

THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BASE AND SUPERSTRUCTURE IN CUBA.

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THE ROLE OF THE ORGANS OF PEOPLE'S POWER ¹

Trying to evaluate or discuss the role of the Organs of People's Power (OPP) presents a lot of difficulties. One of them is the rather short period that the system has been in operation. Another is the complex relation between these administrative organs and the centralized planning model in a socialist country. I will here argue for the necessity of a materialist and functional viewpoint, and this will again accentuate the importance of analyzing the subject in a specifically Cuban context.

First I will discuss very briefly the distinction between quantitative and qualitative strategies of development. My hypothesis is that there is a correlation between the degree of centralization in the planning system, and the principles on which the theory of social and economic development are based. Then I will try to present the OPP as an example of a qualitative development strategy, and discuss if it is a useful system for planning social development in the periphery of the country. The experiences of the OPP will be illustrated partly by data collected from a study in a single community in Cuba. An interesting issue is: Does the OPP-system provide effective decentralization, and at the same time provide a degree of local control, without negatively affecting the application of national plans and policies?

1. Qualitative and quantitative development

Development, the success or failure of any development strategy, has traditionally been evaluated in a context of quantitative terms, for instance economic growth,

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The Organs of People's Power represent a new political/administrative structure by the introduction of popularly elected assemblies from local to national level. It is an attempt to decentralize state organs and coordinate administrative functions.

increased income per capita, etc. Less attention has been paid to problems of distribution, and direct popular participation in the planning of society.

In my opinion «development» has to be understood more in a comprehensive way, rather than in terms of economic growth alone. Then it would be possible to include qualitative terms of development; for instance:

1. The elimination of unemployment.
2. A just distribution of income.
3. A substantial decrease in foreign dominance and dependence on the outside world.
4. The participation of the entire population in the development process.

This doesn't mean *not* putting emphasis on quantitative economic goals in a development strategy. There exists an interdependency between quantitative and qualitative changes, and usually the more qualitative are preconditioned by the quantitative ones. However, it is *not* a question of a mechanic relationship. An existing economic growth per capita does not necessarily mean an improvement in the living conditions of lower social groups. Likewise, an increase in the employment rate does not necessarily lead to a more just distribution of wealth, nor will it automatically provide «meaningful activities» (as the current Scandinavian term goes) to all members of the society, nor any substantial improvement of existing working conditions.

At the national or regional level this distinction between quantitative and qualitative development can be illustrated by the two «concepts» *development in a region* and *development of a region* respectively (Asheim 1980). The former indicates a growth in production capacity and output, the latter a change for the better in the population's living conditions. What complicates this even more, is the fact that there isn't any unambiguous relation between the material aspects of conditions of living and the more qualitative aspects of what also might be termed «conditions of reproduction».

This has to do with the contradiction between capital and labour, that leads to a discussion of class conflicts, and the economic and political structure of society itself. Consequently, a qualitative development strategy is here regarded as a strategy for structural change of society. The most important factors will be extensive collective participation, popular influence and control of the choice of a path of development.

In relation to point no. 4 above, we might say that this strategy ought to be a development process, that is to *prevent* any specific group, class and/or economic sector from

1. being marginalized socially and economically in the process of development, and/or
2. exclusively controlling and/or dominating this path of development.

This would imply a more closely guarded development process on all levels. An important principle is that the groups (classes) involved in the plan (planning), should have the right and the possibility of influencing and exercising control in both the phase of preparation as well as implementation.

The political action or practice that will follow from any development strategy, can be discerned in the planning activity. «Planning» will here be understood as a «purposeful and scheduled effort to bring about economic and social changes that are beneficial to the members of society». Consequently, it can be understood as a function of ideology, and of the political and administrative system. This in turn means that a strong relation exists between the chosen political development strategy, and the process of planning itself.

Turning to the actual processes of planning in socialist societies, one ought to be aware of the crucial role of planning in these societies. Although the socialist system is said to make *the ruled* to coincide with *the rulers*, there will obviously still be conflicts of interests. For instance a latent conflict exists between the general interests as defined and explained in the central plan, and local and class-based specific interests. In some socialist countries there is a growing discrepancy between the official and pronounced political ideology on the one hand, and political practice on the other. Naturally, we have to deal with the problems of *political mobilization*, and the decentralization of *political power*.

In the ever ongoing discussion on socialism, democracy and planning, the lines of demarcation have thus far been drawn between *self-management* at enterprise level, and *centralized planning*.² One side claims that centralized planning is incompatible with democracy, while the other argues that reliance on self-management will interfere with the building of socialism. But as Magdoff puts it:

«The most democratic self-management at the enterprise level does not guarantee democracy in overall social issues, nor does central planning necessarily exclude participation of the masses in determining the choice of social priorities or in realizing workers control over the labour process». (Magdoff 1981).

A common situation in socialist countries has been to give priority to the development of the productive forces. My claim is that there is a contradiction between the technical/economical material development in these societies and the social/political organizations i.e. between the level of the productive forces and the relations of production.

And when economic decentralization occurs, and a greater independence of the economic units in the decision-making process has been granted, it is often accompanied by a strengthening of the central political power and planning organs.

From our definition of a qualitative development strategy, then, it should be clear that a real decentralization of the planning and financial executive organs will be required. Only representative and democratic organs constituted by all social groups, combined with active mass organizations, can guarantee a substantial influence over the central plan and a fair distribution of the surplus product.

A detailed discussion on how existing socialist regimes will fit into these general statements and categories of decentralization and choice of development strategies, can not, of course, be dealt with adequately within the limits of this article. Nevertheless it might be useful to evaluate the Cuban experience with the Organs of People's Power in such a context.

2. The Organs of People's Power. Background and way of functioning

Although the Cuban government from 1959 has encouraged mass participation in the revolutionary process, the impact of political participation on decision-making had been modest.

«Apparently political participation served only to affect decisions about local problems, and even in that area there were severe constraints. Local leaders could not respond to local demands from citizens without authority from the central leadership and institutions. Thus the effect of participation on local decision making was limited by the lack of local autonomy.» (Domínguez 1979).

² For further discussion see for instance Dupuy and Yrchik (1978), Participation and Self-management (1973), Roos (1974).

This was in fact the situation with the local bodies called the «Juntas de Coordinación, Ejecución e Inspección» (JUCEI) established in 1961 to facilitate center agencies operating locally. The local leaders were appointed, not elected, and the administration was highly centralized and subordinate to the Central Planning Board (JUCEPLAN).

Then, in 1967 a new system of local government was established that was supposed to respond to local needs and initiatives. Although these local bodies, called *Poder Local*, were elected locally, they never played any crucial role in planning and decision-making. As far as political administration concerns, the solution and local plans and problems were decided centrally and passed through 3 administrative levels before reaching the local authorities. However, with the renewed demand for centralization in preparation for the 1970 sugar harvest (see below), this so-called local democracy was abandoned. The executive officers of local districts began to be elected or appointed by the local leaders of the party.

The center of the formal planning apparatus for the nation has from 1960 been the Central Planning Board (JUCEPLAN). However, despite the centralization of legislative and executive power, decision-making in Cuba has always been a complex process involving many participants.

A new decade in the Cuban revolutionary process often called the «Institutionalization of the revolution-period», started in 1970. The crisis in 1970 was precipitated by the failure to achieve the ten million ton target of the sugar harvest, and the changes that were to follow. This economic failure started a process of political restoration. The deficiencies in the planning apparatus had become clearer, and especially the lack of coordination between different administrative levels and economic sectors. The necessity for the development of a more democratic planning model was accepted. Greater collective participation and local self-determination were regarded as crucial elements in the development of such a model.

The cornerstone in the «institutionalization» should be strengthening at the local level. Besides the drawing up of a new constitution, this institutionalization of the revolution consisted mainly of three components.

1. A new system in direction and planning of the economy.
2. A new administrative and political division of the country.
3. The establishment of the Organs of People's Power on all three judicial/administrative levels: national, provincial and municipal.

The new economic management system is meant to give more independence to each economic unit and is based on the necessity of establishing a unified planning system all over the country. In official terms it is defined as:

«A centrally governed system, which guarantee the initiative and participation from all sectors of the national economy, more limited with respect to planning and less limited concerning the implementation and management.» (*Granma* 25.5.79).

The new political/administrative division reduced the number of municipalities to 169, and increased the number of provinces to 15 (see map). At the same time the regional unit disappeared. These new administrative units were to coincide with the economic resource base of each province, and facilitate the planning of social and economic development. Not less important was the fact that they were to function as the basis on which the OPP are organised, territorially. The new principles for organizing the Cuban state were all adopted in the new Cuban Constitution of 1976.

The Organs of People's Power were proposed and tried out for a period of two

Figure 1. Political and administrative division 1969.

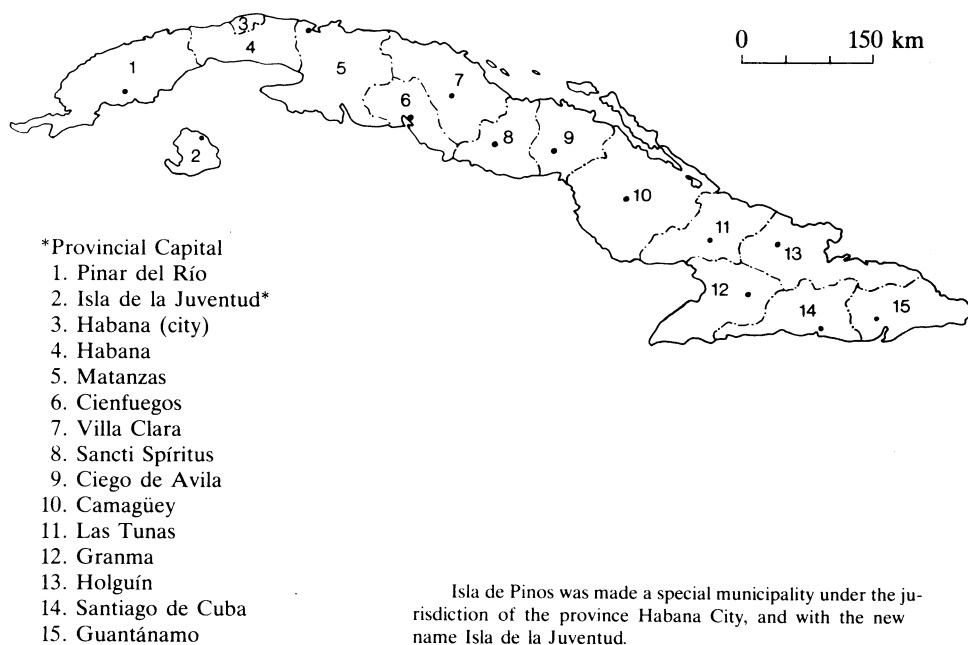
Cuban provinces 1969



*Isla de Pinos is included in the Habana Province.

Figure 2. Political and administrative division 1976.

Cuban provinces 1976



Isla de Pinos was made a special municipality under the jurisdiction of the province Habana City, and with the new name Isla de la Juventud.

years in one province (Matanzas). Based on this experience the system was adopted and extended to include the whole country. The system establishes an elected form of government at both the national and local levels, although some government bodies are appointed, for example the Council of Ministers.

However, this is not a parliamentary system, nor is there any formal division of power such as that conceived in Scandinavia. The main organ of state power is the National Assembly of People's Power (*Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular*) in which the constitutional and the legislative power is concentrated. This Assembly has a standing committee called the Council of State (*Consejo de Estado*) which is entrusted with the supervision of the Council of Ministers, the judiciary and the local governments. The Council of State is an elected organ of the National Assembly, representing it during the intervals between sessions. (*Constitución de la República de Cuba*, article nº 87).

According to the same Constitution the Council of Ministers is defined as the highest executive and administrative organ of state power (Art. 93). It is composed of the president, vice-presidents and secretary of the Council of State, the ministers, and the president of the Central Planning Board (*Junta Central de Planificación*). The secretary general of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (Central de Trabajadores de Cuba) has the right to participate in both the Council of Ministers and its Executive Committee. The Council is accountable and responsible to the National Assembly. Provinces and the municipalities are ruled by the People's Power Assemblies. The local assemblies are elected every two and a half years, the National Assembly every five (see diagram).³

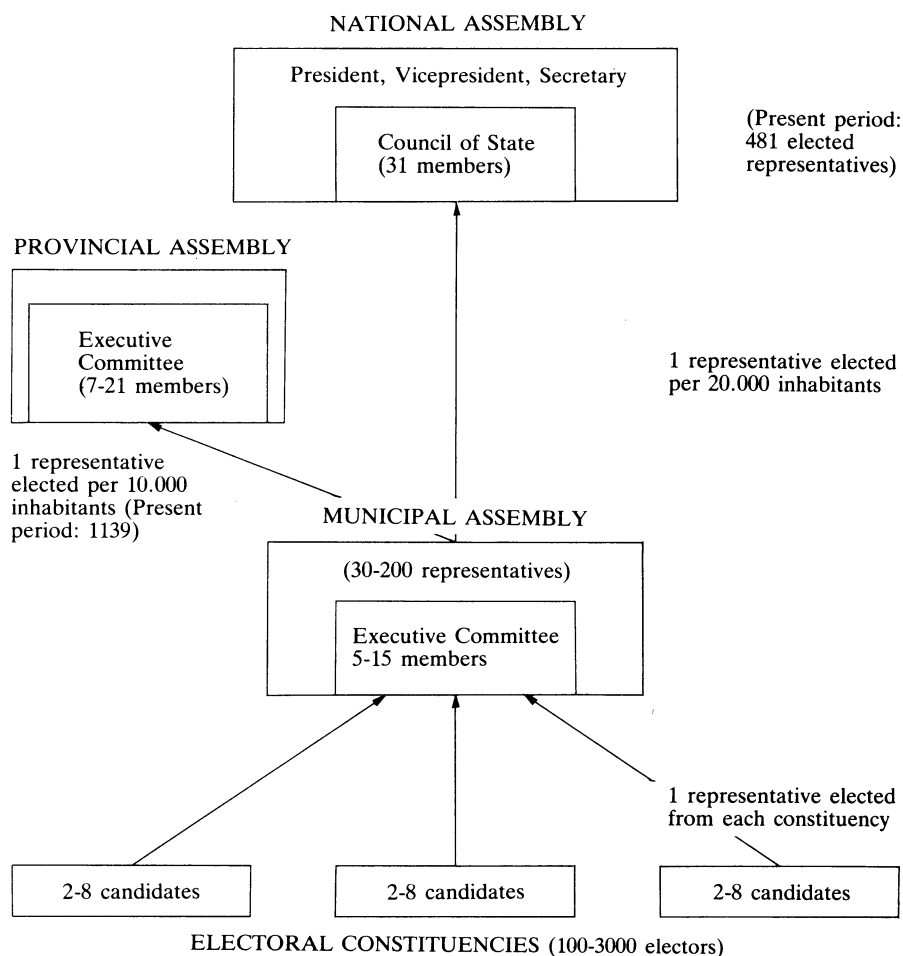
2.1 The Organs of People's Power at the local level.

2.1.1 The principle of economic decentralization

The essential criterion for a decentralization of economic units is the following: All the units of production and service that can be conceived of local importance ought to be transferred to the local Organs of People's Power. Among these units we find the main part of all service units belonging to the public health sector, all educational activity at primary, secondary and pre-university levels, cafeterias, hotels and recreational facilities. And further: local transport facilities, retail trade, day-care centers, housing, public utilities such as the postoffice and telegraph services, warehouses for agricultural products, and so on.

Some industrial activity is handed over to the local authority too, but so far only to a very limited degree. There could, for instance, be industrial production in the consumer sector, or production of spare-parts related to bus-terminals, car repair shops, and so on. The main impression is that economic activities related to the reproductive sector of the production, i.e. distribution and operation of the local service activities, are those first included in the economic decentralization. Industrial policy is till subordinate to central decisions, and the central state agencies administer the key industries.

³ For a comparison between the Cuban and the Soviet Constitution, see De la Cuesta (1976).

Figure 3. The Structure of the Organs of People's Power

Source: *Constitución de la República de Cuba, Ley Electoral.*

**Table 1: Economic units transferred from central to local authority. October 1976
April 1979. By economic sector.**

	Manage- ment	Construc- tion	Transport	Trade	Local service	Other	Total
Number	258	183	95	472	158	22	1188
Percent	21.7	15.4	8.4	39.7	13.3	1.9	100

Source: Based on unpublished statistics from Cuban Central Planning Board (JUCEPLAN), April 1979.

2.1.2 The prerogatives of the local OPP.

Local governments have numerous prerogatives, the most important of which are:

1. To direct the economic production and the public services which are placed under their respective jurisdictions. This sphere of authority includes also the right to appoint or discharge local administrative leaders.
2. To cooperate with the economic units not subordinate to local bodies of OPP, but located in their jurisdictional area, both in implementation as well as improvement of the approved plans.
3. To participate in the preparation, implementation and control of the Uniform Socio-Economic Plan (*Plan Unico de Desarrollo Económico-Social*) adopted by the state according to a law to be enacted.
4. To ensure a functional and economic use of available resources.
5. To establish and promote the necessary activities as far as cultural, educational and recreational aspects are concerned.
6. To protect citizens rights and the social property, assuring socialist legality and to elect and revoke the judges of the peoples courts in the areas under their respective jurisdictions.
7. To collaborate to strengthen the country's defensive capacities as well as to preserve its internal order. (*Normas Reglamentarias de las Asambleas Municipales del Poder Popular*).

This needs some further explanation. Concerning the possibilities to influence on planning activities, it is necessary to mention some aspects which restrict the local OPP's possibility to intervene.

The Cuban management system itself restricts the local OPP's possibility of having any effect on the country's economic plans. Economic units are divided into two categories, those of high importance nationally, (for instance the sugar industry), and those of importance on a more local level (small industry, basic food production, etc.).

As mentioned before, the first category functions, in a way, rather independently of local government bodies. Local influence is limited to the control of supply and demand of the labor force, and problems directly affecting the local community. And according to the principle of dual subordination (see 2.1.3) the management of the production unit in question has to inform the local OPP of their economic activity and direction plans.

Local production units are organized differently. The local OPP are responsible for the management, and according to specific guidelines decide the use of any financial surplus. This also includes the right to designate and dismiss administrative personnel. However, we will find various restrictions: According to the Party Resolution: «The process of decentralization, which implies turning over activities, service and production units to the local Organs of People's Power, and locally established enterprises, shall be accompanied by a strengthening of the role of planning and of a systematic control on part of central state agencies,» (*Sobre los Organos del Poder Popular. Resolución*, p. 24).

Five strategic functions remain with the center:

1. Setting up norms, procedures and methods.
2. Deployment of technical experts.
3. Training and deployment of specialist cadres.
4. Research and development.
5. Planning and statistics.

Briefly one can say that the norms and procedures in the economic and social

planning are set up centrally, while the responsibility of concrete implementation lies with the local Organs of the People's Power. A concrete example which illustrates this principle: For the norms of distribution of daily consumer goods, the Department of Internal Commerce is responsible for everything that is uniform throughout the national territory, for instance the size of the consumption quota. The municipal OPP, on the other hand, supervises the implementation of national directives, and is also in charge of daily operations, maintenance, repairs, customer service, etc. Thus one tries to ensure that different units belonging to the same sector of the economy, are operated according to the same principles and guidelines. Likewise it is possible to take local circumstances into consideration, concerning the use and exploitation of local resources.

It would be going too far to go through the principles of internal organization in each type of production-unit. But in relation to workers' participation in planning, they are principally limited to discussing production quotas, the so-called «*cifra de control*». Concerning internal order and the organization of production, problems are being presented and discussed in the production assembly.

The local OPP's role of mere implementation is strongly emphasized by the central government's financial authority. That means that a social division of labor still exists. Such a division is problematic for at least two reasons:

- a) The country's resource situation, as defined by the central government, too often might set a limit on proposals from the local level.
- b) Decisions made by provincial and municipal bodies are subject to revocation by the central organs.

This does not mean that I am arguing for a federalist kind of system, where one district or region is working purely in their own interest, without taking into account the possible negative effects it might cause another. A central coordinated planning model is necessary. The important point is, however, the existence of the possibility to control and correct the central decisions by means of a collective political mobilization and participation from below. Socialist democracy can only mean, as I see it, an open and frank confrontation of the existence of conflicts of interest as well as a recognition that alternative plans of development are possible.

2.1.3 The principle of dual subordination.

The Cuban Constitution stipulates that the OPP are «the supreme local organs of state power at the provincial and municipal levels» (Article 102). At all levels, however, they are functioning according to the principle of dual subordination. In short this means that an elected representative or body is responsible both «upwards» and «downwards» in this democratic hierarchical system. For instance, elected representatives must periodically «render accounts» (*rendición de cuentas*) to their constituencies regarding their work. The Executive Committees must report to their respective assemblies and their immediate superior Executive Committee on the next level.

The same principles exist in the operation of the local economic management. The local OPP have an administrative apparatus at their disposal — the Administrative Departments (*Direcciones Administrativas*). And this apparatus consists of several committees corresponding to the different economic sectors of the municipality. These administrative departments appointed by the local government — OPP — are similarly, accountable to their respective municipal assemblies and Executive Committees as far as their performance is concerned. The right to call back representatives or delegates, administrative personnel and so on, is provided for at all levels, but

strictly obeying a principle that states that *only* the corresponding electing body may call back any elected or appointed representative (or body).

2.1.4. The representative system.

It is outside the scope of this article to go into detail about the electoral system of the OPP. However, it seems important to mention one aspect which is of great importance for the participation of the general public and degree of local influence on decisions.

Due to the rather small electoral constituencies (100-3000 persons)⁴ and the reciprocal information duty, the Cuban system of local government appears more active, in political terms, than for instance the Bulgarian or the Soviet government system. The Cuban system seems less rigid and bureaucratic at the local level. In our terms it means a more lively relationship between the *elected* and the *electors*. We might call it an existing horizontal democracy at local level. Unfortunately, this does not mean that in today's Cuba there is any authentic socialist democracy in its ideal state. As we have tried to show above, many restrictions exist within this new administrative/judicial system. Let us then try to exemplify a little bit more from the experience of the municipality of Nuevitas.

3. The OPP in practice — The municipality of Nuevitas

As mentioned above, the OPP at the local level have a variety of practical tasks. The sort of problems that are presented and discussed in the local government may indicate to what extent the OPP is an integrated part of the local community.

The types of problems brought to delegates by their electors were obvious. The most frequent problems raised were:

- housing maintenance and housing conditions in general
- system of distribution of consumer goods, operation and service of the local grocery store
- municipal services, i.e. water supply, electricity, sewerage etc.

These problems accounted for more than 50 percent of the issues raised. The general trend was that the majority of discussions centered on the consumer sector, and were of local character.

If we compared the citizens of Nuevitas' own evaluation of the different service/production units that are transferred to the local government, at first glance we find a correlation between problems raised most frequently and the sectors best improved. This could indicate that political activity from below, directed towards local officials has been met by concrete political decisions and solutions. This may perhaps indicate real political participation and influence in the decision-making process.

However, it is rather doubtful whether the information I obtained in Nuevitas expresses all the problems the citizens may have. A certain self-restraint appeared when bringing problems to the local government. Various demands or proposals from the local level were often withdrawn because the central government said they were impossible to meet given the available resources.

In my opinion this means there is a contradiction between economic goals expressed in a central plan, and political influence of the local level, what we here term «the dictatorship of objective problems» (*la dictadura de los problemas objetivos*).

⁴ The highest number is set in urban areas, for instance a city, while the minimum of 100 electors is set that low to favor areas with dispersed population.

The fact is that the difference between «objective» and «subjective» problems (*problemas objetivos y problemas subjetivos*)⁵ is rather often underlined in political speeches/discussions in Cuba today. This has to do with the relation, and often *artificial* distinction, made between economy and politics. Because of the economic problems that confront the country, the government calls to the population for moderation in material demands, and at the same time makes an appeal to always oppose any inclination towards «lack of consciousness» an «irresponsability» i.e. «subjective problems». Incidentally these subjective problems are also considered to be the most easy ones to solve.

The «objective» problems — the very severe economic situation — are officially explained as to be «of external origin» — for instance the US economic blockade, the dependency on the world markets, and hence the vulnerability that follows price fluctuations. And no doubt, these *are* real problems facing Cuba today. My point, however, is that the «external explanations» might put some serious restrictions on the local government bodies' influence, and might result in self-restraint when confronted with problems and needs that may arise. This is expressed by the fact that the operation and services of local grocery stores is criticized more often than the system of distribution of consumer goods as a whole.

The population accepts (and adapts) to this reality, and only problems that are considered likely to be solved are taken to governing bodies or representatives.

In Nuevitas these phenomena are illustrated by the fact that less than 10% of the issues raised in the period 1.1.78-1.5.79 had to do with the local transport system, whereas at the same time the local transport was considered by 40% of the population as the least improved sector.

3.1. *The relationship between the central and local levels.*

At least three relevant aims concerning the establishing of the Organs of People's Power should be mentioned.

- a) making national decisions more efficient
- b) serving local interests
- c) facilitating regional integration.

These are not necessarily in accordance with each other, and the problem is how to balance them. This difficulty is aggravated by the conflicts arising from distribution under condition of scarcity, — a problem that affects both central planning and self-management. What priorities should be established in deciding what is to be produced? How are the available supplies to be distributed? And maybe most important: Who decides and gives answers to these questions?

«It should be obvious that scarcity is the breeding ground of inequality and of conflicts of interest between sections of the population and between regions.

And it is precisely here that the issue of democracy in a socialist society should be located.» (Magdoff 1981, p. 26)

In my survey in Nuevitas in 1979 different opinions were found concerning the most important aims of OPP, that were mentioned. The «central» (official) view is stressing «decentralization of the State/development of a substantive socialist democracy», and «more efficient planning» as the most important consequences. The «local» (popular) view stresses first of all the importance of OPP in solving their

⁵ See for instance Humberto Pérez (1979), member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and President of the Central Planning Board (JUCEPLAN).

local service problems. And as mentioned, activities handed over for administration by the local OPP are mainly those concerning the local service of the community. The same discrepancy was found, though in more moderate forms, between elected representatives in the local organs, and the electors. The degree of connection to official organizations, either the Communist Party or the Organs of People's Power, seems here to be of importance. This brings us to the conclusion that OPP has been an important instrument in improving local service systems, hence this had led to a more equitable distribution among the people. The OPP seem to have functioned effectively in leading people's energies towards making solutions to their own problems. At this level, the OPP decentralize decision-making, and place the discussion of problems close to the problems themselves. Thus it is facilitating a more efficient action by eliminating the need to resort to far removed loci of decision-making and by fostering the spontaneous creative action of the masses. In other words:

«Ruling and planning in general, yes, that process takes place in Havana. The difference from prior to the introduction of the Organs of People's Power is that we now don't need always to ask Havana about what in principle ought to be done in our local community». (Citizen of Nuevitas)

«Before the establishing of the Organs of People's Power the masses did not have any possibilities, or in other words, they didn't have any method and organizational structure with which to resolve a problem. One of the greatest advantages of the Organs of People's Power is that now, indeed, such a procedure is created.» (Elected representative of the OPP, Nuevitas)

3.1.1. The role of The Communist Party

In this last part I have found it necessary to specify the relationship between administration and political decisions.

Of course it is difficult to appraise the political power and influence of the Cuban Communist Party in the decision-making process. In principle it is established in a resolution made by the Party as follows:

«The Party only has the authority to inform, advise and control in the political development and education of their members participating in any body of the Organs of People's Power. However under no condition is the Party allowed to intervene and/or make a decision on their own, concerning issues under the jurisdiction of local government bodies — the local or provincial Organs of People's Power.» (*Sobre los Organos del Poder Popular*, p.28)

The separation of the Party and the State is seen as essential to the correct functioning of both organizations. By virtue of its leading position in the Cuban revolutionary process, the Communist Party formulate the country's political course. Resolutions made will never be used as directives towards the OPP but only as advice. This is the theoretical base. The degree of being independent to Party decisions is obviously lower, in practice. And indications of dependency/independency can be read out of available data about the number of Party-members in the administrative apparatus of OPP.⁶

² In judging the political power of the Cuban Communist Party, one has to be aware of the strong relationship between the Cuban people and the Party. A discrepancy of ideas is seen as unlikely — i.e. an immense confidence in The Communist Party and its leader Fidel Castro, is found among the people in general. One interesting issue is how this relationship will develop with a new generation which does not have the experience of revolutionary struggle.

As seen in Table 2 the percentage of representatives belonging to the Party is increasing from the local to the nation assemblies. This Executive Committee has a higher percentage than the respective assembly on each level, and it is increasing from level to level as well, up to the Council of State which consists of exclusively Party members.

In contrast to this fact, I found that in Nuevitas 3/4 of the persons interviewed were of the opinion that Party membership was not a necessary condition for being a good representative. Nevertheless 70% of the elected representatives in Nuevitas were members of the Communist Party.

Table 2. Composition of the Assemblies of People's Power, 1979, Percent.

	Municipality		Province		Nation	Council
	Ass.	Ex. com	Ass.	Ex. com	Ass.	of State
OCCUPATION						
Administrative leaders, technicians, military	49,5	77,0	69,6	93,1	56,6	x
Workers in prod. services and education,						
peasants	39,3	17,4	23,3	5,1	31,4	x
Others	11,2	5,6	7,1	1,8	12,0	x
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	
SEX						
Male	92,8	86,5	82,6	84,0	77,8	90,0
Female	7,2	13,5	17,4	16,0	22,2	10,0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS						
Communist Party members (PCC) or candidates	64,7	90,4	90,6	99,2	91,7	100,0
Young Communist League members (UJC)	11,1	5,2	3,3	0,4	5,0	—
Nonaffiliated	24,2	4,4	6,1	0,4	3,3	—
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
EDUCATION						
Higher	4,6	6,6	15,6	27,1	28,5	x
Intermediate	19,9	32,0	35,6	53,3	59,7	x
Elementary	75,6	61,5	48,8	19,7	11,8	x
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	
AGE						
10 to 30 years	24,7	16,1	10,0	4,1	10,6	x
31 to 40 years	62,8	76,5	78,8	91,8	73,6	x
51 and over	12,5	7,4	11,2	4,1	15,8	x
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	—

x — Data not available

Source: *Comisión Electoral Nacional, 1979.*

4. Concluding remarks

With the introduction of the Organs of People's Power, Cuba has established more «reponsible» state organs, which are to be held accountable by the public. However, People's Power does not mean a strengthening of self-government, but rather the development of more efficient and responsible organs of local administration. The economic and political decentralization which has developed is still limited by the means of control still held by the Communist Party and the Central Administration.

However, it is important to stress the improvement of local services and the system of distribution that has been attained, and in the operating of the municipality itself in general. Local government bodies make it possible to improve on planning at the central and the local level, and will probably facilitate the implementation of territorially based national plans, through their being in a better position to point out administrative and technical errors. Their responsibilities concerning the use and distribution of available resources have been extended, which will possibly mean a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to development on the local level.

Although I consider the Organs of People's Power as a positive step towards mobilization of the masses in decision-making at all levels, I do claim that so far the OPP appear more as an economic and administrative decentralization process. The most important deficiencies are of a political nature; a more extensive decentralization of the political power is lacking. Many questions arise. What is the relationship between the administration and the levels of political power? Can efficiency in production and popular participation in the shaping of policy be made compatible? To what extent will greater local authority and control in the productive sector necessitate a different political/administrative structure?

I think there is a growing contradiction between the system of political mobilization and the demand for economic efficiency in material production. In other words: there is a danger that economic necessities will predominate over political/ideological priorities, which again means that quantitative factors will dominate the development strategy of Cuba. Despite the new planning procedures and the OPP, the implementative and consultative forms of participation of the masses remain predominant in Cuba today.

Until now the inclusion of the general public in the decision-making process have been limited, and primarily of local nature. Only after a more outspoken and clear priority of the political aspects of the decentralization process is given, will the Organs of People's Power become what the Cuban government officially intends them to be:

«A formidable school of government in which millions of people will learn to take on responsibilities and resolve problems of government.» (*Granma*, 28.5.74).

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