mass

organisations with specific functions and responsibilities into political life was hardly surprising. The mass organisations were essential in creating a collective sense of purpose, inculcating new values and fortifying a post-revolutionary political culture (Fagen, 1969). They may have been part of a top-down process involving an increasingly clear definition and differentiation of the roles that social actors and groups were to perform, the spaces that they could occupy and within which they could operate, but they were also genuinely popular with ever increasing numbers joining.

As broad-based groupings, centred around neighbourhoods, work places and categories of people, the mass organisations were highly inclusive. Suárez explains: "this was because it was easier to make decisions like that, as opposed to with fragmented or fractured groups" (Suárez, interview, 15 April 2003, Havana). It was the political leadership that generated this limited number of organisations. Their creation can be understood as part of the vision mentioned above, to promote unity and the move towards greater homogeneity. Unity may have become a "sacred value" for the political culture of Cuba but diversity was sacrificed at its expense (Suárez, interview, 15 April 2003, Havana). [57] For Martínez (2001,p.158), however, the Revolution *was* "the unification of diversity." The contradiction is clearly evident and operated at many levels, creating the tensions which have come to characterise the Cuban Revolution. Just as the state created opportunities for participation, so too did it control these opportunities, effectively manipulating participation for the purposes of exclusion. Seen in this light, the mass organisations became a tool to limit diversity. Participation was encouraged in officially approved ways which were "defined and limited" by the need to "maintain political hegemony" (interview, Valdés Paz, 30 April, 2003). By spelling out which organisations were permissible, the state was clearly setting the limits and defining the boundaries of civil society, a trend which, as we shall see in Chapters 5 and 6, continues to this day. Civil society was controlled and organised by the state. Social spaces were carved out, allocated uses, formalised, and controlled.

All of the mass organisations were highly ordered and cohesive, their members conscious of their role in a larger project (interviews with Castañeda 19 March 2003 and García Torres 26 March 2003, both Havana). The overlapping interests and interlocking ties between the state and these organisations meant that the boundaries between them were by no means clear (Castañeda, interview, 19 March 2003, Havana). Given this, the identities of civil society's actors and their degree of autonomy from both the party and the state can not easily or automatically be determined. In the Cuban context, autonomy from the state or 'anti-stateness' is not a litmus test which can meaningfully be used to indicate the presence of civil society. In fact, an attempt to apply such a test implies a lack of understanding of the Cuban context, where the associative world is "linked to," rather than "autonomous from," the state (Suárez,

interview, 15 April 2003, Havana). From the 1960s, the state and civil society intermingled and were "braided" together (White, *et al*, 1996,p.209) with the result that the distinctions between them became blurred. In much the same way, the lines between the political and the non-political became similarly unclear. Politics had previously not been something that most people in Cuba were involved with but, following the Revolution, everything was political (Basail, 1999). Bulté describes the situation in Cuba in the following way:

> Civil society penetrated very easily into the political system in society through authentic organisations: centres for workers, the pioneers, the FMC. The state communicated very fast with civil society. It was a togetherness that was dynamic. It was not easy to find the border between the political direction and civil society (Bulté, interview 23 April 2003, Havana).

As shown in Chapter 1, the lack of clear lines of demarcation between state and civil society is conventionally regarded as a negative feature of a polity by the dominant liberal perspective. However, although the state may have been present in nearly all spheres of life, this does not necessarily indicate that civil society was "extremely limited," as Dilla (1999a) claims, but more accurately suggests that certain elements within civil society were weak or repressed. To say that the state stifled civil society would be a generalisation but certainly its lack of toleration for an independent opposition was, at times, coercive (de Luis, interview, 14 January 2003, Havana).

Commenting in 1969, Fagen argued that rather than feeling that "the apparatus of the state is abstract and distant," the mass organisations "facilitated the sense that the state was close and respected," because it was "the people's state" (Fagen, 1969, p.86). The mass organisations became conduits for popular mobilisation and participation and in some ways served to regulate the state, communicating demands and frustrations from their constituencies to the central state and enabling social groups to develop an improved capacity for collective action. During this era organisations such as the FMC saw their function as corresponding to that of the state (Castañeda, interview 19 March 2003, Havana). For Dilla (1999a,p.164) this indicated the "compromised" nature of civil society.

The mass organisations epitomised the relationship that the leadership desired between state and civil society. Rather than simply being seen as part of the state, following the logic that "if they are not in opposition to the state, they can't be civil society" (Acanda, interview 6 March, 2003, Havana), the mass organisations can be interpreted during this period as organisations which represented the possibility of a complementary rather than necessarily conflictual state-civil society relationship. Rejecting the distinction between political and civil society which invariably positions civil society against the state, these organisations represented "a civil society which neither reinforced the state only, nor challenged the state only but rather did both things" (Acanda, interview 6 March 2003, Havana). To use Chanan's (2001,p.389) terminology, civil society and political society were "momentarily fused."

Over time, there evolved a gradual formalising of this relationship. The state slowly circumscribed the autonomy of the mass organisations until they were little more than conveyor belts. Dilla (1999a,p.162) argues that there was a gradual encroachment on the autonomous spaces of these organisations, "until they were definitely established as transmission belts between the new political class and the popular masses." He argues that this "severe subordination" produced not only contradictions, but also a "diminution in the vitality of public spaces and the consolidation of patron-client relations between state and society" (Dilla, 1999a,p.162 and Dilla, 2002,p.16).

However, the Cuban case also shows that where a state is driven by developmental objectives, it has the potential and capacity not only to limit but also to stimulate and promote important aspects of civil society. This suggests, in contra to White *et al* (1996), that the market is not the sole generator of civil society. Rather it indicates that the state can also build civil society and create specific spaces for participation and inclusion. Unlike the experiences of Chile, El Salvador, Peru and Nicaragua (where coerced marginalisation brought about by right-wing military rule had the counter intentional effect of stimulating the growth of community-based popular organisations that became the locus for resistance to military repression and social, political and economic exclusion), in Cuba the state itself stimulated the growth of popular participation (see Chanan, 2001). Its role in engineering, fostering, regulating and coordinating civil society has been critical. It was the state that had the vision and capacity to take the impetus in reshaping patterns of social association. While it is the case that the type of civil society that the leadership wanted was one whose structures legitimated rather than challenged the Revolution's hegemony, it does not follow that post-revolutionary civil society was "extinguished" (Rupnik, 1988) in Cuba as it has been in other parts of the socialist world. And while civil society had not absorbed the state, as Marx would have expected, neither had the state absorbed civil society. In spite of the leadership's instincts to mold and channel differences of outlook, belief, lifestyle or interpretation into institutions that were 'safely under its own wing', so to speak, Cuban civil society was never absorbed by the state in a manner parallel to the case of the Soviet Union, for example (Bengelsdorf, 1994). It is difficult to find ideal-type civil society organisations that fully embody the principles of voluntary participation, self-regulation, autonomy and separation from the state which most conventional approaches to civil society stipulate but it *is* possible to determine examples of civil society agency in collaboration with the state as well as instances in which the state was shaped by civil society. This trend became even more apparent in the 1990s, as we shall see in later chapters.

3.2.8. Manufacturing Consent in the Crucible of Action

Gramsci believed that socialist revolution would have to be built by purposive human action (Boggs, 1976). In Cuba following the Revolution, people suddenly found themselves undertaking previously "unimaginable" activities (Martínez, 1999, p.84) which were part of tasks so huge that only months previously they would have seemed impossible: they were building socialism. This task required not only a high degree of popular mobilisation but also great self-sacrifice. The notion of self-sacrifice was important. It was part of the political and ideological formation considered indispensable to citizens of the Revolution:

> … this required - and this was an ethical and ideological demand - episodes in the first five years of the Revolution which were capable of moving us to perform destructive and defensive tasks and not to contemplate personal, private interests. Because in the code of that epoch personal interests were seen to be spurious if they were promoted before collective interests - because that ethic was joined to the solidarity of the compatriots for achieving national independence and destroying the foundations of the previous regime. In these conditions, to promote the personal is illegitimate (Limia, interview, 12 May 2003, Havana).

The mass mobilisations and voluntary labour campaigns of the 1960s (see Fagen, 1969 and Chanan, 1985) were a way of connecting the majority of Cubans to the struggle that the Revolution represented. Limia explains: "a process of initiatives was developed to link the masses to the political and ideological struggles" (interview, 12 May 2003, Havana). The revolutionary project was geared to the transformation of society and to the individuals who constituted it. The ideology articulated by the leadership, especially by Guevara, was focused on the emergence of a 'new man' who valued moral rather than material incentives as a standard of success (see Selbin, 1999). This revolutionary individual would transcend personal ambition and work for the greater good of all (Bulté, interview 23 April 2003, Havana). Guevara's vision inspired a social doctrine that redefined social relations between civil society and the state in Cuba. Personal worth was to be measured in terms of devotion to the revolutionary struggle rather than by the accumulation of money or power. However, Guevara was aware that the moral incentive, if it was to be operated truly, could not be "manipulated from above," but rather "must be generated and sensed within the populace" (Guevara in Chanan 1985, p.178). In this environment, Fagen (1969) argues, the "good" and "bad" citizen becomes the basis for political cleavage (Fagen, 1969, p.98).

The enormous mobilisations of the population during the 1960s, not only in military defence of the Revolution against U.S. aggression, such as the Bay of Pigs insurection of 1961, but also in campaigns such as the literacy campaign of that same year,[58] which saw 1.25 million Cubans out of a total population of 7 million actively drawn into the campaign either as students or teachers (de la Torre, pers.com., 15 May 2004, UK), were crucial in forging a sense of social and national cohesion. Reflecting on this process Rafael Hernández explains: "the Revolution had to change the political culture that had defined Cuba almost overnight" (Hernández, interview, 11 March 2003, Havana). In another interview conversation, Bulté

made the point that the fracture of all the ways of civil society that had developed with the capitalist regime "was not just about changes in the economic order," nor was it "merely a matter of transforming absolutely the structure of classes and the old hierarchy to enable new protagonists to emerge," but moreover, "it included profound changes at the level of the family" (Bulté, interview, 23 April 2003, Havana). Both Bulté and Hernández highlight the transformations in family relations that the Revolution provoked as an example of the reach and extent of the changes taking place within Cuban civil society. Illustrating his point with reference to his own personal experience Hernández explained:

> I can give you an example from my own life. At 13 I was sent away from home and my mother had to accept a new way of organising society which at that time meant that children were sent off on masse to be educated and to work. At that point [the early 1960s], the Revolution tried to break the bonds of culture for ideological purposes (Hernández, interview, 11 March 2003, Havana).

Bulté describes civil society's power as a force capable of 'breaking the family order' in the following terms:

> All Cuban families were fractured by immigration, political dissidence, and even by the literacy campaign and the formation of the militias. Normally when we talk of these processes we do not allude to something dramatic at their base but many of those young people who went to the mountains [during the literacy campaign of 1961] did so without the agreement of their families. They broke family ties. Civil society in these cases broke the family order (Bulté, interview, 23 April 2003, Havana).

A large proportion of 'those who went', some 52 per cent according to Fagen (1969), were women. In so doing, traditional gender roles and relations were ruptured both within the patriarchal structure of the family and in society more widely (de la Torre, pers.com., 15 May 2004, UK). Miller (2003) argues that the space apparently opened for women by the campaign was, however, "historically marked and closed rather than being an open space that had been permanently conquered by women" (Miller, 2003,p.159). The following extract from an interview with Rausberg (2003) offers a fascinating insight into the way in which subtle, and discrete forms of discrimination continued, despite the intention of the Revolution to change the social position of women:

> Women have been incorporated into the work force. For example 75 per cent of professionals in Cuba are women. But women remain a minority in decision making positions. In Ministries such as Education and Public Health the entire pyramid is completely made up of women – the whole thing. But then at the head – so the person who makes the decisions – there is a man. In the 1980s there were quotas for women and blacks. But there was also a technique whereby women were chosen for positions of 'power' who had so many problems in their personal lives that they would implode. Of the possible candidates a woman would be chosen for a job if it was felt that she was loaded down with as many problems as possible. The more the better: single parent, looking after elderly relatives, etc., etc., That meant that when she did not manage to do her job – as a result of these problems that she was having to balance rather than her capabilities – they could get rid of her. They would allow her to implode all by herself. Women have been the element who have been both most developed by the Revolution and also the most marginalised as a group (Rausberg, interview, 4 May 2003, Havana).

The Revolution set out to break sharply with the past and to break a political culture in which discrimination along gender and racial lines had been the norm, by giving people new experiences. In this climate, discrimination could not be tolerated and moves were taken to prevent it, not only at the ideological level by 're-educating' the population but in concrete terms with legislation introduced to destroy the patriarchal-racist foundation of society (see Hasanbegovic, 2001). Despite the persistence of 'anti-revolutionary' conduct of the type noted by Rausberg, there were also very considerable achievements in this sphere, not least in the development of a political culture permeated by a sense of solidarity and cooperation.

As Gramsci points out, in civil society there are structures, values and concepts that legitimate the existing hegemony or challenge it. Many deeply held beliefs, ideas and values underwent profound transformation following the Revolution and in spiritual and cultural life there was an attempt to "break the bonds of culture for ideological purposes" (Hernández, inteview, 11 March 2003, Havana). This was felt especially in the relationship between the Catholic Church, its believers and the new regime. The ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Cuba had, up until 1959 been characterised by its "extraordinarily tight" links to Franco (Bulté, interview, 23 April 2003, Havana). It was "highly conservative," "absolutely dependent on Spain" and "very much against the Revolution" (Bulté, interview 23 April 2003, Havana, also Calzadilla, interview 10 March 2003, Havana). Given its position, the aim of the Catholic hierarchy was to "invite the noble Catholic youth who wanted to support the process of the Revolution to oppose it" (Bulté, interview 2003). If at the level of the individual this produced tensions (as it invariably did and as is revealed in a frank interview with the Cuban poet Eliseo Diego published in Mexico in 1993), at the level of society it brought Church and state into direct conflict. An uneasy relationship began in which the Catholic Church, unlike its Protestant counterpart, became "closely connected to dissent" and a position "*in contra* to the official line" (Suárez, interview, 15 April 2003, Havana). Whereas in the past the Church had enjoyed a monopoly on education, it was "the state that had the monopoly on education and mass communication following the Revolution" (Calzadilla, interview, 10 March 2003, Havana).

The state's total command of formal education and the mass media during the early decades of the Revolution meant that there was a near monopoly of information. This impacted on the interpretations that Cubans could draw on to make sense of their social world. The officially imagined world was meant to be "the only world" (interview Arango, 23 April 2003, Havana). There was little space from which a legitimate challenge could be constructed, particularly as alternatives were associated with non-legitimate US-backed positions (Espina, interview, 09 May 2003, Havana; Rausberg, interview 4 May 2003, Havana). Furthermore, there was no space for organised groups to act collectively to re-define their relationship with

the state in a way that would have allowed for greater organisational autonomy and participation in national decision-making. This was not part of the leadership's vision.

Vision and Organisation

Certain leaders such as Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Camilo Cienfuegos and Raúl Castro demonstrated exceptional visionary and organisational skills.[59] While Fidel combined both with tremendous charismatic appeal, Che was undoubtedly a visionary leader with the capacity to articulate social revolutionary ideology and arouse support for it. Raúl and Camilo in contrast, possessed the organisational skills that under-girded 'the vision' and translated it into reality. At different moments in the revolutionary process we can discern a prioritisation of 'vision' over 'organisation' or vice versa. Programs were undertaken and led accordingly: the campaigns of the 1960s (vision); the institutionalisation in the 1970s (organisation); the Rectification process (mid to late 1980s, vision again).[60] As a rough classification then, the decade of the 1960s was predominantly one characterised by visionary priorities, while the 1970s, as we shall see, saw the predominance of organisational objectives. By 1986, during the re-consolidation phase, vision was again given primacy. The dynamics between these tendencies, which swung in and out of vogue, were of course far more complex than this scheme suggests. And more complex still were the politics which lay behind them. The internal power struggles within the revolutionary leadership over the problem of 'the appropriate path' that socialist development should take in Cuba shaped the course and nature of social change on the island. If civil society's role during the visionary era of the 1960s was to mobilise actively participate in the transformation of Cuban society, what was its role to be during the 1970s?

3.3. STATE-CIVIL SOCIETY RELATIONS IN THE 1970s

If the 1960s had been a time of experimentation during which the state and civil society enjoyed a fluid relationship, in the 1970s this began to change and fluidity was replaced by stability and structure. There was a gradual abandonment of the more idealistic features of the revolutionary process. Highlighting the decision for Cuba to join the *Consejo de Ayuda Mutua Económica* (CAME) in 1972 as a pivotal moment in this trend, Bulté argues:

> When Cuba joined the CAME a more dependent economic situation was created. The economic links, as well as the cultural links we began to establish, made us very dependent. Some 85% of what we consumed came from the socialist camp, mostly from the USSR. We imported over 900 types of products and so our dependence was very great. This didn't fail to be felt in civil society and in the political models which we used. The Party was organised along the lines of the Soviet model and the state itself had to abandon traditions that came from our war of independence to adopt aspects of the Soviet, Chinese and Korean models: the

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Assembly, the Council of State etc., We left Presidentialism which had been our predominant model. All this was down to the influence of the Soviet camp […] This influence also meant that processes of bureaucratisation within the Revolution began. These processes of bureaucratisation damaged the dynamic relation between society and the political direction. I have affirmed that one of the characteristics of the Cuban political process in the 1960s was the permeability between civil society and the political system of society … this was limited in the 1970s when bureaucratic formulas full of rigidity were introduced (Bulté, interview, 23 April 2003, Havana).

Suárez echoes Bulté's perspective, adding:

In 1972 the whole model became formalised. Because of the links with the Soviet Union and all of the discourse of transmission belts and the roles of different organisations, it becomes very Sovietized (Suárez, interview, 15 April 2003, Havana).

In terms of external politics, the Revolution's first decade had been dominated by the relationship between the U.S. and Cuba, but it was the link with the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc that defined the second. Partially a reaction to the adverse international environment orchestrated by the U.S (see Blanco, 2003), the Soviet-Cuban alliance was evidence of a rapprochement between the two socialist states whose relationship had suffered after the Missile Crisis and again following Cuba's open support for the guerilla movements of Latin America. Soviet influence began to be felt within the state-civil society relationship in the early 1970s, as shall be seen below. Economically, there was closer alignment following Cuba's insertion into the CAME but ideologically too, the Cuban leadership turned to a more orthodox construction of socialism rooted in the Soviet experience. The need to systematise and to plan was one of the defining factors that shaped the changes that Cuba underwent in the 1970s. Maximisation of production had always been an important goal but following the fiasco of the 1970 zafra[61] it was to be achieved in a more orderly way – on the basis of one and eventually five year plans. Within the leadership those who believed that economic development could no longer be improvised, as it had been in the 1960s, were increasingly influential. The view which became dominant was one which asserted that socialism could only be constructed and maintained by adhering to laws and principles. It appeared that the Cuban heresy was over. However, while the belief that Cuba could carve its own route to socialism may have ended in terms of internal politics, in foreign policy Cuba's 'heretical' commitment to internationalism continued, as the decision to become involved in Angola in 1975 showed (interview, García Brigos, 4 March 2003, Havana).

3.3.1. El Quinquenio Gris (The Five Grey Years)[62]

In the same way that a gradual formalising of the relationship between state and civil society was discernible in associative spaces during the late 1960s and 1970s, a similar encroachment took place in the terrain of ideas in the early 1970s, when civil society agency in the academic

realm was effectively stifled by the state's bid to consolidate intellectual control. The notion of an 'official' and an 'unofficial' discourse began to take shape and with it a sense of the 'correct' or 'incorrect' interpretation of ideas. Hence, in this sphere too, the trend to formalise and incorporate was evident. It has been widely acknowledged that despite these tendencies, another of the characteristics of the 1960s was a spontaneous dynamic, originating from within civil society and energised by the radical changes taking place at all levels of the economic, social and political structure, which precipitated a culture of debate, diversity of opinion and creativity (Acanda, 2002). In the early 1960s there did not exist a sole, or dominant interpretation of Marxism but over the course of the decade a confrontation developed between a dogmatic form of Marxism favoured by bureaucrats and the political class, which copied the model developed in the Soviet Union, and a 'creative' Marxism which was linked to the work of Gramsci, who was read and taught widely at the time (interviews with Acanda, 25 February 2003; Basail, 7 February 2003, Havana). His texts, which were first published in Cuba in 1966, influenced a generation of politicians and intellectuals who were at:

> … the fulcrum of a real revolution in which cultural transformations - that is to say, a radical shift in consciousness, in ways of thinking about society and political relations - appeared to be as much the motor of revolutionary change as any transformation in the economic relations (Chanan, 2001,p.390).

The debate within the Revolution was vibrant and occurred in various spaces. One of the most important was the journal *Pensamiento Critico* which was published between 1967 and 1971 (see Salkey, 1971;Martínez, 1995). Through the late 1960s *Pensamiento Critico*, although orthodox in its support for the radical turn taken by the Revolution, was heterodox in offering its readership a wide sample of writings and ideas from major figures from the 'left' in the western and non-western world. The journal was developed in February 1967 by academics from the faculty of Philosophy at the University of Havana - described by Chanan (2001,p.390) as a "seat of resistance to the manuals of Marxism produced by the Soviet Academy of Sciences" - as an attempt to generate a critical and authentic Marxism on the island. The *Pensamiento Critico* group was perceived by the hegemonic political class in Cuba as a challenge from the left. This class decided that there was to be no further space for debate about what socialism was, for with its ascendance one (hegemonic) interpretation had already become dominant. There was a closing of both the discussion and of the forums in which discussion could take place. As a result, by 1971 *Pensamiento Critico* had been closed down following criticism by Raul Castro of its contributors (see Tablada, 2001).[63] With its closure, there began what Dilla (2002,p.2) describes as a "very grey and monotonous period in Cuban academic life," one which was "saturated by Soviet manuals" (see 3.1 above). The faculty of Philosophy itself underwent a re-shuffle and its staff were denounced and re-assigned work outside of the academic sphere. [64]

The denunciation of intellectual "traitors" was not limited to the journal, and a kind of "turning in of the Revolution on itself" began (interview, Basail, January 2003, Havana). Those faculties of the University of Havana which in the early 1960s had been hotbeds of radical ideas and solutions, were silenced and the social sciences virtually banned. Gradually the academic sphere, like others, became monopolised by a dogmatic Marxism which echoed that adopted by the political leadership in its closer ties with Moscow. The Departments of Philosophy and History at the University of Havana were converted into the departments of dialectical materialsim and historical materialism respectively (Acanda, 2002,p.312). In 1978 the degree course in Sociology completely disappeared, 'replaced' by the study of Scientific Communism. It was not until the end of the 1980s that the faculty was reopened (interview, Basail, 17 January 2003, Havana) and while the faculty of Political Science was also closed at this time it has never been reopened, substituted instead by the *Escuela de Cuadros del PCC*, a Party school (Acanda, interview 6 March 2003, Havana; see also López, 1997; Hoffman, 1998). To this day political science remains an unavailable specialism at the Univerisity (Hernández, 1996).[65]

The idea that Cuban socialism could be discussed or that there were possible alternatives within the socialist perspective, became intolerable for the leadership during the 1970s. The maintenance of the political class's hegemonic discourse required the suppression of the culture of debate that the Revolution itself had precipitated. In this context, open debate was unacceptable. The tendency to homogenise and unify while manipulating fears of diversity and hence fracture, was lent ideological legitimacy as the correct path, once chosen, was defended. The perception that debate would generate disunity led to the "constriction of spaces for open informal debate around and across a wide range of themes" (Suárez, interview, 15 April 2003, Havana). As noted above, by the early 1970s the writings of Che Guevara and Gramsci had largely disappeared.

In 1971 the arrest and self 'confession' of the novelist and poet Heberto Padilla marked the failure of the use of culture and cultural figures as an arm of foreign policy. Following the Padilla affair,[66] this sector of civil society was subject to discipline in terms of what was published and who travelled abroad. A military man, Luis Pavón, the new minister of culture, was in charge of administering this discipline (see Bengelsdorf, 1994). In the same year accusations that foreign individuals such as K.S. Karol, whom Fidel himself had invited to Cuba to write a book, were agents of the CIA reinforced the sense of paranoia which the process had generated and precipitated a break with western intellectual supporters of the Revolution (see Hollander, 1981). The Cuban state's actions were repudiated by a long list of foreign intellectuals (Satre, Simone de Beauvoir, Italio Calvino, Susan Sontag, Mario Vargas Llosa) who only three years earlier had attended or supported the Havana Cultural Congress

(see Salkey, 1971). These intellectuals interpreted Cuba's actions as falling under Soviet influence culturally as well as economically.

The state's measures to suppress alternative thought, to prevent people from 'thinking in other ways' were manifestations of the struggle for hegemony which was occurring within the Revolution between those who held different ideas about how the socialist project should be actualised. The control of ideas is central to Gramsci's notion of hegemony and those in power in Cuba choked and stifled potential sources of disagreement and tried to prevent criticism of the decisions made by the leadership. Rather than simply crushing it, as occurred in the Soviet Union, attempts were made to re-channel discontent and re-define the space for its expression within a framework which was molded by paternalism. For some time, those in power established as sacred and unquestionable the formula 'socialism = the soviet regime' and all that was outside this equation was stigmatised as revisionist and counter-revolutionary (see Tablada, 2001; also Espina interview 09 May 2003, Havana). Increasingly, the Revolution had become associated with one particular vision of socialism. The intellectual space which critical voices from within the Revolution could occupy became increasingly constrained, and even closed. "Instead of being reduced," Martínez argues, "there was a widening of intolerance in all senses … the absence of violence does not make the damage any less (significant)" (Martínez, interview, 21 April, 2003). Although in the 1970s the social sciences (and other fields) were held in check both by the censor and the auto censor (Acanda, 2003), the high level of concentration of political authority and the monopoly of the revolutionary political leadership in the regulation of social life was accepted by the majority of the population who enjoyed the benefits of political stability and upward mobility (Dilla and Oxhorn, 2002). In fact, one of the contradictions of the 1970s appears to have been that while in one sense the cultural sphere was closed, in another it was opened as never before. There was an expansion of popular cultural participation, activity and appreciation of a level unheard of for an underdeveloped island (see Chanan, 2001; Paz, 2003). This was an extremely significant development within civil society and even those who were 'critical' defended the gains the Revolution had made and consented to a system which offered social justice, national self-determination and had restored a sense of pride in the Cuban nation (interview, Valdés Paz, 30 April 2003, Havana).

3.3.2. Institutionalisation

It was also during the 1970s that the relationship between state and civil society finally became formalised as the leadership moved to institutionalise the governmental processes (Basail, 1999). The process of institutionalisation in Cuba involved practically every organism that had

functioned or malfunctioned during the 1960s (Bengelsdorf, 1994). Reflecting on this process, Bulté (2003) makes the following comment:

> Around 1970 the leadership of the country realised that they needed a judicial order, to create judicial discipline, and to do this they needed to organise the state and so they started a process of institutionalisation. Which from my way of looking at things is an element which we can not fail to examine when we are looking at civil society in transformation (Bulté, 23 April 2003, Havana).

Institutionalisation was a process which encompassed a restructuring of the work process, with a return to material as opposed to moral incentives and a drastic decline in reliance upon voluntary labour, a resuscitation of the trade unions together with the remainder of the mass organisations, the reorganisation of the legal structure and the introduction of a new procedure for passing laws culminating in 1976 in the enactment of an entirely new Constitution,[67] a reemphasis on the family (particularly the norm of the nuclear family) as the major agency of socialisation within the Revolution (see the family code of 1975), the reorganisation of the Party structure and a search for a more collective form of leadership and finally the organisation of the state apparatus itself through the introduction, experimentally in 1974 in Matanzas and then nationally in 1976 of the system of Poder Popular (see August, 1999 for a detailed discussion of Poder Popular; also Casal, 1975; Cockburn, 1979; Lutjens, 1992; and Roman, 1995, 1999).[68]

The idea of Poder Popular had its roots in a series of speeches given by Fidel in 1970 (see Bengelsdorf, 1994). In them he clarified the realm in which the people as a whole were to have 'direct control' and this realm was very local. It corresponded, in effect, to what Fagen described as the subculture of local democracy (see Fagen, 1969). At the local level people were to be insured a role as the subjects of their own history (Bengelsdorf, 1994), and in exercising this power they were to resolve the enormous inefficiencies and bureaucratic bottlenecks that had characterised local administration and service operations (interview, Ramírez García, 24 November 1999, Cienfuegos). As the leadership believed that the expansion of such control into other realms would produce deepening chaos, the centre was to maintain overall control.

The Poder Popular system in its very structure operated to inhibit discussions that might be "ideologically contentious" since such issues did not fall within the jurisdictional range of the base-level Municipal Assemblies (Espina, interview, 09 May 2003, Havana). The built-in structural inhibitions were effective in insulating Ministries from the popular base. Meetings at the municipal level gave a clear indication of subject parameters, that is, of which issues fell inside and which were outside the jurisdiction of the most local level of Poder Popular. The sorts of decisions were not ones which would determine the general direction the country would take. It became apparent that none of the new forums of discussion and decision

making would truly be an autonomous venue of power, or an independent and separate base for the expression of views of a distinct part of the population. However, and despite their weaknesses, the organs of Poder Popular were important forums for citizens (see August, 1999; Roman, 1995, 1999).

Bulté argues that it was in 1976 that "political consensus reached its highest peak in Cuba," with over 97 per cent of the population approving the new Constitution inaugurated that year (Bulté, interview, 23 April 2003, Havana). The fact that by the mid 1970s thousands of Cubans were leaving their homes to fight in wars in Angola and Ethiopia or to work as doctors in countries throughout the Latin American region, demonstrates the degree to which the project had been embraced by the population. According to Migdal (1988), the mobilisation of the population to serve in international campaigns could have only grown out of the state's increasing social control.

Institutionalisation also involved the activation of Party structures that had lain dormant in the 1960s. The 1976 Constitution refers to the Party as the "highest leading forces of society" responsible for "organising and guiding the common effort toward the goals of constructing socialism" (see *La Constitución de la República de Cuba, 1976*). In effect, this meant a blurring of the boundaries between the Party and any other institution of authority. The Party held its first Congress in 1975, at the same moment that the state structure was being organised and instituted, with the result that there has been "almost permanent ambiguity in terms of where power lies" (Army officer, pers.com. 22 January 2003, Havana). This ambiguity was physically expressed by the extreme overlap between party membership and delegate status. Bengelsdorf (1994) argues that if Party members were bound by the decisions of the Party this surely had an impact on their function as delegates, that is, as advocates of the specific needs of the populations that elected them and to whom they are accountable. The space within Poder Popular for active disagreement with the decisions of the central Party organisation was limited. Furthermore, Bengelsdorf (1994,p.113) questions what is meant by the statement in the Constitution that in Cuba "all the power belongs to the working people, who exercise it either directly or through the assemblies of Poder Popular and other organs of the state which derive their authority from these assemblies" when it was the Party that "must guide, promote and control the work of the state organs" and that was invested with the task of determining the direction of the Revolution. She concludes that the lack of clear boundaries between administrative and political functions which had so characterised the 1960s, and whose resolution was consequently one of the goals of institutionalization, remained in the 1970s as tangible a problem as ever (Bengelsdorf, 1994,p.113-14).

In fact it was with institutionalisation during the 1970s that the main distortions within the political system emerged. The highly centralised model made possible rapid and decisive

leadership yet the low degree of decentralisation was a weakness which debilitated the system. The concentration of power, invasion of private spaces, excessive politicisation of daily life and excessive control and regulation of social behaviour were effects of the hypertrophy of the state (Arango, interview, 23 April 2003, Havana). No where was this more evident than in the bureaucracy.

3.3.3. 'Bureaucratisation'

In a major reversal of the ideas of the 1960s, when Guevara had argued that the creation of formal institutions for decision-making carried with it a risk of bureaucratisation and should therefore be avoided, by the 1970s a very different perspective was put forward. During the period from 1970 to 1984, the bureaucracy was fortified, strengthened and formalised. Pointing to the 'errors' of the 1960s, Raúl Castro asserted in contrary to Che Guevara that bureaucracy grows in the *absence* of institutional channels that would allow the people even greater participation in the decisions that affect their lives (in Taber, 1983,pp.280-292). Since 1970 and especially since the First Communist Party Conference in 1975, lines of authority and formalized procedures became increasingly clearly delineated. As Bulté puts it, "bureaucratic formulas full of rigidity were introduced." Limited market reforms were also instituted between 1976 and 1985 under SDPE (System of Direction and Planning of the Economy). The socialisation of practically all economic activity since the 1960s had deprived the urban population of the products of small scale private agriculture with the result that they suffered periodic shortages. The lack of repair shops and other facilities following the Revolutionary Offensive of 1968 had created a difficult situation, described here by Blanco (2003,p.435):

> In 1968 we wiped out private enterprise, from the woman running a hamburger stand to the guy selling snow cones on the street corner. It was done by decree, forbidding people from entering into market relations, rather than through a slower process of both educating the population and setting up an alternative to replace the vacuum created by this loss of private enterprise … By pushing them aside in one fell swoop, the Cuban economy never recovered from that blow. Goods became scare, inflation resulted because people had a lot of money and not much to buy, and the problem of poor services continues to haunt us today.

The reforms of the late 1970s and early 1980s were introduced in part to alleviate these difficulties, however they had the unwanted effect of increasing material incentives and consumerism at the expense of revolutionary consciousness. The long-standing controversy of material versus moral incentives was to be addressed by a process of rectification.

3.4. THE RECTIFICATION CAMPAIGN OF THE 1980s

The Campaign to Rectify Errors and Negative Tendencies is the framework within which any discussion of the nature of the relationship between civil society and the state during the 1980s

must be situated. The rectification programme of the mid 1980s was an attempt to return to the priorities of the Revolution's first ten years (Azicri, 1992). The policies that dominated from 1970 to 1986, had themselves been intended to be a 'rectification' of what were considered as the errors of the first decade. However, in the mid 1980s these were in turn condemned as a mistake. The 1970-1986 period was seen by the leadership as a deviation from the policies that had defined the revolutionary process. There was a perception that Cuba had drifted too far away from its own path and too close to that of its Soviet allies (Arango, 2002). The attempt to redress this imbalance and halt the process of 'Sovietization' was via the re-introduction of Guevara's ideas of the 'moral economy' which had been popular in the 1960s. The centre-piece of the project was the reorganisation of the Party and, again, political and ideological factors were given more weight.

Among other decisions, rectification terminated the *mercados libres campesinos* (free peasant markets) which had been opened in May 1980 and had grown until 1982 when the government had first intervened to put a break on their development (see Campbell, 1995,p.42), before the closure of the markets towards the end of May 1986 (Rosenberg, 1992; Carriazo, 1998). Measures were taken to reduce remaining self-employment and restrict the private construction, selling and renting of houses, while reviving revolutionary ideological commitment. As in the 1960s, voluntary work, micro-brigades and moral incentives were regarded as mechanisms which would facilitate a movement away from consumerism, mercantilism and materialism towards socialism.

Although rectification was formally introduced and inaugurated at the Third Party Congress in 1986, the idea had been developed in a series of speeches whose rhetoric recalled the dramatic tone of the late 1960s and evoked the promises of far-reaching popular control which had been made in the 1970s. Fidel's words in these speeches about the power of moral forces and the weight and centrality of popular intervention held the expectation of a renewal of the seed of radical Marxism that had been embedded in the core of the Revolution since its earliest moments. Nowhere in the revival of late 1960s values and slogans was there, however, any discussion of the problems of the period. Nor was there any discussion of the need for, or the means by which to encourage, the revival of the kind of effervescent, far-ranging informal discussion and debate that had characterised the first decade and was terminated in the aftermath of the failed 1970 harvest.

Some Cuban social scientists argue that the formal announcement of the campaign in 1986 can no more be taken for its commencement than could Fidel's 1961 declaration that Cuba was socialist be taken as the moment at which socialism began in Cuba (see Martínez 1998, above). In underscoring the idea that the rectification actually began in the early 1980s, that is, prior to Gorbachev's accession to power in the Soviet Union, their intention is to press the

point that rectification was not a Cuban reaction to *perestroika*[69] and *glasnost*[70] but the expression of, and reaction to, specifically Cuban needs and problems (see Bengelsdorf, 1994). The essence of such arguments was that rectification had been generated from within the Revolution itself and not as a result of endogenous pressures. Given that a process of reform was occurring throughout the socialist world in 1986 (for example the *doi moi* reforms in Vietnam, see Irvin, 1995; Quan Xuan Dinh, 2000), it is understandable that the Cuban Revolution wished in some way to mark itself off from this general trend and stress the 'authenticity' of the Cuban process (interview, Rausberg, 4 May 2003, Havana). More importantly, and as Blanco (2003) notes, the process of rectification could plausibly be dated from 1984 after the U.S. invasion of Grenada and the subsequent reassessment of the Cuban defense doctrine. On this point he argues:

> I think that this 1984 reassessment of our defense system was historically very important. It reactivated our original concept of the importance of the people's participation in defending the revolution and stressed our vision of an "armed democracy" as evidence of respect for Cuba's sovereignty. After reshaping the island's system of defense, we entered a process of reassessing our economic policies. First we scrutinized our strategy of development and, second, the manner in which our economy had been structured according to the Soviet Model … [it also] led us to a careful review of our political system, with a serious search for ways to get people more involved in the political process (Blanco, 2003,pp.439-40).

Bengelsdorf (1994) concurs that the impetus for rectification was the U.S. invasion of Grenada in 1983 or rather, the absence of a Soviet response to the invasion which made it clear to Cuba that the island was "on its own" (Bengelsdorf, 1994,p.143).

Rectification was a full-scale attack on the 1970s and most particularly on 'borrowed' institutions, ideology and methods of procedure (see Martínez, 1988). But it was also a "many layered process of collective self-criticism, streamlining, and reform, designed to modernize the administrative system and also clear out the Party of corrupt, opportunistic and 'orthodox' members" (Kapcia, 2003,p.196 note 15).

The issue of ideology was "key to the rectification campaign" (García Brigos, interview, 04 March 2003, Havana). In December 1985 the powerful ideological apparatus of the Party, which was widely seen within the Party itself as a stronghold of conservatism, was dismantled. Toni Pérez, the Politburo member who had been secretary of ideology on the Central Committee, was dismissed from his post and the ideological section, which had controlled within its jurisdiction the departments of science, culture, education and revolutionary orientation, was dismantled. The impetus for this seems to have come as a result of critiques of the manner in which those in charge of ideology had enforced the application of a kind of dogmatic Marxism-Leninism in various areas, beginning with the manner in which Cuban history itself was taught and learned in the school and university system (see Miller, 2003). The application of schematic pre-set formulas about 'worker's states' through which Cuban history was filtered and reshaped meant that the actual dynamics of that history had been lost,

replaced by an artificial and distorted story which was manipulated to fit the prescribed formulas of Soviet-style Marxism.[71] The same rigidity and dogmatism which had led to the closure of the faculties of Sociology and Political Science in Cuban Universities and the general deterioration and devaluation of the social sciences, affected the way in which Cuban reality and the history of the Revolution was taught and studied. There was an awareness that this needed to be changed.

Rectification was clearly a political process but it also had an economic element (interview García Brigos, 4 March, 2003, Havana). It was in 1986 that an economic crisis hit the Cuban economy. This crisis (see Chapter 4) and Fidel's disagreements with the solutions proposed by key figures from the Central Planning Board (JUCEPLAN) for its resolution, led directly to the rectification process and to its first targets which involved the structure of the economy and the stated intent to virtually dismantle the economic mechanisms that had been put in place during the 1970s to regulate the economy. The focus was on the organisation of work, the determination of salaries and the level of economic decentralisation.

It appears that it was very much Fidel Castro who initiated the changes and who set the parameters for discussions regarding rectification. As in the 1960s he constantly initiated new schemes to achieve seemingly impossible goals, reviving the microbrigades to carry them to fruition. His increased public presence – like his tours of the island in the 1960s – was also via frequent appearances on television.

Amid much speculation, Gorbachev visited Cuba during March and April of 1989. Fidel had been critical of Gorbachev's attempts at political and economic reforms in the Soviet Union (Cruz and Seleny, 2002). The Cuban leadership had refused to step into line with the changes taking place in the rest of what was the 'actually existing' socialist world (Bahro, 1978). The Cuban leadership's commitment to a high degree of economic egalitarianism and the understanding that any widespread introduction of market mechanisms and private property would inevitably undermine the foundations of such egalitarianism meant that social stratification of the kind tolerated in USSR could not be allowed in Cuba. The leadership derived their staunch adherence to this touchstone of the Revolution as much from the national hero José Martí as from Marx. Speaking in 2003, Fidel put it in the following terms: "From Marx we learned what society is. From Lenin, we learned about the state. But from Martí we learned about ethics" (conference, 8 May 2003, Havana). The rejection of economic and social inequality underpinned and motivated the decision in 1986 to end the five-year experiment in free peasants' markets and to suspend the 1982 law allowing the sale of housing was, then, consistent with principals at the core of the social project within which the very legitimacy of the Revolution was rooted.

A second major concern regarding *perestroika* centred around Gorbachev's dealings with the West. The U.S. invasion and occupation of Panama and its economic and military stranglehold on Nicaragua, which effectively forced the Sandinistas to cede political power, fostered in Cuba a sense of isolation and provided convincing evidence of the United States' increased militancy in its drive to dominate Latin America. The intensification of the U.S. embargo and the broadcasting of Television Martí into Cuba served to justify the leadership's renewal of a state of siege mentality, leaving little space in which to discuss or even consider alternative opinions. In such an atmosphere, socialism became synonymous with nationalism and unity – a closing of ranks – which echoed José Martí's efforts to forge a single Cuban movement to drive the Spaniards from the island.

Glasnost in the Soviet Union allowed and even facilitated the beginnings of a redefinition of civil society as distinct from the state and a re-emergence of a terrain in which the terms of discourse were not given, controlled and defined by the state. During the Gorbachev period in the Soviet Union, civil society witnessed the proliferation of political groups and clubs representing views ranging across the political spectrum from extreme right to left as well as issue orientated groupings. Parallel to their formation was an incredible boom in the publication of journals and literature of all sorts, as well as an opening in Soviet newspapers and magazines for critical articles and commentary. Bengelsdorf (1994,p.147) suggests that the "penetration of the political into every arena of life for seven decades" generated, perhaps in reaction, "the flourishing of the *not* political." The opening provided by Glasnost went in all kinds of directions. The Cuban leadership wanted to prevent such an uncontrolled resurgence within civil society. For them, a proliferation of political clubs such as those that sprung up in the Soviet Union was intolerable. Indeed, resumed publication of a journal like *Pensamiento Critico* was inconceivable in the late 1980s. Fidel Castro banned Soviet publications and purged the high officialdom at the ministry of the interior in 1989, ridding the state of the *perestroikos* that sympathised with Soviet-style reforms (Del Aguila, 1994). The press, television and radio remained under the tight control of the ideological office of the Party. However, the realm of cinema, which came under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture, enjoyed a far greater measure of autonomy (see Chanan, 2001; Davies, 1996). In many respects, Cuban cinema fulfilled the function of a "surrogate or vicarious public sphere" (Chanan, 2001,p.398) and a new genre of socio-critical comedies which tackled social problems such as housing, machismo, divorce, bureaucratic inefficiency and the generation gap were made (*Temas* No.27, 2001).

During interviews conducted in Havana in 2003, the issue of the third post revolutionary generation born with no knowledge of pre 1959 Cuba was frequently raised by respondents as a feature of debate during the 1980s. At the end of the 1980s young people in

Cuba found that the possibility of new arenas for expression on various levels and in multiple contexts were limited.[72] The 'youth issue' was dealt with by encouraging the incorporation of more young people into existing governmental and Party institutions and by emphasising the importance of their role in these institutions. The entry age for membership of the Party was lowered from 35 to 30 (interview with Rubido, 19 June 2003, UK). Some young stars like Roberto Robaina González who had been head of the UJC quickly rose in status. One respondent commented on Robaina's appeal to the younger generation:

> Robaina's style of discourse was one full of slogans, not the traditional ones, but new, fresh, rhetoric with lots of clever word-play. It was not 'profound', but it represented a new discourse which had huge appeal with the young. He used phrases from well-known songs and had slogans emblazoned on headbands or on t-shirts that he wore to rallies. His style was very informal. But his discourse was also very critical, very openly and publicly critical, and this probably appealed to elements of the youth (interview, Marrero, 30 January 2003, Havana).

Robaina became a member of the politburo and Minister of External Relations.[73] The hope was that in young people like Robaina the link to the third generation could be forged. Again, quoting from the transcript of the 30th January 2003 interview, Marrero continues:

> Robaina became Minister for External Relations, which is a very political position. He entered the Ministry but was immediately perceived badly by the traditional structure there. He began a process designed to introduce greater informality. He dressed down and began to recruit new, younger members of staff. He also started to commit errors. His superficiality might have been pardoned in the UJC but not in the Ministry. Eventually he was removed. It was said that he had received money from the exterior which was associated with a Mexican drug traffic connection. In this way he was visibly separated from the government. He had been the first leader after Fidel to have mass appeal, he was immensely charismatic - too successful in this sense.

In part as a response to the shortage of outlets for youth designated areas were assigned at which young people could gather during the 1980s. On another level, this move could be understood as the geographical representation of the leadership's instinct and desire to contain potential sources of protest in boundaries it could control. It was also an example of a contraction in civil society's terrain. Fed by the deeply ingrained vein of paternalism that had evolved, the need to channel, control and contain meant that the state attempted to absorb any potential rebellion or protest - in effect co-opting it - before it could escalate. Even the mildest forms of youthful expression were interpreted as signs of antagonism of a kind unacceptable to the leadership and in an attempt to defuse new trends, the Revolution incorporated the popular forms of expression favoured by young people into its own celebrations (interview, Marrero, 30 January 2003, Havana).

However, in the following except from an interview with Bulté the sense of rectification as a "virtual coup d'etat" (Bengelsdorf, 1994,p.152) against the party and state bureaucracy is captured. Bulté also communicates the idea that civil society has the capacity to

'take the agenda'. In Bulté's interpretation, far from being crushed by the state, civil society is a force waiting to lead, as it had done in the earliest moments of the Revolution.

> In 1986 Fidel presented a discourse, saying things were not going well. In it he talked of the need to make a Rectification of Errors. This has been understood in many ways. As a process of re-accommodation, a process against bureaucracy, the 'dynamisation' of the Party that had become very distant from the masses. But all this can be interpreted in another way. One in which Fidel thinks that the masses are falling behind. Civil society is not being the protagonist and it is facing a bureaucratic apparatus of power. Fidel 'jumps over' this bureaucratic apparatus and 'stands' in front of the people. And at this point a real revolution against the state is started. This is no good! That is no good! SDPE must be ended! Let's get rid of some Ministries! We'll reactivate voluntary work and the Trade Unions! Well, how is all this to be interpreted? I think that Fidel was looking for not only a broadening of consensus but also the *revitalisation of the protagonism of civil society* - that civil society should go back to take the agenda of society. And the state accommodates this. This is the path during 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989. Just as this starts to bear fruit we get the fall of the Soviet camp and everything changes (Bulté, interview 23 April 2003, Havana, his emphasis).

An entrenched bureaucracy - economic as well as political - was identified as the source of the contradictions of the 1970s. This group, whose existence was a consequence of the institutional structures and formulas copied from the Soviets, was perceived to have held back change and reform. Yet Fagen (1969) had already identified the growth of a bureaucratic elite that was the product of the Schools for Revolutionary Instruction (EIR) established in the 1960s. Not the brightest, but the most compliant and career oriented, these students became the conservative bulwark against change that rectification attempted to challenge.

The rectification process was a policy which changed the dynamic of the relationship that had developed between state and civil society during the 1970s. The reciprocal relations between the power of the state and the power of civil society had undergone fundamental changes in the three decades since the triumph of the Revolution. At the time of the Revolution civil society's power had grown with respect to that of the old state. Then, while civil society continued to take the lead, the capacity of the state, slowly at first but later with greater momentum, also began to increase. However, after this 'positive sum' (Stepan, 1985) situation, the power of civil society diminished as state power grew. Recognising this, the leadership moved to instigate a recomposition of the economy, politics and society which would enable civil society to regenerate itself. But no sooner had this began, when world events were to propel Cuba towards an economic abyss.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, a radical position has been put forward. It has been argued that it makes sense to talk of the existence of a civil society in Cuba between the years 1959 and 1989. By doing so, the idea that interpretations constructed with the purpose of understanding the failure of

European socialism can be generalised and applied to other socialist contexts is challenged. It was found that where a state is driven by developmental objectives, as it was in post-revolutionary Cuba, it has the potential and capacity not only to limit but also to *promote* important aspects of civil society. Unlike its capitalist predecessor, overall the socialist state had a positive relationship with civil society, a relationship whose fundamental character was established at the time of the Revolution and guided by the ethos of the revolutionary project. Having crushed those elements of civil society which remained from the old order, the post-revolutionary state had no wish to be completely independent of the new civil society which was emerging. Nor did it wish to consolidate a position *against* this civil society. Neither stance was in the state's interests. For the Revolution had emerged *from* civil society and the state required civil society's continuing support if it was to complete the developmental goals and objectives which defined its pledge and retain power. In fact, the state's very legitimacy, rather than lying in its neutrality, lay in its links with civil society. Links which were designed both to promote *and* limit opportunities for the development of civil society, in accordance with the objectives of the political class which had taken control of and subsequently shaped the state. There was a sense of the state and civil society pulling in the same direction but with the state as the senior partner or guide in the relationship. During the period, the state developed a high capacity to penetrate civil society and to regulate and control social relations on the island. Civil society's role as a site for opposition was repressed.

It has been argued that the key to understanding the dynamics of state-civil society relations in Cuba between 1959 and 1989 lies in how a dominant group came to achieve hegemony and how it maintained its hegemonic position vis-à-vis challenges from 'outside' the Revolution and from competing discourses 'within' the Revolution. Hence, the nature of the relationship that evolved between civil society and the state in Cuba was shaped by, and in turn shaped, the struggle for hegemony that took place within civil society. As ever greater numbers of people consented to the new order, and in so doing legitimised it, the means by which the political class defended, reinforced, re-negotiated and reconstructed its hegemony were modified.

Dominated by the state's paternalism and vertical tendencies (Dilla and Oxhorn, 2002,p.16), by the 1980s the relationship between civil society and the state was in need of adjustment. This was recognised by the leadership whose response was the launch of a 'Rectification Campaign', a campaign which sought, among its other objectives, to correct this imbalance. It is perhaps not surprising that the Cuban state had assumed such overbearing characteristics in its relationship towards civil society during the 1970s. Aside from the influence of the Soviet Union, in many ways the state's revolutionary objectives required a state with overwhelming dimensions and capacities, a state capable of promoting the national

interest, of transforming society and stimulating development, while also protecting Cuba's position in a hostile world. The nature of such a state implied a relationship with civil society which was at times contradictory, necessitating both a high degree of autonomy from forces within society which opposed or were perceived to stand in its way, while at the same time requiring and actively promoting the involvement of the population, their support, participation and active consent. On the eve of the Special Period, as the Cuban leadership wrestled with the tensions involved in guaranteeing the continuity of socialist rule through a concentration of power at the centre, while at the same time recognising the need to promote leaps in participation and the elimination of all forms of domination, civil society was being in the process of being 'reactivated'. However, as Bulté remarked: "Just as all this began to bear fruit," the fall of the Soviet camp "changed everything."

NOTES

[1] One of the benefits of having conducted interviews in Cuba has been the opportunity it has afforded me to talk to people who not only lived through the process of the Revolution but who have also reflected on it in their own publications, notably: Jorge Luis Acanda (2002), Aurelio Alonso (1995a, 2002), Lázaro Barredo (2003), Alain Basail (1999), Julio Fernández Bulté, (1999); Julio Carranzas Valdés (1995a), Jorge Ramírez Calzadilla (2000) Mayra Espina Prieto (1997), Rafael Hernández (1999), Miguel Limia David (1997), Fernando Martínez Heredia (2001) and Juan Valdés Paz (2001). The opportunities I had to hear Fidel Castro speak have enabled me to weave through the following pages his memories and accounts of the period that is our focus (see Appendix A for details).

[2] Many of those interviewed in Cuba spontaneously, sketched an historical overview of the revolutionary process during our conversations in order to contextualise their interpretations of state-civil society relations. At times these 'sketches' included considerable detail (for example the interviews with Bulté, Limia, Hernández and Valdés Paz, Havana, January-May, 2003). All stressed the importance of including the past in our interpretations of contemporary social relationships in Cuba. This was more than "good social science practice," it was "a necessity" (interview with Sotolongo, 24 March 2003, Havana).

[3] See the discussion in *Temas*, No.16-17, 1999. Participants included: Milena Recio, Jorge Luis Acanda, Berta Alvarez, Haroldo Dilla, Armando Hart, Rafael Hernández, Migel Limia David, Isabel Monal and Raúl Valdés Vivo.

[4] See the Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy's *Cuba in Transition* series (ASCE, 1999).

[5] I stress *civil* society as opposed merely to 'society'. Civil society, as has been argued in Chapter 1, has a distinct and independent analytical status to 'society'.

[6] For an analysis of this literature see Pérez, 1995; Rodríguez, 1995; Valdés, 1988; Bengelsdorf, 1988; Kapcia, 2000.

[7] The literature on Fidel Castro is vast. Important contributions include: Bourne, 1986; Casuso, 1961; Dubois, 1959; Fagen, 1972; González, 1974; Halperin, 1972.

[8] See also Hollander (1981) on this point.

[9] For example, during the 1990s many intellectuals who had earlier been unable to publish began to comment publicly on the 1959-89 period and the works which had been produced during these years (see Martínez, 1995).

[10] For example, for an overview of social research between 1959 and 1997 see Martín (1999), and for discussions from disciplinary perspectives of the themes which dominated academic institutions and the 'gaps' in research agendas see: Ibarra, 1995 (History); Limia, 1995 (Political Science - although Limia chooses to call this 'Social Studies' given the absence of a Political Science or Politics Faculty at the University of Havana and the general low regard with which Politics as a discipline is held [interview, Limia, 12 May 2003, Havana]); Carranza *et al*, 1995b (Economics); Espina, 1995 (Sociology); Martín, 1995, González 1995 (Psychology). For thematic perspectives see: Alvarez, 1995 (Women's Studies); Calzadilla, 1995 (Religion) and Domínguez 1995 (Youth Studies).

[11] At one point during the 1960s Blas Roca's *Fundamentals of Socialism*; Carlos Rafael Rodríguez's classic *El Marxismo y la Historia de Cuba* (1943) and Castro's speeches were virtually the only works available. By 1979 Rodríguez's *Cuba en el Tránsito al Socialismo, 1959-1963* was more widely available.

[12] Such as the Centro de Investigationes de la Economía Mundial (Centre for Investigations of the World Economy or CIEM); la Escuela Superior del Partido Ñico López (the Ñico López Superior School of the Party); la Facultad de Filosofía e Historia, (the Faculty of Philosophy and History); la Facultad de Economía (Faculty of Economics) of the University of Havana with the collaboration of specialists from CEA (Centre for Studies of the Americas) and CESEU (Centre for Sudies of the United States).

[13] Studies on race relations, for example, are noticeable by their absence (Marrero, interview 8 March 2004, UK).

[14] See for example, *La historia me absolverá*, *History will absolve me* (1953); *Palabras a los Intelectuales*, *Words to the intellectuals* 1961; *First Declaration of Havana*, 2 September 1960; *Second Declaration of Havana* 4 February 1962; *Fidel Castro Denounces Sectarianism*, 1962).

[15] Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficos (ICAIC) founded in 1959.

[16] The attempt on the Moncada barracks in 1953.

[17] In September 1990, Fidel Castro called this period into effect during a speech at the 30th Anniversary of the CDRs. He had spoken in August 1990 at a meeting of the Federation of Cuban Women of what life might look like in Cuba during what he called a 'special period in peacetime' brought on by shortages resulting from non-delivery of goods from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, increased economic pressure from the United States, or any combination of these.

[18] As Rundel (2001) suggests, it is interesting to consider the changing significance of the expression *antes de* (before). She argues that while *antes de* used to mean before the Revolution, it is now also used to mean before the Special Period. In both of its meanings *antes de* indicates a dividing line, a significant break, between a before and a now. This, for Rundel, is more than just a change in the use of an everyday expression, the new use of *antes de* speaks of "a novel conceptualising of the past," that is, "a fading of the Revolution as an absolute dividing line" (2001,p.6). The idea of a 'fading' is interesting given the Revolution's emphasis on linkages with the past and projections into the future, essentially Fagen's theme of "millennium or utopia" (Fagen, 1969,p.11).

[19] The announcement of the 'socialist' nature of the Revolution was publicly declared by Fidel Castro on 16 April 1961 at the funeral of Cubans killed in the pre-Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs) aerial bombings. The U.S. sponsored invasion at Girón began the following day (see Martínez, 1999). Chanan (1985,p.101)

argues that the timing of the announcement was highly significant for it was "inconceivable" that it should have been made without the belief that it would be met with popular support.

[20] Cuba remained a Spanish colony until 1898 after which it was occupied by the U.S. military until 1902, when it became independent. This was the beginning of the Republic "which for Cubans refers to what there was in this country from the 20th May 1902 until the 31 December 1958" (Guanche, 2004,p.15).

[21] For an analysis of the 1902-58 period see Aguilar, 1972; Blackburn, 1963; Boorstein, 1968; Kapcia, 2000; Ibarra, 1998; MacGaffey, 1974; O'Connor, 1970; Raby, 1975; Report for the Commission on Cuban Affairs, 1935; Smith, 1966; Stokes, 1949; Thomas, 1971; Valdés, 1975. See also: Temas, No. 22-23 (2000) and 24-25 (2001) for recent Cuban analyses.

[22] Controversy persists regarding the classification of the Revolution. The following taken from an interview transcript with Fernando Martínez Heredia (21/04/2003) illustrates this point: " .. the concept of a *Socialist Revolution of National Liberation* is my idea, which is opposed to that of Carlos Rafael Rodríguez and to all those in Cuba who say that first there was the stage of national liberation and then there was the socialist stage." Here, I follow Martínez's heretical interpretation.

[23] These examples are taken from Raúl Castro's address of the 15th March 1990, at the IV Party Congress of the Cuban Communist Party. There has been a conscious attempt on the part of the Cuban leadership to link the Revolution to this broader history of struggle in Cuba and Raúl's address goes on to mention examples from the post 1959 period.

[24] The Cuban ethnographic historian, Fernando Ortiz, distinguished the revolutionary project in terms of destruction and reconstruction (see Armando Hart's comments on this point in *Temas* No. 16-17,p.158).

[25] Within the Cuban literature there is more emphasis on the 'dismantling', 'smashing' and 'destruction' of the old order as active processes carried out by the new regime (see for example, Hernández, 1994).

[26] The Rebel Army was the Ejército Rebelde del Movimiento 26 de Julio (Rebel Army of the 26 July Movement).

[27] Fidel was named Prime Minister on the 14th February 1959 after José Miró Cardona left office and was appointed Ambassador to Spain. Manuel Urrutia, the judge at Fidel's 1953 trial following the Moncada attempt and who had found him innocent, became the first President of the second Republic (replaced by Osvaldo Dorticós). At this point, Felipe Pazos, an economist of international standing, took command of the economy (see Selbin, 1999).

[28] Weber observed that charisma involves much more than popularity. On this theme, Fagen (1969) writes: "the charismatic leader is perceived by his followers as endowed with exceptional or even superhuman qualities, and he perceives himself as the instrument of a higher destiny" (Fagen, 1969,p.26).

[29] The M-26-7 was effectively destroyed during the first years of the 1960s when it was subsumed into the FAR (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias*, Revolutionary Armed Forces). In 1963 when individuals formerly from the Movement joined Fidel in the PURS (United Party of the Socialist Revolution) they joined as individuals and as Communists (see Bengelsdorf, 1994,p.77).

[30] The forerunner of the PSP, the Cuban Communist Party, was established in 1925. According to Migdal (1988) it was co-opted into the ORI because, as a group, it was experienced in organisational work and was educated in a comprehensive ideology (see Migdal, 1988,p.275).

[31] Basing her evidence on an article by Roberto Fernández Retamar, *Cuarenta años después*, published in the *Gaceta de Cuba* (June 2001), Miller's (2003) investigation corroborates this interpretation.

[32] For Guevara the effects of bureaucracy were stultifying and he called for a 'war' against it. See E. Guevara (1968) *Venceremos: The Speeches and Writings of Che Guevara* (New York, Simon and Schuster), pp.220-225.

[33]This belief came to characterise the position of the leadership during the decade of the 1960s when campaigns against bureaucracy (1967) were fiercely fought. At this time, the revolutionary offensive on bureaucracy was via the creation of a communist consciousness. A revolutionary attitude was considered critical to increase production and those with such attitudes were moved to key positions. The emphasis was on attitude as opposed to skill, a policy which, according to Bengelsdorf (1994) generated chaos and confusion.

[34] The crisis was resolved following the agreement between John Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev in which Kennedy promised that the U.S., would not invade Cuba (see Diaz, 2002). For alternative accounts of the crisis see Kennedy (2003) and Desnoes (2003).

[35] On February 6, 1962 the U.S. embargo on Cuba was formally instituted (see Thomas, 1971).

[36] The dichotomy represented by those 'in favour' versus those 'against' the Revolution was a fault line which hardened during the three decades between 1959 and 1989.

[37] See IBRD (1951) Report on Cuba.

[38] The success of these tribunals was in part responsible for the fact that by the end of the 1960s the counter-revolution had been quelled and the armed attacks, terrorist bombings and other acts of sabotage no longer posed a serious threat to security (see Fagen, 1969).

[39] *Esta tierra nuestra* was one of two films produced by Julio García Espinosa for the Dirección de Cultura (Cultural Directorate) of the Rebel Army under Camilo Cienfuegos in 1959. Scripted by García Espinosa and directed by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, it dealt with the Agrarian Reform and gave an explanation of the legislation which was to be introduced in May 1959 and why it was necessary (see Chanan, 1985 for details of the film). See below for a discussion of its impact on Cuban audiences.

[40] By way of illustration, in 1953 the poorest section of Cuban society accounted for 40 per cent of the island's total population, but received only 6.5 per cent of the islands total direct income. In contrast, the richest section, constituting 10 per cent of the population received 39 per cent of total income (Brundenius and Zimbalist, 1989).

[41] From 1959 to 1963 over one hundred new statutes were enacted, covering almost every aspect of society (see Azicri, 1988,p.97). For a Cuban analysis, see Espina (1994, 1996, 2003).

[42] He is referring here to *History Will Absolve Me* his two hour defence speech following the attack on the Moncada Barracks on 26 July 1953. The speech was later elaborated and disseminated as the manifesto of the 26 July Movement which Fidel organised from prison on the Isle of Pines (see Kapcai, 2000).

[43] López (1997,p.19) claims that in the first three years of the Revolution some 600,000 people left, principally for the U.S., the vast majority of them doctors, architects and other educated professionals.

[44] See Diaz's (2002) discussion of the U.S. Cuban Adjustment Act. Of course, the United States was by no means the only country to welcome Cubans. Franco's Spain also opened its doors to a tide of exiles. My own father remembers the growing Cuban community in Madrid in the 1960s.

[45] This sub-title is taken from Marchetti's (1986,pp.309-310) analysis of the case of Nicaragua in which the revolutionaries' struggle to capture the support of the population is described as 'the winning of the people's soul'.

[46] Commenting on the decision not to hold multi-party elections following the Revolution, Chanan points out: "the Rebel Army was not about to abdicate its responsibilities and return the country to the anarchy

that immediate civil elections would entail" (Chanan, 1985,p.88). See Oliver Stone's (2003) film *Commandante* for a fascinating discussion of this issue between Stone and Castro.

[47] From 1959 to 1963 over one hundred new statutes were enacted, covering almost every aspect of society (see Azicri, 1988,p.97).

[48] The form of democracy which existed in Cuba prior to the Revolution had no legitimacy in the minds of the people (Basail,1999; Dilla, 1999a). The former political parties were associated with corruption and the excesses of the capitalist system.

[49] Not just the National Ballet, or other cultural arenas which had previously been the exclusive province of the powerful, but education, housing and adequate healthcare.

[50] See Chanan's analysis of the way in which Fidel is portrayed in films such as Alvarez's *Mi Hermano Fidel* (1977) where Fidel is engaged in direct personal interactions with ordinary Cubans.

[51] Recently Arturo Arango has commented on the manifestations and marches that took place at the time of the 'Elián crisis' of 1999-2000 (see Chapter 6). Arango writes: "My children of 16 and 17 years, students at the *Lenin,** have been turning out over the last months for demonstrations and marches which seem to be taking place ceaselessly. They form into tightly packed ranks with their teachers whilst someone, megaphone in hand, leads them in the only cry permitted which they must only shout out at the moment when the order is given" (Arango, 2002, pp.29-30). * The school to which Arango refers is the *Preuniversitario Vocacional de Ciencias Exactas 'Vladimir Illich Lenin'*.

[52] This vision was contained in the Programme Manifesto of the 26 July Movement (November, 1956). It had ten points: national sovereignty, economic independence, work for all, social justice, education for all, political democracy, civil authority, freedom of conscience, public morality and constructive friendship with all counties.

[53] The PCC was created in 1965 as a vanguard party and held its first Congress in 1975 (see Azicri, 1988).

[54] Founded in 1939, after November 1961 the CTC became the Central de Trabajadores de Cuba (Martínez Puentes, 2003). Kapcia (2000) notes that the CTC was purged of its *batistiano* elements after 1959 and was briefly led by activists from the 26 July Movement. By 1962 more radical cadres had assumed power, mainly from, or linked to, the PSP (see Kapcia, 2000, note 17, p.110).

[55] The FEU was established in 1923 and led by Julio Antonio Mella. It was a political organisation which, as well as fighting for University reform, had a strong anti-imperialist platform (interview, Marrero, 22 January, 2003, Havana).

[56] The CDRs did serve Cuba well during the 1961 U.S. sponsored invasion and the 'dad's army' image created here should not detract from this (see *Desde las Cuadras, Mi Pais,* CDR pamphlet, 1996).

[57] For example, in the 1960s, homosexuality was considered deviant behaviour which was against socialist morality and linked with counter-revolutionary activities. Repressive measures were taken and many homosexuals were denounced as counter-revolutionaries and sent to UMAP work camps (Military Units to Aid Production). These camps, where inmates were required to do mostly agricultural labour, were opened in 1965. Fidel ordered their closure in 1967 after receiving protests about the brutal treatment of UMAP draftees (interview, Marrero, 5 February 2003, Havana).

[58] The campaign reduced the illiteracy rate of twenty-three per cent to 3.9 per cent in one year (Kapcia, 2003,p.195).

[59] Nelson P. Valdés (1988) writes: '..in the social scientific literature charisma is not an inherent individual quality but rather a structural social relationship. In other words, charisma is a form of authority that emerges in a given sociopolitical system when a number of conditions are present. The literature on Castro's charisma, more often than not, seems to be unaware of these basic sociological

discoveries. Richard Fagen is one of the few notable exceptions. He said, 'The charismatic leader is always the creation of his followers' Fagen 1972:158' (Valdés, 1988 p.199).

[60] A parallel can be drawn with Chinese politics and the swings from 'economics in command' to 'politics in command' as the visions of key individuals who had power/influence swung in and out of favour.

[61] The *zafra* or sugar harvest of 1970 was intended to reach 10 million tons and thereby take advantage of the relatively high price of sugar in the international market (Blanco, 2003). The failure to achieve this figure, following a huge mobilisation and a concerted effort from all sectors to prioritise the sugar industry (to the detriment of other sectors) left the country feeling demoralised (see Cole 1998 for details).

[62] The *quinquenio gris* was a term coined by cultural historian Ambrosio Fornet to describe the period between 1971 and 1976 in Cuba.

[63] It is interesting to note that it is again Raúl who, in the 1990s, denounces academics at the CEA (see Chapter 5).

[64] Essentially, to be 'reeducated' by manual work, see interview with Martínez, 1995.

[65] López (1997) like Kapcia (2003) argues that the system has always regarded political science and sociology with suspicion and to this day will not authorise the Association of Sociologists. This in part explains the negative reaction I received from some officials when questioned about my academic background. I was told that it was "a shame" that I had studied politics as opposed to medicine, physics or law, which are more highly regarded and seen to be "less problematic" politically. I was also struck by physics students' perception of themselves as an elite within the university.

[66] See Casal (1971).

[67] The new Constitution guaranteed the right to work, free health care, education and protection against vulnerability through redistributive policies (Basail, 1999).

[68] Poder Popular functioned from 1976 to 1992, when it underwent significant changes.

[69] Restructuring, dismantling the centralisation of the economic and political system.

[70] Openness, reducing censorship and media control.

[71] See the analysis by White *et al* (1996) on China for interesting similarities with regard the teaching of history. During my own research in Cuba I had the opportunity to examine history text books at one Havana secondary school and found that in many cases children were using texts that had been produced in the 1970s, and which were full of out-dated Soviet-style interpretations of the type mentioned here.

[72] see Toirac (2003) for a fascinating analysis of the problem in the 1990s.

[73] Robaina was removed from his position as Foreign Minister in 1999 although he retained his seat in the National Assembly amid allegations of 'disloyalty to the Revolution'. Raúl Castro rebuked Robaina for his close ties with political figures and foreign reporters. He was also charged with accepting favours from former Mexican governor, Mario Villanueva (*Cuba News*, August 2000; see also Chapter 4).

PART TWO

The State-Civil Society Relationship During the Special Period
(1990-2003)

Chapter 4

Dangers and Opportunities:[1] State-Civil Society Relations During Economic Crisis (1990-1994)

INTRODUCTION

As the first of three chapters which examine the relationship between the state and civil society in Cuba during the decade of the 1990s, this chapter is concerned with the impact of the economic dimension of the crisis which engulfed Cuba in the 1990s on state-civil society relations. The context for analysis is the initial phase of the economic crisis, which is widely perceived to have been at its most intense during the years 1990 to 1994 (Carranza, interview, 7 May 2003, Havana). The Cuban state and civil society responded quickly to the increasingly complex internal and external situation that unfolded in the early 1990s, as did the United States. Both the crisis and the measures taken by these actors in re(action) to it, precipitated profound transformations within Cuban society, the impact and implications of which are analysed here. It is suggested that by focusing on the responses of the Cuban state and civil society, important insights into the nature and capacity of both spheres can be revealed. Moreover, it is argued that changes in the roles of the state and civil society shaped new patterns of interaction between them, which were at times contradictory to socialist objectives.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first briefly sketches the multi-dimensional nature of 'the crisis' before focusing in more detail on the economic aspect. The second section analyses the responses of the Cuban state and civil society to the crisis in the economy. Section three tentatively maps the new patterns of interaction that began to develop between the state and civil society during the early 1990s and suggests these were an unintended consequence of the strategies employed by each in their attempts to mitigate the worst effects of the economic situation. Finally, the chapter offers an assessment of the extent to which state-civil society relations were redefined during these years of crisis and transformation, when as well as dangers, there were also new opportunities.

4.1. 'THE CRISIS'

"When I think of the Special Period," one Cuban academic recently remarked, "I have an image of jumping into a swimming pool that has no water in it, a swimming pool which is completely empty" (interview with Perera, 16 April 2003, Havana). On a personal level, Perera's metaphor represents the leap of faith and, more powerfully, the leap of despair which many Cubans took at a time when life patterns and survival strategies were completely disrupted and the search for

new, unfamiliar, ones had just begun (Migdal, 1988). However, it is also an image of Cuba falling into the unknown. An image which reflects the position in which Cuba found itself on the eve of the 1990s.

In late July 1989, Fidel Castro had expressed concern about the "possible disintegration of the Soviet Union" and insisted on the need for Cubans to "be prepared" for such an event (discourse on 26 July 1989, in García Valdés, 1998,p.103). Just over a year later, in August 1990, Fidel gave details during meetings held by the Cuban Federation of Women of what life might be like in Cuba during what he called a "special period in peacetime." Such a period could, he explained, be brought on by shortages resulting from the non-delivery of goods from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, increased economic pressure from the U.S., or any combination of these (in Bengelsdorf, 1994,p.138). By September 1990 just such a period had been made operative and an ambitious range of austerity measures were put into effect in order reestablish economic stability in as short a time as possible (see below).

The crisis that developed in Cuba in the early years of the 1990s had various dimensions and multiple phases (interviews with Limia, 12 May 2003; Carranza, 07 May 2003; Sotolongo, 24 March 2003, all Havana). What tends to be called 'the crisis' was in fact a complex process which took many forms and manifested itself in myriad ways: as a severe "economic crisis" that reached its most critical point in the summer of 1993 when Cuba teetered on the brink of economic collapse (Carranza, interview, 7 May 2003, Havana); as a "social crisis" which manifested itself when unrest spilt onto the streets of Havana during August 1994[2] (Marrero, interview, 30 January 2003, Havana; Dilla, 2002); as a "migration crisis" that same summer when waves of *balseros* attempted to cross the Straits of Florida on precarious crafts (interview Valdés Paz, 30 April 2003; Kapcia, 1995; Martínez *et al*, 1996); as a "crisis of daily life" characterised by food shortages, power cuts, an almost total lack of transport[3] and medical supplies, and a flourishing black market that charged exorbitant prices for increasingly scarce goods (interviews with Bulté 23 April 2003; Perera, 16 April 2003, Havana); as a "crisis of the socialist paradigm" following the fall of the Soviet Union which left Cuba "without a stereotype to follow" (interview with Limia 12 May 2003, Havana; see also Martín *et al*, 1996), and as a "psychological crisis" manifested within the social subject (interviews with Espina, 09 May 2003 and Perera, 16 April 2003, Havana; see also Sorín, 1990 and Perera 2002).

By no means all of these forms and manifestations of crisis directly concerned the economy, but the economic crisis was a critical part of the broader process of crisis which developed on the island and it was this dimension that dominated the years 1990-1994 (see Ferriol Muruaga *et al*, 1998).

4.1.1. The Scale of the Crisis in the Economy

By 1990 the profound economic crisis that Cuba was experiencing affected levels of production and commerce and, as a consequence, the standard of living of the entire population (Monreal, ILAS seminar, 24 January 2001, London; López et al, 1995). The effects on the national economy which rapidly began to "cave in" (Eckstein, 1997,p.136), were extreme. Although well documented in the literature (see Mesa-Lago, 1994; Menéndez Díaz et al, 2003) the following data, gathered in Cuba during research trips in 1996 and 1999 from unpublished sources and interviews at the Ministry of Finance and Prices, are helpful in giving a sense of its scale.

Officials and researchers at the Ministry of Finance and Prices reported that Cuba's capacity to import was reduced from 8 billion U.S.$ in 1989 to 1 700 million in 1993, that is to say, a reduction of almost 80 per cent. This loss was reflected in the drop in productive activity and in the deterioration in living standards across social sectors (Fuentes, interview 18 November 1999). Imports were negatively affected in all senses, from consumer goods to capital. For example, imports of petroleum were reduced from 13.4 million tons in 1989 to only 3.3 million in 1993 (IIF Report 1995,p.11). The Cuban economy had to function with around a quarter of the combustible for which it had planned in 'normal' conditions (Fuentes, interview 18 November 1999). As a result, Casanova (1994) claims that the structure of imports changed substantially during the early years of the 1990s. Together with the reduction in capital goods there was a rise in the bill for petroleum to 44.5% of the total, followed by basic foodstuffs (at 25.9%), medicines and agricultural products (IIF Report, 1995,p.11). The difficulties in the acquisition of consumer durables directly influenced the production of articles for export, whose structure was based on products that consisted of traditional exports (sugar, nickel, shell fish, tobacco and citrus products) and which have generally been basic or regressive products (IIF Report, 1995). As a consequence this bought a strong contraction in foreign trade, as illustrated in table 4.1 (see Appendix B for all tables). This situation had significant negative repercussions in the economy, provoking a decline PIB (GDP) of almost 35% between 1989 and 1993 (see table 4.2).

Given its pivotal role in the Cuban economy, the sugar industry merits particular mention. Despite efforts to prevent a deterioration, the harvest of 1993-1994 produced only 4 million tons, a devastatingly low figure for an economy which remained dependent on sugar (IIF Report, 1995,p.12). According to analysts at the Ministry of Finance and Prices, this was due to a number of factors including the reduction in the supply of fuel and the severe difficulties in buying fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides (see also Rosset and Benjamin, 1994). The reduction in sugar production was calculated to have signified a loss for the Cuban economy of around one billion dollars in two years (Martínez Martínez, quoted in IIF Report 1995,p.12). Agricultural production more widely also fell into arrears in the first three years of the decade and registered a loss in performance of 50 per cent since 1989 (Casanova, 1994,p.5). By 1993 industrial capacity was recorded at 10-20 per cent, while in construction it was less than 20 per cent, with

what capacity there remained being concentrated in priority investments and low cost housing projects (IIF Report, 1995,p.13).

From the mid 1980s the flow of capital into Cuba had contracted strongly as a result of both the 'traditional pressures' exerted by the government of the United States at an international level, and the announcement by Cuba of difficulties in servicing external debt (see Cole, 1998). In spite of these problems, during the early 1990s the policy of public spending which had been characteristic of the period before the crisis continued to be maintained, ensuring that the levels of employment, salaries, education, social security and health were retained at acceptable levels throughout the country, thereby helping to maintain social cohesion (Burchardt, 2002). Figures cited in the Executive Summary of the proposed state budget for 1999 (Ministry of Finance and Prices, 1999) illustrate this trend (see table 4.3). As well as attempting to maintain previously established levels of public spending, the Cuban state managed to increase its subsidies for business activity during the period (IIF Report, 1995). However the combination of raised costs and insufficient gains in income to off-set them, provoked the growth and accumulation of a budgetary deficit which, by 1993, had reached 5050 million pesos (see table 4.4).

The growing budgetary deficit was financed fundamentally by "monetary emissions in the face of difficulties in external funding and the fall in production" (Carranza, interview, 7 May 2003, Havana). The lack of a material balance to guarantee acceptable levels of supply before a fund of salaries which maintained their stability, "provoked the accumulation of monetary liquidity in the economy" (Carranza, interview 7 May 2003; see also Burchardt, 1995; González, 1995), that reached 11 896 million pesos in May 1994, of which 59 per cent were found in savings accounts (source, Ministry of Finance and Prices; see also Beruff, 1997). In a meeting with executives from the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC), the Minister of the Economy, José Luis Rodríguez, stressed the necessity of eliminating the excess liquidity in the economy in as short a space of time as possible. He signaled that although this would not represent a solution to the principal problems facing the Cuban economy, which were at this time a lack of capital and resources and the need to increase the efficiency of the economy, it would be "a move in this direction" (Rodríguez in *Trabajadores*, 25 July, 1994). During an interview in May 2003, an advisor at the Ministry of Economy and Planning again stressed the need to make Cuba's socialist economy more efficient and highlighted the key issue which has preoccupied Cuban economists since the Revolution: how to combine economic efficiency with the delivery of social goods to the population (González, interview, 13 May 2003, Havana; García Brigos, seminar, 21 February 2003. See also González, 2002).

As the crisis of the economy reached its deepest point, Fidel Castro began 1993 with a warning to the Cuban people to prepare for a "hard and difficult year" (in Perera, 2002,p.4). 1993 was a year when, according to National Assembly delegate Lázaro Barredo, "you needed hope

to have hope" (interview, 29 April 2003, Havana). Although tentative signs of economic recovery were visible in 1994 when, for the first time in four years, a small increase of 0.7 per cent in GDP was registered signalling the start of the second phase or "recuperation phase" of the economic crisis (Carranza, interview, 2003, see also Carranza et al, 1995), the situation remained fragile. In December 1994 Carlos Lage told members of the CTC secretariat that the severe deterioration from which the Cuban economy had been suffering had been "held in check" (*Trabajadores*, 19 December 1994, p.9). What had led the Cuban economy to the point of near collapse?

4.1.2. The State's Analysis of the Causes of the Economic Crisis

An internal publication produced in 1995 by the Institute of Financial Investigations (IIF) of the Cuban Ministry of Finance and Prices, identifies three "interlocking factors" as the main causes of the crisis of the 1990s. These were: (a) the disappearance of the Soviet camp; (b) the intensification of the North American blockade; and, (c) the problems that had accumulated in the Cuban economy (IFF 1995,p.6). This analysis of the 'causes of the crisis' has been repeated at many times over the course of this inquiry by Cuban bureaucrats, academics and politicians who have been interviewed.[4] As the 'official' Cuban perspective, it is also a position which has been reinforced by Cuban leaders when they have spoken publicly.[5] Conventional though such an analysis may be, the factors identified in the Ministry's report merit consideration and provide a framework within which to discuss briefly the background of the crisis of the Cuban economy.

a)   The Disappearance of the Soviet Camp

The demise of the Soviet Union in December 1991 and the loss of fraternal socialist assistance and trade partners in the CAME, represented a devastating blow for Cuba (see Pérez, 1993; Azicri, 2000 for details). As a member of CAME since 1972 Cuba had, like Mongolia and Vietnam, enjoyed the benefits which were afforded to it as a relatively less developed member of the group. The relations which Cuba had established with many of these socialist countries even before its official entry into CAME, and their evolution over almost thirty years, had enabled the Cuban state to achieve a "substantial part of the transformation of [the island's] economic structure and social conditions" (Fidel Castro, speaking at conference 7 May 2003, Havana; see also Fagen, 1969). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, with subsidies cut and foreign trade lost, the Revolution sank into the most acute economic crisis in its history.

Some sense of the extent of the economic links between these countries can be illustrated by the following figures. In the late 1980s the Soviet Union was providing Cuba with approximately three to four billion U.S. dollars in aid through price subsidies (Diaz, 2002,p.70). Approximately 84 per cent of Cuba's imports came from the CAME, with imports worth

approximately U.S.$5.52 billion from the Soviet Union alone (see CEE 1991). In terms of exports, in 1989 Cuba's commerce with the CAME accounted for 63 per cent of sugar exports, 73 per cent of nickel, 95 per cent of citrus products and 100 per cent of the products from the electronics industry (IIF Report 1995,p.5).

Following the disappearance of the Soviet bloc between 1989 and 1991, and the subsequent 'deactivation' of the CAME, Cuba faced a critical situation. The Cuban economy was not only deprived of its principal markets and sources of material and financial resources - including preferential prices and soft credits - but also lost, in a matter of months, "the economic integration that had been structured around the CAME relationship" (IIF Report, 1995,p.7). Among other things, this integration included "co-operation over the development of strategic economic plans and the training of key professionals" (interview, Ministry official [Fuentes], 18 November 1999; see also Lage, 1994). Hence, the loss represented far more than the loss of either the advantages of the market which the former socialist countries offered or the benefits of economic integration. An official from the Cuban Ministry of Science and Environment summed up the situation in the following terms:

> All of a sudden we were in an international situation which was totally negative. We had lost the international links which were of an economic but also political, social and cultural character which we had been in the process of configuring since the decade of the 1970s. We lost 80 percent of our market in the exterior. We lost the ties which were technical, financial and cultural with the USSR; we were *totally* linked to that economy. It was a very dramatic situation. In practically one year we had to restructure all of our international economic and political relations (interview 12 May 2003, Havana).

All respondents interviewed in 1999 and 2003, without exception, stressed the loss of the Soviet Union and trade links with the CAME as the primary reason for the on-set of the economic crisis of the early 1990s in Cuba. It was also the "first exogenous structural element" associated with the transformation that was to characterise Cuba's development in the 1990s (Burchardt, 2002,p.58).

b) *The Intensification of the U.S. Blockade*

The second factor referred to in the IFF's Report, and also one mentioned consistently within the literature and during interviews, was the intensification of the U.S. blockade; identified by Burchardt (2002,p.59) as the "second exogenous structural element of Cuba's transformation". Since the early days of the Revolution, the U.S. economic blockade had been a fundamental factor that had pushed Cuba to develop relations of exchange with the socialist camp (see Cole, 1998). In a move to influence further the critical internal situation that was unfolding in Cuba, in 1992 the U.S. policy of external aggression was reinforced with the passing of the Torricelli law[6] (Cuban Democracy Act, hereafter, CDA) by U.S. Congress. With this law the U.S.

administration attempted to extend the reach of the embargo beyond the frontiers of the U.S., effectively tightening its strangle hold on the island by broadening its scope.

Among the law's proposals was a clause which was intended to prohibit those subsidiaries of north American companies operating in 'third countries' from doing business with Cuba; most of which was in consumable goods such as food and medicines (Azicri, 2000). In 1991, the value of the transactions of the subsidiaries of north American companies trading with Cuba had reached U.S.$718.7 million and exports to Cuba were in the order of U.S.$383 million in total (Trueba, 1994,p.83). To strengthen the trade restrictions, another aspect of the law prohibited all foreign ships that had docked in Cuba from unloading or loading in U.S. docks for a period of no less than 180 days following their departure from the island, unless authorised by the U.S. Treasury Department. This measure further increased the costs of shipping and the transportation of goods to and from the island. It was intended to limit, and make more difficult, relations of exchange between Cuba and her remaining trade partners, particularly those in Europe (see Diaz, 2002). The U.S administration also took the opportunity to increase the penalties for violating the embargo from $10,000 to $50,000 and included the seizure of property as a possibility within the new legislation (Schwartzman, 2001).

In essence, the CDA was the first step on what would become the new U.S. policy towards Cuba.[7] Between 1991 and 1992 Moscow had unilaterally withdrawn its troops from the island, effectively ending the military aspect of the Soviet-Cuban relationship and leaving Cuba without protection in the case of invasion by the U.S. As a consequence, any threat to U.S. territorial security had also ended. However, despite losing its legitimate security and strategic reasons for isolating Cuba internationally, the U.S. strengthened this policy and attempted to influence the EU to follow its approach through the adoption of a 'common position' (interview FCO official* 6 December 2002; interview Holdich, 18 December 2002, UK; see also Diaz, 2002).

The CDA was designed as a two track policy that mixed engagement with sanctions. The engagement provisions (Track Two) of the legislation included humanitarian donations of food and medicines to newly established NGOs on the island (see Chapter 5) and individuals. These activities were already permitted, but the law gave the humanitarian NGO community in the U.S. the opportunity to continue their work with the approval of federal government, even though other aspects of the law tightened the embargo. As a result, the number of U.S. NGOs making contact with Cuba increased significantly after the law was passed (Habitat-Cuba, 2000). Track Two was fortified by allowing more contact between the U.S. and Cuba. This was to be achieved by the upgrading of telecommunications between the two countries, including: a proposal for the U.S. postal service to deliver mail through charter flights (a move rejected by the Cuban government); provisions to allow export and import information which had previously

been prohibited; and reduced travel restrictions to allow groups such as religious, educational and human rights organisations to travel to the island (see Diaz, 2002; Azicri, 2000).

Track One of the law sought to tighten the blockade economically and to apply sanctions that would close existing loop-holes in the embargo legislation. The law gave the U.S. President the authority to deny aid to any state that provided assistance to Cuba. This was intended as a clear message to Latin American states who, in the light of the measures, "would have to consider carefully" their trade with the island (interview with Thomas, 4 October 2002, UK). To compensate for the trade restrictions imposed by Congress, the law granted the President the authority to waive the new trade sanctions under Section 1706 if it was determined that Cuba had taken steps towards a transition to democracy.[8] In particular, the President was granted the authority "to reduce the sanctions in *carefully calibrated ways* in response to developments in Cuba" (U.S. Congress, The Cuban Democracy Act 1992, supra note 65, Section 1703, emphasis added). While the criteria set out by the Congress tightened the embargo, the law envisioned that the President was to determine when and how the embargo could be lifted, albeit as long as he reported to Congress his intentions. In this way, a certain amount of flexibility was built into the Act. However, the Act's key feature was the explicit intention it contained to promote democratic change on the island. It represented a move from crude destabilisation to a more subtle political, diplomatic and ideological strategy to undermine the Cuban Revolution and was part of a broader U.S. "NED [National Endowment for Democracy]-style 'democracy promotion' program" for regime change in Latin America (see Robinson, 1996,p.105).

According to Cuban officials interviewed in November 1999 at the Ministry of Finance and Prices, the intensification of the blockade that the CDA represented "accentuated the repercussions of the fall of European socialism in all aspects of political, economic and social life in Cuba." Again reflecting on the situation in the early 1990s, Barredo remarks:

> Since the disappearance of the Soviet Union, the United States has tried to create a pressure cooker situation here with Torricelli. They wanted the economic problems which have afflicted us as a result of the intensification of the blockade, to facilitate an internal situation of a type which would enable them to resume their historic role as an internal actor on our island (Barredo, interview, 29 April 2003, Havana).

Among other strategies, the Cuban state responded to this attack by promoting Cuban nationalism (see Chapter 6). While the collapse of the socialist states of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union together with the tightening of the U.S. blockade were undoubtedly critical factors in the economic crisis of the early 1990s, deeper structural problems within the Cuban economy were also a contributing factor.

c) *Problems Accumulated in the Cuban Economy*

Although the 1980s are popularly perceived by Cubans as a "golden decade" (interviews with local and central government officials, Cienfuegos, 1999; also, Havana 2003) when the main structural features of underdevelopment, especially in the social area, had been eliminated (see Burchardt, 2002), there is strong agreement among analysts that serious problems had begun to take hold of the Cuban economy during these years (interviews with García Brigos and Carranza, 04 March and 07 May 2003 respectively, Havana; Monreal, seminar 24 January 2002, London). Kapcia (2000,p.207) argues that the "real crisis point" was not 1989 or 1991 but rather 1984-5. Cuban economists from the Institute of Philosophy and the Ministry of Economy and Planning interviewed in Havana in 1999 and 2003 concur with this interpretation. Moreover, in their Report (1995) economists from the Ministry of Finance and Prices, demonstrate that in the period 1980-1985 evidence of symptoms indicating that the model of economic development which had characterised Cuba from 1975 onwards was exhausted can be discerned (IFF Report 1995, p.9; also interview Carranza, 07 May 2003). This model had been one of "extensive" development which had been supported by the relations between Cuba and the countries of the socialist camp and through the island's integration into the CAME (Monreal, ILAS, 24 January 2001, London). Among the 'symptoms' that indicated the "bankruptcy" of the model (Monreal, ILAS, 24 January 2001, London), the following can be identified: the fall in the performance of tangible fixed assets; an increase in the external dependence on important resources; an insufficient reply from imports; and the low efficiency of the process of investment (interview Carranza, 07 May 2003, Havana). These problems were in turn reflected in the "low effectiveness" of key sectors such as farming, manufacturing industry and construction (official, Ministry of Finance and Prices, 1999). To them there can be added "errors in the concept and practical implementation of the System of Direction of the Economy (SDPE)," which had been based on the experiences of the socialist bloc (interviews, Carranza, 07 May 2003; González, 13 May 2003, both Havana). As a copy of the planning system used in these countries, SDPE in Cuba did not always correspond to the conditions and specific needs of the Cuban economy (White, 1986). In particular, it placed centralised material planning as the main instrument for the direction of the economy, "relegating the role of indicators of value and in particular of fiscal and monetary policies to second place" (Hernández Gomez, interview 18 November 1999, Havana), a policy which was in line with political objectives at the time (García Brigos, interview 9 January 2003, Havana). It is worthy of note that officials in the newly created Ministry of Finance and Prices interviewed in the mid and late 1990s criticised this particular dimension of past policy. These technocrats pushed for market and business reforms, indicating their position as potential members of what Dilla has termed a "new technocratic elite" which has, he argues, emerged in Cuba (see Dilla, 1999c).

From this situation in the 1980s, there arose a raft of problems, the most dangerous of which was inefficiency (interview González; Carranza, Havana, 2003; see also Burchardt, 2002),

which was manifested through the low productivity of work, the waste of primary materials, economic voluntarism, the payment of salaries and material incentives which were not in accord with productive results, and the lengthening of the periods of recuperation required by the economy (interview, Carranza, 7 May 2003, Havana). The drop in production efficiency (Carranzas *et al*.1995) was particularly evident in construction projects which took on average 6 months to complete in 1975 and almost 8 years in 1985 (Burchardt, 2002,p.58). Cuba's extensive and inefficient model of development contributed to the rise in external debt, which was accelerated by the credit facilities offered by the international environment to subsidize the importation of capital goods (Monreal, ILAS 24 January 2001, London). Cuban debt with non-socialist countries rose to more than 9 billion dollars by the mid 1980s, concentrated in its greatest part in the Paris Club (see IIF Report, 1995,p.10).

The model of accumulation which had been used by Cuba for three decades was dependent on the finance provided by the countries of the CAME and ended abruptly when relations with these countries were broken. At a meeting held for Cuban economists in February 2003, Hiram Marquetti, a senior economist at the Centre for Studies of the Cuban Economy, put forward the position accepted by many analysts (both Cuban and non-Cuban) that Cuba had adopted the model of the socialist countries because it had no other choice. However, Marquetti added, Cuba had taken on the model at a time when the model itself was in crisis and as a result had also assimilated many of its deficiencies (see also Burchardt, 2002). As a consequence, "in the Cuban case the crisis came strongly and relatively quickly" (Marquetti, 21 February 2003, Havana). Like García Brigos (interview, 04 March 2003, Havana), Marquetti identifies the 1986-1995 stage as the most important for the economy, a time during which a series of "internal contradictions" were "exacerbated by external problems" (Marquetti, 21 February 2003, Havana). By 1986 a combination of low market prices for Cuba's principal exports of sugar and oil,[9] increasing rates on accumulated hard currency debt, an inability to negotiate new loans and a resulting massive cut-back in imports of intermediate goods from capitalist countries, led to a sharp downturn in the economy. At this point Cuba could no longer comply with international debt repayment schedules (Suárez, interview, 15 April 2003, Havana) and stopped paying its capitalist foreign debt, typically estimated at between $6 and $7 million, and as a result became ineligible for anything other than short-term credits (see Cole, 1998). In the mid 1980s the Cuban government responded by initiating austerity measures to address both the mounting hard currency debt (see Eckstein, 1997) and also the growing domestic budgetary deficit. The deficit has since been a "permanent feature" of the Cuban economy (interviews with Hernández Gomez and Fuentes 18 November 1999; interview, Carranza, 7 May 2003, Havana), although it has been reduced in recent years.

Returning to a position last adopted in the 1960s, the leadership looked to Guevarist principles in order to explain the problems in the economy and in the hope that in them they might find a solution. This policy was expressed in the Rectification Campaign of 1986 which sought to return the Revolution to its historical roots by invoking moral incentives and voluntarism as the motor-force which would rejuvenate the economy (see Chapter 3). However, rectification left fiscal problems largely unresolved (González, interview 13 May 2003; see also Eckstein 1997 on the fiscal crisis).

The "structural crisis" (Suárez, interview, 15 April 2003, Havana) of this period acted as a dynamic for limited reform. Already by the late 1980s there were openings towards foreign capital and tourism (interview, García Brigos, 4 Mach 2003, Havana). However, the application of these measures coincided with the deteriorating external situation. As a consequence the policies intended to resolve the crisis were not able to be fully realised (interview, García Brigos, 4 March 2003, Havana). Moreover, Cuba's public declaration in December 1985 of her presence in Angola had not helped her search for new forms of bi-lateral assistance (Suárez, interview, 14 April 2003, Havana). At the same time, with Gorbachev's rise to power and his emphasis on market oriented reforms, relations with the Soviet Union became increasingly unreliable (interviews, Bulté 23 April 2003 and García Brigos, 4 March 2003, Havana). As the prices of Cuba's fundamental export products fell and the Soviet Union's failure to fulfill import agreements became an increasingly regular occurrence, the situation in Cuba deteriorated. Hence, visible cracks started to appear in the Soviet-Cuban economic alliance when "trading shipments were delayed in 1989 causing great disruption in Cuba's productive capacity" (Fidel Castro, speaking at conference, 8 May 2003, Havana).

According to the Cuban economist Jesús García Brigos, the crisis of the 1990s had its foundations in some of the same issues as the "crisis of development" that had occurred in the 1980s, but "the *form* that it took in the 1990s was manifested in different ways" (García Brigos, interview, 4 March 2003, Havana, his emphasis). Like Suárez (interview, 15 April 2003, Havana) García Brigos stresses the essential differences between the two crises. Although the crisis of the 1980s did not affect the daily lives of Cubans in the manner of the crisis of the 1990s, he interprets the former as a crisis that had "the potential to be far more dangerous for the Cuban state." For this respondent, the crisis of the 1990s was essentially an economic crisis not a political crisis; a point reflected by all of the Cuban economists interviewed at the Ministries of Finance and Prices, Economy and Planning, Science and the Environment (in 1996, 1999 and 2003). Both crises are commonly perceived by these government economists to have had the same "conductive fuse" (García Brigos, interview 4 March 2003, Havana) and have been described as "crises of the lack of sustainability of the development model" (Carranza, interview, 7 May 2003, Havana). The fall of the Soviet Union was widely indicated as 'the catalyst' for a

crisis which had been 'detonated' in the 1980s (interviews, Havana, government economists, 2003). In the following excerpt taken from an interview transcript, García Brigos expresses his perceptions of both crises:

> In the first half of the 1980s there was a crisis of development. The crisis of the 1990s had, in its foundation, some of the same issues and problems as this earlier crisis but the form in which it was manifested was that of a crisis of the economy. It was not a cyclical crisis of the type you would see in a capitalist system, and it was not a crisis of society or the state. In 1984 at the IV Forum of Energy, members of the Central Committee had highlighted difficulties in the Cuban economy. Planning mechanisms relating to economic policy were criticised. In 1986 during a discourse for the 19th April there was again recognition from the leadership that we had in effect been reproducing underdevelopment rather than development in Cuba. If we had let this go on there would have been an intense crisis of development. Rectification was to be the solution to this problem. It was a political process with an economic mechanism: planning. It was designed in order to perfect our politics. We urgently needed to modify policy. Representation and participation were inadequate and we needed changes (García Brigos, interview, 4 March 2003, Havana).

It is to an analysis of the changes which García Brigos indicates were necessary that we now turn.

4.2. THE RESPONSE OF THE CUBAN STATE

The response of the Cuban state to the crisis of the early years of the 1990s was intimately linked to its longer term objectives and aspirations. Commenting on the Cuban state's response, one UK official reflected: "every move they have made, they have thought to themselves: is this consistent with our system" (interview, FCO official, 6 December 2002, London). The state's overall objective was to preserve the Revolution and its achievements. Far from compromising or abandoning its socialist principals, these were to be strengthened by the management of two dynamics which, at first glance, appear contradictory: the dynamics of continuity and transformation. Continuity was to be found in the state's objectives; the maintenance of Cuba's sovereignty, her independence and autonomy, as well as the commitment to social justice and equality (Marquetti, Havana, 2003), while transformation was to characterise the *methods* by which continuity would be achieved (Limia, interview, 12 May 2003, Havana,).

At the start of the crisis the state's response was rapid and pragmatic (Arvue Puelua, interview 29 April 2003, Havana). The immediate priorities were to maintain the country's food supply and to safeguard education and health (Rosset and Benjamin, 1994). In December 1989 a major food programme the *Programa Alimentario* was announced in order to decrease the dependence on imported food (see Rosset and Benjamin, 1994; Lambie, 1997) while at the same time the state attempted to ring-fence resources for education and health (M. Fuentes, interview, 18 November 1999, Havana). A wide range of measures directed towards achieving, in the shortest time possible, the reanimation of the economy and its re-insertion into the international

market under the new conditions of the post-cold war environment were set in train (interviews: González 13 May 2003; Carranza 07 May 2003; García Brigos 04 March 2003, all Havana).

The state's response to the crisis between 1989 and 1994 was designed to "save the Revolution through a partial transformation" (Bulté, interview, 23 April 2003, Havana). As such the state's immediate tasks were to preserve its version of socialism (see Jackiewicz and Bolster, 2003) and get Cuba out of the economic crisis (Gracía Brigos, interview, 04 March 2003, Havana). Publicly the state's commitment to socialism was continuously reiterated both within Cuba and on the world stage. The decisions regarding how best to confront the crisis were informed by the perils seen in the Eastern European cases and the Soviet Union. With the Soviet model no longer a "guiding exemplar" but rather a "cautionary tale" (Cruz and Seleny, 2002,p.222), China and Vietnam were declared the new models of success, precisely because they had avoided the "crazed" political reforms implemented in European state socialist systems and by extension precluded the "fatal" growth of "bourgeois party pluralism" (García Valdés, 1998,pp.166-7).

Although the state initiated a public debate about the crisis (see below), policy decisions were not open to debate. The ways in which the Cuban state attempted to fulfill its dual objectives of staving off the economic crisis while preserving the socialist system at times appeared contradictory. During conversations in 1996 and 1999 with officials at the Ministry of Finance and Prices the aims of the economic strategy adopted by the state during these years were outlined. According to these respondents, the main objectives of the strategy can be summarised as follows:

i.   To maintain the achievements made since 1959 in education, health, social security and social assistance.

ii.   To preserve the predominant role of the system of state property, with the aim of conserving the economic means necessary to stabilise the collapse and make strategic economic decisions.

iii.   To decentralise state-sector industries in the economy.

iv.   To open an aperture to private foreign capital in order to encourage its greater participation in the Cuban economy, principally in association with state property.

v.   To encourage foreign trade.

vi.   To concentrate resources and foreign investment in the sectors identified for rapid recuperation: tourism, the sugar industry, biotechnology, the pharmaceutical industry, mining and petroleum, as well as in those sectors which guarantee the functioning of the economy such as transport and agriculture.[10]

vii. To promote greater participation of the cooperative sector in the economy, principally in agriculture.

viii. To implement conditions in which self-employment could be reintroduced.

ix. To introduce 'the laws of the market' in certain spheres in order to stimulate production.

The state's aim was to rebuild specific sectors of foreign trade with a view to acquiring hard currency and foreign exchange, while making the fewest possible market concessions. Foreign capital was to be enticed by the state's willingness to forgo taxes and its decision not to limit the expatriation of profits (Schwartzman, 2001; also interview with Thomas, 4 October 2002, UK). In the main, foreign investment was Spanish, Mexican and Canadian (Cruz and Seleny, 2002). Those segments of the economy selected for 'repair' and/or change included: biotechnology, telecommunications, tourism and prospecting for, and extraction of, oil and minerals (mainly nickel). Aspects of the market mechanism were introduced to facilitate this, which in themselves required the legalisation of private property for foreign interests, the creation of tax-free economic zones, various new forms of economic association such as mixed enterprises geared towards the world market. Contradictions between specific (capitalist) policies and overall (socialist) objectives are evident. For example, joint ventures in the tourism industry were intended to bring in revenue in the hope of preserving the socialist system.[11] Having been banished by the revolutionary government as the cause of many societal ills in the period prior to the Revolution, tourism became one of the focal points of the new Cuban economy and, ironically, a pillar on which the survival of the Revolution now rests. Sadly, with its re-introduction many social problems have returned and prostitution, in particular, has reappeared (see Pattullo, 1996; Rundel, 2001; also interview with Rausberg, 4 May 2003, Havana).

As a precondition for the economic transformations planned, important measures were taken by the state that were directed towards the reoganisation of internal finances (IIF, 1995). These measures included the reform of taxation policy and public spending, as well as reforms in the areas of finance, employment and salaries and prices (IIF, 1995).[12] The absorption of the excess money that was in the economy was also identified as a priority. Changes and modifications were undertaken to bring about an economic opening which was to be as much an internal as an external aperture. A process of socio-economic re-adjustment was implemented in an attempt to revert the effects of the crisis and to minimise its most acute impacts. A group of measures and processes were initiated with the purpose of lessening the effects of the crisis and re-inserting Cuba into the ambit of the global market and international economic relations.

Of the most important measures were a series of economic and political reforms which were introduced between 1992 and 1994 (see Azicri, 2000). Neither were of a neo-liberal kind (interviews, Hernández 11 March 2003; Carranza, 7 May 2003; Garcia Brigos, 04 March 2003;

Espina, 9 May 2003) but instead represented an "authentic" Cuban alternative to the crisis situation (interview Espina, 9 May 2003). The economic reforms were a carefully calibrated range of measures designed to create a structurally more diverse economic sphere (Espina, interview, 09 May 2003, Havana) and were introduced throughout 1992 and 1993. In 1992, with the inauguration of a the new Cuban Constitution, there was a reform of the property law. This heralded the redesign of the system of property, the appearance of a mixed economy sector and an opening to foreign capital. The result was arguably the most fundamental change in the socialist system since the Revolution (Carranza, interview, 07 May 2003, Havana). For with the introduction of Law 50 and Law 75 the number of forms of property on the island increased and the state no longer held the monopoly. With the reversal of this touch-stone of the Revolution the "irreversibility" of socialist property came to a sudden end (interview, Bulté, 23 April 2003, Havana). With it, the certainty of a socialist future, the "millennial vision" which Fagen (1969, pp11-12) had identified as the necessary counterpoint to the theme of struggle which characterised the Revolution, evaporated. The "gilded image of the future" which the leadership had "held up to the Cuban population", as Fagen (1969,p.12) put it, for over thirty years was suddenly seen to be a possibility, and a 'shaky' one at that, rather than a certainty (Limia, interview, 12 May 2003, Havana).

In 1993 the Cuban state was "forced" to make three important market oriented reforms (interview, M. Fuentes 18 November 1999, Havana). These included: the creation of the UBPCs (Basic Units of Cooperative Production), that is, the transformation of state farms into cooperatives; the de-criminalisation of the possession and circulation of the U.S. dollar; and the introduction of a new law relating to self-employment, which authorised the practice in certain occupations. Mesa-Lago (1997) reports that these structural reforms were tolerated only as a last resort and only in the most minimal terms. This view is shared by Rausberg (interview 4 May 2003, Havana) who argues that Carlos Lage, the man widely perceived to have been the 'architect of the reforms', had had to "squeeze the reforms out of Fidel, drop by drop." Such reluctance was characteristic of the top leadership but it did not reflect the position of all groups within the leadership circle. Arango (interview 23 April 2003, Havana) points to "fights between bureaucratic socialists and market socialists" within the elite. The position of orthodox figures such as José Ramón Machado Ventura and reformers like Carlos Lage represented these ideological divisions and tensions. However, according to Carranza this did not indicate a "weakening of coherence" within policy making circles (interview 7 May 2003, Havana). Likewise, Rausberg notes that despite "perceptible fractures," between certain sectors of the party and state that wished to put a break on reform and those pushing to deepen the reform process, both were united in their loyalty to Fidel Castro and in their unity of purpose in pursuing socialist developmental objectives. Carranza argues that the timing of the reforms was key: "it is highly

significant that these measures were taken at the lowest point of the economic crisis … it is only at this point that the state decides to take stronger measures" (interview, 7 May 2003, Havana). Rausberg sums up the leadership's position regarding the reforms as a case of: "buying a fish but being scared of its eyes." Although an economic aperture was created, it was with caution, reluctance, and a certain amount of trepidation (Rausberg, interview, 4 May 2003, Havana). Let us look at the reforms in a little more detail.

4.2.1. The Creation of the UBPCs

Since the first years of the Revolution, the concentration of property in the hands of the state had characterised the Cuban system (Espina, interview 9 May 2003, Havana). The main exception was in the agricultural sector where, besides agri-industrial complexes, agricultural companies and state farms, there also existed close to 200,000 private farmers, most of whom were grouped together in agricultural production cooperatives (*cooperativas de producción agropecuaria* or CPA*)* (Espina, interview 9 May 2003; see also IIF, 1995). The rest were organised into cooperatives of credits and services (*cooperativas de créditos y servicios* or CCS).

However, on the 20 September 1993 the Cuban leadership announced a dramatic agricultural reform which would turn state farms into cooperatives run by individual cultivators (see Pérez Rojas *et al* 1999). Decree Law No. 142 authorised the creation of *Unidades Básicas de Producción y Cooperación* (Basic Units of Cooperative Production) or UBPCs, by sub-dividing some of these state farms. With the drastic drop in input imports in the early 1990s, the huge state farms that had predominated in the past were no longer sustainable (see Enriquez, 2003). Moreover, the economic crisis had forced policy makers to acknowledge that production levels were higher on smaller farms, lending credence to the decision to downsize production. By the end of 1996 there were 2,654 UBPCs (CEPAL, 2000,p.313).[13] Consequently, the state farm sector's control over agricultural land dropped from 82 to 24.4 per cent (Valdés Paz, 1997,p.147).

Although UBPC workers would not have ownership of land they would have the right to use their parcel of land for an indefinite period (Schwartzman, 2001). They were to have access to extended credit to buy and to insure their equipment. In return, UBPCs were expected to produce their own food and supply a contracted amount of whatever crops they produced to state farms. On the issue of the creation of the UBPCs Limia argues:

> We had to create the UBPCs … we had to rapidly change the system of agricultural property which we had before the crisis because we needed to develop a form of property to overcome the contradictions from the previous phase (Limia, interview, 12 May 2003, Havana).

The introduction of the UPBCs was a "partial process of privatisation" (Carriazo Moreno, 1998,p,100). It was an adjustment that was necessary, the state argued, in order to "stimulate and stabilise" production (Carriazo Moreno, 1998,p.109) but it was also a transformation which

responded to the process of decentralisation and the need for greater autonomy in different sectors of the national economy (see Vilariño Ruiz, 1998 on the issue of decentralisation). However, Enriquez (2003) notes that although UBPCs were supposed to be relatively autonomous from the state, ties between them remained strong.[14]

4.2.2. The Legalisation of the U.S. Dollar

In July 1993 the Cuban state legalised the use of the U.S. dollar as the country's second currency. This was a measure aimed, in part, at undercutting the black market for U.S. dollars (and the purchase of items with them) as well as increasing foreign exchange earnings through the state-owned retail system for goods sold in U.S. dollars (Enriquez, 2003). The law was amended to allow the private holding of foreign exchange (see Ritter and Rowe, 2002). Among other things this move enabled monetary remittances from the estimated 2 million Cubans living overseas to be legally absorbed into the Cuban economy (Ritter and Rowe, 2002). The effects of dollarisation were immediate (González, interview 13 May 2003, Havana). There was a collapse in the currency black market and a rise in the value of the peso, which in turn stimulated an increase in food supplies, particularly in the capital. The state's decriminalisation of the possession and circulation of hard currency facilitated the third reform: self-employment.

4.2.3. Self-Employment

As one of the initiatives designed to absorb excess liquidity and to improve the state's budgetary balance, the legalisation of self-employment (*por cuenta propria*) was a turning point.[15] In July 1993 the National Assembly approved more than 150 types of self-employment, including the operation of *paladares* (in-home restaurants). Tight regulations for *cuentapropistas* were also introduced, to ensure that no one would benefit from 'illicit enrichment' (Scarpaci, 2002). The authorisation of forms of self-employment was intended to create spaces for new economic actors. It was also to provide much needed revenue for local government from the sale of licenses and later through taxation. The director of Finance and Prices from one municipality remarked:

> Self-employment created income for the municipality which helped us in our struggle to reduce our budgetary deficit (Molina Aeosta, 24 November 1999, Cruces, Cienfuegos Province).

The legalisation of self-employment was a move which represented a re-structuring of forms of employment and sources of income. Moreover, it fundamentally changed state-worker relations in Cuba. From 1959 to 1989 there had existed a small number (less than one thousand) of independent transport operators who formed part of the forty to fifty thousand self-employed workers registered on the island (Espina, 1998). The rest of the economically active population

worked in the public or state sector, primarily in manufacturing, government services and administration. As a result of a policy of full employment, unemployment was virtually nonexistent between 1959 and 1989 and that unemployment which did exist was, in the main, voluntary (Hernández Gomez, interview, 18 November 1999, Havana). In the 1990s this changed and unemployment began to rise. A combination of a reorganisation of the state's administrative structure (see below) and the slow down in industry, precipitated a contraction in overall public sector employment in 1994-1995 of 110,000 workers (Estay, 1997,p.31). As a result, the unemployed population grew from 7.9 per cent in 1989 to 34 per cent in 1995 (CEPAL, 2000,p.253), although Basail (1999) claims that the authorities insist it has remained steady at approximately 7 per cent. Although the legalisation of self-employment was intended to reduce unemployment - and there is evidence that the emerging self-employed and co-operative sectors did absorb many of those who lost their jobs[16]- underemployment became a major issue (see Eckstein, 1994). The policy was also aimed at meeting the demand for certain goods and services that the state was unable to provide. The new self-employed workers were a highly diversified group, their occupations ranging from hairdressing to the selling of soft drinks and snacks (see Pérez-López, 1995).

A year after the legalisation of certain forms of self-employment, farmers' markets or *mercados agropecuarios*, were established. Hence as of 1994 it became legal, as in the 1980-86 period, for farmers to sell their excess produce in markets in which prices were set by the laws of supply and demand. That is, they were free to market any produce they still had after meeting the quotas stipulated by the government for produce sales to *Acopio* (the state purchasing and distribution agency.[17] Shortly thereafter, artisan and industrial goods markets were established.

4.2.4. Political Reforms

The reforms of the political system were expressed in institutional changes in the Party, the central state, local government and the electoral system. Hence, in addition to the economic reforms, the apparatus of the state underwent a reorganisation and was reduced in size in order to lower costs at this time. In April 1994 a decree law abolished all thirteen state central committees as well as other central agencies (see Cole, 1998) and created four new ministries.

The political reforms which the leadership introduced have often been regarded as less significant than the economic measures by external analysts. However, despite being less dramatic, they were highly influential in shaping state-civil society relations (Basail,1999). Controlled political openings were made during the early 1990s (see August, 1999) and a new government level was created with the introduction of *consejos populares* (popular councils) in 1992 (interview with Ramírez García 25 November 1999, Cienfuegos; see also García Brigos, 1998). Having been piloted since 1989 in much the same way as the Poder Popular system was

in the early 1970s (interview, García Brigos, 2003), the popular councils were established in Havana following the Fourth Party Congress of 1991 and were intended to be a "lighter" form of government, "more decentralised," "closer to the base" and "designed as a mechanism to transmit demands upwards" (interview, Ramírez García, 25 November 1999, Cienfuegos). Composed of local government delegates and representatives of key local enterprises they were initially formed to give more decision-making power to the local community. Having worked closely with this new layer of local government in his work as a delegate, and later as the President of a popular council in Havana, García Brigos is convinced that without these councils people would not have coped during the Special Period. He argues: "we would not have managed the 'zero option' without requiring a military presence had it not been for the consejos populares" (interview, 4 March 2003, Havana). Over the course of the early 1990s, García Brigos claims that the function of the councils changed. They became the "resource for getting resources," the "means to resolve local problems," rather than merely, "the means of transmitting local problems upwards" (García Brigos, interview, 4 March 2003, Havana).

As mentioned above, there was also a reform of the Constitution during the early 1990s. A new version of the 1976 Constitution was introduced following the Constitutional Reform Law of 12 July 1992 which signalled that the transformations and changes taking place within the economic and political ambit were to be permanent. Most significant in this respect was the new Constitution's modification of the irreversibility of the character of the socialist sector. A few months later, in October 1992, a new Electoral Law was approved (Law Number 72). The 20 December 1992, and 24 February 1993, elections were the first to be held under the new law (see August, 1999), with the direct election of deputies to the National Assembly by the general electorate being allowed for the first time in 1993.[18]

The new Constitution was necessary in order for the state to redefine property and to modify the irreversible character of the socialist sector. However, the Constitution was not important solely for these reasons. Among the changes it sanctioned was the exclusion of atheism as the official ideology of the Cuban state and with this measure the end (in theory at least) to all forms of religious discrimination (see *Constitución de la República*, 1996, Article 8). This move reflected the decision taken by the Party in 1991 "to end the policy of non-admittance to believers" (interview, Calzadilla, 10 March 2003, Havana). The Party was to remain the vanguard of the state and the Party of the Cuban nation (Hernández, 1999,p.28), but one of the greatest challenges which it identified at this time and one which, according to Valdés Paz and Calzadilla (interviews 30 April and 10 March 2003, Havana, respectively), reflected popular opinion, was for more room to be given to distinct currents of thought *within* the Party. This was to be achieved without a diminution in the force of the Party as a bastion of national unity.

It was also in the early 1990s that new forms of workplace assemblies, *Parlamentos Obreros* (Workers' Parliaments) were established as fora where workers could discuss and decide how to run their workplaces under the constraints of the Special Period. All of these political measures, argues Burchardt (2002), were vital in preventing the fragmentation of political power, a theme to which we return in Chapter 6.

4.2.5. Re-negotiating a Space for Socialist Cuba in a Capitalist World

In parallel to these internal measures, the Cuban state began the task of re-inserting the Cuban economy into the international market (Carranza, interview, 07 May 2003, Havana).[19] Limia describes the economic crisis as an event which "pushed Cuba into globalisation" (interview, 12 May 2003, Havana). The re-integration into the world market and re-articulation of the Cuban economy towards the capitalist world involved the need to re-negotiate a space for Cuba within the global economy. Critical to this was the search for new trade partners.[20] It also involved a partial opening-up to the international economy *within* Cuba. Joint ventures with foreign enterprises and investment, the acceptance of a relative external aperture and the diversification of exports were features which increasingly began to characterise the Cuban economy during these years. Carranza sums up the situation in the following terms: "there was a decentralisation of external commerce and an aperture was made for foreign capital" (interview, 07 May 2003, Havana). A visible signal of Cuba's move towards international business and political communities was reflected by Fidel Castro's dress code. His use of suits, rather than the habitual military fatigues which the world has become accustomed to seeing him wear, indicated that Cuba was ready to 'do business'.

Dilla (2000) argues that the adaptation of the Cuban economy to the demands of the world market was strikingly different from corresponding processes in other Latin American countries as in Cuba the political leadership attempted to avoid the harsher aspects of adjustment, a point reiterated by many of those interviewed in 1999 and 2003. However, Rausberg (interview, 4 May 2003, Havana) argues that reforms such as the legalistation of the U.S. dollar "heralded the Latin-americanization of Cuba," as with it came the potential for inequality between social groups to grow. Cuba's re-insertion into the international economy has been noted to have had a differentiated impact within Cuba's territories (Perera, 2002). The provinces, Perera claims, have felt varying degrees of "advantage" and "disadvantage" in relation to their inclusion in the new economic strategies (interview, 16 April 2003, Havana). The city of Havana was the hub of this process, with foreign capital, tourism and new technology impacting upon it in multifarious ways, not all of them positive, but by no means all of them negative (see Perera 2002).

4.2.6. The Effects of the Reforms: The Return of Social Inequality

The reforms spurred social change in Cuba and "generated many new contradictions" (Carranza, interview 7 May 2003, Havana). The most obvious change was a diversification of the social structure (Espina, interview 9 May 2003, Havana) precipitated by the economic discrimination caused by the reforms (see Burchardt, 2002). Income levels became increasingly differentiated as spaces were opened to the market in the area of domestic economic relations. In 1989, for example, the largest salary differential stood at 4.5 to 1 (Burchardt, 2002,p.57). However, by the mid 1990s Cuban economists confirm (although no official figures are available) that the gap in income levels had widen significantly (interviews with García Brigos, 04 March 2003 and Carranza 7 May 2003, both Havana).

During the first three decades of socialist rule, state control had ensured that prices varied very little and that the inflation tax on prices for the consumer was extremely low, on average at around 3 to 5 per cent annually. Important spheres of social life such as health, education, sport and culture enjoyed high levels of development (IIF Report, 1995). In the new climate of the Special Period, it was uncertain whether this could be maintained. Price increases meant that the average Cuban family required twice its regular income to satisfy its basic needs (Toroges, 2000). As real wages fell for the majority of Cubans most people attempted to supplement their income via market activities in the informal sector. With estimates of numbers within this sector as high as 40 per cent by 1994 (Padilla Dieste, 1997) the 'generalisation' of both the self-employed informal sector and the illegal sector meant that income was no longer dependent on an individual's social contribution (Espina, interview, 9 May 2003, Havana). As Bulté explains: "by the early 1990s, inequalities had nothing to do with the extent of support that we each gave to society. This was an absolute change in Cuban civil society" (interview, 23 April 2003, Havana). The legalisation of the dollar and the circulation of two currencies was a significant source of rising inequality (see Lambie, 1997). Bifurcation of the currency began to gradually undermine social cohesion. Echoing Bulté, García Brigos states:

> Cuba became more complex after the legalisation of the dollar. A social aspect of this was the creation of real and new sources of social differentiation which were not based on the contribution of 'every person according to his ability' to society (interview 04 March 2003, Havana).

Paradoxically, the problems were greatest amongst those who had worked hardest for the Revolution (Barredo, interview, 29 April 2003, Havana). The public service and state workers who had remained faithful to the system and were paid their wage in pesos, found themselves in a precarious position. The gap between official wages and what was needed for household survival widened during the early 1990s and has continued to do so (Burchardt, 2002). In Perera's (2002) study it is reported that between 1988 and 1996 the number of people at risk (defined as those who did not receive incomes which permitted the satisfaction of basic needs) grew from

4.3 to 11.45 per cent (Perera, 2002, p.9). During interview conversations, Perera stated that as groups the elderly and women working within the 'traditional sector' were the most vulnerable (interviews, 16th and 18th April 2003, Havana). Doctors and teachers, the two groups of professionals into which almost half of the university students graduating between 1980 and 1989 were absorbed (CEE, 1991), and those traditionally considered as at the vanguard of the Revolution, were among the hardest hit. Unlike other workers, they were less able to supplement their income by engaging in informal sector or illegal activities due to personal ideological commitments and/or social pressures. Many in these sectors were "hard pressed" and "suffocating" (Perera, 2002,p.30). A joke recounted by a doctor attending an evening seminar in Havana, illustrates the grim situation in which many medical professionals found themselves:

> A man is walking down a street when suddenly a masked man jumps out in front of him, threatening him with a knife. The armed man says: "Give me your money or I'll cut your throat!" Shocked the man gets out his wallet, opens it and finds that all he has is a five peso note.[21] He turns to his attacker and says: "Look, I've got practically nothing, only this five peso note." Impatiently, his attacker replies: "Well, give me your watch then!" The man looks down at his wrist saying: "This old thing, its not worth a peso." Exasperated the attacker sighs: "Look, just give me your shoes." At this, the man looks down at his feet and says: "You can't want my shoes! They are so old they are falling apart and I can't afford to buy new ones." Frustrated and demoralised the attacker drops the knife and says: "What on earth do you do? You have no money, a watch which barely keeps time and a pair of old shoes which have more holes in them than leather." His victim says: "I'm a doctor." At this the assailant lifts his mask and says: "Oh! Which year did you graduate?"

One consequence of the growing disparity in incomes has been a process of "de-professionalisation" (Perera, 2002) as many professionals have left their skilled jobs to take work in sectors such as tourism (Barredo, interview, 29 April 2003, Havana), where it is widely reported a waiter or chamber maid can earn in a couple of days the monthly salary of a university lecturer in tips alone.[22] It is perhaps not surprising then that it has become increasingly common for a bribe to be given in order to secure a job as a hotel barman or doorman (Moyano, interview, 28 February 2003, Havana). According to Burchardt (2002) the movement of highly skilled workers to low-skilled jobs has devalued qualifications and specialisations, with a potentially devastating effect for the entire social pyramid. The trend for highly qualified workers to leave the country in search of better opportunities abroad (Limia, interview, 12 May 2003; see also Martínez *et al*, 1996) despite the difficulties involved for Cubans in acquiring permission to travel, has also had important ramifications for the social structure.[23]

It was in the early 1990s that a process of marginalisation began to take place in Cuban society, most notably along the social fault lines which had characterised pre-Revolutionary Cuba. In this context, it was the black population which was particularly hard hit by the new economic climate. Given that few black Cubans had emigrated from the island following the Revolution (Burchardt, 2002), on the whole this group has not enjoyed the benefits of *remesas* or monetary remittances (most often in U.S. dollars) sent to Cubans on the island by relatives

who live abroad. The results of this study confirm Alvarado's (1996) assertion that racist stereotypes and prejudices are still present in Cuban society (see Chapter 6) and are compounded by problems such as the unequal access to hard currency which denies many black Cubans the means of satisfying their consumption needs through the network of state-owned shopping establishments which began to operate in hard currency during the early 1990s.

Another source of social inequality precipitated by the reforms was associated with foreign business and investment (Limia, interview, 12 May 2003). Summing up the effects of the reforms, Limia argues:

> These measures had social consequences which did not always coincide with the goals for which they had been created. In general, the reforms permitted the halt of the economic crisis. They sometimes had undesirable consequences, because along with the foreign finance or companies which entered Cuba, there also entered ideological influences. The market entered and with it social ills such as drugs. With the development of tourism there also came the disadvantage of prostitution (Limia, interview, 12 May 2003 Havana).

These new sources of income and inequalities prompted what Espina describes as a "re-stratification of society" (interview, 9 May 2003, Havana), the most negative aspects of which included the reappearance of poverty (Espina, interview, 9 May 2003, Havana) and the emergence of high income levels that were not derived from work. A tendency towards crime and corruption (Bulté, interview, 23 April 2003, Havana; Thomas, interview 4 October 2002, UK) spawned by the invigorated black market and other illegal activities also generated distortions, including the emergence of a 'new rich' strata. However, one provincial government delegate from Cienfuegos recognised that the black market represented a contradictory space: "the black market has helped people to solve their problems during the Special Period" (interview, Ramírez García, 24 November 1999, Cienfuegos). The director of Finance and Prices in a small sugar-producing municipality put it in these terms:

> The black market can act as an escape valve. Through this type of activity - from the traffic of stolen jewelry and art work to prostitution - people's frustrations can, to a certain extent, be alieviated (open interview, Molina Aeosta, 24 November 1999, Cruces).

Fuelled by growing inflation, in 1993 the black market accounted for close to 60 per cent of all goods in circulation (Burchardt, 2002,p.61, see Burchardt 1995 and González, 1995 for inflation rates for this period). Within this context, Rausberg argues, elements within the socialist system itself further contributed to inequality (interview, 4 May 2003, Havana). He identifies the *libreta*, the ration book which entitles Cuban citizens to basic food stuffs and, more rarely now, items of clothing, as an "element of stagnation" and a "source of inequality." He went on:

> The *libreta* was very good in the first stages of the Revolution, but with the social differences arising in the 1990s this symbol of equality paradoxically generates inequalities. It is an injustice that someone earning U.S. dollars should also have their *libreta*, but no Cuban can renounce it. That would be impossible (Rausberg, interview 4 May 2003, Havana).

Clearly, the reforms generated both 'winners' and 'losers' (Valdés Paz, interview, 30 April 2003, Havana). Of the 'winners', those owning *paladares* (small in-home restaurants) were highlighted for particular mention by respondents. Described by Rausberg as "millionaires" on account of their ability to make a profit *and* pay the cost of an operating license (required for restaurants to receive payments in dollars) which could cost U.S.$400 or more annually (representing four years salary at state wages) plus a monthly fee (Rausberg, interview, 4 May 2003, Havana), this sector's 'winnings' have clearly not been cost-free. As Jackiewicz and Bolster (2003) point out, aside from the licenses, these workers face crippling taxation rates. Among the other reform 'winners' Enriquez (2003) places small farmers who benefited as a group from the re-shaped agricultural policy. However, it was not only those who were legally self-employed who benefited from the reforms, "all those who worked for them or around them were similarly rewarded" (Rausberg, interview, 4 May 2003, Havana).[24]

It is important to note that geographical location also had a bearing on the outcome of the winner-loser equation. Regional variations between "backward" provinces such as Santiago and "progressive" provinces such as Havana have been highlighted in recent studies (see Perera 2002). If anything, regional income disparities, which had always existed, grew during the 1990s (Quintana Mendoza, 1996; Enriquez, 2003). This precipitated an out-migration, particularly from Oriente to Havana, which the state has tried to curb by enforcing residency restrictions in the capital (a person wishing to reside there must have a minimum of 10m² in which to live as well as employment) and investing in the regions (Barredo, interview 29 April 2003, Havana).

The reforms also precipitated what some Cuban analysts have called a "crisis of values" (see *Temas*, 1998) which is dealt with more thoroughly in Chapter 6. Perera, (2002) notes, for example, a deterioration in "core" values such as solidarity, but also in ethics and in professionalism at work, which are, she says, the "essence of socialism" (Perera, 2002,p.33; also interview 18 April 2003, Havana). Limia (interview, 12 May 2003, Havana) confirms this, identifying a "break away from socialist values" which must be "tolerated" in order to "overcome the economic crisis and accumulate for socialism" (again, point reiterated by Bulté and Barredo who claim that socialist values were 'damaged' during this period, but not irrevocably so, interviews 23 April and 29 April 2003, Havana, respectively).

There is general consensus that measures such as the legalisation of the U.S. dollar and the invigoration of tourism and mining created conditions in which the economy could recuperate. However beyond this, the reforms remain a matter of controversy and have been comprehended by Cuban and non-Cuban analysts in various ways. Some argue that the reforms were necessary "concessions" (Barredo, interview, 29 April 2003, Havana) which enabled socialist principles to be "kept on ice," before later being "defrosted" when the economic crisis had passed and the internal situation had improved (interview with Espina, 9 May 2003, Havana).

Others, such as Mesa-Lago (1994) and Gunn (1994) were more sceptical, claiming that the reform of the economy had generated actors, such as self employed workers and those who worked for foreign firms in the export sector, who had the potential, at worst, to liquidate the socialist system or, at best, to erode it. Others pointed out that "none of the measures attacked the causes of the crisis," but instead, "allowed the conditions of crisis to be continually reinforced during these years" (Carranza, interview, 7 May 2003). Commentators such as Espina have put forward an alternative socialist perspective, arguing that it is neither necessary nor desirable to view the reforms as a means of returning to the 1980s, a decade which, she points out, was beset by problems. Rather they should be interpreted within the context of socialist transition, that is, as a step closer towards a socialist future (interview, Espina, 9 May 2003). As for the new social actors that have emerged as a result of the reforms, they have been: "maintained within the [socialist] system and so while they may have generated new influences, they are counter-balanced by the system and contained within it" (Espina, interview, 9 May 2003, Havana). Limia regards the legalisation of part of the informal sector (as the new 'self-employed sector') as a way of legitimising the growth of a phenomena which he perceives is an 'inevitable' structural feature of underdeveloped economies in today's world:

> In all countries of the Third World, globalisation leads towards the informal economy. In our case we legitimised it and, as a result, the informal worker in Cuba lives in conditions which are far superior to those of informal workers in Venezuela or Colombia or any other country in Latin America (Limia, interview 12 May 2003, Havana).

4.2.7. Redefining Spaces

The new spaces for the market which were created in the years 1990-1994, as well as the space that Cuba re-negotiated within the capitalist world, were 'made' or constructed by leaders and policy makers. An analysis of the discourse of stakeholders involved in these changes suggests that they perceived the state to have been the actor which 'created' and 'gave' spaces to different social groups. Limia for example comments: "*we gave* land to the cultivators, *we created* the UBPCs and the spaces for the self-employed and for the artisan market. *We opened* spaces. *We opened* the market" (interview, 12 May 2003, Havana, emphasis added).[25] Calzadilla also talks of the state "opening spaces to religion" (interview, 10 March 2003, Havana) and an important consequence of the crisis was the re-strengthening of religion (see Chapter 5). On this theme Perera (2002) argues:

> One of the worst consequences of the crisis was the apparition of an empty spiritual world, the weakening of universal human values. In this context religion appeared as a refuge to fill this space, this void (Perera et al., 2002, p.25).[26]

Spaces were also re-defined in more tangible ways. Having once been a beach "which Cubans could visit and where they could stay in hotels in national currency," the beach at Varadero was "sacrificed" and transformed into a "tourist space" (Barredo, interview, 29 April 2003, Havana).

A 'border control' manned twenty-four hours a day ensures that only those who can pay the tariff (in U.S. dollars) can enter to enjoy the beaches. The entire peninsula on which Varadero is sited represents a contested social space where the deeply conflicting and contradictory values that comprise state-civil society relations are visible. This space, and the actors who traverse it, provide important insights into the complexities of contemporary domestic politics in Cuba.

In addition, a space was 'made' for new relationships such as the relationship between the state and foreign capital. The re-definition of social spaces during these years reflected a process of re-definition which was occurring in the social relationships which lay beneath them. The socio-economic and political transformations that took place, played a key role in the restructuring of society and the reshaping of an intermediary sphere of association. This, in turn, shaped the way in which civil society and the state interacted (see 4.3., below).

4.3. CIVIL SOCIETY'S RESPONSE

It was not just the state that responded to the economic crisis of the early 1990s. Civil society was also quick to react and demonstrated a high capacity to respond to the economic crisis. The response came in the form of a "spontaneous mobilisation" by actors from within civil society who took the initiative to resolve problems at the community and neighbourhood levels (Marrero, interview 30 January 2003, Havana). The following excerpt from an interview transcript illustrates the nature of this reaction:

> How did we resist the [economic] crisis? I could give you many reasons … but the most serious is that *civil society 're-dynamised' itself.* Once again in these dramatic moments it became dynamic … but this was not civil society in a moment of exhilaration or euphoria.[27] It was a re-concentration of civil society. The re-animation of civil society was about its recognition of its responsibility to take on suffering and sacrifice at a moment when it was necessary for it to re-gain its force and character (Bulté, interview, 23 April 2003, Havana, my emphasis).

In the early 1990s, Cuban civil society underwent a radical re-articulation (see Chapter 5). Affected by increases in social heterogeneity and fragmentation, and by the new social actors and groups which were emerging into an increasingly complex social arena, civil society responded to the economic crisis in multifarious ways; by no means all of which at the initiative of the mass organisations (interview, Marrero, 15 January 2003, Havana). Given Cuba's history of strong social networks and reciprocity, together with the high levels of social capital which had been accumulated since the Revolution (see Rosendahl, 1997), informal 'self-help' channels were already in place. With the economic crisis these channels became life-lines, but their reactivation had consequences which went beyond either the satisfaction of personal needs or the individual search for alternative survival strategies.

4.3.1. New Community Movements and Associations

New organic associations emerged spontaneously within communities during the early 1990s and, quite rapidly, social movements began to coalesce around them, offering the potential for a new (alternative) kind of social network within Cuban civil society (see Mathey *et al*, 2004). With the state unable to provide all of the goods and services required by society (due to the economic crisis), community movements such as the urban agricultural initiative and self-help food production project which was started at Santa Fé,[28] began to develop (interview with Sánchez Naranjo, 15 November 1999, Santa Fé). Santa Fé had been notorious as a base for illegal migration, but this small rural community in the municipality of Playa, on Havana's western fringe, became an example of best practice during the early 1990s (see Rosset and Benjamin, 1994). Throughout the island local groups, often led by charismatic figures, took over the role of solving the immediate problems confronting them (Mathey *et al*, 2004). High on their agenda was the issue of food security. In the Havana municipality of Marianao, for example, a community group was established during the early 1990s that was committed to the cultivation and preservation of food-stuffs (see Figueroa and Lama, 1999). Started in order to satisfy the needs of the family, like the horticultural groups of Santa Fé, the initiative rapidly spread and became linked to local schools. Representatives from this group interviewed in 1999 explained that they had been granted air space on national radio in order to deliver their message as widely as possible, in recognition they felt, of both the state's appreciation of their project as an example to be emulated elsewhere, and its understanding of the need to promote civil society's role in "helping itself" (interview Figueroa and Lama, 22 November 1999, Havana). This group received the state's 'support', in the sense of being granted the use of land and access to technical expertise when necessary, but received no state funds for their work, which they describe as an example of a "horizontal participative movement" (Figueroa, interview, 22 November 1999, Havana). Having survived for one and a half years without any external financial support, with income from the sale of books, plants and herbs sustaining the project, modest assistance was eventually secured from a Dutch NGO (Hivos) which subsidised the publication of books produced in order to explain the food preservation methods to the local community (interview, Figueroa and Lama, 22 November 1999, Havana). The Cuban Council of Churches and the Cuban Organic Support Group also provided financial assistance and gifts of gardening tools. Like many of the initiatives later studied by Mathey *et al* (2004), this project was linked to local CDRs and benefited from the mechanisms which were already established within and between the mass organisations, particularly the 'official calls' to participate which were made by the CDR on its behalf (Figueroa, interview, 22 November 1999, Havana).

Other agencies which promoted self-reliant urban agriculture at the time of the economic crisis included the Asociación Cubana de Agricultura Organica (ACAO) which was established in 1993 and later incorporated into ACTAF[29] as the Grupo de Agricultura Orgánica (GAO).

Despite describing themselves as a "base organisation," the members of the GAO, unlike the community food preservation project workers or the Santa Fé horticulturalists, were technical experts who had been investigating issues surrounding sustainable organic agriculture and environmentally friendly pest control strategies before the Special Period. Hernández Díaz, herself a soil expert, acknowledged that "when the country suddenly found itself in the position of being unable to buy fertilisers and pesticides, all of this prior knowledge and research became vital" (interview, 23 November 1999, Havana). During the 1990s ACTAF was active in supporting a raft of organisations of different kinds, from large UBPCs to urban *organopónicos* and the 80,000 organic *huertas* (allotments), which all came under its wing (Delgado Díaz, interview, 23 November 1999, Havana).[30] As an organisation, it worked closely with the Ministry of Agriculture (where its central office in Havana is based) but did not receive funds from the state. Hernández Díaz describes the relationship between this national NGO and the state in the following terms:

> Our group (ACTAF) is not the state. It is a new association and its finances are poor. Like the mass organisations, it has a national structure, with representatives within each province and in every municipality. Although these are not state institutions the state sees no contradiction between ACTAF and itself. The state *facilitates* our association. It can not give us direct financial support but it helps in other ways; by providing our office here [at the Ministry of Agriculture], and by selling seeds and tools to us at moderate national prices.[31] There are certain themes on which ACTAF works which are of interest to and help the state, and vice versa. The state understands this and, aware of its own deficiencies, regards the relationship it has with ACTAF as beneficial. Our links with the state are horizontal and mutually beneficial (Hernández Díaz, interview 23 November 1999, Havana. Her emphasis).

Prior to the 1990s, the relationship between the state and agricultural producers had been characterised by its vertical orientation (Delgado, interview 23 November 1999). With the pivotal role of self-help groups in the period of intense economic crisis and the state's inability to fulfil its role as provider of essential services, this relationship was rapidly re-negotiated. From the early 1990s, no one involved in this form of production was required by the state to pay taxes (Hernández Díaz, interview 23 November 1999, Havana) and the mutual benefits of close state-civil society ties were evident. The producer, national NGO (ACTAF and its sister organisation ACPA or *Asociación Cubana de Productores Agropecuarias*, The Cuban Association of Livestock Producers) and the state began to engage with each other in a horizontal relationship which was synergistic.

However, unlike the experience of ACTAF members, who stressed the benefits of state involvement in many of their projects, Mathey (2004), Figueroa (interview 22 November 1999) and Sánchez Naranjo (interview 15 November 1999, Santa Fé) all noted a diminution in the vitality of the Santa Fé initiative once state institutions had intervened. All claimed that although the state had "good intentions," state agents were more obstructive than helpful in their dealings with local producers. One of the researchers involved in Mathey's (2004) study of community

initiatives in Havana during the Special Period, described how following the involvement of the state, the charismatic organic community leaders who had initially established the Santa Fé project became frustrated and lost motivation, indicating the state's abilty to "dampen spontaneous initiatives by binding them within a ponderous regulatory framework" (Fitzpatrick, interview 23 February 2003, Havana). Sánchez Naranjo, one of the members of the orginal group of Santa Fé producers, remarked that it was procisely at the point when their small-scale initiative had began to develop and had become more 'successful', that the state had become involved (interview 15 November 1999, Santa Fé). He explained that due to regulations surrounding the use of land, it had been necessary for the municipal planning board to allocate the land they required for cultivation, in this way ensuring that only land which was not required for any other purpose was used by the group. Permission to work the land was granted with the proviso that should it be needed in the future, it would have to be relinquished and alternative cultivation sites found (interview, Sánchez Naranjo, 15 November 1999, Santa Fé). At this point, the municipal government's representative for agriculture was attached to the group to "coordinate" their activities and "provide help with technical assistance" (Sánchez Naranjo, 15 November 1999). It was as a result of this individual's involvement that the potential for the group to become a social organisation was seen and a formal organisational structure was established. Despite the understanding that their role was to "help and not direct," the involvement of agencies such as the *Dirreción de Agricultura Urbana*, headed by Ejilio País and developed to promote and facilitate small scale organic production, generated tensions and contradictions (Sánchez Naranjo, 15 November 1999). In their study of 37 community initiatives in Havana Mathey *et al* (2004,p.10) note that in 13 cases state intervention was identified as either the "most important" or "second most important" factor holding back initiatives, or even causing them to fail. These researchers report: "where the state intends to play an active part in the execution of a project, it runs the risk of killing the enthusiasm and imagination of the initiatives neighbourhood members" (Mathey *et al*, 2004,p.10). It would appear that their findings corroborate the interpretation offered by Sánchez Naranjo in our interview.

However, there is also evidence that the mobilisation of civil society in complementary partnerships with the state was an important factor in the development of some community projects during the early 1990s (Dilla, 1999b). It is widely held that co-operation between both social actors should bring about a so called 'win-win' result, in other words, a co-operation between community and the state should facilitate better results than the effort of just one of the two social actors alone. This result was reported by Suárez concerning the relationship between the Cuban NGO *Centro Memorial Martin Luther King* and the Cuban state (interview, Suárez, 15 April 2003, Havana). Mathey *et al* (2004) note that in 21 (out of 37) cases, the relationship between an institution of the state and the neighbourhood initiative showed a "notable impact"

on the quality and success of the project. In 5 cases, the state's support had been the primary factor accounting for a "flourishing civil society initiative" (Mathey *et al*, 2004,p.10).

4.3.2. Intermediary Organisations

As well as the 'bottom up' initiatives which emerged from within the community, other examples of civil society agency in the early 1990s can be identified which originated from, or were stimulated by, organisations such as the *Talleres de Transformación Integral del barrio* (Integral Neighbourhood Transformation Workshops). These intermediary organisations had been established in 1988 by the *Grupo Para el Desarrollo Integral de la Capital* (GDIC). Many of those interviewed emphasised the importance of the assistance granted by a Neighbourhood Office of the *Taller* for the smooth functioning of community initiatives in Havana (Pastor, conversation 06 January 2003, Havana; interview with Perera 16 April 2003, interview with Castañeda 19 March 2003, Havana). Support took different forms, but was mainly of an organisational nature, facilitating the promotion and coordination of local projects and providing technical assistance when required. In many cases, the *Talleres* acted as mediators between community groups and the local government (*Poder Popular*). Offices of the *Talleres*, staffed by interdisciplinary groups of experts, including sociologists, psychologists and architects, were financed by local government and supported logistically by the GDIC. They promoted educational and cultural initiatives within communities and also assisted with participatory citizen-action projects to improve conditions in the most deteriorated and under serviced zones of the city, where difficult living conditions were aggravated by environmental, physical and social factors. For example, in the problematic neighbourhood of Cayo Hueso in central Havana one of the first *Talleres* was established to co-ordinate urban renewal with neighbourhood participation (Pastor, conversation 06 January 2003, Havana). This area, which occupies less than a km² has a population of 28,000. It was here that in 1994 the *Taller* together with local residents and a construction microbrigade began to upgrade the *ciudadela* (slum housing plots).[32] The *Talleres* used diagnostic, 'strategic planning' techniques which were aimed at mobilizing citizens to identify and resolve the most urgent problems of a neighbourhood (see Dávalos Domínguez *et al*, 1999).[33]

4.3.3. Occupying New Spaces

Overall, civil society responded to the economic crisis by moving into those spaces that the state had been forced to abandon or over which it had lost control, as more pressing tasks were prioritised. Although it appears from talking to those involved in these processes that such spaces 'fell open' these openings were in many senses created by the state, albeit as much negatively (i.e., as a consequence of other actions) as positively (through design). Associational initiatives

at the local level flourished in a context in which spaces began to open and function but were not yet under state regulation (Marrero, interview 22 January 2003, Havana). It was at this time that civil society began to assume new roles and with them different associational modalities appeared. Not all social spaces were used for purposes that complimented the state's goals. Contradictory spaces also arose where the state was unable to suppress entirely the growing diversity and division within society (see Chapter 6). Over the course of the 1990s such spaces became more closely regulated (see Jackiewicz and Bolster, 2003), a tend which has continued today.

However, many Cuban stakeholders indicated that during the 1990-1994 period mechanisms linking the state to civil society organisations were flexible and relations between them were characterised by their "fluidity" (interview Marrero, 22 January 2003, Havana). Access to Ministries, for example, was "direct" (interview García Brigos, 4 March 2003, Havana) and there were no clear laws "blocking" civil society activities and initiatives (Marrero, interview 22 January 2003, Havana). In this climate, local problems were resolved quickly and informally. This informality, together with the flexibility and sense of spontaneity surrounding the development and evolution of civil society initiatives, was likened by many respondents to the situation during the 1960s when civil society had been particularly dynamic (interviews with Figueroa, 22 November 1999, Havana; Hernández Díaz, and Delgado Díaz, ACTAF, 23 November 1999, Havana; Suárez, 15 April 2003). State-civil society co-operation was important during the early 1990s (Suárez, interview, 15 April 2003, Havana) and although the interface between state and civil society was more complex than it had been in the 1970s and 1980s (as new social groups emerged and took their place along it) it remained blurred. However, a clearer delineation between 'civil society' and state was beginning to take shape and come into focus (see Chapter 5).

There is a common perception that associational life flourished in Cuba during this difficult period (interviews with Suárez, 15 April; Marrero, 15 January; Bulté 23 April, all Havana 2003). As mentioned above, although there is evidence that civil society regained its force and character, it was not necessarily in "positive" ways (Bulté, interview 23 April 2003; Limia interview, 9 May 2003, Havana). Manifestations of new activities in the black market and the informal sector increased dramatically (interviews: Vital Martínez and Molina Aeosta 24 November 1999, Cruces; Raírez García 25 November 1999, Cienfuegos; Barredo 29 April 2003, Havana; Limia, 12 May 2003, Havana; Espina 9 May 2003, Havana; Perera, 16 April 2003, Havana). One respondent maintained that, in her view, crime was being used at this time to both "undermine the system," and "express discontent" and as such was "an informal way of stimulating change" (Thomas, interview 4 October 2002, UK; a perception which is supported by data from Cuban respondents, see below).

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The diversification of associational life was a significant change for Cuban civil society which had up until this point been characterised by its homogeneity. By 1994 civil society no longer represented a single interest but rather many fragmented and contradictory interests which reflected the diversity of the new social structure. As we shall see in Chapter 6, the state was concerned to (re)incorporate these parallel groups and organisations within the official structure.

4.3.4. Legality / Illegality

Although analysts such as Jackiewicz and Bolster (2003), Hasanbegovic (2001) and Evenson (1994) note that the line between the legal and the illegal is well defined in Cuba, in the climate of uncertainty that characterised the early 1990s, the boundary between both types of activity appears to have been less clear or, at least, open to multiple interpretations. Many respondents claimed that "virtually everyone" was engaged in some form of illegal activity, whether consciously or unconsciously (for example, interviews with Neira Milian, 7 February 2003; De Luis, 13th 16th and 24th January 2003, Havana). The idea of what was, and what was not, legal was imprecise due to the existence of "grey areas" within the law (participant observation, 22 January 2003, Havana), particularly at the point of enforcement where there were inconsistencies (Espina, interview, 9 May 2003, Havana). One individual interviewed in 1999 had been sentenced to three years in prison (of which he had served three months) for being "too successful" after having left his job as an electrical engineer in order to take advantage of a then legally sanctioned opportunity to earn income outside of the state sector (a point also noted by Jatar-Haussman, 1999). This respondent's entrepreneurial drive was not dampened by his experiences and despite having had all of his property confiscated, he began his business again (Eduardo,* interview 16 November 1999, Havana). Such discrepancies embodied the contradictions inherent in the leadership's attempts to advance revolutionary ideals while trying to stave off economic collapse through the use of limited market mechanisms. The boundaries between legality and illegality had become blurred by inconsistencies and ambiguities which made activities that were in one instance acceptable, in another subject to prohibition. In a similar way, the boundaries between the state and civil society were equally uncertain, with a sense of the two merging increasingly at the borders. We saw in Chapter 1 that Dilla (1999a) illustrates the difficulty of determining where civil society 'begins' and where the state 'ends' by using the analogy of not knowing whether 'the doorway is part of the street or part of the house'. This analogy could equally well be applied to the issue of legality / illegality.

Black-market activity flourished during the early 1990s, despite the state's moves to legalise self-employment and its attempts to regulate informal sector spaces. Reflecting on these difficulties one Municipal Assembly President commented:

> Our main problem was a lack of discipline. People, for example, began to sell products from home as opposed to taking them to the correct market. We controlled this to a certain extent though the use of licenses. People needed licenses to sell at the market and they also needed their health and safety license. This is how we controlled the self-employed sector (Vital Martínez, 24 November 1999, Cruces, Cienfuegos Province).

The state also attempted to regulate the self-employed sector by curbing its profits.[34] Exorbitant tax rates were introduced to guard against 'illicit enrichment' and prevent economic distortions among the population in a supposedly egalitarian society. Such measures, together with the tight regulations mentioned above, forced important components of the legally self-employed sector such as the *paladar* operators underground, as they were unable to support the extreme financial burdens imposed by the state (see Jackiewicz and Bolster, 2003). Self employment became more strictly regulated in 1994. Permits for private taxi drivers and flower vendors, for example, were cancelled and *paladares* were banned from seating more than eleven customers at a time. Decree law 149 aimed at 'illicit enrichment' gave the state the right to question the legality of any citizen's material possessions (Cruz and Seleny, 2002).

At the gateway between the illicit and the legal economy, institutions such as the *paladar* began to operate with "one foot in each camp" (Rey, interview, 03 April 2003, Havana). However it was not only *paladares* that represented the gateway into the illegal informal sector. The gateway could equally well be represented by foreign business ventures where staff had access to tax-free goods (in *zona francas* or duty-free zones) which could then be sold on to others for a profit. In these circumstances, the legal and illegal, formal and informal, state and civil society blended, overlapped and merged, on occasions creating antagonisms. Patrolling the gateway between legal and illegal activities, but equally capable of 'turning a blind eye' when necessary, were the police and the CDRs (Milian interview 07 February 2003, Havana).[35] Though corruption increased during these years, it was not regarded by those interviewed as a serious or 'endemic' problem. The police acted on information passed to them from the community (often, but not always, via the CDR) and took measures against those who broke the law, for example, in cases where rooms were rented out to foreigners without the correct licenses and permissions. One respondent who had been in police custody for just such an offense describes how the police treated him:

> I spoke very strongly to the police. I told them that I had been forced to rent out a room not because of greed but because I needed to survive. I also told them straight that I was critical of the regime, of why I was in this position. It got to a point that I knew that they wanted to hit me - I could see it in their eyes. I had pushed them to the limit, but they would not, could not, touch me. They did not like what I said but they treated me with respect (Neira Milian, interview, 7 February 2003).

Although such an isolated example can not be used as the basis of generalisations, it does confirm the findings of Hasanbegovic's (2001) comparative analysis of the difference between the Cuban police force and its counterpart in Argentina regarding the use of violence by agents of the state,

a point also stressed by Macaulay in her study of the police in Brazil (guest lecture, Autumn 2001, UEA).

4.3.5. Inclusion / Exclusion

The legalisation of certain forms of self-employment in the 1990s produced new spaces of inclusion and exclusion over which there were subsequent negotiations between the struggling state sector and an increasingly dynamic civil society (see Jackiewicz and Bolston, 2003). The state's regulatory experiment was contested by new forms of resistance which sought to reproduce an altogether different ideal of entrepreneurial space to that envisaged by the state. Within these spaces, state and civil society contested the power to reproduce space, that is, the state attempted to regulate space and civil society responded with efforts to "manipulate and work within, through, and around these spaces" (Jackiewicz and Bolston, 2003,p.377). Although the state was the regulator of new social spaces it acted in confusing and at times contradictory ways. Showing that it is the social relations behind these spaces which are important, Burchardt (2002) argues that with the opening of new entrepreneurial spaces within Cuban society there was the potential for a "technocratic-entrepreneurial group," together with "influential private entrepreneurs in the informal sector," to merge into a "new power elite" which could become the "avant-garde for a capitalist transformation," thus challenging the hegemony of the socialist leadership (Burchardt, 2002,p.68), a point also noted by Dilla (1999c).

It is arguably for this reason that the Cuban state staunchly defended its political omnipotence against the formation of new interest groups during the years 1990-1994. Such groups were given "no opportunity to achieve political influence" (interview, Espina, 09 May 2003, Havana). As Burchardt (2003,p.69) points out, the character of the Cuban regime made functionally defined alliances or "subsystems within the system," as he put it, "dangerous" and "risky" for those in power. However it was precisely those actors who benefited from the expansion of the emerging sector and existence of a dual economy who, potentially, had the greatest possibility for self assertion and who could possibly in the future harness this potential in organised ways.

Espina is another who argues that the new social actors who emerged in the early 1990s were unable to get their views onto the official agenda (interview, 9 May 2003, Havana). Those spaces for discussion which did exist, such as the mass organisations and *poder popular*, were fora for different types of discussion and were not geared to the needs of new social groups such as the *cuenta propistas*. Moreover, within each of these spaces, people "knew the sorts of themes they should discuss, what was appropriate for the environment and what was not" (Espina, interview, 09 May 2003, Havana). According to Espina, none of these spaces were suitable for discussions about those issues which concerned the self-employed. She argues that as a result,

all of the negotiations about the self employed "were informal and took place between themselves" (interview 09 May 2003, Havana). These important negotiations on economic matters that were critical for Cuba's future were therefore not within the public ambit and as a result remained largely invisible. The spaces that were available in which people could articulate their demands or influence the decision-making process were limited. Espina raised the question: "How, then, could demands be articulated that were known to be viewed [by the leadership] as unacceptable?" (interview 09 May 2003, Havana). This difficulty was compounded by the fact that new social actors had no specific political representation but were instead invited to join the existing (general) mass organisations (see below). Similarly, those social groups that had been discriminated against by the reforms had neither a specific forum in which to express their grievances nor interest groups to represent them.

Espina's analysis of the nature of those discussions which were "typical" of *poder popular* meetings suggests the lack of a Habermasian critical public space. In particular, she claims that critical public discussion of public affairs does not take place within these spaces. The following taken from the interview transcript illustrates this:

> The agenda of *poder popular* is very local, people talk about the price and quality of bread, the holes in the road that need to be repaired - that sort of thing. More importantly, the political culture of *poder popular* meetings is such that people know the sorts of issues they 'should' discuss. They know what is appropriate for that environment and what is not. There are other spaces - the FMC and CTC meetings - where this process is repeated, but with a different 'accepted' agenda (Espina, interview 09 May 2003, Havana).[36]

Espina's analysis suggests that the traditional division of interests, represented by the mass organisations (see Chapter 3), was still being used in the 1990s in order to discuss complex social problems. Dilla (1999) among others argues that it became evident at this time that the mass organisations needed to assume a more 'civil character' and that trade unions needed greater autonomy. Unable to keep pace with the growing complexity of Cuban civil society, the mass organisations required adaptation. In the FMC this was to be achieved through the diversification of the range of programmes offered (interview Castañeda, 19 March 2003, Havana) but overall it was recognised that participation could not be the same in the early 1990s as it was in the 1960s, 1970s or 1980s (Martínez, interview 21 April 2003, Havana). As we shall see in Chapter 6, existing mechanisms for participation were not in tune with the new climate of the 1990s and modifications were needed in recognition of this.

4.3.6. New Social Actors: Caricatures of the 1990s

It was also during this early phase of the Special Period that those social subjects who have since become caricatures of the 1990s (and embody the decade's contradictions) emerged onto the social scene. The *jineteras* and *jineteros* 'hustlers' (see Rundel, 2001) on the streets of Havana are the most obvious example, but the *cuentapropistas* and among them the *paladar* workers (see

Jackiewicz and Bolster, 2003), were also important new characters within the setting,[37] as were the foreign tourists who were their customers. The existence of these actors should not be interpreted as a static expression of a temporal condition of crisis but rather as a dynamic representation of the formation of new social groups. Although many of those interviewed felt that such 'characters' were tied directly to the Special Period, it may be difficult to eliminate some of them, particularly the self-employed sector, should the economic situation stabilise further in the future. The existence and growth in the number of *jineteros*, for example, represents the emergence of a new social actor who has simultaneously helped and threatened the ideology of the state. Such actors may therefore play a contradictory yet vital role in the maintenance of the system.

A New Social Discourse?

At the level of discourse, a new 'language' also emerged during the early 1990s. Defined by the verbs *resolver* (to resolve), *conseguir* (to find or obtain), *inventar* (to invent or 'find a way') it spoke of the need for individuals to find their own solutions to their problems (see Arango, 2002; also interview with Valdés Paz, 30 April 2003, Havana). Perera noted that during the most critical years of the economic crisis, people were unable to deal with anything more than daily units of time: "people dealt with the problems that they faced 'today'. Just a day at a time. They were unable to face the future, even if that only meant looking as far ahead as the next day" (Perera, interview 16 April 2003, Havana). Another respondent mentioned that with hindsight he was struck by the "passivity" of the 1980s, a characteristic which, for him, had been reflected in popular discourse. He noted that then people had used expressions such as "I was sent" or "I was taken" (as opposed to the active: "I went") which, he concluded, indicated that "Cubans were used to being directed as opposed to having the autonomy to make decisions for themselves" (Alejandro,* interview 21 January 2003). It appeared to this respondent that Cubans had "abandoned the will to control their own destiny," and instead "put their trust in the state to organise their lives for them." However, he perceived this trend to have been dramatically reversed during the 1990s when the struggling state sector had relied on a dynamic civil society to help pull Cuba out of economic crisis. In the new context of the 1990s, Cubans were expressing their desires to be "owners of their own destiny," as Marrero put it (interview, 22 January 2003).

4.4. NEW ROLES AND A NEW RELATIONSHIP?

There is broad agreement amongst those interviewed that despite the introduction of far reaching changes and reforms, the state remained the "primary promoter and agent of change" in Cuba

during the 1990-1994 period (interviews, Marquetti, 21 February 2003; Espina, 9 May 2003; García Brigos, 4 March 2003, all Havana). During the 1990s the state continued to play a significant role in economic and social planning, but the crisis led to some retrenchment and also the emergence of contradictions associated with its role as an economic actor under the new conditions. In particular, the contradiction of promoting market-based solutions and tolerating limited entrepreneurial endeavours in order to save the weakened socialist system, meant that the state needed to control the distortions that its own political and economic transformations had helped to create. Hence, the state must be understood as a key protagonist during the early years of the Special Period, continuing to play a major developmental role in actively promoting Cuba's internal and external development, while simultaneously re-defining its relationship with the global economy and Cuban civil society. It also deepened its function as a regulator of newly emerging groups such as the self-employed (see Jackiewicz and Bolster, 2003), in so doing exhibiting its ability to mobilise two sets of rules: one for foreign investors who were offered stable access to profitable investment opportunities; and another for the indigenous private sector which was suffocated by tight regulation (see Cruz and Seleny, 2002). During one participant observation session (22 January 2003, Havana) a participant offered the opinion that "by regulating a sector too tightly, it becomes inoperable." However, it was through the use of such techniques that the Cuban state was able to stifle opportunities for contradictory (or illegal) activities without appearing to be heavy handed. Overall, the Cuban state showed both flexibility and ingenuity. In a style reminiscent of the 1960s, one respondent reported that due to the speed of changes, Ministries such as Finance and Prices took on legislative functions as there was no time to get legislative approval for measures which needed to be introduced rapidly (Puelua, interview 29 April 2003, Havana).

A key feature of the Cuban Revolution has been that a large part of an individual's entitlement to a range of goods and services is based not on the money value of their wage but on a notion of active economic citizenship (Basail, interview, 17 January 2003, Havana). This sustained the bargain between the state, as provider and guarantor of economic and other entitlements, and the individual, as active participant in the Revolutionary process, not only in terms of work but also in terms of political and community activism and voluntary labour in agriculture and construction. The new social contract of the early 1990s implied a new role for the state which was no longer capable of sustaining the 'old' contract, as well as a new role for civil society which took on certain aspects of social reproduction from which it had previously been excluded.

The state continued its dual roles of simultaneously controlling and transforming society. With the increase in the range of social actors and organisations in Cuban society, the state's role in maintaining social control became more complex and the political struggle to contain

challenges or resistance to state control became more pressing. The state's success in opening the economy both internally and externally had the effect of creating new interests and organisations in an increasingly complex economy and (therefore) civil society. These organisations and interests, together with external pressures, had the potential to challenge the power, authority and autonomy of the state and, as a result, to promote further political and economic change.

When stakeholders were asked to reflect on their perceptions of the role of the state during the early 1990s, they emphasised the state's "supporting" role. Those interviewed noted changes in their own perception's of the state's role, with many stating that they knew that although the state had the will to promote development, it had not always had the material resources with which to do so. This view was particularly common among local government leaders who explained that they and their constituents knew the parameters of what was possible and as a result attempted "not to ask for the impossible" (interview Ramírez García, 25 November 1999, Cienfuegos). The state 'facilitated' projects in the sense that it either tolerated the development of initiatives or provided access to office space, land or know-how and specialist expertise, but the material resources it could offer were limited. Funding, for example, was practically non-existent. Though the state encouraged self-initiatives, there was also the perception among those interviewed that this was a 'last resort', in recognition of the potential cost in terms of a possible loss of control by the state.

According to Espina, with the "broadening and diversification" of the range of actors in Cuban society resulting from the reforms, "the state's essential role changed" (interview, 9 May 2003, Havana). Rafael Hernández reiterated a view put forward by all those who touched upon this subject, arguing that the opening of a space for certain forms of private initiative and the collaboration with foreign capital did not imply the implementation of reforms of a neo-liberal kind designed to "rub out" the role of the state in the economy (interview, 11 March 2003, Havana). As Basail (1999) points out, the role of the state continued to be essential in guaranteeing social justice. There is evidence to suggest however, that the economic reforms did change the dynamic of the relationship between the state and the Party. It is, after all, those technocratic elements of the state, often (although by no means always) furthest removed from the Party structure within each Ministry, that are interacting with new social forces in the economic sphere (observations, Ministry of Finance and Prices, 1996 and 1999).

With the opening of spaces for forms of private national initiative there was a modification of the role of the state in the economy with a greater role for the market and strategic planning. Although there was a greater role for the private sector the state retained its power in and influence over the economy, though both were weaker than they had been before. Overall, the changes in the role of the Cuban state during this period indicate that the state has not been

static. Rather it represents a transitional form which may undergo various phases of metamorphosis as other state forms emerge.

The state perceived civil society's role as remaining that of support for state policy. Somewhat paradoxically, the state envisaged an essentially passive role for civil society as desirable - one encapuslated in the slogans calling on the population to "resist" and "have faith" in their leaders (see call to the IV Party Congress 1991) - while recognising that in the new context civil society would have to do far more for itself. At a nominal level, the state required civil society to be involved in the decisions regarding how best to confront the economic crisis. Much emphasis was placed on the "incorporation" of civil society in "making the diagnosis" in terms of planning the way ahead for Cuba. During 1991 this process of consultation and discussion was particularly visible. Through the workers' parliaments and the discussion of the documents circulated by the Party before the call to the IV Congress "a diagnosis was achieved which was above all legitimate, because it was from the base at the level of the territorial community and workers' groups" (Limia, speaking at conference 8 May 2003, Havana). This, in turn, guaranteed "that the policies implemented were not simply 'well done' from a technical point of view, but had the support of the population" (Limia, speaking at conference, 8 May 2003, Havana). Limia described this process as a "new role" for civil society (interview 12 May 2003, Havana).

The "country's force" (the capacity of the state), its "inheritance," (the "social capital" it had accumulated since 1959, as Fidel put it in a speech to delegates on 8th May 2003, Havana), and the ever-present external threat (manifested in the tightening of U.S. legislation) were stressed by respondents as factors which prevented Cuba's "fall" into a deeper crisis, essentially a crisis of social domination (O'Donnell, 1998). Although those interviewed emphasised the perception that the economic and social crises had not been converted into a "political crisis" or "crisis of the state in society" (interviews with Carranza, 7 May 2003, Havana; García Brigos, 4 March 2003, Havana) there is evidence to suggest that the economic crisis of 1990-1994 did lead to a decrease in the state's overall level of social control. Migdal (1988) argues that crises can reduce the overall level of social control in societies by taking rewards and sanctions out of the hands of social organisations or by making the strategies of survival they offer irrelevant to the new exigencies people face. In Cuba, the state attempted to retain control over "rewards" (Migdal, 1988), for example, by limiting the power of foreign companies to establish parallel reward mechanisms. As such, new join venture enterprises were unable to hire staff directly and were required to pay salaries straight to the state as opposed to individuals. However, during this investigation evidence was uncovered that suggests this policy has been unsuccessful. Workers for foreign enterprises who were interviewed stated that they were routinely paid incentives directly by the foreign firm where they were employed (interviews and participant observations,

Havana, 2003). Such practices effectively circumvent the state's policy, which is intended both to safeguard equality and guarantee a hardworking and loyal workforce for foreign firms. In the tourist sector, as Rausberg points out, the economic opening has meant that employees can keep their tips in U.S. dollars and then also receive their state wage on top of this "informal wage" (Rausberg, interview, 4 May 2003, Havana). However, Limia and others have pointed out that workers in this sector have voluntarily donated a proportion of their tips to social projects, particularly to health-care, yet it is still clearly an area in which inequalities may precipitate social cleavage.

Thus, although it attempted to spread the costs of the economic crisis, the state was incapable of preventing the growth of inequalities during this period. Students at the University of Havana suggested that the state's traditional emphasis on its role as the provider of social rights has been so severely damaged by the crisis that a new discourse to replace what they perceive to be "the now outdated social provision theme" is necessary (participant observation, 22 January 2003, Havana).

4.4.1. Redefining the Relationship between State and Civil Society

The new roles of the state and civil society affected the nature of their relationship. The state's inability to complete the tasks which had previously defined its position in relation to civil society and, inversely, civil society's move to take on such tasks was accepted by both as a necessary state of affairs, and one that in the short term would have to be tolerated. Increasingly, accommodations between the state and other organisations in society were made for pragmatic as opposed to ideological reasons. The relationship between the state and the Party as well as the relationship between the state and the economy and civil society underwent adjustments. With the introduction of new levels of government such as the popular councils new patterns of interaction were developed between state and civil society. Moreover, new influences and new social actors had an impact on the dynamics of the state-civil society relationship. The basis of the old relationship between state and civil society was questioned by the state's inability to fulfil its part of the 'bargain' (the social contract established during the 1960s) and the conditions for the negotiation of a new relationship (and contract) emerged. The state attempted to maintain its traditional relationship, while recognising that in certain sectors it needed civil society in different ways to before. No longer was it possible to regard civil society merely as a site for mobilisation. Contextual factors such as the existence of increasing inequalities among a previously homogenous social subject and structural changes at all levels of the economy created tensions which reverberated in the state-civil society relationship. In the new context of the 1990s, the political leadership had to face new dilemmas and challenges. Bulté observed what

he terms a "trembling of consensus" at this moment. In the following excerpt from the interview transcript he develops this point:

> There were lower levels of consensus in the 1990s to those in the 1980s. There was what I call a 'trembling of consensus' at this time. We had the crisis of the *balseros*. Some think that this represented a process of crisis in Cuba and it *was* a trembling of consensus, but there again there was no food. There was a crisis of hunger. The *balseros* were a result of that, it is natural. If consensus fell to 70 per cent from 90 per cent I am not surprised - who would be. In 1994 things started to touch the floor, we hit rock bottom, but after that the economy began to rise. When this happened we all thought Fidel was a magician - we said to ourselves 'how did he manage to get us out of this!' We gave every Saint a peso! Consensus started to rise again. Some people lost faith during 1993-4 but afterwards consensus began to rise.[38]

Despite the weakening of consensus suffered by the state, Valdés Paz argues that the lowest point of the economic crisis in 1993, when the state took its most dramatic measures, was a point which ultimately "led to a new consensus" (Valdés Paz, interview 30 April 2003, Havana), a point which is explored more fully in Chapter 6.

During the 1990s there was a trend towards greater toleration of the previously unacceptable. This trend went hand in hand with the increasing diversity seen within society (Espina, interview, 2003). Spaces were opened for groups that had previously been excluded. This increase in tolerance came from the state as well as civil society. Rausberg (interview, 4 May 2003, Havana) provides the example of the police:

> The police were sent on training courses. Before the police did not understand some of the groups that existed within society, for example the transsexuals and homosexuals. The police did not know how to react to them. Sending the police on courses implied a policy decision. In turn, this implied a change of strategy at the level of the state. I think this is particularly significant (Rausberg, interview, Havana, 2003).

Another less positive change, from the perspective of the state, was a perceived weakening in the rapport between leadership and civil society. Basing her views on the evidence she and her colleagues uncovered during research carried out in 2002-3 in the capital, Perera argued that the most important transformation with regards this issue was:

> .. the heterogeneous way in which leaders were regarded. The traditional image of a self-sacrificing leadership fixed to revolutionary principles began to change during this era (interview, Havana, 2003).

Examples of "appropriate" leadership behaviour (which would be regarded by the population positively) were described by another respondent in the following terms:

> In a hurricane the local leaders must be seen to be repairing the houses of others before those of their own families. These things impress people. For example, seeing Carlos Lage going to work on his bike each day also impresses people - or seeing the Minister of Culture in a Lada rather than in a newly imported car. When you have a sole Party these issues are important (Rausberg, interview, 04 May 2003, Havana).

A loss of faith in the credentials of the leadership would fundamentally undermine the basis of state-civil society relations. In Chapter 6, we shall see how the state's responded by re-articulating its image and reconsolidating its hegemonic position.

CONCLUSION

The years 1990-1994 did not represent a period of transition in Cuba, as many external analysts initially thought. Rather they were a time of reorientation when the state attempted to mediate an economic crisis and seek out solutions to it, while preserving revolutionary ideals and socialist principles. Both opportunity and danger characterised the period. New forms of state-civil society relations emerged, as actors from both spheres navigated pathways through the economic crisis and vied for the reproduction of, at times, contradictory spaces. This should not be interpreted as evidence that relations were antagonistic. As Jackiewicz and Bolster (2003) argue, in principle, "it is quite possible for civil society and the state to merge synergetically and provide new legitimacy for the system" (Jackiewicz and Bolster, 2003 p.70). As in previous decades, state and civil society remained interlocked, each relying on, and yet now also contesting, the other. By 1994, in an attempt to control the process of fragmentation which it had set in train, the state began to move to regain control over some of those social spaces which had emerged and which civil society rapidly occupied. In the next chapter, the role and characteristics of civil society as both an idea and a process during the Special Period are analysed in more detail.

NOTES

[1] The title of the chapter is inspired by a comment made by Maricela Perera during an interview on 16 April 2003, Havana. She pointed out that the Chinese pictogram for 'crisis' depicts both 'opportunity' and 'danger'. See her discussion of 'crisis' in her (2002) study.

[2] I am referring here to the street protests of 5th August 1994 when fighting broke out between angry crowds in the streets around Havana's Malecón (the street that borders the sea). Construction workers from a nearby *contingente* went to meet the anti-Castro demonstrators and violence ensured. One eye witness whom I interviewed remarked that Fidel, on hearing of the protests had first gone to the University, imagining it to be the location of unrest (reflecting his own experiences in the 1950s). When he finally arrived at the scene, those who had moments earlier been chanting 'Down with Fidel!' changed their cries to revolutionary slogans (interview, Marrero, 5 February 2003, Havana). See also, Landau (2002).

[3] For two very different 'views' of Cuban transport during the Special Period in Havana and Cienfuegos see Plates 6 and 7, Appendix A.

[4] For example: during interviews at the Ministry of Finance and Prices in 1996 and 1999; by members of the Cuban Trade Mission to Britain in 1996 hosted by what was then *CARITAG* (later TradePartners and now UK Trade & Investment) and where Carlos Martínez Salsamendi, President of the Cuban Chamber of Commerce spoke to delegates; during interviews with technocrats at the Cuban Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2003; at seminars held by the Cuban economist Pedro Monreal, ILAS, 24 January 2001, London, and in Havana; during interviews with National Assembly delegates, Havana, 2003.

[5] For example: by Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, Ricardo Alarcon, Carlos Lage, Filipe Roca, Able Prieto and many other members of the Cuban state who have spoken at events I have attended in Havana and London.

[6] The act was proposed by Robert Torricelli, a New Jersey Democrat and chairman of the Foreign Affairs subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere. Between 1989 and 1992 Congressman Torricelli received $120,650 from the Cuban American community, the largest amount at that time for a congressional campaign. On the same day that candidate Bill Clinton declared his support for the CDA, he received $275,000 in campaign contributions from the Cuban American community. President Bush, pressurised by his opponent's support for the proposed CDA, changed his position and signed the law on 23 October 1992 in Miami, a few weeks before the November 1992 Presidential elections. He received $550,000 from Cuban American community. The law was implemented by Clinton in 1993 and became the new framework that outlined US policy for Cuba (Diaz, 2002, pp.117-120).

[7] For analyses of the U.S's role see Díaz-Briquets (2000); Latell (2000); Betancourt (2000), Radu (2000).

[8] *The United States Congress*, The Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, Supra Note 65, Section 1706.

[9] Cuba re-exported the Soviet oil that was 'sold' to Cuba in exchanged for sugar (Fidel Castro, speaking at conference, 7 May 2003, Havana).

[10] It is noteworthy that as early as 1982 the Cuban government had begun to invest in biotechnology as well as other 'high-tech' areas such as pharmaceuticals and computerised medical equipment and software (Blanco, 2003).

[11] Joint ventures were first allowed in 1982 but became easier to arrange by 1992 (Schwartzman, 2001).

[12] In January 1996 Budgetary managers from the Cuban ministries of Finance and Prices and Economy and Planning came to the UK for training provided by the Cuban Financial Reform Group (de Montfort University). There followed a programme of technical assistance in Cuba with UK companies such as Ernst & Young providing training on issues of taxation. At this time, Cuba also received technical assistance from Colombia among other countries (interviews with Cuban budgetary managers, January 1996 UK and March 1996 Havana).

[13] They played their largest role in sugarcane, but were also important in citrus, rice and livestock production (Enriquez, 1997).

[14] On this point see also, Colectivo de Autores, (1996).

[15] Other initiatives included financial and fiscal reforms. The banking sector was restructured and the a new graduated income tax was introduced for the first time since the 1960s. During March 1996 I joined members of the Cuban Financial Reform Group (de Montfort University) who were visiting Cuba in their capacity as directors of a programme designed to provide know-how to Cuban budgetary managers at the Ministries of Finance and Prices and Economy and Planning. Experts from UK firms such as Ernst and Young gave advice on matters related to taxation.

[16] Enriquez (2003) notes a pattern of "repeasantization" - or the movement of people not previously engaged in agricultural labour into small-scale farming - reversing the general historical trend during the 1990s.

[17] See Plate 8, (Appendix A) for an example of the sale of agricultural surplus on a Havana street in 1999.

[18] Previously, only the municipal assemblies were directly elected, with the make-up of the provisional assemblies determined by a vote of municipal delegates and, in turn, the National Assembly composition established by provincial representatives (Saney, 2004). See also August, 1999 and Roman, 1999.

[19] This policy had been initiated in the late 1980s and although it was deepened during the early 1990s it predated the reforms which have been discussed in sections 4.2.1. to 4.2.4.

[20] Speaking at trade event in London in 1996, Carlos Salsamendi, the president of the Cuban Chamber of Commerce, spoke of the insertion of Cuba into the international market and the need for Cuba to significantly alter her trade relations.

[21] In 2003 US$1 = 26 Cuban pesos.

[22] A university lecturer typically earns 260-280 pesos per month.

[23] Here again the medical profession finds itself less able than other sectors to take advantage of overseas opportunities, with permission for travel rarely being granted.

[24] For example, those working for foreign firms who were paid an additional wage in dollars could then afford to employ cleaners or someone who took in ironing and in turn pay them in dollars (participant observation, Havana, 2003). Kapcia (2000,p.218) notes that by 1995 1 million people were dependent on this sector which itself comprised 170,000 registered *cuentapropistas*.

[25] It is interesting to note that some stakeholders interviewed used the construction *they gave / they created / they made* as opposed to *we …*, to indicate their desire to distance themselves from these policies or to emphasise the fact that they had not been included in the decision making process.

[26] See Chapter 5 for a discussion of this issue.

[27] Here he is contrasting the Cuban experience to that of Eastern Europe.

[28] In 1991 some 1,800 neighbours interested in urban agriculture had joined the horticultural clubs in Santa Fé. By 1996 the total number of plots had reached 12,000 (Mathey, 2004). This achievement captured the interest of many NGOs, both national and international, who offered their support and co-operation. As rapidly as the movement had grown, much of the residents' interest dissolved once the aid projects financed by the NGOs had come to completion. Their 'natural leaders' remained frustrated with the sudden intervention by state institutions which had good intentions, but were more obstructing than helpful in practice (conversations with Fitzpatrick, January- March 2003, Havana).

[29] The Cuban Association of Agricultural and Forestry Technicians.

[30] See Plate 9, Appendix A for an example of an *organopónico* in the Miramar district of Havana.

[31] Here she is referring to the fact that these prices are in Cuban pesos as opposed to U.S. dollars.

[32] 16 one room dwellings without services were transformed into 17 duplex-appartments with a kitchen and bathroom each. The neighbours participated in the design and were incorporated in the microbrigade (construction team) responsible for the execution of the building works (see Mathey *et* al, 2004).

[33] This technique has been widely used by advocates of 'popular education', such as the 'Graciela Bustillos' Colectivo de Invesitgación Educative whose Havana headquarters I visited in January 2003.

[34] The state also 'regulates' this sector in less overt ways. It is able to manipulate public perceptions of self-employed workers by discrediting them or by casting suspicion on them. Take for example an incident in April 2003: the head teacher of a Havana school warned parents and pupils that food should not be purchased from street vendors operating on the street outside of the school gates. Apparently "drugs" were being put into cakes which were sold to children. Whether there was in fact evidence for this or not, the

case had a dramatic impact on perceptions towards (licensed) street traders throughout the city and aroused a general sense of distrust of these workers.

[35] It is interesting to note that Cuba has problems finding recruits for its Police force (Marquetti, 21 February 2003).

[36] Of the *Poder Popular* meetings that I attended in el Vedado (municipality of Plaza, Central Havana) the meeting of 1 March 2003 was representative of what Espina describes. The themes discussed by those present (50 neighbours, the delegate, vice president of the consejo popular and the head of the CDR) included: the water situation, the need to repair holes in the road, the issue of shoddy workmanship, the price and quality of bread, the need for the local school to be painted and a concern about the packaging of a breakfast cereal being sold in dollar shops which, in the view of the majority present, depicted revolutionary figures in a "frivolous and disrespectful" manner.

[37] Although *paladares* had been in existence before the 1990s.

[38] See Chapter 6 for a more detailed discussion of these issues.

Chapter 5

Process and Idea: The Debate About Civil Society in Cuba During the 1990s

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines civil society both as an idea and as a process. Although the idea of civil society has provided a "shared language" in Cuba it is also one which has obscured fundamental differences (Whitfield, 2002,p.307), as this chapter will show. In the first part of the chapter, some of the coordinates and forms which Cuban civil society has adopted in the 1990s are identified in order to provide a 'map' which will enable us to navigate this terrain. The process of civil society refers to the complex interactions between these historically generated structures and their national and international linkages, over political issues. Essentially, the actions and reactions of social groups seeking to challenge or support the existing distribution of power. Having examined the main features of the landscape of civil society in the 1990s one element within that landscape is chosen for closer analysis. Hence, in part two, the role of the intellectual community and the debates which this sector generated about the idea of civil society and its relevance for the situation in which Cuba found itself are discussed. The ways in which the idea entered Cuban society through academic exchange and NGOs, and the nature of the debate that flourished within the social science press are discussed. The reaction of the Party and state to this debate is then analysed in part three. The state interpreted these debates as counter-hegemonic challenges to its dominance and took measures to render the channels from which alternative ideas emerged impotent. The chapter concludes by arguing that as different types of social actors began to articulate different notions of civil society, the language of academics gradually became the language of ordinary people. As this dynamic gained momentum, civil society as a concept was no longer divorced from the agency of the groups of individuals it purported to describe. The result was a dialectical relationship between civil society as idea and civil society as process. The idea affected the process through its influence on the perceptions and actions of multiple categories of social actors. In turn, the functional use of the idea by these actors contributed to the prevalence of the idea and its role in propagating the illusion of a single entity called 'civil society' in Cuba. We begin with a brief taxonomy of civil society during the 1990s, in order to scan the contours of this associational landscape and point out new features within the topography.

5.1. THE LANDSCAPE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Hernández (1996) notes that of the (few) external sources which focus on Cuban civil society, many tend to use the concept to refer to the so called 'human rights groups' or dissident organisations and the Catholic church. However, the number of civil associations registered with the Cuban Ministry of Justice (MINJUS) is also widely presented as evidence of the existence of civil society in Cuba (interviews with Suárez, 15 April 2003, Havana; Bulté, 23 April 2003, Havana). Although an important number of these associations developed after 1989 (Dilla and Oxhorn, 2002), there has been a long tradition of non-governmental organisations in Cuba (Suárez, interview 15 April 2003, Havana). Mora (2000) notes that of the 2,154 associations registered in 2000, some have origins which date back to before independence while others date from the early years of the twentieth century (see Dilla 2003b; López, 1997). As their status suggests, these associations are dedicated to a diverse range of activities within the civic realm. Not all of them have a significant public presence. For example, they include: charitable institutions; unions of many kinds; professional associations; associations for all kinds of aficionados; Masonic lodges; religious congregations; community social movements; development NGOs and academic centres (see Mora, 2000; Dilla 1999). The most recent records available from MINJUS show that of the 2,154 associations currently registered, 1,105 are classified as "fraternal associations" and 1,049 as "social associations" (Mora 2000) Of these there are 141 scientific associations, 57 cultural associations, 389 sport associations and 132 friendship associations listed. A further 330 associations are described as being of a "social interest nature," 50 of which are oriented towards the "design, promotion and execution of social development projects" (Mora, 2000; see also *Granma International*, 19 June 1996). Another group of associations is affiliated to international or regional organisations such as Médicos del Caribe.

Two hundred of the associations registered with MINJUS have nationwide reach. All of them exist in accordance with Law 54 of 1985 which recognises the right of association (Arbesús, Head of the Department of Associations of MINJUS quoted in Habitat-Cuba 2000) and title 10, article 396, of the civil code (Law No.59, see Civil Code, 1994). The simple interest groups that make up the majority of the associations registered are not, Bray and Bray (2002,p.13) argue, likely to "contribute to general public discourse" and, in recognition of this, Dilla and Oxhorn (2002,p.17) plead: "surely most are irrelevant for … analysis." While we may assume that their public roles are no sufficiently developed to warrant our attention here, the registration process for such associations is worthy of brief consideration.

The minimum number of people required in order for an association to register is thirty. The registration process itself is long and difficult. Firstly, it requires the backing of two state organisations which can justify the "social interest" of the organisation. After being

approved (a process which can take many months) the new association is assigned a state department. The new association's finances are under the scrutiny of MINVEC (Ministry of Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation), which reserves the right to approve them and carries out audits with what Dilla and Oxhorn (1999,p.163) describe as "Orwellian zeal." Political intention is an important criteria in the registration process. According to Arbesús:

> There are some (associations) that seek only to gain a position which will enable them to later protest in other countries about something that they do not like here in Cuba (cited in Habitat-Cuba, 2000,p.29).

Perhaps as a consequence of this perception, Dilla and Oxhorn (1999,p.163) report that since March 1996 there has been a "virtual freeze" on the creation of new associations, a point corroborated by Suárez (interview 15 April 2003, Havana). Cuban civil society is far more than merely those officially sanctioned associations, in fact many associations which have a significant public presence are not registered legally and so do not appear in the official data (Dilla, 2003b). Suárez notes that a diverse range of associations and a conglomeration of different ideological stances fall under the wide umbrella of 'civil society' (interview, 15 April, 2003). He argues that during the 1990s, civil society could best be distinguished as: "a way of working," a "particular style of interaction between associations and the state and the community" as opposed to the associations registered with MINJUS (Suárez, interview 15 April 2003).

5.1.1. The Social and Mass Organisations

Recognised by article 7 of the 1996 Constitution, the social and mass organisations (see Chapter 3) represent "the specific interests of distinct sectors of the population and incorporate them in the tasks of building, consolidating and defending socialist society" (Article 7, Constitution of the Republic of Cuba, 1996,p.6). Traditionally perceived by external analysts to be conveyor belts for the state, some have memberships of millions, for example the CDRs and CTC, while others have far smaller memberships, such as ANAP and certain social organisations such as ANSOC (*Asociación Nacional de Sordos e Hipoacúsicos*, National Association of the Hard of Hearing), ACLIFIM (*Asociación Nacional de Limitados Físicos y Motores*, National Association of the Disabled), and ANCI (*Asociación Nacional de Ciegos y Débiles Visuales*, National Association of the Blind and Visually Impared). Professional associations cover most areas but, according to Dilla and Oxhorn (2002,p.17), in general have shown "limited autonomy" in the public arena. However, these analysts note that in practice certain organisations have been capable of "adopting their own positions in relation to specific problems that affect their sphere of action" and, moreover, that some regularly "participate in the decision-making areas in which they are represented, whether in state institutions or the party" (Dilla and Oxhorn, 2002,p.18). Crucially, they have exhibited a "certain autonomous

dynamic" at the grassroots level (Dilla and Oxhorn, 2002,p.18). Within the context of the economic crisis, this tendency has been reported to have increased, especially in the case of the unions and professional associations involved in artistic and intellectual activity such as UNEAC (interview, Arango, 23 April 2003, Havana). During the months preceding the session of the parliament planned for the approval of additional economic adjustment measures in May 1994, the unions initiated a series of debates among their rank and file that were subsequently reflected in the union press. An outcome of these discussions was the postponement of the imposition of a tax on salaries which had been part of the original proposal (García Brigos, interview 9 January 2003; see also Dilla 1996). Again, it was following a proposal from the CTC that maternity leave was increased to one year by the National Assembly (García Brigos, interview 9 January 2003). These examples of civil society agency demonstrate the ability of certain organisations to represent their constituencies' interests in the face of new state policies.[1]

Although new strategies were developed by the FMC in the 1990s (Castañeda, interview 19 March 2003, Havana) such as the *casas de orientación* which were introduced into communities to help women and their families, particularly in relation to issues of domestic violence that increased at this time, by providing a range of services including legal advice (interview, Rey, 3 April 2003; Perera 2002), opinion is divided regarding the degree to which the FMC was in touch with its base. Rey, for example, claims that "the FMC has no real knowledge of the problems women face today" (interview 3 April 2003, Havana). New unions were also created in the 1990s. In December 1991 Fidel Castro spoke of the need for a Science Union which was subsequently created in early 1992 and held its first congress in March (Viega Moreno, interview 8 May 2003, Havana).[2] The Secretary General of the Santiago de Cuba Science Union explained how the creation of this union represented: "an example of transformation in the Special Period, when Fidel wanted there to be spaces within the field of science for all workers, from technicians and cleaners to highly qualified scientists" (Veiga Moreno, interview 8 May 2003, Havana; also Limia interview 12 May 2003, Havana). Although the CTC remained the single central union, uniting all workers, workers within specific sectors could join "their own unions" through a process of double affiliation (Veiga Moreno, interview 8 May 2003, Havana).

It was also in the 1990s that the mass and social organisations underwent a change of name and became self-styled 'NGOs'. To what extent this reflected a change of identity was questionable: "We'll call them NGOs, to use the language that is currently in fashion," commented Valdés Vivó, the head of the Party school (see Valdés Vivó, 1999,p.169). While the head of the department of international relations at CDR headquarters in Havana, José Manuel García Torres, expressed confusion during an interview over who or what civil society

was; forgetting for a moment that the CDRs are themselves now officially a part of Cuban 'civil society' (interview, 26 March 2003, Havana, see Chapter 2).

However they choose (or are told) to describe themselves, the importance of these organisations for Cuban society was stressed by many of those interviewed (García Brigos, 4 March 2003; Valdés Paz, 30 April 2003). Valdés Vivó claims that the government can not act without the consensus of the mass organisations which participate in the "application" of government decisions (Valdés Vivó, 1999,p.168). He explains:

> … at the same time it is undeniable that these organisations have structures and tasks that are different from those of the state, although in their ultimate objectives remain the same: the continuation of socialism, the independence of the country and the preservation of our cultural identity (Valdés Vivó, 1999,pp.168-69).

5.1.2. Churches and Religious Groups

As mentioned in the previous chapter, at the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party in 1991 a more flexible approach was adopted towards religion (see Reed, 1992; Alonso, 1992), which was reflected in the constitutional changes of 1992 (see article 8, Constitution, 1996, which guaranteed freedom of religion). Pope John Paul II's visit to Cuba in 1998 (21-25 January) represented another significant moment in this opening (Girardi, 1996). Together these 'events' symbolised, for many Cubans, a re-encounter with belief systems other than Marxism. Given this new environment, more Cubans began to publicly identify themselves as followers of a religion and many church congregations became engaged in community action projects (interviews with Suárez, 15 April 2003, Havana; Alonso, 12 March 2003 Havana; Calzadilla 10 March 2003 and 22 April 2003, Havana). The majority of Cubans follow Afro-Cuban cults which tend to be characterised by their highly atomised and fluid nature (Dilla and Oxhorn, 1999). However, as informal networks at the community level they serve a key role in the socialisation of values (Basail, 17 January 2003, participant observation, Havana). Dilla and Oxhorn (2002,p.18) note their "mobilisational potential," a factor which Mathey *et al* (2004) had not anticipated:

> … the greatest surprise in analysing community initiatives in Havana was the discovery of another very strong factor of motivation that was not included in the initial hypothesis of the investigation: namely the factor of 'religion'. Present in almost all the initiatives with reference to Afro-Cuban roots, and above all in initiatives where dance and music were involved, religion is a theme which bonds the members of the group (Mathey *et al* 2004,p.16).

Calzadilla (interview, 22 April 2003, Havana) points out that religion in Cuba is very closely associated to everyday life and the resolution of the problems of day to day living. This may account for the fact that the incorporation of aspects of traditional religious practices has been noted to have a stabilising effect on community initiatives (Mathey *et al* 2004, p.13).

With regard to the Catholic and Protestant churches, the situation is different. Both are highly organised and hold distinct political positions in Cuba. The Protestant church represents the minority of Christians on the island, although recently its membership has increased (Calzadilla, interview 10 March 2003; Cerezo, 01 April 2003, both Havana). Since the 1980s, the Protestant church has become active in community development (interview, Suárez, 15 April 2003). The Martin Luther King Memorial Centre is just one example of a Cuban NGO that is closely linked to the Protestant Church and which has become well known for the popular education projects which it runs.[3] Like the Centre of Reflection and Dialogue in the city of Cárdenas (see Dilla, 2003b), Havana's Martin Luther King Centre has had a significant public impact through its projects for community development and theological reflection. It produces a journal *Caminos* and runs a publishing house of the same name. This NGO, like the Protestant church more widely, has a positive relationship with the Cuban state (interview Maritza,* 28 March 2003, Havana). For example, in one Havana municipality (Plaza, Centro Habana), the local *Poder Popular* delegate, Juan Ramón de la Paz Cerezo, is a Protestant vicar. Many within the community expressed pride that their neighbourhood had been one of the first in Havana to have elected a local delegate who is also a prominent member of the Protestant church (community meeting, 01 April 2003, Havana).

In contrast to the increasingly close relationship which has been developing over recent years between the Protestant church and the state, the Catholic church has traditionally been hostile to the revolutionary project (interviews with Calzadilla and Bulté 22 April and 23 April 2003 Havana respectively; see also Alonso, 1995b; Ramírez Calzadilla, 2000) and it remains a conservative force in Cuba (interview, García Brigos, 4 March 2003, Havana). Since 1959 there have been distinct phases when the Catholic church's relationship with the state has been more or less strained. One respondent contrasted the Catholic and Protestant position regarding the state in the following way:

> The Protestant Church has always been more incorporated into politics and has had closer ties with the state, while the Catholics have been more closely connected to dissident groups. From the start they were against, or at least contradicted, the official line and they still do so to some extent. Take a look at the *Carta Pastoral[4]* and you'll see what I mean. (Maritza,* interview 28 March 2003, Havana).

In our discussions, Calzadilla pointed to the conflict between the Catholic church and the state during the 1970s, though there have been more constructive phases more recently (interview 10 March 2003, Havana). In the following excerpt from the interview transcript he elaborates the church's recent demands:

> In terms of the conflict between the state and church, the Catholic church has had three types of demands. First, institutional demands for more facilities, activities and processions. This has to some extent been resolved in recent years. The second set of demands are more complex - they are demands for religious education in schools and greater space in the media. Since the Revolution, the state has had the monopoly on education and mass communication

and therefore to allow the church a presence is more difficult. The churches are now able to run religious courses within the community but the Catholic church wants religious education to be institutionalised in schools. The state will not accept this demand. In terms of the media, there are now over 30 Catholic publications in circulation nationally and the church also has access to radio space, although it is the Protestants who use it rather than the Catholics. The third group of demands are political and extremely contentious. The Catholic church is dependent on the Vatican. It therefore can not develop an independent position in Cuba. The doctrine and vision of the Catholic church is to defend private property. This is essentially a capitalist vision. It is the deepest source of contradiction with the state and supremely difficult to resolve. The Pope has said that socialism does not 'fit' with the church's social doctrine which supports natural order and rights. Conversely, the state's desire to eliminate classes does not correspond with the church's views on private property (Calzadilla interview, 10 March 2003, Havana).

The publication in 1994 of a programme laying out the Catholic church's vision of Cuban civil society based on the church's social doctrine (Valdés and Estrella, 1994) was received very negatively by the state and further damaged the fragile relationship between church and state (see section 5.2. below). However, a new era of détente began with Fidel Castro's 1996 visit to the Pope in the Vatican, closely followed by the Pope's visit to Cuba in 1998 (see Azicri, 2000 for details; also Girardi, 1996).

It is important to note that none of the religious groups that exist in Cuba - of which there are new age and spiritualist groups, Buddists, Muslims, Jews, practitioners of Chinese religions, indigenous and Afro-Cuban Santería and voodoo cults, besides the various Christian Churches - occupy a privileged position, and the Catholic church is by no means dominant (Calzadilla, interview 10 March 2003, Havana).[5] Before the Revolution, non-Marxist Cuban sociologists and ethnographers such as Fernando Ortiz and Lydia Cabrera, had already demonstrated that popular religiosity was not solely a Catholic phenomena. Within Cuba's civil society religions of Afro-Caribbean origins such as Santería, Regla de Ocha and Palo Monte represent a group of social relations and an impetus for mobilisation that is more important than that of the Catholic church which maintains in its structure ideological positions which are rigid and minority (Hernández, 1996,p.92). In contrast, Santería has no regional or national hierarchy, nor does it respond to the designs of an external power of a kind similar to the Vatican. Its hierarchies and social modes of organisation are rooted in civil society itself and are carried out in a democratic, popular manner (participant observation, 24 January 2003, Havana). As mentioned above, there has been a tendency to involve Afro-Cuban religious groups in cultural promotion and other aspects of local development in certain neighbourhoods during recent years.

It has been among the Cuban youth that religion has found particular resonance (see del Rey and Castañeda, 2002). Since the economic crisis many young people have sought a means to cope with the uncertainties of life in the Special Period (see Perera, 2002; interview Rosita,* 01 February 2003, Havana). They find no contradiction in combining religions. During an interview, one young woman put it in these terms:

> I am a Catholic but I also turn to santería when I need help, for example, when a wound on my leg would not heal. These things are on the increase not only because people are looking for solutions but because now it is acceptable to be religious (Clara,* interview 27 January 2003, Havana).

Lumsden (1996,p.6) also notes a deep-seated connection with the Afro-Cuban religions within the Cuban psyche (however revolutionary):

> … at times it seems that there is not a single Cuban who, in a crisis, will not resort to making an offering to Ochón (Virgen de la Caridad), Yemayá (Virgen de Regla), or to Babalú (San Lázaro) or to consult a santero to divine their future with the aid of coconut, card and shells.

According to Hernández (1996) the majority of Santeros support the regime and Calzadilla argues that there is no tension for the majority of the population between the Revolution and popular religion but rather it is at the institutional level, particularly between the hierarchy of the Catholic church and the state, that discord arises (Calzadilla, interview 10 March 2003, Havana). It would appear that in recent years the state has realised the importance of harnessing the support of religious groups in a unified approach "in the fight to save the Revolution" as Bulté puts it, he explains:

> Fidel has called on religious faiths to increase their message regarding religious principles, morals and commandments. The Christian spirit, encapsulated in formulas such as 'do not rob', is crucial because we all need to fight against moral degeneration, against drugs, against prostitution and against corruption (Bulté, interview 23 April 2003, Havana).

The mutual concern to combat the growing social ills of the Cuban system in the 1990s (the corrosive role of foreign capital, the increasing problems of prostitution and petty crime and the tendency towards individualism inherent in the daily battle for economic survival) revived the moral impulse latent within Cuban civil society and the state's desire to harness it (see Kapcia 2000, on the code of moralism).

5.1.3. Development NGOs

According to MINJUS figures, 50 development NGOs exist in Cuba. However Dilla and Oxhorn (2002) argue that the figure is probably lower, closer to two dozen or less. They claim that some of these organisations have a "very limited role" and are merely "appendages of the state," with "little decision making autonomy" (Dilla and Oxhorn, 2002,p.19). However, others argue that such organisations have had a significant qualitative impact on Cuban society (Habitat-Cuba, 2000) and also point to the fact that some have been recognised internationally as examples of best practice.[6] Many Cuban NGOs have received financial help from their European or Canadian counterparts. The Norwegians and Germans in particular have channeled significant funds into Cuba (interview Figueroa, 22 November 1999, Havana). Sources of funding have also come from within the region. Suárez notes the regular exchange between Latin American Development NGOs and Cuban groups during the mid to late 1980s (interview, 15 April 2003, Havana). Although cooperation between European NGOs and Cuba

began in 1982, it was not until 1993 that the "cooperation boom" began (Dilla and Oxhorn, 2002,p.19). The extent of the financial side of this cooperation is expressed in the following table.

Table 5.1

Total Value of Economic Funds Channeled into Cuba by International NGOs from 1990-1995

Year	Received in USD ($)
1990	1, 855.900
1991	2, 300.146
1992	5, 142.833
1993	11, 429.756
1994	13, 085.264
1995	16, 914.780
Total	50, 728.679

Source: MINVEC quoted in Murillo (2000)

By 1994 there were 108 registered development projects in Cuba undertaken with 66 foreign NGOs (Dilla and Oxhorn, 2002). Approximately half of all projects were administered by Cuban development NGOs, but only three of these organisations accounted for the majority of the projects and financing. One of the main problems pointed out by those interviewed in this sector was the ability of Cuban NGOs to decide on, and control, the use of funding (interviews with Figueroa and Suárez, 22 November 1999 and 15 April 2003, Havana respectively). Priority areas which received funding included projects which focused on: alternative energy; community development; the environment; popular education; women; and institutional development (Habitat-Cuba, 2000).

A worrying aspect of the relationship between some foreign NGO workers in Cuba and stakeholders from within the context has been a perceived lack of transparency regarding their objectives. Respondents mentioned a reluctance on the part of NGO staff to inform their Cuban counterparts of the full extent of their objectives. Conversely, NGO staff expressed exasperation with Cuban community workers who had not identified the 'correct' issues (as they saw them) to tackle in their neighbourhoods.

There is however evidence that some Cuban NGOs have been skilled advocates when dealing with their foreign counterparts. It has been reported that at meetings with European partners that took place between 1993 and 1995 (CEE, 1994; 1995), Cuban NGOs

demonstrated "remarkable aggressiveness" with regard to the bureaucratic roadblocks and political controls that hindered their activities (Dilla and Oxhorn, 2002,p.20). Such organisations wished to have greater autonomy and were against any imposition from foreign counterparts. A characteristic of Cuban development NGOs has been their stance in contra to any policy which would contribute to the U.S. position against Cuba.

5.1.4. Community Social Movements

The appearance of community social movements in Cuba has been noted by analysts since the end of the 1980s. According to Dilla and Oxhorn (2002,p.20) these differ from the traditional neighbourhood associations at both the normative and procedural level. These analysts explain that the movements are characterised by the lack of "linkages" between them. This characteristic is not a "question of some deficiency" but rather a defining characteristic which makes them unique (Dilla and Oxhorn, 2002,p.20). Of diverse origins, such movements have at their base state initiatives implemented by local government or technical agencies (see Chapter 4). Their evolution has been expressed by the diversification of their agendas from issues of cultural revival to social development projects (see Mathey *et al*, 2004). While their tendency to seek autonomy has on occasions put them in conflict with the local authorities (García Brigos interview 09 January 2003, Havana; see also Dilla and Oxhorn, 2002). However, a 'pacted autonomy' gives them a margin for action while remaining in consultation with local authorities. None have the juridical status of civil association and this "limits their capacity for decision making and action" (Dilla and Oxhorn, 2002,p.21).

5.1.5. 'Dissident' Groups

According to Dilla (2003a,p.9) there was "virtually no internal opposition" in Cuba during the 1970s and 1980s. Although during the 1990s there were a very small number of opposition groups on the island, that opposition which did resurface was largely a result of social conditions (García Brigos, seminar discussion, 22 January 2003, Havana).[7] People's frustrations, growing poverty, the increasing diversity of the social subject, and the "state's failure to meet expectations" were responsible for generating discontent and disillusionment (Dilla, 2003a,p.9; also interview with Perera, 16 April 2003, Havana). Those 'dissident' groups that emerged tended, as noted by Hernández (1996), to emphasise human rights and had an anti-systemic agenda and ideological identity. The degree to which they influenced politics at national or even local levels was, and remains to this day, limited as a result of their close association with the U.S. position regarding Cuba, which alienates them from the vast majority of the Cuban population and severely limits their appeal (interviews with: Barredo, 29 April,

2003; Rausberg, 4 May 2003; Espina, 9 May 2003, Havana). Rausberg argues that ironically it is the U.S. which prevents the emergence of a stronger dissident community on the island:

> The U.S does not allow indigenous dissident groups to emerge from the base. Once you start to work against the Cuban government SINA [the North American Interest Section] begins to pay you. This contradiction - the fact that the U.S. pays you, the fact that you are invited to the house of Cason[8] and other U.S. diplomats - obliges the dissident to work within the agenda of the U.S. It is not going to be dissidents who get rid of this government (Rausberg, interview 4 May 2003, Havana).

It must be noted, however, that since the early 1990s there has been a change in the character of internal dissidence in Cuba. The group *Asamblea Para la Promoción de una Sociedad Civil* (Assembly for the Promotion of Civil Society), for example, has promoted a hard-line anti-dialogue approach to political change. Describing itself as "a key institution within the Cuban opposition that unites 343 'civic resistance' organisations" against "castroite despotism" (Fleitas, 2004), it aims to improve human rights on the island, in particular the right to free association, through a provocative campaign aimed at undermining the state. Its leader, the economist Marta Beatriz Roque Cabello, was taken into custody in the wave of arrests mounted in 2003 (see Chapter 6) but was freed a year later on grounds of ill-health. Closely associated to Roque Cabello's organisation are the movements of 'Independent Librarians' and 'Independent Journalists' (see Chapter 6). Other dissident organisations include the groups *Todos Unidos* (Together United), led by Vladimiro Roca and Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas's *Movimiento Cristiano Liberación* (Christian Liberation Movement), most famous for the *Varela Project* of 2002 (see Chapter 6). Less uncompromising than the *Asamblea Para la Promoción de una Sociedad Civil*, they nevertheless represent an important part of the internal dissident community.

Dissident groups tend to be comprised of those who wish to emigrate, a factor which also contributes to the instability of their oganisations and memberships. According to Hernández (1996,p.93) these groups "lack any real presence in Cuban civil society." The degree to which the state tolerates their existence is dependent on the level of activity between them and the U.S. administration represented in Havana at the North American Interests Section (SINA) of the Swiss Embassy. In the Spring of 2003 the Cuban state mounted a major crack down on dissident activity, arresting 75 individuals (see Dilla, 2003a) and warning EU diplomatic missions on the island to "contain themselves within the parametres of diplomatic conventions," warning them that it would be viewed as "outstandingly disrespectful to invite enemies of the state to [their]official receptions" (Rubido, interview 19 June 2003, UK).

Within the organised opposition in Cuba there are groups who are not linked to the U.S., and who have maintained a stance against the North American administration, that plan socialist alternatives; on occasions more socialist than those proposed by the Cuban government (Arango, interview 23 April 2003, Havana). According to Dilla (2003a,p.10) these groups are "repressed like any other." The state's concern is not with the existence of an

organised opposition as such, but with the potential that such an opposition has to 'connect up' with spaces of discontent and the lack of motivation that today characterise Cuban civil society (interview with García Brigos, 21 January 2003, Havana).

5.1.6. Cooperatives

As we saw in Chapter 4, the creation of the UBPCs transformed the agrarian social structure in Cuba. Technocrats interviewed at the Ministry of Agriculture in 1999 estimated that over 350, 000 people had entered the cooperative sector since 1993 (interview, 23 November 1999, Havana). According to Dilla and Oxhorn (2002) the UBPCs represented "embryonic opportunities" for Cuban civil society. Mirroring the opinion put forward by Espina (interview 9 May 2003, Havana), Dilla and Oxhorn (2002) contend that it is the environment in which new actors are contained which is the key determinant of whether these new structures will have negative effects on social relations, for example, increasing inequality (see also Pérez and Torres, 1996). Again, like Dilla and Oxhorn (2002), Espina points to the fact that as yet there do not exist any associations specifically designed for cooperative members and, as a result, they are encouraged to join existing unions which have not been designed to meet their specific needs (Espina, interview 9 May 2003, Havana). The 'newness' of the UBPCs, like sectors of the self-employed (see Chapter 4), leaves members without an autonomous or tangible public presence in terms of their representation.

5.1.7. New Economic Actors

New actors who are active in market spaces have emerged as a result of the reforms. They too have practically no organisational expression (see Chapter 4) but nevertheless are able to influence ideological production and the socialisation of values (interview, Bulté, 23 April 2003, Havana). Groups that stand out for particular mention include the technocratic-entrepreneurial sector and foreign entrepreneurs, who have no distinguishable organisational structure (the Association of Spanish Entrepreneurs is a notable exception, see Dilla 2000,p.40). These groups have fluid relationships with the state. In addition there are close to 200,000 self-employed workers who "swell the emerging informal sector" of the Cuban economy (Dilla and Oxhorn, 2002). Again, this sector is not organised. Each self-employed worker can join the union most closely related to his/her own activity but many have declined to do so (Espina, interview 09 May 2003, Havana). As this sector evolves, actors may find new opportunities for collective action. It is a sector which has the potential to become a powerful economic force, as the experience of China shows (see White *et al*, 1996; Howell, 1993). In Cuba, the existence of a social subject that has the advantage of being very well qualified in

educational and political terms, is an important factor which will aid the process of gaining representation (interview, Carranza, 7 May 2003, Havana).

5.1.8. Academic Centres and Publications

Between 1990 and 1995 many Cuban research centres had a strong impact on a range of key debates involving a wide cross-section of the Cuban population, including professionals, public servants, community leaders and social activists. The *Centro Félix Varela* is just one example of a non governmental organisation in Havana that conducts research and publishes a journal on politics and ethics. Named after a nineteenth-century priest whose work contributed to Cuba's independence movement, the centre was founded in 1993 by the Cuban philosopher and historian Juan Antonio Blanco. However, not all of the research centres in operation during the 1990s had NGO status and many were under the control of Ministries, the Party, or linked to mass organisations.[9] However, despite their affiliations some have played a crucial role in the articulation of civil society as an idea and in the establishment of communications networks between academics and other groups, both nationally and internationally. Moreover, it has been from these centres that ideas regarding the reproduction of the socialist system within the context of the economic crisis have been offered. In addition, such centres have produced a range of academic publications which have had an impact far beyond the intellectual community. Given the importance of the relationship between the intellectual and the state in Gramsci's analysis, in the next section we examine the work of this sector of civil society in more detail.

5.2. CIVIL SOCIETY: THE CUBAN DEBATE

It is widely accepted in Cuba that the debate about civil society was one of the "great debates" of the 1990s (interview with Fernando Martínez Heredia, 21 April 2003). During this decade there was a "boom" in interest in civil society and an "explosion" in the use and study of the term within Cuban intellectual circles (Monal, 1999; Acanda, 1996). According to one Cuban analyst, such reflection represented the "conceptual renovation" of the term (Alonso, 1996,p.119). It was a view shared by many others who concurred with Alonso that the concept was in need of "critical rescue" having been "continually distorted" at the level of discussion during the last quarter of the twentieth century (Alonso, 1996, p.119-20; see also Recio, 1997 and 1999).

However, by the end of the decade Limia argued that interest in the theme was little short of "an intoxication" which he perceived "could not last much longer" (Limia, 1999, p.175). In his view people were quite simply "drunk on civil society" (Limia, 1999, p.175).

Speaking in 2003, Martínez claimed that the debate on civil society had become "an adornment," and was no longer "profound" (interview 21 April 2003, Havana). He suggested, as did Limia (1997; 1999), that there were other more important questions to be discussed in Cuba which had been pushed to one side or overshadowed by the interest in civil society (Martínez, interview, 21 April 2003, Havana).[10]

However, on the 4th April 2003 and amid much publicity, a new book by the Cuban philosopher Jorge Luis Acanda was launched entitled *Civil Society and Hegemony* (2002).[11] With its arrival Acanda deftly moved the theme of civil society back towards the centre of debate in Cuba. Over a decade after it first began to 'intoxicate' its Cuban audience, civil society was back on the agenda.

5.2.1. The Contours of the Debate

The fertile debate that evolved in Cuba around the theme of civil society can be traced within publications and through discussions which were held on the subject by research centres and Cuban NGOs which were later disseminated publicly via journals and cultural magazines.[12] Like their counterparts in other parts of the world, Cuban analysts concentrated on the philosophical controversies surrounding civil society and on issues of conceptual definition.[13] The provenance of the idea was an important matter for many, particularly those socialist thinkers who were accustomed to regarding the idea as a 'liberal' term. However most contributors traced the intellectual lineage and genealogy of the concept back through the works of Gramsci and Marx to Hegel, at times making reference to Rousseau on route, but more often emphasising the early contributions of Hobbes and Locke (see Valdés and Estrella, 1994; Acanda, 1996, 2002; Limia, 1997; Recio, 1997, 1999; Fung, 2000). Others, examined the relevance of the concept for what they called the "concrete" or "actually existing" internal situation of contemporary and, more occasionally, historical Cuba (Alonso, 2000a; López, 1997). While still others balanced the two approaches, offering fascinating insights into both (Hernández, 1994, 1999; Azcuy, 1995; Alonso, 1996; Dilla; 1998).

All, through their contributions to the debate, enriched the very dynamic which was both their focus and their impetus for reflection: the (re)activation of a vibrant public space, populated by an ever more diverse range of actors and groups, which had been provoked by the economic, political, social and ideological changes of the decade.

The debate was by no means confined to academic circles, nor was it heard solely within the ambit of the social sciences. Rather it spilt over and was taken up by other actors within Cuban civil society. Most notably by the new development NGOs which had emerged during the late 1980s (see Habitat-Cuba, 2000), the Cuban Catholic Church (see *Address for the Second Catholic Social Week* 17-20 November 1994) and the 'politicos' of the Party and

state (see Raúl Valdés Vivó, Rector of the Higher School of the PCC 'Ñico López' in *Granma* 4 January 1996 and Raúl Castro: *Informe del Buró Politico,* 23 March 1996). In addition, key cultural figures such as Armando Hart Dávalos (the former Minister of Culture and a member of the Central Committee of the PCC), and Abel Prieto Jiménez (the current Minister of Culture, President of UEAC since 1988, and member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the PCC), increasingly began to use and analyse the concept in public spaces.

In a more general sense, the theme of civil society "moved towards the centre of public opinion" as the 1990s progressed (Acanda, 2002, p.12), a fact borne out by the sheer number and range of publications which began to run articles taking civil society as their focus (for example, *la Gaceta de Cuba, Temas, Granma, Envío, Marx Ahora, Revista Casa de las Américas* to name just a handful). Academics, bureaucrats, politicians and activists were all talking about 'civil society' but they by no means shared the same opinion of the concept, nor were they all convinced of the relevance of its application to Cuba's experiences during the last decade of the twentieth century. Hence, although civil society provided a shared language with which to enter the debate, it did not bring with it a shared understanding of desirable outcomes or how these were to be achieved.

The primary cause of controversy amongst scholars engaged in the Cuban debate was the conceptual ambiguity surrounding the term itself (see Azcuy, 1995; Cristóbel 1994; Dilla, 1998; Monal, 1999; Acanda, 2002). From its birth, Monal (1999) argues, civil society has been an ambiguous concept "in Marx it is ambiguous, in Hegel also, and I don't need to mention Gramsci" (Monal, 1999, p.171). Likewise, Acanda (2002) talks of "the heterogeneity of the dissimilar processes" which have been labelled as civil society, the "diversity of meanings in the content of the concept" and the "breadth, ambiguity and imprecise utilisation" that it started to have in the 1990s, as much in the social sciences as in political discourse, "after being forgotten for almost 120 years" (Acanda, 2002, p.317, also interview 25 February 2003, Havana). In Marxist theory the term had not been merely 'forgotten' but had, for decades, also been fiercely anathematised (Dilla 1999, p.161; see Chapter 3). This made the concept a difficult one to use. The contradictions, ambiguities and disorientating array of interpretations from both liberals and Marxists all added to the confusion surrounding the use of the term both as an idea and a process in Cuba. It is ironic that at a time of great uncertainty as to the future direction of the country, an idea charged with similar ambiguities and uncertainties was the subject of such close attention and, in some cases, invested with the expectation that it could be a positive force in the rebuilding Cuba's political consensus in the midst of a deep economic crisis.

In the Cuban debate, unlike the Eastern European one, there was a broad rejection of liberal interpretations of civil society which "counter-pose state and civil society and regard

civil society as a space between the individual and the state" (see Acanda, 1999,p.159-160). Though they recognise that civil society can be differentiated from the state (Dilla, 1999) most Cuban analysts felt that this difference need not represent an antagonism (Limia, 1997; Acanda, 2002; Hernández, 1999). In fact most participants who took part in the debate, discussed the problem of the state-civil society dichotomy for socialist thought. They pointed out that the counter-posing of state and civil society as two independent spheres, in polar opposition to each other, raised many problems for socialist interpretations. With reference to the issue of the separation of state and civil society, Acanda argues:

> … we need to look at the way civil society is conceptualised in early liberal thought. In the beginning civil society is *not* separate from the state. In the early period of English philosophy, Hobbes and Locke did not separate the two realms, it was Hegel who was the first to talk of state and civil society as separate (Acanda, interview, 25 February 2003, Havana, his emphasis).

However, Alonso (1996) proposes that the Hegalian vision is "not exactly a dichotomy" (1996,p.120) and, in much the same way as elsewhere, the philosophical debate has been characterised by contradictions and disputes in the interpretation of fundamental texts.[14] Unsurprisingly, Marx and Gramsci are the two theorists most often referred to in Cuban literature dealing with this theme and their work has been important in orienting socialist interpretations of the concept. Acanda claims that what is crucial about Gramsci is that "he is trying to understand the *relations* between state and civil society. For Gramsci the two are interrelated but people often overlook this" (interview, 6 March 2003, Havana, his emphasis).

Many Cuban analysts considered a clear separation of public and private spaces as false. Public space, with its maximum representation in the state as the only bearer of political relations and interests, is seen as a conceptually flawed interpretation, in the same way that civil society, as the ambit of the private sphere where these relations are not established, is also dismissed by many.

There was not, however, consensus with respect to a single interpretation of the concept of civil society, nor the utility of the term within the Cuban context. Despite the significant amount of academic work that has taken place in Cuba on the theme, Limia (1997) remains unconvinced that Marxist theory can benefit from a concept that remains "gnostically very poor" suffering from "imprecision" and therefore of "limited scientific value" (Limia, 1999,p.172). López (1997) has been critical of this preoccupation with theory. She argues that within Cuba questions regarding civil society could become little more than an "opportunity for polemic and theory" which in itself could end up "being a blind alley" (López, 1997,p.17). She suggests that theories should be left to one side. Instead analysts should start "from the concrete" thereby "enabling us to understand what actually existing civil society in

Cuba is today" (López, 1997,p. 17). Acanda offers the following analysis of how the idea of civil society's has been received in Cuba:

> Unfortunately … for many Cuban Marxists the concept arrived as would a meteorite: something which seems good at first and hits you whether you like it or not. In Cuba there have been two very characteristic responses, one is not to take it up and to say that this concept is not Marxist and that furthermore we do not have room for it as a social phenomenon. The other is that of those who accept it, but who are not able to take it on critically and give it the interpretation that it should have in Marxism. This is how the liberal scheme is reproduced (Acanda, 1999, p.160).

While primarily concerned with theoretical issues Acanda also attempts, as López (1997) suggests, to describe "what civil society is" in contemporary Cuba:

> Cuban civil society is not only the Félix Varela Centre, or the Martin Luther King Jr. Centre or the Catholic church. It is the film on Saturday night. It is also the ICRT[15] which broadcasts televised messages with an ideological content that does not always correspond fully with our project … It is also expressed in a March for the 1st May … The Communist Party is within civil society, not only as a political party, but as a structure which creates and diffuses values, principles, norms. Therefore strengthening civil society would not be - as some think who believe that civil society is all that which is not the state - to weaken the Party of weaken the government (Acanda, 1999,p.161)

A greater degree of shared understanding does exist with regard to certain aspects of the debate, for example, most analysts agree that the state and civil society constitute specific areas in the social structure. Furthermore that between them there may be contradictions, but that they are not necessarily in opposition or antagonistic. Also, that civil society is an ambit which is internally contradictory, as it is in civil society that the differences and confrontations of diverse types of class, race, ethnicity, generations, gender, culture and politics are produced and reproduced (interviews with Acanda 22 April 2003; Bulté, 23 April 2003; Basail, 17 January 2003, all Havana). Hernández (1996,p.88) describes civil society not as the antithesis of the socialist state but as an area that is permanently in multiple and complex relations with the state. Rather than understanding civil society as a realm in opposition to the state (which would be to reproduce the neo liberal approach), according to Recio (1997,p.125) the key debate regarding civil society in Cuba has been: "how to restructure the hegemony of revolutionary socialist power on the island" and "how to continue legitimising it." As such, civil society has been identified as a space for "the rearticulation of consensus" (Dilla, 1999,p.161; also Recio, interview 25 March 2003, Havana).

How civil society is understood and how its relationship with the state is conceptualised has had an impact in Cuba which is far greater than these intellectual discussions might at first suggest. For if civil society is understood as a site in opposition to the state, as an arena in which dissent can form and from which it can be mobilised, then the existence of such a realm can not be tolerated by the state. As we shall see below, such issues

have characterised the 'tense dialogue' between certain intellectuals within Cuban civil society and the state (Arango, 2002, interview 23 April 2003, Havana).

5.2.2. A New Debate in Cuba?

Pin-pointing the precise start of any debate is always problematic and the case of the debate about civil society in Cuba is no exception. Recio (1997) claims that the debate that evolved in Cuba during the 1990s was to a large extent characterised by a 'revisiting' of debates that were at the heart of the Rectification Process (from 1986-1990) and also those raised by the IV Party Congress of 1991. She stresses, as do others, that although there is a "direct correlation" between interest in the idea of civil society and the economic transformations that were taking place in the early 1990s (Recio interview, 26 February 2003,Havana), the debate about civil society should be understood as part of a trend which predates the economic crisis and the introduction of the reforms (Limia, interview 12 May 2003, Havana). The debates at the end of the 1980s had at their centre the demand to perfect the Cuban economic and political scheme, to accept the growing and increasingly evident heterogeneity of the social fabric and to rectify the errors committed as a result of the application of a model (based as we have seen in Chapters 3 and 4 on that of the USSR and Eastern European socialist states) that was in many aspects 'wrong', and with the tendency to be verticalist and homogeneous (see Reed, 1992).

More importantly, the Rectification Process was a policy which set out to change the dynamic of the relationship which had developed between state and civil society prior to that point, and precipitate the re-composition of the economy, politics and society. Before *perestroika* the III and IV Congresses of the Party, celebrated in 1986 and 1991 respectively, involved critical debate about the problems of the model. The public discussion of the document 'Call to the IV Congress' throughout 1989-90 has been hailed as a debate which was "the most democratic and broad-based discussion known to Cuba in the last decades" (Hernandez, 1998,p.138; also interview García Brigos, 19 January 2003) and it was from these discussions that took place across the island, that a number of national problems were identified.

The "return" of Gramsci in the 1990s (see Chanan, 2001) and also a renewed interest in the thought of another icon of the 1960s, Che Guevara (Acanda, 2002,p.313), at a moment when Soviet-style socialism had "failed" and when the debate on the island turned towards a renovation of indigenous ideas, again linked the 'civil society' debate to the more fundamental debate within which it was embedded: the debate about socialism in Cuba. What socialism 'is', how it is 'built' and the ways in which it can be 'maintained' and 'perfected' were, of course, not new issues (see Chapter 3) and, like the discussion over civil society, nor were they specifically Cuban. However, the debate about socialism was, and remains to this day, "the primary debate

in Cuba" (Limia, 12 May 2003, Havana). This has been particularly so following the collapse of socialism in those countries 'east of the Elba' in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Limia reflects on the crisis in socialism and describes the loss of a paradigm in the following terms:

> All of a sudden we were left without stereotypes. We were not only facing a crisis in the economy but a crisis of the definition of socialist ideals. Suddenly we didn't know what an efficient socialist economy was! What was a socialist state? What was socialist culture? Because what we had considered to be our paradigm, the USSR, had fallen! Suddenly we didn't know how to construct, I repeat, *we didn't know how to construct the socialist mode of production!* (interview, 12 May 2003, Havana, his emphasis).

Far, then, from being seen as a parallel discussion, the debate about civil society that took place in Cuba must be set within the matrix of a range of debates that emerged in the context of a crisis in all of its manifestations, but particularly the ideological crisis in mechanistic interpretations of Marxism and the economic crisis of the Special Period.

The ideological crisis of the late 1980s and early 1990s (to which Rectification was to be the answer) prepared the conditions for the revival in interest in Gramsci's thought as intellectuals searched to make sense of the new realities confronting them. Acanda (2002) argues that in contrast to the 1960s, "when it was Gramsci's philosophical contributions that were the focus of attention," in the new climate of the 1990s, it was "his treatment of the concepts of the state, hegemony and civil society which attracted interest" (Acanda, 2002,p.316). It was also a moment when the thought of arguably Cuba's greatest thinker, José Martí, enjoyed a revival as Cubans searched for 'authentic' responses to the crisis (interview García Brigos, 9 January 2003, Havana). Acanda (1999) argues that in Cuba the key discussion has been over whether to maintain the existing model of socialism or transform it; where 'transformation' does not mean the abandonment of socialism but rather its reform and perfection, a view echoed by Hernández (1998) and Limia (interview, 12 May 2003, Havana) among others.

Recio (1997) points out that the level of critical and evaluative distance was sometimes lacking in those discussions on civil society that were published in the 1990s. Regarding the debate about the relationship between state and civil society during the 1990s she writes:

> … it is possible to observe a certain incompleteness in the interpretation of the new relations between civil society and the state … the debate over these modifications is, in general, accompanied by an analysis which is not very profound … probably because of the fact that we still have not found the necessary critical and evaluative distance within the social sciences (Recio, 1997,p.122).

The other 'great debate' which, according to Hoffman (1998), should have arisen for public discussion in Cuba at this time, was the debate about the economic reform of the country (also Carranza, interview, 7 May 2003, Havana). The publication of Carranza, Gutiérez and Monreal's (1995) *Cuba: Restructuring the Economy: A Proposal For Debate* had, according

to Hoffman, only one failing: it did not succeed in opening the debate on the economy, as was its intention.

5.2.3. Why was civil society on the agenda in the 1990s?

The trajectory of the debate on civil society in Cuba during the 1990s was heavily influenced by the interplay of political strategies and events originating from both within and outside of the island. It is possible to identify a combination of exogenous and endogenous influences which together conditioned the emergence and course of the debate. As well as impacting on the parameters and nature of the debate, these influences also represented the context within which the debate was articulated.

a) Internal Factors: Economic Crisis, Reform and Transformation

Observing that the discussion in Cuba took greater force and began to establish itself in academic and political spaces around the years 1993 and 1994, when Cuba was in the middle of the harshest phase of the economic crisis, Recio (1997) is one among many Cuban analysts who argue that the economic and political transformations precipitated by the economic crisis and the reforms introduced by the state in an attempt to combat the economic decline, conditioned the rise and development of the debate about civil society (Recio, 1997). The development of diverse forms of property, the emergence of new social and economic actors, increased levels of social differentiation, the increase in spaces for the market and the greater presence of its laws, the introduction of foreign investment and the arrival of international NGOs were all mentioned as reasons activating the discussion about civil society (interviews Suárez, 15 April 2003, Havana; Bulté, interview 23 April, 2003, Havana). The protagonists of the debate were academic groups, NGOs and the community movements, all of whom proposed and offered ideas for the reproduction of the socialist system on the island at a time when the political class was left perplexed and isolated without the support of the Soviets and with an economy that appeared unable to guarantee its own reproduction (Limia, interview, 12 May 2003, Havana). However, according to Dilla, it was a debate "primarily inspired" by the innovative actions of the state in the political as well as economic ambit (Dilla, 2003a,p.10). Unlike in the '*Pensamiento Critico* period' of the late 1960s, in the 1990s social scientists were not proposing to transform Marxism but to use it to explain the causes of the national crisis and to propose economic, social and political solutions; a process that led them to examine civil society.

i) The reconstruction of civil society

Many cite the domestic situation on the island as the primary reason for the emergence of the debate. "Without doubt" Dilla (1998) argues, "the most relevant cause is strictly local: the reconstitution in Cuba of civil society" that was taking place within the context of an economic reform oriented towards the market (Dilla, 1998, pp.4-5). Dilla (1998) argues that NGOs operating on the island had a key role in initiating debate on the subject (see Habitat-Cuba 2000) and there is evidence to suggest that the conceptual debate on civil society has been closely linked to the debate concerning the entry and role of international NGOs on the island, particularly between 1994 and 1996 (Recio, 1997, 1999; Dilla, 1999, p.164). Writing recently on this theme Acanda argues:

> If the theme of civil society has occupied the attention of Cuban intellectual circles - and within this group I include politicians - in the last years, it has not been exclusively because of the preeminence this concept has attained in contemporary social science, but, above all, because of the activation of our own civil society and public space, which has been provoked as much by the economic, political and ideological effects of the disappearance of the socialist camp, as by the maturation of the classes and social groups involved in the Revolution, who have learned the way towards their self-construction as historical subjects (Acanda, 2002,p.341).

For Acanda and Dilla, the activation of civil society in Cuba was manifested in its appropriation, however partial and incomplete, of spaces and processes that had previously been the exclusive preserve of the state, and in the ideological debate which had become increasingly widespread and systematic.

ii) Effects of the Economic Crisis

Azcuy (1995) argues that the economic crisis and the social differentiation that it caused, has been a factor influencing the amount of attention that the theme of civil society received in Cuba (Azcuy, 1995,p.105). In particular, the rise of the market is identified by Azcuy as a key factor precipitating interest in the theme (Azcuy,1995,p.112). Acanda (1999) also stresses internal reasons, including the conditions which led to the need to grant greater space to the market and foreign investment, as well as the creation of new economic actors, for example, the self employed (Acanda, 1999,p.162).

Since the late 1980s the Cuban state had been unable to undertake with the same efficiency, the role that it had previously carried out in securing the social needs of the population (Basail, 1999; Dilla, 1999). Of those factors which Dilla (1999) identifies as having influenced the increase in attention given to the civil society theme he states:

> I consider that a key one is that the state could not continue exercising, with the same efficacy, the functions that until that moment it performed. There is a moment in which the state has to hand over spaces to other competing actors. The most relevant today is the market which began to make its entrance with the development of tourism, with the liberalisation of the dollar, with the aperture of the agricultural and industrial markets, self-employed workers and other consequences of the economic reforms. In parallel, also, the community began to

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assume new roles and different modalities appear, as is the case of territorial community movements with aspirations of being self managing, in many cases encouraged, up to a certain point, by the state itself (Dilla, 1999, p.164).

Dilla also points to the entrance of international NGOs in Cuba and argues that some of these organisations brought with them a 'discourse of opposition'. In the years 1994-6 such a position gained more space within Cuban politics. There is a high degree of consensus among respondents that the most important factors conditioning the development of the debate were the new relations between state and civil society that had been precipitated by a combination of the economic crisis, the reforms and subsequent transformations within the economic and political order.

b) External Reasons

Although many Cubans stressed endogenous forces as the catalyst which conditioned the start of the debate, domestic issues were intimately connected to exogenous events and processes.

i) A global trend in the use of the concept

Cuban analysts note that the debate in Cuba followed a general global trend in the increase in the use of the concept, both in the academic world and within the development (NGO) field, where the term civil society enjoyed a renaissance from the late 1980s.[16] Literature focusing on Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and Latin America influenced and contributed to the debate on the island (Dilla, 1998; Azcuy, 1995; Recio, 1997).[17] But the use of the term to describe events and processes emerging in contexts as dissimilar as Europe and Latin America, and in relation to an assortment of social movements, NGOs, human rights advocates, religious communities and indigenous organisations to name but a few, added to the confusion of those seeking to identify the elements that constituted civil society in order to define the category. Commenting on the differences between Latin American and Eastern European understandings and the Cuban experience, Hernández writes:

> Unlike in Latin America where they want to gestate a parallel power with no articulations to the state or in Europe where the 'song' of civil society is a song of the crisis of real socialism, of privatization and of neo-liberalism, the Cuban experience of civil society provides the key to re-thinking socialism as an alternative (Hernández, 1999,p.166).

The growing flow of information into the island during the 1990s from Latin America and Europe undermined the monopoly of the state media and despite attempts to control access to the internet, the state was unable to stem the tide of information completely. However, the spatial containment of information, deficient press freedom and lack of pluralist discourse during the 1990s is noted by Burchardt (1995) and Jackiewicz and Bolster, (2003).

ii) The collapse of Eastern European Socialism and the USSR

Almost without exception, Cuban analysts made reference to the influence of the disappearance of the Socialist camp in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union as a key factor stimulating the revival of the discussion about civil society on the island (see Recio, 1997; Monal, 1999). However, Alonso (1996) argues that the idea of civil society that appeared in relation to Eastern Europe was one which was closely tied to dissidence and political opposition. In this context civil society was understood as a "programme of resistance to communism," appearing first in Poland with the *Solidarity* movement (Alonso, 1996,p.130). This pattern was not repeated in Cuba.

iii) Political discourse of the International Right

Respondents stressed the impact of the political discourse of the international right and the renovation of liberal thought on the use of the term 'civil society' which became associated with neo-liberal policies as a factor influencing its popularity. According to Acanda, the concept of civil society fell into disuse from halfway through the nineteenth century until the 1970s when it was re-examined in liberal thought (interview, 25 February 2003, Havana). For this reason, he argues, many in Cuba were "theoretically unprepared" for the revival in interest in the concept (Acanda, 2002, p.319). Internationally, the failure of the welfare state and new interpretations of the role of the state (which negated its role in the economy and in redistributive activities) was coupled with a renewed interest in the use of civil society to weaken the state and fight against socialism. Recio (1997) argues that although Cuban writers have been aware of these themes and incorporated them into their debates on civil society, there is a general rejection of the neo-liberal focus that understands civil society as all that is not involved with, or is actively against, the state, a point with which the findings of this study concur. Limia (1999) maintains that the domestic polemic on civil society has been to a very large degree induced by external forces and in response to this neo-liberal offensive. While Acanda suggests that interpretations of the concept of civil society from the right, were so strong that they "out-shadowed attempts to interpret the idea as an instrument of the left" in its search for alternatives to the right's democracy promotion and transition programme (Acanda, 2002,p.319).

iv) The Political Rhetoric and Policy of the U.S.

Influencing the domestic debate and heightening the political controversy surrounding it, was the introduction in the 1990s of Track II of the United States' policy to promote regime change in Cuba. Spelt out in the 1992 text of the Cuban Democracy Act (Torricelli-Graham bill)[18] which hardened and extended the blockade against the island, it was proposed more openly in

1994 (Azicri, 2000), and then strengthened in 1996 with the introduction of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act or 'Helms-Burton' bill (see Hoffman, 1997; Diaz, 2002).[19] As noted in Chapter 4, Track II was a policy designed to use cultural, professional and personal exchanges between Cuba and the U.S. as the vehicle through which the U.S. administration's objective of promoting a civil society which would destabilize and ultimately overthrow the Cuban government, could be achieved. Commenting in May 1997 Wayne Smith, the then head of the U.S Interest Section in Havana, set out the objectives of Track II:

> Let us remember that in the words of its principal architect, then-Republican Robert Torricelli, the purpose of the Cuban Democracy Act … was to 'wreak havoc in Cuba' and get rid of the Castro government. Torricelli assured one and all in the debate on Cable News Network in December of 1992 that, as a result of the legislation, the Castro government would fall within weeks!' (Smith quoted in Azicri, 2000,p.189).

In President Clinton's *Plan for Democratic Transition in Cuba*, the U.S. administration confirmed that the aim was to restore in Cuba the civil society of 1958 and bring about a return to the 1940 Constitution.[20] Reactionary elements within the U.S., principally among the Cuban-American lobby, insisted that civil society did not exist in Cuba. This was due, they claimed, to the presence of a totalitarian state that impedes free association. These actors argued that the creation of such a realm would be a key element in the defeat of the Revolution. Consequently, the aim of the U.S. administration was the promotion of a civil society in Cuba that would be populated by not merely *non*-government organisations but *anti*-government organisations, which would eventually, as occurred in Poland, precipitate the fall of Cuban socialism.

Valdés Vivó (1999) takes this issue as the point of departure for the debate on civil society in Cuba, arguing that the debate was initiated as a result of the 'ideological pressure of the enemy' and the intensification of the U.S. administration's hostility via Track II (Valdés Vivó, 1999,p.169). According to Valdés Vivó:

> … this enemy advanced subtly among some of the academic community of our country. All of a sudden, they started to talk about civil society without its full name,[21] of NGOs which arose without a commitment to the Revolution. Some started to copy the conceptions of the North Americans, shying away from Soviet language. And the enemy brought with it a strategy: Track II' (Valdés Vivó, 1999,p.169).

According to Recio (1997), the importance attached to civil society outside of Cuba for making dynamic proposals for capitalist transformations within the country played its part in the emergence and dynamics of the debate on the island. In the Mexican edition of *Mirar a Cuba*, Hernández (2002,p.186) talks of the U.S. policy of promoting civil society as: "a policy to promote interchanges directed towards ideologically contaminating civil society in Cuba." Again, linking the question of security to the issue of civil society.

Although the new debate on civil society in Cuba may well, in part, have been stimulated as a reaction to U.S. policy, it was also constrained by it. The hostile mediations of

the U.S. administration, which was interested in using Cuban civil society for subversive and counterrevolutionary ends (Dilla, 2003b), added to the caution and reticence with which many Cubans viewed it as an analytical category and as a tool for rebuilding political consensus in the midst of an intense economic crisis.

v) The Latin American Left

The crisis of the left in Latin America and its attempt to reorganise and regain potency via the use of popular movements has also been identified by respondents as a key factor stimulating the debate (Suárez, interview, 15 April 2003). Hernández (1994) criticised the Latin American left for putting too much confidence in civil society and, specifically, challenged Castañeda's (1993) analysis (in which Castañeda proposes that the Latin American left had embraced the concept of civil society in order to renovate their discourse) as simplistic. However, Gallardo (1994) observed that the preoccupation with civil society in Latin America can not be separated for the processes of north-centred and uni-polar globalisation which their economies and societies were living.

5.2.4. Landmarks in the Cuban Debate

In the initial stages of the debate (between 1989 and 1993), the concept of civil society was used by the organic intellectuals of the Catholic church as a theoretical instrument to criticise the past and present strategies of the Revolution and put forward ways out of the situation of crisis, that had nothing to do with socialist alternatives. Valdés and Estrella's (1994) *Reconstruir la Sociedad Civil: Un Proyecto Para Cuba* (Reconstructing Civil Society: A Project for Cuba) was presented during the Catholic church's 'Second Social Week' in November 1994 and was a landmark text in the civil society debate. In this document Valdés and Estrella (1994,p.1) presented a classical liberal interpretation, identifying civil society as "the group of voluntary associations independent of the government" and "a sphere to be contrasted with the state". According to these authors, in Cuba there was no civil society as there was "a total lack of organisations" that generated "their own ideas [as opposed to the state's]" (Valdés and Estrella, 1994,p.2). Within this context, the only space for "communion and true participation" were the organisations of the Catholic church (Valdés and Estrella, 1994,p.1). What was needed, they argue, was a radical change of system, with a pluralistic democracy and a state that guaranteed stability. Private property would be the basis of such a system and the laws of the market would its guide. The traditional values of the church would provide the normative foundation for this civil society. However, the reconstruction of civil society that these authors outlined implied for many Cubans, the "elimination of the main achievements of the Revolution" (interview Limia, 12 May 2003, Havana).

The second landmark in the debate was the publication of Rafael Hernández's *Mirar a Cuba* (1993), closely followed by his article *La sociedad civil y sus alrededores* (1994) which appeared in the cultural magazine *La Gaceta*.[22]   Both articles were later included in his book *Mirar a Cuba: Ensayos Sobre Cultura y Sociedad Civil* (1999). As well as being publications which "took a new path in the analysis of the political and social reality" in Cuba (Hoffman, 1998,p.72), Hernández's texts were regarded by many Cuban analysts as the point of departure proper for the Cuban debate (Martínez, interview 21 April 2003, Havana). It was a time when many works were published presenting different positions on the theme and, particularly in the cultural camp, civil society became an area for reflection (Acanda, 2002). Dilla (2003b) suggests that the positive allusion to the role of civil society in Latin America made by Fidel in a speech at the Rio Summit was interpreted by Cuban intellectuals (and social activists) as a signal that the subject was now 'safe' to talk about after having been harshly proscribed by Soviet Marxism (see above and Chapter 3). Hernández's (1994) article was itself a response to a letter sent to the editor of *La Gaceta* from the writer Armando Cristóbal Pérez (*La Gaceta* 1/1994; see Fernández, 2000 for a discussion of Cristóbal's letter and Hernández's reply). In his letter Cristóbal Pérez commented on Hernández's (1993) essay arguing that there is "ambiguity between Hernández's use of the concept 'civil society' and 'actual society'" (*La Gaceta,* 1/1994,p.28) Cristóbal raises this important point before going on to argue that the origin of the imprecision and ambiguity surrounding the use of both concepts (society and civil society):

> … probably arises from the contemporary use that some currents of thought give to the latter, contrasting it to the concepts of 'political system' (and, of course, to its nucleus the State) and political society (Cristóbal Pérez, 1994,p.28).

Hernández (1994,p.17) is concerned to correct the impression given by analysts that Cuban society "is sleeping," which, he argues, is as much to say that civil society "practically does not exist". This, he claims, is a continuation of the opinion that in Cuba there is on the one hand, "the government, the party [and] the elite," and on the other, "the mass of passive subjects" (Hernández 1994, p.17; see also López, 1997). In an interview for this study Martínez makes a similar point, arguing that despite the need to improve Cuban civil society, "this is not to say that civil society is dead" (interview, 21 April 2003, Havana).

Like many participants in the debate, Hernández (1994) was interested in the conceptual dimensions of civil society, tracing the idea through the philosophy of Hobbes, Locke, Hegel and Marx and arguing that it is "an exaggeration" to say that, for Hegel, the state is totally outside of civil society (Hernández, 1994,p.34). He talks of the "abuse" of the concept by foreign analysts who "study Cuba from the outside" but also by some Cuban analysts "who regard it as a conservative concept," at the centre of "regressive forces in society" (Hernández, 1994,p.38-40). In Hernández's scheme, the polar division between state

and civil society is refuted. Like Bulté (see Chapter 3), he sees Cuban socialism as having its "roots" in civil society (Hernández, 1994,p.40). For Hernández, socialist civil society has evolved since 1959, becoming ever more complex and heterogeneous (Hernández, 1994,p.41).

Hernández's articles reoriented debate in Cuba towards socialist interpretations of civil society. Stressing the Marxist provenance of the idea, the work of Gramsci was a key point of reference. Like Alonso (2000a), he objected to the "satanisation" that the concept had suffered at the hands of dogmatic Marxists but also rejected the then-fashionable liberal ideas that civil society was either a neutral ideological sphere separate from the political or else an expression of opposition to the state and civil disobedience which, in the Cuban context, meant that only those dissident groups and the Catholic church would merit the title 'civil society'. Through his treatment of the concept, Hernández effectively rescued the term from its imprisonment within the liberal and neo-liberal vernacular and its exclusion from the Marxist. In such a way civil society was converted into an instrument with which to perfect socialism.

Other analysts recognised the importance of Hernández's pioneering work. Writing in 2000, Alonso argues that he was "without doubt one of those who has consistently and rigorously introduced this difficult theme for analysis" (Alonso, 2000a,p.174), enabling a middle path to be found between the "*officialistas*" and the "dissidents" (Alonso, interview 12 March 2003). This 'middle way' was adopted by those critical Marxists (Acanda, 2001, 2002) who saw that civil society might, potentially, be a space in which the Revolutionary project could be strengthened.[23] Such writers did not represent a homogenous group but they did share a vision to consolidate the process of the Cuban revolutionary process. Their position was reminiscent of that of the small group of intellectuals who in the 1960s had sought to find socialist alternatives to the 'only thought' advocated by those in power (see Chapter 3).

5.2.5. The Spaces for Debate

One of the principal spaces in which the debate about civil society occurred was within the pages of the journal *Temas*.[24] Established in 1995, in the middle of the economic crisis, *Temas* describes itself as a "cultural journal." It was also an important space "dedicated to the social sciences" (see Arango, 2002,p.12). The director of the editorial board was, and remains to this day, Rafael Hernández. The *Initial Words* of the first edition set out the journal's vision:

> *Temas* responds to the need to promote reflection and debate within contemporary cultural circles within Cuba and across Latin America … [The journal] incorporates a diversity of positions and interpretations which enrich knowledge of the problems of today, from an integrated cultural and multi-disciplinary perspective. *We want to stimulate discrepancy and exchange. We aim to collect together and represent the plurality that exists within Cuba today*, not only in the diversity of the areas of knowledge (that we cover), but also across generations and genders and between currents of thought. This is reflected by the composition of our editorial board and by our collaborators. We propose to maintain this fecund diversity in the pages of the journal […] *Temas* arises in the middle of the most intense economic and ideological crisis that Cuba has known within the last decades, and from within a framework

of Latin American and Caribbean though that seeks new directions. For this reason this journal's existence is not a luxury. We would like to modestly contribute to fighting the challenges of the present through the interchange of ideas, collaboration and the search for new realities between all of us. We hope that our readers take this intention which animates us and make it their own (*Temas* No.1, 1995, emphasis added).

The quarterly publication claims to be both "non lucrative" and "independent." Although it is not the "official organ of any state organism" (*Temas,* 1995, No.1), the journal has close links to the Ministry of Culture and since 1998 the current Minister of Culture, Abel Prieto, has sat on its editorial board. Over the years 1995 to date *Temas* has been funded by contributions from a range of sources including the Fund for the Development of Culture and Education (the Cuban Ministry of Culture), Oxfam-Canada, UNESCO, Oxfam-América, Ayuda Popular Noruega and, more recently (and arguably more surprisingly) the David Rockefeller Centre of Latin American Studies, of the University of Harvard.

Although other journals such as *Contracorriente* and *Debates Americanas* also appeared in the 1990s, it was *Temas* that was most successful in establishing itself as the central forum for the discussions in the social sciences in Cuba (see Hoffmann, 1998,p.80). Arango (2002) describes the appearance of these cultural magazines as "an expression of a renovated polemic" which had re-gained space on the island (Arango, 2002,p.12). He goes on: "we found in them, for the first time, reflections which centred on problems which had long been hidden by the press" (Arango, 2002,p.12). The catalyst for and background to such reflections was the economic crisis, which Arango regarded as having generated a wide debate about the destiny of the country not just externally, but also in Cuba (Arango, 2002). In her analysis of politics and culture in Cuba, Davies (2000) identifies other spheres where key debates were being played out, for example, in the performance arts (film and theatre), in the fine arts and, to a lesser extent, in literature. But, like Arango, she notes that it was in the "glossy cultural journals that … proliferate(d)" rather than in books, that the key debates took place (see Davies, 2000,pp.112-4).

Under the directorship of Rafael Hernández,[25] the first edition of *Temas* (Jan-March 1995) was entitled: *What do they think in Cuba?* It was a résumé of the 'state of the art' in a range of different discipline, from history to the social sciences, including: economics, sociology, psychology, religious studies, gender and generational studies. *Temas's* contributors were, and in many cases still are, key figures within their disciplines and tend to be mostly Cuban nationals, although foreign contributions are encouraged (interview with Hernández, 11 March 2003, Havana). In the second edition of the journal (April-June 1995)[26] the theme was: *What do they think about Cuba from Outside?* This edition was devoted to an analysis of the way(s) in which Cuba is studied in the U.S. Contributors were drawn from academics resident outside of Cuba as well as those on the island, who offered a Cuban perspective on the debate

over 'cubanology'. The last edition of the year was dedicated to the theme of 'Marxist Culture in Cuba' (September, 1995) and it was in this edition that the 'critical Marxists' mentioned above offered their perspectives. By the time that the fourth edition was published, other developments were about to influence the debate on civil society. Within it there was an article by Azcuy (1995) which took up the debate initiated by Hernández (1993 and 1994) in *La Gaceta*. In his article *State and Civil Society in Cuba*, Azcuy (1995) argues that given the diversity and plurality of interests emerging within Cuban society, it was no longer appropriate to organise society solely through the six mass organisations. Furthermore, he put forward the suggestion that civil society should not only be used as an instrument of analysis, but also 'as a *project*' (Azcuy,1995,p.105 his emphasis). Azcuy went on to argue:

> It would seem desirable and necessary that the debate over this important theme is broadened and deepened in a positive way, allowing a better appreciation of its place in the processes which this country is currently living through … there are aspects that should be discussed more in Cuba … It is not right to defensively fence-in or self-limit our responses, neither [is it right] that we should leave it to others to think for us about our own national reality (Azcuy,1995, p.112-3).

This was not, Hoffman (1998,p.81) argues, "what the Political Bureau [of the PCC] wanted to hear." The discussion about civil society had enabled alternative discourses to gain space which had the potential to challenge the hegemony of the Party-state and the political class that controlled this nexus. Recognising the danger, the Party-state suddenly responded.

5.3. THE RESPONSE OF THE PARTY-STATE

On 4th January 1996 the daily newspaper and official organ of the Cuban Communist Party, *Granma*, ran an article entitled *La Sociedad Civil o Gato por Liebre?* (Civil Society or Confidence Trick?) by Raúl Valdés Vivó, the Rector of the PCC's Ñico López Superior School. In it, Valdés Vivó denounced civil society as a "neo-liberal excrescence" and NGOs as its "institutional expression, designed to undermine from within, socialist society" (Valdés Vivó, 1996). Civil society was vilified as an instrument to cause internal fracture and undermine the progressive role of the state in social development. Somewhat paradoxically for a staunch anti-imperialist, Valdés Vivó was describing precisely the kind of civil society that the U.S. administration wished to foster in Cuba. Within his article, he negated any role for civil society other than as a force antagonistic to the Cuban state. By adopting the same ideological position as that of the U.S., essentially one which identified civil society as a site for dissent and opposition, Valdés Vivó along with "the most conservative elements of the state and party apparatus" (Dilla, 1998,p.4) began an "offensive against civil society" (Dilla, 1998,p.4). This offensive gained momentum after the introduction of the U.S. administration's Helms-Burton legislation in March of the same year (see above). Azcuy (1995) had earlier argued that it was

'logical' for the Cuban state to take measures to protect national independence and to prevent U.S. influence on the island, even if this meant a curtailment of liberties and rights for Cuban citizens, given the fact that the U.S. administration was using a series of policies that focused on an emergent civil society as a possible space for the subversion which (it hoped) would enable it to become an internal actor in Cuba. His words were to prove prophetic. In addition to the 1992 Torricelli and 1996 Helms Burton legislation, the U.S. administration approved financing, through USAID, to stimulate the activities of small groups of radical opposition on the island (see Diaz, 2002; Azcuy, 1995). Former Minster of Culture, Armando Hart describes U.S strategy in the following terms:

> … Now [Washington] is attempting to provoke chaos in our society by establishing directly relationships with some individuals, promoting organisational models outside of our political system, seeking to destablise the democratic order of our society (Hart, *Granma International* 18 September 1996,p.3).

Acanda has called the position adopted by Valdés Vivó and later by Núñez (see his article in *Bohemia*, April 1996), as one of a "Marxism of suspicion" (Acanda, 2002,p.323). Those who took up such a position regarded civil society as both a weapon for the U.S. to deploy against Cuba and a cynical maneuver on the part of the enemies of the Revolution within the island. Only one interpretation of the term was accepted, one which was essentially the same as the liberal position which counter-posed the state against autonomous associative spaces in civil society.

It was in March 1996 that the Cuban state produced an official version of what it understood by the term 'civil society'. On the 23rd March Raúl Castro, Head of the Armed Forces and Vice-President of the Council of State, read an official pronouncement by the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party (see Informe del Buró Político*, Granma* 26th and 27th March 1996 for full text) at its Fifth Congress. In this pronouncement, the Party mounted an attack on various NGOs, calling them a "Trojan horse" used by the U.S. to "ferment division and subversion" within Cuba (Raúl Castro, 1996,p.5). The book *Cuba: Crisis and Transition* (1992) published by the University of Miami was specifically mentioned, and those intellectuals contributing to it were accused of being "in the service of the United States government" (Raúl Castro 1996, p.5). Apparently, this book demonstrated a "new counter revolutionary strategy" at a time when the USSR was disappearing and when, in Miami, there were "shouts to prepare the suitcases for a return to Cuba" (Raúl Castro 1996, p.5). According to Raúl, the book characterised Cuban civil society as having "nothing to do with the state," as something that could "oppose and destroy" it (Raúl Castro 1996, p.5). In contrast, the Party offered the following definition of civil society:

> For us, civil society is not that to which the U.S. refers … Cuban socialist civil society is composed of our powerful mass organisations - the CTC, CDRs, FMC, ANAP, FEU, FEEM and even the Pioneers - as well as social organisations which group together amongst others,

the veterans of the Revolution, economists, lawyers, journalists, artists and writers, and those NGOs that act within the law and do not try to undermine the economic, political and social system which has been freely selected by our *pueblo*. Even when they have their own personality, and even their own specific language, together with the Cuban state [these organisations] pursue the common objective of building socialism (Raúl Castro 1996, p.5).

As Dilla (1998) was later to reflect, the *Informe* which the Party had produced offered a utilitarian definition of "socialist civil society," whose elements were "the traditional social and mass organisations and those NGOs that were considered acceptable" (Dilla, 1998,p.13). It appeared that despite sweeping changes in the structure of Cuban society (many of which had been precipitated by the state), the state and the Party adhered to an outdated model of civil society. Moreover, it was one which enabled the bureaucracy to control civil society by defining what did and did not belong to it as a category. What was, however, a dramatic change, was that the term 'civil society' was being used at all by high-ranking officials from within the political class.

5.3.1. The Campaign Against Ideological Subversion

Through the discourse presented by Raúl Castro, the Party launched an attack on social sciences in Cuba, with the CEA (*Centro de Estudios de América*) and to a lesser extent the CEE (*Centro de Estudios Europeos*) as its main targets. The accusations were harsh. The following extract provides an example of the tone of the discourse:

> Of course we need to make a distinction - and we have done so in relation to said Centre (the CEA) and elsewhere - between the Cuban investigator who might think in ways that are different from the accepted position regarding a particular subject - yet from a socialist stand point and using an appropriate framework - from the investigator who is a Cuban citizen and even holds a Party card but who has turned into a Cubanologist, disseminating their views with the complacency of our enemies (Raúl Castro, 1996,p.5).

The CEA was by no means the only target for attack. Other academic centres and publications were criticised as "a variant of Glasnost," as having "an annexationist orientation," and representing "the growth of fifth columnists" functioning at the behest of U.S. interests within Cuban society (Raúl Castro, 1996; for an analysis, see Dilla 1998). The attack on intellectuals and the battle between the organic intellectuals of the Party-state and alternative 'independent' intellectuals from within Cuban civil society was broadened:

> Within the universal environments of the cinema, radio, television - of culture in general - two types of conduct are discernable: that which is linked to the fidelity of our revolutionary *pueblo*, and then that of the small minority whose conduct, with its annexationist orientation that is completely alien to patriotism, characterises the behaviour of the majority of our intellectuals (Raúl Castro, 1996,p.5).

From the pages of the Madrid-based journal, *Encuentro de la Cultura Cubana,* Hoffmann (1998) argues that it was via this discourse that the Cuban leadership launched an attack on the social sciences in Cuba. According to Hoffmann (1998,p.71) Raúl Castro's speech was little

less than an "ideological crusade" by the Politburo. What was interesting about this particular attack was that it was aimed primarily at the social sciences, although it was broadened to include the cultural sphere more widely. This was a departure from past strategy, for up until this point it had been from the cultural sphere that examples were taken and denunciations made in order to define the limits of what was acceptable and unacceptable (Hoffmann, 1998; see also Chapter 3).

In practice, the Party's 'crusade' led to the virtual dismantling of the CEA. Straight after the discourse the then director of the CEA, Luis Suárez Salazar lost his position (see Hoffmann, 1998,p.81). Members of the CEA were dispersed but none were expelled from the Party and many continued to work on the same research themes in other organisations (interview Espina, 09 May 2003, Havana). In his account of the affair, Giuliano (1998) argues that although this was clearly "not a victory for democracy or civil rights," neither was it a victory for the Party orthodoxy.

The CEA (like the CEE) had been created in the 1970s by the Central Committee of the Party as an 'autonomous institute' intended to function as a state-sponsored but independent think-tank (see Edelstein, 2002). In the 1980s some CEA scholars had begun to study Cuban domestic affairs and by 1996 the centre had been reinvented as an NGO, receiving funding from external sources as well as the Party. It was at this time that:

> … the thinking at the CEA had become so independent that it had begun to think the unthinkable, and it came up with proposals that looked to hard-liners in the Central Committee like economic reformism (Chanan, 2001,p.401).

It was in the CEA that the "veteran Gramscians" of the 1960s had found a home, alongside a team of younger researchers who "owed their intellectual formation to the Revolution" (Chanan, 2001,p.401). Many of those who had been involved on the "losing side" in the 1970s closure of *Pensamiento Critico* found themselves once again at the centre of a confrontation between dogmatists and Gramscians within the Party.

More and tighter controls over NGOs, the dissolution of some associations in the process of being formed, and a reluctance to accept new organisations for legal registration, followed the denunciation of the CEA. "In the long term," Dilla argues, "the official definition (of civil society) implied an intent by the state to introduce a series of administrative controls over civil society and its dynamic" (Dilla, 1998, p.13). However, what was equally difficult was the 'uncertainty' left as a result of the attacks, described by Hoffmann in the following way: "no one knows who should receive the blows, but everyone lowers their head" (Hoffmann, 1998,p.81).[27]

Although not specifically mentioned, the journal *Temas* could consider itself one of the 'accused'. Tragically, Hugo Azcuy died of a heart attack soon after Raúl's discourse and although the fourth edition, which featured his article *State and Civil Society in Cuba*, was

presented to the public as normal, it was under difficult circumstances (Hoffmann, 1998,p.82). *Temas* continued to be published but the impact on the journal of Raúl Castro's speech was evident. Having analysed the themes covered by the journal both before and after the discourse, one respondent mentioned that he had noted a dramatic change in their tone and content after the fourth edition. "Less controversial issues" dominated later editions and gone were the "frank discussions" that had set the journal apart from its rivals (interview Marrero, 13 February 2003, Havana). It appeared that the editorial board's vision was out of pace with the realities of the (officially recognised) political environment.

Acanda (2002) describes Raúl Castro's discourse as: "an important text in the history of this discussion" (Acanda, 2002, p.323). With it, the idea of 'socialist civil society' and the need for its perfection became part of the theoretical arsenal of the Party. In his analysis of the impact of the *Informe*, Armando Hart, former Minister of Culture and Director of the *Oficina Nacional del Programa Martiano* (The National Bureau of the José Martí Programme) and President of *la Soicedad Cultural, José Martí* (The José Martí Cultural Society) argued that the document presented to the Central Committee in 1996, did not "shy away from" the expression 'civil society' but rather "characterised it (as): *socialist* civil society" (Hart, 1999, p.156). For Hart, this distinction was critical for he was of the opinion that the key to the use of the idea of civil society in the Cuban context was that the types of organisations labelled 'civil society' were of a socialist character. Principal among them were the unions, what Hart called civil society's "motors," followed by the social and mass organisations. Hart explained that there was no longer a need to fear either the existence of different organisations in society - so long as they were in line with the Constitution of the Republic - or the term 'civil society' itself (Hart 1999,p.156, see Chapter 3). In a collection of articles published during 1996 in *Granma* and *Habanera*, two periodicals with huge circulation within Cuba, Hart consistently used the concept and stressed the importance of its deployment in the consolidation of the Cuban revolutionary process. Unity could be secured, he argued, "only through the strengthening of both socialist civil society and the authority of the state" (Hart, 1999,p.158). Without this there would be "chaos" (Hart, 1999,p.158). From this it would appear that one way in which the authority of the state could be 'strengthened' was through the use of a discourse which legitimised different types of exclusion. Those academics who had worked at the CEA were to be excluded on grounds which would receive the unequivocal support of the majority of the population: the charge of aiding and abetting the U.S. in its efforts to undermine both the socialist system and national sovereignty in Cuba. By becoming what was effectively a non-Party alternative which did not speak the official language of the political class, the CEA had laid itself open to misuse as an instrument for enemy propaganda.[28] It is important at this point to contextualise the attack on the CEA. Although conditions had been facilitated by the

decades-long "multifaceted U.S. programme of hostility" (Edelstein, 2002,p.80), Edelstein identifies the incident in February 1996, when two small aircraft flown by the Miami exile organisation 'Brothers to the Rescue' were shot down after violating Cuban air space, as the "immediate precipitant" (Edelstein, 2002,p.80). For it was immediately afterwards that U.S. President Clinton responded by signing the Helms-Burton Act (see above).

In a move to strengthen the hegemonic discourse of the leadership, in 1996 the Party journal *Cuba Socialista* was re-launched by the PCC under the editorial leadership of José Ramón Balaguer, the man who had been sent in to investigate the CEA. This journal was to be the mouthpiece for "politically correct" official political discourse (Hoffmann, 1998,p.82). A few months later, a study by the Higher School of the Party was published in which participants talked of a civil society in Cuba as a legitimate space for action. They did not offer their own conceptualisation of the term but stressed that they were against the "bourgeois use of it to destablise the Revolution" (CEE 1997). Again, curiously, the state had closed the debate within civil society and *about* civil society, using arguments qualitatively similar to those which have since been used against its opponents. By doing so, the state displaced critical debate towards the right (Dilla, 2003a).

5.3.2. The Debate After 1996

Acanda (2002) claims that after the fixed positions in the Fifth Congress of the Central Committee of the PCC and the pronouncements of Armando Hart, the possibility of rejecting the use of the concept of civil society, or for considering it anti-Marxist and anti-Socialist, have been de-legitimised and are now "views that hardly anyone maintains" (Acanda, 2002, p.324). Further, he notes that some Cuban Marxists "who originally rejected the term" now use it but "tend to accept, in an a-critical way, the liberal interpretation" and think of civil society as "little more than a group of non-governmental organisations," reducing the discussion to a question of what type of organisations are acceptable, or not, in Cuba (Acanda, 2002,p.324). Those that take a Gramscian perspective, interpret civil society as the sphere of ideological production, organically interconnected with and tied to the state. These theorists centre their reflection on the need to perfect Cuban civil society "through the development of structures and institutions for ideological-cultural production within the framework of socialism" (Acanda, 2002,p.325).

By 2001 the political climate in Cuba was sufficiently open to enable a group of authors to publish a book which took as its theme Rosa Luxemburg's ideas about liberty. Luxemburg's assertion that "liberty can never be anything other than the liberty to think in another way" (quoted in Acanda, 2001,p.67) was the focal point of the discussion. In the book, which contains articles by members of the *Cátedra de Estudios Antonio Gramsci* (see below)

who in collaboration with the Centre Martin Luther King, met in February 1999 to discuss the application of Luxemburg's ideas for contemporary Cuba,   Acanda argues:

> … without the liberty to produce new thought, to express it and discuss the conceptions generated from diverse points of view … without the liberty to think 'in another way', which allows the disruptive and libertarian components of socialism to flower and germinate, there is no possible guarantee of the continuity of the Revolution (Acanda, 2001,p.76).

He goes on to quote Abel Prieto's observation that the Revolution has before it the task of creating a culture that is both "affirmative and critical at the same time" (Acanda, 2001,p.76). In contrast to the official perspective, for Acanda the discussion and development of "heretical" positions within the Revolution is essential: "the thought of the Revolution needs to be affirmative of its moments of subversion and critical of the persistence of old ways of thinking" (Acanda, 2001,p.76).   From this it would appear that Acanda, together with other critical Marxists, is continuing the Cuban tradition which the journal *Pensamiento Critico* had so briefly begun in the late 1960s and early 1970s: that of offering socialist alternatives to the 'official' socialist perspective.

The principal spaces in which reflection has continued over these questions have continued to be the journal *Temas*[29] and its *Último Jueves* (last Thursday) monthly open discussion meetings, as well as the seminars organised by the group 'Cátedra de Estudios Antonio Gramsci' at the Juan Marinello Centre for the Investigation and Development of Cuban Culture, Havana.   This centre describes itself as an NGO yet (like *Temas*) comes under the wing of the Ministry of Culture.   The 'Antonio Gramsci' group was founded in 1997 and showed, according to Acanda, "the Ministry of Culture's commitment … to the renovation of reflection on the cultural dimension of the Revolution" (Acanda, 2002,p.337).   This group of intellectuals (including Fernando Martínez Heredia, Jorge Luis Acanda, Juan Valdés Paz, Aurelio Alonso Tejada and Néstor Kohan, among others) also receives the sponsorship of the Protestant NGO, Centro Memorial Martin Luther King Jr.[30]   Miller (2003) observes that despite the obstacles facing academics working in the shadow of "an increasingly authoritarian state" and with the practical difficulties of the Special Period,[31] some remarkable work has been carried out by Cubans intellectuals.   For Miller:

> … the [recent] opening of a series of small windows, like those in an Advent Calendar, suggests that academics in the humanities are positioning themselves to take their place in a potential civil society that is gradually assembling its cumulative force for when it can emerge from the shadow(s) (Miller, 2003,p.157).

Despite the 'openings' the shadows remain.   In 2003 a respondent recounted the difficulties faced by academics who wish to run open courses which the general public can attend. Discussions are 'closed' not by direct imposition by the state but through more subtle means. For example, the presence of personnel from the central committee sitting in on the 'open' debate has proved to be more than enough to limit its parametres.   "Either no one would talk,"

this respondent reflected, "or certain themes could not be raised, effectively closing down the discussion" (interview, Marrero, 22 January 2003, Havana). This is a theme to which we return in the following chapter.

5.3.3. The 'Problem' of Alternatives

As seen in the previous chapter, in the early 1990s civil society had tried either to occupy those spaces abandoned by the state or simply to share social action in the economic realm. This was replicated in the cultural sphere and corresponded to a re-articulation of civil society in both theory and practice. In the same way that the state had hardened its position towards emerging community associations and extended over them greater control as the decade wore on (see Chapter 6), a similar process was repeated in the academic sphere. Despite the Party's claims, the academics denounced by Raúl Castro had not articulated liberal positions regarding civil society, quite the contrary, but in many ways this presented a greater danger. As in the early 1970s, any discussion of socialist 'alternatives' frightened the already nervous Party-state leadership, who recognised that within the context of the Special Period alternative socialist discourses had the potential to emerge, coalesce and challenge the dominant hegemonic discourse which underpinned its political dominance. The existence of multiple discourses could not be tolerated, for the emergence of heterodoxy, self-reflection and dispersion (Davies, 2000) was fundamentally at odds with the state's aim to assimilate differences where possible. The official Marxist narrative had been legitimate in Cuba for three decades (1960-1990) and although it had been "losing its attraction since the 1980s" (Davies, 2000), it was not until the economic collapse that alternative "stories" began to appear in public culture (Davies, 2000.p.105). By the mid 1990s, when economic recovery, though tentative, appeared more certain, the principal preoccupation of the Cuban state was not merely the existence of an organised opposition but the fear that this opposition could link itself to those (growing) spaces of discontent and demobilisation that were manifesting themselves in Cuban society (Limia, interview 12 May 2003, Havana; Marrero, interview 19 February 2003, Havana). Given this, the role of the social sciences in analysing and labeling such spaces and processes took on an even greater significance.

During the early 1990s there was what has been described as the "re-birth of social science in Cuba," as the academic establishment started to debate the problems of the country "in a form that had not been seen in the previous twenty-five years, that is, Hoffman (1999,p.72) argues: "with openness." At a time of crisis, Cubans sought to find out about and learn from alternatives. Their need to do so finds resonance with Kuhn's interpretation of crises as times characterised by: "a proliferation of competing articulations, the willingness to try anything, the expression of discontent, the recourse to philosophy and to debate over

fundamentals" (Kuhn, 1970,p.91). As one respondent interviewed for this study put it: "the crisis which we have experienced reveals all of the underlying tensions. It is at the moment of crisis that different currents of thought have surfaced in Cuba" (Marrero, interview, 19 February, 2003).

The debate about civil society linked up struggles in the public sphere to those in the political sphere. The need for both a space in the public sphere for political deliberation and expression, and a space within the political sphere for this expression to be incorporated and acknowledged, highlighted an important change in state-civil society relations. As we shall see in Chapter 6, the state reacted quickly to what it perceived as a threat to its hegemony and moved to regain its monopoly of both the agenda for debate and the space within which debate could take place. This involved the repression of existing organisations (like the CEA), the cooption of others (like *Temas*) and the creation or revitalisation of its own organisations (as occurred with the re-launch of *Cuba Socialista*).

Hence, civil society was on the agenda during the 1990s precisely because the relationship between the state and civil society was changing. The debate over civil society in Cuba was itself a reflection of this process of re-adjustment between the state and society in a post-Soviet era. It can not be regarded as coincidence that at a time when the relationship was changing 'on the ground' so to speak, it was also being re-thought by social scientists at the conceptual level. Their contributions to the debate and their subsequent interpretations of it, impacted on civil society's new course. The response of the Party's organic intellectuals - essentially to co-opt the concept of civil society which they recognised could be used as a metaphor for social change - was an attempt to influence the direction of that change, diluting the potency of the concept as an analytical tool in understanding what was actually happening.

5.3.4. Process and Idea

The effect of the interaction between civil society as an idea and civil society as a process was to promote the idea of civil society as a new idiom of Cuban politics, through which actors articulated and understood political processes, replacing or supplementing previous ideological discourses. The discourse of those leaders of social organisations and academics who were interviewed draws on the common metaphor of space. For example, they often point out the need for the state to "make space" or "create space" for other voices, ideas and interests. This demand for space rejects the state's model of civil society in which 'socialist civil society' should support rather than challenge, criticise or propose alternatives. The metaphor maintains salience as the public space is not as open as some would like it to be, and the political sphere lacks effective channels for groups to influence government policy. It is also discursive

evidence of a power struggle between government and organised social groups over the definition of their roles; a struggle in which the idea of civil society plays a major part.

International and national NGOs, the state and social organisations have all used the idea of civil society to legitimise their actions in recent years. For the state 'civil society' is an arena for subversion, while '*socialist* civil society' is the new way of conceptualising the peasant-worker alliance which has underpinned the Revolution since its earliest moments (see Chapter 3). For the United States civil society is both a means and an end. It is a means for influencing Cuban politics and it is an end in as far as it is perceived as the solution to democratic governance and a vibrant economy. For international NGOs civil society is the key to linking citizens around the world in common struggles and for social organisations it is a tool for mobilisation and legitimation.

The debate about civil society opened a range of discursive possibilities, including the parameters of the hegemonic political discourse and the available stock of ideas with which to challenge it. This interaction between an existing hegemonic political discourse and new ideas may potentially lead to changes in the dominant idiom of politics. Moreover, the idea of civil society provides a collective identity for diverse social organisations and, through consciousness of themselves as part of civil society, they have the potential to create a common frame of reference independent of the state around which they can coalesce. The acceptance of the idea by state officials provides social organisations with a degree of room to maneuver. What is less clear is how civil society might be involved in policy making. The notion of representing some constituency is particularly problematic. Civil society could contribute to political change through a process whereby organised groups act collectively to redefine their relationship to the state in a way that allows for greater organisational autonomy and participation in national decision-making. The case of Cuba exposes the fallacy of describing civil society as static, as something a country does or does not have, or as 'weak' or 'strong'. Such descriptions only make sense in relation to some idea of civil society against which reality is compared. A major theme characterising civil society in Cuba has been the role of social organisations as channels of mobilisation. The issue of self-identification with the label 'civil society' remains unresolved but the recent labelling of occupational and functional organisations that had existed since the Revolution as 'civil society organisations' underlines the dominance of the idea of civil society in Cuba.

In short, a deconstruction of what is commonly referred to as 'civil society' in Cuba in the 1990s exposes continuities with past processes as well as some of the recent transformations taking place within civil society as a result of the changing political context. It reveals how part of contemporary 'civil society' links up to past processes of mobilisation and past objectives of social groups, while part of it includes new forms, objectives and actors. The

idea of civil society merges with existing motives and processes to produce new circumstances, both expanding and limiting opportunities for participation.

CONCLUSION

The 1990s were a decade during which both the Cuban state and civil society struggled to find a tentative equilibrium in their relationship within the maelstrom of transformations that were taking place at the national and international levels. At this time, Cuban intellectuals were re-thinking fundamental debates, questioning their guiding paradigms and searching for stable ground amidst the ideological quicksand which appeared to surround them. In the case of the debate about civil society, the contributions and interpretations of Cuban intellectuals impacted on the very course of the processes which they studied: the new relationship which was being (re)negotiated between the state and civil society. The site of this struggle, as Gramsci shows, was civil society itself. The debate about civil society in Cuba, at least that which has been made public, has overwhelmingly been between distinct voices from *within* the Revolution itself, that is, between those respecting and wishing to preserve the Revolution's interests and achievements. This does not however mean that there has been consensus. Within the parametres of socialist debate there have been fierce critiques, and equally fierce defences, of both traditional and alternative views (see Arango, 2002,p.87). Of those voices outside of the socialist fraternity, those of the organic intellectuals of the Catholic Church have arguably been the most significant.

In this chapter literature gathered from Cuban sources, as well as data generated from interviews undertaken in Cuba have been used to map the contours of this debate, the pathways along which it has travelled, its characteristics and some of the controversies which have surrounded it. An attempt has been made to set the debate within its historical and contemporary context. It has been argued that the interplay between external and internal politics in Cuba, together with changes in social relations on the island during the decade of the 1990s, influenced the nature of the debate, those who participated in it, and the spaces that they were able to use for their discussions.

The very fact that the idea of civil society was on the public agenda in Cuba during the 1990s, that a debate emerged spontaneously and found for itself a space within public fora, points to an important change in the relationship between state and society during the decade, which in itself is worthy of analysis. It would seem that civil society was enjoying a renaissance both as an idea and as a process at this time, a dynamic which has not continued with the same vibrancy and openness today, as we shall see in the next chapter.

NOTES

[1] Not all proposals voiced by the mass organisations have been accepted by the National Assembly. One proposal that students should pay to go to University was not carried forward. As a "half-way measure" language schools have become fee paying in the 1990s, but the state provides English and French courses on its television network to increase access (García Brigos, interview 9 January 2003, Havana).

[2] Subsequent congresses were held in December 1997 and May 2003.

[3] One respondent reported that this Centre does not have good relations with another Cuban NGO which also is concerned with popular education, the Colectivo de Investigación Educativa 'Graciela Bustillos' (interview Marrero, 22 January 2003).

[4] The *Carta Pastoral* is a monthly bulletin published by the Catholic church in which the Church sets out its position regarding contemporary themes. It is widely discussed by academics (Fieldwork Journal).

[5] See 'Para entender nuestras religiones' (Towards an Understanding of our Religions) in *Temas* (1995) No.4 for a detailed analysis or religion in Cuba.

[6] For example, in 1999 the GAO (see Chapter 4) was one of four winners of the Right Livelihood Award, the 'alternative nobel prize'. It was chosen from more than 80 candidates from 40 countries for its work in promoting organic agricultural methods in farming (http:/www.foodfirst.org/progs/global/cuba.html. Accessed 27 November 1999).

[7] The increase in blank or spoilt ballots cast in recent elections was noted by many respondents as an indication of 'general discontent' but it was not perceived to be of a level to cause concern. On this issue see August, 1999; Kapcia 2000; and Dilla 2003a.

[8] He is referring to James Cason, who since September 2002 has been the head of the North American Interest Section in Havana.

[9] For example the FMC and UJC have centres for the study of women's issues and youth issues respectively.

[10] Both Limia and Martínez pointed to the need for greater emphasis to be placed on the issue of participation which both claim to be insufficient (Martínez, interview 21 April 2003, Havana; Limia, interview 12 May 2003, Havana), see Chapter 6 for a discussion of this issue.

[11] There is often a significant time lag in Cuba between the date of publication and the presentation of a book / journal to the public. On the day that this particular book was launched a large crowd of upwards of 100 academics and students crammed themselves into a room at the Centre Juan Marinello to hear Acanda speak. As soon as the announcement was made that the book was on sale the entire room erupted into a frenzy of activity as people literally fought to buy copies. Arguments broke out as some attempted to jump the 'queue' by crawling under tables and climbing over furniture. In an attempt to restore order staff hosting the event periodically shouted out that over a thousand copies had been printed and that those present should be patient. Having secured their copies the crowd then descended on the author himself in order to have their copies signed. As I had arranged to see Acanda after this event I sat with the author during this remarkable scene which he, like everyone else, appeared to enjoy immensely.

[12] Discussions were held, for example, by the Cátedra de Estudios Marxistas 'Julio A. Mella' of the Institute of Philosophy from 1994 under the direction of Dr. Isabel Monal. Other workshops included 'Reflections on Civil Society' run by the Escuela Superior del Partido 'Ñico López' from the 14-15 March 1996 (see Limia, 1997 for other examples).

[13] I am aware that Dilla (2003b,p.651) appears to have recently argued to the contrary, stating: "no one was worried about defining what civil society was, much less studying it" but Dilla is referring here to the very early years of the 1990s. My interpretation is based on data from interviews conducted with contributors to the debate and from an analysis of published literature (including many of Dilla's own works).

[14] Hegel's philosophical thought has long been rejected by the Cuban academic establishment although recently there has been more emphasis on his work, particularly in relation to the development of Marx's thought. In 2003 I attended an MA course module for Sociology students at the University of Havana which covered Hegel's contribution to the Marxist tradition. Interestingly, rather than finding *The Philosophy of Right* in the University Library, by chance I came across approximately two hundred copies of the text in a disused bathroom close to the main lecture theatre in the University's humanities building. Although it would appear from the number of copies present that this had been a core text, it would seem that there may yet be some way to go before Hegel is fully reinstated and literally brought 'out of the closet' so to speak.

[15] Cuban Institute for Radio and Television.

[16] Those examples most often cited in Cuban texts from this vast literature include: Keane, 1988, 1992; Offe, (1991); O'Donnell *et al* (1986) Arato, (1993), Green, (1993).

[17] Again, those works most often mentioned in the Cuban literature include the following: Jorge G. Castañeda: *La Utopía Desarmada*, Ed. Joaquín Mortiz, México, 1993; Damián Fernández: 'Civil Society in Transition', in *Transition in Cuba, New Challenges for U.S. Policy. A Project by the Cuba Research Institute,* Latin American and Caribbean Centre, Florida International University, 1993; Gellner, E. (1991) *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press; Keane, J., (1988) *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives* London, Verson; O'Donnel and Schmitter (1986) *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule* John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

[18] Signed in Miami by President Bush on October 23, 1992, at a political rally (Azicri, 2000,p.186).

[19] Having first contested the bill, President Clinton signed the Helms-Burton bill coinciding with the Republican primary in Florida, on March 12, 1996 (Azicri, 2000,p.205). It is important to note that this about turn on Clinton's part came after the 24 February 1996 *avionetas* incident in which the Cuban airforce shot down two Brothers to the Rescue planes (see Azicri, 2000; Kapcia 2000).

[20] The 1940 Constitution was hailed inside and outside Cuba as constitutional reform which would revise executive-legislative relations and introduce a 'semi-parliamentary system' which would encourage democratic tendencies and curb authoritarianism (see Stokes, 1949).

[21] He means 'socialist civil society'.

[22] In a recent article Dilla (2003b,pp.650-1) notes that Hernández first argued about the importance of 'civil society' in 1984 at a talk at the CEA. At this time "ideas like those of Hernández were viewed, at best, as needless intellectual subtleties," although the situation had changed by the late 1980s.

[23] In his article in the collection *Rosa Luxemburg: Una Rosa Roja Para el Siglo XXI* Acanda (2001) discusses the importance of Luxemburg's thought (along with that of Marx, Gramsci and Foucault) for a 'critical Marxism' which re-interprets and stands against the 'dogmatic' position of many Marxists. This internal struggle within Marxism to construct the conditions that will make possible another alternative mode of thought is identified by Acanda as essential (see Acanda 2001,pp 67-77).

[24] The information I use in this section relating to *Temas* comes from my access to its archives during fieldwork in Havana (2003) and from interviews with staff, particularly Rafael Hernández and Vani Pedraza, and contributors.

[25] For two decades Hernández worked at the CEA where he directed the North American studies programme.

[26] Not published until August 1995. As mentioned previously, see note 11, there is often a delay in publication in Cuba (interview, Hernández, 11 March 2003, Havana), a point reiterated by Arango, the editor of *La Gaceta* (interview, 23 April 2003, Havana).

[27] See Chapter 4 for examples of manifestations of this 'uncertainty' in other areas, for example, within the ambit of the self-employed.

[28] Even seven years later, when data collected for this analysis was collected, sentiments still ran high among the intellectual community regarding the *caso CEA* and although some showed sympathy for the position of those academics who had been involved, others still regarded them as "traitors" (interview, García Brigos, 04 March 2003, Havana).

[29] Especially the no. 16-17 edition of 1999, with its round table debate on civil society in the regularly featured *Controversia* section of the journal. Participants included: Milena Recio, Jorge Luis Acanda, Berta Alvarez, Haroldo Dilla, Armando Hart, Rafael Hernández, Miguel Limia, Isabel Monal, Raúl Valdés Vivó.

[30] They have recently held international sessions on the following themes: *Rosa Luxemburg and Contemporary Problems* (11-12 February, 1999) and *The Work of Michel Foucault* (2000). From each conference a book has been produced, again, as with many editions of *Temas,* with the help of funding from the Ministry of Culture's Fund for the Development of Education and Culture.

[31] She is referring to the difficulties in acquiring basic stationary supplies, a problem which was particularly difficult during the 1990-1996 period. Today the situation is less critical but remains an issue.

Chapter Six

A Redefinition of State-Civil Society Relations? From the 1990s and into the New Millennium

INTRODUCTION

This chapter evaluates state-civil society relations over the period 1990 to 2003, when data collection for this study ended. Drawing on the longitudinal understanding of these relations developed thus far (see Chapters 3-5), together with an analysis of their characteristics in the early years of the new millennium, the current chapter aims to reach some conclusions regarding the nature and impact of modifications in state-civil society dynamics since the inauguration of the Special Period. In short, the chapter answers the central question posed in the introduction to the thesis: Have changes taken place in state-civil society relations which have been transformative, that is, have state-civil society relations been redefined during these years?

To this end, the chapter begins by briefly reviewing the argument developed in the previous two chapters. It then analyses five interlocking strategies, identified from the data, which the state used during the thirteen years that are our focus in a bid to re-articulate its hegemony and reinforce social control. The perceptions of key actors regarding the state's use of these strategies are incorporated into the analysis which is intended to throw new light on the nature of the relationship between the state and civil society. The chapter concludes by discussing the transformations that have taken place in state-civil society relations and briefly explores the challenges facing those in power in Cuba today. It is argued that the main constraint on state-civil society relations remains the influence of, and interplay between, hegemonic politics both within Cuba and between the island and the U.S.

6.1. REVIEWING THE ARGUMENT: THE DYNAMICS OF OPENING AND CLOSING SPACES

We have seen in chapters 4 and 5 that the Cuban state's capacity to structure outcomes declined in the early 1990s, while civil society's diversity and power increased. To some extent, the state had itself provoked these trends. However, the decline in the state's previously unchallenged capacity to control the distribution of goods and services, social and political discourse, and (hence) ideological production, weakened the ideological and political resources available to it. It also created opportunities for a range of cultural, religious, economic and

community actors to fill new spaces which were expanding as rapidly as the state was retreating. However, by the mid 1990s the state was in a position to move against those elements of civil society which it had previously tolerated and/or promoted; in this way curbing the power of some non-state actors. For example, in the previous chapter we saw how the CEA was dismantled and its workforce dispersed. It was suggested that this process could be interpreted as part of a wider attempt by the political class that controlled the state to reassert its hegemony within civil society.

Echoing these shifts in the balance of power between state and civil society (and to some extent responsible for them), two trends characterised the Cuban state's policy in the 1990s. The first was a trend to 'open up' spaces for new forms of economic, political and cultural activity from the early to mid 1990s. The second, a reverse dynamic, followed. Beginning mid-decade and running into the early years of the new century, it represented the onset of a process intended to regulate, limit, co-opt or close down spaces for activities and debates which were perceived to be counter-hegemonic, or potentially so. Suárez puts it succinctly: "the state's policies of adjustment [to the economic crisis] opened up spaces which have since been closed" (interview 15 April 2003, Havana).

The opening trend unlocked a pandora's box of social forces which spilt into the social arena, dramatically changing its configuration and worrying hardliners within the Party and state (Rausberg, interview 04 May 2003, Havana). The subsequent closing can perhaps best be interpreted as a response to this process and an attempt to limit what were perceived by some within the political class to be its negative repercussions. The dynamics of these trends and their momentum, were influenced by a constellation of internal and external forces which acted variously as catalysts or inhibitors. Although it had been the Cuban state which had initiated the economic and political reforms that energised the opening dynamic, and thereby facilitated the emergence of a rejuvenated civil society, civil society itself was an important protagonist during the early years of the 1990s. In its diverse forms, Cuban civil society moved spontaneously to occupy spaces over which the state was either unable to maintain control or had been forced to abandon. As civil society's role changed, so too did its relationship with the state. Initially, the state had little option but to tolerate these changes and to manage them as best it could. It was adept at recognising those critical moments which signaled that a range of "escape valves" should be opened just sufficiently to allow mounting social pressure to dissipate safely, without the risk of social control being lost (Rausberg, interview 4 May 2003, Havana). Although a serious internal political crisis was avoided, during the summer of 1994 the skills of the leadership were put to the test as violence erupted on the streets of Havana. With the beginning of economic recovery that same year,[1] those forces from within the Party and state which had been against the opening, were in a position to begin a process designed to

reestablish the equilibrium which had previously existed between state and civil society and which they considered desirable. Though the economic recovery acted as a fulcrum, the majority of those interviewed suggested that it was not the *cause* of this process, preferring instead to highlight the complexities of the situation and the inextricable nature of the link between political and economic factors (interview Sotolongo, 24 March 2003, Havana). We have seen that as the Cuban economy reached this pivotal point, the United States moved to intensify and extend economic and political pressure on the island. At the same time that the U.S. was adjusting its stranglehold in order to exert a tighter grip on the island, a process of 'closing down' social and political openings, and closer regulation of domestic economic activity, began. This "internal tightening" (interview Basail, 10 April 2003, Havana) was justified by the Cuban state, and accepted as "legitimate" by large sectors of Cuban civil society (interview Valdés Paz 30 April 2003), due to the increase in U.S. aggression and the widely accepted need to maintain internal security at all costs. Paradoxically, in order to justify the closing dynamic, the Cuba state drew upon the same logic as its enemy; a logic based on the belief that the newly expanded Cuban civil society represented a potential site for organised opposition, counterrevolutionary sabotage and destabilisation on the island (see Chapter 5). As the Cuban state moved to re-occupy spaces, formerly spontaneous social movements became formalised. Dynamics for transformation which had originated in civil society were dampened, stifled and, in some cases, repressed.[2] The political leadership recognised that although the state's monopoly over the economic sphere, which was structurally more diverse and populated by a range of new actors, could not be regained, a brake could be applied to the pace of reform (interview with Carranza, 7 May 2003). Overall, the state's strategy during the early 1990s was one of survival (Monreal, 2002). Monreal argues that as the economic situation improved and the state gained confidence in the durability of the economic recovery, it began to implement a *estrategia de perfeccionamiento,* which he translates as "a strategy for upgrading" which was "superimposed" over the previous strategy (Monreal 2002,p.76). By 2003 Cuban economists such as Julio Carranza were arguing that a new generation of reforms was required:

> The economic reforms that have been introduced have not been wide-ranging enough. I think a second phase is now needed. The two sectors in most urgent need of reform are banking and the taxation system. But a brake has been put on the reform process. To understand this you need to consider the initial motivation for the reforms which was the need to face the economic crisis. Once it was perceived that a recovery had begun the political process of applying the breaks began. In my opinion a new generation of reforms is now essential. The previous reforms dealt with the situation as it was. Today we face a new situation and new reforms are needed. However, my proposals are not being followed (interview 7 May 2003, Havana).

Despite disagreements and fractures among hardliners and reformers within the political class, the leadership enjoyed sufficient internal cohesion to maintain social control in the 1990s (Rausberg, interview 4 May 2003) and avoid a regime transition of the type experienced in

Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union (see Waller, 1993; Brown 2002), despite the predictions of Cuba-watchers (see Chapter 1). In short, there was a hardening of positions around a hegemonic response to the economic crisis and its social and political ramifications. As we shall see in the following sections, by using five interlocking strategies the political class was able not only to re-establish, but also strengthen, its hegemony. It is to a closer examination of these strategies that we now turn.

6.2. THE STATE'S STRATEGIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON STATE-CIVIL SOCIEY RELATIONS

Gramsci argues that when the hegemony of the dominant class has been achieved, coercive mechanisms of social control are superceded by consensual mechanisms, although coercive mechanisms remain latent, or in the background. Over time, a movement from coercive to consensual forms of social control has been identified as a characteristic of the Cuban Revolution. Dilla and Oxhorn (2002), for example, argue that the use of violent repression became less frequent and, where violence was used, it was with the support of significant sectors of the population. A range of mechanisms were developed by the dominant political class to exclude or condemn 'dissent' which relied predominantly on ideological means of socio-political control and regulation; again, with the consensus of the majority of citizens who increasingly accepted the worldview of this group and their project. These mechanisms enabled hegemony to be maintained through a continual process of adjustment and re-adjustment according to, and in anticipation of, the interplay of those objective and subjective conditions which defined the context. However, as indicated by Gramsci, a movement towards consensual forms of social control should not be regarded as irreversible. As we shall see, when consensual mechanisms break down, coercive mechanisms pass from latent to active.

The data collected for this study suggests that during the period 1990-2003, the Cuban state used a range of mutually reinforcing consensual and coercive strategies to reassert its hegemonic position vis-à-vis civil society. These strategies included: co-opting civil society agency; managing consensus; controlling the agenda; developing new modes of participation and increasing repression. As a consequence, parametres of inclusion and exclusion shifted dramatically during these years. We begin by examining the ways in which the state incorporated or 'co-opted' civil society agency.

6.2.1. Co-opting, Harnessing or Displacing Civil Society Agency

Migdal (1988,p.229) describes how one method used by states to "keep a reign on social organisations with independent mobilisation capabilities" and "eliminate alternative power

centres" within their societies has been to incorporate these organisations, or their functions, into state or state-allied institutions. He labels this strategy "harnessing or displacing" competing organisations (Migdal, 1988,p.31). One of the clearest examples of the Cuban state's co-option of civil society agency can be seen in what Suárez (interview, 15 April 2003, Havana) describes as the recent "crisis of relative autonomy" of civil associations. During the period when the economic crisis was at its most intense (1990-1994) these associations exhibited relative autonomy from the state. Having emerged spontaneously from within communities, they were not initially subject to state regulation or control (Suárez, interview 15 April 2003, Havana). Gradually however, these organisations, and the spaces they represented, were taken over or reoccupied by the state as it moved to reincorporate them within official structures. Hence, in ways that echoed those used in the immediate post-Revolution period (see Chapter 3), the state aimed to ensure that the power of alternative, potentially counter-hegemonic, structures was diffused while, conversely, its own power was re-concentrated. According to those interviewed, while acting in this capacity, the Cuban state can best be described as a "centralising state," a state which "absorbs," "formalises," "weakens" and "takes over" new social movements in order to avoid fragmentation (interviews with Marrero, 22 January 2003, Havana; Espina, 9 May 2003, Havana).

Reflecting on the decade of the 1990s, De la Torre argues that in general "spaces for alternatives have been closed and lost" (pers.comm. 27 March 2003, Havana). Other respondents gave concrete examples of this phenomenon, pointing, for example, to the way in which spaces that had been "informally" occupied by various elements of the youth, such as the *Parque de Lennon* (Lennon Park) in Havana's El Vedado district, have been "taken over" and "made official" during recent years (interviews with Marrero, 22 January 2003, Havana; Toirac, 5 February 2003 Havana. See also Toirac 2003). As a consequence of the state's (re)appropriation of these spaces, their former inhabitants have been dispossessed of, and displaced from, those territories with which they had identified and where they were able to share a collective identity, strengthened by its close association with a geographic space, with like-minded others (Toriac, 2003). Many of the city's *rockeros*, (fans of heavy rock music) who on weekend nights regularly occupy the *Parque de G y 23* (the Park between streets G and 23) on the Avenida de los Presidentes in El Vedado, claim that they can no longer identify with the *Parque de Lennon* now that it is patrolled by wardens who ask them continuously to "keep off the grass," a euphemism for not contravening the new rules governing the space (Luis* interview, 13 January 2003, Havana). Reflecting on data collected during her (2003) ethnographic study of nightlife around street 23 in Havana, Toirac (interview, 19 April 2003) notes that this group now favours the more "public" (i.e., visible) space that the park at G and 23 offers, in particular the opportunity to "be seen" as a group and, conversely, to "watch" other

actors who traverse "their" space, or its perimeters, as a means of marking the differences between themselves and others. Distinguishable by their distinctive dress and hairstyles, the *rockeros* represent a stark contrast with other actors within the setting who, in turn, regard them with suspicion (interview Adita* 12 February 2003, Havana). According to Aguirre (2000,p.18) these "modes of dress, body language, adornment [and] gestures" are "discrete symbols of dissent" which "the system cannot completely stop." Moreover, these codes indicate the presence of a "subterranean, persecuted, shadow world of alternative realities in Cuba" (Aguirre, 2000,p.18).

Although the *rockeros'* use of the park as a meeting place to talk and listen to music has been tolerated by the police, its association with the sale and consumption of hallucinogenic drugs - "here all types of hallucinogenics are consumed, anything that ends in *il*" (quoted in Toirac, 2003,p.7) - has meant that those who gather there are frequently asked by the authorities to show their identity cards and run a high risk of being rounded up and taken into police custody for questioning. In early 2003, respondents indicated that the state's *campaña contra la droga* (campaign against drugs) which was in train, made toleration of the *rockeros* - who are popularly perceived to be "delinquents" engaged in "anti-social behaviour" (drug-taking and 'idleness', i.e., unemployment[3]) - "less likely to continue" (interview Adita* 12 February 2003, Havana).[4] Many parents interviewed for this study spoke of their fear that their own children might be influenced by the "deviant" behaviour (ranging from growing hair long, wearing exclusively black clothes and heavy make-up, to life style attitudes and the illegal activities mentioned above) of groups like the *rockeros*. One mother suggested that it was the duty of all citizens to report the first signs of "deviancy" or "abnormality" of this kind to the CDR who would "monitor the situation" and, where necessary, "arrange to have the offender re-educated" (interview Yolanda* 12 February 2003, Havana). This view (supported by Rey, interview 25 March 2003, Havana) would appear to indicate that there continues to be considerable pressure on young people in Cuba to conform to the 'norm' and follow accepted style and orientation codes.

Despite the state's attempts, where possible, to incorporate or render impotent, potentially counter-hegemonic spaces, there is considerable evidence that spaces for non-conformity continue to exist in the capital. These spaces are no more than pockets, but they represent an important aspect of civil society's new geography. Spaces recently (re)appropriated by previously repressed groups such as male homosexuals[5] have, increasingly, been tolerated by the authorities (Rausberg, interview 4 May 2003, Havana). For example, since the mid 1990s the pavement area immediately outside of Havana's *Cine Yara* on the corner of streets L and 23 (opposite the *Havana Libre* hotel) has become the Saturday night meeting place for the city's gay community (on gay life in Havana see Arenas, 1992;[6] see also

Lumsden, 1996). Another outdoor gay scene is a section of the nearby *Malecon* seafront wall. Despite a noticeable police presence after 10 p.m. at both locations and in spite of attempts by the authorities to disperse any large groups which congregate there, it appears that the *Yara* and the *Malecón* will remain "gay spaces," as one respondent put it, until such time as either an alternative location is found by those who use and identify with them, or, as has occurred before (see Toirac, 2003), the authorities move to 'close' these spaces (interview Ricardo* 30 March 2003, Havana). Although there is no law prohibiting homosexuality in Cuba, as with the *rockeros*, the police periodically either round up or disperse groups congregating at the *Yara* or *Malecón* in order to protect public order (interview Ricardo* 30 March 2003, Havana). Article 303a of the Penal Code (30 April 1987) punishes "publicly manifested" homosexuality with between three months to one year in prison. There is also legal provision to fine those "persistently bothering others with homosexual amorous advances." Due to difficulties in interpreting these laws their application has been very uncertain but respondents claim that outward indications of homosexuality (clothing or behaviour) have been used as grounds to prosecute.

Indicative of the state's new stance in the 1990s regarding the hitherto taboo subject of homosexuality,[7] was the making and screening of Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's (1993) award winning film *Fresa y chocolate* (Strawberry and Chocolate), based on a short story by Senel Paz. The film focuses on the friendship between two Cuban men: David, an "ideologically correct" straight Communist student and Diego, a gay photographer. Diego is a free thinker who manages to convince David that the Revolution should value, rather than repress, difference.[8] By depicting a male homosexual artist as its hero the film brought the issue of homosexuality to the very centre of public discussion. Although the film criticised the culturally and sexually repressive atmosphere and policies of the Revolution in the 1970s (Paz, 2003), it was also critical of contemporary Cuban reality and dealt with issues of prohibition, marginalisation and denial in ways which, according to Paz (2003), would find resonance with its audience. Given this, what made *Fresa y chocolate* particularly remarkable was the fact that its production had been funded by the state.

Green (2001,p.651) argues that the film "critically assessed the regime's policies and attitudes toward homosexuality" and "sparked an informal national debate about the treatment of gays under the revolutionary regime" after it was shown to packed audiences throughout the country. Basing his analysis on Lumsden's (1996) study of homosexuality in Cuba, Green concludes that Cuba's "authoritarian political culture" does not encourage self-organization:

> Groups of lesbian and gay men with a political agenda to fight homophobia, discrimination and sexism have yet to materialize, as they have in the rest of Latin America. Nevertheless, Cuban gays have shaped a vibrant nightlife and forged important social networks, in spite of continued state regulation of sexuality and its opposition to manifestations of homosexuality (Green, 2001,p.651-2).

In a city which denies them other possible public spaces, many of those among Havana's gay community interviewed by Toirac (2003) claimed that their illuminated night-time territory outside the *Yara* provided a much needed space where they could meet and identify with others; a view which was reiterated by respondents interviewed for this study who also highlighted the "highly gendered" nature of community space in Cuba (Luis* and Dania,* interviews 13 January 2003, Havana).

In 1994 the Gay and Lesbian Association of Cuba was formed (see its Manifesto in Lumsden, 1996) but by 1997 it was unable to operate following police harassment of its members who were arrested at their places of employment. Within the "out-group" (Migdal, 1988) of the homosexual community itself, lesbians have encountered a particularly difficult situation. Rausberg (interview 4 May 2003, Havana) describes how it is impossible for lesbians to organise, and indicates that male chauvinism or a "macho mentality," however much in decline (Lumsden, 1996), still precludes the acceptance of public spaces for lesbians. Though largely excluded from formal public spaces, a vibrant lesbian sub-culture does however exist in Havana, particularly among artistic and literary circles. Moreover, Lesbians have well developed informal private networks which operate to support them in times of need which may offer the potential for development. Another respondent cited the lack of popular acceptance which he felt as a gay man as the prime reason behind his desire to leave Cuba and seek a new life in the U.S: "where there are spaces for people like me … where I can breathe [freely]" (interview with Ricardo,* 30 March 2003, Havana). In general, many gays feel excluded from community activity and participation (Luis,* interview, 13 January 2003, Havana).

Other spaces less defined by their physical geography than the *Yara*, *Malecon*, or the *Parque de Lennon* are not so easily controlled by the state. The impromptu rap, R&B and hip-hop performances which take place at street parties in Havana's back streets are just one example of the way in which elements from within civil society have recently taken temporary ownership of urban spaces, circumventing the usual bureaucratic procedures and 'permissions' required to hold street activities and festivals (García Torres, interview 26 March 2003, Havana). These spontaneous events are announced by hastily prepared advertisements or by word of mouth.[9] The crowds form and then dissipate quickly, leaving little tangible trace of the social movement which has begun to coalesce around this music. Almost entirely a black phenomenon, there is however evidence of a growing minority of white youths who identify with this 'black' culture and use it to assert a new form of 'anti-establishment' identity (interview, De la Torre 23 April 2003, Havana), a trend which is not unique to Cuba (see Sewell, 1998; Frosh 2002). Olavarria (2002,p.29) describes how Afro-Cuban youth, "with the accent on the Cuban" as she puts it, have adopted the genre from the U.S. and transformed it

into a space for self-expression that constitutes their identity. While not all Cuban rap is politically charged, the music has been used as an instrument of social criticism, the expression of disenchantment with life in the Special Period, and as a vehicle for identifying deficiencies that exist within society. Olavarria claims:

> … a number of groups have begun an important movement for cultural and social change, using rap as a vehicle to speak out about racism, prostitution, police harassment, growing class differences, the difficulty of daily survival and other social problems of contemporary Cuba. While rap is not necessarily offering solutions to these problems, the movement has created an opening for freedom of expression under the threat and pressure of state censorship (Olavarria, 2002,p.28).

In a recent article in the *Guardian*, Gavin McOwan describes the "angry" music of Havana hip-hoppers *Los Aldeanos*:

> Los Aldeanos have a heavy urban sound and hard-hitting lyrics. They're rapping about racism, social injustice, housing, unemployment, corruption - there's no holding back (Guardian, 20/11/04,p.12).

During the 1980s and early 1990s this music was part of an underground which was viewed by the state with suspicion and its artists and followers perceived as the carrier of capitalist, anti-social influences. However by the mid 1990s, in what would appear to be a complete about-turn, the state began promoting and supporting (to the extent that it could) hip-hop and rap festivals as well as radio shows dedicated to these sounds. Interestingly, it was also active in allying the growing number of groups[10] to organisations such as the Asociación Hermanos Saíz (an organisation that promotes young artists) which were linked to the UJC, a move which was intended to "keep the reins on" (Migdal, 1988,p.229) such groups by incorporating them into state organisations or state-allied institutions. At this time, officials from the Ministry of Culture began to decide the parametres for inclusion and exclusion at festivals and were quick to exclude acts that came too close to the sensitive issue of racism[11] in a context where official discourse has declared it to be a "non-issue" (Miranda, interview 8 April 2003, Havana). One (white) respondent claimed that 80 per cent of those receiving social security and 95 per cent of Cuba's prison population in 2003 were black (interview Rausberg, 4 May 2003 Havana). Aside from these statistics, evidence gathered during data collection suggests that an underlying racism persists in Cuban society (interview, Hernández, 11 March 2003, Havana).[12] The following extract from an interview transcript illustrates this:

> The 1990s were a decade of crime … Although they had seen a stranger in the building our neighbours did not stop the thief. He was white and therefore they did not think he could have been stealing (interview with retired customs officer,* 16 January 2003, Havana).

The state's attempts since the mid 1990s to move rap and hip-hop groups towards the official fold, where they could be more easily controlled, indicates its awareness of the political potential of the music and its social role in opening spaces to create a "better society" (Fernández quoted in Olavarria, 2002,p.28). It is another example of the state's tendency to

"officialise" noted by Marrero (interview, 24 February 2003, Havana). There are, however, strong expressions of *cubanidad*[13] in much Cuban rap (see, for example, the lyrics of the Orishas and X Alfonso) which suggest that these artists have an awareness of Cuba's marginalised position within a hostile capitalist world order and that they identify with Cuba's role as an alternative within it. In this way rap is used to express a complex dilemma facing many Cubans, namely, how to criticise the excesses and defend the achievements of the Revolution simultaneously.

In a context in which the state's control of discourse is paramount, words have become a critical currency in the battle to express diversity, non-conformity and new identities. Fernández (1993) mentions the evocative anti-establishment power of the words *teque teque* when used by Cuban youths to characterise the tired stilted phraseology of state bureaucrats, and the liberating power of the word *frikis* (freaks or 'freakies') as an identity conferred on young people who are not connected with, or participating in, the official vision. According to Marrero (interview 22 January 2003, Havana), one of the main problems facing Cuba's younger generations is that despite being highly educated they have "no way of satisfying their wants." It is in this context, Limia claims, that the "role of the U.S. dream" has "won space" among the youth, who see in it "the precarious proposal for consumption" that they crave (interview Limia, 12 May 2003, Havana). Given this, Limia describes how the hegemony of the political class must be continuously adjusted, with particular consequences for 'ideological work'. Speaking about the 'problem' of meeting the needs of different generations he makes the following observation:

> The children of the Revolution - and by this I mean those born after 1959 - have been formed in the conditions that the Revolution provided. They have grown up with the Revolution and as such are able to evaluate society not on the basis of the past but on the basis of the future; a socialist future. That is to say, they evaluate the present using the criteria of the future rather than those of the past, with the consequence that ideological work with them can not be the same as it was with those that have gone before them (Limia, interview 12 May 2003, Havana).

Increasingly, Davies (2000) argues, elements of contemporary Cuban civil society have begun to privilege heterogeneity and subjectivity; a trend which may explain the state's recent moves towards greater toleration of sexual and religious diversity (see Chapter 4 and above). A reassessment of 'minority' cultures (women, gay culture), the creation of new styles (*frikis, rockeros*) and the appearance of what Davies (2000,p.113) describes as "transgressive Cuban identities" can all be identified within the contemporary social milieu.[14] In *Máscaras* Padura Fuentes's (1997) novel (published in both Cuba and Spain) the protagonist describes a party scene in which various new transgressive identities are performed:

> Activists in favour of free sex, of nostalgia and red, green and yellow parties … gays of all categories and affiliation … nihilists converted to Marxism and Marxists converted to shit; people with all kinds of chips on their shoulders: sexual, political, economic, psychological,

social, cultural, sports, electronic … practitioners of Zen Buddhism, Catholicism, witchcraft, voodoo, Islam, Santaria, a Mormon and two Jews … admirers of Pablo Milanés and enemies of Silvio Rodríguez … the repatriated and patriots; the expelled from every possible place you can be expelled from … (Padura Fuentes 1997,pp.143-144, translation in Davies, 2000,p.113).

Despite Padura Fuentes's apparent celebration of this diversity, Suárez (interview 15 April 2003) refocuses our attention on the "sacred value" of unity in Cuban political culture which, during the 1990s and beyond, has come to represent the "glaze of homogeniety" that Rudakoff (1996) identifies in her analysis of contemporary Cuban theatre. "Unity, the construction of hegemony, consensus and legitimacy are vital here," says Suárez. "But how then," he continues, "do you dissent in this context? How do you organise if you are, say, a gay Christian?" Suárez leaves his own question unanswered but lying implicit within his silence are the unspoken difficulties, at times impossibilities, that face subordinated groups who wish to challenge the 'correctness' of the dominant group's social mores and religious controls. By way of conclusion, he states: "What we have lost here is diversity and the toleration of sub-identities in the associative world" (Suárez, interview 15 April 2003). For Suárez, there is "no easy way forward" for Cuba's heterogeneous cultures. As Davies (2000,p.108-9) points out: "few Cubans are prepared to abandon their [national] ego and venture along roads of limitless chaos."

6.2.2. Managing Consensus

Despite having survived the economic crisis and avoided a "crisis of the state" (Carranza, 7 May 2003), during the 1990s an 'erosion' of consensus in Cuba was discerned by many respondents (Valdés Paz, interview 30 April 2003, Havana). According to Gramsci (1971,p.210) "disruptive pressures build up as a consequence of losing the consent of the majority" and in order to avoid the development of precisely such pressures, during the latter half of the 1990s the Cuban state was active in managing, and attempting to increase, levels of popular consensus in order to maintain its political authority. The "loss of confidence" reported by analysts such as Perera (2002) in the policies of both the Party and state - what Davies (2000,p.112) calls the "crisis of confidence in the Cuban supreme fictions" - required particular attention following the "profound collective trauma and disbelief" which the economic crash had precipitated (Perera, interview 18 April 2003, Havana). The following extract taken from an interview with Limia (12 May 2003, Havana) captures the spirit of the state's strategy:

> During the 1990s the state developed a process of initiatives to link civil society to the political and ideological struggles. This was seen, for example, with the boy Elián, with the five heroes, and in the protests against North American oppression. These processes have brought with them the re-establishment and renovation of socialist values.

As well as the specific initiatives Limia mentions here (discussed in more detail below), other processes were developed by the state to "reconnect" civil society to the vision which had been

articulated by those in power since 1959 (Limia, 12 May 2003, Havana). Of these, the enrichment of cultural life, development of the school system, use of mass communication and introduction of universal learning at the tertiary level were identified by respondents as key consensus-forming tools (interviews with Barredo 29 April 2003; Bulté 23 April 2003; Limia, 12 May 2003 Havana), all of which fit well with a Gramscian understanding of consensus (see Chapter 1).

A key to sustaining the ideological hegemony of the ruling political class in Cuba has been its manipulation of the code of nationalism. Since 1959, the Revolutionary government has been what Burchardt (2002,p.66) describes as an "emblem of national self-determination" and has shown considerable success in transforming what was before 1959 "an occasionally flawed and confused sense of national identity" (Kapcia, 2000,p.234) into a new national pride. More recently, it has been particularly successful in integrating a collective historical consciousness of a Cuban national identity into its policies which draws on a sense of continuity that has been constructed between the pre and post 1959 period.[15] While Soviet-style Marxism, like capitalism before it, has lost some its attraction (interview Espina 9 May 2003, Havana) and has progressively been abandoned on the island (see Chanan, 2001), nationalism, in contrast, has been promoted as a programme in the state's recent strategy to enhance popular consensus. According to Davies (2000,p.103), this represents a move to recharge or revitalise an "institutionalised discourse with a new signification." Such a move is identified by Burchardt (2002), who discerns a clear shift in the direction of a radical nationalist doctrine at the Fifth Party Congress of 1997, when Party, state and nation were identified as one, and the anti-imperialism of José Martí was re-invoked.[16] Earlier in the 1990s, the Constitutional reform of 1992 had presented the Party as the vanguard not of a particular class, but of the entire Cuban nation (see Article 5). For Hernández, this implied a new challenge for the PCC:

> One of the main hurdles it [the PCC] faces in the coming years is that of really making itself the Party of the Cuban nation, welcoming various currents of thought which reflect the feelings of the people, without losing its strength, unity and capacity to direct the country's development and preserve its independence and national sovereignty (Hernández translated by Cluster 2002,p.134-5).

Barredo also points to the high degree of identification which Cubans have for their homeland and argues that it is patriotism which unites the population: "Here there are only a few communists, there are a few more socialists, but patriots? There is the entire population" (interview, 29 April 2003, Havana).[17] Echoing the view of Valdés Paz (see Chapter 4), Martínez (2002/1998,p.141) comments that national identity in contemporary Cuba is closely associated with the world *risk*:

> ... the *risk* of losing the society of social justice to which national identity has been linked for decades, the *risk* of losing socialism. And the *risk* of losing sovereignty as a people, as a nation-state (emphasis added).

It is for this reason, Aguirre (2000,p.13) notes, that the Cuban state has recurrently produced and effectively used "moral panics" based on mass fears of U.S. imperialism. According to Aguirre (2000,p.13), these 'panics' against real or imagined threats "mobilise people and divert attention from internal difficulties." Bulté (interview 23 April 2003, Havana) acknowledges that "mass fears" have played a part in the Cuban population's desire to "keep the [socialist] model at all costs." He argues:

> During the 1990s people asked themselves: if we don't get out of this crisis, where will we end up? Under U.S. domination? Will we lose our sovereignty, our national identity, our language even, like Puerto Rico? (Bulté, interview 23 April 2003, Havana).

For Chanan (2001,p.400) the Cuban state's high degree of legitimacy, despite the loss of hegemony that the Party suffered following the collapse of socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, is a paradox which can best be explained by a "crucial movement of identification and separation." He explains this dialectic as: "[the] identification of Fidel with the country and its destiny, which at the same time separates him from the Party and the political apparatus" (Chanan, 2001,p.400). According to Chanan, it is Fidel's personal charisma and unique political style which makes this movement possible. In particular, the way in which Fidel "reaches over and beyond" the Party apparatus to enter into personal dialogue with different groups within civil society is highlighted as the key to his position as a "powerfully cohesive force" (Chanan, 2001, p.400) - a point which was also made by Fagen (1969) in his analysis of the young Revolution. It is interesting to note the similarities between Chanan's and Bulté's descriptions of Fidel's style. When analysing the rectification campaign of the late 1980s (see Chapter 3), Bulté talks of Fidel "jumping over" the bureaucratic apparatus of the state in order to "stand in front of the people" (interview, 23 April 2003, Havana). The echoes with Chanan's choice of metaphor are clear. In both Bulté's and Chanan's analyses, aspects of Fagen's (1969,p.26) description of Fidel as the charismatic leader who is perceived by his followers to be endowed with "super-human" qualities is captured. Arguably, the most striking example of this comes again from the transcript of the interview with Bulté. Having reflected on the economic collapse of 1993, Bulté remarks: "Fidel is a magician! How, if not, could he have got us out of this!" Here, Fidel is portrayed as capable not only of 'super-human' feats ("of regularly working 22 hours a-day," according to Barredo[18]) but also of working miracles and performing feats of magic.

In the Autumn of 1999 the state launched a campaign that was intended to "revive lagging national sentiments" (Anderson, 2003) and send a serious message to the U.S. The campaign took the form of a $180 billion law-suit seeking compensation from the U.S. for

suffering inflicted on the Cuban people by the blockade and other aggressive policies. By early November, billboards in Havana were announcing the *Demanda del Pueblo*, the people's demand for justice in this matter. The law-suit was formally announced to the international community on the 9th November, the day of the annual vote in the UN about whether nor not the U.S. embargo should be lifted, but went largely unreported, as did the Ibero-American Summit which was opened in Havana a week later. The Summit ended on Tuesday 16th November and the following Sunday five year old Elián González and his mother left Cárdenas, a small town some eighty miles east of Havana, with twelve others in a rickety craft bound for the U.S. Elián's dramatic rescue by U.S. authorities and the subsequent battle over his custody became front page news around the world. Crucially, as Limia indicates (see above), what became the 'Elián González affair,' along with the case of the 'Five Heroes'[19] imprisoned on espionage charges in the U.S., gave the theme of national unity a new lease of life.

From November 1999 the Cuban state initiated a campaign to return Elián, from the U.S. to Cuba (see Anderson, 2003). Internationally, the 1999-2000 struggle for custody of the 'abducted' *balsero* became a major diplomatic incident, not least because it occurred at a time when the U.S. Congress was debating trade policy (Permanent Normal Trading Relations or PNTR - what amounted to most-favoured nation status) with another socialist country: China (see Erikson, 2002).[20] Within Cuba, Elián was portrayed as *nuestro hijo* (our son) the son, that is, of the entire Cuban nation. Similarly, *su familia* (his family) signified not only Elián's biological family but the patria itself (see Kapcia, 2000,p.240). Muguercia (2002,p.182) argues that the return of the child on the 28th June 2000 ended "the most gigantic and protracted ritual of 'loyalty to fatherland' ever to take place on the island," a point reiterated by Arango (2002). Once it broke, the story of Elián certainly appears to have been manipulated as an important part of the state's strategy to raise national consensus (interview Valdés Paz, 30 April 2003) but the 'ritual of loyalty to fatherland' that it provoked was also a reflection of genuine popular outrage. According to Bulté, the official campaign was highly successful precisely because it tapped into this sentiment:

> The Elián case precipitated a huge rise in national consensus. With Elián, Fidel was able to unify the youth, the radical sectors and all the faiths of the country. All of them wanted to save the boy. But the mobilisation for Elián is also an example of civil society re-animating itself. Civil society became united and got over its differences in order to get the child home. How stupid the U.S. 'mafia' were! They managed to unite this civil society of ours! In political terms, the Elián case provoked a degree of consensus in civil society the like of which had never been seen before (Bulté, interview 23 April 2003, Havana).

For over seven months, the Elián campaign effectively dominated the domestic political sphere in Cuba, relegating all other issues to the margins of political life (Marrero, interview 19 February 2003, Havana). Along with the campaign to free the 'five', Elián was part of the

state's *batalla de ideas* (battle of ideas), a strategy designed to strike a blow against the global dominance of neo-liberal ideology and markets (García Torres, interview 26 March 2003, Havana).[21] Essentially, this particular battle was, and continues to be, the state's most recent reinvention of the binary *cubanía / plattismo* (i.e., U.S. interference in Cuba) which has been deployed since 1959 to explain U.S.-Cuban relations. Ironically, as Dilla (2003a,pp.6-7) argues, this approach contains the contradiction that:

> … while alternative spaces to the 'only thought' are being reclaimed on the international plane, at the domestic level a single way of thinking is being entrenched without spaces for discrepancy.

Hence, the *batalla de ideas* has been fought simultaneously against both an external and internal 'foe'. The state's message to its internal audience is clear: alternatives within the Revolution are as dangerous as the counter-hegemonic (neo-liberal) ideology threatening Cuba from the exterior, in particular, from the U.S (Abel Prieto, 6 May 2003, speaking at UNEAC). Limia describes how this neo-liberal ideology attacks Cuba's socialist values on a daily basis:

> … it arrives in music, in adverts, in the subliminal messages contained in films, as violence, as the market, and as 'liberal democracy' in inverted commas. It is the proposal for consumption which is offered in symbols and images which bombard us from North America (interview 12 May 2003, Havana).

Barredo connects the battle to another phenomenon which has been identified and debated by Cuban intellectuals of late,[22] the perceived *crisis de valores* (crisis of values) in Cuban society:

> Our values have been harmed, they have been damaged and continue to be in danger, during this Special Period through which we are transiting. But we are fighting this with the battle of ideas (Barredo, interview 29 April 2003, Havana).

Bulté (interview 23 April 2003, Havana) points out that "changes in values have been going on since the start of the Revolution," but that then, "these changes were in a positive direction: towards solidarity, collectivism, altruism and unity." Recently, in contrast, there has been "a change in direction" and "egoism, individualism and mercantilism" have emerged (Bulté, interview 23 April 2003). In this climate, corruption and the abuse of drugs (two of the social ills most commonly associated with this change in values by respondents) are regarded as "the political problems which put the Revolution in the gravest danger and represent an important change in civil society" (Bulté, interview 23 April 2004, Havana). Similarly, Limia notes:

> … many socialist values have been profoundly questioned during the crisis because many survival strategies have put emphasis on the personal, on the private and as a consequence there has been an unravelling, and in some cases a rupture, with the principals of collaboration, cooperation and mutual help which have defined our values (interview 12 May 2003, Havana).

The following excerpt from an interview conducted with a man in his mid twenties gives a sense of the processes that Limia is describing:

> At the moment it is difficult to do anything illegal but it is not impossible. Where I live there is a police informer - a black woman in her forties who gets paid to 'watch' our block. But I

can get you anything on the street. Look, I could survive anywhere and anything. Even in the worst days of the Special Period I had a computer and today, despite the restrictions, I have internet access. Imagine! But there is a lack of opportunity here. We need capitalism and democracy. I want to be able to take the initiative in what I do (Manolo,* interview 17 January 2003, Havana).

Other analysts have characterised the crisis of values as a "crisis of citizenship and legitimacy" (Basail, 1999). However, in an act which "put to the test the dynamic and vitality of Cuban civil society" within this context of falling consensus, weakened citizenship and lower legitimacy, in June 2002 the mass organisations arranged a petition which declared the socialist foundations of the Republic of Cuba to be 'untouchable' and its socialist system irrevocable. While socialist property proved ultimately to have been reversible (see Chapter 4) a clear message was being sent to the population that the socialist system itself was not. For Bulté, the mobilisation of 8 million Cubans who signed the declaration represented unequivocal "proof" that by mid 2002 the degree of consensus that had been achieved by the state in civil society was at its highest levels since 1976 (when the state was given institutional expression, see Chapter 3), having tumbled to an all time low in 1993 and 1994[23] (interview 23 April 2003, Havana). Others considered the declaration less favourably, pointing out that it was an example of the state's ability to identify and apply sanctions to those who refused to sign (Marrero, interview 05 February 2003, Havana).[24] For Dilla (2003) the constitutional reform declaring the socialist regime immutable can be interpreted as the state's immediate response to James Carter's mention of the *Proyecto Varela* in a speech which was televised live throughout Cuba during his May 2002 visit to the island.[25] The pinnacle of the Varela Project was a petition containing more than 11,000 signatures which had been submitted to the National Assembly on 10 May 2002 by Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, a representative of the Movimiento Cristiano Liberación (Cuban Christian Liberation Movement). The petition called for broader freedom of statement and association, amnesty for political prisoners, property rights, free enterprise and changes in the electoral system (see Saney, 2004). The petitioners made use of existing Constitutional provisions (Articles 63 and 88) to state the right to present their demands and request a referendum. Article 88 (g) refers to the right of citizens - with the stricture that this right be exercised by at least ten thousand citizens who are eligible to vote - to present new laws (the right of legislative initiative) to the National Assembly for consideration (see *Constitution of the Republic of Cuba*, 1993; for a discussion see Saney, 2004). Only the National Assembly, under Article 75, is authorised to call a referendum, a right which neither Article 88 nor 63 covers (see Ramy, 2002). Without Carter's mention of the Project, it is likely, argues Dilla (2003,p.11), that it would have passed by without the majority of the population knowing of its existence. To date, however, no action has been taken regarding the proposals put forward in the petition (interview García Brigos, 09 January 2003, Havana).

Like Bulté, Limia interpreted support for the modification of the Constitution as a demonstration of the popular appeal of the Revolution. The "massive" support was an indication that "despite the conflicts between egoism and solidarity, people are still conscious of what the Revolution's collective values are" (Limia, interview 12 May 2003, Havana). However, another respondent stressed a problem which many raised during interviews:

> … the Revolution today [2003] continues to satisfy the needs of those who needed help in 1959. But now, because of the Revolution, different classes have emerged and their needs are not being met (mircobiologist, interview, 7 February 2003, Havana).

Speaking "on behalf of Cuban intellectuals," Alfonso articulated what this meant for his colleagues in the academic and artistic communities:

> Right now, as a group, our desire is to travel. Not to leave permanently, but for oxygen, to be able to breathe a little - and to be able to earn some money to bring back for our families (interview, 8 February 2003, Havana).

As we have seen (see Chapter 5, also 6.2.3 below), the late 1990s were difficult ones for intellectuals. Alfredo Guevara's fear of the "asphyxiation of art in an oxygen tent," which he articulated at the First National Cultural Congress in the 1960s has retained its salience over thirty years later.

According to Caballero: "A Revolution has to fight against a lot at one time … Ensuring its continuity, its permanence, implies the need to manage the idea of consensus and to be 're-mobilising' this consensus all the time" (*último jueves* discussion 24 April 2003, Havana). In the 1990s, as Muguercia (2002,p.182) puts it, "there was a need for rituals." As well as the Elián González affair and Fidel Castro's sudden use of civilian clothes after decades of olive-green military fatigues (see Chapter 4), Muguercia cites the meeting of Fidel and Pope John Paul II in January 1998 as the most visible example of a phenomenon which she describes as "pairing the cat and the marten," a reference to a verse in a poem by José Lezama Lima [26] and the inspiration for Abel Prieto's (1999) novel *El vuelo del gato*. Like Davies (2000), Muguercia (2002) comments on the symbolism of the Catholic mass held before one million people in Havana's Plaza de la Revolución and stresses the juxtapositions involved: the Pope facing the huge mural of Che Guevara that presides over the Plaza, with the statue of José Martí and the tall tower which is his monument behind him; Fidel in civilian clothes at his side and a sea of white, black and mulatto faces in the foreground. An image as incongruous as that of 'the flying cat'. A image of consensus being managed in, at times, highly creative ways.

6.2.3. 'Maybe We Shouldn't Start a Debate Here:'[27]   Controlling Discourses and Agendas

If the Cuban state was aware that ultimately the strength of its power rested on the level of popular support it enjoyed within civil society, it was also conscious of the need to limit the

support that other 'rival' discourses enjoyed within this sphere. In Chapter 5 it was suggested that the political class which controlled the Cuban state feared the emergence of diverse perspectives within the Revolution and, in particular, the "deregulation of national-revolutionary discourse" (Davies, 2000,p.112) and hence took measures to ensure that no single alternative discourse developed with a convincing counter-hegemony. During the 1990s, the state attempted to accommodate the new dynamic for alternative discourses (which, as we have seen in Chapter 3, had the potential to be both stimulating and threatening) by assimilating those that arose within what Davies calls "a metadiscourse in need of resignification" (Davies, 2000,p.112). That the state had the capacity to do so, suggests that although hegemonic control had been weakened (the very emergence of alternative discourses indicates this), it was still strong enough to prevail.

Although challenges to the official discourse were not necessarily 'anti-systemic', by the late 1990s socialist discourse was subject to control (see Dilla 2002), in ways reminiscent of earlier periods (see Chapter 3). Marxism, as a form of critical thought, as opposed to a totalising narrative, had never been well developed in Cuba (Dilla 2002,p.1), but during the 1990s there was a restoration of the attempt first made in the 1960s to generate "an authentic and critical Marxism on the island" (Dilla, 2002,p.2). As the orthodox 'Marxist' narrative that had been legitimated in Cuba since the late 1960s began a rapid process of delegitimation, there was an opening of spaces for the discussion of a wide range of themes, which were discussed in a climate of greater tolerance and pluralism. As "old sureties failed" (Davies, 2000,p.105) alternatives appeared which questioned official revolutionary discourse. Undermined by earlier revelations of corruption and personal ambition,[28] according to Perera (2002) there was a loss of faith in the revolutionary ethos of some officials and in the state itself during the Special Period. While Davies (2000,p.112) cites the correction of past mistakes: "what Fidel Castro in his welcoming speech to the Pope allegedly called 'correct[ing] the errors we made in correcting our errors'," as an example of the crisis of confidence felt in society.

In short, the economic crisis and the weakening of authority that the crisis precipitated made spaces in which heterodox discourses could be articulated and myriad identities emerge and disperse. However, by the late 1990s many themes were not on the agenda and those that were, needed to be "worked on with care," often outside of the public arena (Marrero, interview 21 January 2003, Havana). Similarly, Arango notes the "silences or concessions, provoked by the auto censor," indicating that in late twentieth century Cuba both the auto censor and the official censor conspired to keep analysis within the parametres of officially accepted discourse and limit the possibilities for identification with alternative realities. One Cuban academic commented: "today there is an urgent need for critical spaces. We are not able to write about certain things." Reflecting on the revolutionary process more widely, she continued: "things

are getting bad and perhaps they will get worse. This whole thing [the Revolution] has changed. It has become fossilized and authoritarian" (interview, Carmen* 24 April 2003, Havana). Respondents explained that recently workshops have been held in Havana on social and cultural themes which are not part of the 'official debate' but which highlight "observable problems" in daily life, such as the growing number of *jineteros* on the streets, drug abuse among the youth, insufficient food production and the problems faced by many in accessing U.S. dollars (interviews with: Marrero 22 January 2003; Perera 16 April 2003; Espina 09 May 2003, all Havana).

The ways in which themes for research are identified and agendas set is in itself worthy of note. Data gathered during interviews suggest that at the top of the agenda are themes which have been "problematised from above," meaning those which the Party or state identifies as a research priority. After these, respondents ranked themes which had been "identified internationally" by the wider global academic community and which were highlighted, for example, at international conferences or in journals with a global audience.[29] Finally, they listed "problems highlighted by the base," by which they referred to social problems of all kinds including marital violence, poor housing, delinquency and drug abuse (Castañeda, interview 19 March 2003, Havana; Rey interview 03 March 2003, Havana). It was evident that despite being at the 'bottom of the list', these were the issues which respondents regarded as critical and worthy of higher status and visibility. According to one respondent, themes emerging from the base are "worked politically" or "distilled" until they "disappear." In this way, critical debate is continuously "displaced away from the real problems" (Marrero, interview, 5 February 2003, Havana).

All ministries in Cuba have teams researching social themes (García Brigos interview, 9 January 2003, Havana). In the period 1990-1995, a new way of organising these teams was developed. Researchers were integrated to work on multi-disciplinary projects dedicated to the study of national issues (see Chanan, 2001; Dilla 2002). However, in the late 1990s this was changed and a system introduced which allocated specific research themes to particular centres. The "fragmentation of themes," rather than being heralded as a useful device to increase specialisation, and thereby deepen knowledge and understanding, was highlighted by those interviewed as a factor which reinforces the compartmentalisation of knowledge and creates divisions which inhibit its development. With research institutes under the control of separate ministries (Basail, interview 2003, Havana), the institutional structure of Cuban academia itself reinforces this trend, with the result that "the bureaucracy directs research" (Dilla, 2002). Commenting on these issues Marrero argues:

> Since the mid 1990s there has been a diminution of themes in the public arena. Themes have been concentrated in particular research centres which are authorised to study them and, as a consequence, have 'ownership' of them. As a result, there is less and less on the [official]

agenda for social science. There are difficulties in generating and discussing new ideas due to the state's control of these processes (interview, 5 February 2003, Havana).

As was noted in Chapter 5, the mass organisations also have research centres affiliated to them, such as the FMC's *Centro de Estudios de la Mujer* (Centre for the Study of Women) and the UJC's *Centro de Estudios de la Juventud* (Centre for the Study of Cuban Youth). During interviews a number of respondents spontaneously commented on difficulties relating to the research activities of these organisations. The FMC, in particular, was accused of "agenda setting" in order to "maintain a tight control of the agenda regarding women's issues" (Rausberg, interview 4 May 2003; also Marrero, 5 February 2003; Basail, 10 April 2004; Hasanbegovich, 27 December 2002, UK). While a former vice-president of the FEU spoke of the difficulty students faced in developing autonomous positions. He argued that the "voice of the students should not just be the voice of the UJC," but indicated that, in his perception, "the ambit of debate has been closed, not only for students, but in general since the late 1990s." Speaking of the situation in early 2003 he continued: "now there is a lot of resistance to re-opening it. It is not politically opportune and as a consequence there is a limit to what is possible. In this atmosphere, things tend to be left unsaid" (interview, 30 January 2003).

According to the majority of those interviewed, the Cuban state will not tolerate uncontrolled debate because it does not want fissures to open in Cuba between alternative perspectives which could leave the island vulnerable to ideological attack. Such a stance is "justified" by the nature of Cuba-U.S. relations, a situation which influences the "available stock of ideas" with which to challenge hegemonic political discourse on the island (interview Espina 9 May 2003, Havana).

Those who described themselves as "alternative socialist voices" raised the issue that within Cuba "sham" spaces exist where 'debate' does occur but in an artificial, constructed, way. High on these respondents' lists of such spaces is the nightly current affairs programme *Mesa Redonda* (Round Table). As its name suggests, the programme is intended to be a forum for open discussion on a range of topical national themes of public interest. However, according to Arango, it is a "managed, staged, discussion which does not represent an interchange of ideas" (interview 23 April 2003, Havana). Those invited to 'sit at the table' are public figures and/or experts from politics, journalism or academia, and Fidel himself regularly uses the space to speak to the nation. For Arango, *Mesa Redonda* is a "symbol of all that it is bad" (interview, 23 April 2003, Havana). He continues:

> *Mesa Redonda* represents a rigid, constructed reality. It is fed to the people each night as a formula. It tells people what to think. It is manufactured and supports and presents a vision that is predetermined. It is not a debate. It is not an interchange of ideas. It is symbolic of the sclerosis that has set in here (Arango, interview 23 April 2003, Havana).

The "empty rhetoric" of *Mesa Redonda* illustrates the gap between the dominant fictions generated by the state and people's daily life experiences, a point highlighted by Basail (1999) in his discussion of the distance between discourse and official practice and the everyday preoccupations of Cubans.

It was not only intellectuals, artists or writers who identified a lack of debate in Cuba. An army officer, speaking during a participant observation session, observed that "there is no culture of debate here" (seminar 22 January 2003, Havana). This perception was echoed by others who were interviewed. One Cuban mother stated: "I want my daughter to hear different points of view, to be able to talk to people who articulate a range of visions rather than a monolithic vision, to not feel as restricted as I do" (Rosa* interview 1 February 2003). In the following extract from an interview transcript, Rausberg explores this issue:

> There is a lack of debate in this country. There is a perception that debate generates disunity when in fact debate *fortifies* and *solidifies* unity. There is no debate and there again there is a fear of debate. The way in which those 'debates', if we can call them that, that are tolerated are carried out also gives a false impression. For example, [Carlos] Lage and his colleagues debate an issue, they disagree strongly during the debate, but only when they are in agreement do they let the press in. This gives a false impression to the public (Rausberg, interview 4 May 2003, his emphasis).

Given the paucity of debate, Arango, himself editor of the *Gaceta*, a literary journal produced by the writers' union, commented that there is now an urgent need to "enrich" the culture of debate in Cuba. Under his editorship he believes the *Gaceta* has been a forum "where people can say what they want," although he is quick to point out that he would not publish something "which is openly counter-revolutionary." Commenting on the material chosen for publication Arango states:

> We ourselves choose what to publish and I personally will continue to do this, to make sometimes controversial choices, until I am sacked. Someone who now works for *Encuentro*[30] wrote a very strong article before they left [Cuba] and it was published in the *Gaceta* (Arango, interview, 23 April 2003, Havana).

He argues that there is a dialectic between unity and diversity which needs to be kept alive: "if you only have unity, things get stuck," but he remains aware that the underlying problem is the need for critical spaces for discussion. Speaking at an *último jueves* meeting (24 April 2003) organised by the journal *Temas*, Arango offered the following analysis of the problem:

> There are many zones in Cuban life where debates occur only at the domestic level, because there are no other spaces where they can be produced in other ways. If there really were 'round tables' there would be opportunities for debate … We are a country of *la polemica* but we lack the spaces for being polemic. If we opened spaces so that there were not only monologues, but rather a real dialogue, then there would be more debate[31]

The theme for discussion at this particular meeting was 'Baseball and the Culture of Debate'. The email sent to potential participants advertising the session stated: "on this occasion we will have an exchange of views … about the characteristics of popular debate about baseball and *in what sense this can serve as a model for the development of a culture of debate in Cuba today*"

(email received 17 April 2003, emphasis added). In a subsequent conversation, Denia García, one of the organisers of the event, explained that "sport is an area in which diverse views are maintained in Cuba," and asked: "if this happens in baseball, could it not serve as a wider model?" (García, interview 24 April 2003, Havana). The conclusion which the *último jueves* panel arrived at was a tentative 'yes', although this was left implicit in the subsequent publication of the debate (see *Temas*, No,37-38). Speaking later about the event one academic commented: "This is ridiculous! The whole issue of baseball is being used as a pretext for the other debate [about democracy]" (Carmen* interview 23 April 2003, Havana). Ridiculous or not, in a context in which spaces for discussion had been "lost" and "closed" the significance of this event would seem to be many times greater than it might initially appear.

As well as the ambits of sport, the cinema (see Davies, 1996; Fornet, 2001), and national radio (López, 1997; Niera speaking at thesis defence, 07 February 2003, Havana), there are other cultural spaces that can be discerned which acted as arenas in which alternative voices could be heard debating topical issues during the 1990s. During the first half of the 1990s, theatre and its public provided:

> … a space for critical reflection about visceral questions of belonging and identity that, in the midst of the evident crisis, official discourse, deliberately simplistic and resistant to any kind of unauthorized problematization, left abandoned (Muguercia, 2002,p.179).

Theatre groups have injected critical appraisals of contemporary society into the public arena. In her fascinating analysis entitled 'Scripting Sexual Tourism,' Marrero (2003) describes how the treatment of the phenomenon of *jineterismo* in a performance piece by two artists (Coco Fusco and Nao Bustamante) entitled *STUFF*, "disrupts the official Cuban script that *jineteras* are simply morally degenerate women" by purporting that the phenomenon in the Special Period is "an economic one" (Marrero, 2003,p.245).[32]

Despite the difficulties, both practical and ideological, facing writers in contemporary Cuba, Arango claims that Abel Prieto's tenure as Minister of Culture has helped his profession: "As a writer, I can say it is easier to work here now that Abel Prieto is Minister of Culture" (Arango, interview 23 April 2003, Havana).[33] However, Arango qualifies his statement by expressing concern regarding the persistent tensions between artists/intellectuals and the state in contemporary Cuba (see also, Arango, 2002). Historically, the Revolution has given great importance to its intellectuals, academics and artists but the relationship has not always been an easy one (see Chapters 3 and 5).

The question of the role of the artist in relation to the state during the 1990s can be explored using the dispute that erupted over the film *Alicia en el pueblo de maravillas* (Alicia in wondertown), released in June 1991 and directed by Daniel Díaz Torres. According to Davies (1996) the direct confrontation between the state and the artistic community which arose around the film represented the defeat of the former and a victory for the latter. Harshly

criticised by the official Cuban press for squandering state resources and for ridiculing Cuba at a time of great vulnerability, the film is described by Davies (1996,p.188) as a "virtually plotless satire." In it, Alicia, a young drama teacher, is sent to the town of Maravillas to help the theatre group. In this strange place she experiences a series of adventures and, like Lewis Carroll's Alice, is harassed because she "dares to confront its absurdities" (Davies, 1996,p.187). Finally, Alicia escapes from the town but only to discover it has all been a bad dream from which she awakes at the end of the film. For Díaz Torres, the character of Alicia embodies the "courageous non-conformist attitudes" necessary for the survival of the Revolution (quoted in Davies, 1996,p.187), but it is the town itself which is particularly noteworthy. Maravillas is a decaying spa town directed by a satanic dictator who has developed a therapeutic mud to cure the town's inhabitants, all social misfits, of their anti-social behaviour. According to the Cuban Penal Code (1993) a person is considered to be 'dangerous' if he or she is deemed to have a special proclivity to crime: drunkenness, drug addiction or anti-social behaviour. If found guilty, three kinds of security measure are available: therapeutic, re-educative and police surveillance. In the light of this, the film clearly has multiple allegorical interpretations. Having broken all box office records when it was released, the film was suspended after just four days. It may well have been that its censors felt it too clearly represented the contemporary Cuban reality. The subsequent move to disband the ICAIC - which, according to Chanan (2001,p.396), had "successfully resisted authoritarianism in the cultural domain" during the 1970s - and merge it into the Cuban TV company, was met by a defiant response from filmmakers who wrote a letter of protest to Fidel Castro. The fact that ICAIC survived was, presumably, the 'victory' which Davies (1996) mentions in her article.

Dilla (2003,p.2) argues that the Cuban political class has always perceived social scientists with "very utilitarian ends in mind" and this analysis could equally well be extended to other intellectuals. Intellectuals and artists may at times have had a strained relationship with the state (Arango, 2002) but they have also been an essential component of the party-state's strategy to legitimate its ideology. This was seen in April 2003 when the state requested that its artists, intellectuals and scientists sign a declaration entitled *Mensaje desde la Habana para amigos que están lejos* (message from Havana for friends who are far away) timed to be published on the 19 April 2003, some 42 years after the victory at Playa Girón. The declaration was a direct response to the international condemnation from sectors of the left[34] of measures taken by the Cuban state earlier in the Spring (see section 6.2.5. below) when 75 Cuban "dissidents" were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 6 to 28 years and three men were executed for their part in the hijacking of a small ferry in Havana harbour. Within the context of the war in Iraq[35] and increased North American aggression towards the island, particularly in Miami where the slogan *"Iraq ahora, Cuba después"* (Iraq now, Cuba later) was apparently

being used to incite anti-Cuban sentiment, the Cuban state aimed to send a message to "our friends who have so often lent us their support and solidarity but who, in good faith, could now be confused" (*Mensaje*, 2003 p.2). The message that such 'friends' within the global community and the Cuban public, who were arguably the primary audience for the message, were to receive was that a campaign orchestrated by the U.S. was in train to isolate Cuba and prepare the terrain for a military action as part of a "plan to impose a fascist dictatorship world wide" (*Mensaje*, 2003,p.2). Within this context, the writers of the 'message' told their public that any criticism of Cuba was tantamount to support for the U.S. What they asked for was "unconditional solidarity" (Dilla, 2003,p.8). Of those intellectuals who signed the message (reportedly 8,234 had done so by the time the *Mensaje* went to press on 19 April), some 29 had been interviewed by journalists and had their views cited in the publication. Without exception each stressed the need to "defend" the Revolution and its achievements in the context of the renewed menace from the U.S., a point reiterated publicly by the leadership at every available opportunity during the weeks that followed. One intellectual describes the pressure to sign and internal struggle this provoked:

> Look, I was one of those who went to the mountains to teach during the literacy campaign. But now I am being pressurised to add my 'paw print' to the list and I don't want to. But, equally, I am afraid not to [sign]. I have to think about my children, their work … But I can't just say 'no'. They know my health has been bad, so I've decided to use that as my excuse, but that means that I have to stop everything. It means I can't do anything. I can't be selective. I'd hoped that when I'd retired I'd go to only those things that most interested me but now I'll have to stay out of everything. For years I have been telling them what I think. I have said at Party meetings that we need more discussion, more debate and no one has listened to me. Why should I dance to their tune now?

Others, however, were prepared to lend their support. Even those who, as one respondent put it, "had at other times been perceived by the state to be against the [official] current and who, as a consequence, had been censored or sent for re-education" (Marrero, interview 30 January 2003, Havana) were enticed into the public arena to lend their support to the state. This apparent contradiction - the oscillation between being 'in favour' and 'out of favour' which many Cubans intellectuals have experienced during their careers[36] - is noted by Chanan (2001) in his discussion of the 'rehabilitation' of intellectuals. It is one which, he argues, sets Cuba apart from "full-blown Stalinism" (Chanan, 2001,p.395). For Kapcia (2003, pp.198-9) this level of tolerance can be explained by three factors: these intellectual's "usefulness to the system," the fact that if necessary they can be "marginalised and thus ignored in alternative jobs or institutions" and because there are systems in place to "keep a cautious eye on them." Marginalisation has rarely been complete and it has been in the system's interest periodically to bring out of the wings those intellectuals who could offer alternative perspectives to pressing problems.

That the Cuban state was so keen to use its intellectuals in Spring 2003 (when a practical solution to a particularly significant problem was necessary) leads to a related issue which is often ignored by the literature. It concerns the formation of public opinion. In her *Diccionario urgente* (urgent dictionary) of Cuban civil society, López (1997,p.33) argues that the Cuban system does not recognise 'public opinion' as a social or political phenomena and hence "does not formulate policy taking such opinion into account." Although she does concede that the government organises surveys and opinion polls as well as discussions, such as the 1990 *Llamamiento* to the IV Congress of the PCC, she argues that the results are never made public - "not even Party militants were able to analyse them" - because the information gathered is "classified" (López, 1997,p.33). Given that the Cuban political system prides itself on its ability to listen to and incorporate the views of the electorate, particularly at the local level (see August, 1999), there are no doubt those who take issue with López's claim, but the key point that she makes in her analysis stands: that knowledge of "what others think" is critical for society's development and it is this which Cuban society lacks. As one of López's respondents stated:

> I would like to find out if there are five or five thousand people who think like me. I would like to find out whether I am thinking something that is 'right' or whether all that occurs to me is nonsense … But I shall never know this. I have no way of knowing … (quoted in López, 1997,p.34).

Without knowledge of public opinion, society is left vulnerable. It is unable, as López puts it, "to find out 'where it is' or to move one way or another as a result of this knowledge." It can not use this device to "reinforce some positions or to overcome others, to regulate conduct or reflect on it" (López,1997,p.33). In such an environment, the state's use of key figures such as its artists and intellectuals to reinforce an official position can be interpreted, as Dilla has pointed out, as a utilitarian strategy. It would appear from López's analysis that public opinion has been transmitted to the public rather than from them (a view supported by university students, seminar, 22 January 2003, Havana). However Hernández (1996) notes that since the 1990 *Llamamiento* "the beat of public opinion has been transmitted on a variety of national problems" (1996,p.90). "Definitively," he writes, "we are not dealing with a mute civil society."

6.2.4. Developing New Modes of Participation

Always a central theme for the Revolution, in the 1990s the state recognised that forms of participation could not remain the same as those used in previous decades, particularly if the ennui and disenchantment of the Special Period were to be overcome. As in the 1960s (although not at the levels seen then) participation through activism and mobilisation was used as a device for political socialisation in order to revive revolutionary attitudes. There was

constant mobilisation through rallies, campaigns, and electoral processes in the 1990s, but there were also new initiatives which were developed alongside these more traditional forms.

For the generations of citizens born after the Revolution, participation has become an important value and the role and type of participation represents a critical issue (Limia, interview 12 May 2003). The high degree of human capital which has been developed since 1959, largely as a result of the Revolution's educational initiatives, indicates the capacity of Cuban civil society which is comprised of well informed citizens (López, 1997). We have seen that in the first three decades of the Revolution, the mass organisations monopolised the space for organising the revolutionary effort and engaging with the state. However, since the 1990s the state has promoted new spaces for, and forms of, participation in response to the exigencies of the Special Period (see Chapter 4). Participation through new forms of property such as the urban cooperatives but also via work-place discussions held, for example, by the Workers' Parliaments which ran between the end of 1993 and beginning of 1994, have been noted by analysts (see Cole, 1998). New unions such as the Science Union represented the development of additional participative spaces and, according to its members, were crucial in the maintenance of processes of mass political participation (interview Veiga Moreno, 8 May 2003, Havana). In addition, campaigns focused on mobilising the youth such as the recent (Spring 2003) *campaña contra el mosquito* (campaign against the mosquito) which saw thousands of uniformed youths (many from the provinces) mobilised throughout Havana to check water cisterns and tanks for mosquito larvae, have revived the 1960's spirit of activism and community service. While the recruitment *en masse* of young people into social work has created an important new source of employment (Limia, interview 12 May 2003, Havana) and has enabled those most vulnerable to the effects of the economic crisis (the young and the elderly) to receive support.

This process to develop new modes of participation has involved a complex articulation between participative forms that have emerged spontaneously from below and those that have been designed from above. Participative methods for the diagnosis and execution of social projects have been influenced by the philosophy of popular education. Cuban NGOs such as the *Centro Martin Luther King* and the *C.I.E Graciela Bustillos* (Centro de Investigación Educativa, Asociación de Pedagogos de Cuba) have pioneered workshops where key professionals and community activists are able to train to become 'popular educators'.

According to López (1997,p.34): "Participation is the criteria against which Cuban civil society should be judged." Rather than an evaluation being made on the basis of the number of associations that exist, whether they have been created from below or above, the resources they have at their disposal or the laws within which they operate, it is whether and

how people participate that is crucial. However, there is awareness among respondents and commentators that participation "is undoubtedly insufficient" (Martínez, interview 21 April 2003, Havana). Martínez emphasises the importance of the link between the civil society and the Party: "if the Party loses this link it will lose everything. Participation is therefore crucial" (interview 21 April 2003). For Limia the development of new participative modalities is essential:

> We have to continue developing a mode of participation which is not only vertical, by putting emphasis on labour collectives, municipalities, work centres, unions and youth organisations. But for this you need to prepare and generate a new style of leadership that reestablishes the role of this form of participation.

Recognising that participation is the key to the survival and continuity of the Revolution he asserts: "it is only by linking people socially and politically that you can advance" (Limia, interview 12 May 2003, Havana). In the 1990s, Martínez argues, civil society played a critical role linking people within the socialist struggle. Civil society is not regarded only as a means of satisfying basic needs but also as "a vehicle for social diversity," and as a force for the "enrichment of a national identity that is linked to socialism through its participation in revolutionary power" (Martínez, interview 21 April 2003, Havana). With its organisational and political cultures civil society can cover spaces being left empty by the state, "not so much to compete with the state but rather to participate in forms of revolutionary power in which the state should also be instrumental" (Martínez, 2002/1998,p.146).

The need for "greater participation by citizens in decision making and the control of the political process" which Hernandez (1996,p.89) stresses, is also captured by the following "graffiti" recorded by López (1997,p.35) of an adulterated verb table for the verb 'to participate' which ends, sardonically, with the third person plural as 'they decide':

> *Yo participo, tú participas, él participa, ella participa, nosotros participamos, vosotros participáis vosotras participáis, ellos deciden.*

Participants at a seminar (University of Havana, 22 January 2003) assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the Cuban political system argued that while spaces for decision making are "very narrow," when all that remains is for decisions to be carried out the spaces are "suddenly very broad." This sentiment was expressed by one participant using the following analogy: "Here no one participates in the decision to sow potatoes, but everyone must participate in collecting the harvest!"

Recently, there has been a move to 'individualise' the Revolution which is interpreted by Arango as the "right to conceive of the Revolution as something very personal" (Arango, interview 23 April 2003, Havana). While, in the past, the development of the individual had not been essential for Cuban socialism, "more importance is now being given to the personal and to the private, finding the legitimate place it has today in this project" (interview Limia, 12

May 2003, Havana). As such, the emphasis is not only on organised mass actions that mobilise social forces, but also on personal projects that link the individual to the Revolution. A central plank of the policy to bring the Revolution to the individual has been through "individualising social policy." Limia argues:

> Our social policy is not a macro policy, it is not guided by statistics, neither does it regard people as general stereotypes. Our social policy is supported by the names and surnames of people, that is to say, it is individualised. It has offered specialised diagnoses of the sectors of the population who are most at risk during the Special Period. We have developed a new way of doing social policy and we have created a new source of employment as we have recruited social workers on masse to put this policy into effect (12 May 2003, Havana).

Bureaucracy, excessive centralisation and paternalism are identified by respondents as phenomena that limit participation. Bulté (interview 23 April 2003, Havana) argues that the current challenge is for "communication between the organs of civil society and the state to be less bureaucratic," something which, he claims, "the leadership knows is necessary." Paternalism in the structures of power has been manifested, according to López (1997), as a control of information, while the paternalism of the state towards society has engendered a passivity, a culture of waiting for decisions to be made and an inertia which has become routine (interview Espina, 9 May 2003, Havana). For Limia it is the corrosive influence of new patterns and possibilities of consumption that induce social passivity:

> The person who is engaged in consumption does not participate actively in society. He or she participates only in consumption and consumption is inactivity. It is social passivity (interview 12 May 2003, Havana).

Reflecting on the Special Period Barredo sums up the importance of participation and the challenge for the future:

> We have transited a long way in the last ten years. Participation has been the key. Only by linking people socially and politically can you advance. Here you can not govern by decree. Cuban society is a matrix full of idiosyncrasies. Our commitment and obligation is for participation by all (29 April 2003, Havana).

The relationship between the state and civil society as a process is based on participation and it is for this reason that participation is a crucial currency for social control.

6.2.5.   Social Control Through Coercion

There was a common perception held by those interviewed in 2003 - even before the events of March and April - that there had been a "general tightening" or "hardening of the state's position" since the mid 1990s in Cuba (Basail, 2003; also FCO official, UK 2002). De la Torre links this to the wider "sclerosis" that she perceives has hindered the political system in recent years (interview 23 April 2003, Havana). Certainly, since December 2002, there had been a campaign to crack down on 'illegalities' of all kinds, from the housing of foreigners in unlicensed accommodation (see Chapter 2) to the supply and sale of illegal drugs, and

corruption in the work place (interviews Pérez, 5 January 2003, Havana; Yedra 14 January 2003, Havana).

However few Cubans were prepared for the critical incidents of March and April 2003 when, following summary trials, 75 'dissidents' were given prison sentences (see Dilla, 2003,p.5) for "acts against the independence or territorial integrity of the state" (Eliseo Alberto, 2003,p.1), and when, in a separate incident, three men were executed for their part in the hijacking of a small ferry in Havana harbour. In both cases, the coercive power of the state on behalf of the interests of the dominant political class was evident. Let us briefly examine each incident and consider the context in which they arose.

The Imprisonment of the 'Dissidents'

On the 18th March 2003 thirty-two activists from the fragmented organaised Cuban opposition were arrested following a meeting with the new head of the U.S. Interest Section (SINA), James Cason. The following day a further thirty-three people were arrested, a process which continued until in total 75 men and women were in custody by 25th March. All were accused of being "mercenaries in the service of the [U.S.] empire" and of receiving money from the U.S. state. Following summary trials between the 3rd and 7th April, all were charged and convicted of conducting "mercenary activity in the pay of a foreign enemy power" (Pérez Roque, press conference 9 April 2003). They were found guilty of receiving financial assistance, gifts and equipment and of having been recruited by Cason, to carry out counter-revolutionary activities on the island.

Since his arrival in Cuba in September 2002, there had increasingly been problems between Cason and the Cuban state. The intensification of discord was, according to respondents, palpable since late December 2002 and had precipitated the harsher internal measures taken to stamp out illegalities. By early 2003, Chanan's analysis of the state's policy toward human rights activists as that of "a cat-and-mouse game" characterised by the fact that "at one moment they are allowed to function … but at the next they are subjected to harassment and short-term detention" (Chanan 2001,p.402), was clearly out of date. It would appear that the internal costs of tolerance had been calculated by the state to be greater than those of repression. In early 2003, Cason organised various meetings and work shops at his residence with members of the Cuban opposition. Rubido (interview 19 June 2003, UK) suggests that Cason's aim may well have been to push the Cuban state into a position where it would act repressively and, having done so, condemn itself to international isolation and disapproval, particularly at a time when the E.U. was opening its first office on the island. This interpretation is favoured by Dilla (2003) over the more "simplistic" explanation that Cason might have thought that with U.S. support the organised opposition on the island could pass

beyond its embryonic stage and become a decisive force in Cuban politics and, by this means, grant the U.S. a role as an internal actor (see Dilla, 2003,p.7). In accord with Track Two policy towards Cuba, on the 26 March USAID announced authorisation of funds totalling $1 million for Miami University's Cuba Transition Project. While on the 31 March the U.S. State Department published its report on Human Rights in which Cuba was heavily criticised.

The Hijackers

Detained on the 4th April, tried on the 8th and shot on the 10[th.] of the month: this was the fate of three men involved in the hijacking of the motor boat *Baraguá* from Havana harbour; a fate sealed in what Dilla describes as the "galactic space of a week" (Dilla, 2003,p.5). At 1.40 a.m. on the 2nd April officials at the Ministry of Interior were informed that *Baraguá* was heading out of the bay of Havana and appeared to have been hijacked. At 3.00am the hijackers communicated with coast guards to confirm that they were heading for the U.S. but by 11.45am they had run out of fuel and three hours later Cuban frontier guards led the stricken vessel to the port of Mariel (*Granma*, Tabloide Especial No.3, 2003). The hijacking on the 2nd April was by no means the first of 2003, nor was it the last. According to the Cuban press, between 19 March and 25 April there had been no less than twenty-nine hijacking attempts (*Granma*, Tabloide Especial No.3, 2003,p.3). Although not all had been 'successful', the Cuban passenger plane hijacked on the 19th March for example (the night that the bombardment of Iraq by U.S. led coalition forces began), had managed to reach Miami where, to the consternation of the Cuban government, the hijackers were immediately granted U.S. residency under the terms of the Cuban Adjustment Act. Despite requests made by the Cuban Ministry for External Relations to the Cuban Interest Section in Washington to extradite the hijackers and return the sequestrated plane to Cuba, the U.S. authorities refused.

The drastic reduction in the number of visas granted to Cuban nationals by the U.S. for travel has been interpreted by many Cubans as a ploy to force those wishing to leave the island to take drastic steps. Here, Carlos Martí Brenes, the President of UNEAC, explains the situation:

> Only 700 visas have been granted [in the last six months] of the 20,000 agreed upon in the 1994 migratory agreements. There are people who want to go to the U.S. legally but they are forced to try to get their illegally. People are forced to take these measures. In this case the hijackers had very bad personal records so it would have been extremely difficult for them to go legally … In a recent State Department report it was made clear to us that hijackings from Cuba would be considered a danger to the national security of the U.S. The extreme measure of the death penalty needs to be seen in this context. It is not easy to justify this measure, but it should not be analysed out of context (speaking on 06 May 2003, Havana).

In the following extract Abel Prieto describes the selection of candidates for visas and how intentional limitations are placed on legal immigration by the U.S. government. He reiterates the point made by Carlos Martí regarding the personal records of those wishing to travel:

> Visas are granted *selectively*. It is a lottery which we Cubans call 'el bombo' – it is a Cuban word, a 'Cubanism' – well, el bombo curiously is always for whites, people from stable families, university graduates, non-marginals, you get the idea. So very few visas are given and those that are given are very selectively given. And in recent times the number has contracted (Abel Prieto, UNEAC, 6 May 2003, Havana).

The majority of those interviewed in Cuba agreed that the U.S. was attempting to "manufacture a problem" which would in turn create a situation which could justify an escalation of aggression against Cuba (Barredo, interview 29 April, 2003, Havana). However there was widespread shock following the executions. A foreign journalist who has lived and worked in Cuba for many years remarked that he had taken an opinion poll after the news broke of the executions and had found that "60 per cent of those polled on camera and giving their names were against the death penalty" (interview Rausberg, 4 May 2003, Havana). Given this level of popular disapproval, it is understandable that Cuban leaders reiterated at every possible opportunity that their methods were "judicially sanctioned" and "within the law" (Pérez Roque, 2003).[37] Following the events in the U.S. of September 11th 2001, in December of that year, the Cuban National Assembly passed the *Law against Acts of Terrorism* which stipulated, that in the most serious cases, the death penalty could be applied for various terrorist activities including hijackings involving armed force and violence. Until the executions of the three hijackers on 10 April 2003, the Cuban government had instituted a moratorium on its use (initiated May 2000, see Saney, 2004).

The state's use of the death penalty generated a rapid response world-wide as intellectuals and politicians registered their sentiments (see above). Within Cuba the critical space available to the official press was reduced to the position the government took vis-à-vis the shootings: namely, that it was a regrettable yet necessary measure against "traitors" or "confused" delinquents (see Dilla, 2003). The following extract from an impromptu speech made by Fidel Castro on the 6 May 2003 gives a sense of this:

> By their actions, these people had resorted to being common criminals. Their crime was very dangerous. They wanted to create a conflict between Cuba and the U.S. These men were not *gusanos*, they were delinquents. They were the product of corruption, the product of our society. They behaved like animals … We've had a moratorium on the death penalty for two years. We knew ending it would have terrible repercussions but we were using judicial means. No one in Cuba likes the death penalty or supports it. We believe in re-education through the prison system, we believe in the real possibility of re-education. In fact we despise the death penalty. But these people were guilty. They had turned into animals. I'm not interested in excuses. These people produce terror and must be stopped (Fidel Castro, UNEAC, 6 May 2003, Havana).

Again, linking the decision to execute the men to the migration accords and the context of U.S. aggression, a National Assembly delegate remarked:

> Well, with regards the three [hijackers], they were delinquents, they were inhuman and they had to be shot. To understand this you need to look at the context - the reality for Cuba - and the reality is called the United States of America … Since the disappearance of the Soviet Union, the U.S. has tried to do all it can to create a pressure cooker situation here in order to

facilitate an internal situation. It does this primarily through the migration accords (interview Barredo, 29 April 2003, Havana).

Taken together, these two excerpts are revealing for they represent the official position that was disseminated via the Cuban media during April and May 2003. In an attempt to persuade both Cubans and the rest of the world that the executions were necessary (and justifiable), the hijackers were repeatedly described as "delinquents," "animals," "inhuman." Interestingly, Fidel makes a distinction between these men and *gusanos* (the term used pejoratively of émigrés or those seeking to emigrate from Cuba). Clearly, the hijackers *were* strictly speaking '*gusanos*', after all they were caught attempting to leave the island bound for the U.S., but by associating them with common criminals, as opposed to with the disaffected or opponents of the regime, an interesting shift is being made in public perception. Cuba has been described as the *isla deshilachada* (the island with fraying borders) and, as was shown in Chapter 3, immigration has long been a problem for the revolutionary government (see CEAP, 1996). However, by the late 1990s, Basail argues: "those wishing to emigrate from Cuba had stopped being seen as political traitors and the decision to leave was converted into a personal decision" (interview, 07 February 2003, Havana). This may be a sign that the Cuban state is going to revise immigration policy in the near future and remove certain restrictions which at present amount to serious obstacles for those Cubans seeking to reside in the exterior.[38]

The events of March and April 2003 provide a particularly grim illustration of the link between the endogenous and exogenous dimensions of Cuban politics and the way in which they mutually influence each other. The nature of the relationship between the U.S. and Cuba limits the possibility of organising an opposition within Cuba and constrains the expression of alternative positions within the Revolution. As such it impacts negatively on the ability of a convincing counter-hegemony to develop. Moreover, it is used by the state to justify coercive measure and deflect responsibility for them. For those in power in both Cuba and the U.S., the preservation of hostility has its advantages (interview Barredo, 29 April 2003, Havana).

6.3 A TRANSFORMATION OF STATE-CIVIL SOCIETY RELATIONS?

Contrary to the predictions of right-wing analysts, who argued during the early 1990s that the collapse of the Cuba's socialist regime was immanent, the Cuban state navigated a course through the decade and beyond which has enabled it to maintain social control and political power.[39] This process has not, however, been without costly repercussions for the socialist project. An increase in inequality and a subsequent diminution, if not loss, of socialist values have been just two of the many disadvantages which have accompanied it.

Rather than a simple cost or benefit, the gradual alteration of the social relations of power represents a more fundamental change. Using Stepan's (1985) understanding of the reciprocal relations between the power of the state and civil society as a guide, the Cuban case during the 1990s can be crudely characterised using the following generalisation: from 1990 to approximately 1995 the power of actors outside of the state increased, while the state's capacity to structure outcomes decreased, thereafter, from 1996 onwards, there was a shift in favour of the state (and to the detriment of civil society) as state power grew and the power of civil society diminished. During this latter phase, the state moved to regain its dominance within civil society and win back consent by employing a range of strategies (see 6.2 above).

On the basis of this, it might reasonably be concluded that state-civil society relations appeared to be undergoing a transformation during the 1990s, but then 'slipped back' to previous patterns from mid decade onwards, helped by the economic recovery. However, this would imply a teleological interpretation of 'transformation' as a series of (preconceived) stages through which state and civil society must transit on their evolutionary trajectory towards a (known) destination. Such an analysis corresponds closely to the logic of both neo-liberal transition theories and reductionist Marxist approaches, for they draw on similar positivistic understandings of social change. If, however, and as indicated in the introduction to this study, transformation is interpreted as a *substantial* and *qualitative* change leading to a redefinition of the relationship which is our focus, then reaching an understanding as to whether there has been a transformation in state-civil society relations in Cuba (and, if so, the nature of that transformation) is not so much a question of reaching a conclusion regarding the *balance* of power between them, but rather of analysing changes in the underlying *configuration* of power relations which permeate both sites of rule. Hence, in order assess whether a transformation has occurred we need not only to compare and contrast changes in the configuration of relations of power within and between the state and civil society over time, but also in terms of the two dimensions of 'transformation' which have been identified. The remainder of this chapter will discuss the changes that have taken place in civil society and the state, and how these have influenced the relationship between them, before evaluating whether these processes have amounted to a substantial and qualitative shift or 'transformation' in the nature of their relationship within the context of socialist rule. To conclude, the challenges facing the Cuban state and civil society today are briefly highlighted.

First, however, an important point must be made regarding the interpretation of socialism which has guided this study and its implications for the understanding of state-civil society relations that has been developed. Following Martínez (1993,p.64) socialism is conceived as a process characterised by a series of upheavals:

> Socialism is … a process of successive upheavals not only in the economy, politics and ideology, but in conscious and organised action. It is a process premised on unleashing the

power of the people, who learn how to change themselves along with their circumstances. Revolutions within the revolution demand creativity and unity with respect to principles and organisations and broad and growing participation. In other words, they must become a gigantic school through which people learn to direct social processes, socialism is not constructed spontaneously, nor is it something that can be bestowed.

In this definition, Martínez captures the notion that socialism is a complex and on-going *process* of social change rather than a series of discrete events or a system. Within this context, the relationship between the state and civil society is itself a process which is continuously being re-articulated and re-negotiated. The upheavals or critical moments that occur over time represent opportunities for transformations. Was the Special Period one such moment? According to the majority of respondents, and as Lázaro Barredo put it during one interview, a "substantive change *was* achieved in state-civil society relations during the 1990s" (interview 29 April 2003, Havana, emphasis added). In order for us to appreciate why this interpretation is plausible, let us begin by considering the changes which had occurred within civil society.

During the 1990s Cuban civil society underwent a dramatic transformation. In part a result of self-generated responses to the socio-economic deterioration which had resulted from the economic crisis, during these years a civil society with a different value base - one no longer determined solely by social contributions and obligations - emerged and began to function. The separation from state reliance served to energise a self-help dynamic which was particularly strong at the community level. Moreover, the emergence of new social actors seeking to operate in the spaces created as a result of the state's reforms made civil society internally more complex and led to the diversification of associative forms. While still performing an important role, the mass organisations were no longer sufficient. Although it has been argued that the number of civic associations or NGOs, for example, should not be taken as evidence of the existence or vibrancy of Cuban civil society (see Chapter 5), an increase in their number does merit attention. It points not only to an important change in the social structure, which was becoming increasingly complex as a result of the limited introduction of the market mechanism and the increase in forms of socialist property, but also to a greater willingness on the part of the leadership to tolerate a broader and at the same time more inclusive understanding of socialist civil society which included groups which had hitherto been excluded, for example, religious believers. Reflecting the greater heterogeneity within society, by the mid 1990s civil society represented many fragmented and contradictory interests (not all of them falling within the state's definition). Within this context the possibility for competing discourses to emerge and challenge the hegemonic discourse of the Party-state grew. New spaces for participation and the production of alternative discourses fundamentally altered the configuration of power relations within civil society which was no longer defined

exclusively by the mass and social organisations. As such, civil society has been an area which has engaged in complex and multiple relations with the state.

For its part, during the 1990s the state was no longer able to support civil society as it had in previous decades. It was in an ever more precarious situation from which to respond to the demands of different social sectors. The state began to modify the traditional style of its relation with civil society as the dimensions of its social responsibilities were re-designed and re-thought in the context of the economic crisis. While retaining its developmental focus, there is evidence that the state may be less autonomous from domestic and outside forces. Although it is still the state which negotiates with the external sector, it is no longer the sole agent of transformation and it has less ability to regulate people's behaviour and the social spaces with which they identify. As in earlier decades, the state remains concerned with retaining a high level of consensus. Its greater toleration of non-conformity indicates the potential for greater pluralism within Cuba but for this to occur there may first need to be spaces for consultation and inclusion within the political process, particularly for new social actors such as the *cuentapropistas* and those working for foreign firms.

The state's response to civil society has been a contradictory one. As well as attempting to define and at times limit the parameters of civil society, the state has continued to take an important role in developing and empowering civil society, for example, in creating new mechanisms for interaction such as the *parlamentos obreros* (see Chapter 4). In essence, the Revolution has been about creating spaces for individuals to fulfill their potentials and develop their creativity (see Cole,1998). As a project it has generated strong upward mobility and numerous participative spaces for initiatives to progress and evolve. Moreover, it has created a social subject with high levels of education and training in civic activism. Although it at times appears that the political class is uneasy with a 'strong' civil society in Cuba, a civil society which has been nourished by four decades of socialist Revolution can not hope to be anything other than strong. It has been from this position of relative strength that it has begun to transform its relationship with the state.

Whereas in previous decades the distinction between civil society and the state had been far less precise and at times the two had become, to use Chanan's (2001) term, "momentarily fused," over the decade of the 1990s a clearer demarcation of boundaries between the state and civil society can be discerned, although the interactive nature of their relationship remains fundamental for its comprehension. López (1997,p.27) describes state-civil society relations during this period as "harmonious" and *overall* state-civil society relations have remained complementary and cooperative. There have, of course, been important exceptions, as the arrests in March 2003 show (see above). Less dramatically, there has been contestation between state and civil society but the expansion of spaces for civil

society need not imply antagonism, conflict or confrontation. Given that what continues to unite the state and civil society has been an interest in a common good and in the preservation of the achievements of the Revolution, it is quite possible that they merge synergistically and provide new legitimacy for the socialist system (Jackiewicz and Bolster, 2003). Legitimacy includes the acceptance of the state's symbolic configuration within which rewards and sanctions are packaged. It indicates people's approval of the state's desired social order through their acceptance of the state's myths.

While unwilling to fall back on the reductionist argument that changes in economic relations have defined changes in social relations between state and civil society, we have seen that during the 1990s a number of structural changes impacted on state-civil society relations, not least the limited reintroduction of the market mechanism. However, it has been argued that the matrix in which state-civil society relations must be analysed is the on-going struggle for hegemony. The Special Period has provided the opportunity for the emergence and articulation of alternative counter-hegemonic discourses and, concomitantly, an opportunity for the dominant group to promote and strengthen the existing hegemony. Hence both continuities and transformations have defined these years. Though weakened, the hegemonic control of the political class has been strong enough to prevent a transition from socialist rule towards either capitalism or liberal democracy However this has not prevented a substantial and qualitative change to have taken place in state-civil society relations.

Although the idea of a 'substantial' change might appear to indicate a quantitative dimension, and implies that some consideration should be given to issues of size or value, the concept of 'transformation' used here is not intended to suggest a quantitative or linear improvement. Rather it refers to changes of a fundamental nature. Evidence that a new type of relationship between state and civil society is in the process of being (re)configured can be found in the existence of competing discourses, levels of debate and spaces for debates, not only in the new forms of economic participation which have been introduced in response to the economic crisis. The emergence (however short-lived) of intellectual and associational spaces in which to reflect openly and critically mark an important qualitative change and suggest the potential for an authentic critical socialism to develop and grow.

A Continuing Challenge

Despite the dangers and, it would seem, against all odds, Cuba's socialist system has survived into the new Millennium. That Cuban socialism has endured was the starting point of this study, for just as cases of 'transition' require explanation, so too do those cases which are, to use Laurence Whitehead's (2002) term, 'exceptional', and Cuba's pathway through the last forty-five years has been nothing if not exceptional.

As we have seen, the years 1959 and 1990 were critical ones for Cuba. At both points in the island's history the possibility of the survival of the Revolution and the space for an alternative that it represented were questioned. In 1990, just as in 1959, the Cold War had a critical impact on the Revolution's fate. The very balance of power that had enabled the Revolution to exist for three decades, ultimately represented its greatest danger, for although it had made possible the "luxury" of a Revolution that had "virulent anti-Americanism" as a prime component (Fagen, 1969,p.31; see also Kapcia, 2000), when, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the global balance of power was tilted in favour of the right, the Cuban Revolution was left isolated and vulnerable. Without the economic and ideological life-line that the Soviet Union and much of Eastern Europe had provided since the 1960s, Cuba was marooned at the edge of a hostile world system. For the first time since the Revolution, Cuba had to find a way to 'breathe' unaided.

In spite of such radical changes in the external environment, the fundamental challenge for those in power in Cuba has varied little since 1959. It remains essentially the following: How to defend the space that the Revolution occupies within Cuba, while at the same time defending the position that Cuba occupies as an alternative space within a capitalist world. The two dimensions of this challenge have had important implications for the nature and dynamics of the relationship which has been at the centre of this study: the relationship between the Cuban state and civil society. Although it has been the first part of the 'challenge' that had occupied the main focus of our attention here (essentially how the Revolution has defended its political space internally and the implications of this for state-civil society relations) it has been argued that the political space that Cuba defends in the world - and the manner in which the Cuban government seeks to enhance this space - is critical to an understanding of internal politics on the island.[40] Neither can adequately be understood without reference to the other for they are inextricably related.

If, as Jameson (1992,p.188) argues, the Third World "is the last surviving social space from which alternatives to corporate capitalist daily life are to be sought" then it is clear that the position of Cuba as an alternative social and political space within that alternative world is critical. For how long Cuba will continue to resist being absorbed into the mainstream is uncertain, but Cuba's struggle to redefine its relationship with the global economy and its international relations with other states will, if Migdal's (1988,p.2) assertion that "the role and effectiveness of the state domestically is highly interdependent with its place in the world of states" is accepted, have important repercussions for internal politics.

In many respects, the processes of redefining the parametres for inclusion and exclusion which are being renegotiated between the Cuban state and international actors externally have also been played out domestically with actors from within civil society. The

difficult task of reorganising national political consensus is occurring in a context in which the state faces a citizenship whose recent experiences have been very different from those of social subjects in the past, who for decades ascribed to the hegemonic view that the only future possible was a socialist one. Today there is less certainty, but there remains a committed core of leaders and activists within Cuban civil society whose understanding of socialism has been fortified by a rich experience of social solidarity generated by four decades of socialist Revolution. Should socialism falter, it will again be from within civil society that anti-capitalist alternative (counter-hegemonic) programmes arise. Given this, the need to empower civil society without reducing the developmental power of the state could be the greatest challenge facing the political leadership. The combination of a highly politicized citizenship with restricted opportunities for participation in governance may present the potential for instability as well as limit political change. For its part, civil society must develop its capacity as the agent of unitary actions and projects and strengthen its voice in making socially pertinent demands.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the relationship between the Cuban state and civil society in the period 1990 to 2003. The state's use of five mutually reinforcing strategies have been identified and used as an optic through which to examine this relationship. These strategies have covered both consensual and coercive mechanisms of social control. All five involve processes of inclusion and exclusion, and have been accompanied by a discourse legitimising the different types of exclusion. It has been argued that a transformation occurred during the 1990s which has led to a redefinition of the relationship between the state and civil society within the context of socialist rule.

NOTES

[1] By 1994 it was evident that the economy had been saved from collapse and after 1995 it began to show significant rates of growth - 0.7 percent, 2.5 percent, and 7.8 percent in 1994, 1995 and 1996 respectively, compared with an average annual rate of growth of 4.3 percent from 1959-1989 (Hamilton, 2002,p.24).

[2] See, for example, the case of the independent library movement in Cuba (Llloyd, 2001).

[3] In 1971 unemployment was criminalised. This move reflected the belief that if the system provided universal opportunities for employment then the unemployed were, by definition, failing in their social responsibilities.

[4] It must be noted that in Toirac's (2003) study it was found that the majority of *rockeros* interviewed were in employment and by no means all were involved in the drug culture which was commonly associated with the music of which they are fans.

[5] In the late 1960s many homosexuals were put to work in the UMAPs (Military Units to Augment Production) - camps where people regarded as 'social recalcitrants' or 'misfits' were put to work. Although the UMAP were dissolved in (1967), following a bitter letter of complaint from the National Union of Artists and Writers (see Chapter 3), prejudice has continued (interview Marrero 13 February 2003, Havana). During the 1981 Mariel Boatlift, homosexuals were hounded out of the island along with other social 'misfits' (see Arenas).

[6] See also Julian Schnabel's (2000) film *Antes que anochezca* (Before Night Falls) based on Arenas's novel.

[7] Lumsden (1996) argues that the treatment of male homosexuality by the post-1959 Cuban state was influenced by the prejudices and preconceptions prevalent in Cuban society before the Revolution. A point reiterated by Hernández (interview 11 March 2003, Havana).

[8] See D'Lugo (2001) and Davies (1996) for analyses of the film.

[9] Participant observation 26 January 2003 Vedado district, Havana. Research journal entry: "A few hundred youths dressed in baggy jeans, baseball caps and American-style basketball vests (the women in impossibly tight lycra) had gathered on [street] 10 between [streets] 13 and 15 to listen to local rap and hip-hop artists. It was a strange sight on a Sunday afternoon in the otherwise sleepy streets of Vedado. The music came from the garden and open windows of an abandoned house set high above the street (like a stage) that has recently been used as a squat. I could not see a single white face in the crowd and at first felt very much an outsider, a curiosity, as eyes turned to look at me. However within no time people were introducing themselves, asking where I came from, pleased to swap stories about the music scene in the UK, U.S. and Cuba. The event started at about 2pm and went on until about 6pm as people began to drift away after the bands left."

[10] Olavarria (2002,p.28) claims that in 2002 there were some 200 hip-hop groups in Havana and 500 throughout the island.

[11] After an appearance on Cuban television when they were asked to explain their name, the group *Free Hole Negro* was excluded from the 2000 festival. They said that besides being an obvious pun (free hole=*frijol*=black bean) it was calling for a space where all black people could be free (see Olavarria, 2002 for details of this incident). During participant observation in Havana (2003) racial codes that used notions of "decency" to exclude blacks were common. For example, I was advised by the Cuban family with whom I was living to avoid socialising in venues that were not "decent." Having asked to explain what this meant I was told that such venues were places frequented largely by blacks. Despite being officially undeclared, the majority of those interviewed maintained that racism exists within Cuban society.

[12] On the resurgence of racism in Cuba see De la Fuente, 2001.

[13] On the evolution of *cubanía* from a minority (white) intellectual concern, see Kapcia 2000.

[14] In her 1996 review of *Fresa y chocolate*, Davies notes the symbols indicating the "transgressive lifestyle" of one of the main characters as: "the tourist-shop bag, the alterations to his flat to provide more space, santería, Catholic iconography, foreign literature, whisky, dollars and pigs when available" (Davies, 1996,p.178).

[15] According to Marrero (interview 8 March 2003, Havana) elements of the history of the wars of independence (some of which had previously been disregarded by dogmatic Marxists as 'bourgeois') were, for the first time, included in the history of revolutionary struggle. In addition, Marrero notes, it was during the 1990s that the political leadership began to re-enact significant historical moments such as José Martí's return to Cuba casting contemporary political figures in Martí role, in the hope that they would be identified with Martí's virtues.

[16] During the 1990s there was a revival of Martí and Guevara as symbols of national pride and role models of personal commitment. The return of Guevara's body to the island was particularly significant in this respect. Cuban social scientists have responded by producing works on these icons. Of those interviewed, Fernando Martínez Heredia has been engaged in on-going work on Guevara and Jesús García Brigos has been working on the political thought of Martí. For an earlier (prize winning) study of Guevara's economic thought see Tablada (1987).

[17] For a discussion of the distinction between patriotism and nationalism see Kapcia 2000,p.22.

[18] Interview 29 April 2003, Havana.

[19] Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, René González, and Fernando Gonález. These five men are serving prison sentences of fifteen years to life in U.S. federal maximum-security penitentiaries. They had been monitoring various groups in Miami that advocate and have carried out terrorist attacks against Cuba in order to provide information to the Cuban government. In June 2001 they were convicted of engaging in espionage activity and threatening U.S national security. However, no evidence was introduced that substantiated that charge (Saney, 2004). Cuba has maintained that the only crime 'the five' are guilty of is defending the island against terrorism (see *Miami 5* 2003).

[20] Barredo comments: "the U.S. are pragmatic about their conflicts. There are different U.S. policies for China, Vietnam and North Korea. They have been able to normalise relations with China and Vietnam but not with Cuba. Cubans cannot lose sight of the fact that for the U.S. Cuba is different - there are sentiments of possession that are very complicated and deep-rooted" (interview 29 April 2003, Havana).

[21] For a fascinating analysis of the issue of 'battles' within the Cuban Revolution see Martínez (1999).

[22] See *Temas* No. 15 (1998) which is dedicated to this issue.

[23] In Bulté's opinion, it was in 1976, when the new Constitution was approved, that the highest degree of political consensus was recorded in Cuba (interview 23 April 2003).

[24] Such 'sanctions' have traditionally been applied to both "primary" and "surrogate" subjects of social control (Aguirre, 2000,p.11). Aguirre (2000) describes how the surrogate subjects are family members, friends or other persons who can be sanctioned by the security systems to make the primary subject conform. It was clear from the interviews and participant observation that I carried out in 2003 that the perception that family members *might* be negatively effected as a result of another's 'non-conformity' was as strong an incentive to participate in official acts as the actual application of sanctions. One young lawyer told me: "I'm not ashamed to say that I went [to the May Day Parade] to be seen [participating]. I was out of my house by 8am. and my boss was waiting for me and the others from my office. I didn't have any desire to go but it would have been considered anti-revolutionary not to have gone and that would have been a problem for my family as well as me." Even those who were outspoken in their

beliefs admitted to conforming when required. Of all those interviewed only one person, whose situation was so exceptional (her father had been executed by the state in 1989) that her 'non-conformity' was afforded a greater degree of toleration by the authorities, told me that she habitually refused to vote or participate in revolutionary acts. Regardless of this, she was subject to "the usual pressures" to participate (for example, pressure from her CDR to vote).

[25] Carter spoke on the 14th May to an audience at the University of Havana, see http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/latin_america/cuba/carter_5-15-02.html for full text.

[26] 'El gato copulando con la marta / no pare un gato / de piel shakesperiana y estrellada, / ni una marta de ojos fosoforescentes. / Engendran el gato volante' (in Prieto, 1999,p.8) The copulation of the cat with the marten / Does not engender a cat / With Shakespearean and star-spangled fur / It produces the flying cat (translation in Muguercia, 2002,p.182).

[27] Fidel Castro's opening words to a group discussing the decision to execute three men found guilty of hijacking a small ferry in April 2003 (evening meeting at UNEAC, 6 May 2003, Havana - see Plates 4-6, Appendix A).

[28] On July 10, 1989 *Granma* reported the court-martial verdict against fourteen officers charged with drug trafficking and other serious crimes. The main defendants, Division General Arnaldo Ochoa, Captain Jorge Martínez Valdés, Major Amado Padrón and Colonel Antonio De La Guardia, were sentenced to death. Two others, Brigadier General Patricio De La Guardia (twin brother of Antonio) and Captain Miguel Ruiz Poó, received thirty-year prison sentences. Eight other defendants including one woman received prison sentences ranging from ten to thirty years. In a separate case the Minister of the Interior, Division general José Abrantes was charged with the abuse of power, misuse of monies, neglect of duty, for which he received a twenty-year sentence. Other top military and civilian officers were fired - Heads of Customs Service and the Immigration Department. Personnel from the Ministries of Transport and the Armed Forces were charged with corruption and the Minister of Transport received a twenty-year sentence (for details see Azicri, 2000).

[29] Many respondents commented on the difficulties of linking with academics outside of Cuba. Restricted internet access and state control of electronic communication inhibits relations being forged with international associations and, along with travel restrictions, hampers cross-national research. Having said this, many Cuban academics do travel widely and have access to (monitored) internet accounts via the Ministry of Culture's 'cubarte' server.

[30] A Spanish-based journal which focuses on Cuba and which has been described by the Cuban government as a "dissident" publication. See the remarks of Felipe Pérez Roque 9 April 2003 (in *Granma* Special Tabloid No.3, 2003).

[31] Arango's input at this *último jueves* meeting was subsequently published in *Temas* No. 37-38 2004, p.112-113. My version, recorded at the meeting, differs slightly, though significantly, from this later text. Here I use my own transcript.

[32] On this point Rey (interview 3 April 2003, Havana) argues: "prostitution in the Special Period is an economic problem. Women and girls who worked as prostitutes here but have since migrated to Italy, for example, have been horrified by the idea that they should continue their former line of work in another context."

[33] As Kapcia (2000) notes, the post of Minister of Culture is politically significant in Cuba and perhaps more so than in other systems.

[34] See for example, *En defensa de Raúl Rivero* by Eliseo Alberto (14 April 2003) and Eduardo Galeano's *Cuba duele* (both posted on the internet following the trials). Also nobel prize winner José Saramago's *Hasta aqui he llegado* (again, widely available on the internet after the events). It was no coincidence that on the 7 May 2003 when describing the authors whose texts are included in the publications which comprise the 'family library' - a collection of literature available on newspaper in order to keep costs at a

minimum - to a group of international delegates Fidel Castro quipped: "you won't find there is anything by Saramago!"

[35] As in 1999 during the NATO bombing of Serbia, in early 2003 the bombing of Iraq created a palpable fear that Cuba could be a similar victim.

[36] For example, founder of the *Centro Félix Varela*, Juan Antonio Blanco despite being a Communist Party member and strong supporter of the Revolution had frequent disagreements with Cuban government policies and lost his position at the University of Havana in the late 1960s due to his disagreement with the Sovietization of the curriculum (see Blanco and Benjamin, 2003). As he explains in an interview published in *Debates Americanas* (1995) Fernando Martínez Heredia also experienced periods in his career when his work was not well received by those in power and he was "out in the cold" as Chanan (2001) puts it, despite his total commitment to the Revolution. Today he is director of the *Cátedra de Estudios Antonio Gramsci*, an 'independent' institute attached to the Centro Juan Marinello in Havana.

[37] The official arguments regarding the legal processes can be found in the press conference held by Pérez Roque published under the title: *No estamos dispuestos a renunciar a nuestra soberanía* (We are not
Prepared to Renounce our Sovereignty), Editora Política, La Habana, 2003.

[38] The process for Cubans who wish to live abroad is complex. First, they must receive an invitation and visa from the host country (in itself complex and problematic). Having negotiated this hurdle they then have 11 months during which they can legally remain abroad while paying a monthly fee to the Cuban authorities for this permission and while applications are processed for a permanent permission to reside in the exterior (which enables them to retain their Cuban passport, enter and leave Cuba without requiring a visa, and maintain their rights as Cuban citizens when they return to Cuba , including access to all social provisions such as free health care etc.,). At the end of this period if permission is not granted they must either return to Cuba or, should they decide to stay (illegally) they automatically lose their status as Cuban citizens and are unable to return to the island until they have been pardoned (often for up to five years and then only with a visa).

[39] For those keen to retain the 'transition-scenario' analysis, the Cuban case during the 1990s has been described variously as an example of 'non-transition' (del Aguila, 1999; López, 1999; Hawkins, 2001); as a 'slow transition' (Nuccio, 1999), and even an 'uncertain transition' (Whitehead, 2002).

[40] A point emphasized by a researcher at the Institute of History who stressed the importance of Cuba's external policies on the internal policy agenda. He argued that it is impossible to understand Cuba without this external dimension (pers.comm. 07 May 2003, Havana).

Conclusion: Less Space in Which to Breathe?

In order to conclude this study, the threads of the argument developed in the preceding chapters are drawn together and the extent to which the research aims set out in the introduction have been achieved, is discussed.   The contribution to knowledge that the thesis can expect to make is evaluated in terms of originality before the limitations of the study are considered and future research possibilities indicated.

Drawing Together the Threads of the Argument

This study began with a call for a new approach to the analysis of the Cuban Revolution.   As an area which has traditionally been dominated by ideological positioning, it was suggested that a modern social science approach was critical if preconceptions and misconceptions based on stereotypes were to be challenged and overcome.   As with all areas of research, it was recognised that different epistemic communities, consisting of individuals and groups with distinct motives, knowledges and goals, coexist within the field of Cuban Studies but are rarely revealed.   In light of this, it was proposed that greater transparency should become the norm rather than the exception, enabling implicit paradigms to be revealed and partisanship behind stereotypes unmasked.   For this reason, epistemological and methodological preferences have been highlighted in this study.

Given the prevalence of such stereotypes, the current study set itself a particularly difficult challenge.   For the title 'A Space in Which to Breathe' itself risks provoking precisely the kind of stereotypical responses (there is no 'space to breathe' in Cuba) which have beset understandings of the Cuban Revolution.   Furthermore, any reference to 'space' or 'spaces' invites questions regarding the use to which such spaces are put - a space for what exactly?   In the context of a discussion of state-civil society relations, it is not inconceivable that the answer should involve some mention of dissent, opposition or criticism.   While this is a matter of perspective, it is still commonplace within the contemporary debate on civil society to focus on this aspect, and in a significant proportion of the external literature dedicated to the study of Cuban civil society (particularly that of North American Cubanologists), it is practically the only focus (see Chapter 1).   However, and despite the dangers, the idea of 'breathing space' that has been encapsulated in the title was not one which could be ignored, arising as it did from the

interview data (see the Note on the Title).

In this study the 'spaces' which have been identified refer to a diverse assortment of opportunities: opportunities for conformity and non-conformity; for contestation and agreement; for creativity and critique.   Most of these spaces, like much about Cuban politics, are contradictory. At first glance, many of those which appeared during the early years of the Special Period seemed to have opened spontaneously along preexisting fault lines.   On closer inspection it becomes evident that they have been created either as a result of civil society agency or else as a consequence of deliberate state actions and design, as was shown in Chapter 4.   Regardless of their provenance, their existence (however ephemeral or contrived) has enabled Cubans to 'breathe' and, on occasions, has provided an important 'breathing space' for the system itself, particularly during difficult periods such as those through which Cuba has recently been transiting.

For those who come to the study of Cuba with preconceptions arising from a familiarity with pre 1989 Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union - more often than not based on assumptions inherited from 'Sovietology' and influenced by recent analyses of socialist 'transition' - it is difficult to 'see' beyond the stereotypes.   After all, the Cuban case has long been regarded by unsympathetic observers as an example of a dictatorial aberration within a global capitalist and, increasingly, 'democratic' system (see Leftwich, 1996; 2000).

While this research has aimed to challenge such assumptions, the means by which it has done so have presented their own problems.   Complicating the issue has been the fact that the study includes critiques made by Cubans of their own revolutionary process which has, at times, exhibited 'negative tendencies', rigidities and excesses of a type commonly associated with the discredited systems found 'east of the Elbe'.   However, the vast majority of those whose voices have been heard in these pages are not only committed to the Revolution but are convinced of the continuing value of, and need for, a space for socialism not only within Cuba, but as a viable alternative within today's world.   Many acknowledge that their discussions of 'errors' are vulnerable to misinterpretation.   However, and as Rosa Luxemburg courageously argued almost one hundred years ago, without the liberty to 'think in alternative ways,' to question and evaluate critically, to discuss and propose alternatives to mainstream or dominant interpretations within the revolutionary movement (and without the freedom to express such alternatives), there is no possible guarantee of the continuity of the Revolution (see Acanda, 2001).   It was in this spirit

that those participating in this study offered their critiques, and it is in this spirit that they have been presented in the preceding chapters. Arguably, it has never been more necessary for Cubans to 'think the unthinkable' in order to develop new ideas and methods in the struggle to save the Revolution and, paradoxical though it may sound, it is only through transformation that continuity can be maintained. While alternatives to officially sanctioned discourse may be threatening, they are also stimulating (Davies, 2000). Effectively 'oxygenating' the system, they are ultimately necessary.

The Cuban political system is more complex than conventional interpretations have allowed. In order to capture these complexities an approach which is sensitive to local texture and meaning has been required, that is, one based on internally generated data as opposed to externally generated preconceptions. To this end, new empirical data gathered in the setting, together with a combination of theoretical and historical analysis have provided the basis for the interpretation presented here.

The prism through which the Revolution has been analysed has been the relationship between the Cuban state and civil society. In order to conceptualise this relationship, it has been suggested that the usual sharp distinction which liberal theory draws between both spheres should be abandoned. For interpretations which focus exclusively on antagonistic relations between state and civil society often miss the critical differences and peculiarities of the Cuban case. Instead, it has been argued that a conceptual approach based on a Gramscian interpretation of state-civil society relations offers a more appropriate framework for analysis. A Gramscian approach provides an additional conceptual tool which has been critical for this study: an appreciation of hegemonic struggles for coercive and consensual domination within, between and beyond the state and civil society, and the conceptual tools with which to analyse them. The crux of the argument which has been developed is that in order for the complex social relations which represent the state and civil society to be understood it is necessary to consider the processes by which political hegemony has been continuously articulated and re-articulated by social actors within and outside of Cuba. Rather than suggesting a causal link between state-civil society relations and the struggle for hegemony, it has been suggested that both are inextricably interrelated. The variables (for want of a better word) brought to the analysis explain the social phenomena under investigation in a highly interactive (as opposed to additive) way. The relationship between the specific phenomenon of state-civil society relations

and the more general process of hegemony is recursive. There is a 'doubling-back' quality between the phenomenon to be explained (state-civil society relations) and the process in which it is embedded (hegemonic struggle), whereby the historic process of hegemonic struggle shapes state-civil society relations, yet at the same time state-civil society relations influence the on-going struggle for hegemony. Such a model is very different from those which exhibit clear distinctions between 'dependent' and 'independent' variables. Here, the relationship between state-civil society dynamics and hegemony is understood as one of mutual and simultaneous shaping, as Lincoln and Guba (1985,p.151) explain: "everything influences everything else." Hence the relationship between state-civil society dynamics and the struggle for hegemony is seen as complex, interactive and reciprocal.

A comprehensive understanding of state-civil society relations and the dynamics of hegemonic power struggles in the 1990s required a careful exploration of the historical context from which both have evolved. This was the focus of Chapter 3. Although seldom analysed using the civil society-state optic, the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 1 was applied to the years 1959-1989 in the hope that trends could be identified which would facilitate an analysis of the decade of the 1990s. It was argued that in post-revolutionary Cuba the state was an important mechanism for promoting civil society interests. Having destroyed those elements which remained of the previous order's civil society, the socialist state actively participated in the construction of a new civil society. Hence, it was suggested that where a state is driven by developmental objectives (as it clearly was in post 1959 Cuba) it has the potential not only to limit but also to empower civil society. Two political factors variously enabled or constrained the state's relationship with civil society. Firstly, the struggle for hegemony which took place within civil society as a political class formed and attempted to assert its dominance. Secondly, the influence of both the USSR and U.S. in Cuba's domestic politics.

It was argued that during the 1960s the boundaries between civil society and the state were fluid and dynamic, mediated and transcended by new forms of dialogue and participation. This trend was halted during the 1970s and early 1980s when formal institutional channels were created as the means through which the state and civil society were to interact. At this time, the boundaries between the state and civil society had become indistinct and civil society as a sphere of autonomous thought and action became heavily circumscribed, largely as a result of Soviet influence. Following the onset of the economic crisis in the 1990s, and as a consequence of the

measures taken both by the state and civil society to mitigate its effects, a trend towards an increasing differentiation between state and civil society can be perceived which continues to date. Boundaries which had for decades been blurred are becoming more clearly defined in certain sectors and what was once a methodological separation may, as a result of the increasing influence of the market, in the future become organic. This is not, however, a smooth process and although the traditional mass organisations such as the FMC, CDRs and CTC have become semi-autonomous during the Special Period, it remains difficult to disentangle them from the party-state nexus.

As in the earlier post-revolutionary period, it was suggested that the key to understanding the dynamics of state-civil society relations in the 1990s can be found in how the political class that controls the state has maintained its hegemonic position vis-à-vis challenges from outside the Revolution and from competing discourse within it. Despite the nature of the political and economic reforms which it was forced to introduce, the state has remained a key protagonist and has continued to maintain social control via the careful management of coercion and consent. It has been civil society which has undergone the most dramatic redefinition, both as an idea and as a process in Cuba.

In Chapter 5 the debate about civil society which took place within academic and political circles on the island during the early 1990s served to illustrate the revitalisation of this sphere. It also revealed that, contrary to stereotypes, the Cuban system is not monolithic. At times competing discourses have found spaces within which to articulate diverse perspectives that have been tolerated by the state. A recurring theme running throughout the study has been the role of the intellectual in relation to the state. Though not always an easy relationship, the Revolution has given great importance to its intellectuals, academics and artists. A Gramscian approach to state-civil society relations facilitates a discussion of cultural politics and reveals the dynamics of hegemonic struggles between these actors and the state.

Chapter 6 concluded by arguing that overall, the nature of state-civil society relations has been transformed since the Special Period began. A diversified social sphere populated by new actors has created significant challenges for the leadership. While it has been argued that these processes of change have not represented a transition from socialist rule, they have amounted to a qualitative shift in relations. The relationship between state and civil society is far from simple. It is in perpetual motion and operates within parametres defined by a global economic

and political context which has historically shaped its character.   As a result, it has been necessary to view the state-civil society relationship as one that is firmly embedded within an international context.

Assessing The Extent to Which the Research Objectives Have Been Achieved

Overall, substantial progress has been made in achieving the research objectives identified at the outset of the study.   The notion that the civil society-state framework has little utility for the analysis of Cuba has been challenged and shown to be flawed.   By developing a conceptual framework which has enabled the complexity of state-civil society relations in Cuba to be appreciated, it has been possible to analyse the nature and dynamics of state-civil society relations not only in recent years but also during a period (1959-1989) which is not conventionally studied from this perspective.   A sensitivity to the historical evolution of this relationship and the processes by which a political class has achieved and maintained its hegemony has been sustained throughout the study.

It was argued that the economic crisis of the late 1980s and early 1990s should not be seen as the key to understanding the transformations in state-civil society relations.   However, the responses of both state and civil society to the economic crisis were analysed and the implications for their roles discussed.   This enabled an evaluation to be made as to the nature and characteristics of the state-civil society relationship during the 1990s.

Although it has been internal influences on state-civil society relations which have been privileged in this study, an awareness of the influence of external factors (especially the impact of U.S. but also that of the Soviet Union towards Cuba) has been a theme which has run throughout the chapters.   This theme could have been more strongly developed had more external sector stakeholders been interviewed in Cuba.   Had time and financial circumstances allowed, it would have been beneficial to have interviewed stakeholders in the U.S., but this was beyond the scope of the study.

The main objective was to analyse whether the transformations occurring in state-civil society relations were qualitative in the sense that they did not merely indicate the existence of 'more' civil society in terms of the number of associations within the public sphere.   The answer to such a question necessarily involves value judgements but the interpretation offered here has been based on the perspectives of key stakeholders from within the context and as such

represents a plausible interpretation.

Evaluating the Contribution to Knowledge in Terms of Originality

The original contribution to knowledge made by the research rests on a number of factors. First, the study has brought new empirical data gathered in the setting to the analysis of the research problem, facilitating the generation of new knowledge about the subject under investigation. Second, it has proposed an innovative approach to the study of state-civil society relations by linking them to both national and international struggles for hegemony. Third, and in contrast to many existing studies, it has approached the analysis of the Cuban Revolution by using a social science approach which has enabled the perceptions of key stakeholders from within the context to be heard and used as the basis for the analysis.

Potential Limitations of the Study

As methodological limitations have already been discussed in Chapter 2, the limitations noted here are intended to highlight how the study could have been improved and to point to areas for further research.

There is a danger with studies of this kind that too great a focus on the capital might suggest that civil society is predominantly an urban phenomenon. This would be a misrepresentation of the situation in Cuba, but it is one to which the study is potentially vulnerable. Although interviews were conducted in Cienfuegos province during 1999, the main fieldwork was concentrated in Havana and the majority of respondents interviewed were located in the capital. To make generalisations based on data generated in this way is always contentious but it reflects the problem identified by Migdal (1988) that key stakeholders tend to be located in capital cities. Where possible, differences between regions have been highlighted.

An awareness of historical context has been an important feature of the study. However, the study has not attempted to present a history of either Cuba's post-revolutionary development or the Special Period. Rather, the aim has been to interpret a particular aspect of Cuban politics using an approach which is sensitive to the historical context from which it has evolved. As a consequence, there are elements that have been omitted or only dealt with very briefly. One of the most obvious is the treatment of the historical period prior to 1959. Although the study could undoubtedly have been strengthened by the inclusion of a deeper analysis of the period of the Republic, this was not an objective of the study and as such was beyond its scope.

A second obvious omission concerns the issue of democracy and its relationship to civil society. In recent times, the concept of civil society has not only been instrumental in explaining transitions from authoritarian rule but has also been used as part of a broader neo-liberal project where it is seen to have a role in enhancing the vitality of democracy (see Sklar, 1996). The civil society framework presented here is not adequate by itself to address questions of democracy in Cuba. However, this has not been its aim and it would be inappropriate to judge the framework on this basis. In fact, the whole issue of a potential transition to a liberal democratic system has been regarded as a question beyond the remit of this research due, in part, to the speculative nature of such an inquiry, but also to the fact that for the overwhelming majority of Cubans interviewed, the question of a transition from socialist rule was not one which they regarded as relevant. Moreover, the trend to emphasise civil society as a democratic force against an oppressive state has added to the dominant anti-statist theme in civil society debates (see Evans et al, 1985) to their detriment, and to the detriment of our understanding of both spheres. Such a view was not in accord with the objectives of this study, which sought to analyse the interdependence between state and civil society.

For heuristic purposes the state and civil society have been described in much of the above analysis as 'wholes' yet, as pointed out in the introduction, to claim one relationship between state and civil society is problematic, particularly in a context in which civil society is fast diversifying and becoming an ever more contradictory ambit. However, research of this type, which examines 'big structures and large processes' as Tilly (1984) puts it, has an important role to play within the social sciences. Not only does it facilitate comparisons between cases but it paves the way for closer analysis of specific phenomena.

Possibilities for Future Research

There are many rich seams to be explored by future research projects on state-civil society relations in Cuba and it is hoped that this study will stimulate some of them. In particular, and as indicated above, there is a need for greater work to be undertaken on mapping the diverse and internally contradictory currents that make up Cuban civil society, particularly in rural areas. Studies on the changing relationship between the state and key sectors within civil society (the unions, the new self-employed, intellectuals, foreign NGOs and firms) are all required. Linked to this is the need for a continuing analysis of the underlying configuration of power relations

which permeate both the state and civil society.   Moreover, the links between struggles in the cultural sphere and those in the political sphere need to be explored more thoroughly through empirical research and potentially by articulating a more coherent theory.   It would be particularly interesting to develop research on the theme of the Cuban intellectual's relationship with the state, drawing on Gramsci's understanding of the intellectual to guide the analysis. As indicated above, the current study has been unable to devote sufficient attention to the years between 1902 and 1958 and although it is common to stress differences between the pre and post-revolutionary periods, it would be particularly interesting to examine areas of continuity within state-civil society relations, possibly examining organisations such as the FEU which have spanned the two.   Although research has been carried out on contested spaces such as the paladar more empirical studies are needed.   One such area which would be fascinating to explore is the contested space which the beach at Varadero represents.   Overall, however, more comparative work on state-civil society relations, particularly with Latin American cases, is desirable.

Less space in which to breathe?

At various times since 1959 the Cuban Revolution has both provided and denied different elements of civil society a space in which to breathe.   Likewise, the Revolution itself has passed through phases during which it has been close to asphyxiation and others where it has respired more easily, in both an economic and political sense.   That the Revolution could exist at all was largely made possible by a space within the complexities and contradictions of cold war politics. By 1990 it appeared that this space was disappearing, but the Revolution continued, transforming itself in a bid to engage with the new reality of a post-Soviet international context.   Within the island, the relationship between the state and civil society underwent a radical redefinition at this time and although there was not a transition of the type experienced elsewhere in the socialist world, the effects of this process have been far-reaching.   From the late 1990s onwards there has been a political 'tightening' which has accompanied a closing down of some of those spaces within civil society which had characterised the early 1990s.   In late October 2004, moves on the part of the Cuban state to strip the dollar of legal tender status in everyday transactions have further reduced the 'space in which to breathe' for many Cubans.

APPENDICIES

Appendix A

i) Details of Respondents and Semi-Structured Interviews 1999-2003

Pilot Field Trip Cuba 1999				
Name of Respondent	**Relevant Details**	**Date(s) of interview** day/month	**Duration of interview**	**Number of Interviews with respondent**
Delgado Díaz, Ricardo	President ACTAF	23.11	45 mins	1
Eduardo*	Former electrical engineer Self-employed	16.11	1 hr	1
Figueroa, Vilda	Community Project Activist	22.11	1 hr 30	1
Fuentes, Alejandro	International Relations Officer Ministry of Finance and Prices	18.11	1 hr	1
Fuentes, Marcia	Head of Section, Central State Budget Ministry of Finance and Prices	18.11	2 hrs	1
Hernández Díaz, Magda	Vice-President, Agricultural and Forestry Technicians, ACTAF	23.11.	1 hr 30	1
Hernández Gomez, Ileana	Director, Section for Local Government Budgets Ministry of Finance and Prices	18.11	30 mins	1
Lama, José	Community Project Activist	22.11	45 mins	1
Molina Aeosta, Osmany	Director, Finance and Prices, Cruces	24.11	2 hr 30	1
Ramírez García, Mariano	Director, Provincial Council of Administration, Cienfuegos	24.11 25.11	1 hr 1 hr 30	2
Sanchez Naranjo, Victor	Santa Fé Club of Horticulturists	15.11	1 hr	1
Vital Martínez, Juan	President of Municipal Government, Cruces	24.11	1 hr	1

Main Fieldwork Cuba 2003				
Name of Respondent	**Relevant Details**	**Date(s) of interview** day/month	**Duration of interview**	**Number of Interviews with respondent**
Acanda, Jorge Luis	Academic Faculty of Philosophy University of Havana	13.02 25.02 04.03 06.03 22.04	2 hrs 1 hr 1 hr 1 hr 45 mins.	5
Adita*	Lawyer / Cuban Customs Officer	12.02	1 hr 20	1
Alejandro*	Formerly at Ministry of Culture Artist Self-employed taxi driver	21.01	2 hrs	1
Alonso Tejada, Aurelio	Academic Sociologist CIPS	12.03	1 hr	1
Alfonso, Félix Julio	Academic Department of History, Fernando Ortiz, University of Havana	08.02	2 hrs	1
Arango, Arturo	Writer / Editor UNEAC	23.04	1hr 30	1
Arvue Puelua, Carlos	Cuban NGO (Salvador Allende)	29.04	2 hrs	1
Araya, Juan	Foreign Business Consultant	21.02	45 mins.	1
Barredo, Lázaro	National Assembly Delegate	29.04	2 hrs	1
Basail Rodríguez, A.	Academic Department of Sociology University of Havana	17.01 07.02 28.03 10.04	1 hrs 2 hrs 1 hrs 1 hr 30	4
Bell Lara, José	Academic FLACSO Cuba University of Havana	07.01	1 hr	1
Bulté, Julio Fernández	Lawyer / Academic / Bureaucrat Ministry of Justice and Department of Law University of Havana	23.04	1 hr 30	1
Calzadilla, Jorge Ramírez	Academic (Religion) CIPS	10.03 22.04	2 hrs 2 hrs	2
Carmen*	Academic	24.04	1 hr	1
Carranza Valdés, Julio	Economist Government Advisor UNESCO Academic	07.05	1 hr	1
Castañeda Marrero, Violetta	FMC Centro de Estudios de la Mujer	19.03	2 hrs	1
Clara*	Social worker / M.A. student	27.01	1 hr	1
Dania*	Photographer / Artist	13.01	1 hr	1
De Luis, Graziella	UN translator	13.01 16.01 24.01	2 hrs 1 hr 1 hr 45	3
De la Paz Cerezo, Juan Ramón	Dean Episcopal Church	15.01 01.04	30 mins 1 hr	2

De la Torre Molina, Carolina	Academic University of Havana President of Association of Psychologists	22.03	1 hr	1
Edmundson, William	Diplomat British Embassy Havana	13.02	45 mins	1
Espeja, Jesús	Priest / Academic San Juan del Letran	13.02	45 mins	1
Espina Prieto, Mayra	Academic CIPS	09.05	1 hr 30	1
Fabelo Faléon, Yolanda	Trade Unionist (Sindicate de Trabajadorea de las Ciencias de la Provincia de Villa Clara)	08.05	2 hrs	1
Fitzpatrick, Daniel	International NGO worker	23.02 + other pers.comms	2 hrs	1
Fresnillo, Estrella	Journalist / Writer	07.02	3 hrs	1
García, Denia	Editor	23.04	30 mins	1
García Brigos, Jesús	Academic / Economist Institute of Philosophy Former National Assembly Delegate Former leader of Popular Council	09.01 21.01 22.01 04.03	4 hrs 1 hr 2 hrs 3 hrs	4
García Torres, José	Head of department for International Relations CDR National Head Quarters	26.03	2 hrs	1
González Guitierrez, Alfredo	Economist Advisor to the Minister Ministry of Economics and Planning	05.05 13.05	30 mins 2 hrs	2
Guitierrez, Silvia	Journal Editor	19.03	1 hr	1
Hare, Paul Webster	Ambassador British Embassy Havana	13.02	2 hrs	1
Hernández, Rafael	Journal Editor / Director Academic Formerly CEA	11.03	1 hr 30	1
Limia David, Miguel	President Council of Social Sciences Ministry of Science Academic	09.05 12.05	30 mins 2 hrs	2
Luis*	Artist	13.01	2 hrs	1
Manolo*	Import clerk	17.01	1 hr	1
Marrero Escrich, Ernesto	'Free-lance' academic Psychologist Formerly employed at Centro Juan Marinello (Cuban NGO) Former vice president of FEU	15.01 22.01 30.01 05.02 13.02 19.02 24.02	30 mins 1 hr 30 2 hrs 2 hrs 2 hrs 30 3 hrs 1 hr	7
Martínez Heredia, Fernando	Academic Centro Juan Marinello NB. Interview conducted by Marrero on my behalf (see Chapter 2)	21.04	3 hrs	1
Miranda, Olga Lydia	Academic Institute of Philosophy	08.04	2 hrs	1
Neira Milian, Julio	Plastic Artist	07.02	3 hrs	1
Moyano, Yaniko	Student (History) University of Havana UJC	28.02 29.02	2 hrs 1 hr	2

Pastor, Elena	'Popular Educator' Academic CIPS	06.01	1 hr	1
Patricia*	Pharmacist	24.01	1 hr	1
Pedraza García, Vani	Publicity Officer Journal *Temas*	03.02 10.02	2 hrs 30 1 hr	2
Pérez, Alberto	Academic Institute of Philosophy	05.01	1 hr 30	1
Perera Pérez, Maricela	Academic CIPS / Department of Psychology University of Havana	16.04 18.04	1 hr 30 45 mins	2
Ramos Idania	Cuban NGO Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos	21.02	1 hr 30	1
Rausberg, Fernando	Journalist	04.05	3 hrs 30	1
Recio Silva, Milena	Academic / Journalist Faculty of Communication University of Havana	21.03 25.03	30 mins 1 hr 30	2
Retired Customs Officer		16.01	1 hr 30	1
Rey, Gina	Academic Institute of Philosophy President of CDR	25.03 03.04	2 hrs 4 hrs	2
Ricardo*	Hairdresser	30.03	1 hr 30	1
Rosa*	Retired, mother	01.02	1 hr	1
Rosita*	Social worker / M.A. student Practicing Catholic / church worker	01.02	2 hrs	1
Salazar Rodríguez, Miguel	Trade Unionist CITMA Ciego de Avila	08.05	1 hr	1
Sotolongo, Pedro Luis	Academic Institute of Philosophy	24.03	3 hrs 30	1
Suárez, Joel	Cuban NGO Centro Martin Luther King	15.04	2 hrs	1
Toirac, Yanet	Academic Faculty of Communication University of Havana	19.04 pers.comm	1 hr 30	1
Turowski, Tomasz	Ambassador of the Republic of Poland	30.01	30 mins	1
Veiga Moreno, Milagros	Trade Unionist General Secretary Science Union, Santiago de Cuba	08.05	1 hr 30	1
Valdés Gutiérrez, Gilberto	Academic Institute of Philosophy	12.03	3 hrs	1
Valdés Paz, Juan	Academic University of Havana Formerly CEA	30.04	2 hrs	1
Yolanda*	Teacher	12.02	45 mins	1
Yedra, Gladys	FMC	14.01	1 hr	1

UK 2002, 2003, 2004				
Name of Respondent	**Relevant Details**	**Date(s) of interview**	**Duration of interview**	**Number of Interviews with respondent**
Kitchens, Susie	Cuba Desk Officer FCO	06.12.02	1 hr	1
Johnson, Michael	Trade Partners (telephone interview)	04.11.02	30 mins	1
Hasanbegovic, Claudia	Academic / Lawyer	27.12.02	1 hr	1
Holdich, Patrick	Americas Research Group FCO	18.12.02	2 hrs	1
Morris, Emily	EIU Intelligence Unit	12.11.02	1 hr 40	1
Maddicott, Sydney	FCO Official	06.12.02	1 hr	1
Thomas, Barbara	D&B Country Risk Analyst (Cuba)	04.10.02	2 hrs	1
Rubido, Mauel	First Secretary Embassy of the Republic of Cuba	19.06.03	45 mins	1
De la Torre, Carolina	Academic, Psychologist	05.03	1 hr	1
Marrero Escrich, Ernesto	Psychologist	08.03.04 pers.comm	1 hr	1

Summary

Total number of respondents interviewed: 87

Total number of interviews: 115

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Renovation work in La Habana Vieja
March 1996

Plate No.2
'In Every Neighbourhood: Revolution'
La Habana

Plate No.3
UNEAC 6 May 2003, La Habana

At the table: Fidel Castro, on his right Carlos Martí Brenes, on his left Esther Pérez and Abel Prieto. Standing in white shirt Jesús García Brigos.

Plate No.4
UNEAC 6 May 2003, La Habana
Fidel Castro and Carlos Martí Brenes

Plate No.5
UNEAC 6 May 2003
Fidel Castro, Abel Prieto, Esther Pérez
On the wall behind: A collection of art work in protest against the war in Iraq

Plate No. 6
'El Camello'
Public Transport during the Special Period
Paseo de Martí (Prado), La Habana Vieja March 1996

Plate No.7
Public Transport During the Special Period
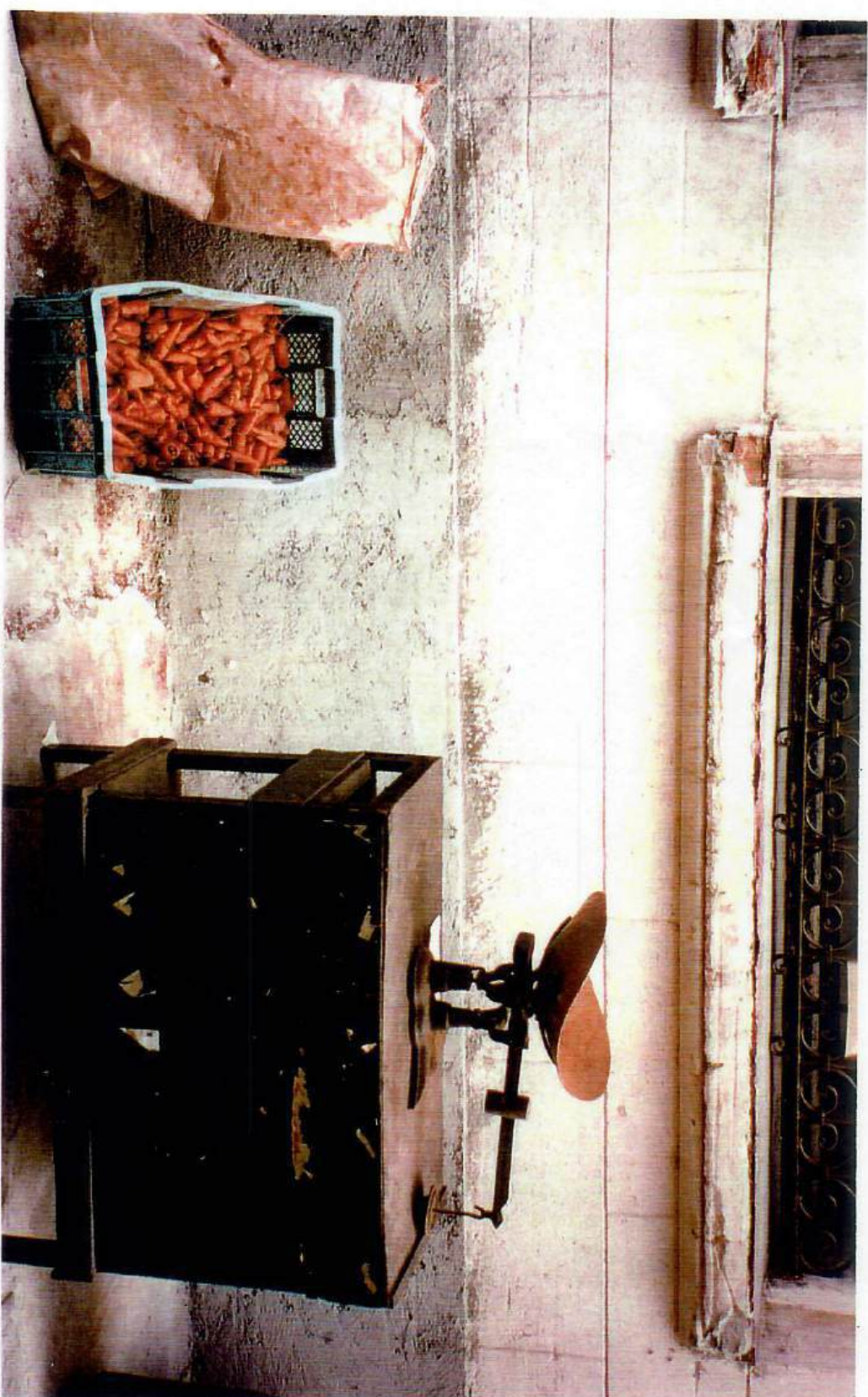*Cienfuegos November 1999*

Plate No.8
Por cuenta propria
March 1996, La Habana

Plate No.9
Organopónico
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Fieldwork Cuba 2003

a) Centres Visited in Havana (Jan-May)

Biblioteca Nacional José Martí
Casa de Las Américas
Centro de Estudios de la Economía Cubana
Centro de Estudios de Joventud
Centro de Estudios de la Mujer
Centro Felix Varela
Centro 'Fray Bartolomé de las Casas' Convento San Juan de Letrán
Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo de la Cultura Cubana Juan Marinello
Centro Memorial Martin Luther King
Centro Salvador Allende
CIE Graciela Bustillos (Centro de Investigación Educativa, Asociación de Pedagogos de Cuba)
CIPS Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas y Psicológicas
CDR (Dirección Nacional)
CTC (Dirección Nacional)
Facultad de Sociología, Universidad de la Habana
Facultad de Comunicación, Universidad de la Habana
Facultad de Historia
Facultad de Filosofía
FMC (Dirección Nacional)
Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos
Fundación Fernando Ortiz
Instituto de Filosofía, Ministerio de Sciencias
Ministerio de Economía y Planificacion
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (MINREX)
Ministerio de Inversión Extranjera (MINVEC)
Ministerio de Finanzas y Precios
Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología y Medio Ambiente
Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular, Miramar
Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas
Oficina Historiador de la Ciudad
Unión de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba (UNEAC)

b) Speeches Recorded / Attended

21.02   Marquetti, Nodarse, Hivan (Economist, Centre for Studies of the Cuban Economy)
27.01   Cicourel, Aaron (Academic)
27.01   Castro Ruz, Raúl
19.03   Álvarez, Elena (Director, Institute for Economic Investigations)
06.05   Castro Ruz, Fidel
06.05   Carlos Martí Brenes (President UNEAC)
06.06   Prieto, Abel (Minister of Culture)
07.05   Castro Ruz, Fidel
07.05   Houtart, Francois (Academic)
07.05   Prieto, Abel (Minister of Culture)
08.05   Alarcón, Ricardo (President of National Assembly)
08.05   Amin, Samir (Academic)
08.05   Castro Ruz, Fidel

08.05   Prieto, Abel (Minister of Culture)

c) Televised Speeches / Debates Recorded

Peréz Roque, Felipe (Minister of External Relations)
Mesa Redonda Informativa *Los Intelectuales y Artistas Cubanos Contra el Facismo*

d)   M.A Thesis Defence Presentations Attended

07.02   Niera Milian (2003) *El Radio en Cuba* (Faculty of Sociology, University of Havana)
21.03   Toirac, Yanet (2003) *Sin Embargo, Algunos se Quedan: Acerca de los Usos y Apropiación de Ciertos Espacios Públicos en las Noches de La Habana* (Faculty of Communication, University of Havana).

e) *Último Jueves (Temas)* Meetings Attended

30.01   'Con todos y para el bien de todos' La idea de República en José Martí.
27.02   'Eso no se dice. El habla y las normas Sociales'
27.03   Cómo se forma un ciudadano? Los factores culturales de la Socialización.
24.04   'Con las bases llenas. El béisbol y la cultura de debate'

f) Book / Journal Launches Attended

04.03   Launch of *Sociedad Civil y Hegemonia* by J.L. Acanda at Centro Investigación Juan Marinello. Key note speech by Rafael Hernández.
19.03   Launch of *Temas* No.30 (y la Economía, Qué) at Centro de Estudios de la Economía y Planificación. Key note speaker: Dra. Elena Álvarez, Directora del Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas.

g) Master's Courses Audited

17.01   One day unit in Sociology on 'Religious Rituals', taken by Alain Basail, Department of Sociology, University of Havana.
21.01-05.02   Two week option in Marxist Philosophy taken by Jorge Luis Acanda, Department of Sociology, University of Havana.
22.01   Afternoon seminar (4 hours) on 'Strengths and Weaknesses of the Cuban Political System', led by Jesús García Brigos, for M.A. students in Sociology, University of Havana.
10.03-14.03   One week course in Anthropology on 'Religion in Cuba and the Caribbean' at Fundación Fernando Ortiz, University of Havana, taken by Aurelio Alonso and Jorge Calzadilla.

h) Lectures / Seminars

27.01   Aaron Cicourel, visiting speaker, 'Language and Discourse Analysis During Fieldwork', Fundación Fernado Ortiz.
06.02   Humanismo y Sociedad: La religión según los filósofos de la sospecha.

Jesús Espeja y Jorge Luis Acanda
07.02   As above
13.02   As above
14.02   As above
20.02   As above
21.02   As above
27.02   As above
28.02. As above

21.02   'The Cuban Economy, Crisis or Recuperation' (Centro Salvador Allende). Key
speakers: Jesús García Brigos and Hiram Marquetti Nordarse.

10.03   Erik Olin Wright - Professor Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin, guest
lecturer at CIPS. Discussion of his book 'Deepening Democracy' with Cuban
academics.

i) Conferences

07-10.01   GALFISA V Taller Internacional: Paradigmas Emancipatorios,
Centro de Prensa Internacional, Ciudad de la Habana.

05-08.05   GALFISA Confrencia Internaciona 'Carlos Marx y los Desafíos del Siglo XXI
Palacio de las Convenciones, La Habana.

j) Poder Popular

15.01   Poder Popular meeting: Provincial Elections for Ciudad de la Habana.

15.01   Nominations for candidates for Provincial and National Assembly. Introduction to
Ricardo Alarcón. Visiting Canadian academic, Peter Roman, also present.

01.04   Rendicion de Cuenta at 8pm

k) Miscellaneous

24.01   Santería Ceremony, el Vedado.
27.01   March of the Torches, commemorating José Martí.
01.02   Visit to San Antonio de los Baños with official from Ministry of Education and
German NGO worker to visit schools benefiting from NGO-State project to improve
sanitation on school site.
06.02   International Book Fair, Havana.

UK 2002

ILAS London, Guest lecture: Pedro Monreal *The Cuban Economy* (24 Jan 2002)
ILAS London, Guest lecture: Lawrence Whitehead *On Cuban Exceptionalism* (Dec 2002)

Sample of General Interview Questions

- If you had to give a definition of what you understand by the term 'transition' what would it be?

- In much of the literature produced in academic circles outside of Cuba it has often been suggested that Cuba is 'in transition' what do you think about that assumption?

- In literature published in Cuba there exists a discussion on the so-called 'crisis of values', seen in part as a result of the structural reforms and transformations, what do you think about this discussion?

- Can we use the term 'civil society' in the Cuban context?

- Do you think that the relationship between the state and civil society in Cuba has changed during the 1990s?

- What is the role of civil society in Cuba today?

- If you had to associate the transformations developed in Cuba during the past decade with a symbol, a representation or an image of some kind, what would it be?

- Which, in your opinion, are the most important themes in Cuba today?

- Which transformations do you consider to have been the most important?

- In the new economic, political and social conditions, what are the most effective ways for creating and recreating consensus within the revolutionary project?

- The recent economic reforms introduced to sustain, transform and develop the Cuban socialist project have implied tensions and contradictions. Of these tensions and contradictions, which would be, in your opinion, the most significant? (and why)

- Do you consider that there exist distinct visions from within the revolution?

- What do you think that the continuation of socialism involves?

- What, in your opinion, is the future for Cuba?

Appendix B

TABLE 4.1

Foreign Trade 1989-1993
(in millions of pesos)

Year	Exports	Imports	Exchange	Balance
1989	5399.2	8139.7	13538.9	2740.5
1990	5415.0	7416.6	12831.6	2001.6
1991	2961.5	4149.0	7110.5	1187.5
1992	1619.8	2236.0	3855.8	616.2
1993	1241.0	1872.7	3114.5	630.9

Source: Marquetti (1994)

TABLE 4.2

Evolution of GDP
(at prices which have remained constant since 1981)

Year	GDP (PIB) (in millions of pesos)	Value with relation to year (per cent)	Value in relation to 1989
1989	19585,8	+ 0,7	0,0
1990	19008,3	- 2,9	- 2,9
1991	16975,8	- 10,7	- 13,3
1992	15009,7	- 11,6	- 23,4
1993	12776,7	- 14,9	- 34,8

Source: Oficina Nacional de Estadística (1995) La Economía Cubana (p.4).

TABLE 4.3

Public Spending in: a) Education, b) Public Health, c) Social Security and
d) Social Assistance
(In millions of pesos)

a) Education						
Year	*1989*	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*
Wages	922.7	930.0	932.9	920.2	895.6	860.6
Other costs	729.9	689.5	571.1	506.5	489.3	474.0
Total	1652.6	1619.5	1504.0	1426.7	1384.9	1334.6

b) Public Health						
Year	*1989*	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*
Wages	501.7	534.9	578.7	599.7	608.1	625.3
Other costs	402.8	402.5	346.2	338.6	468.5	435.8
Total	904.5	937.4	924.9	938.3	1076.6	1061.1

c) Social Security						
Year	*1989*	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*
Costs	1093.9	1164.1	1225.7	1348.0	1452.3	1532.4
Income	676.2	690.5	666.3	672.5	924.9	880.5
Deficit	417.7	473.6	559.4	675.5	527.4	651.9

d) Social Assistance						
Year	*1989*	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*
Costs	101.1	95.6	88.4	98.2	94.2	93.6

Source: State Budget Proposal (1999), Executive Summary, Ministry of Finance and Prices, pp.14-18.

TABLE 4.4

Budgetary Deficit
(in millions of pesos)

Year	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1993/1989
Total Costs	13904	14213	14714	14132	14567	1.04
Total Revenue	12501	12255	10949	9263	9516	0.76
Deficit	1403	1958	3769	4869	5050	3.60

Source: Document prepared by IIF (Instituto de Investigaciones Financieras, Institute of Financial Investigations), (1994) for Authorisation of the 1995 budget.

GLOSSARIES

Glossary of Spanish Terms

balsero	- rafter (term for 'boat people' if the August 1994 exodus)
batalla (de ideas)	- battle (of ideas)
batistianos	- supporters of Batista
caballerías	- unit of land used in the colonial period in Cuba (100 caballerías = 1340 hectares)
campaña (contra la droga)	- campaign (anti-drug campaign)
casas de orientación	- neigbourhood centres provided by the FMC where women and their families can receive help and advice.
Cine Yara	- Yara Cinema in Havana's Vedado district
ciudadela	- slum housing plot
compañero	- colleague or companion, but also in the sense of 'comrade'
contingente	- contingent of workers
cuenta propria	- self-employment (*cuentapropista*: a self-employed person)
frijol	- black bean
gusano	- literally 'worm' (used pejoratively of the émigrés)
huerta	- allotment
isla deshilachada	- the island with fraying borders
libre mercado campesino	- free peasant market
libreta	- ration book
lucha	- struggle
malecon	- Havana's seafront area
micobrigadas	- small volunteer construction brigades
municipio	- local 'municipal' government district
parlamento obrero	- workers' parliament (workplace consultative assembly)
patria	- homeland
pionero	- literally 'pioneer' (referring to youth organisation after 1962)
rendición de cuentas	- delegate feedback session (literally 'rendering of accounts')
remesas	- monetary remittances (sent to Cubans by those living in the exterior)
santería	- Afro-Cuban religion
solidario	- *(adj.)* with an attitude of solidarity
talleres de transformación integral del barrio	- integral neighbourhood transformation workshops
último jueves	- literally 'Last Thursday', referring to the discussion group held each month by the journal *Temas.*
zafra	- sugar harvest

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