

**The Political Will to Democratize in Cuba: An Implication  
for U.S. Policy.**

**by**

**Roger R. Betancourt and Jorge A. Sanguinety\***

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\*University of Maryland and Development Research Center ([betancou@econ.umd.edu](mailto:betancou@econ.umd.edu)) and Devtech Systems and Development Research Center([jsanguinety@devtechsys.com](mailto:jsanguinety@devtechsys.com)). Earlier versions of a related paper were presented at the ASCE meetings in Miami, at the Cuba en la Distancia Conference in Valencia, Spain, and at the AEA meetings in San Francisco. We would like to thank M. Perez-Estable, N. Limao, T. Giannoni, A. Diamond and A. BenYishay for comments on the related paper without incriminating them for any errors that may have been transmitted to this one.

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**Authors:** Roger R. Betancourt and Jorge A. Sanguinety

**Affiliations:** University of Maryland and Development Research Center; Devtech Systems and Development Research Center

**Abstract:**

In this paper we define the political will to democratize in terms of a government's commitment and ability to act in furthering or reversing a democratization process. We also identify two basic dimensions of democracy that can be measured to identify the exercise of this political will: the freedom and fairness of the electoral process and the level of civil liberties. We use these ideas to analyze the current situation in Cuba. Perhaps most importantly, we begin the process of measuring these dimensions by carrying out a survey of attitudes towards these two dimensions. The results with respect to Cuba suggest very different views of their relative importance among those in power, opposition leaders and the general public. Among the implications of these results are implementation strategies for the potential success of recent policy announcements by the US with respect to Cuba as well as serious doubts for the success of the policy changes if these mechanisms are ignored.

**Key words:** Democratization, Electoral Process, Civil Liberties, Political Will, Transition, Cuba.

**JEL Code:** P16; P26; P36; A12; Y80

## **Introduction**

The concept of political will can be applied to any contexts where actors in a political environment vary in their commitment and ability to attain a particular objective. The objectives in question can be comprehensive or non-comprehensive and they can be objectives independent observers view positively or negatively. In this analysis we will focus on democratization, which is a comprehensive objective, keeping in mind that in any particular application actors that make up a government may be trying to reverse rather than to deepen a democratization process. We will develop first the general concepts associated with this issue and, subsequently, we will apply them to the Cuban situation.

Economists tend to describe evaluations of the feasibility of exercising political will in terms of the political economy of reforms while political scientists tend to do so in terms of the political will to reform. Policy makers, practitioners and the media often use these terms or similar ones interchangeably to discuss the viability of policies. We will use the term political will to describe a government's commitment to pursue a particular objective, recognizing that the government is not a monolithic entity.

Based on literature from both political science and economics, this paper presents a conceptual framework for evaluating the political will to further or reverse democratization. Section I provides a precise definition of political will applied to democratization and its main implications. Section II identifies the potential actors and the principal dimensions of their preferences relevant for evaluating a democratization process in principle. Similarly, Section III identifies the general nature of the constraints faced by these actors, including their capacities. Section IV applies these ideas to the

Cuban situation and reports the results of a survey on the two main dimensions of democracy emphasized in the discussion.

## **I. Political Will to Democratize: What Is It?**

It is useful to start with a general definition of the political will to democratize and what it implies before focusing on measuring this concept in any practical context. In this section we start with a simple but general definition and we draw out its implications at an abstract level.

### *A. Definition*

For our current purposes political will is a government's commitment and ability to act in the furthering or the reversal of a democratization process. Of course commitment and ability are two different dimensions, which will become clear in subsequent discussion.

### *B. Implications*

First, commitment is determined by the preferences of the actors that are the main components of a government toward democratization or its main elements relative to their preferences for other objectives. In other words, the degree or intensity of commitment may vary. These preferences can be affected by beliefs and desires as well as interests. We take them as given.

Second, ability is determined by the constraints faced by each of these actors and their capacities to act individually as well as collectively. At the time of measurement it is useful to differentiate the transactions costs of engaging in collective action from the political prices or political costs that may appear in the constraints faced by different actors. Of course, they both matter.

Third, implementation of this approach suggests identification of the relevant actors, their preferences toward democracy or its main elements, the constraints each one of these actors face and their capacities to act.

## **II. Potential Actors and their Preferences Toward Democracy.**

In any society there are a number of potential actors that could play a role in determining outcomes. Hence, in any specific analysis of political will it is useful to identify the main actors in the society as well as the preferences relevant for this particular application.

### *A. The Actors*

In principle we would have i) the military, including factions ii) the executive, including bureaucracies, iii) legislatures or parliaments as institutions and the political parties that make them up at a point in time, iv) the judicial system and any other institutions that impact the operation of the legal system, v) civil society and other institutions that may affect the level of popular support for an activity, for example the media, vi) the private sector and special interest groups, including actors that may be external to a country in some contexts.

While all of the above actors would be relevant for democratization in principle, because it is such a comprehensive objective, the importance of some of them would vary with the context. For instance, they could vary with regime type in the particular country of application at the time of analysis of the democratization process. Similarly, even the classification of some participants as actors or constraints may vary with a particular country of application.

### *B. Preferences toward Democracy*

Each one of the above potential actors has preferences or basic objectives that they desire, and which they can perceive as consistent or inconsistent with the goal of democratization in any specific analysis of political will. Preferences for each actor usually have several dimensions. At this abstract level it is easiest to consider for each actor only two broad dimensions of preferences: self-interest or its elements, especially economic ones, and democracy or its elements.

By and large we will view the first dimension as primary, in the sense of being given greater weight in any decision, and the other one as secondary, in the sense of having a smaller weight. In a particular application one may want to consider more than one element of self-interest, for example preservation or improvement in an actor's current position in terms of staying in power or income. Of course, the elements of self-interest may vary across actors or countries. With respect to the secondary dimension of preferences, however, the opposite is the case. Since it is the focus of our analysis of political will, it is useful to be specific on what we mean at this point.

We will focus on two dimensions of democracy while noting a third one as a moderating factor in the process. The first and most obvious one is the fairness of the electoral processes. This dimension is well accepted as an important ingredient of democracy. Elections are held in almost all systems regardless of their classification as democracies or non-democracies with monarchies perhaps an exception. This dimension is systematically measured, for example, by Freedom House (e.g., Piano and Puddington (2006, pp.780-781). It is one of its three categories of political rights.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Indeed, this dimension has led to the development of organizations that monitor electoral processes in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some of these monitoring organizations are more credible than others. Furthermore, their credibility is an issue that has been well documented in press accounts of monitoring

Since the level of this dimension is evaluated numerically on an annual basis, it is an especially attractive measure. Note that this is strictly the case since 2006 at this level of aggregation, but it is also true for the last 40 years as part of the aggregate political rights index. Benyishay and Betancourt (2008) provide a procedure for estimating past values at lower levels of aggregation using these two pieces of information for the civil liberties index and one of its components. The same procedure can be used here.

A second dimension of democracy is the protection of human rights. Many of these rights, for example freedom of speech and freedom of assembly, are part of the Bill of Rights.<sup>2</sup> In the literature, e.g., Kaufman (2005), these rights are often referred to as first generation human rights and contrasted with second generation human rights. The latter would include, for example, economic rights associated with geographical or employment mobility and property rights. Both sets of rights are also measured by Freedom House (2006) under the label of civil liberties. There are also other measures, for example Blume and Voigt (2007). The level of these human rights can also be evaluated numerically in all systems, i.e., democracies and non-democracies, on an annual basis.

There is a third dimension or aspect of democratization worth keeping in mind. When captured in one word, it is best referred to as legitimacy. What we mean by this concept is that the governed accept or reject the right of the regime to govern for one or more reasons. This concept in general terms has become standard in the political science literature, for example Dogan (2004). Diamond (2008) uses it as a matter of course and without explanation. In our case we will note three aspects of legitimacy that may be

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activities associated with the recent (December 2007) electoral processes in Russia and Venezuela. Nevertheless, monitoring issues will not be pursued at this point.

<sup>2</sup> Most Latin American constitutions include these rights in the text of the constitution.

especially relevant in particular cases without claiming to be exhaustive. These aspects are the presence or absence of economic performance, political competition, and effective delivery of public goods (these can include basic services as well as sovereignty in the form of full control over national territory). With respect to this third dimension its composition in terms of conceptual aspects as well as the measurement of many of these aspects is more controversial. Hence, it is easiest in this brief essay to introduce relevant aspects that can be measured as modifying factors in determining the levels of the first two dimensions of democracy.

### **III. Constraints on and Capacities for Democratization.**

Each one of the above actors faces constraints of various kinds in pursuing the objectives in their preferences. We first describe the general type of constraints on democratization that apply in all contexts. Subsequently, we discuss the ones that are inherently dependent on the characteristics of specific actors, which we call capacities.

#### *A. Constraints*

Some constraints are in the traditional form of limits on time and other resources needed for attaining the objectives in a decision maker's preferences. These constraints are similar to the traditional constraints of elementary economics and we will label them traditional.

Other constraints arise as a result of the interactions between actors in a system of government. Indeed, the notion of checks and balances in a democracy implies that some of the actors identified above are supposed to act as constraints to excesses by other actors in the pursuit of their goals. In other types of regimes similar checks are exercised by the pursuit of their own goals by other actors. This is characterized, for example, as a

principal-agent problem between the executive and the bureaucracy that is supposed to carry out its orders. More generally, a similar issue arises between the executive and the military with respect to some issues. For instance, the military's potential role on the threat of violence in the streets or even of peaceful demonstrations can operate as constraints on the executive. The ability of actors to act as constraints is enhanced by a world of broad Internet access and widespread use of cell phones. We shall call these constraints interactive. They are useful at the very least in identifying limits and sources of power. They can also lead to elaborate modeling of a particular problem.<sup>3</sup>

One issue that arises in the context of interactive constraints is whether the analysis should be undertaken at the national level or at a lower level of aggregation. This can happen because there are administrative considerations that affect the level of political will toward democratization. For instance, provinces and municipalities can exist as mere accounting devices or as actual wielders of economic and political power. The issue of decentralization of political and economic power and its impact on democratization is likely to vary widely among countries everywhere, and even over time in the same country.<sup>4</sup> Thus, its importance and how to incorporate it into an analysis needs to be ascertained in the particular context of the analysis.

Finally, some constraints involve factors that are external to actors in the system of government or to their interactions but that can affect the outcomes of interest, for

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<sup>3</sup> For instance, the political economy model of Grossman and Helpman ( 1996 ) relies on game theory to analyze electoral competition in the presence of special interests groups. Similarly, Spiller and Tommasi (2007) adopt this approach as the underlying feature of their analysis of Argentina's political system. One strand of political science literature has also adopted this approach, for example Bueno de Mesquita, et.al. (2003).

<sup>4</sup> For instance, India is a very decentralized country at the level of the state governments and considerable economic power in the areas of health and education is wielded by the state governments. Within a state at the district or lower administrative levels, however, there was little effective decentralization the first 50 years of independence. This situation led to a number of constitutional amendments in the 1990's to standardize and promote effective decentralization within states, Crook and Manor (1998).

example, other countries, religious beliefs, ideologies, size, geography and demographics. We shall call these constraints environmental. They also help identifying other limits and sources of power.

The classification of constraints into one of the three types above is merely a simplifying or cataloguing device rather than a rigid taxonomy. For instance, in some countries religious beliefs or geographical divisions along ethnic lines may play the role of interactive constraints rather than external ones. In these cases it is also likely that an evaluation of political will is best done at a sub-national level. In other cases, actors external to the system of government inside the country, for example other countries, may play such a dominant role in affecting political will to democratize that they should be viewed as additional actors providing interactive constraints rather than as external constraints. The taxonomy is merely a device that forces an evaluation of the extent of the role of each factor in determining political will.

### *B. The Capacities*

The perceived capacity of an actor or actors to act, individually or collectively, is also affected by characteristics of the actor or actors such as education, religion, ideologies, and visions of the world.

These capacities could be viewed as an additional type of constraint. But it is useful to single them out separately. In contrast to interactive and environmental constraints, this one is internal to the individual actor or group. In contrast to the traditional constraints it reflects limitations other than access to time and money. These limitations lead to heterogeneity in the actors' choice sets. That is, the ability to undertake certain actions will be influenced by these capacities.

Explicit mention should be made of the capacity to act collectively. The ability to engage in collective action by any actor or group of actors varies with the issue (for example number of people who enjoy the benefits or pay the costs), and the circumstances of the society (for example, the extent of social capital). It can also have an important impact on the extent of political will. Perhaps the best way to capture these collective capacities is in terms of the transaction costs faced by each actor while engaging in collective action activities. That is, the actors with greater capacities can be characterized as facing lower transaction costs while engaging in these activities.

Ironically, one of the determinants of these transaction costs is going to be the extent of political and civil liberties prevailing in the society at any one point. For instance, if there is no freedom of speech or assembly the costs of transmitting information and organizing to engage in collective action will be much higher than when there are high levels of freedom of speech and assembly. Thus, the transaction costs of democratization at a point in time will depend on the previous level of this dimension of democratization.

#### **IV. Implications for the Political Will to Democratize in Cuba.**

An application of these ideas to Cuba's current situation can proceed at many levels. We illustrate two of them. First, we will consider the relevant actors, and perceptions of their preferences and constraints. Second, we will report on a survey designed to elicit the views of key actors toward the two outcome variables in a democracy emphasized above.

In Cuba the main actors in a move to democratize would be the military and the Communist party bureaucracy. Legislatures and the judicial system have little influence

other than as rubber stamp mechanisms. Civil society institutions are weak by design and the ones with an autonomous influence, the dissidents, are frequently persecuted by the current regime. The private sector is quite limited. The self-employed are limited in terms of occupational activities, ability to hire anyone other than family and subject to a confiscatory tax regime (Ritter 2003). The joint ventures and 'sociedades anonimas' are normally composed at the top of former military officers and Communist party bureaucrats. Foreign investors must hire employees from a National Employment Agency, which is the one that pays workers (in pesos at the official exchange rate) while the Agency receives their salaries (presumably in foreign currencies or close to their equivalent at the black market rate) from the foreign investors. There is no independent media and only in March of 2008 it became legal to buy cell phones and computers, but these are unaffordable for the majority of Cubans who are without access to substantial foreign currency assets or earnings.

Some Cuban exiles would like to be major actors in the society but at present are unable to play much of a role, at least directly and openly. US policy makers may have ambivalent attitudes toward democratization in Cuba, because of its implications for migration flows. That is, a democratic regime could increase the probability of a major migration outflow if unable to satisfy economic aspirations. The European Union has promoted human rights in ambivalent ways and is likely to limit its efforts to this area, espousing sanctions at times and economic engagement at other times. Venezuela and China, which are Cuba's main trading partners at this time (Mesa-Lago 2008), would seem to have no interest in promoting democracy in Cuba. Similarly, Russia and Iran can

play the role of environmental constraints at some points in the future, depending on their level of engagement with the current regime and the price of oil.

Within the military and the communist party bureaucracy at least two factions have been identified: the hardliners and reformers. The former seem to prefer the current system with few changes and the latter are more open to economic reforms without political reforms, see Betancourt (2008) for a more detailed discussion of their preferences and traditional constraints. Neither group, however, has a strong incentive to democratize in terms of improvements in the electoral processes. Nevertheless, the reformers can find benefits in promoting some civil liberties. For instance, some civil liberties associated with second generation human rights, for example labor mobility, would benefit the success of some economic reforms.

In some ways, the hardliners correspond to a faction in Cuba that Benemelis and Yañez (2007) identify as the talibanes, who are associated with Fidel. But, they also identify the other main faction as raulistas and identifying them with the reformers is risky. While in 2007, for example, the so-called raulistas seemed likely to play this role, appointments by Raul in 2008 and the lack of serious movement toward meaningful reforms raised doubts on this characterization. Nevertheless, the March 2009 purge of Ministers Lage and Perez-Roque as well as others, coupled with an incipient economic opening in agriculture, could be a harbinger of further reforms.<sup>5</sup> In any event, the members of both factions identified above come from both the military and the Communist Party bureaucracy.

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<sup>5</sup> Interestingly Lage and Perez-Roque have been characterized as reformers in some popular accounts of their recent demotions.

Rather than associating these factions with names, we will rely on the abstract characterization of factions as hardliners and reformers. Each faction can play the role of an interactive constraint for the other one in terms of the political will to democratize. Indeed, it is as an unintended outcome of these interactions that the main possibilities for a full blown democratization process in Cuba could arise; of course, those with access to power in the current environment are also fully aware of this possibility. With respect to capacities, both factions have a high capacity to diminish the political will to democratize through repression. While the reformers may have less of an incentive to do so in those areas that involve economic rights they would have a greater incentive in areas that involve political rights, precisely because of the fears that an economic opening may lead to political demands viewed as threatening to their hold on power.<sup>6</sup>

Environmental constraints can also affect the political will to democratize in Cuba in substantial ways. The hardliners are more in sync with Fidel than the reformers. They also have an easier time sustaining their positions if Chavez, for example, continues subsidizing Cuba. Hence, Fidel's actual demise or Chavez policy turnarounds are circumstances normally beyond the control of either group that can affect their relative positions substantially.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, substantial offshore oil deposits within Cuba's territorial waters that can be obtained with technology available to Cuba, directly or through third parties, would alter the interactions between these groups as well as the strengths of their preferences for democratization relative to other objectives. Ironically, this particular event could decrease the political will to democratize for either group if

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<sup>6</sup> These abstract characterizations ignore subtler distinctions that can affect outcomes in practice. For example there are generational differences within these groups as well as within opposition groups.

<sup>7</sup> Indeed, some accounts of the March 2009 purge have suggested that these changes were due to the discovery of a plot with Chavez by the demoted.

they were firmly in control at the time the resources become available, by decreasing the economic benefits to democratization for those in power.

One way of summarizing the previous discussion is that the political will to democratize, as perceived on the basis of standard social science analyses of this issue, is very low. Based on this perspective, one would attach a very low probability to the development of a full blown democratization process in Cuba over the next few years regardless of what happens to Fidel or even Raul's health status. Nevertheless, it is useful to keep in mind two features of major changes in social processes. If they behave in ways similar to non-linear dynamical systems, as some believe because of their complexity, e.g., Beinhocker (2006), changes in phases of regimes are by their very nature chaotic or unpredictable. While no one predicted the changes in 1989 based on clear logical analyses, some provided the basis for such predictions before the event, e.g., Ofer (1987).<sup>8</sup> It is in that spirit that we turn to a second mechanism for analyzing the political will to democratize in Cuba: Namely, a survey of views with respect to the two main outcome variables of a democratization process identified here.<sup>9</sup>

Our sample of interviewees included 28 individuals, men and women knowledgeable about current political conditions in Cuba. The interviews were conducted personally by Jorge Sanguinety on the condition of double and absolute confidentiality. The questionnaires were not identifiable and the list of participants is and will remain anonymous. The confidentiality condition was essential to propitiate honest answers as virtually all interviewees are well known in Cuban and Cuban-American

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<sup>8</sup> Ofer applied a standard form of productivity analysis to data from the Soviet Union between the 1920's and 1985. A systematic decline with negativity productivity estimates in the later periods suggested the inevitability of substantial changes in the system.

<sup>9</sup> A third mechanism would be a historical analysis of the revolutionary process relying on the concepts put forth here, but that would take us too far afield.

political circles. An attempt was made to include residents in Cuba, both members of the opposition and individuals associated with the Cuban government. Nevertheless, only one questionnaire was returned duly filled out. Many of the interviews were undertaken in person while others were carried out by phone.<sup>10</sup>

The survey provides empirical information relevant to evaluate the political will to democratize in Cuba. We applied a structured questionnaire of 16 items with 5 possible integer answers each, ranging from 2 to -2. The questionnaire was especially designed for this effort and was a Spanish version of the one presented in this text. As there are great differences in perceptions about political will among participants previously affiliated with the government or with the opposition or who may have changed positions the questionnaire contains 16 questions addressing the interviewee's perceptions. These cover preferences, general public attitudes and assessments of objective conditions toward our two main outcomes of current government officials, members of the opposition, and the interviewee her/himself. **Box 1** presents the questionnaire translated into English.

**Box 1: Questionnaire to Assess Political Will: Cuba, May 30 2008.**

Please reply exactly to what you are asked; do not change the question.  
The survey is designed for Cuban respondents.  
Choose only one answer; indicate which one with an X.

*Definition for this survey: Political Will is the commitment and the capacity of a government to strengthen or reverse a democratization process.*

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<sup>10</sup> The questionnaire applied was identical, in terms of the type of questions, to one we developed for a Chilean survey. Some of the participants were in the opposition to Pinochet's regime and some of them were members of the government during Pinochet's regime. All of them were active agents in the process that returned democracy to Chile in 1990 and are highly recognized personalities in the country's political arena. The context was, of course, different since they were asked to answer these questions in 2008 with respect to the situation that existed in Chile just prior to the 1988 referendum.

1. Taking the most powerful and influential **decision makers** (government) in the country now, how would you qualify their political will to increase (positive) or to diminish (negative) the general level of individual liberties of Cuban citizens?  
 Very Positive    Somewhat Positive    Nil    Somewhat Negative    Very Negative
2. Regardless of their combined degrees of political will, how do you think **they** would have rated the conditions prevailing now to increase the general level of individual liberties of Cuban citizens?  
 Very Favorable    Favorable    Neutral    Unfavorable    Very Unfavorable
3. How do **you personally** rate those conditions?  
 Very Favorable    Favorable    Neutral    Unfavorable    Very Unfavorable
4. Did you personally expect that Cubans would be better off (happier) or worse off (less happy) with more individual freedoms?  
 Much Better    Just Better    The Same    Just Worse    Much Worse
5. Did you personally expect that Cubans would be better off (happier) or worse off (less happy) with free and fair elections?  
 Much Better    Just Better    The Same    Just Worse    Much Worse
6. Among the most influential and powerful **decision makers** (government) of the country at this time, what do you think are their predominant preferences or attitudes regarding more individual freedoms for Cubans?  
 Very Positive    Positive    Nil    Negative    Very negative
7. Among the most influential political leaders of the opposition at this time, what do you think are their predominant preferences or attitudes regarding more individual freedoms for Cubans?  
 Very Positive    Positive    Nil    Negative    Very negative
8. Among the most influential and powerful **decision makers** (government) of the country at this time, what do you think are their predominant preferences or attitudes regarding free and fair elections for Cubans?  
 Very Positive    Positive    Nil    Negative    Very negative
9. Among the most influential political leaders of the opposition at this time, what do you think are their predominant preferences or attitudes regarding free and fair elections for Cubans?  
 Very Positive    Positive    Nil    Negative    Very negative
10. In your opinion, what do they think at this time about how ready the country is for a change in the system of government?  
 Very Much    Somewhat    Indifferent    Not Ready    Not Ready at All
11. In your **personal opinion**, at this time what proportion of Cubans appreciate having more individual freedoms?  
 Great Majority    Some Majority    50-50    Minority    Very few
12. What do you think is the predominant opinion among the most powerful and influential **decision makers** at this time about the proportion of Cubans that appreciate having more individual freedoms?  
 Great Majority    Some Majority    50-50    Minority    Very few
13. What do you think is the predominant opinion among the most influential political leaders of the opposition at this time about the proportion of Cubans that appreciate having more individual freedoms?  
 Great Majority    Some Majority    50-50    Minority    Very few

14. In your **personal opinion**, at this time what proportion of Cubans appreciate having free and fair elections?

Great Majority  Some Majority  50-50  Minority  Very few

15. What do you think is the predominant opinion among de most powerful and influential **decision makers** at this time about the proportion of Cubans that appreciated having free and fair elections?

Great Majority  Some Majority  50-50  Minority  Very few

16. What do you think is the predominant opinion among de most influential political leaders of the opposition at this time about the proportion of Cubans that appreciated having free and fair elections?

Great Majority  Some Majority  50-50  Minority  Very few

The average value over the 28 respondents of the answers to each of these 16 questions is presented in each cell of *Table 1*. The three rows indicate whose perceptions the questions refer to (government decision makers, dissidents or the respondent's own view); the three columns indicate what the questions refer to with respect to free and fair elections (FFE) and civil liberties (CL), i.e., preferences, attitudes of the general public, or assessments of objective conditions for change. For the reader's convenience the numbers in brackets in each cell refer to the number of the question in Box 1.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

The first column of Table 1 reveals that the respondents' perceptions of preferences toward these two dimensions of democracy by themselves and those of dissidents are similarly positive but they perceive government decision makers' preferences much less positive in both dimensions. Perhaps more importantly, they view the latter as having a sizable gap in their preferences between free and fair elections and civil liberties. Preferences for FFE by government decision makers have the lowest average value of any question among the 16.

In the second column we find a similar result with respect to views on perceptions of attitudes of the general public towards these two outcomes. The scores are highly positive for both dissidents and respondents and much less so for government decision makers. Just as in the first column the latter are perceived to view the general public with a less positive attitude towards FFE than towards CL. In contrast to the first column the respondents seem to agree with government decision makers rather than with dissidents in terms of viewing the general public as less positively disposed towards free and fair elections than towards civil liberties.

Finally, the last column contains perceptions of an assessment of objective conditions for change with respect to civil liberties by the three groups. The scores on these objective assessments by the three groups are far closer together than in the preferences for civil liberties in the first column, e.g., the range of differences for CL in column 3 is 1 while in column 1 is 1.8.

One immediate implication of the survey arises from the following mental experiment. Suppose these respondents perceptions coincide with the views actually held by ordinary Cubans, those in power and influential opposition leaders. What can we say about the political will to democratize in Cuba? We can say that it is far more likely to manifest itself through an improvement in various forms of civil liberties than through a reliance on free and fair elections. Those in power have a strong aversion to the electoral dimension and much milder one to the civil liberties one. Ordinary Cubans have strongly favorable attitudes toward both dimensions, but substantially more for the civil liberties dimension than for the electoral process one. Only dissidents have an equally strong preference for both dimensions.

A more general implication of our analysis and results is connected to recent developments on the policy front. In April of 2009 there were major policy changes with respect to Cuba announced by the Obama administration and a longer term broad policy proposal released by the Brookings Institution Foreign Policy Department. In both cases the aim is to defrost relations with Cuba in a number of fronts. Our analysis and results suggest that the success of these initiatives requires that attention be paid to differences between political rights and civil liberties. For opening spaces in the latter domain is likely to be far better received by the Cuban side. Furthermore, our analysis and results also suggest a strategy when opening spaces on the human rights front. Namely, beginning with pushes on second generation human rights, i.e., those on the economic front, is likely to move the process faster than emphasizing the ones on the political front. This strategy is reinforced by recent literature. The latter shows that the causal connection from democracy to economic growth is weak or non-existent, Acemoglu, et al (2008), but the causal link between economic liberalization prior to democratization and democracy is more likely to exist, Persson and Tabellini (2006).

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Table 1: Respondents Perceptions with respect to FFE and CL.

	Preferences		General Public Attitude		'Objective' Assessments	
	FFE	CL	FFE	CL	FFE	CL
Decision Makers	-1.3 [8]	-0.2 [6]	0.3 [15]	0.7 [12]	---	-0.2* [1]   -0.4 [2]
Dissidents	1.6 [9]	1.6 [7]	1.4 [16]	1.4 [13]	0.4 [10]**	0.4 [10]**
Own Views	1.4 [5]	1.5 [4]	1.0 [14]	1.6 [11]	---	0.6 [3]

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\*This question asked about the collective views of all decision makers together.

\*\* This question asked about change, presumably in both dimensions.