

Culture, Cuba, and The Revolution

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Abstract:

Cuba and Cuban culture is vastly known for having a rich culture which is largely an amalgamation of African and Spanish influences. Its history was defined by wars of independence. The paper takes a look at how the history and culture of the people in Cuba, specifically the cultural changes influenced the Cuban revolution. It analyzes Cuba's culture and revolution across three different psychological dimensions: collectivism, interdependent self, and cultural priming and looks at the significance of these culture indicators that led to not only the revolution but to the economic and political state of Cuba today.

Introduction:

The seeds of the revolution were sown when former Army Sergeant Fulgencio Batista seized power during a contested election. Batista was a former soldier and political leader who rose to rank as sergeant and then gained a big personal following. He gained favoritism from the army but became very disliked by labour groups in Cuba with his dealing with the United States. When it became clear that Batista would not win the 1952 election, he seized power prior to the voting and canceled the elections outright. Many people in Cuba were disgusted by his power grab, preferring Cuba's democracy, as flawed as it was. One of the most well known opposers of the Batista regime were Fidel Castro and Ernesto Che Guevara.

The success and movements gaining strength can be attributed to two different simultaneous movements. The rebels in the mountains, including Castro and Guevara, and the professors and students in the city of Havana and Santiago. Where they communicated with each other and sacrificed safety and risked death in opposition to Batista's rule over Cuba. The leaders

of the revolution permitted foreign journalists to visit and interviews with them were published around the world. In the cities, rebel groups loosely allied with Castro carried out hit-and-run attacks and nearly succeeded in assassinating Batista.

Batista and his inner circle, seeing that Castro's victory was inevitable, took what loot they could gather up and fled. Batista authorized some of his subordinates to deal with Castro and the rebels. The people of Cuba took to the streets, joyfully greeting the rebels. Castro and Guevara and their men entered Havana and gave promises of a Cuba that would work for the workers and the people of Cuba.

Cultural Dimensions

Cultural dimensions summarize the extent to which cultural groups are found empirically to differ from one another in terms of psychological attributes such as values, beliefs, self-construals, personality, behaviors, and much more (Smith & Bond, 2020). To understand the culture of Cuba and success in their independence we look at the culture dimensions below and define what they are in terms of cultural psychology.

Collectivism and individualism are commonly used to delineate societies that differ in their cultural values and patterns of social behavior, prioritizing the relative importance of the group and the individual, respectively. Collectivist and individualist expression is likely to be intricately linked with the political and economic history of a society.

Collectivism: Collectivism encompasses cultural practices such as deference to family members, conceptualizing oneself as inherently connected to others, and cooperation. In psychology it is

regarded as the tendency to view oneself as a member of a larger (family or social) group, rather than as an isolated, independent being. Collectivist societies emphasise the needs, wants and goals of a group over the needs and desires of each individual.

Individualism: Individualistic cultures include a variety of practices and customs that encourage individuals to place their own personal goals ahead of the collective, and to consider how they are distinct from one another. In psychology it is a term that refers to the ways in which people identify themselves and focus their goals.

Hand in hand with collectivism is the interdependent self-construal, People in collectivistic cultures are more likely to engage in thoughts and behaviors that foster the interdependent aspects of their self-concept, such as their close relationships and group memberships.

Interdependent Self: Interdependent self is the extent to which people construe the self as being fundamentally connected to other people.

Cultural priming approach tests how brain activities underlying various cognitive/affective processes are modulated by recent exposure to specific cultural symbols or activation of specific cultural values/beliefs.

Cultural Priming: Cultural priming works by making certain ideas more accessible to participants, and if those ideas are associated with cultural meanings.

Cultural Analysis

Geert Hofstede, a Dutch researcher who focuses on organizational culture, is well known for his research on cross-cultural groups and cultural dimensions. Hofstede himself mapped the world in terms of individualism and collectivism, where most individualistic cultures are English-speaking countries and by Western European nations. Countries scoring high in collectivism were various Latin American countries and Asia. Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory is a framework for cross-cultural communication and shows the effect of a society's culture on the values of its members, and how these values relate to behaviour, using a structure derived from factor analysis. One of his 5 dimensions to his theory of individualism vs collectivism, addresses the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members.

Before the uprising and the attacks of Fulgencio Batista's regime, Cuba and its population was going through a period of economic hardships as Batista, as a dictator, made himself and his associates fortunes while jailing his opponents. In general, economic hardship is often associated with more community-minded values and less materialism.

According to Hofstede's scale, Cuba would be considered a collectivistic culture as it becomes clear in their uprising and involvement in Cuban revolution that the emphasis of the individual does not come before the betterment of a group first (Vergara, 2021). Fulgencio Batista's rule over Cuba, has access to U.S and other foreign companies for the land and labor of Cuba at the cost of the people in order to raise more capital. This can be seen as very individualistic of Batista and Cuban people started protesting this for better conditions of the locals and Cubans living on the island. Cubans believe that the well being of all citizens is

important, therefore making personal sacrifices, like risk of death opposing Batista's regime, for the good of the country.

Cuba's collectivistic-oriented, culture is still present in its state today, with the main indicator being the communist government that urges its citizens to think about the well being of the state and its societies before the personal gain of any kind of individual. There is even something to be said about how the leaders of the Cuban revolution, like Ernesto Che Guevara, appear interdependent and collectivistic. Guevara abandoned his class position, as an affluent, white, Argentinian doctor, to devote his life to freeing Cuba from an imperialist hold.

The leaders of Cuba's revolution not only showed the collectivism present in the culture, but also the cultural priming that was happening during the uprisings to show the rest of Cuba and the world the goal of the resistance and making it an accessible form of information to digest. The kind of cultural priming present during the Cuban revolution was shown by Castro and his rebels in the mountain through cultural framing.

Cultural framing refers to the socially shared assumptions of the meaning of particular events and actions through which individuals come to understand what is relevant in this case, during Cubas uprisings. In social movements the priming and these 'frames' are important because it determines the conversation regarding the revolution. When Fidel Castro and his rebels fled to the highlands of Cuba to avoid Batista he invited a group of reporters to take their testimony, declare the uprising ongoing, and share the policies of Castro and their plans for a Batista free Cuba. These pieces were taken and distributed among the Cuban population and gained international attention. Photos of the guerilla were poetic in nature, painting the men strong in numbers and willing to fight for the state of Cuba boosting morale for the cubans in the city boosting morale and undermining Batista's standing among the Cuban people. With the

continued displeasure Batista had with the Cuban people and its history as either a colony of Spain or an imperial playground for the United States, the articles of Castro and his men framed in a positive light fighting for a democratic Cuba. The cultural framers Castro was able to draw for his cause came in direct opposition to Batista's frame of a dead Castro and a dead revolution.

The cultural

As has been shown the Cuban rebellion benefited greatly from the overall culture of the people of Cuba. Without these cultural dimensions what happened to Cuba during its revolution and the political and economic standing of Cuba now would not have existed without the resilience bred from the Cuban people through their cultural practices.

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