

**Czech University of Life Sciences Prague**  
**Faculty of Economics and Management**  
**Department of Languages**



**Bachelor Thesis**

**Cuban Revolution and Feminism**

**Anastasiia Nikolova**

# CZECH UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES PRAGUE

Faculty of Economics and Management

## BACHELOR THESIS ASSIGNMENT

Anastasiia Nikolova

Economics and Management

Thesis title

**Cuban Revolution and Feminism**

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### Objectives of thesis

The main objective of this thesis lies in assessment of how the country's situation with feminism was developing after the Cuban Revolution that happened in the previous century. The thesis is aimed at evaluating if the country has particular feminist movements and what is the general situation with women's rights after the aforementioned event took place. Ultimately, the thesis aims at analyzing the impact of the Cuban Revolution on feminist movements.

### Methodology

The bachelor thesis will be primarily based on qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interview and structured interview with people who at some point in their lives lived in Cuba and emigrated to other countries. In addition to this primary method, the thesis will also consist of quantitative research based on available secondary data regarding women's engagement in employment and social contribution of women in Cuba in general, based on time-series data. Additionally, methods of induction and deduction, as well as critical thinking will be applied throughout the whole bachelor thesis, which will itself be focused simultaneously on the analysis of the scientific framework published by other authors and also on providing a personal contribution to the topic.

**The proposed extent of the thesis**

30-40 pages

**Keywords**

feminism, Cuba, revolution, communism, social policies, employment, discrimination

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- Paterson, T. G. 1995. Contesting Castro: The United States and the Triumph of the Cuban Revolution. Oxford University Press, USA. 215 pages. ISBN-9780195101201.
- Randall, M. 1994. Sandino's Daughters Revisited: Feminism in Nicaragua. Rutgers University Press. 324 pages. ISBN-9780919888333.
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- Wright, T. C. 2001. Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution. Greenwood Publishing Group. 235 pages. ISBN-9780275935832.

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## **Declaration**

I declare that I have worked on my bachelor thesis titled "Cuban Revolution and Feminism" by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the bachelor thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break any copyrights.

In Prague on 16.03.2024

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# Cuban Revolution and Feminism

## Abstract

This bachelor thesis delves into two interconnected themes: feminism and the Cuban Revolution, analyzing their historical contexts, current status, and implications. Beginning with an exploration of feminism, it provides definitions, historical trajectories, and contemporary manifestations. Transitioning to the Cuban Revolution, the study investigates its causes, main events, and consequential impacts on society. Further, it examines social movements within Cuba, elucidating the intricate fabric of activism and change. The practical component of the research focuses on the period following the revolution, particularly the years 1959-1962, analyzing governmental support for women and their incorporation into the workforce. It investigates gaps in women's rights, educational levels, and re-realization of goals and objectives. Methodologically, the study employs an interview process, employing probing methods and multiple interviews to gather comprehensive data. Results and discussions highlight insights gleaned from these interviews, providing nuanced perspectives on the experiences and challenges faced by women in post-revolutionary Cuba. Overall, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of feminism, the Cuban Revolution, and the socio-economic dynamics shaping women's lives in Cuba.

**Keywords:** Feminism, Cuba, revolution, communism, social policies, employment, discrimination.

# Kubánská revoluce a feminismus

## Abstrakt

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá dvěma vzájemně propojenými tématy: feminismem a kubánskou revolucí, analyzuje jejich historické souvislosti, současný stav a důsledky. Začíná zkoumáním feminismu, uvádí jeho definice, historické trajektorie a současné projevy. Přechází ke kubánské revoluci a zkoumá její příčiny, hlavní události a následné dopady na společnost. Dále zkoumá sociální hnutí na Kubě a objasňuje složitou strukturu aktivismu a změn. Praktická část výzkumu se zaměřuje na období po revoluci, zejména na roky 1959-1962, a analyzuje vládní podporu žen a jejich začlenění do pracovního procesu. Zkoumá mezery v právech žen, úroveň vzdělání a opětovnou realizaci cílů a úkolů. Z metodologického hlediska studie využívá rozhovor, přičemž využívá sondážní metody a vícenásobné rozhovory, aby získala komplexní data. Výsledky a diskuse zdůrazňují poznatky získané z těchto rozhovorů a poskytují diferencovaný pohled na zkušenosti a výzvy, kterým čelí ženy na porevoluční Kubě. Celkově tato studie přispívá k hlubšímu pochopení feminismu, kubánské revoluce a socioekonomické dynamiky utvářející život žen na Kubě.

**Klíčová slova:** Feminismus, Kuba, revoluce, komunismus, sociální politika, zaměstnanost, diskriminace.

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# **1 Introduction**

The Cuban Revolution, which occurred in 1959, is widely regarded as an important event in the political history of not only South America but the entire globe, as it represented a marked shift in power dynamics and had a profound impact on subsequent events (Valdés, 1991: 21). The theme has received widespread recognition for its innovative principles and long-term impact on multiple systems and subsystems of political control and social activism among Cuba's emerging revolutionary movements. For a long time, the leaders of this revolution were considered iconic figures of the 20th century in the history of mankind, since they touched not only the people of Cuba but also states on the other side of the globe (Zawatsky, 2015: 10). This revolution had many sides and origins, which are discussed later but it is important to note that behind the superficial aspects of this famous revolution lies a rather unexplored aspect – the intersection of the Cuban Revolution with feminist ideals.

This thesis is an exploration of the complex interaction between these two dynamic entities, explaining their simultaneous presence, mutual influence, and subsequent effects in the socio-political context of Cuba. This thesis explores the intersection of feminism and the Cuban Revolution, examining how the political and social upheaval of the mid-20th century impacted attitudes toward women in Cuba. It takes an insight into the history of the Revolution, its origins, and its ultimate outcomes, considering the broader societal changes that accompanied it. The thesis also investigates the evolution of feminism in Cuba during this period, examining how women's roles and perceptions were transformed in the aftermath of the Revolution.

## **2 Objectives and Methodology**

### **2.1 Objectives**

The main objective of this thesis lies in the assessment of how the country's situation with feminism was developing after the Cuban Revolution that happened in the previous century. The thesis is aimed at evaluating if the country has particular feminist movements and what is the general situation with women's rights after the aforementioned event took place. Ultimately, the thesis aims to analyze the impact of the Cuban Revolution on feminist movements.

### **2.2 Methodology**

The bachelor thesis is primarily based on qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviews and structured interviews with people who at some point in their lives lived in Cuba and emigrated to Czech Republic. In addition to this primary method, the thesis consists of quantitative research based on available secondary data regarding women's engagement in employment and the social contribution of women in Cuba in general, based on time-series data. Additionally, methods of induction and deduction, as well as critical thinking are applied throughout the whole bachelor thesis, which is focused simultaneously on the analysis of the scientific framework published by other authors and also on providing a personal contribution to the topic.

### **3 Literature Review**

#### **3.1 Feminism**

##### **3.1.1 Definition**

A phenomenon that can be viewed from at least two distinct perspectives is feminism. Firstly, it is a political movement linked to the struggle for women's equality. This aspect is most commonly associated with traditional feminism, particularly the suffragette movement, which advocated for women's right to vote (Winslow, 2020: 168). While such issues may seem like relics of the past, at the beginning of the 20th century, women were denied the right to vote in the vast majority of countries worldwide (Bucur, 2018: 112). However, the early feminist movement's triumphs effectively rendered this issue obsolete (Holton, 2003: 191).

Secondly, feminism is an intellectual movement, a strand of philosophy that is far more diverse in its substance and reasoning compared to traditional political feminism (Donovan, 2012: 23). This is because feminism is an intellectual movement, a trend in philosophy (Guerra, 2009: 74). The term "feminism" first appeared in print at the beginning of the nineteenth century. At that time, in the journalism of the period, this term encompassed all the inherent attributes of a woman (Bamberger & Farrow, 2021: 15). Similarly, to how there are distinct masculine characteristics, or masculinity, there are also unique female attributes, or "feminism" (Hall, 1996:19).

Towards the end of the 19th century, in the context of the suffragette movement, the French word "feminist," meaning "feminist," was introduced (Reckitt, 2022: 132). This term was employed to identify the activists of the women's movement. In its original sense, it referred to those who were campaigning for women's right to vote (Tobias, 2018: 453). As a result, according to Cho (2013), by the beginning of the 20th century, the definition of the term began to undergo a process of progressive transformation. Throughout the past century and a half, when people mention feminists, they almost always mean women fighting for their rights. Moreover, these rights can be interpreted in various ways, and the fight is not necessarily limited to demanding formal political equality (Cho, 2013: 144).

### **3.1.2 History**

Since ancient times, Western civilization has fostered an active feminist thought community. For example, according to Buchan (1999), Plato's Republic suggests that there are no inherent limitations preventing a woman from assuming the position of a ruler (Buchan, 1999: 156). If a woman possesses sufficient intelligence and competence, she should be granted the same legal safeguards as the most intellectually gifted and capable men. Both the Middle Ages and the Renaissance exhibited elements of what is now recognized as feminism (Badiou, 2013: 210).

It is widely acknowledged that Mary Wollstonecraft, an 18th-century Englishwoman, deserves the title of the first feminist (Todd, 2014: 64). In her treatise "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman," she delves into various aspects of the female condition, including the distinctions between men and women, the validity of accusations of female irrationality, and the influence of domesticity and childcare on women's societal role (Poovey, 1985: 118). Wollstonecraft's central rallying cry was the notion that women could autonomously control their own destinies, and this sparked much debate (Taylor, 2003: 57). Mary Astell, her colleague, is often considered to be somewhat overshadowed by Wollstonecraft. Astell relied on the rationalist philosophy of Descartes, who did not differentiate between men and women (Michelson & Kolbrener, 2013: 97). Wollstonecraft, like Rousseau, with whom she engaged in polemics, breaks down the stereotype of feminists as rigid, humorless, and predictable. Feminists provide an adaptable, frequently humorous, and frequently unexpected argument (Broad, 2015: 78).

### **3.1.3 Current Status**

## **3.2 Cuban Revolution**

The first wave of feminism is the simplest to characterize. This is the struggle that women have been waging for political equality and the right to vote and hold office in democratic elections (Evans, 2016: 190). The earliest proponents of women's rights employed liberal rhetoric, arguing that all individuals, regardless of gender, should possess the same rights (Berns, 2001: 460).

The Suffragettes were a formidable social movement in both the United Kingdom and the United States, and their collective action resulted in women achieving their goals (Pugh, 2000: 11). In the United States, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified in 1920

(Gidlow, 2018: 332). This amendment stipulates that a person's gender cannot be used as a criterion to exclude them from participating in political life or, more specifically, from voting in elections. Subsequently, many individuals believed that feminism was finished because women had achieved their primary goal, and that other issues could be addressed by female politicians elected to office (Lorber, 2001: 250). However, this was not the case.

The 1960s of the 20th centuries marked the beginning of the second wave of feminism, which is a phenomenon that is already considerably more complex (Hewitt, 2012: 66). The suppression of women's involvement in political life is not the only kind of oppression that can be found in society anymore (Kuhn & Wolpe, 2013: 90). It was discovered that political equality does not rule out the existence of oppression in other areas, such as the home or the workplace (Thompson, 2003: 13). Simone de Beauvoir's seminal work, "*The Second Sex*", is widely regarded as the defining piece of this era (Evans, 1998: 39). Second-wave feminists challenge the notion that a woman's primary role is that of a mother, which they interpret to mean staying at home, forgoing a professional career, and caring for the family (Thornham, 2001: 11). They rejected the notion that women should not try to express themselves outside of the "women's sphere" (Harding, 2004: 21). The belief is that a man is born an extrovert and a woman is born an introvert and that this societal division of labor has always been and will always be established by certain natural norms (George, 2011: 101). The second wave did not achieve all of its objectives; the challenges that feminists discussed in the 1960s are still present in modern society (Collective, 2005: 55). However, during the second wave, a genuine social transformation occurred: women in the Western world began entering the workforce in massive numbers (Whelehan, 1995: 72). This resulted in a significant increase in society's overall wealth and gave rise to an entirely new concept of "genuine" gender politics (Inglehart, 1990: 90).

The third wave of feminism, which commenced in the 1990s of the 20th centuries, is an attempt to apply important philosophical concepts to gender studies. These ideas largely stem from post-structuralism and postcolonial theory (Gillis et al., 2004). In the third wave, one prominent movement that could be observed was the Riot Grrrl movement (Delmar, 2018: 20). Williams argues that this movement is centered on the aesthetics of not only a liberated but also an empowered woman who is capable of being self-sufficient, brilliant, and leading in the social environment, and who is, therefore, superior to males in this respect. Riot Grrrl asserted that wearing a push-up bra did not contradict the existence of brains. Additionally, Riot Grrrl reintroduced aggressive makeup and high heels, which up until very

recently were believed to be traditional symbols of male tyranny (Williams, 2018: 106). Therefore, post-feminism seeks freedom in all aspects of life, even from the restrictions that were placed by conventional feminism, and this strain of feminism remains committed to this course of action to this very day (Williams, 2018: 110).

### 3.2.1 Causes

The Cuban Revolution is universally recognized as a remarkable triumph over authoritarian rule, and it holds a prominent place in the annals of history, not just for Cuba but also for the entire world (Hoffmann, 2015: 120). This is because the Cuban Revolution successfully toppled the dictatorship that was in place at the time. These phenomena can be attributed to two primary causes: systemic issues that are prevalent throughout Latin America, such as dependence on external financial assistance, and specific circumstances that are unique to the region, such as the dictatorial regime led by Fulgencio Batista (Bonachea, 2018: 522).

Both of these factors played a role in the revolution's genesis. Around 80 percent of Cubans who lived in rural areas lived in poverty in huts and shacks, and they could only find work for three to four months out of the year during the sugarcane harvest season (Aremu, 2017: 62). McGuigan believed that between one-third and one-half of the population was illiterate and the healthcare system was in its early stages. Two-thirds of the children did not attend school. Another factor that contributed to the Cuban Revolution was the policies pursued by President Fulgencio Batista: he not only repressed the economy (which caused a rise in prices for all goods), but also actively attracted American capital to the country, which led to further dispossession of already poor peasants, concentration of land in the hands of American companies, a fall in wages in all sectors of the economy, and an increase in unemployment to about 40%. The accumulation of all of these factors ultimately resulted in social upheaval and set the stage for the revolution (McGuigan, 2012: 112).

Several key factors contributed to the revolution in 1959. Before Batista came to power, Cuba's economy was heavily reliant on the United States (Mesa-Lago, 2020: 458). According to O'Kane, the production and processing of sugarcane and tobacco were the two primary agricultural activities that supported Cuba's economy. Sugar production accounted for around one-third of the nation's overall income and accounted for eighty percent of Cuba's total exports. Nearly half of the entire agricultural land was devoted to the cultivation of sugarcane. Tobacco production was the second most important sector of the economy (O'Kane, 1993: 101).

Cuba's economy was characterized by a monoculture production system and, for a considerable length of time, an almost total dependency on the United States market. Before the revolution, over sixty percent of Cuba's goods were shipped to the United States (Palma, 2015: 80). According to Ayala (1999), this was a significant portion of the country's exports. The events described earlier in this article inevitably had an impact on the sovereignty of the republic, the advancement of the economy, and the collective awareness of the population. In the United States, monopolistic businesses controlled more than half of the sugar industry, which is more than the required 50 percent barrier (Ayala, 1999: 39). In addition, according to Schwartz (1999), these organizations had a significant influence on over 90 percent of the electricity industry, as well as the oil refining and mining industries. Additionally, monopolies had an impact on businesses within a variety of other industries, including the tourist industry, the communications sector, and others. The United States utilized Cuba as a source of raw materials. Cuba has experienced around one billion dollars' worth of financial losses in the ten years that have passed since the conflict. The United States of America maintained diplomatic, military, and political contacts with Cuba in addition to their economic links (Schwartz, 1999: 130).

A United States naval base was located on the island. As a direct result of this, the scope of American influence in Cuba has grown to such a substantial degree that it posed a risk to the population's ability to maintain its cultural identity (Sweig, 2016: 41). In spite of the fact that the economic conditions in Cuba under the Batista dictatorship were, compared to those in other developing nations in the area, rather good, the Cuban government's promotion of investment from the United States further enhanced the country's dependency on the economy of the United States. The general people do not have favorable impressions of the government as a result of this dynamic (Aminzade, 2001:131).

**Figure 1: Map of Cuban Revolution**



Source: Bishop, 2020.

The second element is related to Batista's determination to maintain his grip on power by whatever means possible. He set up a government characterized by authoritarian rule and military control. His reign was characterized by a high degree of brutality on the whole (Argote-Freyre, 2006: 91). Over 20,000 people who were deemed undesirable by the ruling power were put to death by firing squad in a very short period of time. The quantity of executions is astonishing in Batista's regime (Argote-Freyre, 2006: 91). The constitution was abolished. As a consequence of this, the state security organs had the authority to employ a diverse array of strategies in order to safeguard the ruling system's vital interests.

### 3.2.2 Main Events

The Cuban Revolution, which unfolded in the 1950s, emerged as a broadly supported democratic movement in Cuba. Its primary objective, as previously stated, was to overthrow the dictatorial regime headed by Fulgencio Batista. In addition, the revolution aimed to equitably address the issues of agriculture and liberate Cuba from economic and political reliance on the United States (Rabe, 2017: 210).

The totalitarian administration of Fulgencio Batista was instituted in Cuba in 1952. In 1953, there were serious crackdowns on opposition parties and organizations, leading to the prohibition of the People's Socialist Party of Cuba (PSP). The National Occupational Workers' Syndicate (NSPK) was formed in 1944 through the amalgamation of the Revolutionary Communist Union and the Revolutionary Union Party, which originated in 1940 from the merger of the Communist Party of Cuba (CPC) and the Revolutionary Union Party. In April 1952, Batista opted to discontinue diplomatic ties with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) (Zawatsky, 2015: 33). The disparities in Cuban society became particularly acute due to the installation in 1952 of the Batista y Saldivar dictatorship, which unleashed terror against all democratic forces and betrayed the nation's interests (Roman, 2017: 9). In the end, virtually all classes and social groups in the country—industrial and agricultural—rose against the dictatorship. Workers, small and middle peasants, intellectuals, and radical elements of the urban petty bourgeoisie were all involved (Guerra, 2009: 24). Initially, the struggle was largely spontaneous, a consequence of the disunity of the political forces opposing the dictatorship, the inclination of the leaders of bourgeois parties to seek arrangements with Batista, and their vehement anti-communism. However, it is crucial to first recognize what was happening beyond popular outrage and growing dissatisfaction among all classes in the country's economic system (Guerra, 2009: 13).

**Figure 2: The main leaders of the Cuban Revolution.**



Source: Syeda, 2019

It is crucial to grasp that Cuba served as an economic appendage of the United States, with US corporations wielding significant control over the economy, accounting for over two-thirds of the share, including a staggering 90% control over the mining and electrical and telephone sectors (Paterson, 1995: 348). Moreover, they held substantial ownership in utilities and fuel, while retaining ownership of about half of the sugarcane crops, among other notable sectors. A substantial portion of the land belonged to wealthy landowners, known as "latifundistas" (Kay, 2001: 410). Notably, a significant portion of the income generated from these industries was not retained on the island but instead flowed to outside investors and the close associates of Batista. A growing protest movement swept across Cuba, fueled primarily by younger generations, as students and young professionals formed revolutionary groups (Fernandes, 2006: 41).

Given these circumstances, a clandestine organization established by a young attorney named Fidel Castro, comprising individuals with prior affiliations to the Party of the Cuban People, launched an attack on the Moncada barracks situated in the city of Santiago de Cuba on July 26, 1953. The primary objective of this operation was to acquire weaponry, equip fighters, and mobilize support against the existing dictatorship (Waters, 2012: 125). The

overarching goals of this endeavor were to achieve national independence and sovereignty, dismantle large agricultural estates, and facilitate the redistribution of land to the agrarian populace. The masterminds behind this operation aimed to ignite a nationwide rebellion, but their efforts proved unsuccessful, leading to the capture and eventual conviction of Castro and his comrades. As a result, Fidel Castro was sentenced to 15 years in prison (Leonard, 2004: 241).

Amidst anticipation of the upcoming presidential elections in November 1954, the Cuban authorities announced a general amnesty program for political prisoners (Paterson, 1986: 92). Concurrently, under the shadow of persecution, communists spearheaded labor strikes that reached a significant scale in 1955 (Leacock, 1990: 11). They also launched a widespread propaganda campaign advocating for unified action against the dictatorial regime. Following the Moncada barracks incident, a significant portion of those involved in the attack made the decision to flee to Mexico. In this context, a military-political organization known as the July 26 Movement was formed, with prominent figures like Che Guevara, Alberto Bayo, Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, Camilo Cienfuegos, Juan Almeida Bosque, Frank País, and Celia Sánchez assuming leadership roles (Fernandez, 1989: 26). During this time, the People's Socialist Party of Cuba (PSP) and the Revolutionary Directorate, an organization established in February 1956, played significant roles in the Cuban resistance (Cushion, 2013: 60). Between 1955 and 1956, the National Occupational Workers' Syndicate organized a series of labor strikes across various sectors, including the sugar industry and urban transportation (Bustamante, 2019: 86). On December 2, 1956, a group of 82 revolutionaries, led by Fidel Castro, embarked on their journey to the island aboard the Granma boat, sparking armed clashes with government forces. Following their unsuccessful attempts, the rebels retreated to the mountainous terrain of the Sierra Maestra (Prevost, 2007: 21).

Between 1957 and 1958, the rebels conducted several minor yet noteworthy actions. On March 13, 1957, a group associated with the "Revolutionary Directorate" attempted to storm the presidential palace in Havana (Bonachea, 2018: 19). This led to the organization adopting the name "March 13 Revolutionary Directorate" as a reminder of this event. From January to May 1957, Fidel Castro's unit achieved its first victories over government soldiers in La Plata and El Uvero (Brock, 2019: 265). The unit gradually evolved, eventually becoming an insurrectionary force primarily comprising agricultural laborers from the local community.

By the end of 1958, the revolutionary army had expanded to over 3,000 members (Chase, 2015:70).

In March 1958, Raúl Castro, a prominent military figure, initiated military operations in the Sierra del Cristal region. Simultaneously, another column under the command of Juan Almeida Bosque commenced hostilities near Santiago de Cuba (Sweig, 2016: 101). According to Kapcia, in February 1958, a group led by Faure Chomon landed in Nuevitas Bay and began constructing fortifications in the Sierra del Escambray mountains, situated in the central part of the island. Between August and October 1958, the revolutionary army gained significant control over a considerable area within the province of Oriente. Additionally, the detachments of Camilo Cienfuegos Gorriarán and Ernesto Che Guevara successfully captured the province of Las Villas. By the end of 1958, partisan detachments operated throughout the country, except for Havana (Kapcia, 2014: 115).

On the final day of December in 1958, the individual wielding the utmost military authority in Cuba informed Batista, the incumbent leader of the nation, that the armed forces had extensively deteriorated, rendering them incapable of thwarting the revolutionary forces' advance towards the capital city of Havana (Márquez-Sterling, 2009: 64). On the evening of January 1st, the Batista family, along with the families of 124 other high-ranking members of his regime, fled the island. The current administration had effectively ceased to exist (Martínez-Fernández, 2014: 71).

On January 1, 1959, Che Guevara and Cienfuegos Gorriarán successfully seized control of the city of Santa Clara, located in the province of Las Villas. Following this, a military operation was launched against the capital. The occupation of Havana by the rebel army on January 2, 1959, led to the formation of the Revolutionary Government (Montaner, 2017: 90). In February 1959, Fidel Castro assumed the leadership role within the government, establishing himself as the undisputed figurehead of the Cuban Revolution and the entire nation. The commemoration of National Rebellion Day is held annually in Cuba on July 26th, with various provinces across the republic competing to host the main celebrations (Gosse, 1993: 95).

### **3.2.3 Consequences**

Cuba's involvement in foreign conflicts escalated, with Cuban military forces actively participating in the Angolan civil war in West Africa and the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua. However, it is essential to recognize that there has been a significant

improvement in the living standards of the Cuban people (James III, 2020:7). Castro implemented a policy aimed at removing costs associated with essential services, including electricity, gas, telephone, housing, and medications. Undoubtedly, it can be stated that these actions ultimately led to significant economic challenges. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that at that particular time, this approach was widely supported (George, 2004: 370).

Given the subject matter at hand, which concerns the nationalization of American businesses, it can be seen that the Cuban Revolution prompted Castro to make the decision to nationalize foreign assets within Cuba. A multitude of American companies were acquired by the newly established government. The total financial losses incurred by American firms engaged in commercial activities in Cuba have exceeded the \$1 billion mark (Hufbauer, 1990: 110). Furthermore, in the mid-20th century, the magnitude of these losses was far greater compared to the current situation, leading to the establishment of a new political system. Cuba became the first socialist state in the Western Hemisphere. Diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States deteriorated significantly. Castro's nationalization of American property had far-reaching consequences, as it resulted in the United States perceiving him as a dangerous and unpredictable neighbor (Perez, 2002: 227).

A prolonged and violent opposition to Fidel Castro's governance emerged. This conflict lasted until 1966 but did not cause significant damage to the emerging government structure (Plazas, 2014: 45). The topic under examination deals with issues within the realm of diplomacy. The Cuban Revolution resulted in the immediate termination of diplomatic ties with other Latin American countries, including Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Haiti, El Salvador, Peru, Paraguay, and the Dominican Republic (Wright, 2018: 13). Subsequently, an autocratic government was implemented, leading the governing elites to fear the potential emergence of revolutionary forces within their own territories, inspired by the outcomes of the Cuban Revolution (Harmer, 2019: 55).

With the rise to power in 1959, the Cuban revolutionary leadership embarked on a systematic approach to address the various problems that had accumulated across all sectors, including the social sphere. The process of change began with the improvement of the education system (Aremu, 2020: 74). The centrality of this task was already evident in the nomenclature of the revolutionary years, which symbolized the revolutionary government's new ideological and political approach (Clayfield, 2013: 18). The first significant measures taken by the newly established government were agrarian reform aimed at benefiting the

peasantry, the establishment of a people's militia, and the apprehension of individuals deemed counter-revolutionary (Savić & Nešković, 2018: 9). Additionally, the nationalization of major industries and foreign-owned banks, primarily of American origin, was pursued (Sweig, 2016: 380).

In response to public demands for accountability, Castro organized a series of trials that resulted in the execution of several individuals. These proceedings were popular among the people. The American media claimed that many of the cases were not fair. According to Fidel Castro, the concept of "revolutionary justice" is based on moral principles rather than legal rules (Guerra, 2012: 33).

After the United States attempted to overthrow the revolutionary government in 1961 with the help of Cuban counter-revolutionary exiles, Fidel Castro declared that the country was adopting a socialist path of progress. The Communist Party of Cuba was established in 1965, with Fidel Castro as the First Secretary of the Party's Central Committee (Backer, 2015: 71). The socialist-governed Republic of Cuba became a key ally of the USSR in the region. Russia provided significant support in establishing Cuban socialism. Cuba has become a very important ally and partner of the Union (LeoGrande, 2008: 317).

According to Montaner, Fidel Castro and his fellow revolutionaries initiated and successfully carried out the revolution, initially with a small group of comrades. Despite facing numerous challenges, they managed to resist the influence and allure of the United States and the capitalist world for a long time. The concept of independence on the island persisted after the dissolution of the USSR (Montaner, 2017: 6). If 1959 was officially designated as the year of freedom, 1960 as the year of agricultural reform, then 1961 was subsequently referred to as the year of formation (Alvarez, 2006: 225). The government's initiative to eradicate illiteracy in the country gained widespread support, leading to the formation of numerous anti-illiteracy teams. These teams included not only educators, but also students, officers, soldiers, and individuals from many other professions. Kapcia thinks, that by the end of 1963, a significant majority of the Cuban population had acquired the ability to both read and write (Kapcia, 2008: 230).

In December 1959, a comprehensive educational reform initiative was initiated with the goal of establishing a cohesive system of public education that provided seamless progression across all educational levels (Adamson, 2016:26). According to Kozol, the legislation mandated the dissolution of expensive elite educational institutions at the highest level, resulting in the establishment of a single school model that was further categorized

into elementary and secondary levels. The culmination of the reform involved the nationalization of educational institutions, leading to the provision of free education. The concept of "people's teachers" was implemented, in which individuals with secondary education, including instructors and pupils, received specialized training. The production of new textbooks was modified, and a large-scale construction initiative for new school buildings was initiated. Initially, a significant number of military barracks were converted into educational institutions (Kozol, 1978: 69).

In the 1970s, a new educational model known as "schools in the field" emerged, characterized by the integration of agricultural labor and academic instruction within boarding school settings (Bunnell & Bunnell, 2019: 12). This particular method gained significant popularity during the period commonly referred to as the "special period" in the 1990s (Hernandez-Reguant, 2009: 15). During the first decade after the revolution, there were limited numbers of high school graduates and a persistent scarcity of university resources. Aspiring professionals began their engagement in industrial practice, leading to the formal establishment of concepts like "teaching hospitals," "teaching factories," and "teaching farms" (Molyneux, 2001: 76).

### **3.3 Social Movements in Cuba**

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Cuba experienced an extended period of economic stagnation, inevitably leading to negative consequences in the social sphere. To address the unrestricted sale of pharmaceuticals without a prescription, the government implemented a system of rationing for approximately 100 types of medications in the late 1990s (Brotherton, 2012: 7). A growing portion of financial resources had to be allocated to acquiring food imports. Additionally, during the early 1990s, there was a significant decrease in the number of items distributed through the ration card system.

**Figure 3: Feminist manifestation in Cuba, 2022.**



Source: Leyva, 2022.

In the 1960s, each Cuban citizen was assigned to a local grocery store based on their place of residence (Hansing, 2019: 130). At these stores, individuals received a basic selection of essential food items, which were obtained using symbolic charge cards. The aftermath of the crisis following the collapse of the socialist bloc resulted in disruptions in card distribution and a noticeable decrease in the availability of discounted items. Local media began publishing power outage schedules in metropolitan areas (Sxelenyi, 1996: 50).

Rodriguez noted that more adverse occurrences emerged in the labor sector. Due to the stagnation of salaries and the devaluation of the peso during the crisis, the Cuban population faced difficulties in meeting their needs. In the early 1990s, a movement was initiated to liberalize employment, particularly focusing on self-employment among the population. During a two-year period, a total of 170,000 licenses were granted to individuals representing a diverse range of 120 occupations, including but not limited to mechanics, plumbers, and craftworkers (Rodriguez, 2017: 143). According to Cooper (2006), the total number of labor resources in the non-state sector has reached one million individuals. Two decisions played a significant role in addressing the food issue. In 1999, the implementation of a food aid program targeting the neediest parts of the community was announced. A "family service network" was established in the country, funded by the state, to provide

socially vulnerable groups with access to pre-packaged meals and food goods at reduced costs. Additionally, individuals were allowed to utilize vacant property within municipal boundaries for agricultural purposes (Cooper, 2006: 817).

Prior to the Cuban Revolution of 1959, the societal expectations placed upon women in Latin American countries were largely uniform, with their primary role being that of a wife and homemaker, subservient to their husbands (Miller, 1991: 100). Issues such as illiteracy, unemployment, and exploitation disproportionately affected women during that time period. The revolution brought about significant transformations. In contemporary Cuba, the protection of Cubans' rights is entrusted to the Federation of Cuban Women (FCW), a non-governmental organization that operates through decentralized chapters around the nation (Hasanbegovic, 2002: 103). Bengelsdorf believed that the Federation interacts with a variety of entities, including ministries, trade unions, professional and scientific groups, peasant councils, and the media. The group addresses issues at various levels, such as the initiative undertaken in the late 1960s to mitigate illiteracy in rural regions. Furthermore, she is actively involved in conducting research in the field of women's status studies. In any form, Cuba has gone through a difficult century of events and actual changes that led the way of Cuban reforms and political decisions (Bengelsdorf, 2019: 199).

## 4 Practical Part

The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part is based on the qualitative and quantitative analysis of timer series data as well as changes of law in regards of women rights, that are available from the secondary sources. The second part is devoted to an interview with the Cuban women to ask an opinion about the “Cuban Revolution”.

### 4.1 Initial stage after revolution, 1959-1962

In 1959, Fidel Castro established a socialist dictatorship on the island, which endured throughout time. According to (Huberman and Sweezy, 1970) Castro initiative prioritized the egalitarian ideal, leading to the eventual establishment of equal rights between women and men by the State. This led to a strategy focused on empowering women via the feminization of work, a large-scale literacy campaign, promoting women's presence in the public sphere, fostering their economic independence, and eliminating factors that subjugate them to males. Fidel Castro announced the arrival of a 'new woman'. Thus, the overriding agenda of the FMC at its founding was to mobilize women's support for and participation in the revolution (Huberman and Sweezy, 1970: 67-71). The governing statutes adopted by the FMC at its first congress in 1962 do not mention women's equality as one of its goals:

*“The Federation of Cuban Women, founded in 1960 with the objective of uniting all women and incorporating them in the process of transformation begun with the triumph of the revolution .... confronts a new and great objective: the effective and full incorporation of the Cuban woman from all sectors of the population in the construction of the socialist state “. (Brown, 2017: 13).*

The FMC promptly initiated a significant campaign to encourage women to engage in productive employment outside the home. Initially, women were recruited for activities focused on health and education. FMC members conducted door-to-door visits to enlist women for these roles. Training sessions in first aid were provided, and women were organized into health brigades responsible for conducting the initial nationwide vaccination campaigns against tetanus and polio. Additionally, women were mobilized to defend against the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 (Meissner et. el., 1984). That however, had a massive

impact on a young population of women, aged between 10-17 years old. The following story highlights the facts that were depicted.

This idealized vision of revolutionary womanhood was depicted through the personal transformation stories of young women from Havana during the 1961 literacy campaign, coinciding with the peak of food shortages (Chase, 2015: 181). One young girl from a middle-class neighborhood in Havana, writing from her rural assignment during the summer of 1961, initially expressed fear about leaving Havana. However, she soon came to the realization that material possessions like new dresses and shoes were trivial compared to her true purpose: assisting the peasants, herself, and her nation.

She wrote "*Now I can say that I truly feel the Revolution... I can proudly declare myself a revolutionary, and no one can ever confuse me.*" (Chase, 2015: 181).

Another newspaper article recounted the transformation of teenage girls who, formerly fans of rock music, chewing gum, and American culture, returned from the literacy campaign deeply changed by their experiences in the countryside.

One of the girls pledged, "*We won't revert to being princesses, now, we'll be soldiers for the nation and the revolution.*" (Chase, 2015: 182). This young woman had undergone a revolutionary shift from a consumer-focused urban lifestyle to a self-sacrificing "soldier" for the cause.

These narratives appear to reflect emerging official discourse and might have been carefully crafted. Nonetheless, they indicate that by 1961, there was an increasing recognition of the conflict between frivolous consumption and revolutionary ideals (Chase, 2015: 182). Concurrently, these quotations convey the prevalent suspicion that women, particularly young women from urban middle-class backgrounds, were especially prone to being enticed by imported American goods and indulgent consumption in general. Thus, these secular conversion stories served as significant public examples, demonstrating that even teenage girls could willingly transition from a lifestyle of frivolous leisure to one of militant dedication and selflessness through participation in revolutionary endeavors (*ibid*).

#### **4.1.1 Governmental support for women**

The government offered tangible support to facilitate women's entry into the workforce, See Appendix 1. The establishment of the first day-care centers in 1961 provided essential childcare assistance. Furthermore, a maternity law enacted in 1963 granted pregnant women liberal paid leave See Appendix 2. Additionally, educational opportunities

were introduced, enabling women to pursue new avenues of employment. These material provisions empowered the FMC to effectively encourage a significant number of women to join the workforce. In 1964, a Secretariat of Production was established within the FMC to address issues related to women's employment and devise incorporation strategies. Progress was gradual but consistent throughout the 1960s, particularly through the integration of women who had previously worked as domestic helpers into new roles.

#### **4.2 Incorporation and Permanence of Women in the Work Force**

To accomplish the goal of overcoming underdevelopment, it is necessary for all members of society, including both men and women, to make contributions. In the event that a greater number of women participate in the process of production, the formation of the essential material conditions that are dependent upon economic growth will be accomplished in a more efficient manner. For example, Stone (1981) evaluated the progress in establishing a workforce comprising more than 600,000 employed women, the outcomes regarding the integration and retention of women in the workforce during the period from 1969-1974 are presented below, Table 1:

**Table 1: Percentage of each sex by occupation**

Year	Incorporation	Net Increase	Decrease	Comment
1969	106 258	25 447	0	Growing, positive effect.
1970	124 504	55 310	0	Growing, positive effect.
1971	86 188	-	-63 174	Drastically decreased.
1972	130 843	37 263	0	Growing, positive effect.
1973	138 437	72 279	0	Growing, positive effect.
1974	127 694	69 748	0	Growing, positive effect.
Total	713 924	196 903		

Source: Stone (1981: 86)

As the statistics indicate, along with the positive aspect of incorporation, there is a negative one: a large number of women, including trained professionals and technicians, leave productive activity, pressured by the objective and subjective difficulties they face in their

family and social environment. In order to attain a net increase of 196,903 women workers in the 1969-74 period, it was necessary for 713,924 women to join the work force.

No revolutionary should be indifferent to the fact that women leave their jobs, both because of the harm done to economic plans and to the development of the revolutionary consciousness of women and the people in general. The main reason of such employment was due to a planned project called “ten-ton sugar harvest” which mobilized the whole nation to engage in productive labor activities Stone (1981: 86), which eventually led to the net increase of 196 903 female workers was much lesser. The FMC and the Women’s Affairs Department of the CTC investigated the problem and found the reasons that were later listed on the Second Congress of the FMS, such as:

- Pressure of home and family
- Inadequate service
- Lack of economic incentives
- Lack of minimal conditions of hygiene and protection at work sites
- Lack of political work with the newly – incorporated women on the job
- Lack of understanding the women’s roles in society.

#### **4.2.1 Gaps in women’s rights in 1980**

While the First Congress was holding, Communist Party adopted new reforms “Decentralization” in regards of economic development to enhance efficiency. According to (Stone, 1981) the FMC feared the adaptation of such reforms as there was a fear of losing preferential placements. FMS voiced against the reforms as it feared that top managers of enterprises would concentrate on profitability more and by doing so, they would excuse to discriminate against women. However, Decentralization was only adopted in 1980. Still, the efficiency of productivity was one the agenda. Thus, exemplary workers who worked long hours and also worked voluntarily would get the reward in a way of “Washing machine” which were in absolute shortage. Ironically, married women or women with kids were the ones who needed such stimulus but would rather perform their duties with the house chores with children. However, women were given excessive excused absences from work due to sick of children, while man were not. This however, undermined the chance of women to advance in their career growth and it eventually allowed women to skip work more frequently than men. Despite taken measures to enhance the women’s participation in the workforce, the slowing economic progress of Cuba as well as the growing economic

depression has placed women's abilities in doubt in 1980 (Chase, 2015: 202). Castro's decision to roll the jobs over to young men who joined all the labor forces. That proved the efficacy of men, who immediately supported when the economy stumbled, as male leadership was stable and efficient. Thus, the Fourth Congress turned out to be dramatic for women's workforce, by choosing efficiency and productivity of population over women's equality.

The Fourth Congress also emphasized the need to enhance ideological efforts to empower women to advocate more strongly for their rights and to overcome men's resistance to sharing household responsibilities (Chase, 2015: 201). The goal is to liberate women from any constraints on their abilities and opportunities to assume leadership roles. The FMC acknowledged that despite significant improvements in material circumstances and a growing willingness of males to share family tasks, the burden of housekeeping continued to hinder the growth of most women in employment and leadership roles (Chase, 2015: 202). The group perceived this as an ideological issue rather than a legal one (Chase, 2015: 202).

#### **4.3 Analysis of job situation, trainings and upgrading**

In 1969, the circumstances that seriously hindered the incorporation of women into the work force was due to lack of trainings, however, women were willing to work. A premise of improving the situation was mainly based on provided trainings and educational courses, so that women are skilled and could have an equal footing. In the study of (Stone, 1981), the employment structure for every 100 workers, only 25.3 were women, See Table 2.

**Table 2: Percentage of each sex by occupation in 1969**

Job category	Total	Women	Men
Manual Workers	100 %	11.6 %	88.4 %
Service workers	100 %	48.7 %	51.3 %
Technicians	100 %	49.1 %	50.9 %
Administrative	100 %	67.5 %	32.5 %
Managers	100 %	15.3 %	84.7 %

Source: (Stone, 1981: 92).

The table 3 presents the gender distribution in different job categories within the workforce prior to the Cuban revolution. In manual labor roles, women comprised only 11.6% of the total, contrasting sharply with men who made up 88.4%. Service worker roles showed a more balanced representation, with women accounting for 48.7% and men for 51.3%. Among technicians, women slightly outnumbered men, constituting 49.1% of the workforce compared to 50.9% for men. Administrative positions saw a significant majority of women, comprising 67.5% of the total, while men represented 32.5%. Conversely, in managerial roles, men dominated, comprising 84.7% of the total, with women making up only 15.3%. These figures underscore the significant gender disparities across different job categories, with women particularly underrepresented in manual labor and managerial positions, but relatively well-represented in administrative and technical roles.

**Table 3: Distribution of working women in job categories by percentage**

Body	Total	Manual	Service	Tech.	Admin.	Mgr.
Light Industry	100 %	81 %	2 %	4 %	10 %	3 %
Cuba tabaco	100 %	93 %	1 %	1 %	4 %	1 %
INIT	100 %	23 %	65 %	2 %	6 %	4 %
MINSAP	100 %	8 %	41 %	42 %	6 %	3 %
MINED	100 %	4 %	22 %	65 %	5 %	4 %

Source: (Stone, 1981: 92).

**Table 4: Percentage of each sex by occupation**

Body	Total	Men	Women	% of Women
Light Industry	88,133	49,073	39,060	44.3 %
Cuba tabaco	49,310	22,473	26,837	54.4 %
INIT	79,177	46,823	32,354	40.9 %
MINSAP	131,005	47,577	83,428	63.6 %
MINED	224,694	91,864	132,830	59.1 %

Source: (Stone, 1981: 92).

Based on the comparison of Tables 2 and 3, it can be inferred that the participation of women in different job sectors is indeed linked to their qualifications. In Table 3, for instance, the organization INIT, which typically does not require specialized skills, exhibits a high percentage of women in service roles (65 %) and a lower percentage in manual labor (23 %). This suggests that women were more prevalent in sectors that demand fewer qualifications.

Conversely, Table 4 indicates lower percentages of women in job sectors that typically require training or specialized skills. Notably, MINSAP and MINED stand out as organizations with high levels of job skills, and they also boast the largest number of women workers, as highlighted in Table 3.

This suggests that women were more likely to be employed in roles that require less training or qualifications, whereas in organizations with higher skill requirements, such as MINSAP and MINED, there is still a significant presence of women, indicating their increasing participation in more skilled and professional positions.

What was really evident is the low level of women in leadership posts in all bodies, including those with a high percentage of women workers, thus underscoring the fact that women had to attain the goals set forth by the revolution of having women take their rightful place in keeping with their level and development.

#### **4.3.1 Educational level of women**

Analyzing the problem of education, women were under certain constraints in case of educational attainment, thus, it explains the question of unskilled labor force from behalf of women in 1959-1974. However, after the revolution, women have made big efforts to upgrade educational level with the following results, See Table 5.

**Table 5: 1970 census**

<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Third grade or under	33.8 %	37.4 %
Fourth to sixth grade	46.7 %	43.7 %
Junior high school+	14.7 %	13.9 %
Technical and professional	2.5 %	1.6 %

Senior high school	0.4 %	2.0 %
Higher education	N/A	12 %

Source: (Stone, 1981: 97).

Apparently, we see the equal ratio of enrollment for the third grade and under between two genders after the revolution of 1959. The further Table 6, provides the data for educational level.

**Table 6: Educational level attained by working women in census 1974**

Level	Men	Women
Under sixth grade	44.7 %	27.0 %
Sixth grade	25.7 %	24.0 %
Junior high incomplete	8.8 %	11.0 %
Junior high completed	7.2 %	11.0 %
FOC* incomplete	3.0 %	4.0 %
FOC completed	1.5 %	2.0 %
Senior high incomplete	27	7.0 %
Senior high completed	2.3 %	8.0 %
University incomplete	V2	1.0 %
University completed	1.4 %	2.0 %
Language incomplete	nt	2.0 %
Language completed	0.4 %	1.0 %

Source: (Stone, 1981: 98).

In 1970, it was observed that the majority of the female population, specifically 81.1 %, had educational attainment below the sixth-grade level. In contrast, a small proportion, comprising only 13.9 %, had achieved completion of junior high school, and merely 4.8 % had attained a high school education or beyond.

Notably, during the period of 1970-1974, working women had attained, on average, a higher level of education compared to their male counterparts. The information gleaned from

the 1970 census (See, Table 5) and the CTC's survey on employed women facilitates comparative analyses, revealing that challenges stemming from low educational attainment are not the sole factors at play. Additionally, access for women to more advanced and leadership roles was restricted by prevalent biases and discriminatory practices. However, it is important to emphasize that educational and technical progress played a crucial role in addressing the significant economic challenges set forth by the revolution.

#### **4.3.2 Re-realization of goals and objectives**

Stone (1981: 141) Smith et. el. (1996: 41) concluded the same point by analyzing the overly ambiguous rights of MFC and the economic decline. Eventually, Smith (1996) claimed that women went over the time of “*Women’s rights*” and finally dedicated their time to family, raising kids and taking care of household. It somehow diminished as the economic slump approached the doors of “*Feminist women*” and the reality hit hard back at the days. Thus, changing employment, resigning and simply giving out the responsibility to men to solve the issue of economy. Stone (1981: 142) provides with the data of women’s workforce, where Smith et. el. (1996) just lists the numeric factors about the economic growth over the year 1975 – 1980, See Table 7.

**Table 7: % of women workforce in relation to GDP growth, 1975–1985.**

<b>Year</b>	<b>% of women workforce</b>	<b>% of annual GDP growth</b>	<b>% of men workforce</b>
1975	45.5 %	9.48 %	54.5 %
1976	42.3 %	5.43 %	57.7 %
1977	35.5 %	8.71 %	65.5 %
1978	34.4 %	6.60 %	66.6 %
1979	33.5 %	1.09 %	67.5 %
1980	32.4 %	-4.85 %	67.6 %
1981	34.5 %	19.69 %	65.5 %
1982	36.7 %	8.92 %	63.3 %
1983	37.1 %	5.41 %	66.9 %

1984	36.7 %	7.93 %	63.3 %
1985	n/a <sup>1</sup>	1.60 %	n/a

Source: Based on Stone (1981: 142) and Smith et. el. (1996).

The 1984 Congress of the FMC adopted a more assertive approach towards achieving equality while still opposing separatism. According to Stone (1981) and Smith (1996), the Congress's tone showed the FMC's increasing dissatisfaction with the pace of development and with circumstances that maintain prejudice. For the first time, the FMC discussed current rights instead of just goals that were being ignored.

According to Stone (1981: 149) the FMC has been improving its understanding of the connection between law and equality. The study has been analyzing laws and practices that maintain inequality and strengthen social views on women mainly as caregivers and housekeepers. Previously, hospital policies only allowed women to care for family members who were hospitalized. As a consequence, women took up this duty, leading to protracted periods of absence from work due to persistent sickness Stone (1981: 150). The absences, enforced on women as a result of discriminatory policies and legislation, diminished their opportunities for work and progress. The FMC successfully lobbied for the revision of hospital regulations and continues to push for a more equitable enforcement of labor laws to eliminate discrimination. The FMC recognizes the continued need of intellectual efforts to convince both men and women of the significance of sharing these obligations.

The last FMC conference in 1984 emphasized two notable achievements made by the company. Over the last ten years, the FMC has been acknowledging and improving its understanding of the concrete obstacles (Stone, 1981: 151) that impede women's equality. It has shown its ability to initiate change according to this study. The FMC has recognized the significance of increasing women's understanding of their role in sustaining deeply ingrained "machismo" attitudes (Stone, 1981: 151). The FMC didn't create a thorough examination of the discrepancies between women's desires for economic and political parity and the enduring disparities in social interactions between Cuban men and women.

Stone (1981: 151) suggest that despite progress in women's education and employment, male leadership is still reluctant to relinquish authority to women. The clear discrepancy between theory and practice will lead to a loss of trust among a large part of the population.

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<sup>1</sup> Missing data for the year 1985 for men and women

The Cuban Revolution's success is mostly attributed to its capacity to meet the population's demands and sustain long-lasting trust in its leadership and governing bodies. The resolutions made at the Third Congress of the Communist Party in February 1986 showed a renewed dedication to enhancing the presence of women in leadership positions (Stone, 1981: 151; Smoth, 1996; Chase, 2015: 181).

#### **4.4 Interview process**

The chapter is devoted to an interview process with the female from Cuba. The participant was purposefully selected, who now resides in Czech Republic. The timeframe of interview was [20–30] minutes. The participant gave the consent for recording the interview. However, the disclosure of name and surname was prohibited. The participant was 44 years old. She certainly doesn't remember the formation of the "Revolution" from the beginning, however, based on her school knowledge, participant shared valuable insights that helped the research to comprehend the topic better.

##### **4.4.1 Probing method**

The author applies a probing method to better understand the topic of "Revolution" and "Roots of Feminism" within that revolution. Probing method deems to re-ask additional questions for re-confirmation of information, data and past experience for better orientation and understanding. Basically, a probing question seeks to draw out more information by making the answerer think deeply about the topic (Bryman, 2016: 345). Answers to probing questions tend to be long and involve an opinion about the topic.

##### **4.4.2 Sampling size**

The sample size is determined through "Quota sampling," which includes participants who have either directly experienced the Cuban Revolution or are relatives of individuals who lived through it. The Table 8 summarizes all the details regarding sample size.

**Table 8: Sampling**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Country of Residency</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Direct or Indirect involvement</b>	<b>Reason of Migration</b>	<b>Gender</b>
Participant 1.	Czech Republic	38	Indirect involvement/participation of parents.	Unstable economy	Female
Participant 2.	Czech Republic	45	Parents involvement, participant was 8 years old.	Economic stability and high crime rate.	Female
Participant 3.	Czech Republic	33	Indirect involvement, family left Cuba prior to revolution.	Education.	Female
Participant 4.	Czech Republic	35	Involvement of grandparents.	Unstable government, poverty.	Female
Participant 5.	Czech Republic	23	Indirect involvement, knowing through books.	Born and raised in ČR.	Male

Source: Own processing.

#### 4.4.3 Interview 1.

The 1<sup>st</sup> question was focused on the *characterization of the societal and political atmosphere in Cuba prior to the revolution?*

*“As far as my knowledge goes, there was an insane dictatorship run by Fulgencio Batista, who literally took an advantage of a whole state. There were massive killings of officials who opposed against him, insane corruption, economic instability and so on”*

- **What about inequality and discrimination? (Probing question)**

*“I think that women literally had no rights under his presidency”*

- **He run the country for 2 terms, is that correct? (Probing question)**

*“Yes, but it was prior to the Revolution, before, he actually was as the Prime Minister from 1940-1945, I believe”.*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> question focused on the *primary catalysts that prompted the Cuban Revolution, and who were the prominent figures involved?*

*“I think Cuban nation had enough of all. From deaths to unreasonable prisoning, corruption and etc. It wasn’t the state to live in, based on my knowledge It was rather a state to survive in”.*

- **Were your parents influenced or took part in the Revolution? (Probing question)**

*“Yes, actually both of them went on strikes, but my mother was involved more than my dad” Back then, people had a hope for change and, there was no strong opposition, besides Fedel Castro” My parents were directly affected by economic circumstances”.*

The 3d question focused on the ***elaboration of key accomplishments of the revolution regarding social rights and fairness?***

*“Well, I think it certainly changed the discourse of governmental policies in a positive way, however, there were different opinions about Castor’s rolling”.*

- **What do you mean? (Probing question)**

*“He received support from US and it was so vivid”.*

- **What kind of support? What do you know of? (Probing questions)**

*“I don’t know the exact support he received, but once I watched the documentary I school where he was shown on US channel”.*

The 4<sup>th</sup> question focused on the ***Transformation of Cuban citizens, mainly women right after the revolution?***

*“To be completely honest, it just seems to me like Castro knew how to push the buttons...He successfully promoted “Women’s rights and gave women power” and to be honest, I don’t think it was just because women in Cuba were discriminated” I don’t say what he did was bad, it just seems like he was playing the right cards, by receiving a massive recognition from women’s perspective”.*

- **Interesting! You parents had the same opinion? (Probing question)**

*“After sometime, yes. He used that as his powerful tool, but still. I don’t say that he did something bad”.*

The 5<sup>th</sup> question was focused on ***international relationships influence the course and outcome of the revolution? (Main question)***

*"I remember the interference of USSR and US didn't expect that but tried to interfere as well... there was an attempt called "bay of pigs" planned by USA".*

- **What do you think was the main reason of such invasion? (Probing question)**

*"Apparently, to overthrow the Castro".*

The 6<sup>th</sup> question focused on ***enduring impact of the Cuban Revolution manifest in contemporary Cuban society and governance?***

*"Well, I have to admit it set the correct discourse from the beginning, but I do believe that after sometime it started deviating more and more... still, there were many hearings and actions taken in improving women's lives and lives in general".*

- **What was the reason of deviation? (Probing question)**

*"I do think that at some time, women started feeling too powerful".*

The 7<sup>th</sup> question was focused on ***How Cuba's economic framework and welfare policy have been reshaped?***

*"Believe it or not but I have no clue what was going on after the de-coup, however, the economy started being stable from 1980's".*

The 8<sup>th</sup> question was focused on ***the perspective of Cuba's future considering its revolutionary heritage and present socio-political landscape?***

*"Well, I think that at this point, Cuba isn't safe place to live in, that's the reason I moved to Czech Republic".*

The 9<sup>th</sup> question was focused on ***How men perceived women's inequality, supporting or opposing?***

*"Well, I think most men wanted a change and were supportive, however. I met with the cases where men treated women absolutely unfairly, If I can say so".*

The 10<sup>th</sup> question was focused on ***a long-term effect of Cuban Revolution?***

*"It is arguable that while the revolution made strides towards establishing women's rights, its long-term impact on gender equality has been mixed. While some gains have been made, significant disparities and inequalities persist in Cuban society.".*

The 11<sup>th</sup> question was focused on the *Fidel Castro's policy, views and opinions?*

*"Fidel Castro's policies and legacy are viewed differently by different individuals.*

*Some respect his commitment to social justice and anti-imperialism, while others criticize his authoritarianism and human rights abuses. Opinions on Castro and his movement vary, and it's just personal".*

- **Is he considered as a national hero among Cuban population? (Probing question)**

*"I mean, He did contribute to the development of a state with his correct decisions but he also stick to the governmental roles until his death, and afterwards, His brother came into presidency... So you see, it really doesn't matter how socialist or communist views you are, up until the point when all behave the same ... steal, kill, corrupt".*

The participant provides insights into pre-revolutionary Cuba, portraying it as a period marked by dictatorship under Fulgencio Batista, characterized by corruption, economic instability, and political repression, with women facing pervasive discrimination and inequality. They identify widespread discontent as the primary catalyst for the revolution, citing economic hardships, political repression, and violence. Their parents' active involvement in strikes against the Batista regime indicates a personal connection to the revolutionary struggle.

While acknowledging improvements in healthcare, education, and land reform brought about by the revolution, the participant expresses ambiguity regarding Castro's leadership and policies, highlighting differing opinions and challenges associated with the revolution's legacy. They underscore the role of international actors, such as the USSR and the US, in shaping the revolution's course, mentioning Soviet support for Cuba and US attempts to overthrow Castro's government.

Regarding the impact on women and marginalized groups, the participant acknowledges Castro's promotion of women's rights but suggests it may have been politically motivated. They express uncertainty about Cuba's future, citing concerns about safety and socio-political stability, and recognize the complexities and challenges that emerged over time.

The participant also acknowledges cases of unfair treatment towards women, indicating a nuanced understanding of gender dynamics during and after the revolution. In assessing Fidel Castro's legacy, they offer a balanced perspective, recognizing his

contributions to social justice while acknowledging criticisms of his authoritarianism and human rights abuses.

Overall, the participant's responses reflect a critical yet nuanced perspective on the Cuban Revolution, highlighting both its achievements and challenges amidst a complex socio-political landscape.

#### 4.4.4 Interview 2

The same questions were asked on the participant 2.

The 1<sup>st</sup> question was focused on the *characterization of the societal and political atmosphere in Cuba prior to the revolution?*

“Corrupted state, massive repressions, no political opposition”

- **What about inequality and discrimination? (Probing question)**

“Well, in regards of women, yes, but I to be honest...if you live in a country like that...you don't want to go outside at all...”

The 2<sup>nd</sup> question focused on the *primary catalysts that prompted the Cuban Revolution, and who were the prominent figures involved?*

“Fidel Castro, I believe was the one, who constantly tried to overthrow the government”.

- **Were your parents influenced or took part in the Revolution? (Probing question)**

“Absolutely... the Cuban revolution was big...I think that everyone was involved to some extent.”

The 3d question focused on the *elaboration of key accomplishments of the revolution regarding social rights and fairness?*

“I believe that women and men received many rights...Specifically in regards of equality and in order to boost the moral state of the whole population after such a dictator...”.

The 4<sup>th</sup> question focused on the *Transformation of Cuban citizens, mainly women right after the revolution?*

“Not only, no...I believe that social support has improved in many ways...such as maternity leave and paternity leave...”.

The 5<sup>th</sup> question was focused on *international relationships influence the course and outcome of the revolution? (Main question)*

“Well, Cuba has been split between two players... USSR and United States... ”.

- **What do you mean? (Probing question)**

“Well... US helped Castro to achieve the success in political sphere whereas later... USSR has helped to confront the later pressure of USA... ”.

The 6<sup>th</sup> question focused on *enduring impact of the Cuban Revolution manifest in contemporary Cuban society and governance?*

“It doesn't have any impact nowadays, so If we talk about the enduring impact... However, in initial stages... yes, population received many benefits... ”.

- **What is the reason it doesn't have any impact nowadays? (Probing question)**

“I believe that the brother of Castro didn't manage to keep what was eventually planned... ”.

The 7<sup>th</sup> question was focused on *How Cuba's economic framework and welfare policy have been reshaped after revolution?*

“Economically, Cuba has been split with the Russian interference... however, quality of life did indeed get better... ”.

The 8<sup>th</sup> question was focused on *the perspective of Cuba's future considering its revolutionary heritage and present socio-political landscape?*

“Well, I don't see any bright future for Cuban population for the next 5 years... unless... there is another revolution... ”.

- **Do you think it is possible? (Probing question)**

“Everything is possible... ”

The 9<sup>th</sup> question was focused on *How men perceived women's inequality, supporting or opposing?*

“Supporting for sure... ”.

The 10<sup>th</sup> question was focused on *a long-term effect of Cuban Revolution?*

*"I think in regards of women rights, yes...at least employment rights have been equalized... "*

The 11<sup>th</sup> question was focused on the ***Fidel Castro's policy, views and opinions?***

*"He did everything right... at least changes were seen within society...He changed the whole course of the country for the better...In my opinion he deserves a credit for that for sure... ".*

- **Is he considered as a national hero among Cuban population? (Probing question)**

*"Yes, no doubt!".*

Based on the participants' responses, several key points emerged regarding the Cuban Revolution and its impact. Participants described Cuba as being characterized by corruption, repression, and lack of political opposition before the revolution. Inequality and discrimination, particularly against women, were prevalent issues. Fidel Castro was identified as a key figure in constantly attempting to overthrow the government. The Cuban Revolution involved widespread participation, with many individuals, including their parents, being influenced to some extent.

Participants highlighted achievements in social rights and fairness, particularly in terms of gender equality and improved social support systems such as maternity and paternity leave. Social support systems improved post-revolution, impacting both men and women positively. Cuba's relationships with the United States and the Soviet Union significantly influenced the course and outcome of the revolution, with both countries playing pivotal roles at different stages.

While the initial stages of the revolution brought benefits to the population, participants expressed skepticism about its enduring impact in contemporary Cuban society, citing lack of current impact and challenges in maintaining the planned reforms. The Cuban economy experienced shifts due to interference from the Soviet Union, but quality of life improved overall.

Participants expressed pessimism about Cuba's future in the next five years, suggesting the potential for another revolution. They acknowledged the uncertainty but did not rule out the possibility of significant change. Men were perceived as generally supporting women's equality, at least in terms of employment rights. The Cuban Revolution had a lasting impact on women's rights, particularly in terms of employment equality.

Participants viewed Fidel Castro positively, crediting him with significant positive changes in Cuban society and considering him a national hero. Overall, the responses reflect a nuanced understanding of the Cuban Revolution, acknowledging its achievements while also recognizing ongoing challenges and uncertainties in Cuba's socio-political landscape.

#### 4.4.5 Interview 3

The same questions were asked on the participant 3.

The 1<sup>st</sup> question was focused on the ***characterization of the societal and political atmosphere in Cuba prior to the revolution?***

*"I only read books about revolution and watched documentaries... "*

- **What was the documentary about? (Probing question)**

*"I think that it all started because of the presidential power...He used that in his advantage... "*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> question focused on the ***primary catalysts that prompted the Cuban Revolution, and who were the prominent figures involved?***

*"United States and Fidel Castro... ".*

- **Were your parents influenced or took part in the “Revolution? (Probing question)**

*"Actually, my parents moved out from Cuba right prior to the revolution...so, technically, they were not involved... "*

The 3d question focused on the ***elaboration of key accomplishments of the revolution regarding social rights and fairness?***

*"All over social rights, employment, social support has been improved... ".*

The 4<sup>th</sup> question focused on the ***Transformation of Cuban citizens, mainly women right after the revolution?***

*"I believe that women did receive more recognition than before...hence the rights have been equalized in a way...but again I only judge based on documentary movie... ".*

The 5<sup>th</sup> question was focused on ***international relationships influence the course and outcome of the revolution? (Main question)***

*“Cuba received a massive support from USA... but eventually denied its interference...”*

- **Why it was denied? (Probing question)**

*“Because USA used Cuban’s sources to extract... land, labor and etc... Cuban government started not liking it...”.*

The 6<sup>th</sup> question focused on ***enduring impact of the Cuban Revolution manifest in contemporary Cuban society and governance?***

*“It didn’t sustain for a long time... it eventually collapsed”.*

The 7<sup>th</sup> question was focused on ***How Cuba’s economic framework and welfare policy have been reshaped after revolution?***

*“In a good way for sure... more employment... higher standards of living...”*

The 8<sup>th</sup> question was focused on ***the perspective of Cuba’s future considering its revolutionary heritage and present socio-political landscape?***

*“I don’t know about that... I don’t even know who is the president of Cuba at this point...”*

The 9<sup>th</sup> question was focused on ***How men perceived women’s inequality, supporting or opposing?***

*“I think some men were against... but majority were for that...”*

The 10<sup>th</sup> question was focused on ***a long-term effect of Cuban Revolution?***

*“I don’t have any information about that... I know that nowadays... it is a very poor state”.*

The 11<sup>th</sup> question was focused on the ***Fidel Castro’s policy, views and opinions?***

*“I believe that every revolution... has its success at the beginning but eventually fails with another revolution...”*

Based on the responses of the participants, several insights emerged regarding the Cuban Revolution and its consequences. Participant indicated limited direct knowledge

about the societal and political atmosphere in Cuba before the revolution, primarily relying on books and documentaries for information. They highlighted the role of presidential power as a contributing factor to the revolution's origins.

Regarding the primary catalysts for the revolution, participant mentioned the United States and Fidel Castro. However, they revealed that their parents were not involved in the revolution as they had moved out of Cuba just before it occurred. Participant acknowledged the improvements in social rights, employment, and social support following the revolution, based on their understanding from documentaries. They also noted perceived advancements in women's recognition and rights post-revolution.

In terms of international relationships, participant mentioned Cuba's initial support from the USA but highlighted eventual tensions due to perceived exploitation by the United States.

Regarding the enduring impact of the Cuban Revolution, participant suggested that it did not last long and eventually collapsed. However, they acknowledged positive changes in Cuba's economic framework and welfare policies, resulting in increased employment and higher standards of living. Regarding the future of Cuba, participant expressed uncertainty, indicating a lack of knowledge about current socio-political developments and even the identity of the current Cuban president.

Regarding men's perception of women's inequality, participant believed that while some men opposed it, the majority supported gender equality. Participant lacked information about the long-term effects of the Cuban Revolution but characterized present-day Cuba as a state facing significant economic challenges. Regarding Fidel Castro's policies and legacy, participant expressed a belief that revolutions often experience initial success but ultimately fail, suggesting a cyclical pattern in history.

#### **4.4.6 Interview 4**

The same questions were asked on the participant 4.  
The 1<sup>st</sup> question was focused on the *characterization of the societal and political atmosphere in Cuba prior to the revolution?*

*"I personally wasn't involved in such matter...however had relatives who went thru revolution..."*

- **Who was that among your relatives?**

*"My grandparents"*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> question focused on the *primary catalysts that prompted the Cuban Revolution, and who were the prominent figures involved?*

“Fidel Castro and his brother...”

- **How were your grandparents involved?**

“Well, my grandfather was the journalist and was enforced to many repressions prior to revolution... We never talked about that... but I know of it... my grandmother told me...”

The 3d question focused on the *elaboration of key accomplishments of the revolution regarding social rights and fairness?*

“All rights have been improved... pension support... maternity leave... free education... and etc...”.

The 4<sup>th</sup> question focused on the *Transformation of Cuban citizens, mainly women right after the revolution?*

“I know that women had received many benefits... and even created its institution... but I don't remember the name of it...”

The 5<sup>th</sup> question was focused on *international relationships influence the course and outcome of the revolution? (Main question)*

“Well USA was involved as far as I know...”

The 6<sup>th</sup> question focused on *enduring impact of the Cuban Revolution manifest in contemporary Cuban society and governance?*

“Well, if we speak about enduring impact... than Cuba would be a safe place to live in right now...”.

The 7<sup>th</sup> question was focused on *How Cuba's economic framework and welfare policy have been reshaped after revolution?*

“GDP has improved, just by looking at the statistical data... employment has fostered...”

The 8<sup>th</sup> question was focused on *the perspective of Cuba's future considering its revolutionary heritage and present socio-political landscape?*

*"Well, after revolution the government did successfully lead the country for 20 years straight... but in 1990's the disagreements between population and governments started rising... eventually, after the death of Castro... his brother took over and led the country to poorness and massive unemployment..."*

The 9<sup>th</sup> question was focused on ***How men perceived women's inequality, supporting or opposing?***

*"I think some men were against... but majority were for that..."*

The 10<sup>th</sup> question was focused on ***a long-term effect of Cuban Revolution?***

*"Well, effect of what kind? Economic? – Yes. Political – Absolutely... but it didn't last long enough to prove its efficiency..."*

The 11<sup>th</sup> question was focused on the ***Fidel Castro's policy, views and opinions?***

*"Objectively, yes... his policies improved the country's stability in different perspectives..."*

Participant provided insights into various aspects of the Cuban Revolution and its aftermath. They indicated that while they were not directly involved, their grandparents experienced the revolution. Their grandfather, a journalist, faced repression before the revolution, although details were not extensively discussed.

Regarding the primary catalysts for the revolution, participant mentioned Fidel Castro and his brother, indicating their prominence in the events leading to the revolution. They revealed that their grandfather, as a journalist, may have been impacted by the pre-revolution repression. Participant highlighted key accomplishments of the revolution, including improvements in social rights such as pension support, maternity leave, and free education. They acknowledged the benefits received by women but did not recall the name of the institution created for them. Regarding international relationships, participant mentioned the involvement of the USA in the revolution's course and outcome. She suggested that the enduring impact of the Cuban Revolution should have made Cuba a safe place to live, indicating their perception of the revolution's long-term effects on contemporary Cuban society.

Participant noted improvements in Cuba's economic framework and welfare policies post-revolution, citing increased GDP and employment as evidence. Regarding Cuba's future, participant discussed the initial success of the government led by Castro but highlighted subsequent disagreements and economic challenges under his brother's leadership. Participant believed that while some men may have opposed women's inequality, the majority supported gender equality. Regarding the long-term effects of the revolution, participant acknowledged economic and political changes but questioned the revolution's lasting efficiency.

Finally, regarding Fidel Castro's policies, participant acknowledged their role in improving the country's stability across various perspectives.

#### **4.4.7 Interview 5.**

The same questions were asked on the participant 5.

The 1<sup>st</sup> question was focused on the ***characterization of the societal and political atmosphere in Cuba prior to the revolution?***

*"I have read a book "Revolutionary Cuba" written by Luis Martinez (2014)...and actually he characterizes it as "strict dictatorship era...".*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> question focused on the ***primary catalysts that prompted the Cuban Revolution, and who were the prominent figures involved?***

*"Fidel Castro and United States..."*

The 3d question focused on the ***elaboration of key accomplishments of the revolution regarding social rights and fairness?***

*"Economy was booming after the revolution...drastically increased the GDP per capita..."*

The 4<sup>th</sup> question focused on the ***Transformation of Cuban citizens, mainly women right after the revolution?***

*"I remember the creation of Federation of Cuban Women...the party if I can call it that name was promoting women rights..."*

The 5<sup>th</sup> question was focused on *international relationships influence the course and outcome of the revolution? (Main question)*

*“To be honest I didn’t understand the exact interference of USA...but it seemed like after sometime they wanted to overthrow the Castor’s regime...”*

The 6<sup>th</sup> question focused on *enduring impact of the Cuban Revolution manifest in contemporary Cuban society and governance?*

*“Actually...there is no such thing as enduring impact...only temporary...”*

The 7<sup>th</sup> question was focused on *How Cuba’s economic framework and welfare policy have been reshaped after revolution?*

*“Absolutely yes... there were several political parties...ministers of economy placement...and other authorities who were responsible for a certain economic sphere...”*

The 8<sup>th</sup> question was focused on *the perspective of Cuba's future considering its revolutionary heritage and present socio-political landscape?*

*“According to Martínez (2014), the future of the Cuban economy and its independence hinges on the regime freeing itself from third-party influence...”*

The 9<sup>th</sup> question was focused on *How men perceived women’s inequality, supporting or opposing?*

*“Everybody needed a change... majority supported...”*

The 10<sup>th</sup> question was focused on *a long-term effect of Cuban Revolution?*

*“People demonstrated the strength versus government...It didn’t last long but still...”*

The 11<sup>th</sup> question was focused on the *Fidel Castro’s policy, views and opinions?*

*“Sure...I believe he received a full support from its nation...”.*

The interview with Participant N 5 provides insightful perspectives on various aspects of the Cuban Revolution and its aftermath. Characterizing pre-revolution Cuba as a "strict

dictatorship era," influenced by Luis Martínez's book "Revolutionary Cuba" (2014), the interviewee highlights the authoritarian regime's grip on society.

Key catalysts for the revolution, including figures like Fidel Castro and external influences from the United States, are noted, underscoring the complex factors driving the revolutionary movement. Post-revolution accomplishments, such as economic growth and gender equality initiatives like the Federation of Cuban Women, reflect the revolution's broad social impact.

The interviewee acknowledges the influence of international relationships, particularly U.S. involvement, in shaping the revolution's trajectory. Despite perceiving the revolution's impact as temporary, changes in Cuba's economic framework and governance structure post-revolution are evident, with a focus on achieving greater independence from external influences, as suggested by Martínez. The interview also highlights societal support for addressing gender inequality and acknowledges the enduring legacy of resistance demonstrated during the revolution. Overall, the interview provides nuanced insights into the Cuban Revolution's complexities and its lasting effects on Cuban society, politics, and economics.

## **5 Results and Discussion**

All things considered; the Cuban Revolution was a time when women played a significant part in the attempts to alter institutions that were based on gender. As part of the process of researching the Cuban Revolution, it is essential to have a comprehensive grasp of the shift in dynamics that occurred within the viewpoints of society. Depending on factors like as age, color, family life, and region, the changes that were brought about by revolutionary involvement for women in terms of equality and autonomy were vastly different for each individual woman. In point of fact, the Cuban Revolution brought about change for all Cubans, as the state started to industrialize and embrace socialism as a result of the revolution. Nevertheless, a significant number of these modifications continued to impose restrictions on groups who were generally considered to be a minority in the past, for example, women. One of the factors that contributed to the facilitation of social change and the stimulation of the economy in Cuban society was the prevalence of both conventional and progressive views of the time. Despite the fact that women benefitted from some advancements, such as the creation of new jobs, there was also a persistent focus placed on the preservation of traditional maternal and feminine roles, See Chapter 4.2.1. During the time of the Revolution, there were a few women who were successful in obtaining political posts. Based on the literature of (Meissner et. el. 1984: Chase, 2015: Stone, 1981: Smith et. el. 1996), women experienced new benefits of maternity leave, equal pays, intakes into universities and etc. However, up until some point. After 1985, women became less involved in the work force, due to economic instability, and as a reason, men stepped in and took responsibilities by actively participating in unpredictable economic situation.

Brown (2017: 241) despite the females gains in economic sectors, education and healthcare, the male dominance was still persistent thru the years not because of male aggression of anti – quality position, but mainly due to ideological reasons. After 1985 women's dedication to the household increased. However, all laws in regards of "paid leave", "Maternity leave", "Termination of marriages" and so on, were still useful.

The primary objective of the Cuban Revolution was to achieve independence and emancipation from a tyranny and corrupt administration. Various attempts, both those that included conflict and those that did not involve confrontation, were effective. A great number of Cuba's minority groups anticipated change, which was brought about by the adoption of a socialist government that placed an emphasis on equality. Nevertheless, by the

time the 1970s came to a close, equality, particularly with regard to women, had only made a limited amount of progress. To claim that there was no change during the Cuban Revolution is not to suggest that there was no change. On the other hand, these shifts are more readily apparent in the economically successful implementation of industrialization than in the implementation of gender equality.

Based on the provided information, the interviews offer diverse perspectives on the Cuban Revolution and its consequences. Participants highlighted pre-revolutionary Cuba's challenges under Fulgencio Batista's dictatorship, including corruption, economic instability, and political repression, particularly affecting women. Widespread discontent, driven by economic hardships and political repression, served as the primary catalyst for the revolution, with participants' parents actively involved in resistance efforts.

While acknowledging improvements in healthcare, education, and social rights post-revolution, participants expressed ambiguity about Fidel Castro's leadership and policies, citing differing opinions and challenges. They recognized the role of international actors like the USSR and the US in shaping the revolution's course, with varying perceptions of their influence.

The interviews also addressed gender dynamics, with participants acknowledging Castro's promotion of women's rights while questioning potential political motives. Uncertainty about Cuba's future and concerns about socio-political stability were prevalent among participants, along with skepticism about the revolution's enduring impact.

Overall, the interviews provide nuanced insights into the complexities of the Cuban Revolution and its ongoing implications for Cuban society, politics, and economics.

## **6 Conclusion**

Women played a significant role in the Cuban Revolution, contributing to efforts to change gender-based institutions. However, the impact varied depending on factors such as age, race, family life, and region. While some women experienced advancements in terms of equality and autonomy, others faced persistent restrictions, including the preservation of traditional gender roles. The Cuban Revolution led to significant changes in Cuban society, including industrialization and the adoption of socialism. While women benefited from some advancements, such as access to new jobs and benefits like maternity leave and equal pay, there was still a focus on traditional gender roles, and women's involvement in the workforce decreased after 1985 due to economic instability. Despite gains in economic sectors, education, and healthcare, male dominance persisted over the years, partly due to ideological reasons rather than overt aggression against gender equality. Laws regarding women's rights, such as paid leave and maternity leave, remained in place, but women's dedication to household responsibilities increased over time. While the Cuban Revolution aimed to achieve independence and equality, particularly for marginalized groups, progress in gender equality remained limited by the late 1970s. The focus on industrialization overshadowed advancements in gender equality, indicating that while there were changes, they were more evident in economic aspects than in gender dynamics. Views on the Cuban Revolution's legacy is varied and nuanced. While some acknowledge improvements in healthcare, education, and land reform, there are criticisms of Fidel Castro's leadership and policies, as well as concerns about safety and socio-political stability. Participant in interview expresses a critical yet balanced perspective on the achievements and challenges of the revolution. Overall, the Cuban Revolution brought about significant changes in Cuban society, including advancements in women's rights and improvements in various sectors. However, challenges and limitations remained, reflecting a complex socio-political landscape and differing perspectives on the revolution's legacy.

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### **8.3 List of abbreviations**

**PSPC** – People's Socialist Party of Cuba

**NSPK** – National Occupational Workers' Syndicate

**USSR** – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

**FCW** – Federation of Cuban Women

**CTC** – Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions

**FAR** – Revolutionary Armed Forces

**MINSAF** – Ministry of Public Health

**MINED** – Ministry of Education

**MININT** – Ministry of the Interior

## **9 Appendix**

### **9.1 Maternity Law for Working Women**

#### **Maternity Law for Working Women**

*Official translation of the Cuban Ministry of Justice.*

#### **Executive Branch, Council of Ministers**

I, OSVALDO DORTICÓS TORRADO, president of the Republic of Cuba,

HEREBY PROCLAIM: That the Council of Ministers has approved and I have signed the following:

WHEREAS: Studies made on problems pertaining to working women, especially those relating to maternity, counsel the enactment of new legislation in order to grant the maximum guarantee to all maternity rights which, although recognized and provided for by Social Security Law No. 1100 of March 27, 1963, should be reconsidered on the basis of present-day medical and scientific principles.

WHEREAS: It is a primary interest of the revolutionary government to give special attention to the working mother since, in addition to her valuable contribution to society in the procreation and education of children, she also fulfills her social duty by working.

WHEREAS: A successful pregnancy as well as the delivery and the future health of the child require the adoption of adequate measures on the part of the pregnant woman, as an unavoidable duty toward her child and society.

WHEREAS: To secure the above-mentioned measures, it is necessary to ensure medical attention and rest to the working woman during her pregnancy, the breast-feeding of the newborn during the first months of life which will protect it from disease and favor the development of strong emotional bonds between mother and child, and the systematic medical examination of the child by a pediatrician during its first year of life.

WHEREAS: In our country all medical and hospital services, including pharmaceutical and hospital dietary services related to maternity are guaranteed free of charge to all the population. This makes it necessary to establish additional legislation on the enjoyment of said rights by the working woman or the wife or the companion of a worker.

THEREFORE: By virtue of the authority vested in them, the Council of Ministers resolves to dictate the following:

## 9.2 Paid leave due to pregnancy

### LAW NO. 1263 MATERNITY LAW FOR WORKING WOMEN

#### Chapter 1: Scope and Protection

*Article 1.* The present law comprises the working woman and protects her maternity, guaranteeing and facilitating, in a special manner, her medical attention during pregnancy, her rest before and after delivery, the breast-feeding and care of the children, as well as a financial aid in those cases specified in these provisions.

#### Chapter 2: Paid Leave

*Article 2.* Every pregnant working woman, regardless of type of work, will be obliged to stop working on the thirty-fourth week of pregnancy and will have the right to a leave of absence of eighteen weeks, which will include six weeks before delivery and twelve weeks after delivery. This leave will be paid as determined by this law, provided that the working woman meets the requirements stated in Article 11.

The Ministry of Labor, at the proposal of the Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions, will regulate exceptional situations in those places of work whose special characteristics, according to medical and scientific criteria, make it necessary that working women take prenatal leave for longer periods than those established by this law.

*Article 3.* In cases of multiple pregnancy, the working woman will be obliged to stop working on the thirty-second week of pregnancy, extending to eight weeks the period of her paid leave before delivery.

*Article 4.* If delivery does not take place during the period established for the prenatal leave, this leave will be extended to the date on which delivery takes place and the extended time period will be paid for up to two weeks.

*Article 5.* If delivery takes place before the expiration of the prenatal leave, this leave will cease and the working woman will begin her postnatal leave.

*Article 6.* If delivery takes place before the thirty-fourth week of pregnancy, or before the thirty-second week in the case of multiple pregnancy, the leave will include only the postnatal period.

*Article 7.* The working woman will be guaranteed a postanatal leave of six weeks necessary for her recovery, even when, because of adverse circumstances of accident or acquired or congenital diseases, the child dies at birth or during the first four weeks after birth.

*Article 8.* If the working woman, because of complications during delivery, requires a longer period of recovery beyond the postnatal leave, she will have the right to receive the subsidy for illness as established in the Social Security Law.

Source: (Stone, 1981: 139).

### **9.3 Interview questions**

Gender, Age, Occupation.

- 1.** How would you characterize the societal and political atmosphere in Cuba prior to the revolution?
- 2.** What were the reasons of this revolution? Main objectives?
- 3.** Could you elaborate on some of the key accomplishments of the revolution regarding social equity and fairness?
- 4.** How did the Cuban Revolution transform the daily lives of regular citizens, particularly women, laborers, and marginalized groups?
- 5.** How did international relationships influence the course and outcome of the revolution?
- 6.** How does the enduring impact of the Cuban Revolution manifest in contemporary Cuban society and governance?
- 7.** In what ways did the revolution reshape Cuba's economic framework and social welfare policies?
- 8.** From your perspective, what do you envision for Cuba's future considering its revolutionary heritage and present socio-political landscape?
- 9.** Can you describe how man behaved towards female inequality? Supporting or opposing?
- 10.** Can you relate to the fact that "Revolution" didn't have a long – term effect on establishing women's rights?
- 11.** Do you respect the Fidel Castro's policy overall, views, opinions and movement overall?