Volume 23 Issue 47
Originally issued as F6



Global Journal of human-social science: F
Political Science
Volume 23 Issue 6 Version 1.0 Year 2023
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

Cuba - 30 Years of Innovation and Socialist Goals

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GJHSS-F Classification: *LCC: F1758*



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Tran Anh Cong [α], Tran Xuan Hiep [σ] & Nguyen Anh Hung [ρ]

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I. Introduction

Over the past three decades, the process of socialist construction and reform in Cuba has had many positive changes. Both maintaining the core political ideological stance, and transitioning to a market economy; both focusing on national identity, and integrating and adapting quickly to international changes - have become fundamental trends and goals. This article researches, analyzes and evaluates the general situation of Cuba's reform process over the past 30 years (1993-2023), typical factors affecting Cuba and prospects, orientation, and room for development of Cuba.

II. General Situation of Cuba's Innovation in the Last 30 Years (1993-2023)

Since the Cold War (after 1991), Cuba entered a period entire of disadvantages and difficulties when its ally the Soviet Union and the Eastern European socialist system collapsed. Cuba has wholly lost its close political partners, and its economy no longer has support from them (because before that, in Cuba's economy, the Soviet Union and socialist countries accounted for 80% of export turnover, providing 95% of gasoline, 57% of food, 51% of meat and most office tools, transportation, essential consumer goods (Thao, 2020)). To overcome this situation, since August 1993, leader Fidel Castro and the Cuban government have issued and implemented a series of crucial political adjustment and socio-economic reform measures: organization, rearranging the structure of the government apparatus; improving management in state agriculture; allowing expansion of individual occupations; healthy national finances; legalize the use of foreign currency among people.

Regarding the legal foundation, the Constitution 1976 is still applied as the legal framework of the political system, still, there were edits and supplements in 1992 and 2002 to be compatible with new situations and trends. In the revision of the Constitution 1992, the most essential amendment was to affirm and prove that the Cuban State is a secular state and not an atheist state (recognizing and legitimizing symbols and organizations, related religious functions and activities); and, eliminate some restrictions on foreign investment and grant foreign corporations limited ownership rights in Cuba if they enter into joint ventures with the regime. In the 2002 revision, the most essential amendment was the increased assertion that the current social regime in Cuba is permanent and irrevocable.

The 5th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba (Partido Comunista de Cuba - PCC), which took place in October 1997, is considered an important milestone that initiated many adjustments, reforms, innovations of the entire Cuban political system after that. The Congress Document affirms that the typical political goals and ideals in Cuba cannot be changed, but at each different historical moment, there must be appropriate paths and measures. The principles of democratic centralism, criticism and self-criticism are considered the leading factors ensuring that the Party is a tightly organized and energetic strategic advisory body (Thao, 2020). It is necessary to strengthen party discipline, and effectively fight against bureaucracy, and corruption in the Party and State. Priority must be given to developing a team of practical officers, young officers, female officers, officers of color and knowledge officers. The government apparatus needs to be restructured to limit administrative bloat, overlapping functions, and streamline staffing by 30-40% (redundant people receive 70% of salary until assigned to a new job position). The aspect of democracy and human rights must be emphasized, first of all the right to live, to be met and cared for in terms of food; grow up happily and healthily; to become a valuable, helpful person for society; enjoy equality, dignity and development. For economic development, it is necessary to thoroughly grasp four principles: (1) Only state directional targets, not specific targets; (2) Use domestic efforts primarily; (3) Focus on enhancing production and business

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efficiency as a critical task; and (4) Ensuring the socialist nature of economic reform processes.

Cuba still maintains the planned economic model, but there are many changes and more appropriate, practical, compelling directions. Accordingly, *first,* create a larger environment for forms of ownership and non-socialist production, business. *Second,* make the most of the possibilities to rectify, reorganize and consolidate the public ownership regime, consistently not turning to privatization. *Third,* add new nancial balances and macroeconomic tools to the thinking, practice of economic and business management.

In the field of foreign affairs, after the Cold War, Cuba gradually established and expanded diplomatic relations with most countries in the world, and actively participated in many globally and regional international organizations. Cuba prioritizes developing all-round relations with socialist countries in Asia (China, Vietnam, Laos, North Korea); restore and diversify relationships (especially economic relations) with Russia and Eastern European countries (even though they no longer follow a socialist regime). Cuba also regained its role and strengthened relations with neighboring countries and Latin American countries, and that became favorable when in the first decade and a half of the 21st century, most governments of Latin American countries were led by leftist forces. In December 2004, Cuba founded and is a vital, crucial member of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) - an alliance of many left-wing countries in Latin America. Cuba also has a unique, particular political, economic and social relationship with Venezuela when the left took power in the country from 1998 to present. In relations with the West, Cuba made a vital, a critical development when normalizing relations with Western European countries based on the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement signed with the European Union (UE) in March 2016. Cuba still maintains a determined struggle but responds flexibly to the US embargo policy that has changed over the years of presidents. Under President Bill Clinton (1993-2000) and President Bush Jr. (2001-2008), the United States increased the embargo on Cuba by implementing the Torricelli Act (issued in 1992) and Helms-Burton (1996). Under President Barack Obama (2009-2016), this policy was significantly relaxed, so that from July 2015, the two countries restored diplomatic relations and opened embassies in each other's capitals. However, under President Donald Trump (2017-2020), the policy of siege and embargo was applied again. The administration of President Joe Biden, who took over at the beginning of 2021, has continued to apply and even extend the embargo and strengthen sanctions since, Cuba suppressed of the protest movement in the second half of 2021.

In recent years, the Cuban context has had some important changes, typically the promulgating of the new Constitution in April 2019 and the 8th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba in April 2021. The Constitution 2019 replaced the Constitution 1976 (and amendments and supplements in 1992 and 2002), with many new regulations: (1) Recognizing private property and creating a freer market; (2) Prohibit discrimination based on gender, race, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability (this is the regulation that led to the legalization of same-sex marriage); (3) Ensure women's reproductive and sexual rights and protect women from gender-based violence; (4) Defining marriage as creating a social and legal organization (a family with at least 2 members); (5) Allowing to hold/hold multiple nationalities; (6) Restore the presumption of innocence and suspension of detention in the judicial system (these provisions were last enshrined in the 1940 Constitution); (7) Identify the importance of climate and its threats; (8) Establish a separate individual position of President (previously this position was called Chairman of the State Council and was part of the collective State Council) and a separate individual position of Prime Minister (previously called the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, concurrently held by the Chairman of the State Council); (9) Establish age limits for candidacy and number of terms for the position of President (The President cannot hold power for more than 2 terms and must be no more than 60 years old when first running for election); (10) Transfer the authority of the head of the State Council to the Chairman of the National Assembly (from now on, the Chairman of the National Assembly is also the Chairman of the State Council and the State Council is the standing agency of the National Assembly); (11) Establishment of a provincial council consisting of provincial and city leaders; (12) The positions of provincial chairman and mayor (in charge of executive duties) are supplemented and separated from the position of chairman of the provincial and city councils (previously, the concurrent position of chairman of the provincial and city councils, responsible for both the legislature and the executive); (13) The President and Vice President of a province or city appointed by the President must be approved by the provincial or city government; and (14) Expand the term of district council delegates to 5 years (previously 2.5 years).

In the middle of April 2021, the 8th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba occurred. The Congress passed resolutions as the basis for the country's development in the current and upcoming periods: (1) Political report of the Congress; (2) Ideological political functions and activities, and relationships with the masses; (3) Personnel policy; (4) Update the conceptualization of the Cuban socialist socio-economic development model; and (5) Guidelines for updating the socio-economic development model for the period 2021-2026. In particular, through this Congress, Cuba's

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senior leadership team officially transferred power to the next generation - people more than 20 years younger than them (most were born after the 1959 revolution), typically the position of First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba was transferred from 90-year-old leader Raul Castro to 61-year-old President Miguel Diaz-Canel.

After the Congress, entering the second half of 2021, Cuba faced two signi cant challenges: the Covid-19 epidemic broke out, causing many adverse effects in all aspects, and protests broke out against the government largest over 60 years. *Regarding Covid-19,* this dangerous disease entered Cuba in March 2020 and quickly spread. As of September 24, 2021, 832,286 Cubans have been infected (of whom 7,048 have died) with an increasing incidence (for example, in the second week of July 2021, from 5 to 11, there were an average of more than 3,000 new cases per day (Thoa, 2021) - a worrying number when compared to the total population of Cuba which is just over 11 million people). Cuba has prepared five types of epidemic vaccines, of which two have been successfully tested (Abdala and Soberana 2). The government at that time organized vaccination for about half of the population and vaccinated everyone by December 2021. *Regarding the protests,* stemming from the lack of food and medicine, ineffective epidemic prevention methods and some less democratic measures by the government, on July 11-13, tens of thousands of Cubans in more than 50 municipalities nationwide have taken to the streets to protest (The Economist, 2021). The government crackdown left one person dead and hundreds arrested. On July 17, the Cuban Communist Party also responded by organizing a massive protest in support of the government in the capital, Havana, with the participation of more than 100,000 people (Nicoll, 2021).

In 2022, the protest movement will no longer recur, and the Covid pandemic has altogether declined, still Cuba must overcome the severe consequences left by this pandemic and deal with the strengthening of the US embargo. In just the first 14 months of US President Joe Biden's administration (January 2021-February 2022), losses due to the economic embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba amounted to 6.35 billion USD (equivalent to 15 million USD per day (Tuyen & Hai, 2022). On November 3, 2022, the 77th United Nations General Assembly passed a Resolution with a very high vote rate (185/193) calling for an end to the US economic embargo on Cuba.

Since 2017, the homosexual movement in Cuba has increased, demanding the legalization of same-sex marriage. The regulations on marriage and family in the new 2019 Constitution create conditions for that issue. On July 22, 2022, the National Assembly (Asamblea Nacional del Pode Popular - ANPP) voted to finalize the draft of the new Family Code, which includes regulations officially legalizing same-sex marriage. The draft was put to referendum on September 25; Obtaining a rate of 66.85% of supporters, on September 26, the President of Cuba signed the law, published it in the Official Gazette and from September 27, 2022, the new Family Code officially took effect. This result is a signi cant step forward in expanding and developing human rights in Cuba, making Cuba the first socialist country and the 8th country in Latin America, the 32nd country in the world to legalize same-sex marriage.

During October 27-29, 2022, Cuba successfully organized the 22nd International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties (IMWCP) in [the capital] Havana. The meeting brought together 142 delegates representing 73 communist and workers' parties of 57 countries across all continents, with the theme “Solidarity with Cuba and all struggling peoples. United, we will be stronger in the fight against imperialism, together with social movements and the masses, in the face of capitalism and capitalist policies, the threat of fascism and war; protect the peace, the environment, the rights of working people, solidarity and socialism”.

On November 27, 2022, Cuba held elections for local people's council deputies. According to Cuba's National Electoral Council (CEN), the election was “a victory for the people” when it took place vibrantly, objectively, honestly with 5,728,220 voters (accounting for 68.56% number of people on the voter list), elected 12,422 delegates (with 44.1% female - this rate is higher than the 2017 election) who are responsible for directly managing issues, suggestions and complaints within the communities they represent. This is the first election held in Cuba since it restructured its electoral system and promulgated a new election law according to the 2019 Constitution. Local people's councils were officially established nationwide on December 17, 2022.

During the two days of December 9-10, 2022, the 5th Conference of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, term VIII, took place in [the capital] Havana. The conference discussed the political, economic, and social situation in Cuba and the pioneering role of party members when facing difficulties; at the same time, discuss the strategy of innovating, enhancing and perfecting the Cuban Communist Youth Union (Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas de Cuba - UJC). The conference also addressed some outstanding issues in Cuba today such as dealing with crime and speculation, promoting food production, the electrical energy situation and drug control.

In 2023, from January, Cuba assumed the Chairmanship in 2023 of “The Group of 77 and China” - an alliance of 135 developing countries, designed to promote promote the collective economic interests of its members and create enhanced collective bargaining capacity at the United Nations.

On March 26, 2023, Cuba held the election of the Xth National Assembly (2023-2028), and this is also the first National Assembly elected according to the new provisions of the Constitution 2019 and the Election Law

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2019. Yes. 6,148,876 Cuban voters (equivalent to 75.87% of Cubans eligible to vote) went to 23,468 polling stations to elect their highest representative. As a result, 5,565,640 votes (equivalent to 90.28% of the total votes) were valid, electing 470 National Assembly deputies (64% of which were new/first-time deputies) with an average age. 46 and 53% are female, 20% are young people under 35 years old and 95.5% have a university degree or higher.

In his May-June 2023 speeches, President Diaz-Canel affirmed that Cuba's current socio-economic situation is still complicated and must overcome and deal with many difficulties and challenges caused by the severe consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic and the US embargo policy. To be able to develop economically, he believes that Cuba needs to promote a plan for macroeconomic and social stabilization, including anti-corruption policies (especially among government officials, the military, and food processing industry, civil aviation, telecommunications, nickel plating industry, cigar manufacturing); anti-inflation; reduce budget deficit; overcome the gap between wages and purchasing power; increase available foreign currency; promote domestic food production, gradually moving towards self-reliance on food security; restore the role of state-owned agricultural companies; focus on investing in food production with domestic and foreign capital, and implementing actions to ensure nutrition and national food sovereignty; restore tourism industry goals to and above pre-pandemic levels (in the first 5 months of 2023, Cuba welcomed 1,441,362 international visitors, an increase of 177% over the same period in 2022, and set the target welcoming 3.5 million international tourists this year 2023 (Vietnam News Agency, 2023)).

III. Factors Directly Affecting Cuba's Speed of Development and expansion of Cooperation

There are many factors that directly impact the speed of development and expansion of cooperation in Cuba, typically the following factors:

a) *Adjustment of the political policy of the Cuban Communist Party*

The adjustment of Cuba's political policy is comprehensive but cautious, step by step, not hasty, continuing tradition but updating and closely following reality.

First, *determining the national vision is always a permanent and core issue for the country's political adjustments.* Through the 8th Congress (April 2021), the Communist Party of Cuba determined to continue Cuba's path to socialism, building a country with sovereignty, independence, socialism, democracy, prosperous and sustainable. To do this, there must be four strategic pillars and driving forces for development: (1) Building an effective State, creating vital changes in production and international integration; (2) Developing infrastructure, human resources, science, technology, and innovation; (3) Promote human development and social justice; and (4) Protect natural resources and the environment.

Second, *determined to build a socialist society, not move towards a communist society.* In previous traditional socialist thought, "socialism" and "civilized communist society" were considered the two highest socio-economic forms of humanity, inseparable and inseparable. Successfully building socialism will lead to a transition to a communist society, building socialism to advance to a communist society. This view is increasingly unsupported by people who believe that a communist society [civilized] is a fantasy. The increasing viewpoint of abandoning the goal of moving towards communism in Cuba has prompted the official inclusion of this provision in the Constitution - the fundamental law, with the highest legal effect, regulating the main and crucial national issue. Supported by many people, the Communist Party of Cuba and the Constitutional Reform Committee [led by President Raul Castro] decided not to include the provision "moving towards a communist society" in Cuba's new Draft Constitution... But after many fierce debates about removing or still including this regulation at the 8th Central Conference of the Communist Party of Cuba in December 2018, most delegates still voted to maintain such a regulation, and the National Assembly The Assembly approved it and the new Constitution in April 2019. However, in reality, Cuba has abandoned the goal of "moving towards a communist society". In recent years, "socialism" is still frequently encountered in social life, while the word "communist society" is rarely mentioned. Even at the 8th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba in April 2021, there was no mention of "communism" and "moving towards a communist society", while repeatedly affirming and emphasizing "socialism" and "the work of building a socialist society".

Third, *affirm the sole and supreme leadership of the Communist Party of Cuba.* In each country, if there is one-party politics, the ruling party will have a much easier time in existence, organization, and operation because it does not have to deal with, suffer losses from competing opposition parties such as in a multi-party country, at the same time the leadership of that ruling party will be more centralized (per the "principle of centralization" popular in socialist countries). Therefore, when Cuba built socialism, the old Constitution 1976 (with amendments in 1992 and 2002) of the Cuban State and the congresses and documents of the Communist Party of Cuba all clearly stipulated that the Party Communists are the sole and highest force leading the Cuban State and society. The new Constitution 2019

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and the 8th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba in 2021 continue to affirm and institutionalize this issue.

Fourth, *build and develop Cuban national socialist ideology.* During the revolutionary struggle (1953-1962), the name, style, strategy and ideology of the late leader Jose Marti became the driving force and guideline of organizational tactics and revolutionary activities, under the command of Fidel Castro. Entering the period of socialist construction (1963-1991), Marxism-Leninism was widely spread and applied. Both of these ideologies (Marti and Marx-Lenin) are officially recognized by the Constitution, becoming the core political ideology of Cuba. In 2016, Fidel passed away, and nearly three years later, the new Constitution 2019 officially added his ideas to the Cuban national socialist ideology... Researchers also evaluate the form, value, and meaning attaching importance to building and developing Cuban national political ideology through the order of recognition in the Constitution. If in the Constitution 1976, Marxism-Leninism was recognized first, followed by Marti ideology, then by the time of amending the Constitution in 2002, Marti ideology was placed close to Marxism-Leninism. And in the Constitution 2019, the order, values, and meanings of the Cuban leaders' ideology are put first, respectively: Marti ideology (tradition, revolution, beginning) - Fidel ideology (revolution, practical, modern) - Marxism-Leninism (reference, selection, application).

Fifth, *rejuvenate the country's leadership team.* Until the end of the first decade of the 21st century, Cuba was still led by veteran members who were over 75 years old at that time: Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, and other leaders of the revolutionary struggle (1953-1962). There is an urgent need to rejuvenate the national leadership team. Chairman Raul said that, besides victories, achievements, capacity, experience, opportunities..., health and age are also two essential factors of the leadership team, so since 2011, he has repeatedly proposed and proposed appropriate age levels for the Cuban national leadership: State leaders and members of the Party Central Committee must not be older than 60, Politburo members must not be more senior than 70 years old when taking office first position. This issue was considered and discussed during the 7th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba in April 2016 and implemented per the age-power logic sequence: transferring power from people holding high positions first, then lower positions; move state power first, then transfer party power (because the Communist Party is the political force, having power and leading the Cuban State; [but] state power is the nucleus of political power). In April 2018, Raul (87 years old) handed over the Chairmanship of the State Council to Diaz-Canel (58 years old), and in July 2018, Diaz-Canel appointed 5 Vice Presidents, including two new people in their 50s. Then, at the 8th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, Raul resigned as First Secretary of the Party when he was nearly 90, and Diaz-Canel (61 years old) succeeded him. Many members of the Party Central Committee and members of the Politburo of Raul's time who were over the age of 75 also resigned during this period (such as former Second Secretary Jose Ramon Machado Ventura, who is 91 years old, and former Vice President Ramiro). Valdes Menendez - 89, former Minister of the Armed Forces Leopoldo Cintra Frias - 80...). Thus, the age of the current Cuban Party and State leaders has been signi cant rejuvenated, with the majority being in their 50s and 60s (compared to the previous leaders in their 80s and 90s).

Sixth, *encourage organizations and people to participate in political activities.* Different from the period of revolutionary struggle (1953-1962) with very enthusiastic and vibrant participation in political activities combined with armed struggle of socio-political organizations and people, During the period of building socialism (1963-1991), the movement was much more “quiet”. The reason is that during this period of nearly three decades, Cuban socio-political organizations were only “task-performing agencies” for the Communist Party, subject to the natural, complete direction of the Party and many limitations in work, activities. People are also hesitant to participate in political organizations and activities because participation must have specific goals, be public, and be consistent with the Party's goals. At the same time, many human rights and civil rights are needed. Their political activities are not regulated, limited, or prohibited by the relevant legal system, especially the old Constitution 1976; violations will be strictly handled and suppressed by the government. From 1992 until now, especially in recent years, in implementing political policy adjustments, the Communist Party of Cuba has become more open by encouraging organizations and people to participate in political activities. For organizations that have been considered “mission-sharing agencies” with the Party, their status, role, equipment, and more rights and responsibilities have been enhanced (especially the Committee to Protect the Cuban Revolution (Comités de Defensa de la Revolución - CDR) and Cuban Communist Youth Union). For the people, the legal system and the new Constitution 2019 expand, strengthen, and protect more human rights and civil rights, and are organized and encouraged by the Party to participate in exciting and popular political activities such as meetings, rallies, demonstrations, elections, referendums... These political activities are increasingly making Cuban politics more vibrant, diverse, and practical, however their impact has two present and sometimes very difficult to predict and control (for example, the homosexual socio-political movement that broke out in 2017 has brought signi cant progress in terms of concept, democracy and human rights to Cuba in September 2017). In September 2022, the Cuban government issued a new Family Code, legalizing same-

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sex marriage; on the contrary, the Isidro socio-political movement, taking advantage of the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, rose to they protested against the government in more than 50 cities nationwide in July 2021, becoming the largest protest in Cuba in the past 60 years, causing political instability and adversely affecting the prestige and leadership power of the Communist Party and the State of Cuba).

b) Promulgation and implementation of new socio-economic policies

The promulgation and implementation of new socio-economic policies is also a fundamental factor, affecting many aspects of Cuba today. As early as April 2011, the 6th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba drafted and approved the *"National Plan for Socio-Economic Development until 2030"*. By April 2016, the 7th Congress reviewed and introduced many amendments and supplements. By April 2021, the 8th Congress will continue to edit, update, and complete this plan with 200 appropriate and necessary issues (retaining 17, adding 18, amending 165, and removing 92 issues (My, 2021)), and at the same time passed two critical resolutions: *"Updating the conceptualization of the Cuban socialist socio-economic development model"* and *"Guidelines for updating Cuba's socio-economic model for the period 2021-2026"*. In the spirit of the proposed policies, guidelines, programs, and plans, many new socio-economic policies of Cuba are currently being promulgated and implemented, with the primary goals and contents: (1) Ensuring public ownership of primary/essential means of production and consolidating a socio-economic development model that promotes the effective operation of state agencies and the enterprise system, as well as for the increased and effective participation of society in policy-making; (2) Develop production and service provision activities that take full advantage of the country's strengths; (3) Increase efficiency and competitiveness in all economic sectors. Gradually build a more open mechanism and environment for economic sectors. Quickly expand many scopes and fields of activity for the private economic sector (previously, in economics, private individuals were only allowed to participate in 127 fields, but now this has increased to more than 2,000 fields (My, 2021)); (4) Develop production and commercialization of agricultural and fishery products, ensuring self-sufficiency in food; (5) Ensure, protect and prioritize the overall development of strategic industries; (6) Ensure continuity and cohesion in monetary, credit, price, exchange rate and tax policies. Gradually increase national savings and ensure financial investment funds; (7) Focus on prioritizing the implementation of monetary unification measures (from January 1, 2021, eliminating the parallel circulation since 1994 of two currencies - the national peso and the convertible peso, forming a single peso with an exchange rate of 24 pesos = 1 USD). Reform wages and eliminate subsidies for many non-essential products; (8) Quickly eliminate prejudices about foreign investment (FDI). Diversify and expand FDI sources in the medium and long term. Considering FDI as an essential factor in national development; (9) Create conditions to develop and perfect the domestic market. Expand and diversify foreign trade activities and international cooperation; (10) Affirming and emphasizing that the sustainability of socialism can only be successful based on protecting values and improving labor productivity, creating more material wealth associated with public distribution equality, improving people's living standards and quality of life; (11) Ensuring necessary employment sources. Ensuring work is the individual need and perceived goal of each person; (12) Production resources must be evenly distributed geographically; (13) Always ensuring maintain the annual budget for social security at over 50% of GDP (as in 2017, it was 51% of GDP (Anh, 2021)); (14) Affirm, promote and concretize the principles of openness, fairness and equality in social security; (15) Consolidate and develop the achievements of the revolution in health, welfare and social support, education, culture, sports, entertainment, security and citizen protection.

c) The expansion and development of human rights and civil rights

In modern society, each citizen is like a primary cell of politics. Their role and level of political participation are proportional to the power they are equipped with - both in theory and in practice. Therefore, the affirmation and expansion of human and civil rights in Cuba today have developed the position, organization, and political activities of the people, becoming a vital factor influencing the political system. With the issue of human rights and civil rights, the new Constitution 2019 has removed many restrictions and prohibitions; edit and improve many rights recognized in the old Constitution 1976; at the same time, adding many new rights. Next, the documents of the 8th Party Congress in 2021 and laws (such as the new Election Law in 2019, and the new Family Code in 2022...) have developed, concretized, and put these regulations into practice, typically the following issues:

First, *recognize private property rights.* "Private ownership" is the occupation, use, and disposition of each human being about the means of production, consumption, and living, to meet their material and spiritual needs. Private ownership includes three types: individual ownership, small owner ownership and private capitalist ownership. Previously, in Cuba, only personal ownership was recognized, meaning that private ownership was not recognized (stipulated in Article 21 of the old Constitution 1976). At that time, two types of private ownership, smallholder ownership, and private

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capitalist ownership, were considered illegal because it was believed that those two types of rights used the time and labor of others (when it comes to taking advantage of, taking advantage of, exploiting) to create income and assets for individuals, and at the same time this is also the basis and driving force for the formation and development of a capitalist society - contrary to the goal of building socialism in Cuba.

However, due to the need to adapt and develop, many factors have arisen that push the Cuban legal system to soon recognize private ownership with all three types, for two primary reasons: (1) Before the 1959 revolution, Cuba was a relatively developed capitalist country, with all types of private ownership. When the revolution succeeded and entered the process of building socialism, despite the extensive and robust application of the prohibition of smallholder ownership and private capitalist ownership, the government only achieved the following results, as a result, in terms of form, because these two types of ownership have existed commonly before and contribute together with individual ownership to create the true nature of private ownership, they still implicitly exist; and (2) After the Cold War period, the Cuban economy, in addition to the two main economic components of the state economy/state-owned economy and the collective economy/cooperative economy, was formed. Developing two other economic sectors: joint venture/associated economy and private economy/self-employment economy. The benefits, efficiency and objective necessity have made Cuba accept and increasingly create conditions for these two new economic sectors, especially with critical nancial strategies and policies such as the National socio-economic plan until 2030 introduced by the Communist Party in 2011 or the Foreign Investment Law passed by the National Assembly in 2014... But the development of two new economic sectors (especially the private sector) will lack resources and face fundamental obstacles if private property rights are not fully recognized. This is an urgent need that is addressed in the provisions of the new Constitution issued in April 2019: officially recognizing the role of the free market and private property rights.

Second, *allowing citizens the right to hold multiple nationalities.* "Nationality" is a legal-political relationship that is long-term, durable, highly stable in time, and not limited in space between a specific individual/natural person and a certain government/ state. Each individual can apply to renounce their current nationality with a legitimate need and reason or have their nationality revoked if they commit a serious crime related to honor, reputation, sovereignty, and national security. In addition, each individual can also apply for citizenship (naturalization) when they do not yet have citizenship; or use for two or more nationalities (multiple [national] citizenship) if relevant countries have regulations allowing this. Multinationality is increasingly widely used due to the growing need for integration and globalization and the many benefits it brings to both individuals/natural persons and the state/government.

Previously, Cuba only allowed its citizens to have one nationality, Cuban nationality (specified in Article 32 of the old Constitution 1976). But this regulation conflicts with the growing demand of Cubans wanting to hold multiple nationalities and the government's efforts to call for investment from the Cuban diaspora community. Therefore, the new Constitution 2019 has formalized the regulation allowing holding multiple nationalities in Article 36: "Having another nationality does not mean losing Cuban nationality...". Currently, Cuba is drafting new nationality laws in the spirit of this provision of the Constitution 2019, including guarantees and precautions against adverse effects that the multi-nationality mechanism may bring (for example, for Cubans who hold both Cuban and US citizenship).

Third, *legalize the right to same-sex marriage.* Homosexuals (LGBT) are a significant segment of the population present in Cuban social life. Previously, they had a long period of discrimination from different strata of the population and extreme, unequal treatment by the government. However, by the mid-1970s, discrimination began to decrease gradually, homosexuals in Cuba became more sympathetic, and the government increasingly introduced active policies to help and support them: since 1979, homosexuality has been legalized; since 1993, homosexuals have been allowed to serve openly in the military; since 2008, the right to change gender has been recognized; since 2013, enforce anti-discrimination laws against homosexuals in labor and employment; from 2018 - in the provision of goods and services; from 2019 - in all other areas…

With issues related to homosexuals, "same-sex marriage" has many impacts and receives the most attention from society. Article 36 of the Constitution 1976 clearly notes: "Marriage is a voluntary union between a man and a woman who are legally married to live together..." and thus, same-sex marriage is illegal. But along with the trend of the government becoming more sympathetic and supportive of homosexuals, since the end of 2017, there has been a prominent public campaign by homosexual groups demanding to amend the Constitution to allow same-sex marriage. In July 2018, the National Assembly for the first time passed the new Draft Constitution, in which Article 68 only stipulates that marriage is a family marriage "between two people", without specifying their gender, and thus, indirectly legalized same-sex marriage. This issue is of interest and support to many people in Cuba's leadership team, including President Diaz-Canel. However, the regulation allowing same-sex marriage was removed by the National Assembly on December 18, 2018, right after more than 82% in a signi cant

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referendum still wanted to retain Article 36 of the old Constitution 1976. There are many reasons for this mass opposition, but the most important reason is the influence and intervention of the Catholic church: priests are said to be the leaders in fiercely opposing same-sex marriage because their ideology and teachings always consider same-sex marriage to be "intrinsically chaotic and unacceptable" (Toan, 2021), and Catholicism is the state religion in Cuba with about 60% of the population according. Finally, in the new Constitution approved by the National Assembly on April 10, 2019, this regulation was amended to Article 82: "Marriage is a social and legal institution... based on free consent wishes and equality in rights, obligations and legal capacity of husband and wife...". It can be seen that the amendment does not return to Article 36 of the old Constitution 1976, but still creates conditions for legalized same-sex marriage, but with more inclusive and indirect language.

On that basis, the homosexual movement demanding the legalization of same-sex marriage is still going strong. Also from May 2019, the government combined with the Cuban Bar Federation to launch a plan to complete the legalization of same-sex marriage. The critical activity is drafting a new Family Code (replacing the old Family Code implemented in 1975), which includes provisions officially recognizing same-sex marriage. By September 2021, the new draft Family Code was presented and unanimously approved by the National Assembly on December 21, 2021, and then launched for widespread social consultation from February 15 to February 6. June 2022, receiving about 61% of opinions supporting same-sex marriage. The Cuban National Assembly last voted to approve the draft of the new Family Code on July 22, 2022, and put it to a referendum on September 25, obtaining a vote of 66.85% (that is, about two-thirds) number of votes in favor. The new Family Code was officially issued, effective September 27, and the first legal same-sex marriage in Cuba was held on October 5, 2022, in Manzanillo. This result made Cuba the first socialist country, the 8th country in Latin America, and the 32nd country in the world to legalize same-sex marriage. This is a signi cant step forward in the expansion and development of human and civil rights in Cuba.

Fourth, *implement the "presumption of innocence" and "suspend detention" for the suspect.* "Presumption of innocence" (or "presumption of innocence") is the assertion that every suspect is innocent until reasonably and legally proven guilty. "Suspension of detention" means that citizens have the right to request the court to suspend or cancel their detention document or block their rights if they find that document to be unreasonable and illegal. These are two basic principles that ensure human rights and citizens' rights before the law.

In Cuba, the capitalist government's Constitution 1940 stipulated these principles, still, the socialist government eliminated them in the Constitution 1976 and related legal system, leading to a one-sided situation, abuse of power, irresponsibility of administrative civil servants and court and procuracy officials in the process of reviewing the case (recognizing, prosecuting, investigating, prosecuting, adjudicating, executing judgments), leading to many cases being mishandled according to the law, heavy on imposing authority and creating injustice, causing damage and discontent to the people. The new Constitution 2019 has begun to rectify that situation by introducing provisions for the presumption of innocence and suspension of detention. Specifically, Article 95 affirms that all citizens are guaranteed "...the presumption of innocence until declared guilty through a final judgment of a court". Article 96 notes: "Anyone who is unlawfully deprived of their freedom or property rights, either by themselves or by a third party, has the right to submit a written suspension of detention to a competent court, according to the requirements specified in the law". In addition, citizens can, when necessary, "… bring an appropriate action or procedure against administrative and judicial decisions" (Article 94) and sue government agencies and individual civil servants, court officials, and procuracy, demanding legal settlement and compensation if these groups and individuals operate negligently, abuse power, and are irresponsible, causing negative impacts on rights and interests of citizens (Article 99).

d) United States intervention

From the early 16th century to the late 19th century, Cuba was governed and had to depend closely on the Spanish government because it was a colony of this European country, and from the late 19th century until now, although having become an independent country and gone through many political institutions/ regimes, Cuba has always been dominated, manipulated and interfered with by the United States.

In January 1959, the revolutionary movement under the leadership of Fidel Castro overthrew the pro-American Batista dictatorship and established the people's revolutionary government. The United States immediately aggressively implemented a series of intervention and sabotage measures: hostile propaganda, inciting people to evacuate, diplomatic isolation, economic embargo, support for terrorist groups, and air strikes on the capital Habana... and culminated in organizing more than 1,500 exiled Cuban reactionary troops to land on Giron beach in April 1961 to destroy the fledgling Cuban government. The landing was crushed and the Cuban leadership's willingness to confront and publicize the socialist nature of the revolutionary cause further angered the United States, making a comprehensive intervention in Cuba

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throughout since then, it has focused on two primary areas: the economic embargo on Cuba (since February 7, 1962) and support for exiled Cuban reactionary organizations to sabotage and overthrow the Cuban government.

After more than half a century of tension, due to the needs of both Cuba and the United States, by the second term of US President Obama (2013-2016), relations between the two countries were more open and peaceful. In June 2013, the two sides agreed to promote an 18-month secret negotiation round (with the mediation of Canada and the Vatican). On December 17, 2014, Cuba and the United States normalized relations, ending half a century of confrontation. In April 2015, the United States removed Cuba from the list of "terrorist countries". In July 2015, the two countries opened embassies in each other's capitals. In March 2016, the US President visited Cuba for the first time after the 1959 revolution. In 2016, the US also abstained for the first time in voting to lift the embargo on Cuba at the United Nations General Assembly (previous times, all voted against it). During the two years 2015-2016, the two countries signed 22 cooperation agreements in the fields of anti-terrorism and drug trafficking, anti-informatics crime, sharing experiences in cancer treatment, oil spill prevention cooperation, security, and maritime cooperation (Vietnam News Agency, 2017)... The United States loosened many trade embargoes and eliminated some restrictions on money transfers, travel, customs, maritime regulations... for Cuba. The United States also limits, suspends, or completely stops many types of support for exiled Cuban reactionary organizations opposing the Cuban government (especially organizations based in the United States).

However, immediately after taking office in January 2017, new US President Donald Trump decided to tighten the embargo on Cuba and support exiled reactionary organizations opposing the Cuban government. The Trump administration has introduced and applied 243 additional economic embargoes on Cuba (My, 2022) and many incentives and funding for organizations that sabotage the Cuban government. The trade embargo during the last 20 months of Trump's term (April 2019-December 2020) caused a loss of 9.1 billion USD to Cuba (Nga, 2021). On January 12, 2021, at the end of the Trump administration's term, the US State Department added Cuba to the "list of countries sponsoring terrorism", along with warnings about control and severe sanctions that the United States will impose.

Although candidate Joe Biden, when running for US president in 2020, promised to lift restrictions on Cuba, when he took power on January 20, 2021, Biden did not do so and continued to maintain the restrictions, policies, and embargo measures against Cuba of the previous Trump administration. In June 2021, the Biden administration continued its tradition of voting against the annual United Nations General Assembly resolution calling for an end to the US economic embargo on Cuba (this is the resolution passed for the first time). 29th with an absolute majority of 184 votes in favor, with only three abstentions and two against (the United States and Israel). Immediately after the large protest of the Isidro Movement against the Cuban government in mid-July 2021, President Biden declared his dissatisfaction with how the Cuban government handled and suppressed the government and promised to increase support for dissidents in Cuba. At the same time, he also introduced sanctions against a series of Cuban officials who once commanded, ordered repression of protesters, and loosened policies on immigrants from Cuba for political reasons. As a result, by the end of 2021 alone, about 300,000 Cubans (that is, nearly 3% of the country's population) had evacuated to the United States (Hang, 2023), many of them due to discontent and opposition against the Cuban government.

In mid-May 2022, the United States lifted a series of restrictive measures and embargoes against Cuba, typically 3 issues. *First,* the Biden administration re-established the Cuban family reunification program that was discontinued many years ago, accelerating visa issuance. *Second,* remove the limit on money transfers to Cuba: during the Trump administration, each person in the United States could only send back to Cuba a maximum of 1,000 USD per quarter - this limit will now end. *Third,* develop aviation relations, sharply increase flights between the United States and Cuba. However, soon after, on May 20, 2022, the Biden administration added Cuba to the list of a few countries in the world considered "not fully cooperating" in the fight against terrorism. The embargo policy against Cuba will still be extended in 2022 and 2023 (the US embargo policy is developed, suspended, or canceled by the government of this country... once a year, usually in September each year).

IV. Prospects, Orientation, and Room for Development of Cuba

Looking at the process of building socialism, the reform process in Cuba over the past 30 years, and the typical direct impact factors, we can see Cuba's prospects, orientation, and development potential:

First, *insist on the sole and comprehensive rule of the Communist Party of Cuba and build a socialist regime with Cuban identity.* Specifically: (1) Strengthen, specifically, legalize the rule of the Communist Party and the single-party leadership regime in Cuba. Article 5 of the new Constitution 2019 recognizes this issue, but it is still general. It is necessary to promulgate additional laws and sub-law documents to concretize, and there should also be appropriate and essential explanations when the Election Law The current election in Cuba

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stipulates that no political party (including the Communist Party) can nominate candidates in elections to state offices, but why is the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba still nominated people to be elected by the National Assembly to key State positions; (2) Practicing and widely spreading core political ideas in socialist construction, especially ideas with Cuban identity and Cuban people - such as Marti and Fidel ideas; (3) Increase both the quantity and quality of party members. In recent years, the average admission of about 40,000 party members each year is a pretty positive increase in quantity. However, the quality of party members is still somewhat lenient, not guaranteed, and the number of elderly party members is quite large (42.6% of party members are over 55 years old) (Castro, 2021a); (4) Use and promote the effectiveness of activities of political-social-professional organizations, especially the Committee for the Protection of the Revolution and the Communist Youth Union of Cuba; (5) Leadership and strict management of media. The 8th Congress recognizes the role of the media (especially the internet) as a "double-edged sword": it can also be a tool for widely, quickly, promptly, and effectively transmitting guidelines and policies, the Party and State's plan to the people, can also be an effective tool for hostile forces to use propaganda against Cuba; and (6) Build and develop the great unity of the people around the Cuban Party and State.

Second, *focus on economic development, use the economy as the driving force for social development, gradually transition to a socialist-oriented market economy, avoid dependence on capital through capital, equipment, technology.* Specifically: (1) National economic development, along with the struggle for peace and steadfast ideological stance, are the critical tasks of the Party. Financial decisions must not depart from the revolution's ideals of justice and equality, nor must they weaken the great unity of the people; (2) Edit, supplement, complete and implement specific socio-economic policies/solutions proposed from the 7th Congress in 2016: maintain 17 policies, adjust 165 policies, eliminate remove 92 policies, add 18 policies and thus, reduce the overall 274 old policies/solutions into 200 new policies/solutions; (3) Address the harmful effects of bureaucracy and poor human resource management, which are the causes and conditions for the emergence of corruption and other illegal acts that hinder improve productivity and labor efficiency; (4) Overcome irrationalities in the structure of the economic model, creating enough motivation to encourage labor and creativity; (5) More actively deploy the process of updating the socio-economic model, moving towards a harmonious and appropriate combination between the characteristics of centralized planning with autonomy and decentralization management required at intermediate levels; (6) National ownership of the primary means of production is the basis for the real power of workers. The state-owned enterprise system must prove in practice and strengthen its position as the dominant form of economy management. Implement a comprehensive reform of corporate structures to eliminate stagnation, permissiveness, lack of creativity, and passively waiting for higher-level instructions. Correct bad habits [both old and new], and at the same time, stimulate and promote the spirit of entrepreneurship and dynamism in the ranks of business and grassroots leaders, so that they become more and more autonomous, increase productivity, and achieve greater efficiency; (7) Promote productivity and operational efficiency of the state economic sector in areas that determine the country's development, while flexible and institutionalize non-state management forms. Forms of self-employment/self-employment are expanding significantly, with the types of licensed activities increasing from 127 to more than 2,000; (8) Having enough capacity to regulate the market through indirect measures and increasingly simplified administration. Turn the people's unmet or unsatisfied needs into leverage for domestic production establishments, based on practical and reasonable use of physical and financial resources; (9) Promote production nationwide (especially for food). Limit imports, increase exports with diverse and competitive products; (10) The State ensures the allocation of a significant source of foreign currency, and at the same time encourages remittances that Cubans living abroad send to relatives in the country; (11) Apply standard payment in the new currency CUP from January 1, 2021, but still maintain a certain level of trading in the old currency CUC (one of the two old currencies that were previously parallel) to overcome a negative situation in the past five years, using CUC to smuggle goods from abroad into Cuba and then resell them domestically at high prices; and (12) Continue to implement measures to encourage foreign investment. Eliminate rigidity, shyness, or passivity in foreign investment solutions. Soon amend, supplement or replace the 2014 Foreign Investment Law (Law No. 118) with a new, expanded, convenient, appropriate and more effective law.

Third, *comprehensively evaluate and implement social security issues; continue to promote its advantages in education and health.* Specifically: (1) Never allow measures that harm vulnerable people or leave anyone in a helpless/abandoned situation; (2) Overcome the phenomenon of waste and competition. Determining "saving" is the fastest and safest form of income. Adapt to what Cuba has and do not spend more than the country can provide; (3) The Cuban people's standard of living and consumption must be determined by legitimate sources of income and not by excessive subsidies or complimentary products and services. Eliminate the notion and need to rely [on government support] and level [subsidies and

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social benefits] in the welfare regime in Cuba; and (4) Maintain a free education and healthcare system for the entire population. Consolidate and promote the development of achievements in education and health. Strengthen "educational diplomacy" and "health diplomacy" in foreign policy.

Fourth, *always be alert to plots and sabotage tactics of hostile forces at home and abroad.* Specifically: (1) Deeply deploy ideological security work, maintain the Party's leadership and the direction of socialist construction; (2) Prevent, identify, properly evaluate and provide appropriate and effective handling of hostile forces' plots and tricks to sabotage and overthrow; (3) Enhance vigilance and prevent sophisticated and covert forms of sabotage through the implementation of "peaceful evolution", civil society, private capitalism, religious freedom, democratic sponsorship... ; and (4) Build a large, modern, complete internal security force, ready to detect, suppress and neutralize plots and tricks of sabotage and subversion by enemy forces.

Fifth, *expand international relations and cooperation based on coexistence, mutual benefit, and mutual development, without interfering or infringing on each other's internal affairs; especially maintain and promote relations with traditional friends and socialist countries and soon fully normalize relations with the United States.* Specifically: (1) Foreign policy must fully protect independence, fully demonstrate sovereign rights, and meet the needs and aspirations for solidarity and integration of the country and its people; (2) Respect the principles and regulations of the United Nations Charter and international law; pursue peaceful resolution of disputes; adhere to the principle of non-interference [directly and indirectly] in the internal affairs of other countries and respect the principles of national sovereignty, equal rights and self-determination of peoples; Committed to promoting friendly relations and cooperation between countries in the region, as well as with other countries, regardless of differences in political, economic and social systems or levels of development; promote the spirit of tolerance and peaceful coexistence; total respect for the inalienable right of all countries to choose their political, economic, social and cultural systems as an essential condition for ensuring peaceful coexistence among countries (Castro, 2021b); (3) Strengthen solidarity and cooperation and sharing with countries with leftist governments in Latin America, especially with Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Mexico, Argentina and encourage, cooperate and support leftist forces cholera in this area; (4) Continue to encourage and support the struggle for freedom and independence of peoples and countries around the world, especially Palestine and Western Sahara (Sahrawi); (5) Appreciate cooperation with signi cant powers and powerful developing countries - especially countries in the BRICS bloc (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa). Close and close relations with Asian socialist countries (China, Vietnam, Laos, North Korea); (6) Desire to promote respectful dialogue and build a "new type" of relationship with the United States. Identify why the United States is still hesitant as it is today: (i) the US predecessor Trump administration tightened the embargo on Cuba, leaving consequences that the successor Biden administration cannot change suddenly/quickly, (ii) the political and economic ideologies of Cuba and the United States are very different and contradictory, (iii) if the United States fully normalizes with Cuba, it will have to pay a massive amount of compensation (Cuba demanding the United States compensate 302 billion USD due to the blockade and embargo policy - including 181 billion USD in human damages and 121 billion USD in economic damages, while the United States only demands 8 billion USD in compensation from Cuba about damage because Cuba nationalized some US private companies (Tuan, 2021)), (iv) The United States must return Guantanamo to Cuba, losing an essential geostrategic base/facility, and (v) it is difficult to find a suitable solution for the large number of Cuban exiles who oppose the Cuban government living in the US; (7) Continue to promote relations with the European Union (EU) based on mutual respect and support, especially developing cooperative relations in the fields of culture, agriculture, and renewable energy; and (8) Enhance Cuba's position in organizations in the Latin American region (ALBA, CELAC, OAS...); consolidate and develop Cuba's relations with neighboring countries in Central America and the Caribbean; soon bring Cuba into the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

V. Conclusion

The past three decades have been a long period of change in Cuba's innovation, development, and socialist goals. It is directly affected by many factors, typically the adjustment of the Cuban Communist Party's political policy; promulgating and implementing new socio-economic policies; the expansion and development of human and civil rights; and, United States intervention methods and activities. At this issue, looking comprehensively, it can be seen that Cuba has a positive outlook with solid, clear directions and vast room for development, but at the same time it must also deal with and overcome no-small difficulties and challenges to complete the reform process and its socialist goals.

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