

**HEGEMONY UNDER 'SOCIALISM': A CASE STUDY OF
GRANMA IN CUBA**

by

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Hegemony Under 'Socialism': A Case Study of Granma in Cuba

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Abstract

This thesis applies Gramscian frameworks for explaining tacit consent in capitalist societies to the Cuban situation for the first time. In the process, the thesis explores the applicability of Gramsci's ideas to a wide variety of situations, and to state-socialist societies in particular. The thesis focuses on whether the concept of hegemony can be applied to the Cuban economy. By comparing the output of the dominant group, as represented by the speeches of Fidel Castro, with the media's portrayal of values and ideas, three conclusions were reached. The first is that a Gramscian framework can be applied with success to 'socialist' systems. The second is that the Cuban system is consistent with Gramsci's theory of hegemony. The third is that although the system complies with Gramsci's theory, it exhibits some differences that have not been previously explored. The hegemonic apparatus appears to be more complete in Cuba owing a variety of factors, including charismatic leadership; strict state control over the means of communication, the education system, and intellectual life; and the strategic use of a continual external threat, in this case the U.S. These conclusions lead to important implications for socialism, hegemony, and society in general.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my mother and father who instilled the value of critical thinking in me at an early age, and without whose support, this thesis would not have been written. It is also dedicated to my partner in life Sherry Van Blyderveen, whose steadfast support in times of need allowed me to complete this work in a timely fashion. Last, but certainly not least, I would like to dedicate this thesis to the Cuban people, their resilience, generosity, and love for life, were what drew me to this topic and what allowed me to complete this study. I am sure that one day they will triumph over adversity.

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Table of Contents

Approval	ii
Abstract	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	viii
List of Diagrams	ix
Introduction	1
Chapter One: Hegemony as Theory	5
Gramsci on Hegemony	5
Hegemony and the State	6
Intellectuals	8
War of position	10
Schools of Thought	12
International Relations	12
Resistance	14
Domination	15
Dialectic	16
Empirical Applications of Hegemony and Their Importance for Cuba	17
Conceptual Framework	22
The Cuban Media	25

Granma	29
Chapter Two: The Cuban Media, the State and Hegemony.....	32
Methodology	32
Finding Evidence of Hegemony through Media Analysis	36
Recurring Themes in the Cuban Media and Fidel’s Speeches.....	36
Role of These Themes in Promoting Hegemony in Cuba.....	40
External Influences.....	41
Domestic Economic Policy	44
Economic Production	47
Sugar.....	51
Revolution	52
Dissent.....	57
Conclusion.....	58
Chapter Three: Conclusion.....	60
Hegemony and the Cuban State	60
Gramsci's 'War of Position' in Cuba.....	62
Socialism and Cuba.....	63
Implications for Hegemony.....	66
Bibliography.....	69

List of Tables

Table 1: Theme Identification	37
Table 2: Frequency of Theme Appearance	38
Table 3: Timeline of Events	39

List of Diagrams

Diagram 1: Two Aspects of Power	23
Diagram 2: Civil Society and the Masses.....	24

Introduction

Since the beginning of written history humanity has been divided into many different groups which can either be classified as belonging to the dominant group or the subordinate group. Social scientists have struggled to explain why this division occurs and how it is maintained. Karl Marx's studies of social behaviour helped to explain the functions of the different levels of society, as well as to throw light on to how the collapse of this system might occur. When the collapse of modern capitalist society did not occur, Antonio Gramsci, a member of the Italian Communist Party in the early twentieth century, took up the cause of explaining why subordinate groups remain subordinate. Gramsci's theory of hegemony explains why society remains divided in two. Hegemony is defined as the "ideological supremacy of a system of values that supports the class or group interests of the predominant classes or groups" (Fonte, 2001, p. 16). Hegemony can also be equated with consent. By agreeing with the ideas and values of the dominant group, the subordinate group is consenting to its status in society.

Gramscian scholars have applied his concepts to the social situations of most of the developed world as well as members of the developing world. However, there have only been a few, Blecher (1989) and Gutierrez-Sanin (1995), who have studied hegemony in situations labelled as socialism or state-socialism. State-socialist countries are largely characterized by State dominance over most aspects of life. The state controls capital and labour, access to resources, and access to social programs. In most cases the State is responsible for education, healthcare, and the media. While in some instances

religion has been allowed – late 1990s Cuba for example - , in most of these states, religion has been repressed, at times violently. These states do not conform to Marxist ideas of socialism, and at the same time they are very different from Western-style capitalist societies. Unlike Marxist Socialism, state-socialist societies exhibit hierarchical systems of domination. This thesis examines whether Gramsci’s theories are applicable to state-socialist societies. Since the early 20th century, there have been many attempts at socialist revolution which have resulted in state-socialist societies including, the USSR, North Korea, China, the Eastern Bloc, and Cuba. Yet little study has been carried out on whether Gramsci’s ideas are truly applicable to the societies that have resulted from these revolutions. For the purpose of discovering if Gramsci’s tools can be applied to state-socialist countries, Cuba will be studied. The Cuban situation was selected as it is one of the few nations that attempted a socialist revolution¹ which still has a government which claims to be revolutionary today. The nature of the Cuban administration and the desire to limit intrusion on the revolution has made academic study of controversial topics about the island difficult. This study seeks to fill this gap in the literature on hegemony and to answer some serious questions about the strength of socialism in Cuba through a Gramscian analysis of the media's portrayal of the Cuban economy.

The Cuban economy has been chosen over other areas of study, such as democracy, due to its transitional nature and prevalence in the Cuban media. Since the beginning of the revolution, Cuban economic policy has been altered many times, sometimes in a more socialist vein, and other times in a more capitalist direction. For

example, the opening of the free farmer's markets in the mid-1990s is arguably a capitalist move, while the recent rescinding of the American dollar as a viable currency for industry is a more socialist move. These changes beg the question of how consent from the public is maintained despite ideological indecision at the state level. This study shows that a possible answer to this important question is 'hegemony'. According to Gramsci, the supremacy of the values and ideas of the dominant group throughout civil society helps to achieve consent for the economic policies of the nation.

This thesis reaches three important conclusions. First, that the system of ideas and values present in the Cuban media with regards to the economy is consistent with Gramsci's theory of hegemony. This is shown through an examination of the media's depiction of economic issues. Second, Gramsci's theory of hegemony can be applied to an analysis of state-society relationships in state-socialist as well as capitalist countries. Third, the nature of the hegemonic apparatus in Cuba differs from the theoretical hegemonies that exist in both capitalist and socialist, or communist, systems. This 'new' hegemonic system I have termed a 'unified' hegemony, where civil society appears to be completely dominated by the state. A counter-hegemony does not appear to be visible in civil society. This has interesting repercussions for the concept of socialism in Cuba, which will be discussed later.

Chapter One will provide insight and lay the theoretical groundwork by analysing the current literature and showing that hegemony in the context of state-socialist countries is a neglected area. It will also review the Gramscian framework that guides this study. Chapter Two explains the methodology and analyzes data obtained from the

Cuban newspaper *Granma* and speeches of Fidel Castro over various periods of time. The analysis looks for congruence between the outputs visible in civil society and the state to test the usefulness of Gramsci's theory and describe the possible nature of hegemony in Cuba. The concluding chapter discusses the larger implications for hegemonic theory in general and for socialism in Cuba.

Chapter One: Hegemony as Theory

Antonio Gramsci's concepts of hegemony, 'organic' intellectuals, 'war of position' and civil versus political society, are well entrenched ideas in Marxist discourse. Academics on all sides of the political spectrum have used varieties of these concepts to further political and social theories. One commonality of Gramsci scholars, is that, save for a few examples -Blecher (1989), Gutierrez-Sanin (1996)- almost no one has discussed the potential use of Gramscian theory in explaining phenomena that exist in state-socialist countries like Cuba, China, Vietnam, Myanmar, North Korea, or the former USSR and the Eastern Bloc.

The academics who have studied hegemony have all used Gramscian tools constructed at the theoretical level. While there are different schools of thought on hegemony, all of them are largely in agreement on the definition of hegemony expressed in the introduction. This chapter will outline Gramsci's theory of hegemony, the different schools of thought on Gramscian theory, examples of applications of Gramscian theory, how hegemony relates to Cuba, and will finish by outlining the conceptual framework that guides this study.

Gramsci on Hegemony

Hegemony is the broadest of Gramsci's concepts. Writers have shown how all of his concepts feed into an understanding of hegemony and hegemonic relationships (Femia, 1989; Verdicchio, 1995). Gramsci's theory of hegemony contains many different

aspects that come together to create hegemony. These aspects include the hegemony-state relationship, the concept of the intellectual, and the 'war of position'.

Hegemony and the State

Power is expressed in two ways, coercion and consent. Gramsci explains these two levels of power by examining two aspects of society. First there is

the one that can be called 'civil society', that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called 'private', and that of 'political society' or 'the state'. These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of 'hegemony' which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the other hand to that of 'direct domination' or command exercised through the state and 'juridical' government (Gramsci, 1971, p.12).

Hegemony forms the consensual segment of power (Fonte, 2001; Zompetti, 1997).

Proletarian revolution must therefore take place not only in the economic and political spheres but in the cultural sphere as well. Hegemony is maintained not only through the dominant groups, but also through the subordinate groups who legitimise it. "By creating a culture with illusory benefits and superficial democratic ideals, the hegemony was able to co-opt any resistance or incorporate the resistance into part of the overarching universal, or hegemonic, philosophy through the use of common sense" (Zompetti, 1997, p. 72). Hegemony thus creates in subordinate groups a "false consciousness", that is they actually believe that the ideals expressed by the dominant groups are legitimate (Fonte, 2001). The Cuban administration does not allow academics to study the 'false consciousness' which may exist in Cuba, yet an understanding of the concept is still important in order to comprehend Gramsci's theory.

However, hegemony is not entirely constrained to the cultural sphere. Hoffman's analysis of the relationship between hegemony and the state shows that the two are not wholly distinct as a superficial definition would have readers believe. Hoffman (1984) argues that hegemony cannot be divorced from coercion. If hegemony is acted out in civil society², and coercion in political society, then hegemony – consent - must be linked with coercion because "in actual reality civil society and the State are one and the same"(Gramsci, 1971, p. 160). Thus, hegemony is not something altogether separate from the state, but is intrinsically linked to the state and thus to coercion.

Hegemony is not the only facet of the relationship between dominant and subordinate classes. Counter-hegemony is the opposite of hegemony. States have been unable to rid themselves of this counter-hegemony even with extremely coercive measures. Blecher's study of Chinese hegemony reveals that even after years of domination, counter-hegemony still existed. "The socialist state did not gobble up civil society or transform all preexisting [sic] culture in its socialist image"(Blecher, 1989, p. 8). Pre-revolutionary culture was maintained, particularly in the rural areas of China, confirming that hegemony is never absolute. The state perpetuates the hegemony, but is constantly counteracted by a counter-hegemony which arises from the subordinate groups. This dialectical understanding of hegemony is necessary, as understanding all of Gramsci's concepts – common sense, organic intellectuals — are "critical in fomenting a comprehensive theoretical understanding of hegemony" (Zompetti, 1997, p. 67). This

² Civil society is defined as that organized sector of society which is independent from the state and independent firms, typically exemplified by corporations and other private entities. Familial

understanding of hegemony's connection to the state is important in the case of Cuba where the two are intimately linked in civil society's institutions.

Intellectuals

Understanding Gramsci's concept of the intellectual is imperative to understanding his overall concept of hegemony. The intellectual is at the centre of the hegemonic framework. Intellectuals are given "the function of organising the social hegemony of a group and its state domination"(Gramsci, 1971, p. 13). Likewise, the intellectual is also responsible for the creation of counter-hegemony. Gramsci did not envision the intellectual as a scholar, or public speaker, but in a broader sense. He thought that "all men are intellectuals" but he adds "not all men have in society the function of intellectuals"(Gramsci, 1971, p. 9). Therefore, anybody could conceivably perform the role of the intellectual. Gramsci does enlighten us as to when someone can be considered an intellectual. "By intellectuals must be understood not those strata commonly described by this term, but in general the entire social stratum which exercises an organisational function in the wide sense –whether in the field of production, or in that of culture, or in that of political administration."(Gramsci, 1971, p. 97) That is to say that "anyone whose social function is to serve as a transmitter of ideas either within the realm of civil society, or more importantly as a link between the two aspects of the integral state – political society (government) and civil society" is to be considered an intellectual (Lester, 2000, p. 64).

organizations, community groups, and other similar groups are considered to be members of civil society.

Gramsci further distinguished between two types of intellectuals, traditional and 'organic' intellectuals. Traditional intellectuals are those linked with the dominant societal group. The intellectuals were those with the role of "organizing 'consent' in civil society as well as administering the legal, coercive functions of the state" (Martin, 1998, p. 47). In order to counteract this organisation, "what subordinate groups need, Gramsci maintains, are their own 'organic intellectuals'" (Fonte, 2001, p. 16). These 'organic' intellectuals will emerge from the subordinate group to co-ordinate an attack on hegemony (Fonte, 2001; Zompetti, 1997). The term 'organic' can be misleading at times, so Gramsci offers this clarification:

Every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of production, creates together with itself, organically one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields (Gramsci, 1971, p. 5).

Therefore, each social group or class creates unto itself intellectuals which are self-critical and aware of the position of the group; these are 'organic' intellectuals. The relationship between intellectuals and hegemony now becomes clearer. Intellectuals are the elements of societal groups that are aware of their groups' position in society and can be a force for change. Gramsci explains that the important aspect of the intellectual is this self-awareness:

Critical self-consciousness means, historically and politically, the creation of an elite of intellectuals. A human mass does not 'distinguish' itself, does not become independent in its own right without, in the widest sense, organizing itself and there is no organization without intellectuals, that is, without organizers and leaders (Gramsci, 1971, p. 334).

Intellectuals therefore are the necessary catalyst for any counter-hegemonic production.

Although the role of the intellectual is a key one in forming counter-hegemony to overthrow the rule of capitalists, the intellectual does not stop serving his role when socialism exists. Gramsci, in his notes on the organisation of education, begins by saying that institutions at various levels which train specialist intellectuals are the mark of 'modern civilization,' he means that this institutional function will be maintained under socialism. (Showstack-Sassoon, 2000, p. 29). The continued transformation of society and the maintenance of any hegemony, be it capitalist or socialist rests then in the hands of the intellectuals. This concept of the intellectual is important for the situation of Cuba as this study examines the output of the traditional intellectuals, those intellectuals affiliated with the dominant group, in the form of newspaper articles. The study will show that when civil society is influenced primarily by traditional intellectuals, the hegemonic apparatus is stronger. The intellectuals are the soldiers in the 'war of position'.

War of position

To Gramsci, there were two types of wars, the 'war of manoeuvre and the 'war of position'. To make the distinction using an analogy of physical war, the former would involve a 'shock and awe' campaign of physical revolution, whereas the latter is more like the trench warfare of WWI where each party struggles to maintain its foothold (Robson, 2000). Both types of 'war' are necessary for socialist-revolution to occur. However one cannot have a 'war of manoeuvre' without being in the proper positioning for it (Hoffman, 1984). In a 'war of position' the cultural aspect becomes central to victory. "Civil society alliances and struggles over cultural hegemony become critical resources in the fight to

bring about socialist transformation" (Bruhn, 1999, p. 29). Socialist revolution is not won in a single moment, nor as traditional Marxists saw it, as the result of the systematic collapse of capitalism. Rather, a Gramscian approach argues that revolution is the culmination of this 'war of position', a long arduous struggle in both the political and cultural realms (Billings, 1990). The reason for this long drawn out approach is that

in most advanced States ... civil society has become a very complex structure, one which is resistant to the catastrophic irruptions [sic] caused by immediate economic factors ... The superstructures of civil society are like the trench-systems of modern warfare. In war it would sometimes happen that a dogged artillery attack seemed to have destroyed the enemy's whole defensive system, whereas in fact it had only destroyed the outer perimeter; and at the moment of their advance and attack the assailants would find themselves confronted by a line of defence which was still effective. This is what happens in politics during the great economic crises (Gramsci as cited in Femia, 1981, p. 51).

Revolution cannot occur in a single moment because the structures of hegemony and coercion are too deeply entrenched. A continuous struggle must occur to root out those remnants of capitalism which are left standing. Femia (1981), points out that the counter-hegemony, or communist hegemony that is formed in opposition to the hegemony of the capitalist class, is a different type of hegemony. He maintains that a successful revolution, is not "simply a matter of substituting one hegemony for another"(Femia, 1981, p. 53), but rather transforming the idea of hegemony itself. Whereas capitalist hegemony hides the truth from the majority of society, a counter-hegemony or communist hegemony must be one that exposes the exploitation of the masses and "supersedes it"(Femia, 1981).

The difficulty with the concept of the 'war of position' is to know when this war ends. Neither Gramsci, nor the writers who have analysed his thought have determined

how this concept should work under socialism in a practical sense. It is clear from their ideas about capitalism, that the 'war of position' must be fought to eliminate the bourgeois hegemony and replace it with a 'communist' hegemony. Even though academics have theorized that a 'communist' hegemony should in effect be a continuation of counter-capitalist hegemony, (Femia, 1981) there have been no studies examining how hegemony is constructed in 'socialist' societies. This study will examine how the structure of Granma in Cuba is designed to create and maintain hegemony.

Schools of Thought

Many academics have used Gramsci's concepts to make their own analyses of hegemonic situations and to adapt hegemonic theory to their studies. Current literature on Gramscian thought can be broken down into four distinct areas: international relations, domination, resistance, and dialectical theorists. As explained below, the domination school of thought is the main focus of this study because with reference to the economy, Cuba does not display an open counter-hegemony in the newspaper studied. Thus making the domination school the most appropriate for this study.

International Relations

The first school of thought is that of the international relations (IR) theorists. IR theorists are included in this overview as they claim to have some basis in Gramscian thought. Theorists include: Murphy & Angelli (1993), Arrighi (1993), Van Der Pijl (1993), Cox (1993), Rupert (1993), and Gill & Law (1993). These writers connect Gramsci to the realm of international political economy and international relations,

bringing Gramscian notions of hegemony, political and civil society, as well as historical ‘blocs’ to the international level. It is important at this time to differentiate between these theorists and those who support hegemonic stability theory³. Cox points out that “very often hegemony is used to mean the dominance of one country over others, thereby tying the usage to a relationship strictly among states” (Cox, 1993, p. 60), instead of being used to mean the supremacy of a dominant group's ideas and values.

IR theorists attempt to gain a much broader view of hegemony than the other schools, closer to Gramsci’s own writings on the concept. The international conception of hegemony involves a detailed account of the world political economy. When the world’s economy becomes centred on one nation, and the ideas of that nation begin to permeate the thoughts and actions of other countries, is when international hegemony exists. For example, during the present day, western capitalism is centralised in the United States. The American dollar is the current global benchmark for economy, and American economic ideas of free trade and neo-liberal policy have been adopted by most of the capitalist world. Thus, the current situation could be described as hegemonic, where most states consent to American economic ideas.

Cox (1993) argues that there are times when a non-hegemonic world order has been present. He points to the period of 1875-1945 as a period of non-hegemonic world order. “The balance of power in Europe became destabilised, leading to two world wars.

³ Hegemonic Stability Theory concerns itself with international relations. The theory states that in order to achieve peace and stability in the international realm, there needs to be a hegemon. This hegemon will articulate and enforce the rules of international relations, thus maintaining stability. The hegemon is a state which through economic, technological, or physical force can ensure that other states follow the rules which it, as the hegemon, has articulated. (Kindleberger, 1973; Hunt, 1990; Milner, 1998)

Free trade was superseded by protectionism; the Gold Standard was ultimately abandoned; and the world economy fragmented into economic blocs” (Cox, 1993, p. 60). IR theorists can also be placed theoretically into the dialectical school of thought. IR theorists see both sides of the Gramscian debate and are intent on analysing the emancipatory potential of Gramsci’s theories on an international scale. In fact, Rupert (1993) argues Gramsci in an international context is simply a combination of Gramscian concepts, such as the ‘war of position’, and the intellectual, working at the domestic level.

As this school of thought is concerned with hegemony on an international level it is not important for an understanding of hegemony in Cuba, which occurs on the domestic level. It can be argued that culture from North America is creating inroads in Cuban society, however, the following chapter shows how this does not appear to be the case with respect to the hegemonic apparatus surrounding economic policy in Cuba.

Resistance

The resistance school of thought uses Gramsci's work to analyse and suggest paths of resistance. Resistance is the continuing opposition to the values and ideas of the dominant class by the subordinate groups. This school includes studies by Trepanier (1991), Holub (1992), Zompetti, (1997), Fonte (2001), Lears (1984), Bruhn (1999), Lester (2000), and Billings (1990). Some thinkers of the resistance school argue that Gramscian theory can provide a critical telos from which to attack capitalist hegemony (Zompetti, 1997). The resistance school claims that like Marx, Gramsci envisioned a dialectic, not only in the economic realm of bourgeois versus proletariat, but also in the

cultural or ideological realm (Zompetti, 1997; Fonte 2001). Thus, hegemony is not a one-sided coin, but corresponds with a requisite counter-hegemony. The counter-hegemony is what the resistance school seeks to analyse and propagate.

Academics of the resistance school provide an accurate analysis of Gramsci's dialectical argument. However, they focus on using Gramscian thought to form resistance to hegemony in capitalist societies. As this study seeks to examine the domination aspect of the dialectic, it does not conform to the resistance school of thought.

Domination

Resistance is precisely the area of thought that the domination school believes should be avoided when reading and/or applying Gramsci to the real world. Authors in this school include: Girling (1987) Bocock, (1986), Ghosh (2001), Hale (1996), and Blecher (1989). Domination theorists agree with the resistance theorists on one key aspect, that hegemony in the Gramscian sense exists. The disagreement occurs over the resistance component of Gramsci's thought. They argue that Gramsci's analyses of the possibilities for counter-hegemony are not applicable today as the historical context has changed (Ghosh, 2001). In other words, Gramsci's thoughts on resistance were drawn up when capitalism was not consolidated (Girling, 1987). The entrenchment of the capitalist system since Gramsci's death has led the domination theorists to argue that Gramsci's suggestions for resistance to hegemony have been rendered irrelevant, thus making Gramsci useful only for analysing aspects of domination.

The domination school of thought is the most relevant to the current study, which analyses the hegemonic system constructed by the dominant group in Cuba. The fact that

Cuba does not display an open counter-hegemony, creates a situation where only the values and ideas of dominant group can be analysed empirically. While some might argue that dissenting actions including: the black market economy, waves of emigration, and rampant stealing from the state, constitute counter-hegemony, this study does not consider these acts as counter-hegemonic acts. These actions constitute a form of dissent, but there are no alternative sets of values and ideas presented by these acts. Counter-hegemony, like hegemony, would entail the agreement with a set of values and ideas. While these dissenting acts might be construed as agreeing with different values, they could also simply be the means of survival for the masses, who may in fact actively believe in the dominant ideas despite economic problems. Only further study, outside the scope of the present study, will establish these acts as counter-hegemonic. Thus for the purpose of the present study, no open counter-hegemony has been discovered, demonstrating that the domination school is the most applicable to the Cuban situation.

Dialectic

The above schools of thought represent the authors located on two sides of the dialectic, the counter-hegemony/resistance side and the domination side. There remains a third side to this seemingly two sided debate, and that is the realm of those who I would call the dialectic school. This school is radically different from the first two, in that it largely agrees with the arguments of both the resistance and the domination schools. The only major difference is that the dialectic school analyses both the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic systems simultaneously. Marx, they write, believed in society as a dialectic, as did Gramsci. To this school of thought, any approach that calls itself a

Gramscian approach must make use of dialectic. They argue that one cannot only study one aspect of society, that both the domination and resistance side need to be studied in order to properly understand hegemony and the role it plays in society. Gramsci's theory, they write, is not only a useful tool for explaining the character of domination, but likewise Gramscian theory can also provide suggestions for resistance (Verdicchio, 1995; Kalyvas, 2000; Mumby, 1997).

The case of Cuba raises questions about the necessity of studying both domination and resistance simultaneously. The Cuban administration maintains strict rules for academic study which makes any practical analysis of a resistance movement very difficult to accomplish. However, the existence of a hegemonic system and an analysis of its character can be ascertained by examining the output of the various institutions which function within civil society to create hegemony, even if the resistance to this hegemony cannot be studied directly. While it can be argued that the Cuban exile movements in Miami can be characterised as resistance, this study seeks to examine how hegemony operates on the domestic level, while recognizing that external forces have a role.

Empirical Applications of Hegemony and Their Importance for Cuba

The four schools of thought outlined previously discuss the overall implications for Gramsci's theory in terms of explaining hegemony and counter-hegemony. Few studies drawn from these schools of thought have been used to apply Gramscian thought to analyse actual political situations. As well, there have been remarkably few studies

done on hegemony in state-socialist countries and little has been added to the theory regarding the differences in the hegemonic construct between different societies.

There has been one study conducted by Benigno Aguirre (2002), on forms of social control in Cuba. Aguirre found that various informal types of social control including myths and rituals, controls on residence, and humour, all contribute to a stable system of control in Cuba geared towards maintaining the position and the hegemony of the dominant class. Aguirre's study examined the output of dissident groups based in Miami, as well as various human rights reports in order to reach his conclusions. The present study agrees with the conclusions presented by Aguirre, but reaches them through an analysis of domestic influences on civil society actively working within Cuba. Moreover, the present study looks to develop a Gramscian framework of analysis that can be widely applicable. Aguirre, while using some Gramscian terminology does not apply a Gramscian theory to the Cuban situation.

There have been two studies from the domination school of thought, which apply Gramscian hegemonic theory to other nations and are particularly relevant to the study of hegemony in Cuba. Studies by Blecher (1989) and Hale (1996) provide a different view from most of the domination theorists. Instead of preoccupying themselves with the theoretical debate of domination versus resistance these authors have applied Gramscian theories to patterns of domination.

Hale's study (1996) of the hegemonic construction of women in the Sudan marks a departure from traditional use of Gramscian theory. Hale (1996) does not use the traditional definitions for terms like State or dominant group as her study does not

analyse a bourgeois capitalist society. Hale defines a state as “a cluster of interrelated institutions organized by the ruling class (whether this is ruling class by election as in bourgeois democracies or by self-appointment) for the purpose of controlling the subordinate population and disseminating the ideology of that class.”(Hale, 1996, p. 177)

Her study details the processes by which the Sudanese ‘state’ has controlled labour resources specifically with regards to gender. By adopting an “Islamist” position, the Sudanese state has allowed women to take part in the more lucrative industries, by becoming doctors and assuming other relatively high-paying positions. This move has helped to maintain the subordination of women, Hale writes, because the women are led to believe that they are actually being liberated. Hale argues that the move to differentiate between ‘Muslim’ and ‘Arab’ in Sudan has helped provide women with a focus for liberation. That the state is able to create a hegemonic discourse in which women “see themselves as potentially liberated from certain patriarchal Arab customs upon a return to “pure” Islam” (Hale, 1996, p. 198). Thus the domination of a new ideal of ‘Islam’, within the interests of the state, has created consent/hegemony amongst women who see the possibilities for liberation under such a discourse. Hale’s study (1996) shows how a Gramscian approach can be used in a practical fashion to analyse modern day phenomena, supporting the argument that Gramsci’s theory might be useful to analyse the situation of revolutionary Cuba.

Blecher’s study (1989) of hegemony in China provides another example of a practical Gramscian approach. What makes Blecher’s study unique is that it is one of the few studies which examines hegemony in the context of a ‘socialist’ or as he dubs ‘state-

socialist' country. Blecher (1989) is the only author to point out that there are differences between the Gramscian approach to hegemonic change in Western capitalism and the efforts to effect such change in state-socialist countries. He explains the differences as

while the former [hegemonic change in Western capitalism] have involved a struggle initiated by civil society against the state as a major hegemonic bulwark, the latter [hegemonic change in state-socialism] have been driven by the power of the state against those elements of civil society which are seen as strongholds of antisocialist hegemony (Blecher, 1989, p. 7).

Blecher's work focuses on the remnants of civil society that exist in state-socialist countries. Blecher examined the remains of pre-revolutionary civil society in China, and how the state attempted to counteract their non-socialist tendencies. Blecher's work is relevant to the current study, as a study of Cuban hegemony must take into account that there is a distinction between the counter-hegemonic project against the capitalist state and the hegemony perpetuated by the socialist state. Blecher's study (1989) informs us that hegemony, far from dissolving upon entering state-socialism, is continued, perhaps even more so than it was under capitalism. Blecher (1989) argues that China was "where the socialist state had devoted itself more single-mindedly than anywhere else to, and has received more popular support for, building a new hegemony and eradicating the old" (Blecher, 1989, p. 7). This study will show that the dominant class in Cuba has also attempted in a significant manner to impose a new hegemony on the population. However, the nature of hegemony in Cuba appears to be different to that experienced in China or in capitalist systems.

Blecher (1989) also gives reason as to why hegemony should be used as a method of analysis. He argues that unlike other methods of analysis, the hegemony approach is

the only appropriate way to examine culture-state relationships. The primary reason for this decision, is that most of the revolutionaries of the post-Gramsci period, had read and been influenced by Gramsci's writings, as well as Lenin's thoughts on the subject. Due to the fact that a socialist path of revolution was followed, it corresponds that a hegemonic approach to analysis based on Marxist thought is the correct one.

The secondary reason for choosing a Gramscian method of analysis is that a hegemonic approach allows for a particular view of culture as a force for political change and support. Blecher (1989) argues that it does not minimise culture or place it in the realm of the Marxian 'superstructure', but allows a fuller understanding of culture at the realm of consciousness. He also writes that the hegemony approach links culture to power in a fashion where they are mutually constitutive, that culture and power are linked together. Culture influences power and power influences culture. This concept is useful for a study of Cuba, where the state controls cultural production and therefore gains the benefits of power that result.

The two concepts that are most relevant to this study of Cuban hegemony are those of hegemony-state relationship and the 'war of position'. The concept of the hegemony-state relationship is important because as Gramsci pointed out, civil society and the state are one and the same. This unification of civil society and the state is particularly evident in state-socialist nations where elements of civil society that have traditionally been private, community groups for example, have been removed from the realm of the private and placed squarely in the hands of the state. Hale's study (1996) shows how the state can maintain hegemony by taking an ideological stance, in the case

of the Sudan it was an 'Islamist' position. This study seeks to examine the relationship between the state and hegemony in Cuba in order to establish whether Gramsci's thoughts on the subject apply to Cuba. The second concept, the 'war of position' is also equally important in the case of Cuba. This study examines the manner, or the strategy used, in establishing and maintaining a hegemonic system with regards to the Cuban economy.

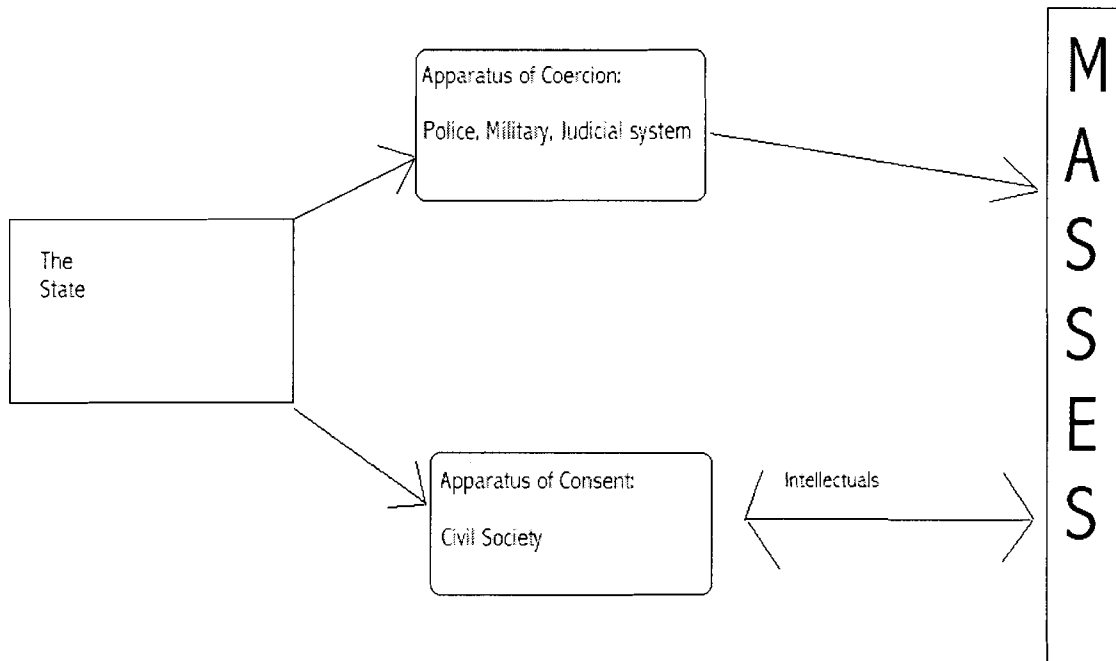
The main hypotheses of this study are:

- That a system consistent with Gramsci's theory of hegemony exists in Cuba.
- That Gramsci's tools: the 'war of position', hegemony, the state and civil society are relevant to modern day studies of state-society relationships.
- That the Gramscian framework can be applied to understand non-violent means of state coercion, including those of socialist states.

Conceptual Framework

A Gramscian approach will be used to study the problem of economic consent in Cuba. The definition of hegemony has largely been agreed upon by all of the schools of thought which study it. Hegemony is one aspect of the relations of power between the state and the masses. Power is divided into two aspects, coercion and consent. Coercion is expressed through the use of physical force, facilitated through the military, the police and the judicial system. Consent, otherwise known as hegemony, is maintained through the institutions acting within civil society (see Diagram 1).

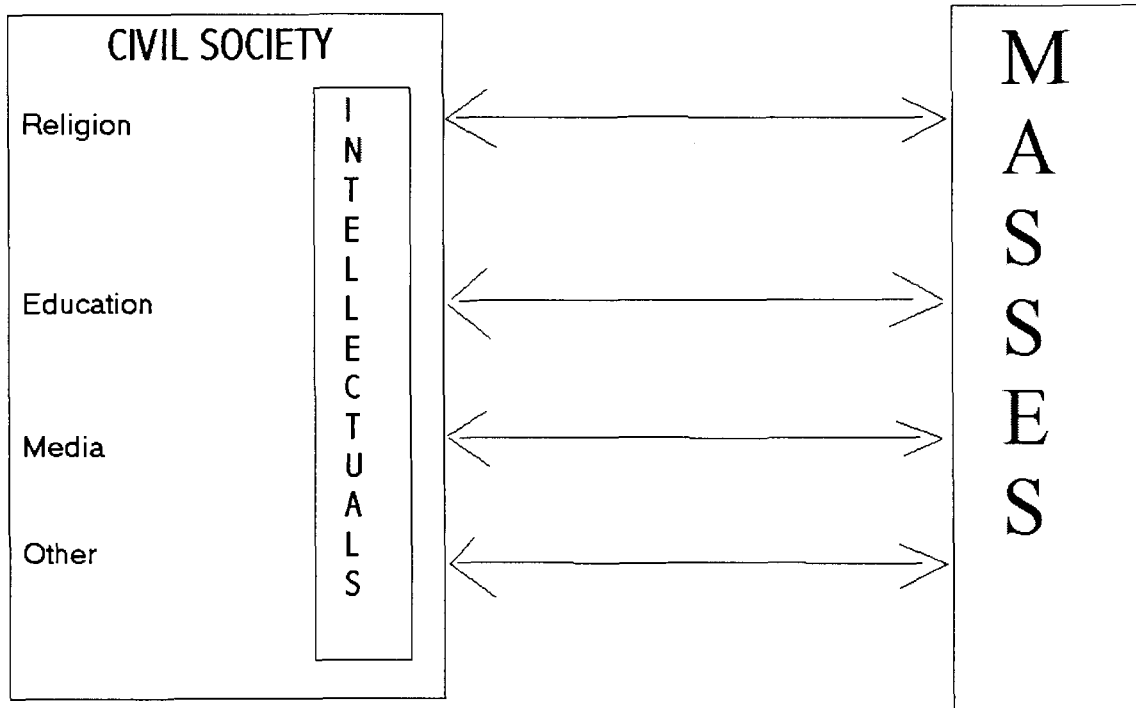
Diagram 1



For the purpose of this study, civil society is defined as the organized area of society which is separate from both the state and independent firms. Thus familial associations, community groups, and other such organized forms of social interaction make-up civil society. Civil society is the sector of society in which public opinion can be expressed and changed. For example, religion, education systems, and the media are all institutions that influence civil society and help to create social values. Hegemony exists when the values and ideas present in civil society are transformed so that they conform with the dominant group's or state's ideas and values. This act of hegemony is being constantly opposed by counter-hegemony. Counter-hegemony is the dissemination of ideals and values which spring from the subordinate group and are in opposition to those emanating from the dominant group. (see Diagram 2).

According to Gramscians, this dissemination is facilitated by 'intellectuals' who act as catalysts by disbursing information throughout society. Any one who performs "the function of organising the social hegemony of a group and its state domination" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 13) is to be considered an intellectual. Intellectuals are the soldiers in the war of position, which is played out on the battlefield of civil society. Thus, intellectuals are not only important for the distribution of information, but also for the creation of material that could be understood as hegemonic or counter hegemonic. Intellectuals are not separate from civil society, but operate within it (see Diagram 2).

Diagram 2



Thus, priests, journalists, directors, teachers and principals would all fit into the category of 'intellectual'.

The media are key institutions which act within civil society to create and maintain Gramscian hegemony. The media are creators of public opinion, the lead

possibility for the creation of counter-hegemony. Shoemaker and Reese (1991) explain why the media are important:

Reality is necessarily manipulated when events and people are relocated into news or prime-time stories. The media can impose their own logic on assembled materials in a number of ways, including emphasizing certain behaviors and people and stereotyping. ... Rhetorically, people can be portrayed with different labels (freedom fighter or terrorist). One of the most obvious ways media content structures a symbolic environment is simply by giving greater attention (in the form of more time, greater prominence, and so on) to certain events, people, groups, and places than others (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991, p. 33).

This discussion of the media displays the role the media may have in creating hegemony as a hegemonic discourse will give more prominence to the ideas, values and people that the dominant group considers more important.

Media institutions serve a hegemonic function by continually producing a cohesive ideology, a set of commonsensical values and norms, that serves to reproduce and legitimate the social structure through which the subordinate classes participate in their own domination (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991, p. 194).

This is the conceptual framework within which this study operated. The framework displays that hegemony is the dominant class' non-violent form of social control. This hegemony can be created and maintained in the realm of civil society through various institutions including, but not limited to: the media, religion, and education. This study examines the hegemonic properties of the Cuban media.

The Cuban Media

Before an analysis of the Cuban media and its representation of the Cuban economy can take place, it is important to understand the structure and the theories which

guide the Cuban media. The structure of the media in revolutionary Cuba provides further evidence that the system is designed to create hegemony. Since the beginning of the revolutionary struggle in the late 1950s the media was seen as a method of persuasion and information. *Radio Rebelde* was launched in the *Sierra Maestra* at the height of the war against the Batista dictatorship. Originally, the station's aim was to "provide accurate information on the war's progress, covering the fighting in the mountains and urban areas, and exposing the blatant lies disseminated by the highly censored print and electronic media under the Batista dictatorship" (Miyares, 1999, p. 77). This early spreading of revolutionary ideas through the media was continued in the early 1960s, when the revolutionary government became the censoring body. The revolution saw the mass media as a public asset needed to disseminate the truth in a world of lies and slander (Miyares, 1999). This view led to the decision to nationalize the media in Cuba.

All of the traditional media - television, radio, cinema, and the print media - are controlled directly by the state. Cuba's latest constitution enacted in 1976, states that electronic and print media are state property and "cannot in any case become private property" (Department of State, 1997, p. 5). This public or state control has been the guiding method behind censorship of the traditional media. Radio and television are strictly controlled. The Cuban Institute of Radio and Television was created to maintain stringent control and to censor the material on all of the major television and radio stations. The government also actively jams both radio and television broadcasts aimed at disseminating 'counter-revolutionary' views from Miami (Department of State, 1997).

The status of the institute as a quasi-ministerial body indicates how much importance the state places on controlling forms of disseminating information.

Furthermore, independent Cuban reporters are almost non-existent. The only reporters whose material is fit to be used in the national media are government employees. It is a crime to give any information to publications not affiliated with the state (Department of State, 1997). Most journalists are also members of the Union of Cuban Journalists (UPEC), a non-governmental organization to which 96% of Cuban journalists belong (Miyares, 1999). "The UPEC's goals include the protection of the practice of journalism, support for continuing technical and cultural education among its membership, and the promotion of the social recognition of journalism" (Miyares, 1999, p. 80).

There are differing views on the role of journalists in Cuba. The UPEC along with other Cuban journalists and intellectuals, Miyares (1999) and Hernandez (2002), argue that the role of the Cuban journalist is one which is key in the defence of the revolution, by promoting ideas and values which are essential to the 'well-being' of the Cuban people (Miyares, 1999). They also argue that rather than there being a strong form of government censorship, that most of the censorship in Cuba is self-censorship in order to preserve the values and goals of the revolution (Miyares, 1999; Hernandez, 2002). In a Gramscian perspective, this self-censorship could be interpreted as Gramsci's 'traditional intellectuals' supporting the dominant hegemony.

The other views about Cuban journalism are more critical and arise mainly from American journalists analysing the Cuban media apparatus from a western perspective.

Ackerman (1996) and Miller (1991) provide some of the criticism of the role of journalists in Cuba. Both agree with Miyares (1999) and Hernandez (2002) on the subject of how Cuban journalists see themselves. Ackerman describes this in contrast to the American journalist. "While American reporters see themselves as adversaries of their government -- ... -- Cuban journalists see themselves as government insiders. They are propagandists as well as loyal critics. U.S. newspapers operate under the assumption that their reporting must be "fair" to all viewpoints, while Cuban media see their job as disseminating government positions" (Miller, 1991, p. 2). While the Cuban journalists see their role as being one of supporting the noble goals of the revolution, the American media sees the Cuban journalists as having been co-opted by a dominant organization bent on control. The U.S. Department of State characterizes Cuban journalism as one that "must operate under party guidelines and reflect government views" (Department of State, 1996). This study does not analyse or theorize on the role of the journalist with the exception of pointing out that the journalism in evidence in *Granma* conforms to the views of the state.

As previously explained the government maintains strict control over the traditional media as well as journalistic freedom. The latest attempt at controlling methods of disbursing information has been the stringent control of the internet. The traditional media sources are one form of communication that allows information to be transmitted from one to many. In the case of Cuba, this means that the state distributes information to its citizens, enabling control. However, the internet allows many to communicate with many, and thus it is not as easy to control the information which is

communicated. The Cuban administration has found an easy route around this by controlling access to the internet. In a state where most families can barely afford food, let alone a computer, the Cuban government can control the method of distribution instead of the actual content. Boas (2000), Eaton (1997), and Kerry (2001), all outline the ease with which the Castro government has stopped the internet from becoming a resource which challenges its authority. While many anti-Castro groups in Florida and elsewhere have set up websites designed to inform Cubans about the supposed benefits of western values and ideas, the Cuban citizens are not allowed to access this dissenting information. Controlling access to information sources is consistent with a hegemonic apparatus that is geared to eliminating counter-hegemonic views by denying civil society access to these views.

Granma

This study in particular looks at the hegemonic properties of the newspaper *Granma*, and how it portrays the Cuban economy. The structure of the newspaper organization itself can begin to answer the question of what role it may play in a Gramscian framework.

Granma is the largest daily newspaper in Cuba. Prior to the revolution there were many daily newspapers; however the revolutionary government, in an effort to control the content of the news media, quickly limited the quantity of different news sources available. Currently there are three national newspapers. *Granma* is the official organ of the Communist Party, and is the only daily national newspaper. *Juventud Rebelde* is a semi-weekly national paper geared towards the youth of the nation and run by the State

affiliated Communist Youth group. *Trabajadores* is a weekly paper aimed at the workers and is largely cultural in content, containing information about sports, local theatre and musical events. There are also local daily newspapers published by state affiliated groups in all of the fourteen provinces (Miyares, 1999). As well there are various cultural magazines published on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Since the beginning of the 'special period' in 1993, a shortage of paper has cut the number of pages in each paper, and was responsible for the demotion of *Juventud Rebelde* from a daily paper to one that is published on an irregular basis.

Granma has been the long-standing voice of the Cuban revolution, consolidated from a number of different revolutionary papers in the early 1960s. *Granma* is run completely by the state, and is known as the official "voice of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party" (Miyares, 1999, p. 79). As previously explained, all of the journalists reporting for *Granma* are employed by the Cuban State. There is no freedom of the press as western journalists would describe it. There have been reports of previous editors and journalists being fired for writing reports critical of the position of the state (U.S. Dept. of State Dispatch, 1991). Editorials appear alongside regular news reports, and in most cases it is impossible to distinguish between the two.

A thorough examination of the literature has not yielded any information on how the editors of *Granma* are chosen nor to whom they report to at the State level. However, the fact that the paper is the official record of the Cuban Communist Party, leads to the inference that it is a very closely monitored newspaper. The level of control and the focus of the newspaper, to be analysed in the next chapter, will help determine *Granma's*

hegemonic properties. By noting that it is an official state organ, it is possible to see how the hegemonic system is created from a structural perspective. The following chapter will outline the methodology used to apply a Gramscian framework to the study of *Granma*, as well as analyse that data that resulted from this examination.

Chapter Two: The Cuban Media, the State and Hegemony

The conceptual framework outlined in the previous chapter, indicates that the media are important sources of information which can contribute to hegemony. The structure of the media in Cuba and in particular the newspaper *Granma*, directs itself to a hegemonic outcome. This chapter outlines the methodology which is used to apply a Gramscian framework to the newspaper *Granma*. The chapter then examines why recurring themes suggest the existence of hegemony. We then look at the number and type of themes that recur in the Cuban media and Fidel's speeches, and how often they recur. Following the presentation of the data, the chapter then moves towards an interpretive discussion of what role each theme may play in establishing and reinforcing hegemony in Cuba in order to discover whether or not Gramsci's theory can be practically applied to the Cuban situation.

Methodology

The previous chapter outlined the conceptual framework guiding the study as well as the background of the Cuban media. In order to examine hegemony in Cuba, extensive research was conducted into the Cuban newspaper *Granma* - one of the state institutions operating in civil society - and how it portrayed the Cuban economy and economic policy over various time periods. The media has been chosen as the desired realm of civil society for analysis as the media are a key influence on civil society and

have the ability to reach large numbers of the population. Relative ease of access to the data was also a consideration. While there are various media sources that could be examined, for instance television, radio and film, the print medium was selected. The print medium was selected because it is a medium which is available universally in Cuba, it does not require the ownership of a television or radio. Cuba has high literacy rates which make the print medium one of the most useful sections of the media to analyse. For the purpose of this study the newspaper with the largest demographic was desired because a large readership suggests the possibility of greater hegemonic value. The precise readership figures of *Granma* are unknown. *Granma* was chosen over the other two national dailies, because *Juventud Rebelde* and *Trabajadores* are aimed at specific sectors of society, the youth and the workers respectively. Another reason for omitting *Trabajadores* is its focus on political and cultural news rather than economic news which is the focus of this study. *Granma* is not limited in its scope to any one sector of society, or any one area of news coverage.

To get a complete sense of how the economy is presented in *Granma*, months were selected at random from a variety of years to illustrate how the newspaper's presentation changed in different time periods. This examination also contributes to our understanding of how the 'war of position' changes over time. The months selected for analysis were: August, 1973; January, 1976; March, 1984; July, 1986; October, 1991; July, 1993; September, 1993; October, 1994; August, 1998; and April/May 2003. These months were selected because they represent different periods of economic prosperity or decline, which helps to demonstrate how consent towards the economy is created in

different economic periods. The archival records of newspapers pre-1973 are spotty at best, so no records from this period were used.

An examination of the media might be considered by some as insufficient to examine hegemony. Hegemony, as defined in the introduction, is the “ideological supremacy of a system of values that supports the class or group interests of the predominant classes or groups”. (Fonte, 2001, p. 16) Thus, in order to examine how hegemony can be created and maintained, the ideas and values of the dominant group(s) need to be established. Cuba is a one party state-socialist nation. The dominant group of the Cuban state is the Cuban Communist Party. The leader of the party for the past forty-four years has been Fidel Castro. Thus, for the purpose of examining the issue of hegemony and the Cuban economy, the speeches of Fidel Castro reflect the values and ideas of the dominant class(es). Speeches given by Fidel Castro were chosen from the Latin American Network Information Centre (LANIC) database⁴ to approximately match the time periods of the articles chosen from *Granma*. There were eight speeches examined, one from each of the following months: August, 1973; July, 1976; February, 1984; October, 1991; July, 1993; November, 1993; August 1994; and May, 2003. Due to resource availability not all of the speeches are from the same month as the articles, though an attempt has been made to ensure that they are from approximately the same time period.

⁴ The LANIC database was chosen because of its large volume of Castro’s speeches as delivered in Cuba on the topic of domestic issues, translated and catalogued by year. The majority of speeches published in the regular print media, including academic journals and Western compendiums of Castro’s speeches, are from international conferences and meetings, and rarely deal with domestic economic issues.

The speeches were chosen based on time period and on content. Speeches that did not concern the economy, were not made with the Cuban people as an audience, or did not discuss domestic issues were excluded from this study. All of the articles from *Granma* during the months listed above were included for study. Articles were removed from the study based on whether or not they pertained to the economy or economic issues. An article was considered to relate to the economy when any of the following terms were found: 'economy', 'national economy' and 'economic'. The focus was placed on the last decade of the twentieth century, the decade with the most economic turmoil and change since the beginning of the Cuban revolution. It is important to examine how consent was maintained during this period of turmoil.

Both the articles and the speeches were examined for the themes contained within. Pre-selecting themes or a coding scheme limits the possibilities that might actually exist in the text; therefore, a predetermined coding scheme was not used. Themes were decided based on the recurrence of phrases, words, ideas, and concepts in conjunction with mentions of the economy. Ideas that were consistently demonstrated through the language used and the content of the articles were given the title of themes. Recurring ideas are surmised to be important, for ideas that are consistently displayed in the media and in the speeches have greater capabilities to shape the ideas and values of the masses and are therefore important for hegemony. In order to establish which ideas and concepts were recurring, both the articles from *Granma* and the speeches were examined.

Finding Evidence of Hegemony through Media Analysis

Hegemony is the supremacy of the ideas and values of the dominant group in civil society. Thus one method of studying hegemony is to examine the institutions which influence civil society in order to uncover which ideas and values are most prevalent. Recurring themes that arise through an examination of the institutions that work within civil society help to create and maintain hegemony. Repeated usage of words and phrases, the creation of heroes, and the ideas of sacrifice and progress, all help to persuade readers that the ideas of the revolution and values of the dominant group are worthy of being followed (Aguirre, 2002). An analysis of the values that the media projects can help reveal the characteristics of hegemony in a given society. The fact that the ideas which are recurring in the media are those which are also espoused by the dominant group suggests that the media are being used for a hegemonic purpose, because the ideas of the dominant group are placed in an important position in civil society. This is visible through a comparison of the texts written in *Granma* with the ideas represented by the speeches of Fidel Castro.

Recurring Themes in the Cuban Media and Fidel's Speeches

The main themes found related to external influences, policy, production, sugar, and revolution. These themes were common to both the articles and the speeches. Table 1 shows the key recurring phrases and concepts that were found in conjunction with the words 'economy', 'national economy', and 'economic'.

Table 1: Theme Identification

Theme	Key Phrases/Concepts/Words
External Influences	'Outside influence', 'yankee', 'imperialism', 'USSR', 'natural disasters', 'hegemonism'.
Policy	'Policy', 'changes in policy', 'meeting to discuss policy', 'forming policy', 'implementing policy'.
Production	'Production', 'productivity', 'increasing production'.
Sugar	'Sugar', 'sugar productivity', 'sugar refineries', 'sugar quotas', 'sugar fields'.
Revolution	'Revolution', 'socialism', 'fight for socialism', 'defending socialism', 'defending the revolution', 'battle', 'battalion', 'brigades'.

During the months studied, the themes, ideas and values projected in *Granma* were very similar to those espoused by the leader of the revolution, Fidel Castro. The fact that all of the themes – external influences, production, revolution, policy, and sugar – were found in both the speeches and the newspapers shows that *Granma* is presenting the ideas and values held by the dominant group. Table 2 provides a monthly breakdown of the number of articles that contained each theme, as well as whether or not the theme was present in the speeches.

Table 2: Frequency of Theme Appearance

Month/Theme	External Influences		Policy		Production		Sugar		Revolution	
	A	S	A	S	A	S	A	S	A	S
Aug. '73					6	Y	1		2	Y
Jan. '76			4	Y	11	Y	11		7	
Mar. '84		Y	1	Y	7	Y	25	Y	1	Y
Jul. '86		n/a	6	n/a	4	n/a	2	n/a	6	n/a
Oct. '91	2	Y	6		7		3		12	Y
Jul. '93	1	Y	3	Y	8		4	Y	4	Y
Sep. '93		Y	3	Y	6		3	Y	1	Y
Oct. '94		Y	5	Y	6	Y		Y	2	Y
Aug. '98		n/a		n/a	5	n/a	1	n/a	N	n/a
Apr./May '03		Y	3		3				2	Y
Total	3		31		63		27		37	

**Legend: A- Article S- Speech n/a – data unavailable y-Theme
Blank - Theme present not present**

With few exceptions, in most of the months in which a theme was evident in the newspaper, the same theme was also expressed in Castro's speech from the same period. This suggests the existence of a hegemonic discourse where *Granma* repeats in the news, the ideas and values espoused by the leader of the dominant group.

These six themes were the only recurring themes on the economy discovered in a detailed examination of Castro's speeches and *Granma*. None of these six were unique to either the speeches or the articles. The fact that the themes are common to both articles and speeches, with neither showing any ideas or values that are unique, can also be interpreted as an effort to establish hegemony. Although no theme was present in every month studied, each theme was consistently present from the beginning of the periods studied through to the end. Table Three outlines a number of the important historical events that occurred during the period of study. It is important to note that despite

changes in policy –i.e. the opening, closing, reopening of the farmers’ markets – the thematic content remains the same. The same themes reappeared throughout the entire period of study with no breaks, nor any change in language used. This further supports the idea that *Granma* has a hegemonic purpose, as the ideas and values expressed by the dominant class were maintained over time despite changes in policy, external interference or natural occurrences.

Table 3: Timeline of Events

Date	Event
1973	The last flight from Havana to Miami ends the Cuban airlift which brought 260,561 refugees from Cuba to the U.S. The 13 th Congress of the Cuban Labour Federation ties wages to productivity in an effort to increase efficiency.
1975	The Organization of American States votes to end economic and diplomatic sanctions against Cuba.
1976	Cuba invokes a new constitution claiming the island as a socialist state, creates the new provinces which still exist today.
1977	President Carter of the U.S. drops the ban on travel by U.S. citizens and allows them to spend money in Cuba.
1979	Cuba develops a close relationship with the new Sandinista regime in Nicaragua which is condemned by the U.S.
1980	Castro’s administration allows farmers to sell their produce in Farmer’s Markets where prices are unregulated and transactions are between private individuals. Castro opens the door for people to leave during the Mariel Boatlift. Approximately 125,000 refugees leave for the U.S.
1981	The election of Ronald Reagan as President of the U.S. sees a tightening of the U.S. embargo against Cuba.
1982	Reagan reinstates the travel ban and forbids U.S. citizens to spend money in Cuba.
1985	Reagan bans the travel of Cuban diplomats to the U.S.
1986	The Soviet Union announces a \$3 billion program of economic aid to Cuba. The Castro administration bans the Farmer’s Markets.
1990	The U.S. congress passes the Mack Amendment which prohibits trade by all subsidiaries of U.S. companies and encourages sanctions against companies that trade with Cuba.
1991	The disbanding of the Soviet Union ends approximately \$6 billion in aid annually to Cuba.

Date	Event
1992	The Cuban Democracy Act is passed in the U.S. prohibiting family remittances and strengthening the ban on subsidiary trade by U.S. companies.
1993	<p>The official beginning of the 'Special Period' in Cuba, characterized by rationing of goods and cutbacks to services.</p> <p>Cuba administration allows the use of U.S. dollars as currency on the island.</p> <p>Some state-farms are transformed into cooperative arrangements.</p> <p>The administration allows limited individual private enterprise.</p>
1996	President Clinton of the U.S. signs the Helms-Burton act which allows American citizens to sue foreign companies who make use of property seized by the revolution in Cuba. Also it denies entry to the U.S. of foreign investors with holdings in Cuba.
1998	<p>Pope John Paul II visits Cuba</p> <p>U.S. eases restrictions on familial remittances sent back to Cuba by exiles.</p>
2001	Hurricane Michelle hits the island ruining crops and destroying homes.
2003	75 dissidents are rounded up by the Castro regime and jailed for terms of up to 28 years.

Role of These Themes in Promoting Hegemony in Cuba

The content of the text in media espoused by the dominant class is essential in considering hegemony. The content of the themes themselves reveals an attempt to establish hegemony. A conclusion might be reached that the media are not promoting hegemony, but simply reporting the important issues prevalent in society. This does not appear to be the case in Cuba. The fact that the themes and the content found in the media are identical to those found in the speeches points to a sustained effort to create hegemony. This is further confirmed by the fact that the themes discovered were the only themes found. There were no themes that were unique either to the newspaper or to the speeches. Had *Granma* simply been reporting the important issues in news, then there would likely be at least one news example in which ideas and values were different from

the speeches. These themes aid in the establishment of hegemony because they help to create a system of content within *Granma* where the supremacy of the views of the dominant group remains unchallenged.

The content of the speeches and *Granma* work together to demonstrate a sustained and consistent effort to create a hegemony of ideas and cultural attitudes towards the Cuban economy. The theme concerning external influences draws the public's attention away from the domestic causes of problems with the economy. The policy theme helps to assuage concerns, by informing the public about new decisions and policy implementation creating a facade about the nature of public consultation. The production and sugar themes each draw the public's attention to specific areas of the economy, namely the quantity of goods produced, in particular sugar. This may draw attention away from other sectors of the economy. The revolution theme ties all of themes together, and attempts to unite the public in support of the Revolution and the Cuban leadership, which in essence is a call to support the dominant group and their ideas and values, thus helping to create hegemony. In this manner, the themes work together to support hegemony. This section discusses the hegemonic characteristics of each theme.

External Influences

The first theme to be discussed, which arose out of both Castro's speeches and *Granma*, relates to external influences on the Cuban economy. There were four types of external influences discussed in the sources: American influence on the Cuban economy, the collapse of the Soviet Union, international economic conditions, and natural disasters. Generally, mention of external influences could be categorized as either boastful and

congratulatory, or blaming. The boastful type can be characterised by mention of how the Cuban economy overcame the odds posed by external sources, while the blame type can be characterized by blaming economic woes on external forces. These are two ways in which the themes played into a continuation of the dominant group's ideas and values.

The boastful, congratulatory example of this theme heaps success on the ideas and values espoused by the leadership. Thus, any success achieved by the economy, the revolution or the nation, occurs in spite of external pressure. The success can also be attributed to the values and ideas espoused by the dominant group. When Castro says,

We told them [foreign visitors] that despite the imperialist blockade and its constant conspiracy against our economy, despite sabotage activities which even reached the extent of introducing plagues and diseases to plants and human beings, our economy in 25 years has grown at an average rate of 4.7 percent (LANIC, 2003)

he is continuing the idea that this growth is due to the revolution. Further, Castro uses the term 'blockade' which contains much stronger connotations than the word more traditionally used outside of Cuba, 'embargo'. By mentioning the success achieved in spite of the 'blockade', Castro is able to attribute the success to the ideas and values provided by the Party, the dominant group. Thus the boastful type of the external influences theme attempts to create and maintain hegemony by attributing economic success to the ideas and values of the elite.

The blame type of the external influences theme is also connected to the efforts to construct hegemony in Cuba. By attributing economic problems to external sources, be they the embargo, the collapse of the U.S.S.R., natural disasters, or the world economy, Castro manages to turn the blame for poor economic performance from the dominant

ideas and values to external sources beyond the control of the dominant group. The following example is from one of Castro's speeches in 1993, "however, that authentic revolution (USSR) has also crumbled, or, to be more exact, was made to crumble. This was a terrible blow for our country, in every sense. It affected us politically, militarily, and especially economically" (LANIC, 2003 – emphasis mine). This example informs the public that problems with the economy are due to the collapse of the USSR, and directs attention away from domestic causes. Another example which blames the world economy achieves the same effect, "There were other adverse factors. Nickel prices dropped more than \$1000 per ton, partly as a result of the surplus minerals former socialist countries had and were throwing into the market from their reserves." (LANIC, 2003) Thus, the blame example serves to create and maintain hegemony by attributing economic problems on external influences and not on the values and ideas of the dominant group.

The external influences theme is perhaps the most important of all the themes, although it is the least frequent of the themes, only visible in *Granma* during October 1991 and July 1993. However, this theme is also visible in Castro's speeches as early as 1984. There was consistent appearance of the different types of external influences, without any being more prevalent during any given period of time. While the other themes discuss domestic issues the focus of the external influences theme is outside of the country. The content of the theme creates a situation where the success of the economy, the revolution, and the nation, is determined outside of the state. The external influences theme, by taking on two different forms, creates a situation where any popular

resentment towards the condition of the economy can be redirected to extra-national sources. Any problem with the economy is due not to the dominant ideology, but rather caused by variables beyond the reach of any domestic ideology. In contrast, success of the economy is attributed to the policies, values and ideas of the dominant group, thus helping to maintain hegemony by maintaining the supremacy of the dominant group's views and ideas.

Domestic Economic Policy

The theme concerning policy deals with Cuban economic policy as presented in Castro's speeches and in *Granma*. This theme is relevant as perception of economic policy, including policy formation and implementation, will have important repercussions for the maintenance of hegemony. The important material from this area, unlike the other themes, is not necessarily what is mentioned in the media and speeches but rather what is left out. A lack of information can contribute to hegemony by removing pertinent information that might challenge dominant values and ideas, leaving civil society with nothing but to agree with the dominant values. The policy theme is visible in three different ways: discussing the implementation of policy, correcting policy, or the formation of policy.

The policy theme contributes to the construction of a hegemonic discourse surrounding the economy. The need for consent in the formation and implementation of policy is essential to avoid revolt. If the policies sprung from ideas and values held by the dominant groups then consent with these policies can be seen as hegemonic. In this area, the media as well as the leadership of the Party, Fidel Castro, have displayed a lack

of information which helps to maintain hegemony. This is visible in all of the ways in which the policy theme is displayed.

When discussing how policy is corrected, *Granma* and the speeches serve to suggest to readers and listeners alike that errors are being corrected, and furthermore that these errors were not the fault of anything in particular to begin with. For example, an article entitled "*Trataran en la Habana asuntos de dirección de economía socialista en reunión de carácter internacional*", from February of 1984, describes a meeting of economic ministers from various socialist countries arriving in Havana to discuss economic problems and solutions that occur in socialist systems. In paternalistic fashion there is no mention of the actual problems or solutions themselves; the article just provides a list of who is attending the meeting. The lack of information concerning the policy correction also helps to reinforce the idea that this change is a mere presentation for the public, rather than an actual change in policy. This contributes to the maintenance of the dominant group's values and ideas by creating a system where the public lack information which may provide critical views of the administration.

The discussion relating to the implementation of policy is perhaps the one lacking the most information content. Throughout the months in which this theme persists, there is a reluctance to actually describe what is being implemented. For example, this excerpt from *Granma* in May of 2003 displays a lack of real definition about what is going on.

El proceso de perfeccionamiento empresarial, considerado como aspecto esencial en la Resolución Económica del V congreso del Partido, se implanta en 24 empresas de esta provincia y según consideran los especialistas, los resultados hasta la fecha son alentadores. ... Las entidades pertenecen a los diferentes sectores de la economía. (May 6th, p. 2)

It informs the public that something is occurring without giving details about what. This is consistent with the effort to create hegemony, as there is not enough information to make judgements or criticisms about the policies involved. Thus the policies, embodying the values and ideas of the dominant group, will be continued.

The policy theme is also apparent when discussion centres on the formation of policy, which also contributes to hegemony. In many areas of both the articles and the speeches, there was discussion about policy, particularly the formation of new policy, with emphasis on different areas of the economy. For example, in October of 1991, Castro discusses the formation of new policy:

We will continue to develop our plans to promote tourism. We will continue to develop all our economic plans. ... Under the leadership of the socialist revolution and government, we will adopt the measures we must adopt so that our factories will continue to operate and our workers will continue to work. (LANIC, 2003)

Tourism is the new economic force, and thus it is implied that policy is moving to develop the tourist industry. Yet there is no actual discussion of policy. This lack of informed discussion seeks to persuade the public that the policies of the dominant group have the capacity to succeed. In the example above the audience is told that developing tourism is a 'plan' and that this will help to keep the workers working. This is an obvious attempt by the leadership to persuade the people to hold fast to the ideas and values of the dominant group for they will prevail. Thus, discussion of the formation of policy is hegemonic because it supports the values and ideas of the dominant group, and is limited to decision makers.

Economic Production

Policy is but one of the ways that domestic issues are focused to play a role in perpetuating dominant values and ideas. The production theme is another domestic focus. The main function of the theme is to persuade the public to believe that if the economy is doing well it is because the nation is producing lots of goods. If the economy is not doing so well, all that is needed to fix it is an increase in production. This theme was present in all of the months studied in *Granma*, as well as being displayed in many of Castro's speeches. The production theme is the broadest and most frequent of all the themes presented and is very much tied into other theme areas, articles and speeches that focus on other themes frequently also contain mentions of increasing economic production. The overall hegemonic properties of the theme are that it focuses the reader/listener on the productivity of the nation. This contributes to hegemony because ideology is never discussed and the dominant values and ideas are never challenged.

The production theme is displayed in four different ways (or forms), in articles and speeches that are either informative, explanatory, congratulatory, or encouraging. Much like the other themes, these areas are not mutually exclusive and many articles and speeches display many aspects of the production theme. Articles that are informative attempt to provide readers and/or listeners with information about current or past economic production. Data that was explanatory in nature aims to show why production has decreased. When it is congratulatory, it recognises by name, the workers, factories or other groups for the work that they have produced during a given period. The

encouraging form of the production theme is linked to the congratulatory form to encourage the citizenry to produce more or work harder.

The informative form of the production theme also contributes to hegemony. This usage of the theme focuses on giving information about the productive output or capacities of various sectors of the economy. The informative type of the production theme was the most common of all of the ways that this theme was displayed. In hegemonic fashion, this form tries to get the readers and listeners to focus on the production that is occurring or is capable of occurring. Examples of this usage of the production theme include the following from *Granma*: "*el plan de siembra de primavera de este año fue cumplido prácticamente al ser plantadas casi, 2,300 caballerías nacionalmente para un 98 por ciento. Esto significó 800 caballerías por encima del plan*" articles from July of 1986, "*se triplicó la producción mercantil de la empresa DATINSAC durante el quinquenio 81-85.*" (July 2nd, p. 3) On the 18th of July 1986, another article explains that "*creció la pesca en un 20 por ciento en el primer semestre*" (p. 1). These examples and this type of usage in general, contribute to hegemony, not by discussing the ideas and values behind the economy but by implying that the administration's values and ideas are resulting in increases in production. The examples above focus the attention of the masses towards one aspect of the economy, production, an aspect of the economy that reinforces the values and ideas associated with the dominant group.

When the production theme is displayed in an explanatory fashion, it also contributes to hegemony. This usage of the theme is similar to the external influences theme, in that it shifts the focus of economic problems away from ideology or policy of

the leadership. Unlike the treatment of external influences, the explicatory form is only visible when drops in production, or production problems are discussed. These problems include items such as drought and organizational problems. In one case, Castro explains drops in production, "Man is not at fault for this. ... We have had some industrial problems in certain provinces" (LANIC, 2003). The first sentence of the quote turns the blame for the problems away from any ideas that man has had, whether it be the ideas of the dominant group or of the masses. The second sentence, while explaining some of the economic problems, does not provide particular details of the problems, nor are any solutions discussed.

There are exceptions to the rule in the explicatory type of article examining production. One article on the 2nd of October 1991 mentions the problems that were encountered in the fishery. "*En los últimos tiempos no marchó bien a causa de una errónea política de sobreexplotación de los embalses, en especial el de Alacranes y a la no repoblación de estos*" (p. 2). *Granma* blames the government for the problems by describing them as 'political errors', while at the same time explaining the cause for some of the problems of previous years. This still contributes to hegemony, as the article's treatment of problems is very dismissive and no in-depth analyses of the 'political errors' are forthcoming. The example is also hegemonic in that it gives the appearance that the Cuban administration is being self-critical, exactly what a socialist administration should be, without actually conducting a detailed examination. This is the only example of all the sources considered where the government attributes any economic errors to the government itself.

Support for the dominant group is continued in the encouraging and congratulatory types of articles that deal with production. The usage of congratulatory and encouraging phrases and concepts linked to production maintains the focus of the readers and listeners on economic production, and not on any of the other values or ideas surrounding the economy. Both of these types of the theme contribute to the construction of a hegemonic discourse about the economy. The congratulatory usage arises when praise is offered to those who are conforming with the ideas of the dominant group. This has the capacity to encourage others to do the same. For example, one article from the 17th of January 1976, describes how the sugar mill 'Panama' "*Presentó el mejor trabajo entre las centrales grandes en el primer chequeo de zafra*" (p. 1). Another article from the 7th of January 1976 congratulates the workers of the factory 'Amador Blanco Pena' for completing its annual quota for 1975. By congratulating those who conform to the dominant values and ideas, this type of article attempts to maintain the supremacy of these ideas and values. The encouragement form of the production theme is far less subtle. Examples such as the headline, "*Criterio Común: producir más*" (July 13th, 1993, p. 2) as well as, "*No será sólo del MINAZ, sino por parte de todos los revolucionarios y el pueblo, quienes expondrán lo que se ha hecho y lo que se continúa haciendo en la principal industria del país*" (July 14th, 1993, backpage) encourage the masses towards the goal of production, a goal which, as previously discussed, fails to allow for a challenge to the values and ideas of the dominant group.

Overall, the production theme helps to focus the attention of the subordinate groups on a single facet of the economy, productivity. The ways in which the production

theme is expressed helps to divert attention from any aspect of the economy that might challenge the values and ideas held by the dominant group. Further, the encouragement and congratulatory forms of the theme direct the readers and listeners to follow the dominant ideology. Therefore, the production theme is consistent with the construction of hegemony in regards to the economy as it protects the supremacy of the dominant group's ideas and values.

Sugar

The theme relating to sugar is unique in that it exhibits some aspects of all of the other themes. The fact that sugar was the only industry given any sort of specific continuous coverage by *Granma*, coupled with the number of mentions that sugar receives in both articles and speeches, requires that sugar be given the distinction of having its own thematic category. The theme of sugar plays a dual role in the creation of a hegemonic discourse. First, sugar plays a similar role to that of the production theme, distracting attention away from anything that might contradict values and ideals held by the dominant group. The sugar industry was the only industry given serious coverage in both the speeches and articles. By focusing the reader's energy on one industry, one that has historically been important to the Cuban economy, the newspaper and speeches marginalize questions about the ideas and values of the dominant group. Sugar becomes the standard in the media by which the economy is judged, and on which the economy relies. Sentences like: "*La recuperación económica del país dependerá en mucho de la recuperación cañera*" (September 17th, 1993, p. 1) encourage readers to believe that the economy is dependent on the sugar harvest; and that other factors like policy, ideology,

or even other industries, do not play as much of a role. It can be argued that this discussion of the importance of sugar is not hegemonic because the reality is that Cuban economy does depend on sugar. However the fact that other industries, including the important tourist industry, are largely ignored by *Granma* demonstrates the reluctance of the newspaper to discuss any industries which may provide controversial material. Sugar is a 'safe' industry to discuss and focussing on sugar allows the administration to avoid criticism of its handling of other industries.

The second facet of sugar's implications for hegemony is tied in with the other themes, namely whenever the sugar industry is mentioned in either the speeches or the articles, it is always in context of another theme. This means that all of the implications for hegemony found in the other themes discussed in this chapter are also found and repeated in sugar.

Revolution

The revolution theme is the most political of the economic themes which arose from the sources. This theme broadly deals with the political aspect of the Cuban economy in that it is vital in linking the economy to the Cuban revolution and the Cuban government. The revolution theme provides the most important content for any analysis of hegemony with respect to the economy in Cuba. Fidel Castro, the head of state, along with other members of the politburo, including Fidel's brother, Raul Castro, have long maintained that Cuba is in a period of revolution. Since the early 1960s, they have also maintained that this is a 'socialist' revolution. This revolutionary framework creates a hegemonic construct that is visible in the newspaper as well as the speeches. When the

theme of revolution arose in the sources, it tended to focus on nationalism, the continuing fight for the revolution, and the importance of socialism.

A sense of nationalism was fostered in the discussion of the 'Cubanness' of the situation that confronts the nation and the idea that solutions will have a Cuban origin. While not very common in the speeches and articles, the nationalism form of the revolutionary theme nevertheless supports hegemony in Cuba. For example, a front page headline on the 11th of October 1991, states that "*Los problemas de nuestro país, como lo fueron a lo largo de la historia, sólo los puede resolver nuestro país, la revolución*" (p. 1). Another article from the same day quotes one of the administrators, Esteban Lazo, "*Lazo proclamó que seguimos creyendo en las ideas que han alentado y sustentan nuestra indolegable lucha y dijo que mantendremos en alto nuestra indeclinable bandera, y confiamos en las masas, nuestro pueblo y en nuestro futuro*" (p. 3 – emphasis mine). These instances show an emphasis on the 'Cubanness' of the problems, of the struggle, and of the revolution. The word 'our' appears frequently, connecting the readership and the nation, emphasizing they are the same, uniting the masses and the leadership. Problems or successes with the economy are not to be celebrated or denounced individually, but rather as a nation, working as one. Such an approach is clearly hegemonic as it directly puts the masses together with the leadership, without distinguishing between them. Thus, no allowance is made for the fact that different voices and opinions, values and ideas, might exist amongst the masses. Everyone is 'Cuban', and it is everyone's duty to find solutions to 'Cuban' problems.

Successes too, are not the victories of the leadership, or of the values of the dominant group, but are the successes of 'the Revolution', to be shared by everyone. At least this is the impression given in the news and the speeches from the leadership. For example, Castro describes relative success during a period of hardship, "our revolution did not leave a single worker destitute, not even during the special period" (LANIC, 2003). The word 'our' connects the listeners and the citizenry of Cuba to the revolution, and to the successes this brought (the fact that no one was left destitute). Thus, this nationalistic sentiment creates a situation where the values of the dominant group are portrayed as being the values of the masses, and vice-versa, a hegemonic construction.

The revolution theme is also displayed when the sources discuss fighting for the revolution. In this form of the theme, present in almost every month studied, the economy is tied to the continuing 'success' of the revolution. This form of the revolution theme relies on the use of words that link the aspects of the economy to revolutionary ideas or actions. Fighting for the revolution is evident in both articles and speeches and calls upon the populace to maintain the fight for the revolution, through both good times and bad. Castro claims in one of his speeches, "we will never yield to any form of hegemonism, we will never accept the unipolar domination of the Yankee empire" (LANIC, 2003). Like the nationalism form of the revolution theme, the fighting for the revolution form helps to promote hegemony by uniting the masses and the leadership against outside forces bent on destruction.

The language used in this form of the theme creates a wartime feel to the Cuban situation. The following examples from *Granma* issues from January of 1976, illustrate this feeling.

- "*Corto batallan de combinada KTP-1 del central 'Eduardo Garcia Lavandero', 107,000 arrobas en la jornada del pasado lunes*" (7th January, p. 1 -emphasis mine).
- "*Los hombres y mujeres incorporados a la batalla por la optimización permanente en esa provincia, defienden con entusiasmo*," (6th January, p. 1 -emphasis mine).
- "*con el fin de luchar por su cumplimiento en tiempo y forma*" (8th January, p. 1 -emphasis mine).
- "*Oriente analizar estos aspectos en cada central, impulsar el movimiento millonario y luchar por cumplir el plan de entrega de caña a los ingenios*" (15th January, p. 1 -emphasis mine).

As can be seen, the language used creates the idea that the leadership and the masses are united in a battle for the nation and for the revolution, consistent with an attempt to maintain hegemony by portraying the ideas of the dominant group as being worthy of fighting for.

The importance of socialism, a different type of the revolutionary theme, is displayed in what can only be described as a rhetorical manner. Although the ideas are not well formed, there is a call by authorities to maintain or celebrate socialism. Again, such statements are hegemonic. In particular, the discussion of the importance of socialism seeks to validate the values and ideas of the dominant group by classifying them as important for the future of the country, as well as presenting them as superior to other ideas. Socialism itself is a direct product of the leadership of the revolution, not of

the masses. This conclusion can be reached due to the fact that the leaders of the revolution did not declare it to be a 'socialist' revolution at the outset, and there was never a referendum, or even a survey conducted, to determine if the masses were in favour of socialism. In early 2003 a plebiscite was conducted on the issue with the result⁵ that there was mass support for socialism in Cuba. This plebiscite suggests that consent from the masses is important to Cuban leadership, and along with relatively low levels of coercion, provides evidence that efforts to create hegemony may be succeeding, given the increasing level of economic problems on the island. Despite the recent plebiscite, the leadership's idea of 'socialism' was forced on the masses. The slogan from the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba demonstrates the importance that is placed on socialism, "*salvar la patria, la revolución y el socialismo*" (October 10th, 1991: p. 1 & 5). This slogan inextricably links the nation to the revolution, as well as to socialism. Other examples of these links are readily available:

y lo más importante, una elevada moral revolucionaria, la cohesión del pueblo en torno a su revolución, su partido, su líder histórico y su proyección socialista (October 17th, 1991: P. 3- Emphasis mine).

The underlined passages exemplify the superiority that is connected with socialism, while at the same time connecting the people to 'their' revolution, 'their' party and 'their' historic leader and his socialist projection. These words thus clearly link a sense of nationalism with socialism, thus creating both positive and negative incentives for complying with this vision of Cuba's future. Furthermore, the subordinate masses are

⁵ Results of plebiscites such as this are very dubious in Cuba as the method of conducting the voting is not open for outside examination.

told (not asked) that the conditions of the country are ‘theirs’ and that the leader is also ‘their leader’, thus suggesting that the leader's ideas are the people's ideas. There is also the implication through the revolution theme that there are no other alternatives to capitalism except for Cuban socialism. Finally this theme also implies that Cuba is a socialist nation in spite of evidence to the contrary which will be discussed in the concluding chapter. The ideas of the dominant seem to become the ideas of the subordinate in terms of the support for socialism. This is another illustration of a hegemonic apparatus.

Dissent

Further, there are no dissenting views provided in the articles or the speeches, let alone reports of surveys or interviews which have input in the nation’s discourse. Put together, the themes help to create a situation that does not allow for the growth of new ideas or confrontation of the dominant ideas within the medium studied. Dissenting views provide many societies with a possibility to challenge the dominant ideology and counteract hegemonic forces by giving voice to the subordinate masses, in particular, organic intellectuals⁶. A lack of open dissent contributes to the construction of hegemonic discourse, for without a visible opposition, civil society is drawn to the values and ideas created by the dominant group. The dominant group, historically, has the funding and resources, not to mention power, to push their views on civil society.

⁶See Chapter 1 section on organic intellectuals.

Conclusion

The aspects of analysis that have been discussed about themes, theme consistency, content and dissent are all evidence of sustained efforts to create hegemony in Cuba, and reveal the nature of the political communication used to support it. In order to prove that hegemony exists on the island, one needs proof that the inhabitants actually believe in the discourse spreading from the dominant group. The situation in Cuba does not allow for such a study, because the restrictions placed on academic research make conducting such a study not feasible. However there are indications that the population does agree with the ideas and values spread by the dominant group. Whether the population agrees with the state's depiction of socialism out of their own preferences or whether they have been "convinced" to believe in the socialist model by hegemonic efforts is impossible to determine conclusively. The lack of open coercion on the island is indicative that there is not widespread unrest or opposition to the regime. The recent plebiscite that had the overwhelming result of supporting continued socialism on the island, as well as the shows of support on important dates such as Labour Day, also suggest that there is some support for the values and ideas of the dominant group. Indeed, the existence of some level of voluntary agreement is consistent with Gramsci's theory.

The existence of a hegemonic discourse in the text of *Granma* and the speeches can at least suggest that hegemony exists. The themes displayed in the newspaper reflect those held by the dominant group, as seen in Castro's speeches, pointing towards hegemony. The fact that there is consistency in themes over time especially in the face of

change on the domestic policy and international levels shows that the ideas and values of the dominant group are maintained in the media. The content of the themes, the phrasing and the focus further support the ideas and values of the dominant group. The bottom line is that there is no way to gauge the population's "genuine" views because of the coercive control of communication and ideas in Cuba. It is extremely important therefore to note that in Gramsci's theory, both coercive and non-coercive methods of compliance work together to reinforce the supremacy of the ideas and values of the dominant group. Thus, it has been shown that the relationship between the media and the dominant group are consistent with Gramsci's ideas of how hegemonic relationships function, the first conclusion of this study. The positive result of this examination using a Gramscian framework supports the second conclusion, that the tools Gramsci provided in his theory of hegemony, explained in Chapter one, are relevant and applicable to the Cuban situation. However, consistent with third conclusion, to be discussed next, the nature of this suggested hegemony in Cuba takes a form that the theory and literature outlined in Chapter one has not yet described. The relationship between hegemony and the state in Cuba, as well as the 'war of position' being fought, differ from what is traditionally expected in a hegemonic situation. This has important implications for the explaining the sustainability of the present system on the island.

Chapter Three: Conclusion

The previous chapter described and analysed the data which resulted in the first two conclusions of this study. The third conclusion, about the nature of hegemony in Cuba is discussed in this final chapter. This chapter also discusses how the Cuban situation relates to the Gramscian theory outlined in Chapter one and what the implications of this study are for Cuba in particular and for socialism, hegemony and society in general.

Hegemony and the Cuban State

The relationship between hegemony and the state is a complex affair which differs greatly between societies. Chapter one discussed the state's role in hegemony at the theoretical level. The state plays a key role in hegemony as an instigator and perpetuator of the hegemonic construct. In Cuba, the state can be equated with the Cuban Communist Party, the sole decision makers and only legal political party on the island. This creates a dominant group, through which the values and ideas necessary for hegemony can be constructed. By taking an ideological position for 'socialism' or 'communism' the state has given itself cause to limit the availability of dissenting views and to pronounce itself as the sole expert on socialist revolution, especially when discussing economic policy.

The Cuban state, in perpetuating a hegemonic discourse about the economy of Cuba in *Granma*, has acted in a distinctly un-socialist manner. Chapter one has shown

that on the theoretical level, socialist states, or states undergoing socialist revolution, are in a state of counter-hegemony. That is to describe that

while the former [hegemonic change in Western capitalism] have involved a struggle initiated by civil society against the state as a major hegemonic bulwark, the latter [hegemonic change in state socialism] have been driven by the power of the state against those elements of civil society which are seen as strongholds of antisocialist hegemony. (Blecher, 1989, p. 7)

Blecher's study of hegemony in China showed how the Chinese were unable to root out these "strongholds of antisocialist hegemony", leaving remnants of a pre-revolution hegemony. (Blecher, 1989, p. 7) However, the present study has shown that the Cuban state has a very different relationship with hegemony. The themes of production, revolution, policy, and sugar, which appear in the articles studied, are not socialist themes, in the sense of promoting the elimination of group differences created by capitalism. The recent policy moves in Cuba to promote capitalist sectors, including tourism, dollar exchanges, and the privatisation of the telecommunications network, back up the conclusion that control of power, rather than socialism, are the priorities of the Cuban leadership.

The only anti-capitalist theme perpetuated by *Granma* was the external influences theme. By blaming capitalism for economic failure, or boasting that in spite of the capitalist blockade success can be achieved, the state does provide a counter-capitalist discourse. However, this discourse is not necessarily the counter-capitalist hegemony explained in hegemonic theory. Hegemonic theory, as outlined by Blecher (1989) and Femia (1989) calls for socialist hegemony to have as its focus the expulsion of capitalist ideas and values. Femia clearly states that a successful socialist revolution is not "simply

a matter of substituting one hegemony for another"(Femia, 1981, p. 53). Yet this is what appears to have happened in Cuba. The external influences theme, while important, is not the theme most prevalent in either the speeches or the newspaper, therefore it cannot provide the focus of Cuban hegemony. Even the theme of revolution does not provide an anti-capitalist discourse. It seeks to impose a new hegemony by focussing on upholding socialism, rather than getting rid of capitalism. The hegemonic discourse displayed in Cuba is not counter-hegemony in a Gramscian sense, but rather the dominant hegemony that promotes the values and interests of the Cuban Communist Party.

The hegemony-state relationship discussed here demonstrates that the actions of the Cuban administration and its hegemonic discourse in Cuba are not socialist in nature. This is further demonstrated when the theory behind the 'war of position' is applied to the Cuban situation, which would require remaining in a state of counter-hegemony.

Gramsci's 'War of Position' in Cuba

As outlined in chapter one, Gramsci posited that there were two facets to any kind of revolution, a 'war of manoeuvre' and a 'war of position'. The first was likened to a physical battle, the second to a battle of ideas. The 'war of manoeuvre' in the case of Cuba was the actual physical overthrow of the Batista regime. The battle of ideas plays itself out in the realm of civil society. In regards to the 'war of position' Joseph Femia, noted Gramscian scholar, explains that a successful revolution, is not "simply a matter of substituting one hegemony for another" (Femia, 1981, p.53), but rather transforming the idea of hegemony itself. Whereas capitalist hegemony hides the truth from the majority

of society, a counter-hegemony or communist hegemony must be one that exposes the exploitation of the masses and "*supersedes it*" (Femia, p. 1981, emphasis mine).

The hegemonic discourse visible in Cuba ascertained from Castro's speeches and articles in *Granma*, does not conform to this theory of a communist 'war of position'. The theory requires that a 'war of position' from a communist standpoint continue the struggle against strongholds of capitalism. The majority of the themes discovered regarding the economy in Cuba, rather than exposing capitalist fallacies and oppression, seek to establish a new hegemony where the ideas and values of the Cuban Communist Party dominate. Whereas the revolutionary 'war of manoeuvre' was completed on January 1st, 1959 with the flight of the capitalist ruler and the installation of the revolutionary regime, the 'war of position' did not take a socialist form. Instead of struggling to rid civil society of capitalist hegemony, the new dominant group, the Cuban Communist Party, seeks to install its own hegemony in the place of the capitalist hegemony.

Socialism and Cuba

Cuba exhibits a hegemonic construct that is similar to the one which exists in capitalist societies. There is a dominant group, the Cuban Communist Party, which imposes its ideas and values on civil society. However, Cuba differs from a capitalist hegemony in that there is no open dissent. Traditionally, capitalist societies have displayed a counter-hegemony which is visible in civil society. Cuba does not display this counter-hegemony.

While differing from capitalist hegemony, Cuba also differs from socialist hegemony. Hegemony in a socialist system is theoretically supposed to be counter-

hegemony, aimed at rooting out the remainders of capitalist hegemony. Cuba does not exhibit this trait. The Cuban hegemonic system, as displayed through Castro's speeches and *Granma*, appears to attempt to impose a new hegemony not counter-hegemony. Thus, a new type hegemonic construct has been created in Cuba providing the third conclusion of this study, that the hegemonic discourse in Cuba is of a form that has not been previously examined in the literature. This hegemonic system is nothing like the theoretical hegemony under socialism, yet it displays traits that are common to capitalist hegemony. Like capitalist hegemony, the new hegemonic system strives to hide the masses from their own oppression. The main feature of this new hegemonic construct is that the dominant group, led by the Cuban Communist Party, is now the only voice in civil society. There has been an apparent unification of ideas and values between civil society and the state, with no room for others. There is no open dissent; the voices of organic intellectuals have been silenced in the media. Pertaining to the economy, Cuba has demonstrated this new hegemonic discourse. It comes under a guise of 'communism' as the dominant group describes itself as 'communist', even though the hegemonic system perpetrated under this group is not socialist style hegemony.

This study has three main conclusions. First, using a Gramscian framework, an analysis of the state's attempt to influence civil society, as represented by the media, was conducted in Cuba in order to ascertain if the state-civil society relationship was consistent with Gramsci's theory of hegemony. The themes that emerged from the examination, when analysed over time and compared with an examination of the ideas and values of the dominant group, led to the conclusion that a hegemonic discourse does

exist in Cuba. This finding creates a second conclusion that a study based on the Gramscian model using the tools developed here is both practical and relevant for a wide variety of societies. The third conclusion, that the hegemonic discourse in Cuba is different in nature than what has been discussed in the literature, provides insight into state-socialist societies in general.

The above discussion has shown that the hegemonic system in Cuba is not one that falls into traditional theoretical types of hegemony. Instead there is a different type of discourse, a 'unified' hegemony, where the views of the dominant group appear to be unchallenged in civil society. This 'unified' hegemony has important implications for our understanding of socialism. Based on the type of hegemonic system that exists, Cuba cannot be characterised as a socialist or communist state. A socialist state would require a socialist hegemony, which Cuba does not display. Previously, a Gramscian framework had yielded two types of hegemony, capitalist hegemony and communist, or socialist, hegemony. Cuba does not display either of these two types of theoretical constructions, but rather exhibits a new kind of hegemonic discourse.

The implications for socialism are that a Gramscian analysis can be one of the tools used to define the nature of a state. Cuba has maintained since 1961 that it is a 'socialist' state. The hegemonic discourse that has been created, as demonstrated by this study, has shown that Cuba does not conform to theories of a socialist state. A socialist state would exhibit a different type of hegemonic system than that which exists in Cuba. Thus, it can be speculated that a Gramscian analysis of any nation can show what type of ideology is being followed by the dominant group. A capitalist society would exhibit a

capitalist hegemony; a socialist society, a socialist hegemony; a state-socialist dictatorship, a 'unified' hegemony.

Implications for Hegemony

The finding of a 'unified' hegemonic discourse in Cuba has important implications for hegemonic theory. The largest implication for hegemonic theory gathered from the case of Cuba is that the non-coercive elements of hegemony could provide a strong method of control, when it exists in a stable system. This is displayed in the fact that Cuba has successfully staved off drastic changes to the revolutionary government while the other state-socialist experiments have failed dismally. The more capable use of the media and the strength and charisma of Fidel Castro, as well as the genuine early accomplishments of the Revolution are the most probable reasons for the sustainability of "socialism" in Cuba.

This study has shown that the hegemonic discourse surrounding the economy in Cuba is 'unified' or complete. The masses have no easily accessible alternative viewpoints available to them, which might conceivably support a collapse. Coupled with this discourse is the encroachment on the island by the U.S. As is visible in the external influences theme, the existence of an external source of interference can function to draw the anger and frustration of the masses away from the dominant ideology. The strength of this hegemonic discourse can be inferred from the fact that open coercion of the kind frequently displayed by the military and police forces of other Latin American nations is absent in Cuba. There does not appear to be the need for coercion on the same level as other nations, contributing to the suggestion that hegemony may have been achieved.

This relative lack of physical coercion helps to preserve hegemony as well as the overall stability of the nation.

Stability is another factor that plays a role in explaining why the Cuban Revolution has managed to survive. Unlike other state-socialist countries, pre-capitalist China, USSR, the Eastern Bloc; Cuba has seen a very stable administration. There have been few purges, and the main figures remain the same as at the beginning of the revolution, Fidel and Raul Castro. This consistency can contribute to hegemony as a stable dominant class with unchanging values and ideas will have an easier time maintaining hegemony than a dominant class which is more volatile. The messages visible in the speeches and the newspaper help to support this conclusion. Even though the country has experienced a wide array of disappointments and successes the message has remained the same, helping to maintain stability.

Capitalist society, contrary to the predictions of Marx, or even of Gramsci himself, has not collapsed. Neo-liberalism and the 'American' way of life, are transforming our globe. With a few exceptions, Cuba and North Korea, all of the states that attempted to follow the path of socialist revolution - controlling the media, increasing desire for productivity and projecting themselves as societies under siege - have failed completely, reverting back to capitalist tendencies. The findings of a 'unified' hegemonic discourse in Cuba, while not conclusive, can provide one explanation for this phenomenon.

Capitalist society exhibits a traditional hegemony where there exists counter-hegemony against the values and ideas of the dominant classes, perpetrated by the

subordinate groups. This counter-hegemony allows for an outlet of ideas and frustration for members of subordinate groups who are displeased with the status quo. The 'unified' hegemony, exemplified by the discourse visible in Cuba, does not exhibit this same outlet. Dissident views are not allowed in civil society, possibly resulting in a build up of frustration where the only outlet is a complete overthrow of the dominant class as exemplified by the collapse of the Berlin wall in 1989, or the fall of the USSR in the early 1990s.

The implications for Cuban society are plain. As long as society has an outlet for disagreement, the population has the capability to deal with volatile governments and changes to the status quo. However, without an outlet, the population is left with no choice but to either go along with the changes, or remove those in power. Cuba has been able to stave-off drastic changes. While economic prosperity has fluctuated, the Cuban administration – as demonstrated in this study – has maintained a strong hegemonic discourse that has changed little from its inception many decades ago. This stability has helped Cuba avoid collapse. However, Cuban society has been given no tools to deal with drastic changes to the system in the future, such as Castro's death. As the Cuban state maintains complete control over the media and civil society the only possible result, short of voluntary change from above, is revolution from below.

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