

LEVERAGING BARGAINING POWER UNDER PATRIARCHY:  
THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF POST-REVOLUTIONARY CUBAN WOMEN

BY

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THESIS

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## ABSTRACT

This socio-historical investigation discusses education as a key contributor to women's development in Cuba since 1959 all the while operating under a well-entrenched patriarchal backdrop. Economic indicators through labor participation are emphasized as the primary metrics for women's development, while bearing in mind the implicit intersectionalities that they represent in the political and social spheres. A discussion of the Cuban education system, instituted to support Revolutionary ideologies, is presented along with statistical comparisons that demonstrate dramatic development achievements which widened employment opportunities for women. It underscores intentional decisions on the part of Revolutionary leadership to utilize Marxist socialism as the mechanism by which to emancipate women and exposes the oversight of the patriarchal suppositions that underlay its theoretical bases. With consideration for multiple economic, political and social achievements, various obstacles to progress and particular backslides experienced by the post-Revolutionary female population, I consider the possible use of negotiation and leverage of bargaining power from a perceived position of weakness as a potential course of action that women may undertake to overcome and dismantle patriarchal obstacles.

**KEY WORDS:** Cuba, women, education, patriarchy, bargaining power

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## NOTE TO READER

As a legally blind individual, the author relied completely on digital text conversions of originals documents which were provided through the University of Illinois Division of Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) to complete the research for this thesis. The author strives for the highest excellence in academic scholarship.

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Excessive delays in obtaining blind accessible text conversions and DRES' failure to convert all requested inaccessible documents imposed limitations to the scope of material resources that would have been used in the conduct of the research.

The author makes no representations regarding any technical or substantive errors which could have been corrected with more effective blind accommodations by the University of Illinois.

## ABBREVIATIONS

CDA	Center for Democracy in the Americas
CDR	Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (Comités de Defensa de la Revolución)
FMC	Federation of Cuban Women (Federación de la Mujer Cubana)
PCC	Cuban Communist Party (Partido Comunista de Cuba)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
GAD	Gender and Development
WAD	Women and Development
WID	Women in Development

## CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW OF STUDY

The stimulus that led me to this study was inspired by a conviction that education has the transformative power to eliminate all social ills associated with poverty, including those which relate specifically to women. I identified Cuban society as the cultural context from which to test my postulate, because of its worldwide recognition as a developing country that sought to alleviate its economic impoverishment through a radical process that placed access to free and universal education and healthcare at the forefront of its Revolutionary objectives. The provision of education and healthcare are considered to be fundamental imperatives to the economic development of any society. Thus, a thriving economy must have an educated and healthy workforce to drive economic mechanisms. Gender equality, as promoted by socialist leaning economies has been historically sustained through female participation in the workforce. With the realization of universal, free education and healthcare for all Cuban citizens, the post-Revolutionary integration of Cuban women into its labor force has demonstrated this fact.

Despite its internationally recognized development successes, however, the Cuban Revolution remains unsuccessful in ensuring full equality for women at all levels of its social, economic and political hierarchies. The reliance on formal education bolstered by the redistributive underpinnings of Marxist doctrine has likely promoted gender equality as much as those mechanisms permit. However, disparities remain which are best observed at the highest levels of power within the Cuban political and business environments.

Cuban scholars and the Federación de la Mujer Cubana (FMC) assert that persistent patriarchal attitudes, at all societal levels, are the source of the unachieved equity between women and men. They point to the disproportionate hours that women spend on the unremunerated labor of housework and childrearing relative to their spouses and the unwillingness of men to take on greater responsibility for what they deem to be women's work based on traditional gender roles. They find that the attitudes of both men and women are responsible for gender inequities maintained by outdated beliefs that do not reflect contemporary realities in the home and workplace. Some of the mythology that persists, includes male 'suitability' over women for leadership roles,, and the male as "breadwinner" of the family. Another pervasive myth espoused by both men and women is the male 'unsuitability' to perform household work. Due to a housing shortage in Cuba and the cultural norm of extended family cohabitation, another contributing factor to the perpetuation of patriarchal attitudes is a form of social reproduction due to the prevalence of intergenerational households in which older members impose sexist and outdated ideas on younger members (Toro-Morn, Roschelle and Facio 2002:51). It is these individual and societal attitudes mired in patriarchal assumptions which are viewed by Cuban researchers of women's studies as the offending influences that are impeding full equality between women and men.

Operating within a cultural context that promotes equality in education and economic redistribution suggests that Cuban women would have the prerequisite knowledge, reasoning ability and economic leverage to challenge patriarchal constructs. The

utilization of negotiation to leverage bargaining power in a perceived position of weakness, as patriarchy implies, is the primary inquiry of this study. To Cuban women's advantage, they have access to all levels of education and—in theory—equal pay with their male counterparts. Thus, I seek to understand how negotiation may be used to leverage bargaining power over the patriarchal constructs that permeate nearly every aspect of not only Cuban culture, but the overwhelming majority of cultures worldwide.

Empirical evidence indicates that equal access to education is a vector to women's economic empowerment. Post-revolutionary Cuba is an exemplar of this reality. After the revolution of 1959, which was spearheaded by the Literacy Campaign, the Cuban government provided equal access to education to all Cuban citizens. Since that time, Cuban females have been provided the same free educational benefits as their male counterparts, including kindergarten through graduate school for all academically qualified candidates. It is common for Cuban women to attend college, pursue professional careers and participate in politics. As a result of the Cuban Revolution and its associated Literacy Campaign of 1960, Cuban women are among the most educated in the world. Statistical data reports that post-Revolutionary Cuban women are more educated than their male counterparts in the secondary and tertiary levels (Center for Democracy in the Americas 2013:36-39; Diaz González 2010:142-143; Núñez Sarmiento 2010:129).

A necessary component to understanding women's progress in Cuba is to give attention to not only the introduction of free and universal education to all Cuban citizens, but also the Revolutionary leadership's alignment with Marxist economic theory. With the onset of the Cuban Revolution, the economic, political and social elevation of women was expected to be incorporated into the redistribution of wealth associated with its explicit Marxist character. The same expectation was also linked with racial prejudice. Their overreliance on conjecture associated with class oppression failed to recognize the patriarchal underpinnings integral to socialist theory, and thus, women's equality was only partially achieved. Legislation that was intentionally enacted to enable women to overcome inequalities has also often been only symbolic in its impact.

The 'woman question,'<sup>1</sup> as referred to by Marxists and feminist scholars, was expected to resolve itself as economic opportunities, secondary to educational attainment for women expanded and permitted them greater access to the public sphere (Hartman 1981:1-5). Presently, 55 years into the experiment, the intended economic, political and social equalities that were envisioned have met with unexpected obstacles that could not be reversed with sole reliance on Marxist theory. The overlooked presence of the patriarchal assumptions that pervade all socially constructed phenomena served to undermine women's developmental progress and to confound Cuban social scientists and Revolutionary leadership. After so many years of Revolutionary doctrine espousing not only gender, but racial equity in Cuba, a serious critique of the discriminatory ideologies that persist in the collective Cuban psyche merits attention.

Notable to women's role in the Cuban Revolution and access to educational opportunities, the FMC was the first major government organ to be formed by the leadership in 1960. Its formation paralleled the Cuban Literacy Campaign and was significant to mobilizing women and girls, who made up more than half of the volunteer brigades. Its top-down organizational structure was in alignment with the socialist movements as defined above, and its leadership under Fidel Castro and Vilma Espín<sup>2</sup> believed that Marxism would incorporate women's elevation with economic progress. They and other Cuban scholars rejected the notion that women's emancipation could not be realized without a feminist ideological basis (Smith and Padula 1996:42) equating it to "...a bourgeois indulgence and an imperialist tool to divert women from the more important class struggle..." (Smith and Padula 1996:4). Not exclusive to Cuba, renunciation of feminist ideologies duplicated approaches that were being taken by other socialist-leaning countries. This said, the FMC undertook the most imperative and pressing exigencies for improving the lives of Cuban women through education, job training and sexual and reproductive health programs. Over the long-term, the FMC has also backed the extensive and progressive legislation that, in theory, grants women full and equal rights to those of Cuban men. Every major activity sponsored by the FMC has involved an educational initiative, designed to liberate women from traditional gender roles and to create the necessary social spaces that encourage greater participation in the hierarchal and male-dominated public sphere. In hindsight, analysis of women's advancements resulting from the Revolution, bourgeois or not, reveals that a feminist

ideology was as inherent to Cuba's approach to women's emancipation as Marxism was to class redistribution.

Worth mentioning are the generally parallel theories of women's development that were evolving in the United States and other developed countries alongside the socialistic approaches to Women's emancipation in Cuba. The predominantly Western, capitalistic theories of WID (Women in Development), WAD (Women and Development) and GAD (Gender and Development)<sup>3</sup> each attempted to encourage women's equity, but have similarly proven as incapable as Marxist theory in comprehensively addressing patriarchy. WID took a technical fix approach to women's economic equality, completely ignoring all other social constructs surrounding male-female relationships. WAD built on WID and recognized the Marxist premise of class exploitation as an impediment to development, but not from explicitly gender-differentiated positionalities within class structures. Defying the principles of capitalism, the GAD theory of women's development was advanced by socialist and feminist theoreticians in the 1980s, and combines Marxist theory and the analyses of patriarchal systems to address the previously excluded attention to social reproduction and the consignment of women to low level productive labor. GAD theory asserts that the integration of social reproduction must be accounted for, alongside productive labor in order to understand impediments to women's development (Razavi and Miller 1995). Its holistic approach brings forth those nuanced intersectionalities that must be considered in order to more fully understand the roots of women's oppression and the patriarchal constructs which reinforce their

presence. GAD theory considers the social, economic and political factors that collectively form social organization and the hierarchies therein. The literature did not specifically mention reliance on education as an instrument for achieving women's equality within the WID, WAD and GAD theories. Rather, it served as a targeted technical fix, and its implementation was not applied as universally, as it was within the Cuban context.

It is a compelling and ironic actuality to observe that the evolution of the socialistic, post-Revolutionary Cuban women's movement and the capitalistic, developed world women's emancipation movements, all the while holding tightly to their opposite ideological started points, have ultimately arrived at similar conclusions, identifying patriarchy as the foundational impediment to women's equality. An important and astute observation about the opposing economic theoretical approaches to women's development is summed up well by Razavi and Miller (1995:i, 1-2, 7, 11), who in their critique of WID theory, point out what can also be claimed about WAD, GAD and Marxist theory, in that their inability to effectively address patriarchy reflects that their respective proponents may have been more interested in what women could do for development, and not what development could do for women.

Further, while I did not find evidence that women's development theories Informed by capitalistic economic assumptions made strong claims toward effecting women's emancipation in the literature, several authors commented that socialist theoreticians held

to the belief that socialism was the only way for women to achieve equality with men (Jennissen and Lundy 2001:188; Randall and Janda 1981:9, 14). While capitalist practices have a proven record of exploitation and misogyny (Hartman 1981:3-10; Sargent 1981), socialism was expected to rise above the patriarchal ‘assumptions’ that accompanied its implementation.

Assuming the presence, as in Cuba, of equality in educational opportunity, this study seeks to illuminate the extent to which education contributes to women’s development. Chapter Two presents a thorough depiction of Cuban education within the Revolutionary context and offers statistics which provide ample evidence that women have benefited from equal access to free and universal education. Despite the fundamental redistributive forces mandated by socialist theory, however, the expected extensions of that education have not yet been fully realized. Convincing data reports that while their educational achievement is very high, and there has been a consistent upward trajectory in women’s economic and social development, it has not translated to equitable representation in formal employment and political leadership positions. The economic crisis that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union, and known as the Special Period in Time of Peace<sup>4</sup>, impacted Cuban women disproportionately as has been seen in the transition of women from formal State-generated employment into the informal employment sectors and back into the home. Often considered to be the ‘great equalizer,’ education has not affected subjective changes that were expected to follow the social, economic and political

structural changes that define Cuba's socialist Revolution. Thus, education is imperative, but not adequate, for overcoming all obstacles to gender equity.

Chapter Three exposes patriarchy as a subjective constraint that persists in upholding the remaining equality gap between men and women in spite of the high education levels of Cuban women. It discusses the deep entrenchment of patriarchy as a power construct that since its inception has adapted itself to the complementary social constructs and power imbalances upheld by both socialism and capitalism. This study specifically critiques patriarchy within socialism; however, it merits note that since its inception, acceptance of the patriarchal bias has infiltrated every social, political, economic and religious construct to the extent that it remains relatively unchallenged because of its universality (Holland 2006).

With the high levels of education among Cuban women, and the assumptions thereof, to engage in reasoning and negotiation, I believe that there is an unrealized social space in which women may successfully challenge patriarchal constructs by leveraging bargaining power to overcome economic and social inequality. I believe that the use of bargaining power may also offer applicable insights into women's agency in cultural contexts beyond Cuba's borders.

Allowing for the presence of high levels (through the tertiary level) of education among the overall post-Revolutionary female Cuban population, I attempt to illuminate theoretical bases of bargaining power and negotiation in the attainment of gender equity in Chapter Four. Through the analysis of Cuban women's development achievements and the continually adaptive constraints of patriarchal structures, I hypothesize a conceptual framework by which a theoretical approach to how those constraints to women's economic development may be mitigated through negotiation and the leverage of bargaining power. I propose that further research may be shaped by using the theoretical bases of bargaining theory, which assesses bargaining specifically from a perceived position of weakness and the potential for transposition within negotiation strategies.

To my supposition that there is an unrealized social space toward that end, the literature on bargaining and negotiation primarily rely on the presence of access to material assets and/or public policy that is specifically enacted to 'enforce' the notion of women's equality, as the means by which women may exercise leverage in bargaining (Folbre 2006; Katz 1997; Ghertner 2006; Iversen and Rosenbluth 2010; Seiz 1995). Cuban women have equality with men with respect to both legislated rights and material wealth. Therefore, in theory, they can dissolve a dissatisfactory situation, because that socio-political space exists within the Cuban context. The data, however, indicates that this social space does not address the implicit patriarchal underpinnings within the Cuban cultural context.

In the process of this investigation, I utilized participatory observation, and secondary sources identified both in the United States and Cuba. As a student and professional, my participatory observation spanned 17 visits to Cuba over nine years that ranged in length from five days to nine weeks before 2008 along with a more recent visit as a graduate student in 2014 that lasted eight weeks. I intended to collect qualitative data from a semi-formal interview process designed for women who had completed years of education through the tertiary level, but was unable to obtain the requisite permissions from the Cuban government. This barrier merits note because it demonstrates the obstacles to academic exchange that have resulted from the US ‘economic embargo,’ more suitably referred to by Cubans as ‘El Bloqueo<sup>5</sup>,’ due to its intended annihilation of the post-Revolutionary Cuban system.

Before proceeding to the substance of the study, and for the purposes of providing a contextual framework for this paper I believe that it is important to elucidate the disparate conceptualizations of the Cuban Revolution from the US and Cuban perspectives. In the United States, the Cuban Revolution is typically essentialized as the compressed timeframe when military actions were underway on the island, and on January 1, 1959, when Fidel Castro and his troops entered Havana. Cubans, however, refer to that day as the Triumph of the Revolution, and the Revolution constitutes the ongoing process against the ideological forces of capitalism that perpetuate human inequality, and which continues to the present. The assaults in which Cubans continue to be embattled include US legislation enacted to uphold the 53-year old economic blockade that has yet to

dismantle the socialist system. Highlights of these include, the Trading with the Enemy Act –enforced by the US Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control, the Torricelli (Cuban Democracy) Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton (Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity) Act of 1996. Additionally, the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba (CAFC) was established in 2004 and published a 423-page report detailing a comprehensive plan for the United States to ‘democratize’ the island (Johnston 2008:1-18). Any reference to the Cuban Revolution in this paper will rely on the Cuban account of events and/or definitions thereof.

## CHAPTER TWO: CUBAN EDUCATION

Cuba's Revolutionary methods have been a source of controversy among ideologues for more than five decades, yet objective evaluations of the Revolution's development accomplishments, conducted by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), withstand allegations that would undermine successes of its education system (Johnston 2008:1-18). As previously mentioned, education has played a key role in the development of Cuban women. The Cuban education system began as the cornerstone of the Revolution, and was profoundly propelled forward by the participation of women in Cuba's Literacy Campaign. With an emphasis on educational programs for women covering all aspects of her most primary needs, the FMC as it developed alongside the Literacy Campaign served as the vanguard organization responsible for endorsing women's equality in Cuba.

Testimony to the UNESCO data supporting the primacy and transformative power of education, I was a more than casual visitor to Cuba between 1998 and 2007. I have had ample opportunity to observe Cubans and Cuban society from close range, and I was always impressed by the self-confidence and authority with which average Cubans spoke about many subjects from the mundane to the polemic. They were better informed on their own national, as well as, international politics than many of my American compatriots on respective issues, and they expertly expressed their world views and their respective roles in it. Cubans were clearly very well educated, and I became curious about why the country was not more economically developed. It was not until I began

research on the post-Revolutionary Cuban education system that I understood the importance of internationalism and political consciousness (Coulter 2010:133-136) as core components of Cuban education within the Revolutionary process.

On various visits to Cuba, I had opportunities to visit rural primary schools that were housed in modest buildings. A goal established by the post-Revolutionary Cuban government, each school was equipped with at least one computer, and the staff was always eager to show it. On the numerous other tours I took over the years, evidence of Cuba's pride in its education system and its citizens' strong inclinations towards educational attainment were demonstrated time and time again. It was very common for Cubans to pronounce, not only their own levels of educational achievement to me, but their families' and neighbors' as well.

In support of my personal observations Greenshields (2010:76) confirms my own interpretation, "Everywhere we found confident, assertive young people with a very strong sense of their communities, their history and their futures. Young people with real purpose and justifiable pride in the achievements of their country." His affirmation of my own reflections demonstrates the ubiquity of this phenomenon throughout Cuba. It also gives credence to Cuba's international reputation for the most successful education system in the developing world, and a contender for that honor among developed countries.

Another observation I made, and a comparison I made with Americans who often differentiate themselves among their peers by their socio-economic levels, the Cuban tendency to do so by their educational achievement struck me as unique and likely stemming from the same psychosocial behaviors I had observed in my own country. In the absence of the relative degree of disparate expositions of material wealth, common to American society, I began to understand this as a form of "...state-generated social capital..." (Breidlid 2007:619) which provides the individual favorable regard and tangible benefits in Cuban society (Guevara 1968).

With the understanding that citizens of any country will seek to optimize their social capital, and that it is through all national education systems that they are intentionally molded to fulfill the values deemed imperative for the preservation of core national ideologies the reader should proceed on the premise that, the post-Revolutionary Cuban education system is imbued with Marxist ideology. The progressiveness of the Cuban education system, which began with the Literacy Campaign of 1961, has earned it international acclaim. The effectiveness of the socialist principles that pervade Cuban pedagogy and praxis serve to shape its socio-political standing, and engenders Cuba to the developing world, all the while under constant siege by US hegemony.

Affording them favorable social capital in the Revolutionary process, Cuban women have played a key role, and navigated a prominent path in the battle against illiteracy within the highly patriarchal Cuban culture. Although their Revolutionary roles as benefactors

and beneficiaries of literacy and the development of the Cuban education system are celebrated, women are not recorded as significant, early proponents of free and universal education before the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Below is a brief discussion of early notions of the emancipatory power of education as it was upheld by Cuba's original proponents. The chapter continues with an explanation of the way in which education molds political and social discourse. This foundational understanding of education policy informs the manner in which the Revolution was successful in establishing a Revolutionary narrative and transforming it to liberate not only women, but all Cubans. Further in, the chapter provides background on some of the more tactical methods underlying the discourse and that have been successfully used in the overall strategy of education and women's development. To conclude the chapter, and to demonstrate successes of those methods, statistics on women's advancements validate the upward trajectory of women's economic, social and political status, as well as the glass ceilings that are revealed upon analysis of that same data.

The Cuban public education system was the vision of a Catholic priest, Father José Agustín Caballero, who in 1795, unsuccessfully promoted his desire to institute public education for all. His mission was quelled by the Spanish colonial government, which segregated and enslaved the majority Black and Mulato Cuban population. An intellect and disciple of Agustín Caballero, Father Félix Varela picked up the cause and eventually succeeded, carrying it forward along with social campaigns for the abolition of

slavery in and Cuba's wars for independence from Spain. These simultaneous liberation movements occurred in the latter half of the 19th century (Alarcón de Quesada 2011:136). Slavery was abolished in 1886 and the Cuban Wars of Independence occurred in 1868, 1879 and 1895, respectively. The 1895 War of Independence led to Cuba's liberation from Spain to the US military occupation of Cuba between 1898 and 1902. These dates are important because they provide a context for another proponent of the Cuban education system, José Martí, also known as Cuba's Father of Independence. Contrary to common belief that Fidel Castro and Ernesto (Ché) Guevara incited the revolutionary ideals of Cuba's education system, it was 100 years prior to Fidel Castro and his contemporaries that José Martí's activism and writings are also credited with forwarding the concept of universal education for all Cuban children (MacDonald 2009:10-13). Moreover, Alarcón de Quesada (2011:136) attests that it was an unnamed "...illustrious group of professors and teachers who not only designed the idea of the Patria with an extremely advanced social content for its time, but who also founded an uninterrupted revolutionary tradition within the Cuban teaching profession." Though limited in its availability to all Cubans, prior to the Revolution, the public school system is recognized for fomenting Cuban patriotism and the student and intellectual movements which propelled Cuba's social and political struggles against Spanish colonialism and would later challenge US imperialism (Alarcón de Quesada 2011:137).

The Literacy Campaign and the development of the Cuban education system were foundational to necessary transformations determined imperative to social change on the island. The Cuban Revolution quite literally took hold of the dominant discourse and the balance of power relations and transformed them. In this respect, it was more revolutionary than the Latin American wars for independence because of how it completely overturned the social, economic and political constructs of the era. The success of the Campaign can be attributed not only to the popular political support it enjoyed, but also the way in which it was implemented. Its primary objective was to fundamentally change social attitudes and relationships through the process of teaching literacy—the inescapable starting point for social and political consciousness building. In his explication of the nuanced layers of what constitutes discourse, Breidlid quotes Loomba, Foucault and White from their definitions of educational discourse and its role in politics and power relations:

Discourse can be defined, in Loomba's words, as 'a whole field of domain within which language is used in a particular way' (Loomba, 1998, p. 38) and is rooted in human practices, institutions and actions. It is a group of statements belonging to 'a single system of formation' (Foucault, 1995). Hayden White stated that discourse constitutes 'the ground whereon to decide what shall count as a fact in the matters under consideration and to determine what mode of comprehension is best suited to the understanding of the facts thus constituted' (White, 1987, p. 3). (Breidlid 2007:619).

Thus, with literacy setting the groundwork for the circulation of that new dominant discourse, Loomba, Foucault and White affirm that, as with any country, the links between educational and political discourses are never objective nor operate in isolation.

Each feeds the other. Following literacy, education discourse is the foundational building block that forms the political value systems of a country's citizens. These in turn form the close connections of knowledge with power. Breidlid (2007:627) also quotes Fiske, who articulates these relationships in his statement that, "Knowledge is never neutral, it never exists in an empiricist, objective relationship to the real. Knowledge is power, and the circulation of knowledge is part of the social distribution of power (Fiske, 1989, pp. 149–150)."

Breidlid (2007:627) is sagacious in his understanding of the inseparable ties between political and education discourse in the realms of what constitutes official knowledge production and circulation. He points out that, explicit or otherwise, the transmission of official discourse is a universally employed method utilized by most countries, including the United States, in order to further their national, ideological objectives. In a clear cut comparison with the social overtones of the Cuban political and education discourse, he comments on the permeation of market ideology ubiquitous to US education discourse.

Therefore, Cuba's education system is not unique in its use of intentional mechanisms to propagate its brand of socialist narrative in its official discourse. Accordingly, it very actively seeks to replicate the citizen who reflects and proclaims the set of political values which defend those political constructs that Cuban government leaders deem valuable to the survival of the Revolution and a conviction to human equality. Consequently, education is considered the "...spearhead of the Cuban Revolution...", (Breidlid

2007:621) and it takes a highly moralistic tone against the greed, corruption and neglect of the poor and marginalized. The Revolutionary government used education in its struggle against neo-colonialism and imperialism, and uses socialist morality as its driving principle.

Implementation of the Literacy Campaign began in September of 1960. Fidel Castro announced to the United Nations assembly Cuba's intention to eliminate illiteracy on the island within one year. According to the national census taken in 1953 the illiteracy rate among Cubans was at 23.6 percent. This was an average based on estimates of 41.7 percent rural illiteracy and 11% urban (Herman 2012:97). After being rolled out in four stages that included the identification of illiterate Cubans and volunteer teachers, Cuba declared itself Free of illiteracy on December 22, 1961. By that time, all educable Cuban citizens could read and write at least the 3rd grade level. Subsequently, the battles for 6th and 9th grade literacy ensued and were achieved by the 1980s. The mass mobilization included more than a quarter million volunteers, called Brigadistas. Of the 270,000, 59% were women (McCall 1987:320). Formally trained teachers made up a relatively small percentage (approximately 35,000) of the 'literacy brigade', and the large majority was student and worker volunteers who received two weeks of training before being assigned to their posts. Many of the volunteers were youth and/or female, who were often posted to rural locations where they worked with families on their farms by day and taught reading and writing by lantern at night. The youngest and oldest recorded literacy workers were 8 and 106 years of age, respectively (MacDonald 2009:47).

Without further investigation as to whether the origins of a parallel initiative were an attempt to create competition among the rivaling socialist and capitalist ideologies for development, it seems ironic that Herman (2012:97) also reports that “Six months after Castro’s announcement, President John F. Kennedy declared the launched of the Alliance for Progress, which encouraged social reform in Latin America in order to prevent revolution and sought to eliminate illiteracy in the same by 1970.” This was a peculiar pronouncement, given not only its abject failure, but also because of the now well-publicized activities undertaken by the CIA to destabilize Latin American governments that did not align themselves with US political interests. Moreover, it reveals a naiveté about the origins of revolutionary movements—almost always instigated by educated people whose very education afforded them the knowledge and reasoning to challenge status quo injustices. Thus, the radical and revolutionary elements innate to education would, in and of themselves, likely have fomented those other Latin American revolutionary movements that Kennedy sought to avoid. The failure of the Alliance for Progress exposed the limitations of a capitalistic construct to generate mass mobilization toward social reform. The initiative also uncovers the US government’s belief that the Cuban Revolution would be short-lived and ultimately, unsuccessful.

Another notable failure of the Kennedy administration relative to the Cuban Revolution was the Bay of Pigs Invasion at Playa Girón on April 17, 1961. It coincided with the Literacy Campaign and the failure served to fuel more popular support of the

Revolutionary government. To demonstrate the popular support for the Revolution and Literacy Campaign, Castro is reported to have,

...hosted a 'second Bay of Pigs invasion' in which the beach where the Bay of Pigs invasion took place was ceremoniously 'invaded' by literacy teachers approaching the shore from boats bearing giant pencils. Planes and helicopters overhead 'bombarded' the beach with literacy manuals and primers (Herman 2012:99).

The reenactment was a clear message as to the primacy of education for the masses and the true underpinnings of the Revolution's war against ignorance and oppression.

Suggestive of the above quote from Herman, the Literacy Campaign was overtly militaristic in its primary tactical approach, rhetorical tone and outward symbolism. This is not surprising when considering the solid patriarchal constructs embedded in Cuban culture which will be discussed in Chapter Three. It was intentional for its appeal to those masses that were not eligible for combat, including youth, elders, girls and the majority of women. The military tone was inherent to the androcentric and patriarchal Cuban culture and images associated with warfare and combat, however, it was uniquely offset by the feminine stereotypes associated with teaching. The military rhetoric instilled the need for the people to unify against the hegemonic forces of US imperialism and economic dominance. The literacy brigades were outfitted with military uniforms, but also with teaching tools. Their weapons were the pencil, and a common refrain was "...death to illiteracy..." (Herman 2012:99). As previously mentioned, more than the military battles, the battle against illiteracy was considered the vanguard of the Revolution. The teaching materials served to indoctrinate both literacy worker and

student with the Revolutionary message, "...Down with Imperialism!" (Herman 2012:99). Moreover, the 'Education Revolution' and its participants were given equal distinction as the military combatants, and another popular theme was that, "...illiteracy and ignorance were not just social ills, they were enemies of Cuba." (Herman 2012:102). The fusion of illiteracy and imperialism fed into the Revolutionary imperative to wage the continuous and far more lethal battle against human ignorance. Bringing tragic realism to that general sentiment and the militancy of the Literacy Campaign were the murders of several Brigadistas and in some cases their students by counter-revolutionary forces. The murders, however, fueled the fervor of the participants and mobilized even greater mass support for the Revolution (Herman 2012:98; MacDonald 2009:47).

Regardless of the androcentrism and militaristic aspects of revolutionary movements in general, Cuban women and girls are hailed with taking on the Battle against Illiteracy. They made up more than half of the quarter million volunteer movement, and like their male counterparts went out to rural posts to live with the families of their students. They took up the challenge and broke with the more narrow patriarchal conventions of the time and consequently altered the nature of those social norms to open up greater opportunities for women throughout successive decades of the Revolution. These girls and women embraced the military elements of the Campaign as revealed in testimonies whereby they consistently repeated their determination and the military narrative of the campaign. Upon coming under siege by counter-revolutionaries, one exceptional 12-year old girl recounts, "...When they surrounded the house, the campesino said 'Be quiet, be quiet, the

house is surrounded' and I put on my uniform and said, 'Let's go outside, all of us together, I'm not staying in here lying down.'" (Herman 2012:106) Her determination in the face of danger and uncertainty was further demonstrated when Literacy Campaign officials tried to move her to another location after the incident, she refused to leave her post and is recorded to have said, "'I'm not moving from here, whatever happens I will face it'." (Herman 2012:106). Despite their proven bravery, however, few women were permitted to serve in the militia, and those who did are reported to have encountered resistance from male soldiers.

Despite the overall enforcement of traditional gender roles in the earliest years of the Revolution, the importance of women to its success is part of standard Revolutionary narrative today. It is widely acknowledged that their participation was vital to success. If we consider the words of Fidel Castro that, "'The battle to be won against ignorance will give our country more glory than the military battles already fought...'", (Breiblid 2007:621) it becomes evident that the greatest challenge of the Cuban Revolution exists squarely within the 'war of ideas,'--between capitalist and socialist ideologies.

A clear indication as to the priorities of Revolutionary leadership and recognition of the role of women in the nation's development, it is noteworthy that concurrent with the Literacy Campaign was the formation of the FMC In August, 1960. Through its mobilization and education activities, an acceleration of the Cuban women's emancipation movement began. The FMC was integral to the Literacy Campaign and

Cuba's long-term development, and women comprised more than half of both its driving force and beneficiaries. The implementation of the literacy campaign by the National Literacy Commission was bolstered by women, including those in leadership positions who developed the learning materials and curricula and a large assemblage of teen-aged girls who taught both children and adults to read and write. Within its first year, the illiteracy rate in Cuba dropped from 23.6% to 3.1%, and all Cubans were reading at least at the third grade level. The FMC also bore the responsibility for building the legal framework for girl's and women's rights, promoting education, obtaining employment outside of the home access to healthcare and other social services (Center for Democracy in the Americas 2013:22, 30). The astounding achievements brought forth from the literacy campaign are evidence of how effectively a society can mobilize in order to address social problems that contribute to poverty and disempowerment.

The continuing efforts of the FMC are credited with much of the social, economic and political strides that have been made on behalf of Cuban women and have benefited all of Cuban society. If not for the foresight of Revolutionary leadership, the outcome would most certainly have been less victorious. In the face of patriarchal obstacles that limited broader women's participation, such as in positions of leadership and power and greater representation in combat, there can be no doubt that the Cuban Revolution succeeded due to the participation of women. Their astounding achievements in the literacy campaign are evidence of how effectively they mobilized and strengthened the Revolution and

Cuba's education system through the ongoing war against oppression. McCall (1987:324)

sums it up nicely, saying:

The continuing efforts of the Cubans to educate their population is one of the outstanding achievements of the Third World. With few resources other than the will of the people, they have given skills to all those capable of learning. The participation of women as teachers and students with the goal of their full integration into the life of that small nation attests that reading is in itself revolutionary.

The role of individual women and the mobilizing efforts of the FMC merit acknowledgement for overcoming illiteracy, as well as driving other social, economic and political achievements while navigating the patriarchal constraints entrenched in Cuban culture. Herman (2012:108) offers a nuanced perspective on patriarchy, women and the Revolution in his comment that,

...the actions of female volunteers contributed to the consolidation of an emerging post-revolutionary culture in which patriarchy, though still present, was changed. Though not a complete victory over female oppression, women's participation in the campaign was meaningful and transformative. It merits a place amongst the early triumphs for women's condition in revolutionary Cuba...

As noted, rather than directly challenging the patriarchal system, the mobilization of women for the Literacy Campaign and the FMC is said to have only altered the nature of Cuban patriarchy. This is likely because of the way in which Revolutionary exigencies enlisted both women and men into roles in which they could best support the Revolution. Thus, in many ways traditional gender roles were set aside, and overlapped to enable maximum contribution by all Cubans; women to participate as warriors and men as teachers. For the most part, it was the urgency and priority given to meeting the

challenges of overcoming illiteracy that opened up the social space for women to transcend their traditional roles.

While not explicitly stated as traditional gender role overlap, some of Guevara's writings which heavily influenced Revolutionary discourse and provided a template for the model revolutionary, clearly endorse a prototype who is expected to embody a personal character and who can transcend traditional gender norms. His 'New Man' philosophy instituted the core values of the exemplar who would be guided by moral and idealistic, rather than economic principles. The selflessness and sacrifice for the collective good, dominant in the 'New Man' philosophy contributed to the acceptance of women's roles in the Revolution and largely their participation in the Literacy Campaign. It was, then, the assimilation by women of the New Man philosophy that helped create the social space for their active participation in the Revolution. As Herman (2012:108) pointed out above, they were all the while altering the constraints prescribed by Cuban patriarchy, but still within the relative limits of Cuban gender norms of the era. (Moya Fábregas 2010:61-84).

Assuming its surprisingly overdue place in Revolutionary rhetoric, the term, 'New Woman' captures the concept of "...an explicitly gendered formulation of the ideal Cuban revolutionary..." (Thomas-Woodard 2003:175). Derived from the 'New Man' philosophy, and outlined in Guevara's famous writings on man and socialism<sup>6</sup>, the term 'New Woman' was first coined by historian, Thomas-Woodard, in 2003 in an article

about Celia Sánchez<sup>7</sup> more than 20 years after her death. (Coulter 2010:128). Inspired by Guevara's writings, the Revolutionary discourse that overtook the nation is rooted in a selfless morality that is typically ascribed to the traditional female gender role and associated with activities of social reproduction. The content of the teaching materials used in the Literacy Campaign established the principles of this new and Revolutionary discourse. Imbued with the socialist values of the 'New Man' philosophy (and implicitly the 'New Woman') the materials introduced many socially progressive topics such as economic equality, imperialism and tax and land reforms to, not only the literacy students, but to all Cubans. In alignment with the 'New Man' ideology, literacy workers were expected to model Revolutionary values in their own behaviors in order to most effectively teach their students. They were expected to relate to their students at a human level by which that empathy would result in shared learning processes. The comportment of the literacy workers would be scrutinized by their pupils, who would recognize correctness, respect and discipline exhibited by each volunteer.

Not likely intended to specifically promote women's empowerment, Guevara's writings clearly reveal his conviction of education as one of the fundamental keys to liberation and to unleashing all human potential. He understood that in addition to the social, political and economic structural changes of the Revolution, the education system would need to focus on deep learning and the practice of the values thus ascribed. In doing so, the Cuban citizen would be well prepared to engage in all of the structures of governance, economics and society. In contrast with capitalistic societies, wherein social constructs

are often disjointed and contradictory, the Cuban system reinforces the connections between family, school and community (Griffiths and Williams 2009:39). Additionally Guevara promoted a sense of self-reflection which enables Cubans to critically assess the Revolution and their role in its continuation and evolution.

This is well exhibited through an autoethnography by Cuban-born scholar, Kapcia (2005), who reflects on her educational experiences in Cuba. She expresses a keen awareness of the various moralities stressed in the Cuban educational system. They include, first and foremost, a socialist morality that stresses human equality; second, strong messages of communitarianism, which espouse solidarity with fellow human beings, especially the oppressed. Both the socialist and communitarian moralities emphasize the role of the family as the basic and central social unit for creating a well-rounded citizen. The third morality underscored in the Cuban educational system is what she calls a 'martiano morality,' which informed Guevara's New Man ideology, and echo José Martí's emphasis on self-sacrifice, voluntarism and sensitivity to others and their cultures. These key principles are foundational to Cuban education, and—as I have personally observed and Greenshields' quotation affirms earlier in the chapter—their influence is manifestly evident in the manner in which Cubans engage and perceive the world.

The eminence of the communitarian morality mentioned above and promoted in Cuban schools emphasizes solidarity and self-sacrifice, along with nationalism and internationalism. It is this proactive internationalism that engenders the Cuban way of life to the oppressed and suffering masses. Since the Revolution, Cuba has a long history of coming to the aid of countries in crisis, whether due to internal political strife or natural disasters. It is a great source of pride and promotes strong patriotic feelings among Cubans. This, too, relates back to the personal observations I shared at the beginning of this chapter, as much of the pride and self-confidence I witnessed often occurred during conversations about Cubans who work or have worked in other countries in support of the socialist agenda.

Initially, Cuba's internationalist activities involved instigating revolutionary campaigns in Africa and Latin America. Due to the Cold War and Cuba's political alliance with the Soviet Union, however, those efforts were heavily infiltrated by the CIA and mostly failed. Upon the success of its own Literacy Campaign, however, Cuba started helping other developing countries design their own locally contextualized literacy programs. Cuba's internationalism has also been prominently demonstrated through its medical aid to other countries. Although downplayed by US media and hardly reported, Cuba offered over 1,200 doctors and medical staff to assist in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, but the offer was rejected by George W. Bush, in spite of the dire need.

To emphasize the extraordinary successes attributed to the post-Revolutionary Cuban education system, the following statistics highlight some of the most outstanding of its development achievements. In Cuba today, the literacy rate and years of education completed for both males and females is outstanding and surpasses literacy rates in some developed countries, including the United States. In the overall Cuban population, the percentage of students attending pre-school is 98.3 (Diaz González 2010:142); completing primary school is 99.8; completing the two-tiered secondary level, through the 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades, are 98.4 and 78.4, respectively (Núñez Sarmiento 2010:139). In addition to these high completion rates, and revealing a high-quality classroom experience, the student-teacher ratio at the primary school level is 20 to 1, and 15 to 1 at the secondary education levels (Diaz González 2010:142).

To illustrate women's achievements that were set in motion through Cuba's Literacy Campaign and education system, and how these have challenged patriarchy, the following statistical data provides a quantitative snapshot of those transformations. Of both male and female college graduates today, 63.3% are women (Diaz González 2010:142). To further illustrate some of the barriers that Cuban women have overcome, a sample breakdown of female graduates in traditionally male-dominated disciplines reveals 74% in the medical sciences, 71% in economics, 48% in the natural sciences and mathematics, 37% in engineering and architecture and 34% in agricultural sciences. Women also remain highly represented in traditional female-dominated disciplines, such as public health and education (at all levels). Working women in Cuba attain higher

levels of education than working men, and in 2006, 19% of employed women had university degrees compared with 11% of their male counterparts, and 56% had completed high school compared with 34% of working men. Women are also more likely to complete masters and doctoral degrees and to study foreign languages (Núñez Sarmiento 2010:138). These figures are phenomenal, compared to those of 1953, when 2% of Cuban girls completed high school and 1% of college graduates were female (Center for Democracy in the Americas 2013:16).

As indicated by Revolutionary rhetoric mentioned above, and the methods used to carry forward its operations highlight, the Cuban educational system is intentionally designed with a bottom-up approach which emphasizes the needs of the people as the absolute priority. As a developing nation, the success of the literacy campaign lies in this political context. The Literacy Campaign set the groundwork for the mass participation of the Cuban people in the national formation process. This democratic approach at the most local level is unseen in capitalist economies including that of the United States whose education system stresses market competition—of which the most basic premise is the acceptance of the necessity of winners and losers (MacDonald 2009:vi). According to Greenshields (2010:79), this approach is seen as “grossly unprofessional” by Cuban educators for that assumption of winners and losers. They consider this approach as divisive and destructive, and we see this manifested through the unequal educational opportunities afforded American children of different socio-economic backgrounds, as well as in their overall expected life outcomes.

Conversely, the Cuban education system prioritizes the success of the collective over that of the individual. This is not to suggest that individual achievement is not encouraged and rewarded, however, the system of emulation promotes those achievements through a collective effort that encourages fraternal competition among teams, schools, municipalities and provinces. In contrast to the competitive and capitalist approach to education, the Cuban system upholds a system of emulation by which individuals are encouraged to contribute to the learning of all in the group so that all benefit from the learning process. This in and of itself is a form of mass mobilization that encourages cooperation between individuals and groups. It is a shared process which puts emphasis on overcoming an obstacle, rather than competing with and defeating an opponent. It is one of the most distinguishing features of Cuban education (MacDonald 2009:105-106).

Along with free and universal healthcare, the State has maintained education as one of its chief priorities. According to UNESCO statistics, Cuba is one of the most committed countries in the world to the goal of education, and in a 2006 report, only five other countries spent more as a percentage of total public expenditure of GDP on education (Johnstone 2008:4). In actual numbers, Cuba spends 6.7% of GDP on education which is twice the average spent by other countries in the Caribbean (Bredlid 2007:630).

Unfortunately, subsequent to the Special Period and designed to control State spending, economic policy adjustments begun in 2006 have created setbacks to Cuba's education system. Self-imposed austerity measures have forced the closure of 96% of Cuba's community colleges, 77% of its rural college preparatory schools and 44% of rural

secondary schools. The rationale for the closures was the threefold cost of maintaining them compared to urban academic institutions. The inaccessibility of the centrally-located urban schools for many Cubans, and the implementation of a quota system, resulted in a 36% reduction in college enrollment between 2007 and 2010 (Center for Democracy in the Americas 2013:36). As a consequence of the reallocation of its education resources, the Cuban education system has been under continual renovation as the island adapts to the economic and political exigencies of the neoliberal world order. Throughout these changes, it is important to point out that Cuba has never received any funding from the IMF or World Bank to support its economy. Cuba has intentionally resisted both the financial assistance, as well as conditionalities that notoriously accompany the brutal structural adjustment programs of these big donor organizations.

Reflecting another objective set of metrics in support of educational achievement in Cuba, the 2013 CDA report lauded Cuba for its successes toward achieving the 2015 United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Of the eight, Cuba has already achieved universal access to primary education, reductions in infant mortality and the promotion of gender equality and women's development. The authors of the report assert that the latter, also known as the MDG3, "...is unique because gender equality is recognized as the means for achieving all the others." (Center for Democracy in the Americas 2013:46). Additionally, the report indicates that Cuba is on target for achieving the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, improvements in maternal health and the cessation of the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. These accomplishments can be

attributed to Cuba's education system, which has provided the foundational knowledge that must predicate any sustainable societal, economic or political achievement.

Education will continue to play a perpetual role in emancipation and revolutionary movements, worldwide. As has been seen in Cuba it is the ingredient most necessary to fuel continuous social progress. The Cuban women's movement is learning that it will take further education and knowledge production to more fully realize gender equity. As with its universal education system, the Cuban women's movement can serve as a model for other countries striving toward gender equality. With education in hand, the following chapter discusses patriarchy as a persistent constraint to women's equality.

## CHAPTER THREE: PATRIARCHY

With a sophisticated and well-established education system in place and statistics reporting the exceptional strides of Cuban women in educational achievement, the Cuban Revolution has benefited Cuban women at least as much as any socialist government relying on Marxist/Leninist theoretical foundations have historically permitted. Cuban scholars in women's studies have identified patriarchy as the remaining impediment to full gender equality in the country. In this chapter, I will discuss the history of patriarchy as a persistent institution that has been embedded into all other contemporary social institutions including economics, politics and religion. I will specifically discuss patriarchy in Cuba, its presence IN Marxist ideology, its influence on the Cuban Revolution and its resurgence during the Special Period.

As a social institution, patriarchy has been traced to historical phenomena with a distinct beginning. (Lerner 1986:6), and according to Holland, it is "...the world's oldest prejudice" (Holland 2006:1-11). In the context of Neolithic history, the term 'distinct' warrants qualification, as with all pre-historical data, exactitude in dating can range over thousands of years. It is suggested by some authors that before patriarchy became the dominant force that we see in historical records of known provenance, that hunter/gatherer societies were egalitarian and/or matriarchal (Biaggi 2005:78). The argument that a matriarchal society preceded the patriarchal construct is not convincing since, throughout the literature, many authors did not make a differentiation between matriarchal and matrilineal,<sup>8</sup> and often the terms seemed to be used synonymously

(Haarmann 2005:163, 169-163, 170). When defined, it is obvious that without the institution of monogamous marriage and the patriarchal implications, therein, that—by default—the lineage of offspring would be traced through the mother, and by this indisputable law of nature, matrilineal. In addition, while some authors are convinced by myths and archeological evidence, others admit that their interpretations are difficult to prove due to the lack of written documentation. Regardless of whether or not humans were governed by a female system of hierarchy or not, it is believed that humanity was at least more egalitarian because of the need for all members of a group to participate in all of the aspects of survival. In support of the role of women in the survival and propagation of humans, Lerner (1986:17-18) points out the presence of anthropological evidence that women (and children) were responsible for the majority of food supply through gathering and small game hunting in hunter/gatherer societies. On the other hand, big game hunting was an ‘auxiliary pursuit’ performed by men. As gatherers, this would naturally afford them at least equal status to hunters.

Among scholars ranging between the social and the natural sciences--historians, archeologists, marine geologists, evolutionary biologists, mythologists, eco-feminists, paleontologists, evolutionary psychologists and so on—there is consensus that patriarchy’s origins are the result of various environmental, technological, cultural, religious and social convergences which they believe started in the Neolithic era between the eighth to seventh millennium BCE in the area known as Indo-Europe, or the Near East (Goettner-Abendroth 2005:38). Lerner (1986:8) metaphorically ‘pinpoints’ that,

“The period of the “establishment of patriarchy” was not one “event” but a process developing over a period of nearly 2500 years, from app. 3100 to 600 B.C.”

Going back to around 20,000 BCE, a non-linear set of loosely related events and phenomena occurred that began with a global climate change that caused glaciers that covered North America and Eurasia to melt.<sup>9</sup> Along with rising sea levels, the Black Sea began to overflow and to flood surrounding lands around 6,600 BCE (Robbins Dexter 2005:149). As with current-day, global climate change, a consequence of flooding in one region can cause desertification in another. Both flooding and desertification renders the land affected unusable for sustaining life. These environmental catastrophes forced the inhabitants of the areas to migrate, in search of new land for survival. The resulting scarcity of water and arable land created rivalries for inhabitable lands and warfare became the method by which communities survived and multiplied (Goettner-Abendroth 2005:35; Hiller 2005:359). The development of bronze weapons and horseback riding in the same general time period between the eighth and sixth millennia BCE gave competing groups with those technologies significant advantages for conquest. (Biaggi 2005:81) Warring peoples killed the men of opposing tribes and took their women and children, because they were more easily subdued due to their inferior physical strength against violence. Those humans were considered the plunders of war and treated as such. It is also consistently suggested that because humans had already learned that they could dominate animals through the domestication of livestock and horses, that plundered women and children would also submit to domination and enslavement (Biaggi 2005:78-

79; Collins 1971:9; Goettner-Abendroth 2005:34). Thus, the commodification of humans as slaves evolved from warfare that was initiated as a necessity for survival.

In isolation, any of the above-mentioned events may not have established the foundations of patriarchy as an institution; however, when taken from the perspective of multiple convergences, it is a reasonable conclusion that these phenomena served to bolster each other and helped entrench the patriarchal attitudes and behavioral norms into societal institutions (Biaggi 2005:87-88). It can be said with certainty, however, that each phenomenon created or represented its own power imbalance, and thus they collectively lent themselves to the codification of the structure of patriarchy (Goettner-Abendroth 2005:27). The continuation of these and subsequent forces gave it traction and have enabled it to pervade nearly all of contemporary society. Lerner (1986) believes that patriarchal institutions are the result of the development of slavery after women and children were integrated into the societies of their plunderers. The role of women in these groups reduced them to providers of sexual services and reproduction, which were treated as commodities and a means of production through the use of their children. They were acquired as private property and exchanged as such. The accumulation of the sexual services and offspring afforded male property owners a power base by which they leveraged control over political enemies or economic competitors. Collins (1971:7-12) refers to this phenomenon as “male sexual property”. The relationship of women to men as sources of commodities in the forms of goods (offspring) and services (sexual) that may be acquired as private property, accumulated and exploited to an end by which

social control may be leveraged provokes an uneasiness with the manner in which economic philosophies thus evolved.

Along with patriarchy, class oppression was also instituted as a consequence of warfare, by which stronger males dominated the weaker. The evolutions of state formation, juridical systems, the patriarchal family and monotheistic religious dogma were also underway at this time. Women were not only subjugated by the class systems in the manner that was imposed upon men, they were further classified by categories, labeled respectable or not based on their known or suspected sexual activities. The labels ascribed to women relative to their sexual behavior were constructed from the institutions of marriage and reinforced by religious dogma which extended the domination and property ownership aspects of slavery into the patriarchal family. Notable and relative to the massive geological changes caused by the aforementioned global climate change, the three major monotheistic world religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam all developed in the general desert area of the eastern Mediterranean (Biaggi 2005:85), and whose prophets were descended from the patriarch, Abraham. Each conceived within its marriage rites that woman as the property of man, whose sexuality must be controlled. Providing women protection against male violence and sexual exploitation, the institution of marriage became a bargaining tool for the patriarchal system by which women came under male control. Access to a marriage partner, economic means, or both, gave women varying degrees of defense against sexual exploitation. Women who existed outside of those social structures, however, remained vulnerable (Lerner 1986:8-10 and 212-217).

Another likeness among Judaism, Christianity and Islam was that they branded female sexuality as something deviant and the source of evil, and liberally promulgated the calumny through creation myths and scriptures. Accounts from oral and written myths suggest that man's internal conflicts over the duality of body and spirit advanced the poorly rationalized beliefs that their sexual desires for women were a state of mind brought about by some kind of supernatural power inherent to women. At the time of their inception, the absence of the scientific knowledge by which we know the sexes to be of the same species could not prevent men from 'othering' women because of their most fundamental of biological differences. The most effective emotion known to promote social control—fear—was translated to men's associations with evil, and it set in motion the centuries-long repression and genocide of women that continues today. In the excerpt below, Holland reveals the doctrine of Original Sin as disseminated in the writings of Saint Augustine,<sup>10</sup> who essentializes the misogyny that developed out of patriarchy as men's struggle with their own collective ego and libido:

In spite of the misogynistic interpretation of his doctrine, which became enshrined in the Doctrine of Original Sin, St Augustine's attitudes to women were more complex. He did not see women as inherently evil. In *The City of God* he stresses that 'the sex of woman is not a vice but nature.' But the terrible anguish of his struggle with desire, which he records with such power, reveals clearly that it is man's battle with himself that is at the root of misogyny. However, for St Augustine, ultimately it is our will that is the source of evil. Ego, not libido, is the problem that made us defy God in the first place. As a punishment, God gave us sexual desire, something over which our will has no control. Just as we defied God, so our desires defy us. Sex became the battleground, both as a pleasure and a punishment, in a way unheard of before in Western culture. Woman was bound to suffer because of our nasty habit of blaming that which we desire for making us desire it (Holland 2006:94).

Catholicism--the most orthodox sect of Christianity and most significant to patriarchy in Cuban culture—was the primary mechanism by which social and sexual control over women was transferred to the island in Spain's imperialist mission to conquer and colonize the western hemisphere. The hegemony of the Catholic Church remained in the milieu of Cuban culture throughout its colonization by Spain and post-colonial occupation by the United States, and it was not until the Church was relieved of its powers of influence in the daily lives of Cuban women and Cuban governance after the Revolutionary overthrow of 1959 that a concerted and comprehensive effort was made to equalize women in Cuban society. This is in no way to suggest that the Church was the only factor that contributed to women's oppression in Cuba; however, the Church's male-dominated hierarchy and its position on women provides an accurate setting for the status of women in Cuban society at large. As is well known, the island was a major participant in the trans-Atlantic African slave trade, which also installed its racial oppressions to

complement patriarchal dominance and contempt for women. Because of the importance of Catholicism in Spanish colonial governance, it is fair to say that the Spanish brought to Cuba a myriad of social and economic oppressions in the forms of imperialism, sexism and racism, all of which exact dominance over women in their respective contrivances. With this historical context illuminating the ubiquity of patriarchal constructs in both religious and secular institutions and their predisposition to propagate each other, the chapter continues with the introduction of Marxism as the core ideology that was expected to liberate women from all oppressions, without consideration for its own patriarchal assumptions.

To understand Cuba's socialist revolution, a definition of socialism is warranted. The following excerpt provides a framework of those ideologies by which Cuba modeled its Revolution.

...those countries which are characterised by: i. an expressed commitment to constructing a socialist society; ii. an espousal of what they call 'scientific socialism' and what they understand to be the principles of Marxism and Leninism; iii. a high level of social redistribution; iv. the adoption of policies which have in the main succeeded in abolishing private appropriation and private ownership of the means of production, these latter relations being replaced by state regulation of both production and distribution according to the principle of planned economic development (Molyneux 1981:169).

The definition aptly describes Cuban aspirations and outcomes for its 'social' revolution. In qualifying use of the term, 'social', I refer to Chapter Two, because despite the economic implications of its socialist revolution, the Cuban Revolution is world-renown

for the specific social reforms it has accomplished through its education and healthcare systems. Also mentioned in Chapter Two, economic development was implicitly subsumed by the ‘battle against illiteracy’ and the Revolutionary conviction embodied in the ‘New Man’ Philosophy. Although labelled socialist/Marxist, and in accordance with the above definition, the economic implementation of the Cuban Revolution followed education as the most immediate driver of the Revolutionary process.

As with its revolutionary counterparts, Cuban socialism was influenced by Marxist/Leninist theoretical underpinnings, and according to feminist scholars fell quite short of yielding equality to women in all aspects of economic, social and political spheres of Cuban society. Marxism’s greatest shortcoming with respect to women has been its supposition that with economic elevation, social and political elevation would follow (Smith and Padula 1996:4; Molyneux 1981:167-200).

It is a certainty that since 1959 the Revolution has overwhelmingly improved the material well-being of Cuban women as is evidence in low birth rates, maternal and infant mortality, high education levels and dramatic rises in labor participation and notable increases in political participation. Unfortunately, however, patriarchy continues to complement and pervade every social, economic and political institution that has evolved since its Neolithic origins. As has been ascribed to the mindset that accompanies neoliberalism, it is an “...invisible idea...” (Bellamy 2005:331) and conveys a “...‘common sense’... (Holland 2006:268-70; Iversen and Rosenbluth 2010:18), that

spans global society. With the development of each new social, political and economic institution, patriarchy has been transferred into the core of its theoretical underpinnings. Holland (2006) points out that despite the progressive ideas ascribed to the rise of democracy, the age of enlightenment and the sexual revolution, they mingle with Marxism as revolutionary social manifestations that have carried forth the proliferation of patriarchy along with much less progressive socio-historical occurrences. He sums it up well, saying that,

It has survived in one form or another over immense periods of time, emerging seemingly unchanged from the cataclysms that have engulfed empires and cultures, and swept away their other modes of thought and feeling. It persists after philosophical and scientific revolutions have seemingly transformed permanently how we look at the world. When social and political upheavals have refashioned relationships between citizens and the state, and democracies vanquished oligarchies and driven absolute monarchs from power, it comes back to haunt our ideals of equality, with the persistence of a ghost that cannot be exorcised. It is as up to date as the latest porn website and as old as civilization itself (Holland 2006:7).

It is the emphasis on ‘material’ welfare that gives credence to Marxist ideology.

However, statistics demonstrate the limitations of full reliance on its mechanisms, as indicators reveal diminishing returns in the form of glass ceilings. Before the Special Period, Cuban women made consistent positive strides toward equality; however, data now reveals backslide in their progress. A phenomenon known to affect women worldwide, economic strains have resulted in occupation transitions that have forced women out of state employment and either back into the home or into the informal sector. Reminiscent of pre-Revolutionary limitations to Cuban women’s economic opportunities,

these employment setbacks affirm the continued pervasiveness of patriarchal constructs that have not been dismantled, but rather set aside when economic demands warrant fuller participation of women in the formal labor force. The disposability of women's labor and the ramifications of the economic, social and political regressions that thrust women out of the public and back into the private sphere is sure indication, as Holland asserts, that patriarchy is cunning, elusive and ubiquitous.

While significant gains in educational, employment and political achievements have been made for Cuban women through institutional mechanisms, the necessary changes in personal and societal attitudes has proven beyond the scope of Revolutionary ideology. As Diaz Gonzalez (2010:139) states, "Initially it was believed that subjective changes would automatically follow structural changes, which proved to be unrealistic." Compounding pre-existing obstacles to women's higher level achievements, the post-Soviet economic crisis that caused the Cuban Special Period resulted in contractions in formal State sector employment and other social safety nets that had enabled fuller female participation in the labor market and political sphere. As a result, female participation in State-run enterprises decreased. This disproportionate impact has negatively affected women's economic stability and survival options and measurable backslide in women's progress has relocated them into less stable informal sector labor and back into traditional gendered roles in the home.

To provide a context to the employment strides made by post-Revolutionary Cuban women, in 1953 the percentage of females in the workforce was 13.7. Of this percentage, the majority worked as household domestics and prostitutes. In some cases, women received no financial remuneration for their work. In accordance with Revolutionary ideology and their advancing education levels, women began to enter the workforce in greater numbers and birth rates dropped, concomitantly. In 2013, women constituted 38.1% of the Cuban workforce, and were employed in all sectors of the economy (Center for Democracy in the Americas 2013:41). Among the highest employment gains enjoyed by Cuban women, they now make up 38.3% of managers (de la Torre Dwyer 2011), 57% of university faculty and 52% of Cuban workers employed in the sciences. Since 1993, women have been employed in more than 60% of professional and technical roles—considered to be the most highly skilled in Cuba’s labor force. Additionally, women are well represented in the pharmaceuticals, computer science, aviation, sugar and tourism sectors (Núñez Sarmiento 2010:136). While this shows improvement, it is low relative to the female, working-age population and begs the question: If their educational achievement is greater than their male counterparts, why don’t the numbers reflect employment outcomes commensurate to their education levels?

Another inequity in women’s employment is evident in a 5 year retirement age difference between Cuban women and men, and the literature gives no explanation of why this differential exists. The retirement age for Cuban men is 65, and for Cuban women, it is 60—up from 55, since 2008 (Center for Democracy in the Americas 2013:45; Núñez

Sarmiento 2010:143). While recognizing the difference in retirement age between men and women, Núñez Sarmiento describes the legislation of Cuba's 2008 social security law as "non-patriarchal," and suggests that the rationale for the five-year gap is socio-economic and linked to anticipated demographic changes in the Cuban population due to female participation in the workforce and trends in reproduction rates. While focusing on those criteria, however, she neglects to acknowledge the five-year gap in male-female retirement ages and the associated forfeiture of wages and women's social capital. Further, and more disturbing than the economic losses to women, is the connection between the female labor force and the implicit expectation that birth rates will continue to drop as more women participate in the workforce. Thus, the female workforce of today must suffer lost wages and the social capital of productive labor for the workforce of the future. This appears to be social engineering afforded on the backs of women, whose labor—as mentioned above—is considered disposable. Viewing the Law with those economic and social factors in mind, it is not "non-Patriarchal," but rather quite gender-biased and economically unfavorable to Cuban women. Additionally, despite legislation to provide equal pay for equal work, women continue to earn less than men. Wage differentials are further exacerbated by the disproportionate low-level positions that women hold, relative to their male counterparts. This inequity demonstrates the continuation of preferential male hires in the Cuban workforce, and is often justified by hiring managers who make claims of lower productivity by women and lost time due to maternity leave and other caregiving obligations.

Given the high proportion of well-trained female professionals and technicians in the Cuban labor force (more than 60%) their employment in senior-level administrative positions should be greater than the current level of 38.1%. Of all leadership positions in Cuba, men hold 70%. This reveals continued disparities in equal access to employment. These stark statistics are further indication of the multiple layers of discrimination that Cuban women must continue to overcome (de la Torre Dwyer 2011:217-218; Diaz González Year Not Provided in DRES Text Conversion:131). Case studies of Cuban professionals cited by Núñez Sarmiento (2010:141) revealed that 80% of female participants opted out of assuming leadership positions for reasons that include: 1) they did not feel that they were sufficiently trained; 2) that the position would require too much time for insufficient pay; 3) that they would not have time to perform the role due to their homemaking responsibilities; and 4) or, that they preferred to develop their technical skills rather than become managers. According to women who maintained leadership positions at the time of the case studies, they had not proactively sought them, but were assigned to them. They accepted the responsibilities, but expressed dissatisfaction with performing the roles. If these women were promoted to positions to which they did not pursue, and they report dissatisfaction with them, it is reasonable to question whether this represents a form of tokenism and/or whether or not they can be expected to succeed in a position in which they do not derive satisfaction. In either case, what impact will this have over the course of their career performance and will they opt to remain in the position over the long-term?

The first reason that women in the case studies claim for not occupying or pursuing leadership positions can be discounted relative to female qualifications for higher level jobs, given their high levels of education. The fourth reason is legitimate if these women, indeed, do not wish to pursue career advancement due to personal satisfaction with their current positions. The second and third reasons, however, can be conflated to reveal lack of time as deterrents to career growth. They warrant investigation into willingness or ability to relinquish control over household responsibilities. According to a study conducted by the Research Institute of Cuba's Ministry of Labor, women are reported to take 77% of reported sick leave. 40% of that lost work time was used to care for other family members or their own maternity leave (Núñez Sarmiento 2010:138). These indicators reveal how the double shift and the traditional female gender role are transferred into women's economic lives. Lost time on the job most certainly has a negative cumulative effect over the lifetime of a career. It is both striking and alarming that such a large proportion of educated women from Núñez Sarmientos' studies chose not to participate in leadership roles and those who did , claim to be discontented in the position.

Relative to the double shift, or relinquishing control over the household, Cuban women have traditionally been deemed masters of the house. This is evidenced by the way in which a household will be referred to by the name of the family's matriarch—for example, Casa Carmen. Common inquiries posed to women upon introduction include their marital status, the number of children they have and their culinary interests and

abilities. The responses given will determine levels of social capital afforded her, subject to the intent of the inquirer's investigation. This may seem reasonable if viewed from a biologically reductionist position. However, an investigation of the historical rationale reveals the patriarchal intent underlying the role. Not unlike capitalistic premises of efficiency, Marxist economics supposes that because women have been responsible for the non-remunerated activities of procreation and social reproduction, they have been assigned subordinate status to men who participate in the public sphere and perform more highly valued, so-called productive labor. By default, this inferior status within the isolated sphere of the home imposes Male control over women's sexuality and sexual reproduction. Additionally, the limitations of information asymmetries inherent to insulated environments places women in much lower power positions from which they must overcome in order to achieve equality. As stated by Stolcke (1981:44-45) All of these factors converge and perpetuate the notion that "...Their incorporation into production is largely determined by the fluctuating needs of the labour market and not seen as their inherent right."

The above phenomena notwithstanding, Cuban women strive for access to higher paying jobs in leadership positions in business and government and fair divisions of labor at home and work. The "double shift" that results from the traditional division of female-male household labor is one of the root causes of women's limited accession to leadership roles in employment and political participation. At the societal and household levels, women continue to bear the burden of childrearing, food preparation and custodial

care of the home (de la Torre Dwyer 2011). They perform 34 hours of weekly housework compared to 12 performed by men (Center for Democracy in the Americas 2013). The reality of gender inequity that persists in Cuba in the wake of such dramatic improvements to its education system illustrates limitations that were not anticipated in the realm of conventional wisdom surrounding the transformative power of learning. This demonstrates the complexity and magnitude of the struggle for women everywhere. Clearly, continued advances for Cuban women must be transferred from their educational achievements into more equitable representations in leadership positions in employment and political participation. Núñez Sarmiento (2010:142) declares that, "...the transformation of gender ideology is unfinished. However, the necessary conditions are present to advance this process." She does not elaborate on what those conditions are, however; the double shift and relegation to the private sphere are obvious impediments to this transformation.

Upon reflection of the remarkable educational accomplishments attributed to post-Revolutionary Cuban women, the FMC has played a pivotal role in movements toward gender equity. Its top-down organization has contributed to major policy changes designed to improve the lives of women that would likely not have been as efficacious were it not for the leadership of Vilma Espín and Fidel Castro. The FMC has over four million members today and operates regionally and locally. Cuban women participate at the national level through the Cuban Communist Party (Partido Comunista de Cuba—PCC), at local levels through the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (Comites

de Defensa de la Revolución—CDR) and at work through labor unions. As noted by Diaz Gonzalez (2010:140), post-Revolutionary legislation that was intentionally enacted to promote women's emancipation include the Maternity Law of 1974, the Family Code of 1975, the Constitution of the Republic, approved by referendum in 1976 and revised by Constitutional Reform in 1992, the Worker Safety and Health Law of 1977, the Social Security Act of 1979, the Penal Code of 1979 and the Labor Code and the Employment Policy Regulations enacted in the 1980s. Notable among the legislation is the National Family Code of 1975, which decreed that men and women must share domestic and parental rights and responsibilities equally (de la Torre Dwyer 2011:214).

Women are prevalent in government positions, and Cuba ranks 6th highest worldwide with 43% female parliamentarians, with women occupying 24% of Ministerial and 47% Deputy Ministerial posts. Women also make up 65% of Cuba's lawyers, and hold 47% of its Supreme Court judgeships. As with the employment rates shown above they reveal women's advancement, but they are still 2nd tier leadership roles (Diaz González 2010:144). Still, the greatest disparities seen between men and women remain in the government sector, including the armed forces, national police and national militia, which embody the "major positions of power" in Cuban society. Central governing bodies are still heavily male-dominated, and as the most powerful decision-making organ in Cuba, the Political Bureau includes only one woman among its 19 members. It has only been since 2009 that women have comprised 43% of the National Assembly, and 37.5% of the Council of State. Prior to that time, women represented between 10% and 15% of their

memberships (de la Torre Dwyer 2011:217). De la Torre (2011:217) accurately assesses that, “As in so many parts of the world, the closer to the pinnacle of substantive power, the fewer women there are in decision-making roles. Thus, the ultimate decisions continue to be formulated by men”. It is noteworthy that the population of female lawyers is so high, and that women are not more heavily represented at the highest levels of government. Further, it merits note that the Cuban women’s movement evolved out of a top-down campaign from Revolutionary leaders who, while progressive in many ways, paternalistically determined its course.

The Special Period, which lasted from 1990 through 2004, caused unemployment among women that was double that of men’s. The female workforce continues to recover from that decline. Further, women’s labor was diverted from the professional to the service sectors where work is less stable, part-time, low paying, and offers lower upward mobility (de la Torre Dwyer 2011:215). While not confined to women, a form of hustling resurfaced that is reminiscent to the time in Cuba’s history in which its sex industry was rampant. The Revolutionary government made prostitution illegal, and for decades could boast of its “elimination.” In the face of the Special Period, however, the government turns a blind eye to ”Jineteros” and “Jineteras.” The targets of this nuanced form of hustling and prostitution are foreign tourists who bring hard currency into Cuba. Because tourism has replaced the sugar industry as Cuba’s greatest revenue source and is bolstering its economic recovery, the Cuban government tolerates the ills that accompany it. While some Jineteras do this exclusively for income, there is a proportion

of Cuban women who hustle to supplement their formal sector work for either money or gifts from foreigners. The economic advantages for most Cubans provide only subsistence improvements to their daily lives. In addition to being illegal, its practitioners receive much scorn from other Cubans, as it represents direct opposition to the Revolutionary morality that has embodied the Cuban ‘New Woman,’ as described in Chapter Two.

This is unfortunate, as it circumvents the realities of the economic hardships that motivate these women and the risks associated with any form of sex work. Risks such as rape and other physical violence, sexually-transmitted diseases, incarceration and negative impacts on future career options if any related arrests are noted on her permanent work record, the social stigma of public exposure, a tourist’s refusal to pay, coercion or abuse by pimps, harassment or sexual assault by police (Pope 2005:111-112; de Sousa Santos 2009:421-422), are most often not mentioned in the literature. On the other hand, Pingueros-- male sex workers in Cuba—do not suffer the same societal derision as their female counterparts and fewer of the physical risks mentioned above. The preoccupation with the morality of Jineteras speaks to the misogyny that continues to pervade the patriarchal construct in Cuba.

On the way to dismantling patriarchy, today the FMC takes the position that further work toward gender equity in Cuba should include a multi-pronged approach. Certainly, continuing education for both males and females about the social construct of gender

roles, the need to change and the benefits of gender equity for all is a significant part of that process (Diaz González 2010:144). At the macro level, it promotes further policy changes that penalize discrimination against women; however, as with racism, individual attitudes cannot be legislated, and such laws merely restrain overt articulation of negative points of view against women. That said, however, challenging employment inequities is one way that this can be set in motion. At the micro level, FMC leadership asserts that the next stage of women's emancipation in Cuba will depend on younger generations to challenge patriarchal gender roles and adopt more progressive attitudes. Continuing education for both males and females about the social construct of gender roles, the need to change and the benefits of gender equity to all is a significant part of that process. Relative to scholarly research, Núñez Sarmiento (2010:145) points out the importance of including males in the conversation of gender equity, and attests that,

...there is also a need to pursue studies on the male role in gender relations in order to facilitate the transformation of patriarchal patterns. This would give scholars the opportunity to produce new knowledge by constantly questioning the status quo, resulting in a better understanding of gender issues and enhancing our comprehension of society as a whole.

Dismantling patriarchy will require understanding the most effective ways to change people's ideas at the most intimate of levels. Both women and men will need to develop senses of self that are not confined by gender stereotypes. In some respects, girls and women will need to stay the course and continue to exercise the agency afforded them through their educations, and that has taken hold through the course of the Revolution. Grandmothers, mothers, aunts and sisters are the role models for granddaughters,

daughters, nieces and younger sisters. Women can take the reins and exercise more control over the outcomes they seek, and rely less on the paternalism of the top-down legislative manner in which Cuban women's emancipation has primarily been accomplished. A more bottom-up approach will enable women to develop and leverage their bargaining power throughout the process and to proactively effect changes in personal attitudes. An argument not present in my literary references, and which would be a valuable contribution to the process, is to educate males about the negative ways in which patriarchy has impacted men over the centuries. This approach would create incentives to open up a social space for men that this social construct currently restricts and to address the fallacies associated with status quo power relations.

Keeping in mind the high education levels of Cuban women, in the next chapter I introduce negotiation as a mechanism for leveraging women's bargaining power in the pursuit to undo patriarchal constraints that continue to delay women's equality.

## CHAPTER FOUR: BARGAINING POWER AND NEGOTIATION

In the initial stages of developing this investigation, I took as a universal given that educational attainment would provide women with fundamental reasoning skills that must accompany the process of leveraging bargaining power. I now waiver in that assumption given the information that I uncovered in my research and subsequently related in chapters two and three of this manuscript. Post-Revolutionary Cuban women possess the multi-dimensional ‘comparative advantages’ of access to free and universal education. On the other hand, they continue to encounter the obstacles of patriarchal constructs in their struggle toward full equality. The literature revealed scant information about how a perceived position of weakness may be employed as a negotiation strategy. The only explicit reference to this occurred within a footnote in Muthoo (2010:161), who states, “...in bargaining, ‘weakness’ can often be a source of bargaining strength”, and as such, there was no elaboration to what this might entail.

As mentioned in Chapter One, the literature on bargaining and negotiation primarily rely on the presence of wealth and material assets and/or public policy that is specifically enacted to ‘enforce’ the notion of women’s equality and as the means by which women may exercise leverage in bargaining. Economic models are heavily emphasized which illustrate reliance on material wealth, or a women’s ability to accumulate it, as the way by which women may most effectively negotiate. The basic tactics of negotiation relied on a positionality approach, by which the zero sum game (I win, you lose) is the standard rationality.

This mentality is reminiscent of the origins of patriarchy which ascribed power to one who has the ability to accumulate some resource and then use the power associated with that accumulation to dominate and maintain power over another. A troubling aspect of this idea is the belief by some authors that women were the first commodity, and thus objects of accumulation for their labor and sexual reproduction. If viewed from an economics perspective only, women's bargaining power must rely on the patriarchal assumptions that are built into its current models and theories. While there is no doubt to the efficacy of material wealth accumulation as a mechanism toward women's equality, the overwhelming evidence that women account for the most impoverished peoples worldwide renders this rigid constraint is neither feasible nor appropriate to the realities of their material conditions.

In addition to and complementary to the assets assumption, economic approaches to the use of negotiation rely heavily on models based on cooperative and non-cooperative game theory and its derivatives, including bargaining theory (Folbre 2006; Katz 1997; Iversen and Rosenbluth 2010). Power positionality appears to be the normative behavior in intra-household conflict resolution. Explicit to bargaining theory, the ultimate power position in any bargaining situation is the ability and/or the willingness to walk away from the negotiation without a resolution. In the presence of divorce rights (or not), the ability to leave a situation is available to women. However economic independence is a prerequisite to exercising that option. In support of the assets assumption, Iversen and Rosenbluth (2010:20-23) discuss this option with its possible constraints, and posit that in

male-female partnerships, males have greater ability to abandon a dissatisfactory situation than do females. They assert that, attributed to have more 'mobile' assets than women, men generally have greater ability to seek and find an alternative option to their current circumstances. Their rationale relies on the supposition of these male exclusive mobile assets and that if swayed by the presence of children, women would not walk away from an unsatisfactory situation.

Besides the not to be ignored tinges of patriarchal and misogynistic assumptions in their statement, this presumptuous reliance on the evolutionary biology argument is limited, as it assumes that the maternal instinct is an immutable constant that may not be altered by a woman's rationalization of her circumstances and the risks associated with staying in it. Folbre (2006:5) also contends that evolutionary biology can place men at a greater comparative advantage relative to asset mobility, but also alludes to the hollow assumption of an absolute maternal instinct ascribed by patriarchy in her statement that, "Social institutions lead to stronger forms of male domination than biological differences alone are likely to generate."

While some examples are offered in the authors' attempts to account for the presence of patriarchal impediments to women's equality, such as the absence of property rights and violence against women, the tendency to essentialize women's inequality into economic formulas that treat all configurations of the family (nuclear and extended) as a single unit without power dynamics and asymmetries predominates and falls short of the necessary

social process of deconstructing the continually adapting patriarchal stronghold that maintains the construct of women's subjugation (Folbre 2006:1; Katz 1997).

In an evaluation of the GAD theory and its use of social relations analysis to operationalize gender, Razavi (1995:28) cites Kabeer and supports the idea that reinforces the neoclassical economics assumption that the reallocation of resources must entail a zero sum game within the power balance relationship. This notion of the zero sum game in social relations, as intractable as the equation  $1 - 1 = 0$  and reinforced by economic models, is an outdated constraint to the progressive and natural imperative to assume both women's and men's productive and reproductive activities into accurate economic calculations. Models that represent reality and not androcentric oversimplifications of reality, in order to shortcut to a theoretical model that represents fictional equalities, must be developed and integrated into mainstream economics.

There is an untapped component to bargaining that must be discovered and utilized in the negotiation of power distribution. Razavi (1995:31) qualifies this concept by acknowledging the highly fluid character inherent to social relations in bargaining in her statement that,

...Although this theme is not fully developed in the literature, perhaps one way of overcoming this dilemma is to focus on the dynamic nature of social relations. Social relations are not static. As social relations analysis attempts to demonstrate, the conflictual and collaborative aspects of gender relations involve men and women in a constant process of negotiation and re-negotiation. The priority for those interested in improving women's status, therefore, must be to provide women with greater bargaining power within this process.

In accordance with Razavi's assertion on social relations analysis, more research is needed to understand the highly complex nature of bargaining power and how it can be leveraged to create value for greater gender equity and economic efficiency. Specifically, I believe that the idea of low or no bargaining power can be transposed to broaden the scope and angle from which it is positioned within a single context and to cultivate a more powerful bargaining position as viewed from a larger, multi-dimensional setting.

As in social relations, power dynamics and asymmetries in international relations are similarly applicable, and—while in no way do I suggest that there is a male-female power dynamic in play within the normalization talks which are currently unfolding between the US and Cuba—it illustrates a negotiation process by which one country has historically appeared to have absolute dominance over the other. Thus, from almost every positionality, Cuba appears to be in the weaker bargaining position.

In light of the uninformative nature of the material on bargaining and negotiation collected in the conduct of this study, I assert that further research into bargaining mechanisms which are informed by social relations analysis and not constrained by

current economic assumptions is warranted to better understand how a perceived position of weakness may, in fact, be developed as a bargaining strength.

Endowed with high levels of education, and the knowledge that patriarchal constructs are considered the remaining barriers to gender equality, Cuban women are in an advantageous position to take up the challenge and alter the discourse.

## CHAPTER FIVE AFTERWORD

Simultaneous announcements made in Washington, DC and Havana on December 17, 2014, stating that the time to begin normalizing relations between the United States and Cuba had finally come, carried with them a multitude of interpretations by spectators from all corners of the globe. Reports from Cuba indicated that the long awaited moment was met there with great rejoicing, from the party faithful through known political dissidents, for all that it would promise. As this thesis was being written, proactive diplomatic discussions were taking place, and historical events toward normalization were unfolding. It is an exciting time for both countries, for the constructive benefits that we can offer each other. For Cuba, expected improvements in trade relations will ease their strained economy. For Americans, we can take this opportunity to understand the international social capital that we will engender by reigning in the hegemonic hubris for which we are arguably ostracized worldwide.

For years, Americans—whether knowledgeable or not on US-Cuba relations—wondered if the socialist Revolution would be overtaken by capitalism. Informed by the neoliberal narrative of the so-called ‘victory’ of capitalism over socialism that accompanied the falls of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union, most spoke confidently that capitalism and the common sense<sup>11</sup> attributed to releasing ‘man’ from the domination of the state to pursue ‘his’ inherited right to participate in the ‘free market’ was proof of capitalism’s superiority over socialism. Unfortunately, this most typical economic analysis of the winner and loser premise that is an indelible, patriarchal trademark of capitalist

fundamentals, neglects to consider the social and political factors that are intrinsically intertwined with the humanistic foundations of socialist ideology. As a student of Cuba since 1997, I was skeptical of these predictions. I had witness first-hand many aspects of the Cuban Revolution that I believe would not be easily forsaken to the promises of development ascribed to capitalist ideology. My observations which were confirmed by the aforementioned educational scholars (see Chapter Two) who have investigated the post-Revolutionary Cuban educational system, support and affirm the primacy that the social and political development of the Cuban people took over the strictly economic metrics and which define capitalistic predilections. The ‘common sense’ of socialism is as ingrained in the average Cuban, as is that of capitalism in the United States.

A common American myth surrounding Cuba has been that the island was economically and culturally isolated, and this could only be considered partially true to the extent that before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, its primary trading partners were Russia and other Eastern Bloc/socialist economies. More accurately, the United States has isolated itself from Cuba. According to the Chamber of Commerce of the Republic of Cuba, it has and continues to engage in trade with almost every country in the world. A more realistic depiction of Cuba’s role in the world market can be understood by an investigation into the impact of the US Embargo on Cuba’s cash flow, its line of credit and its ability to develop its international trade.

Cuban officials, including Josefina Vidal Ferreiro<sup>12</sup>, the lead diplomat from the Cuban Ministry of Exteriors, and Raúl Castro have expressed Cuba's position on the normalization process. They have specified what conditions are negotiable and which are not. They have stated that Cuban sovereignty and their socialist system are not negotiable. They stand firm that their nation must be removed from the US List of State Sponsors of Terrorism, the Embargo must end and Guantanamo naval base must be returned to Cuban sovereign control for complete normalization to take place. Fidel Castro has also weighed in, and not surprisingly, expressed distrust for US policy.

As has been proven over the last few decades, no country can 'opt out' of the neoliberal experiment, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union throttled Cuba into a level of market participation for which it was not prepared. It will be instructive to observe how Cuba continues with its economic transition, and to what extent it will integrate its socialist system into the global market. Despite the beliefs of some Cuba observers, I do not believe that the Cuban government will completely forsake its Revolutionary accomplishments to neoliberal forces. The island is a reluctant participant in the neoliberal process, and the majority of living Cubans have enjoyed the benefits of the Revolution. To its credit, the Cuban government takes a slow, deliberate approach to market liberalization, and can learn from both the failed and successful experiments as they unfold in other countries. The collectivist and internationalist overtones instilled in the post-Revolutionary education system, which inform the policies and actions of Cuba's current and future leaders will not likely be disrupted by extreme economic

exigencies. Rather, I believe that Cuba will continue to make calculated policy adjustments that protect its core social accomplishments and political interests. That said, Cuban women will continue to be a significant force for its future in the international marketplace. To encourage their fuller involvement, the 2013 CDA report proposes greater cultivation of women's entrepreneurship and the auxiliary skillsets that accompany it. This entrepreneurial prescription attests to the necessity and importance of economic elevation in the struggle for equality. As the State's ability to offer opportunities for economic security domestically proves limited, and the Cuban economy adopts more liberal policies toward market integration internationally, spaces for women entrepreneurs are opening. Specifically, incremental increases in government sanctioned private businesses are fueling those opportunities. The irony intrinsic to the entrepreneurial remedy can not be ignored, however, given the negative way Cuban women have been impacted thus far by market liberalization. Furthermore, women's entrepreneurship will not be a panacea, as all women (or men) are not inclined toward business operations. With respect to their overall development capacity, however, Cuban women have the tremendous advantage of literacy that women in many other developing countries do not.

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## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> See Sargeant, pages 1-5.

<sup>2</sup> Vilma Espín: Deceased wife of Raúl Castro.

<sup>3</sup> For more on WID, WAD and GAD, see Razavi, Shahrashoub and Carol Miller. 1995. "From WID to GAD: Conceptual Shifts in the Women and Developmental Discourse." Contribution to the Fourth World Conference on Women, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Geneva.

<sup>4</sup> Special Period in Time of Peace was a self-imposed austerity program that began after the fall of the Soviet Union.

<sup>5</sup> El Bloqueo (the blockade) is the name used by Cubans and other countries in referring to the economic sanctions imposed on Cuba by the United States in 1960. Although it is known as the Cuban Embargo within the United States, it is by definition not an embargo. Due to the manner in which it is implemented, it is more accurately and appropriately labeled a blockade per because of the comprehensive and brutal manner in which it has been executed.

<sup>6</sup> Ernesto Guevara's famous, *Socialism and Man in Cuba*, introduced the concept of the New Man philosophy.

<sup>7</sup> Celia Sanchez is the most famous of Cuba's female revolutionaries.

<sup>8</sup> Matriarchal: Governed by females, rather than by males. Matrilineal: Tracing descent only through female lines. Source: [www.wiktionary.org](http://www.wiktionary.org)

<sup>9</sup> See Biaggi (2005:79).

<sup>10</sup> For more on Saint Augustine, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustine\\_of\\_Hippo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustine_of_Hippo).

<sup>11</sup> See David Harvey.

<sup>12</sup> Josefina Vidal Ferreiro is the Director General for the United States of the Cuban Ministry of Exteriors and lead diplomat in the US-Cuba diplomacy talks.