

inclined toward authoritarianism. This is a much more contentious claim not adequately demonstrated in this volume. Missing is a demonstration of the causal pathways between early and later Venezuelan history. One might also note that not all Venezuelan presidents have clearly exhibited the same personalist style. Notable exceptions might include Isaías Medina Angarita (1941-1945) and Rómulo Betancourt (1958-1963), both highly influential and generally admired today. Greenwood also does not adequately support his claim that Anderson's theories are structuralist rather than constructivist. Greenwood himself seems to draw upon structuralism in explaining why creoles opted for a civic conception of nationalism rather than a more radical egalitarian variety. The choice, he acknowledges, was rooted in the nature of the colonial export economy—not a novel argument to be sure, but one implying that class structures make a difference. Yet he devotes very little attention to social class issues and how they shaped creole thought. Even less attention is devoted to gender, despite some evidence that choices made in the kitchen may influence national identity as much as choices made in male-dominated social realms.

Despite its shortcomings this book offers careful and detailed research on the transport of French ideas through Spain to the Americas, and adds a case study supportive of Greenfield's innovative, if controversial, work on varieties of nationalism. If nothing else, it should lead us to question Anderson's claim that the creoles pioneered modern nationalism—a notion that we might like to believe because it challenges Eurocentrism, but one that ultimately may not stand up to scrutiny.

Webster University
St. Louis, Missouri

DANIEL HELLINGER

Looking Forward: Comparative Perspectives on Cuba's Transition. Edited by Marifeli Pérez-Stable. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007. Pp. xx, 332. Illustrations. Tables. Bibliography. Index. \$27.00 paper.

After more than thirty years of what Philippe Schmitter called "transitology," students of comparative politics have shifted their focus from the variations of democratic politics that have emerged around the world to give greater attention to issues not prominent in the first generation of transition studies, such as gender, race, the quality of institutions, and the way in which international non-state actors either buttress democracy within a given nation, as in the role of human rights organizations, or weaken democracy, as in the operation of international criminal gangs, including drug traffickers.

This book focuses on the what the authors believe to be the inevitable transition to a democratic regime in Cuba after Fidel and place their estimates of what that transition might be in a comparative framework, making particular reference to the transitions to democracy in Latin America and to the transitions from authoritarian socialist regimes in Eastern Europe, China, and Vietnam. It is worth noting at the outset that the conviction of the authors in this collection that democracy will come to Cuba sooner or later echoes the conviction of the first generation of transitolo-

gists (Guillermo O'Donnell, et al.). Those who study the transitions in China, Vietnam, Russia, and other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States are much less sanguine about the democratic outcome of a transition.

All in all this is an excellent collection and it should be on the reading list of anyone interested in Cuba. Aside from the belief that democracy will arrive in Cuba, there are two fundamental assumptions that drive the analyses of most of the chapters in this volume. The first is stated explicitly by the editor in her own chapter evaluating the prospects for democracy in Cuba, "Whatever the scenario, the diaspora—especially Cubans in Miami—will have a role in Cuba's future, if probably not a dominant one. . . . The diaspora is, moreover, crucial for the inevitable normalization of relations with the United States" (p. 45). In fact, although the word does not appear in the title, the central theme of the volume is reconciliation—how the Cubans in Cuba and their exiled brethren, the vast majority of whom live in South Florida, will become reconciled.

The second assumption, that Cuba is unique, is stated explicitly in about half the chapters, is implicit in many of the others, and not addressed at all only by the non-Cubans among the contributors. Even William LeoGrande, in his chapter on Cuban-U.S. relations refers to the inevitability of geography in the future of Cuban relations with the United States. Not surprisingly, insisting on Cuban uniqueness, which is to be heard with equal vehemence in Havana and in Miami, makes comparative study of the Cuban transition a bit difficult. This dilemma is dealt with great success by Lisandro Pérez in his chapter, "The Emigré Community and Cuba's Future," one of the best summaries of the situation I have read.

There are three chapters that deal with what are normally considered successes of the revolution—gender equality, racial equality, and providing access to social services—by Mala Htun, Alejandro de la Fuente, and Carmelo Mesa-Lago that I found particularly effective. All three describe in a balanced manner how the revolution achieved successes in these areas, and how these successes compare (and compare favorably) to other democracies in Latin America and in Eastern Europe, despite the fact that economic and social conditions have made life on the island more difficult since the collapse of the Soviet Union. They also point out that in all of these areas, especially race, what the regime and its admirers have called successes or achievements have been less than the claims made, even before the deterioration of the Special Period, and have taken on mythic qualities in the rhetoric of the Revolution. As a bonus, Mesa-Lago provides a short but extremely useful set of proposals for how any transition government can best preserve the social advances made since 1959. His chapter is a model of an academic essay intended for a public policy audience.

Another chapter that is required reading is Jorge I. Domínguez's essay on civil-military relations. Here, the claim that Cuba's military is unique is well grounded. It is the only military among the comparative subjects in Latin America or Eastern Europe that actually fought and won wars on foreign soil. Domínguez deals with the ambiguous role of the military in any possible transition. On the one hand, it is a

professionalized institution. On the other, Fidel and now Raul have become increasingly dependent on the armed forces and on individual military officers to run the newer export oriented dollarized investments and to supervise more and more of the economy. This dependence together with what Dominguez suggests will be the inevitable claims on the state that veterans of the armed forces will make on any possible transition government can only complicate the transition.

I would add one further detail. During the last few years in which Fidel's illness slowed the decision making process at the top, the promotion sequence of the Cuban armed forces was frozen so that the senior cadre of general officers, all of whom were close to Raul, would remain in their positions beyond the normal term. This guaranteed the loyalty of the military in the handing of power from Fidel to Raul. It cannot be frozen forever and a big question that remains open is what the successor cadre of general officers will bring to the transition process. For what it is worth, my guess is that the younger the senior officer cohort, including colonels, and the more involved they are in dollarized economic activity, including tourism, the more sympathetic they will be to a transition that leads Cuba toward a democratic regime and a more market-oriented economic system.

As to the role of the diaspora in any Cuban transition, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, in his Foreward, insists that national reconciliation "will be no mere goal - it will be a prime imperative." But, he goes on to say, "The cornerstone of Cuba's national reconciliation is the internal opposition that arose in the 1990s as the harbinger of good news among so much bad. This opposition which resides within Cuba, stands against the regime rather than against the Revolution as a whole" (p. xii). I would have been happier if the editor had dealt explicitly with this challenge to her interpretation by the old master of the first generation of transitologists.

Given that reconciliation is so important in Cuba's transition, it is a bit surprising that there are not more contributions by Cubans who are not exiles. The exile perspective predominates in the volume and the editor does not explain why. As this project was getting under way, two collections of essays were published in which contributions by Cubans on the island were given equal weight with those by exiles and those by non-Cuban academics. The dominance of the exile perspective may explain why religion does not get more attention, why so little importance is given to Cuban civil society, and why the changes that have taken place on the island since the collapse of the Soviet Union are given such short shrift. The editor states, "Cuba has not changed" (p. 1). Most of the research on these changes has been done by Cubans. That work does not appear to be taken into account in the chapters in this volume on the economy and civil society. That is a shame. Reconciliation, as Rafael Rojas points out in his chapter, "Ideology, Culture, and Memory: Symbolic Dilemmas of the Cuban Transition," must include a growing dialogue between students of Cuba in the diaspora and students of the Cuban reality on the island itself.



COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

TITLE: [Looking Forward]
SOURCE: Americas (Md) 65 no3 Ja 2009

The magazine publisher is the copyright holder of this article and it is reproduced with permission. Further reproduction of this article in violation of the copyright is prohibited.