CHAPTER I
CUBAN MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT

The proposed study is an attempt to assess and analyse the process of political and economic reforms witnessed in Cuba since 1986. For a better understanding, the Chapters have been divided to deal with the major political and economic developments in specific periods. The first Chapter deals with major political and economic developments from 1959 to 1985. After getting an overall background of Cuban Revolution, the second Chapter critically examines the depth of economic crisis, measures taken to save the revolution and other important issues in the period, 1986 to 1990. The third Chapter looks into the period from 1991 to 1995; the period of major reforms at economic and political levels, implementation of policies to save socialism and get back the faith of masses in the socialist process of development, achievements of the government, etc. The Chapter discusses constitutional and electoral-political reforms in details. The tightening of US embargo in 1996 hurt the economic growth prospects in Cuba even more besides the Cuban economy had to respond to lots of changes that occurred at domestic and international fronts. The fourth Chapter describes economic reform and change during 1993-1995. The fifth Chapter critically examines the major developments from 1996 to mid-2010 including restoration of economic growth rates and political control and stability of the regime. It also evaluates and analyses the incidences of turmoil, suspense from 2003 to 2009. And, the sixth Chapter presents an overview of Cuba's external relations. The last chapter will carry summary and conclusion.

The present Chapter examines the Cuban revolution; its nature, evolutionary trajectory, and the salient political and economic features. This is followed by a discussion on the contemporary economic situation. A separate section critically evaluates the dynamics of Cuban revolution and its relevance in the present domestic and global context.

After providing a brief historic introduction of social, political and economic trends of the nation, the study focuses on the period from 1959-85, divided in few phases for a better understanding of socio-political and socio-economic developments between 1959 and 1970. Under this section a number of issues have been discussed: Cuba's trade and economic relation with the then
Background of the 1959 Revolution

(i) Nature of the 1959 Revolution

The historical roots of the 1959 revolution can be traced back to the political control of Cuba by the United States of America after the Cuban independence in 1898. The American economic and political domination thereafter bred an intense nationalism to an extent that inspired, and which was later used as an effective instrument by the Cuban revolutionaries headed by Fidel Castro. Undoubtedly, the immediate catalyst of the Cuban revolution was the long-established brutal dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista that worked to defend the US economic and political interests on the island. Batista had long been at the helm of affairs, beginning with as the leader of the 'sergeants’ revolt’ in 1934; and then had manipulated elections to become the head of state in 1940 under a democratic constitution (Castro 1989: 39-58). Batista had stepped aside when a successor from opposition was elected president in 1944; but in 1952, intervened against the government with the backing of foreign investors, the United States government and a group of beneficiaries of the sugar industry (Ibid). There was little (by way of) respect for the democratic constitution of 1940, as personalist authoritarianism and corruption characterised his rule. In fact, the rallying point of action for Batista’s opposition in the 1940s and 1950s was to restore the democratic populist constitution of 1940. With the democratic option foreclosed, and regime repression quite widespread, Batista had left his opponents with only one option. To stop him, they would have to bring down his government, and the only way to accomplish that was through a popular revolutionary struggle.

(ii) Features of the Revolution and Political Developments

The struggle against Batista was waged on several fronts after 1952; the two most prominent being, the urban resistance and the guerrilla campaign of the 26th of July Movement. Both were led by the idealistic generation of 1953 who, as university students and young professionals, had opposed Batista’s return to power.
and the perpetuation of a corrupt, elite dominated authoritarian regime subservient to the US interests and goals.

Fidel Castro and his youthful urban guerrilla band supported by a small rag-tag peasant army had begun campaigning with the ill-fated attack on the Moncada military barracks in Oriente province on 26 July 1953, which had led to his capture and imprisonment. The movement subsequently became victorious and five and a half years later, came to be known as the 26th of July Movement (Suarez 1967). Before his conviction, however, Castro had delivered his famous *History Will Absolve Me* speech announcing his commitment to overthrow Batista and the creation of a nationalistic, reform-oriented social democracy to replace the dictatorial regime.

While living in exile in Mexico, Castro met Argentine Marxist Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara; and from Mexico, they prepared to sail to Cuba aboard *Granma*; and there began the long guerrilla struggle in the rural mountainous Sierra Maestra. Until 1959, Cuban politics was characterised by massive corruption and fraudulent elections, associated with authoritarian and repressive political administrations and successive military occupations by the US. The overwhelming predominance of US economic interests, in alliance with Cuban military and politicians had stifled the development of an independent Cuban nation state. With the advent of Fidel Castro to power in 1959, two major challenges had confronted the revolutionary regime: the unrelenting hostility of the United States; and, consolidation of the revolutionary process. In facing these challenges, Castro resorted to several short and long-term measures at different levels.

In May 1961, after the Bay of Pigs (*Playa Girón*) incident orchestrated by the US, and the ‘Havana Declaration’ that proclaimed the socialist character of the Cuban revolution, a process was initiated for the creation of a new vanguard party with the merger of these groups – M-26 (Fidel’s 26th July Movement), Revolutionary Directorate (*Directorio Revolucionario - DR*) a student group, and the Popular Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista Popular – PSP*). In July 1963, Castro formally announced the merger of these three organisations into the Integrated Revolutionary Organisation (*Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas – ORI*). After a massive membership drive, the party’s name was changed to the Communist Party of Cuba (*Partido Comunista de Cuba – PCC*) in
October 1965. The next section discusses the economic and political situation from 1960s till now, divided in phases to understand more comprehensively, focusing more on 1990s.

(iii) The Economic Condition

In 1959, US investment in Cuba totalled more than US$ 1 billion and the US provided more than 65 per cent of Cuban imports and purchased about 75 per cent of Cuban exports, mainly sugar. As a consequence of the US hostility including suspension of sugar quota, the revolutionary regime had to look elsewhere for sale of its sugar. The revolutionary government was beset with the challenges of upturning the historic dependence on US. In doing so, it began to turn towards the Soviet Union. In May 1960, the US-owned oil refineries in Cuba were asked to refine a consignment of oil from the Soviet Union, the result of a trade agreement with Soviet Foreign Minister Anastas Mikoyan, who visited Cuba in February 1960. This trade agreement, exchanging Soviet oil, petroleum, wheat, fertiliser and machinery for Cuban sugar also included a credit of US$ 100 million.

Following the 1961 incident of Bay of Pigs, Cuba’s diplomatic relations with the United States ruptured, and Soviet Union became the major economic and commercial partners of Cuba. The Central Planning Board, (Junta Central de Planificación – JUCEPLAN) was created to plan and co-ordinate economic development activities. Different sectors, such as foreign trade, mining, agriculture, labour and banking, fell under the jurisdiction of the relevant ministries; and investment and financing were carried out through state budget allocation. Prices were centrally fixed and consumer goods were allocated through rationing.

In the economic arena, there was expanding collectivisation of the means of production and a concomitant reduction in market forces. Notably, the latter were not substituted by planning and central orders, partly because of the lack of a clear economic programme and due to the alienation of former managers and technicians who were mostly replaced by enthusiastic but unskilled revolutionaries. The net result of this situation was widespread economic disorganisation. The

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1 The history of the Communist Party of Cuba (Partido Communista de Cuba, PCC) is stretched over nearly the span of the 20th century. Although officially launched in August 1925, the antecedents to the formation of party, according to most historians, go back to the beginning of the century. Most Cuban historians are of the view that the party owes its birth to the socialist workers party formed as far back as 1905 which for various reasons had become splintered since then and, eventually under the influence of Bolshevik ideas forged into a single, unified communist party.
revolutionary leaders, however, had a firm commitment to expand employment and raise the living standards of the low-income strata of the population. This goal was achieved however, at the cost of a drastic curtailment of capital accumulation, which in turn affected the viability of other goals such as the elimination of sugar monoculture through rapid industrialisation and agricultural diversification.

Phases of Cuban Revolution

(i) The first phase of the Cuban revolution lacked a defined ideology, but certainly there were statist, anti-market, populist, and nationalistic tendencies – some inherent in the constitution of 1940 whose restoration was one of the revolutionary goals and others that emerged mainly out of the prolonged guerrilla struggle in the Sierra Maestra. The new revolutionary regime undertook the systematic liquidation or control of the most powerful pre-revolutionary political forces and groups -- the army, political parties, unions, and farmers’ and professional associations. These were substituted in many cases by new institutions which strongly supported the revolution, and included importantly the rebel army, the militia, and the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDR). All important decisions, however, were made by the revolutionary government, which mobilised huge political rallies to build popular support and legitimacy for its rule.

(ii) Once a commitment to Marxism-Leninism was made in early 1961, a systematic attempt to institutionalise the revolution and to apply the system of politico-economic organisation prevalent at that time in USSR began. The few revolutionary organisations, still allowed to operate, were merged into the ORI, which was transformed into United Party of the Socialist Revolution (Partido Unido de la Revolucion Socialista – PURS) -- the germ of the future Communist Party – in February 1963. In the economic arena, the vacuum of the market was intended to be filled by a centralised system of planning and technical aid from the Soviet Union. The emphasis was placed on the unions which became conduits for the orders of the central administration. The curtailment of consumption to increase investment began in the hope of accelerating the industrialisation process

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2 The committees to Defend the Revolution (CDRs) are the largest, with the membership of more than seven million people and most grassroots of all the mass organisations.

3 On July 1961, Castro stated that ORI was a transitional institution through which the M-26, DR and PSP would cooperate in the creation of a unified party – the United Party of the Socialist Revolution (Partido Unido de la Revolucion Socialista – PURS).
and generating high rates of economic growth. However, the warm relationship between Cuba and Soviet Union was suddenly shaken by the Soviet-American understanding in the Missile Crisis of 1962 which, in the official Cuban view, was a Soviet retreat aggravated by the lack of consultation with Cuba.

**The Missile Crisis of 1962**

After the failed attempt by Cuban exile group to capture Bay of Pigs, the Eisenhower administration of United States sponsored retaliatory forces to overthrow the Castro government in Cuba. The continuous attempt by the United States government to destabilise the revolutionary government of Cuba, hostility and armed actions between the so-called capitalist force (US) and Communist regime (USSR and Cuba) demanded some extra security measures for the defence of revolution. In this view Soviet government tried to help Cuba by installing intermediate range nuclear missiles in Cuba. The United States' intelligence came to know about this development before it (missiles) reached to Cuba by sea route. On missile issue confrontation continued for many days between the two super powers, threatening the world for the first and last time of a nuclear exchange between US and USSR. Under an agreement arrived at the back of Castro, Khrushchev agreed to withdraw the missiles in exchange for a US pledge not to invade Cuba. Castro and the revolutionary Cuba had to draw few lessons from the way Missile Crisis was brought to an end by the two Cold War adversaries. For one, Cuba had to learn to manage its relations with Soviet Union; Castro was not ready to exchange the historic dependence on US with a new dependence on Soviet Union. After the missile crisis, Castro managed to fortify his position at home and allied himself much closely with other communist leaders in Beijing and Eastern Europe countries. At the same time, he undertook the task of supporting leftist guerrilla movements and to support the movements for independence and national liberation throughout the Third World so as to seek their support and consolidate his position as a revolutionary internationally (Clayton and Pontiff 2005: 449-450).

(iii) Post-Missile Crisis, Cuban Revolution moved into the third phase, dominated by a lively debate on alternative systems of political organisation and development strategies (Mesa Lago 1972: 49-111, 70-76). In the ensuing debate, Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara and his followers, influenced by the system of the Maoist ‘Great Leap Forward’, endorsed an ‘idealistic’ line of thought, departing from
more conventional Soviet thought of the 1960s. The Guevarist line presented three main objectives: the total elimination of the market or ‘commodity production’ through full collectivisation of the means of production; a highly centralised-planning system; and central financing of all state enterprises through budgetary appropriations i.e., non-repayable, interest-free grants, with transfer of all enterprise profits back to the state budget, and the gradual eradication of money and ‘material incentives’. To be successful, the first action had to be paralleled by the creation of an unselfish, self-sacrificing, frugal, fully-socialised, egalitarian human-being – the ‘New Man’ of which Che Guevara spoke a lot. This would be attained by raising mass consciousness through education, mobilisation, unpaid voluntary labour, and ‘moral incentives’ (e.g., banners, medals, and free social services provided by the state). Such steps, in turn, would facilitate the process of capital accumulation and economic development. The last goal, somewhat controversial, was the support to other revolutionary countries and the so-to-say ‘exportation’ of the Cuban revolutionary model to other Latin American countries (Mesa Lago 1972: 70-76). The ideology of Che Guevara and the strategies and tactics of revolutionary transformation he suggested had turned him into an icon; and added new dimensions to the political-ideological debate in Cuba about the virtues of Soviet and Chinese models of socialism.

(iv) For four years, Castro had abstained from openly participating in the debate on the course of Cuban revolution. During this period, many of his opponents and potential rivals were dismissed or sent abroad. Once his path was cleared of potential opponents, he started the new phase of the revolution by endorsing ‘Sino-Guevarism’, although, embellished with personalistic Castroite features. For instance, the most important economic decision were not concentrated in a ‘scientific and objective’ central planning apparatus, but were made by the Prime Minister and his inner circle of loyalists and implemented through ‘mini’ or sectoral plans. In this fourth phase, emphasis on capital accumulation, mobilisation, moral incentives, egalitarianism, and abolition of money was heavier than in Guevara’s scheme. Grandiose output targets were set for the years ahead, including ten million tonnes of sugar for the harvest of 1970. The army’s influence increased enormously and pervaded many facets of society while the party stagnated (Mesa Lago 1972: 49-111).
In the meantime, Che Guevara was fighting in Bolivia to transform the Andean region into a Latin American Sierra Maestra, and Cuban-Soviet relations reached their lowest ebb when Castro denounced the USSR for limiting the supply of oil to Cuba, and imprisoned a pro-Soviet group of PSP leaders -- 'the micro-faction' -- for their alleged anti-governmental activities. The radicalisation movement reached a climax in the spring of 1968 with the launch of 'Revolutionary Offensive', under which the remainder of the private sector was nationalized; mobilisation was accentuated; and record was established in capital accumulation at the cost of sacrificing consumption. Cuba then claimed that it was building 'communism' and was ahead of the USSR in 'communist ownership', the development of consciousness, and egalitarian distribution. Disaster on both the internal and external fronts -- Cuba's deteriorating economy and Guevara's death in Bolivia, however, forced a reconsideration of some of the previous policies and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia offered the opportunity for it. Castro's endorsement of the invasion, although qualified, facilitated a steady improvement in Cuban-Soviet relations. Most specialists on Cuban affairs, regardless of their ideological propensities, have argued that since Fidel Castro endorsed the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, the USSR began playing an increasing role in Cuban affairs, particularly since 1970 (Gonzalez: 81-104).

(v) From the mid-1970s, the Soviet influence on Cuba increased considerably, thus shaping the fifth phase of the revolution with the following features. Externally, Cuba moved closer than before to the USSR and became its chief defender in the third world against criticism from more radical leftist positions. Diplomatic and trade relations were re-established with a dozen Latin American countries with divergent socio-politico-economic systems. Internally, there began the process of institutionalisation, characterised by delegation of power from the previously dominant role of Castro; strengthening of the Cuban Communist Party; specialisation of the army; and re-organisation of the unions and mass organisations. This process paralleled the tightening of central controls over ideology, education and culture (Ibid). In regard to economy, there was an acknowledgement that, the previous policy was too idealistic and that a more realistic and conventional approach was called for. New policy was focused on strengthening of the central planning apparatus; the more rational use of capital and manpower to increase productivity, the expansion of material incentives; the
drastic reduction in labour mobilisation and the setting of realistic output targets, particularly in sugar. This phase may be summarised as, giving solid foundation to socio-politico-economic condition through effective policy measures.

This phase of development also involved the promotion of socialist consciousness. In order to build a new political and social culture and use it for economic ends, a number of initiatives were pursued. In particular, a range of mass organisations were set up such as the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (Comites Para la Defensa de la Revolución – CDRs), the Federation of Cuban Women (Federación de Mujeres Cubanas – FMC), and the Union of Young Communists (Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas – UJC). Some mass organisation which were part of the 1959 revolution like, Confederation of Cuban Workers (Confederación de Trabajadores de Cuba – CTC) (founded in 1939), and the Federation of University Students (Federación Estudiantil Universitarias – FEU) (Founded in 1922) remained active in the process of socialist development.

Evidently, in the afore-mentioned five phases, greater focus was on ideological and political aspects including on creation of political institutions. From 1970, the focus shifted to economic issues including those related to higher sugar output and a strategy of industrialisation, under the belief that a socialist economy need be heavily industrialised.

**Material Incentives and the Sovietisation of the Economy**

From 1970 to 1986, material incentives were re-introduced, and the Cuban economy was re-organised, almost wholly, on Soviet lines. In 1972, Cuba joined the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA)—the Soviet socialist bloc’s mutual economic cooperation mechanism—and in the following year, the Economic Management and Planning System (Sistema de Dirección y Planificación de la Economia – SDPE), based directly on the 1965 Soviet economic model, was introduced. Despite some success, including a significant growth in the Cuban economy during the 1970s, the SDPE however proved increasingly inefficient and wasteful.

The response to the incompetent handling of the economic situation was political—the establishment of Popular Power (Poder Popular) in 1976-77. Until

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4 The period from 1963 to 1970 can be considered as phase of development of socialist consciousness. During this period, the emphasis was given on political consciousness to promote economic development.

5 These organisations were the avenues for the political participation.
this time, direct democracy had lacked structure and had been limited to mass organisations such as the CTC, the FMC, and the CDRs. Popular Power was important at that time because, it attempted to fuse political and work responsibility. It was a clear “attempt to maintain the process of democracy at the centre of Cuban socialist development and to reconcile revolutionary ethics with international economic specialisation” (Cole 1998: 36-38). However, despite its desirability as a system of government that incorporated important and novel elements of grassroots participation, Popular Power had little to do directly with the Cuban economy (apart from consumption) because the municipalities had traditionally lacked significant economic powers. Arguably, more important in Popular Power was the degree of worker’s participation in economic decision making, in public enterprises through trade unions.

Notwithstanding, the Sovietisation of Cuban economy, Cuba continued to face many internal and external challenges. Changes in the Cuban-Soviet relations from the mid 1980s, led to ‘making of the crisis’ at the economic and political levels towards end of the decade. Significantly, around the same time, Castro had also launched the ‘rectification process’, and announced ‘Special Period in the Times of Peace’.

**First Congress of PCC, 1975**

With the aim of institutionalisation of PCC (Communist Party of Cuba-Partido Comunista de Cuba), the first congress met on 17-22 December 1975. The need for the first Congress was felt after ten years of founding of PCC and seventeen years after installation of the revolutionary government. The delegates attending the Congress numbered 3116, drawn from all levels and sectors of the Cuban society as well as members of grass-root organisations or groups. The Congress examined and approved important theses and resolutions by the Party’s Preparatory Commission after innumerable meetings throughout the country. The approved theses included issues and policies regarding internal organisation of the party, the social and economic five year programme (1976-80), the Organs of People’s Power(OPP), the new System of Economic Management and Planning

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6 The reconciliation of the planning exigencies and bureaucratic tendencies of coordination with the CMEA/ SDPE with the ethics of the revolution was attempted through Poder Popular (Popular Power).
(SDPE), the mass media, the educational, scientific, cultural and artistic aspects of post-revolutionary Cuba.

The Congress took measures purported to institutionalise the PCC as well as the state apparatus. In the wake of First Party Congress, several initiatives were made; important among these were the drafting of its charter—the Cuban Communist Party as the only political party in the political system; implementation of democratic centralism as the organisational principle behind the system of hierarchical relations among the different state organs; establishment of Organs of People’s Power at national, provincial and municipal levels; other socio-political organisations for citizens, workers, women and peasants; establishment of an economic system based on the public ownership of the means of production with exception of privately owned small farms; and a socialist economic pattern which accepts the existence of income variations from each according to his/her ability to each according to his/her work. It also approved the socialist constitution that gave legal and juridical framework to the political system under the revolution.

The Congress elected Fidel Castro as First Secretary and Raul Castro as Second Secretary of the PCC. Fidel headed the Politburo and Secretariat—the two main centres of power in the PCC. The previous eight-men Politburo was enlarged to thirteen members. Out of five additional members, three came from the ranks of the PSP namely, Blas Roca, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez and Arnaldo Milian and two were from the M-26 namely, Pedro Miret and Ramon Machado. At the same time, the membership of National Secretariat was also increased from seven to nine members to facilitate a wider division of responsibilities. During the Congress, 35 full members and 12 alternate members were appointed. The new Central Committee of PCC had 150 full members and 12 alternate members (Singh 1999: 72).

**Politburo Members**

- Fidel Castro Ruz
- Raúl Castro Ruz
- Juan Almeida Bosque
- Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado
- Guillermo García Frías
- Armando Hart Dávalos
Constitution of 1976

After fifteen years of continuous governance in Cuba, the Castro government felt the need to institutionalise the state apparatus as well as party to strengthen socialist democracy. On 22 October 1974, a constitution commission was appointed which submitted the draft consisting of 12 chapters and 141 articles in February 1975. In December 1975, after extensive public discussion, the First Party Congress approved it; and it was further ratified through a national referendum on 15 February 1976. Before the referendum, the draft constitution was circulated in the mass organisations for discussion. After 1,60,000 meetings, where about sixteen thousand modifications were proposed and hundreds of those were incorporated, the final document was put to a national vote. In the referendum on constitution, held through secret ballot, 97.7 per cent voted in favour (Singh 1999: 72-74). Thus, the new Constitution of 1976 replaced the Constitution of 1940.

Some landmark changes provided by the new Constitution were as under:

1. The legislative power shifted to National Assembly consisting of 481 deputies.
2. It provided elected national, provincial and local governments.
3. The President of Council of State was given status as President of the Republic and of the Cabinet.
4. It specified separate power for the President of Council of State (head of state) and the President of the Council of Ministers or Cabinet (the head of government) unlike in other socialist constitution.
5. The cabinet having charge of administration was endowed with considerable powers, including the power to draft legislation.
6. The supreme courts and other courts were subordinated to the National Assembly and the Council of State.
7. No basic change was made in the role and functioning of the vanguard party as the most authoritative source of political guidance.
8. The party members were restrained to give legally binding orders to the state administration.
9. Article 5 gave the PCC legal authority over state and society, in other words the PCC was given a Constitutional status. Article 5 stated:

   The Communist Party of Cuba, the organised Marxist-Leninist Vanguard of working class, is the highest leading force of the society and of the state, which organises and guides common effort towards the goals of the construction of socialism and progress towards a communist future (Rabkin 1985: 255).

It has been observed that the new Constitution increased the institutional cohesiveness of the state. Somehow, it formalised the socialist nature as well as the character of the society and economic system and pre-eminent role of the PCC.

**Second Congress of PCC, 1980**

The second Congress of PCC was held exactly after five years on 17-20 December 1980. In the Congress, many issues were discussed and approved—statutes, bye-laws or rules of PCC; ideological debate on the need for Marxism-Leninism in the country; politics of religion and freedom of church; equality of
women; agriculture and farmers; policies related to education, science and technology, literary and artistic culture, sports, international relations; better functioning of OPP, SDPE, etc. About this meeting, it could be said that politically, attempts were made to revitalise the Cuban Communist Party in view of the world-wide crisis and retreat of communist parties; economically, adjustments were initiated in the Economic Planning and Management System (SDPE) as the crisis-ridden Soviet economy many preferential trade and economic arrangements; and ideologically, more emphasis was added on South-South cooperation in foreign policy realm.

At the second Congress, number of members increased from thirteen to sixteen in the Politburo. The second Congress also created positions for alternate members. Alternate members were non-voting candidates for full membership who took the place of full members in case of death, removal or promotion. At that time, eleven members were elected as alternate members. Thus, the combined membership of the Politburo of CCP increased up to twenty seven. The three veterans of M-26, namely; Jose Risquet, Julio Camacho and Osmany Cienfuegos were added as new full time members. However, majority of the appointed alternate members were leaders of major mass organisations like; FAR, FMC, CTC, ANAP, CDR, and SDPE. The selected members from various mass organisations were: from FAR came Abelardo Colome, Senen Casas and Sixto Batista (all of them holding rank of General in the revolutionary armed forces); the one belonging to FMC was Vilma Espin; Roberto Veiga came from CTC; from ANAP came Ramirez Cruz; from CDR it was Armando Acosta; and Humberto Perez represented SDPE. Jesus Montane and Antonio Perez Herrero the old associates of Fidel with military background were also added. Miguel Cano a successful first secretary from Holguin province was also included.

It is to be noted that Central Committee has two types of memberships, i.e. full members and alternate members. The full members were authorised to participate in decision making process or meetings. In the second Congress, fourteen of sixteen full Politburo members were members of Council of State. The Council of State was empowered to issue decree law, propose legislation and replace ministers. In the Executive Committee, the members of the Council of Ministers, eight members were from Politburo members, one from alternate member of Politburo, and from PCC Central Committee members. With the
inclusion of 48 new members, the number of full members reached up to 148. While, the number of alternate members reached 77 after election of new 65 members. The total number of Central Committee comprised 225 members, which was 113 more members than previous congress (Singh 1999: 105-6).

**Politburo Members**

- Fidel Castro Ruz
- Raúl Castro Ruz
- Juan Almeida Bosque
- Ramiro Valdés Menéndez
- Guillermo García Frías
- José Ramón Machado Ventura
- Blas Roca Calderío
- Carlos Rafael Rodríguez
- Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado
- Pedro Miret Prieto
- Sergio del Valle Jiménez
- Armando Hart Dávalos
- Arnaldo Milian Castro
- Jorge Risquet Valdés-Saldaña
- Julio Camacho Aguilera
- Osmani Cienfuegos Gorriarán

**Secretariat**

- Fidel Castro Ruz : First Secretary
- Raúl Castro Ruz : Second Secretary
- Pedro Miret Prieto
- José Ramón Machado Ventura
- Jorge Risquet Valdés-Saldaña
- Antonio Pérez Herrero
- Jesús Montané Oropesa
- Lionel Soto Prieto
- Julián Rizo Alvarez

Dynamics of the Revolution and its Contemporary Relevance

Around five decades of revolution have resulted into Cuba's current political and economic order along with a series of events that have marked the stages of its historical course—the establishment of a new political power that emerged from the revolution against the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista and the creation of a revolutionary government in 1959; the creation of a socialist system beginning in 1961; the re-framing of socialist polity in 1975; and the reforms of the 1990s (Ferriol 1998).

The issue of transition in Cuba has attracted attention in recent years from scholars and policy-makers alike. The collapse of socialism in Soviet Union and other socialist bloc countries of East Europe, economic modernisation in China along capitalist lines, the inexorable ageing of the Cuban revolution's founding generations, and the 'third wave' of democratisation have all sparked a renewed interest since the early 1990s in the prospects of political change in Cuba. At least, three issues in transition are worth examining and worth being kept analytically distinct: firstly, the economic adjustment and changes the Cuban regime has been forced to undergo mainly as a result of the collapse of Soviet socialist bloc and attempts at adjustment and integration of Cuba into the world market; secondly, political changes or process of political liberalisation which may eventually lead the socialist system towards some kind of a democracy; and finally, the leadership succession, which may commence only after the passing of Cuban President Fidel Castro from the political scene (Leo Grande 2002).

The Cubanologists have raised many speculations about the difficult times due to the economic crisis in Cuba. Considering basic needs of the masses, important economic changes since 1991 include the introduction of a free farmers’ market; de facto privatisation of agriculture, legalisation of self-employment; reduction of subsidies to state enterprises; and the legalisation of US dollar.

These changes, or 'reforms' as their proponents call them, have also created the social pre-conditions for the emergence of contentious politics: erosion of the Cuban Communist Party's control over the economy and employment, exacerbation of social inequalities and stratification, and growth and expansion of groups and organisations not controlled by the government and potentially in
conflict with it. Admittedly, the regime has also weakened politically by the universal decline of the legitimising ideology of Marxism-Leninism. At the height of the crisis in early 1990s, the leadership of the PCC was sharply divided over how much political ‘reform’ could accompany economic ‘reforms’; and by 1996, Castro had decided against any significant political ‘liberalisation’ that could challenge either the socialist ideology or the rule of PCC (Ibid).

Closely related to the economic and political restructuring, or reforms, is the question of succession after Castro’s departure that has become important. It is assumed that, in the post-Castro scenario, there could be an opportunity for greater political debate, at least within the party leadership, and a potential for that debate to spill over beyond the elite, as it did in other erstwhile communist systems. Would Cuba move towards some kind of ‘colourful’ revolution—the ‘pink’, the ‘velvet’ and other kinds which were witnessed in several East European and former Soviet republics in the late 1980s and early 1990s—was speculated a lot after Castro decided to take a break following illness in 2008. Although, currently quiescent, the division between the so-called ‘reform’ and ‘hard-line’ factions of the Cuban Communist Party has not disappeared. When Castro is no longer there to act as ultimate arbiter, existing divisions are likely to re-emerge. Studies of democratic transitions in Latin America and Eastern Europe indicate that this sort of elite division is the *sine qua non* for the initiation of a ‘transition’ process.

For a description and assessment of the political and economic restructuring since the late 1980s, it is important and appropriate to first examine the dominant economic and political processes since the early 1960s. One can easily identify five main stages in the trajectory of the growth of political structures and institutions and economic development strategies in the period preceding the initiation of ‘reform’ or the restructuring process. The economic and political restructuring process in Cuba in the 1990s has been discussed in details in rest of the study.

**Debate on Political System in Cuba**

The Cuban political system springs from the country’s unique historical experiences, the nature and process of revolution of 1959, and the application of Marxist-Leninist theory and praxis. The form and content of Cuban revolutionary
government and governance system is rooted in Cuba's nationalist struggle to exercise sovereignty and attain social justice. Crucial to the realisation of many of these goals is the legacy of José Martí, who fought for Cuban freedom from Spanish colonial rule and then American neo-colonial domination towards the end of nineteenth century, and the socialist theory and practice that came to dominate the discourse in the 1960s (Liss: 1987).

The domination of socialist theory and practice was strong after 1960s, so much so that sometimes it infects the reading of Cuban history. A unique feature of the national liberation movement led by Jose Marti was the simultaneous struggle against Spanish colonialism and American neo-colonialism combined with the idea to establish a humanistic order along lines of political freedom and social egalitarianism. In this respect, Jose Marti's national liberation movement was in a sense precursor to many of the national liberation movements in Africa and Asia in the 1940s.

Marti's writing on the imperative of national unity and his experience in building the Cuban Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Cubano-PRC) have since the 1960s been used to justify the establishment and rule of the Cuban Communist Party. No doubt, Marti was critical of American democracy, elite character of its party system and use of money in electioneering. His succinct summarisation of the US political system was:

Elections are quite costly. The capitalists and the large companies help the needy candidates with their campaign expenses; once the candidates are elected, they pay with their slavish vote for the money which the capitalists lay out in advance (Foner 1988).

Many of Marti's writings have been used to draw the inspiration for the post-1959 socialist ideas and practices. It is said that his observations of the US political system inured him against its multi-party arrangements and the politics that ensued. Marti's aim was to establish a party dedicated to the vast majority of Cubans, especially the most humble sections from whose ranks essentially the PRC had emerged. Taking a cue from his struggle against the establishment of American rule over Cuba after the Spanish-American War, it was argued that Martí had conceptualised the single party systems as an alternative to the laws and the constitution imposed by US—a system under which Cubans were incited to divide
themselves along the lines of one or the other of the political parties each of which fought to attain political power for itself. In Martí’s vision, the working masses would provide the impetus for meaningful change. He declared that “profit creates worms; it is among the poor, that the sincerity that drives the worms away, prospers” (Ibid). The antipathy towards party-based liberal democratic order also originated in the experiences during the first half of the twentieth century. Elitist and violent, involving trade-offs between civilian elites and military leaders, the traditional party system was manipulated by Cuban elites and US interests through 1902-1958 (August 1999).

The guerrilla struggle since 1953 and the triumph of the revolution in 1959 contributed most to the development of ideological and practical insights into the future shape of Cuban economy and society. The 1959 Cuban revolution and its tumultuous aftermath, including American intransigence and ties with Soviet Union, made many creative and valuable contributions to the evolutionary political process and the corpus of socialist theory. The challenge was how to embody the socialist theory and praxis into the historical aspirations and experiences of the Cuban nation. Cubans have not been involved in merely replicating the experiences and forms of other socialist countries. Rather “they have rejected copismo [copying]”. Hence, the study of socialist democracy in Cuba necessitates the differentiation of the genuine Marxist paradigm from its canonised interpretations and from the discredited political practices that corrupted socialism in various other countries, through the use of technocratic methods of political direction, the presence of regimes that banished the popular masses from power or through the idea that diluted what is an individual into a social concept and forgot all about individual human beings (Spalding 2003).

The Cuban political system made concerted efforts to overcome the past “capitalist way of life from within and without”. Toward this end, the country developed an extensive political framework so as to ensure popular participation in the deliberations that shape and determine the decision-making processes. Moreover, the participation exceeded mere consultation; establishment of numerous organizations and mechanisms of popular participation meant ordinary Cubans deciding and exercising significant control. This is exemplified by Organos de Poder Popular (Organs of Peoples’ Power)—the system of representative government that gives each citizen the right to select, elect and be
elected and at the same time participate in the decision-making and governance process at the grassroots level. This is manifested in the power of Cubans to nominate candidates for the different levels of government, the principle "that the people should nominate and the people should elect" (Madan, N. et al. 1993). This power is not vested in the Communist Party of Cuba, but rather is exercised either directly by the people, at the municipal level, or through the various mass organisations and elected representatives. Thus, the role of the Cuban electorate extends to active participation in choosing the list of candidates, instead of having a state foisted upon them. This contrasts sharply with the practice that prevailed in the USSR and other Socialist bloc countries, where all candidates were chosen by the various communist party committees or depended upon for securing their approval (Silber 1994).

Cuban socialism sought to extend popular participation and grassroots level democracy to both the political and economic spheres. Compared to liberal democracy, which is often criticized for the gulf that exists between public authority and citizenry and where state is often seen as set against the popular well being, Cuban political system, notwithstanding the rule of single party, sought through popular organisations, to bridge the divide between public authority and citizenry and between state interest and popular well being. Consequently, the Cuban socialist conceptions of democracy went beyond the mere proclamation of the rights and freedoms of citizens, moving from formal equality towards the goal of substantive equality. Therefore, Cuban socialist democracy has rested on four bases: political participation, economic equality, the merging of civil and political society and the *mandat imperatif* (Campbell 2001).

The Cuban electoral system also, notwithstanding all its imperfections and single party domination, challenges the electoral practices of liberal democracies as well as those of the erstwhile socialist systems in Soviet bloc: (i) It breaks with the liberal electoral models conceived and designed essentially as legitimising mechanisms through forms of political competition, winner and loser game, bargain, negotiation and compromise, party alliances and circumstantial compromises with electoral goals in mind. (ii) Cuban political process has introduced a different concept regarding the place and value of elections. Two elements are new even original here: elections are not a competitive battle; and elections are not an end in themselves. (iii) Cuban electoral system has innovated
the methods and mechanisms of running candidates. Candidates are not nominated by party machinery or its bosses, rather they emerge through a complex of consultations and interrelations in which diverse popular and community organisations carry decisive voice.

It would be unjust to dismiss the present Cuban political system as a relic of the past or an outmoded communist regime. Cuban political system has survived in the face of extreme challenges and difficulties—both domestic and external. One needs to look into its historical legacies, original aspirations of the 1959 revolution, a popular desire to retrieve national sovereignty and dignity from American domination, popular culture and ethos stressing on egalitarianism, which have helped the regime to survive for around five decades in the face of sustained US opposition and the collapse of socialist bloc in the 1990s.\footnote{In the Declaration of Santiago, made in the 1959 meeting of the Organisation of American States in Chile, Cuba among other states, had affirmed the 'seven principle regarding human rights, including the separation of powers, free elections, equality before the law, and freedom of the press and radio', though external intervention to enforce these principles was not regarded as acceptable. Wyatt et al. Mac Gaffey, “Cuba: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture”, New Haven, HRAF Press, 1962, p. 330.}

**Summary and Conclusion**

The long-established dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista worked to defend the US economic and political interests on the island. Batista had long been at the helm of affairs, beginning with as the leader of the ‘sergeants’ revolt’ in 1934; and then had manipulated elections to become the head of state in 1940 and again in 1952 under a democratic constitution. Personalist authoritarianism and corruption characterised his rule and the repressive nature of the regime became immediate catalyst of the Cuban revolution. The struggle against Batista was waged on several fronts after 1952 in the form of urban resistance and the guerrilla campaign. The university students and young professionals had opposed Batista’s return to power and the perpetuation of a corrupt, elite dominated authoritarian regime subservient to the US interests and goals.

Fidel Castro Ruz with peasant army attacked Moncada military barracks in Oriente province on 26 July 1953 which had led to his capture and imprisonment but later it came to be known as the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement. Castro had delivered his famous *History Will Absolve Me* speech announcing his commitment to
overthrow Batista and the creation of a nationalistic, reform-oriented social democracy to replace the dictatorial regime. Castro met Argentine Marxist Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara in Mexico during his exile; and from Mexico, they prepared to sail to Cuba aboard Granma; and there began the long guerrilla struggle in the rural mountainous Sierra Maestra. With the advent of Fidel Castro to power in 1959, two major challenges had confronted the revolutionary regime: the unrelenting hostility of the United States; and, consolidation of the revolutionary process. In facing these challenges, Castro resorted to several short and long-term measures at different levels.

In May 1961, after the Bay of Pigs (Playa Girón) incident orchestrated by the US, and the ‘Havana Declaration’ that proclaimed the socialist character of the Cuban revolution, a process was initiated for the creation of a new vanguard party with the merger of these groups – M-26 (Fidel’s 26th July Movement), Revolutionary Directorate (Directorio Revolucionario - DR) a student group, and the Popular Socialist Party (Partido Socialista Popular – PSP). Following the 1961 incident of Bay of Pigs, Cuba’s diplomatic relations with the United States ruptured, and Soviet Union became the major economic and commercial partners of Cuba. The Central Planning Board, (Junta Central de Planificacion – JUCEPLAN) was created to plan and co-ordinate economic development activities. The revolutionary leaders, however, had a firm commitment to expand employment and raise the living standards of the low-income strata of the population. In July 1963, Castro formally announced the merger of abovesaid three organisations into the Integrated Revolutionary Organisation (Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas – ORI). After a massive membership drive, the party’s name was changed to the Communist Party of Cuba (Partido Comunista de Cuba – PCC) in October 1965.

The Cuban revolution could be better understood by describing in few phases because during the 50 years of Cuban revolution, country faced many ups and down. The first phase of the Cuban revolution lacked a defined ideology, but there were statist, anti-market, populist, and nationalistic tendencies. The new revolutionary regime undertook the systematic liquidation or control of the most powerful pre-revolutionary political forces and groups -- the army, political parties, unions, and farmers’ and professional associations. The second phase began in with a systematic attempt to institutionalise the revolution and to apply the system
of politico-economic organisation prevalent at that time in USSR. After the missile crisis, Castro managed to fortify his position at home and allied himself much closely with other communist leaders in Beijing and Eastern Europe countries. At the same time, he undertook the task of supporting leftist guerrilla movements and to support the movements for independence and national liberation throughout the Third World. Post-Missile Crisis, Cuban Revolution moved into the third phase, dominated by a lively debate on alternative systems of political organisation and development strategies. In the fourth phase, emphasis on capital accumulation, mobilisation, moral incentives, egalitarianism, and abolition of money was heavier than previous in Guevara’s scheme.

In the fifth phase of the revolution, Cuba moved closer than before to the USSR and became its chief defender in the third world against criticism from more radical leftist positions. Diplomatic and trade relations were re-established with a dozen Latin American countries with divergent socio-politico-economic systems. Internally, there began the process of institutionalisation, characterised by delegation of power from the previously dominant role of Castro; strengthening of the Cuban Communist Party; specialisation of the army; and re-organisation of the unions and mass organisations. This phase may be summarised as, giving solid foundation to socio-politico-economic condition through effective policy measures. From 1970 to 1986, material incentives were re-introduced, and the Cuban economy was re-organised, almost wholly, on Soviet lines.

In 1975, the first Congress of PCC was meant to institutionalise the Communist Party of Cuba. With this view, it was decided that the PCC shall be the only political party in Cuban political system. In the Congress, five year plan (1975-80) was charted out for social and economic development. With the aim to include masses in the decision making process, Organs of Popular Power (OPP) was institutionalised and for a balanced economic development, new economic management planning (SDPE) was established. Fidel Castro and Raul Castro were elected as first and second secretary of PCC, respectively. The PCC also approved a new Constitution in this Congress. While, in the second Congress new debates emerged at the ideological level on the need of Marxism-Leninism, shape of socialism in Cuba, freedom of religion and state-church relation, gender equality, education, health, functioning of OPP and SDPE and other issues concerning welfare of Cuban populace.
In view of PCC, the first Congress secured the people’s participation in decision-making process by holding a national referendum in 1976, in which the new Constitution was approved. With this began the process for national election, of delegates for the municipal Organs of People’s Power held later in October 1976. It was the first-ever election held under the revolutionary government. At the same time, the 1976 Constitution guaranteed a number of fundamental political rights and freedoms to the citizens, and OPP provided institutional framework for selection of political leadership and also for shaping public policy.

To correct the mistakes done in previous five years, in the second Congress of PCC in 1980, emphasis was given to decentralisation of the decision making process so as to revitalise the Cuban Communist Party (PCC). The Council of State was empowered to issue decree laws, propose legislation and replace ministries, whereas Council of State served as a standing legislature. In this meeting, special efforts were made to channelise the energy of the young blood because with the liberalisation of the economy there was tendency for diversion from the revolutionary goals. Ideologically, the second party Congress drew Cuba closer to the political ideology as well as bankroll and military umbrella of the soviet bureaucracy.

The ideological and political trajectory of Cuban revolution has been characterised by a good deal of voluntarism and innovativeness rather than by some determinate, authoritarian controls; and egalitarianism, rather than by privilege for the powerful; ruralism rather than the urban bias of industrial development; and humanist principles emphasising the subjective fulfilment of individuals’ potentials, rather than the dogmatic assertion of ‘objective’ class interest.

The next chapter will deal the major developments at political and economic fronts from 1986-90. The chapter will discuss the Rectification Campaign, the third party Congress of PCC and ‘Special Period’ in the time of crisis in details.