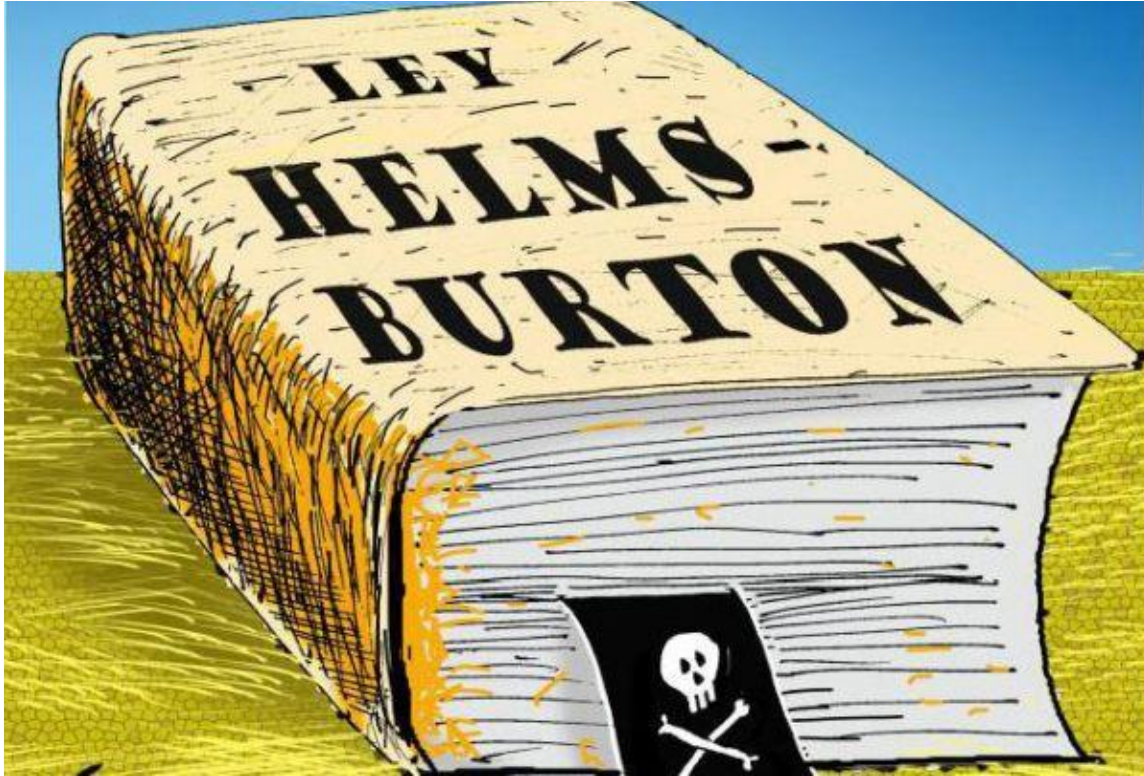


**The ineffectiveness of Economic Sanctions: An analysis of the factors leading to the  
ineffectiveness of United States Helms-Burton Act against Cuba**



The deadly book of Helms-Burton Act (Activation of the Helms-Burton, 2019)

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**List of acronyms**

ALBA – Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America

US – United States

UN – United Nation

EU- European Union

NAFTA- North American Free Trade Agreement

FTAA – Free Trade Area of the Americas

WHO – World Health Organization

FAR- The Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces

USSR- Union of Soviet Socialist Republic

PDVSA – Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A.

WMD – Weapon of Mass Destruction

**List of definitions**

Communism – the political and economic ideology that promotes community ownership of all properties and equity.

Coordination goods- goods that foster civil openness. Examples: internet and telecommunication

Embargo – an official ban on trade and commercial activities.

Engagement – the establishment of political, economic and social relationship.

Legitimacy – the acceptance and support of authority of the state by the people.

Liberalism – the political and moral ideology that concerns freedom, equality under the law and public participation.

Mirror statistics – trade statistics that are constructed based on data reported by partner countries.

Non-democratic/Authoritarian/autocratic/tyranny – a form of government with involves strong state power and limited political freedom.

Perestroika – the restructuring of the economic and political policy of the Soviet Union.

Political stability – the absence of war, riots, demonstrations or any form of political disturbance

Ruling coalition/elites – the small group of people that hold maximum political power.

Sanction busting – the economic activities that generate revenue for the target state -causing sanctions to be ineffective.

Sender state – the state that imposes sanctions.

Socialism – the political and economic theory that advocates redistribution and community ownership of the means of production.

Special period – the economic hardship that hit Cuba after the demise of the Soviet Union

Target state – the state that receives the sanctions

Third Party States – states other than the sender or target state

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Economic sanctions have become a potent foreign policy tool employed by the United States (US) and European Union (EU) for the promotion of democracy and liberal policies in the post-cold war era. (Axyonova, 2015). They serve as a mechanism for the enforcement of western democratic principles of governance. Economic sanction can be unilateral or multilateral (see Kaemperfer & Lowenburg, 1999; Bapat & Morgan, 2009), comprehensive or targeted (Brooks, 2002, Hufbauer, 2007 and Drezner, 2011) and positive or negative (Kim, 2014) (see table 1 in appendix). Many countries such as Iran, North Korea, China and Cuba have experienced unilateral comprehensive economic sanctions imposed by the United States in the past years (Yang, Askari, Forrer, & Teengen, 2004). However, Sanchez (2003) describes the severity of US economic sanctions on Cuba as bizarre. The economic sanctions on Cuba have lasted for almost six decades -causing a devastating effect on the Cuban population -without achieving the desired outcome of causing a change in Castro's policy behaviour (LeoGrande, 2015). One of the first popular arguments raised by the US to legitimise the economic sanctions on Cuba was that Cuba poses a threat to its national security (LeoGrande, 2015).

After the cold war and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the US' reason for imposing economic sanctions on Cuba shifted from averting national security threat, to emphasise on promoting liberal values such as human rights observations, democracy, and market reforms (Lamrani & Oberg, 2013, Oechslin, 2014 and LeoGrande, 2015). The US tightened the Cuban embargoes by codifying it into law through the signing of the Helms-Burton Act referred to as the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act in 1996 (Roy, 2000; Miller & Piccone, 2016). Of most importance, the Helms-Burton Act (henceforth), aimed at inflicting devastating economic hardship on Cuba by preventing other countries from trading with the island and eventually causing the demise of the Castro regime. Nonetheless, the ultimate goal of the Act against Cuba seems to be far from actualising. Despite US economic pressure on Cuba over time, the Castro regime has failed to respond to the US foreign policy mandate as the sanction continues (Gordon, 2012).

In the absence of a critical analysis, it is complex to disentangle the efficacy of states resorting to economic sanctions as a way to achieve their foreign policy goals. The most comprehensive study on the effectiveness of economic sanctions estimates that sanctions as a foreign policy tool work about only 35% of the time (Hufbauer, Schott & Elliott, 1990). The issue

with sanctions effectiveness is more complicated when one visualises the resilience of certain countries such as Zimbabwe, Cuba, Iran and North Korea towards western economic sanctions. There is a pool of scholarly works that examine the effectiveness of economic sanctions. Nonetheless, most scholars have dedicated their research to qualitative analysis of the ineffectiveness in a broader context. In their works, Early (2011), Rarick & Han (2010) and Grauvogel & Soest (2014) have assigned the causes of the ineffectiveness of economic sanctions in political regimes to the assistance of third-party states, domestic politics during a particular regime, and leadership culture (see chapter 3: conceptual framework). There is limited quantitative evidence to support their contribution. For that matter, this paper seeks to combine both qualitative and quantitative analyses to answer the research question, “*how did the Castro regime survive and resist the US economic sanctions (Helms-Burton Act) from 1996 to 2008?*”

The ability of specific regimes, for example, Cuba to resist sanctions imposed by a global power such as the United States is the primary motivation of the author for choosing this thesis topic. This thesis topic is still relevant today as the current President of the United States -Trump has reintroduced the Helms-Burton Act to take full effect -allowing Americans to sue foreign companies and persons trafficking in confiscated properties during the Cuban revolution (Baker, 2019). Since its enactment, the Title III of the Helms-Burton Act (see appendix) was waived every six months during the administration of President Clinton, Bush, Obama until Trump -preventing US citizens from filing those lawsuits (Kleiner, 2019).

The objective of this paper is to fill the existing research gaps left within the numerous academic literature on the ineffectiveness of the US economic sanctions against Cuba and afford a mixture of qualitative and quantitative contribution to how certain factors cause sanctions’ ineffectiveness in autocratic regimes<sup>1</sup> or how autocratic regimes survive sanctions. Another contribution of this paper is to afford policymakers with an in-depth understanding of how specific regimes respond to economic sanctions to make an informed decision in persuading foreign nations to comply with their demands.

The thesis is organised as follows: Chapter one introduces the topic, research question and objectives of the study. Chapter two offers a historical background about how the sanctions began, and reasons why they were ineffective. The next chapter delivers a conceptual framework on the factors leading to the ineffectiveness of economic sanctions by providing the assumptions

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<sup>1</sup> Autocratic, authoritarian and non-democratic are used interchangeably.

arguments concerning how regimes resist and survive sanctions. Chapter four follows by addressing the research design and explains how the researcher answers the research question. Chapter five offers the findings and critical analysis of the study to provide readers with new insights into the effectiveness of economic sanctions and how Castro survived Helms-Burton Act. Finally, the last chapter affords a conclusion and recommendation for future research.

## Chapter 2: Background

### 2.1. Brief history of the United States economic sanctions on Cuba

Figure 1: The US embargo caricature (Robinson & Martinez, 2017).



In March 1960, the US president, Eisenhower made a formal decision to overthrow the Cuban government by planning a military invasion of the “Bay of Pigs” in Cuba (Leo-Grande, 2015). The invasion at the “Bay of Pigs” was a botched operation by the CIA in April 1961 under the administration of President J.F.

Kennedy (Leo-Grande, 2015). In October 1960, President Eisenhower manifested his hostility towards Cuba through his foreign policy – the imposition of commercial, financial and economic embargo known as “el bloqueo” or the blockade in response to the 1959 Cuban revolution (von Burgsdorff, 2009). The Cuban revolution of 1959 culminated in the overthrow of the US-backed Cuban President Batista by Fidel Castro and he established Cuba as the first communist country in the Americas (Doma-Nguez & Dominguez, 2009). The aftermath of the revolution, inspired by triggers such as the US refusal of multinational companies to refine Soviet oil, and US import quotas on Cuba’s sugar, was the nationalisation and confiscation of about 1.8 billion United States assets (Capek & Keller, 2016; Aremu & Soetan, 2017). Capek and Keller (2016) states that such a sum signifies the largest uncompensated seizure of American properties by a foreign nation in US history. The confiscation and the threat of having a Soviet ally in the Americas provoked President Eisenhower to halt the importation of Cuban sugar (which accounted for 80% of Cuban exports) states Lamrani (2013).

Furthermore, diplomatic relations between Cuba and the US ended in 1961 when President Eisenhower closed the US embassy in Havana and banned US nationals from travelling to Cuba (Totten, 2014). Eisenhower’s foreign policy towards Cuba was the beginning of a policy that continues to exist today. Successive US administration have either relaxed or tightened the sanctions. In 1962, President Kennedy imposed a total embargo on all Cuban imports and



suspended exports, which included food and drugs breaching international humanitarian law which the United Nations have condemned (Gordon, 2012). The Organisation of American States (OAS) during the administration of US-President Johnson expelled Cuba as a member through the influence of the US. However, in 1974, President Ford attempted to relax the policy toward Cuba. Similarly, President Carter sought to normalise relations with Cuba so in 1997, Washington and Havana established diplomatic missions for the first time since 1961. The rise of Reagan in 1981 took back the effort of President Ford and Carter and reinforced Eisenhower's restriction policies on Cuba (Gordon, 2012). A significant turn of the sanctions was the promulgation of the 1996 Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act also known as the Helms-Burton Act that sought to persuade and strengthen international cooperation in the US sanctioning effort against Cuba (Lowe, 1997).

## 2.2. *The Helms-Burton Act*

Figure 2: The signing of the Helms-Burton Act by President Clinton in 1996 ("Timeline: U.S.-Cuba Relations", 2019).



President Clinton signed into law the Helms-Burton Act after Cuban authorities shot-down of two humanitarian planes owned by a Miami-based organization in February 1996 (Irving, 2004 and Lowe, 1997). The Helms-

Burton Act was a law that tightened the previous US foreign policy on Cuba that had existed for decades. With its signing into law, the economic sanctions cannot be lifted by any President without congressional approval -which makes it a difficult process. Though the policy had failed in causing the demise of Fidel Castro, the new law sought to include certain elements to intensify

the process of ousting the Cuban regime and aiding Cuba to transition to democracy peacefully. See appendix for the elements of the Helms-Burton Act.

### *2.3. Helms-Burton Act and its ineffectiveness*

This thesis asserts that the Helms-Burton Act is ineffective because it did not succeed in: 1) the demise of the Castro regime, 2) transitioning Cuba into a democratic state, 3) deterring other countries from trading with Cuba, and 4) but produced a counterfactual effect by strengthening the Cuban regime (Napier, 2010 and Segrera, 2011).

Firstly, despite the economic hardship caused by the sanctions, the Castro regime enjoyed a high level of political stability. There were no major political uprisings except the initiation of the Varela project in 1998 by the opposition leader Oswaldo Payá, who collected signatories to support democratic reforms in Cuba (“Dissidents challenge Cuban Government,” 2010). Secondly, the Act failed to instigate democratic principles in policies in Cuba. Surprisingly, the suppression of the freedom of speech, association and movement of political dissidents become worse when the US become more hostile to the regime. Thirdly, many countries such as Canada and countries in the EU expressed their disapproval of the United States and traded with Cuba when they desired. Lastly, the sanction missed the Cuban leaders who were its intended target. The Cuban civil society suffered the impact of the sanctions while Castro and his ruling coalition remained strong. In 1998, during his visit to Cuba, Pope John Paul II mentioned that the most vulnerable Cuban citizens rather than their leaders gravely felt the effects of the sanctions (Napier, 2010). The findings of this paper present some exemplification of the ineffectiveness of the Act.

## Chapter 3: Conceptual framework

### 3.1. *Ineffectiveness of Economic sanctions*

The factors leading to the ineffectiveness of economic sanctions are labelled in several themes. Some authors have broadly identified them as the assistance of the third-party state (Bonetti, 1998, Rarick & Han, 2010 and Early, 2015), the domestic politics during a particular regime (Lektzian & Souva, 2007, Brooks, 2002, Grauvogel & von Soest, 2014, Allen, 2005, Kim, 2014, and Oechsin, 2014) and the leadership culture (Li, 2014 and Malici, 2011).

#### i. The Assistance of third-party state

In the article “Distinguishing Characteristics of Degrees of Success and Failure in Economic Sanctions Episodes”, Bonetti (1998) firmly argues for two factors that cause the ineffectiveness of economic sanctions. He asserts that the significant assistance of third parties and the absence of previous trade relationship between sender and target states are the prominent causes of the failure of economic sanctions (Bonetti, 1998). Nevertheless, he ranks the former factor as the more powerful of the two determinants examined in his study.

Likewise, Rarick and Han (2010) provide a theoretical explanation for the conditions that cause ineffective economic sanctions. They use the power-dependency theory, which focuses on the power the sender has on the target. If the target state depends enormously on the sender state, there would be a high possibility of concession to the sender state’s policy request. However, if the target state has an alternative market to replace the sender, then it is less likely to comply (Rarick & Han, 2010). For instance, after the United States imposed economic sanctions on Myanmar, Myanmar ceased to trade with or depend on the United States but shifted towards China, India, and Thailand (Rarick and Han, 2010) weakening the power of the United States on Myanmar.

Bonetti, Rarick, and Han present a thoughtful insight into the factors leading to the ineffectiveness of economic sanctions, yet the picture is not complete. Even though it is clear that third-party states influence the outcome of economic sanctions, they do have different motives that affect the period in which they come to the aid of target states. For instance, during US economic sanctions against Cuba, the Soviet Union offered tremendous assistance to Cuba after Fidel Castro publicly declared on Cuban national television that he was a Marxist-Leninist, meaning he supported the communist ideology of the Soviet Union (Early, 2010 & Bain, 2010). Venezuela also came to Cuba’s aid in the 2000s; however, before that, the country was not a Castro

sympathiser (Feinsilver, 2008). In a more recent study by Early, a famous sanction scholar, titled “Busted Sanctions: Explaining why Economic Sanctions Fail”, reaffirms Bonetti, Rarick and Han’s arguments; by assessing the influence of third-party economic assistance to target states and concluded that significant third-party assistance to target renders economic sanctions void (Early, 2015). Early refers to such a phenomenon as “Sanction Busting” (Early, 2015).

Sanction busting, according to Early (2015) is the economic or political activities that other states other than the sender or target state actively indulge in to render economic sanctions ineffective. Early addressed the concern raised above about the timing of assistance by focusing on two archetypes of sanction busting. Sanction busting constitutes trade-based and aid-based busters driven by different motives and produce a differing impact on the outcome of economic sanctions (Early, 2015). The trade-based assistance has an economically driven motive that seeks to grab profitable opportunities. For that matter, their influence on the ineffectiveness of economic sanctions can be high when trading with the target is beneficial. Nevertheless, if the cost of trading with the target state is dear, they will likely halt their trade activities. On the other hand, political motives typically drive the aid-based busters. In other words, they do not seek to extract profit from the target but promote their political ideologies or strengthen their political allegiance (Early, 2012). Hence, sanction-busting activities in a particular period are geared towards the satisfaction of the sanction buster’s motives.

ii. Domestic politics during a particular regime

Lektzian and Souva (2007) in their article “An Institutional Theory of Sanctions Onset and Success” argue that the economic effect of sanctions is only relevant in democratic regimes but not autocratic ones. In their view, due to the different institutional incentive, economic strain usually fails in autocratic regimes (Lektzian & Souva, 2007). Brooks (2002) concludes that different types of sanctions result in distinct domestic situations in both democratic and non-democratic states. Comprehensive sanctions -which involve total trade, and financial sanctions and travel bans that affect the total population are more likely to succeed in democratic regimes and not in autocratic ones. This is because, according to Allen (2005), governments are concerned about the domestic response of economic sanctions in their respective states due to the quest for maintaining political power.

Sanctions come with an economic burden and can jeopardise the popularity of political leaders. In democratic regimes, leaders have a plethora of citizens they are accountable to in order to maintain power. The citizens would vote them out of power if they were incapable of pleasing the general population. On the contrary, autocratic leaders have few ruling coalitions to gratify (Carneiro & Elden, 2009). Comprehensive sanctions give autocratic leaders more zeal to redistribute resources for their private gain and strengthen the few but influential political supporters while crippling the rest of the population. Hence, domestic condemnation of the regime becomes challenging. Brook (2002) suggests that only “targeted sanctions” -which is sanction aiming at the movement and assets of the target regime ruling coalition -are likely to induce concession from the targeted autocratic state.

Furthermore, Grauvogel and von Soest (2014) have investigated why some autocratic regime fail to transition to democratic even after the imposition of economic sanctions. Using a qualitative comparative analysis, they discovered that authoritarian regimes strategically resist external pressure by gathering strong domestic support. These leaders use strategic means to derive legitimacy from their population while using the opportunity to accuse the sender state for the destitute in the country. According to Kim (2014), the strategies utilised by autocratic leaders include appeasement, backlash and surveillance. In her analysis in the case of North Korea, she first differentiated between positive and negative sanctions. Positive sanctions are economic sanctions imposed through rewards comprising reduction of tariffs and trade subsidies while negative sanctions include tariffs, embargoes, quotas, and boycotts (Kim, 2014).

During the imposition of positive sanctions, North Korea tends to use backlash rhetoric - blaming the sender. The regime blames the sender for the woes of the country to prevent its domestic population from supporting the sender state. On the other hand, the regime resorts to appeasement rhetoric more when negative sanctions are imposed and less when positive sanctions are imposed. The appeasement rhetoric, which is the provision of social benefits and reforms, prevents the rise public dissatisfaction. Lastly, Kim (2014) reports that North Korea uses surveillance rhetoric rampantly during both positive and negative sanctions to prevent covert mobilisation. Oechslin (2014) supports Kim’s findings claiming that some autocratic regimes survive economic sanctions by strategic means such as limiting the provision of public goods necessary for popular revolt.

### iii. Leadership culture

An exciting but understudied insight into the causes of ineffective sanctions can be the best way to describe Li's (2014) article "US Economic Sanctions against China: A Cultural Explanation of Sanction Effectiveness." Li (2014) explains how "culture," which he simplifies as "the target state's shared attitude or norm toward how to deal with conflict -specifically, whether the target state is conflict-averse or acceptant", influences the outcome of sanctions (p. 316). Which means that some countries respond aggressively to economic sanctions based on their distinct political norms and beliefs or ideas with the sender state. While others view sanctions solely as a foreign policy tool based on their shared beliefs and norms with the sender state; hence, they comply easily to economic sanctions. The underpinning assumption behind such endeavour is that some non-western countries such as China, North Korea and Cuba envision sanctions as demeaning (Callahan, 2010) while the western cultures such as the United States and EU only visualise sanctions as a tool to convey foreign policy messages. The non-western cultures see sanctions as humiliating because often the demands of the economic sanctions conflict with their norms and beliefs which makes them view sanctions as a forcible disregard for their beliefs and norms by so called "hegemony". Such construction of economic sanctions by the target regime's leadership is what the author refers to as "leadership culture" in this paper.

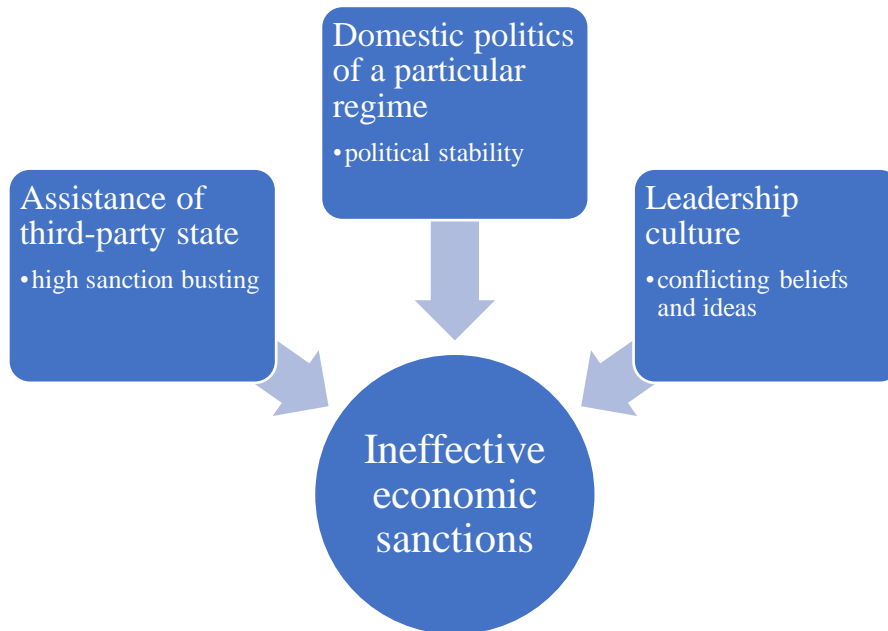
A contribution by Malici (2011) in his co-authored book "Rethinking Foreign Policy Analysis" also explains the importance of norms and beliefs in the outcome of economic sanctions. He designated a chapter to describe how the strong commitment to the beliefs and norms by the Cuban and North Korean leadership led to the continuity of communism in the two countries despite the fall of the Soviet Union and the absence of Soviet political and economic support (Malici, 2011).

Li, (2014), and other authors have used constructivism as the supporting theory for this cultural argument. Constructivism holds that norms and ideas matter in international relations (Wendt, 1992), which are components of a nation's culture. According to Dunne et al. (2013), constructivists argue that international politics is less of an "objective reality" and more of a social construction (p. 188). Political "actors make choices in the process of interacting with others, and as a result, bring historically, culturally and politically distinct reality into being" (Dunne et al., 2013, p.188). Hence, the target regime response during economic sanctions are shaped by the interaction with sender.

Example of how the sender state and target state leadership cultures may conflict can be seen in the value placed on liberal ideas and principles by democratic and non-democratic leaders. Democratic leaders believe that liberal principles are better means of economic and human development and the best way for a country to be governed to allow participation of all adult citizens or taxpayers. On the other hand, non-democratic leaders believe that liberalisation of the population, such as participating in democratic processes would hinder them from actualising their subjective goals and will for their country due to obstructions from unlike-minded citizens. Li (2014), in summing up, stated that sender states should, therefore, consider the cultural responses and sensitivity of the target state for a successful imposition of economic sanctions as a foreign policy tool.

In conclusion, all authors have introduced remarkable puzzles and afforded significant contributions to the factors leading to the ineffectiveness of economic sanctions. Nonetheless, Kim's article "Economic Sanctions and the Rhetorical Responses of Totalitarian Regimes: Examining North Korean Rhetorical Strategies" is the only literature that differentiated between positive and negative sanctions, which are both geared towards altering change in a target regime. Such input makes the work of other authors questionable as to whether positive sanctions were taken into account in their research and how this may have affected their findings in support of, or against traditional theoretical knowledge about the effectiveness of economic sanctions. The lack of consistency and consensus on the factors leading to the ineffectiveness of economic sanctions draw attention to the fact that this aspect of economic sanctions needs to be contextualised and given more consideration for research. Therefore, to investigate the various hypothesis (distinguished below), this paper intends to focus on the US "comprehensive negative sanctions" on the Cuban regime.

Figure 3: Conceptual Framework



### 3.2. Research Question

How did the Castro regime survive and resist the US economic sanctions (Helms-Burton Act) from 1996 to 2008?

#### i. Hypothesis

1. Significant sanction busting by third party states rendered the Helms-Burton Act against Cuba ineffective.
2. The stable domestic political atmosphere between 1996 and 2008 subdued the effectiveness of Helms-Burton Act.
3. The leadership culture adopted by Fidel Castro rendered the Helms-Burton Act ineffective because it conflicted with leadership culture of the US.



#### **Chapter 4: Method of analysis and research design**

In the event of debating the success of the US economic sanctions against Cuba, professors and policy analysts typically ponder over its effectiveness. A widespread assumption is that it failed to break Fidel Castro's autocratic administration (Askari, Forrer, Teegen, & Yang, 2003). The debate on how the regime survived the US Helms-Burton Act cannot be answered without taking into account the assistance of third-party states, domestic politics during the regime, and the leadership culture of Fidel Castro. The policy objective that the US hopes to attain may be illusory if the Cuban regime gained economic support from other states, enjoyed political stability and if the Castro's beliefs and ideas conflicts with that of the US (Lopez, 2000). The paper adopts a descriptive study in order to ascertain whether those factors truly reflect and probably led to Cuban survival of the US Helms-Burton Act. A qualitative method is considered because it can deal with conjunctural causation and equifinality aspects of the case study that are of fundamental theoretical pursuit in this paper (Braumoeller, 2003 and Bara, 2014).

In considering conjunctural causation and equifinality, a single case study is used as the time and cost-effective capital approach that allows the researcher to have an immerse understanding of the subject. Besides, single case studies can rigorously explain the reality of the phenomenon more than multiple cases (Beach, 2017; Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010) -as the author desires to focus on the dynamics in the survival of the Castro's regime against the Helms-Burton Act. As a single case study is employed, the researcher is also able to test existing theoretical concepts in this paper.

With reference to the fact that US economic sanctions against Cuba has occurred over time, some existing studies have identified process tracing method to be more useful for within-case studies that aim to achieve a more in-depth interpretation of the causal dynamics that formed the outcome of a specific historical case (Beach, 2017; Davis, Lance, Stanley & Engerman, 2003). In this vein, this thesis considers process tracing as the primary method to use in analysing this case study. Although process tracing is chosen as the focal method, the analysis of US-Cuba case is further extended by adopting comparison case study method, in which the findings could be compared with other countries where necessary but predominantly the North Korea of case. The additional utilisation of comparative method to this study is to avoid the issue of case selection

bias and make a stronger causal deduction about how the three factors described in Chapter 3 can best explain not only the causal process of US-Cuba but also in relation to other similar cases in international affairs (Bengtsson & Ruonavaara, 2017). International relations scholarly literature shows that comparative process tracing method actively enables researchers to employ both quantitative and qualitative evidence to test the research hypotheses stated in the previous chapter (Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010).

For this study, the US economic sanctions on Cuba is selected as the leading case of interest in the analysis. This choice is based on the fact, it is one of the most prolonged US economic sanctions in the world, yet there is no sign of triumph. The case is focused on the period from 1996 to 2008. The time frame represents the reign of Fidel Castro from when the Act was signed until he handed over power officially to his brother Raul Castro in 2008 (López Segre, 2011). However, previous years would be taken into account to help in better explaining the phenomenon. As mentioned earlier, US-North Korea is considered one of the reference points of comparison for the research findings. North Korea is chosen because it has also been under economic sanctions of the US since 1950 but is yet to acquiesce US demands of denuclearisation and still maintains its socialist/communist state system as Cuba.

Other relevant states like Canada, China, Russia, Venezuela and the EU countries have outstandingly contributed as third-party assistance states to Cuba regarding the trade and foreign aid assistance; therefore, these countries are captured as part of the sample population for this research. The US also stands as a sample population as its liberal principles are compared with that of Cuba's Fidel Castro. In testing the research hypothesis, variables such as quantum of import and export, political stability, leadership beliefs and ideas are used. This thesis is mostly focused on the descriptive study, and for that reason, charts are also presented using quantitative data to support the theoretical concepts employed in analysing the research.

#### *4.1. Data collection*

This research is mainly a desktop study in which the analysis is based on a review of literature, reports, and theoretical concepts. The study draws its information and data materials from internationally recognised websites, published books, articles, and journals. Although the international relations literature on economic sanctions could assist in exploring the effectiveness of the US economic sanctions on the Cuban government, various online data sources such as the

World Bank Group database 2019, The Global Economy database 2019, Indexmundi 2019 and the Freedom House 2019 in turn provide quantitative data. The quantitative data help estimate the ineffectiveness of US unilateral economic sanctions against Cuban government. The quantitative data used in this paper are dataset from the period 1970 to 2008. NB: The data for imports and exports does not exempt any country; it includes the United States due the inability to exempt US from the already compiled data by the World Bank. It is beyond the scope of this paper to answer whether US traded or provided aid to Cuba or not. Table 1 outlines the details of the variables used in this paper.

Table 1: Research variables, measurement indicator and sources

<b>Independent Variables</b>	<b>Measurement Variables</b>	<b>Measurement indicator</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Type of research method</b>
Assistance of third-party state	Volume of import and export with third-party states	Total export and import of goods and services  Import (% of GDP)  Export (% of GDP)	The World Bank database	Qualitative and Quantitative
Domestic politics during Fidel Castro's regime	Level of political stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Political stability index</li> <li>. Education, health, military,</li> <li>. Access to telecommunication, internet and roads</li> <li>. Freedom of the press</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The Global Economy</li> <li>-Indexmundi</li> <li>-The World Bank database</li> <li>- Freedom house</li> </ul>	Qualitative and Quantitative
Leadership culture	Belief and ideas	Conflicting beliefs and ideas	Literature, websites and archives	Qualitative

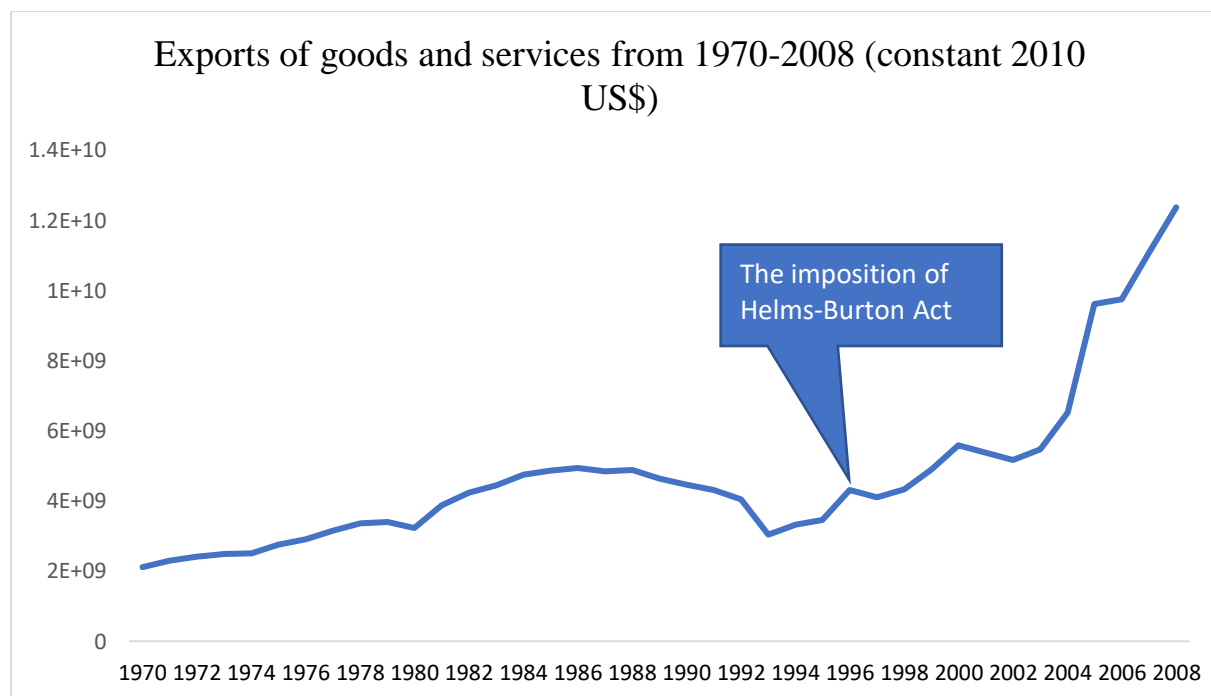
## Chapter 5: Findings and analysis

This chapter provides the findings and analyses of the study. It begins with the data and analysis on the assistance of third-party states. Then addresses the nature of domestic politics during the reign of Fidel Castro. Finally, it expounds the leadership culture of Fidel Castro and how his beliefs and ideas affected the outcome of Helms-Burton Act.

### 5.1. The assistance of third-party state

The assistance of third-party state is argued to be one of the essential factors that result in the survival of target states. Even after the imposition of Helms-Burton Act which aimed to prevent third-parties from trading or to invest in Cuba, some countries continued to trade with the island a phenomenon which Early (2015) refers to as “Sanction Busting” as discussed in the conceptual framework. The volume of imports and exports is used to determine the rate of sanction busting on Cuba’s behalf. The countries with the largest share in trade with Cuba were some EU countries, the Russian Federation, Venezuela, Canada, and China. Chart 1 shows the volume of Cuba’s export to the rest of the world before and after the imposition of the Helms-Burton Act.

Chart 1: Total export of Cuba’s goods and services from 1970 to 2008

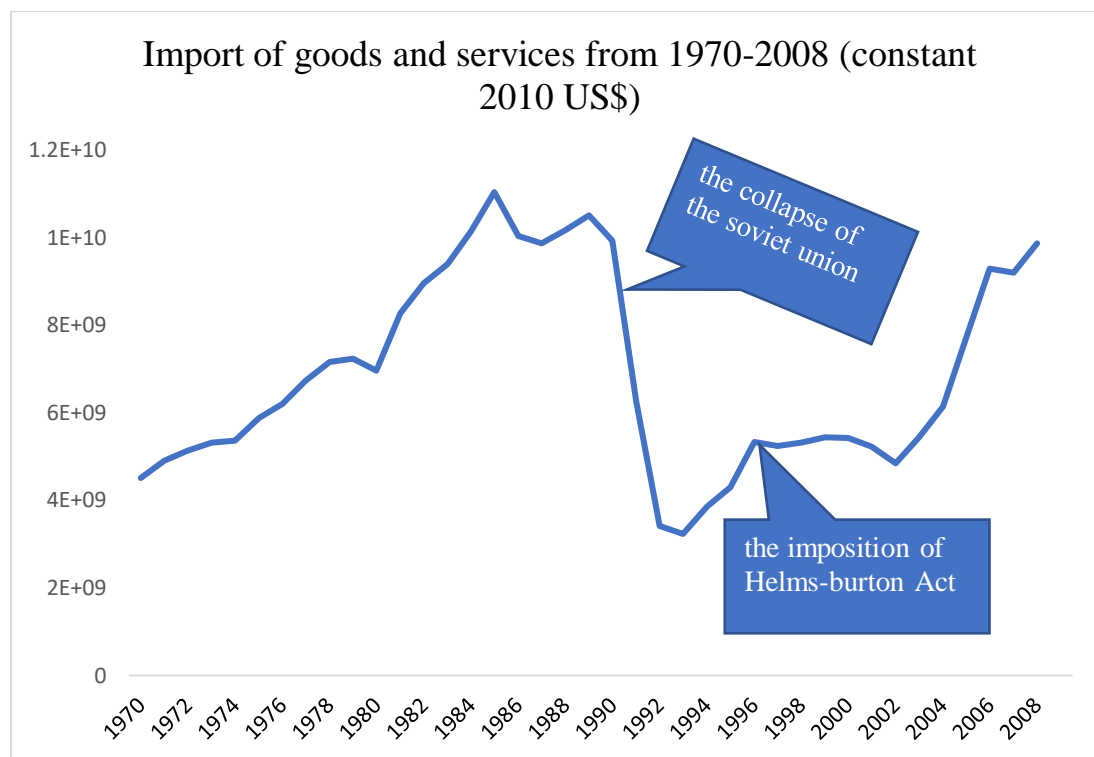


Source: (“Exports of goods”, 2019)

Chart 1: The total exports of goods and services, represents the value of all Cuban goods and other services exported to the rest of the world (“Export of goods”, 2019). This chart shows that before 1996, exports from Cuba to other countries were minimal compared to after 1996. Export fluctuated from 1970 until 1980, where it increased, then fell reaching a nadir in 1993. Export increased slowly from 1995, picking momentum in 1996 before dipping slightly in 1997, then regained its upward trajectory from 1998 until 2001. It varied between 2001 and 2003 and later increased significantly from 2004 until 2008. By demarcating the period before the imposition of the Helms-Burton Act and after, Chart 1 shows that the period from 1996 to 2008 saw a significant increase in Cuban export than the period before the imposition of the Act i.e. 1970 to 1995. The Russian Federation was the largest export partner from the 1990s to 2002 -importing a large amount of Cuban sugar. The EU countries took over that position from 2003 to 2005. The EU was replaced by Venezuela, which imported Cuban technical and health services (Azicri, 2014). In general, the main export products of Cuba were raw sugar, rolled tobacco, hard liquor, nickel, foodstuff, metals, animal products and wood products (World Integrated Trade Solutions, 2019). Cuba’s main export partners were the Russian Federation, Canada, Spain, Netherlands, Venezuela, and China.

As mentioned earlier and indicated in chart 1, the imposition of the Helms-Burton act did not deter other countries from receiving Cuba’s exports. The increase in the export of Cuban goods from 1996 to 2008 signifies not only the ineffectiveness of the Act but a counterfactual effect as well. The counterfactual effect is due to the economic reforms initiated by Fidel Castro to relieve Cuba from the economic hardship. The reforms took place from 1994, which involved a limited opening of the Cuban economy to the rest of the world to establish new trading partners (Yaffe, 2009). The reforms improved the Cuban economy, and because other countries were against the Helms-Burton Act, they did not hesitate to indulge in sanction busting in Cuba. Chart 2 illustrates the level of Cuba’s imports from the rest of the world before and after the imposition of the Helms-Burton Act.

Chart 2: Total import of goods and services from 1970 to 2008



Source: ("Imports of goods", 2019)

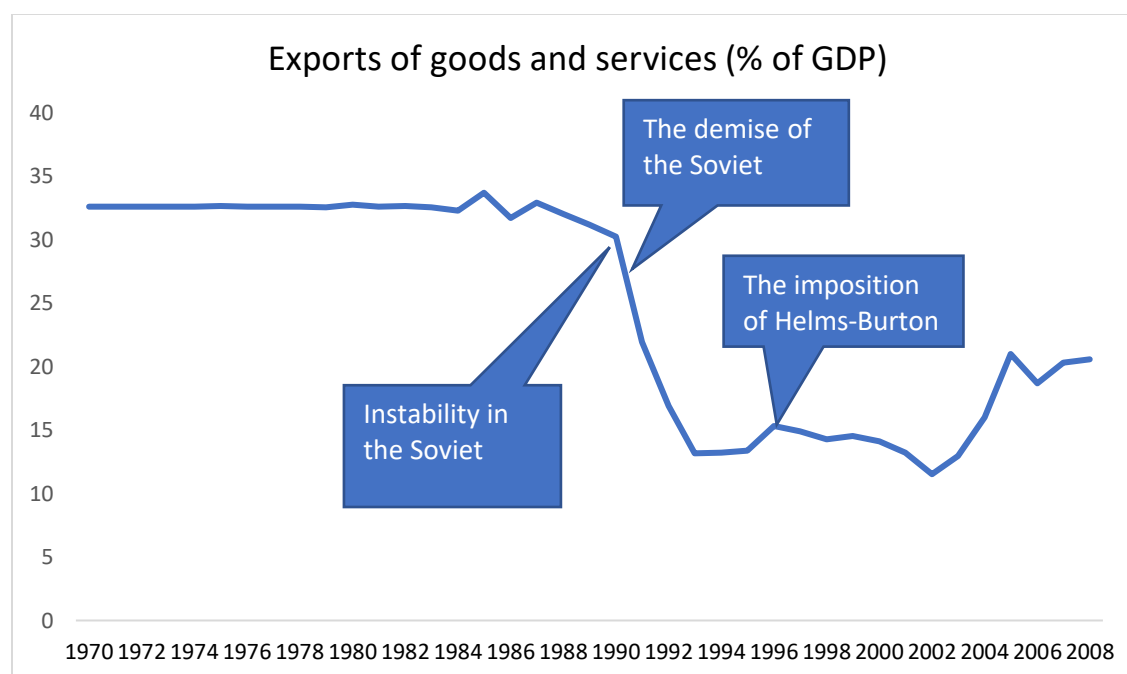
Chart 2: the total imports of goods and services, represents the value of all goods and other market services produced by the rest of the world and received in Cuba ("Imports of goods", 2019). Unlike Chart 1, Chart 2 shows that import of goods and services were significantly higher before the imposition of the Helms-Burton Act in 1996. On the other hand, the period after the imposition of the Act was low- although increased. From 1970, imports to Cuba grew steadily until 1990 when it fell drastically. Import volumes appreciated again from 1994 until 1996 when it dipped slightly in 1997, rose again until 2002, and fell slightly. From 2003 to 2008, aside from minor fluctuation, imports rose considerably. There is a stark difference between the volume of import before the Act and after the Act.

Nonetheless, the fall of the volume of imports started in 1990, which means it was not solely the cause of the Helms-Burton Act but the instability of the Soviet Union. The fall of the Soviet Union caused Cuba to lose a substantial amount of Soviet oil, which comprised 70%-80% of Cuba's import (Gordon, 2016). Once Cuba substituted Soviet oil with Venezuelan oil, import began to skyrocket; explaining the increase in imports from 2003 to 2008. Cuba's main import products after Helms-Burton were machines and equipment, chemical products, metals, foodstuffs,

plastic and rubber, animal products and mineral products (World Integrated Trade Solution, 2019) with Spain, Venezuela, China, Canada, Italy and Mexico as the main partners.

Furthermore, to envision the total output of the Act on international trade in Cuba, the percentage share of international trade (import and export) in GDP before and after the Act needs to be noted. This is because there is no data available on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) for Cuba -which would have helped in visualising the volume of inflow of investment and revenue to Cuba after the imposition of the Helms-Burton Act. Chart 3 and Chart 4 shows the share of export and import in GDP from 1970 to 2008, respectively.

Chart 3: Percentage share of exports of goods and services in GDP from 1970 to 2008

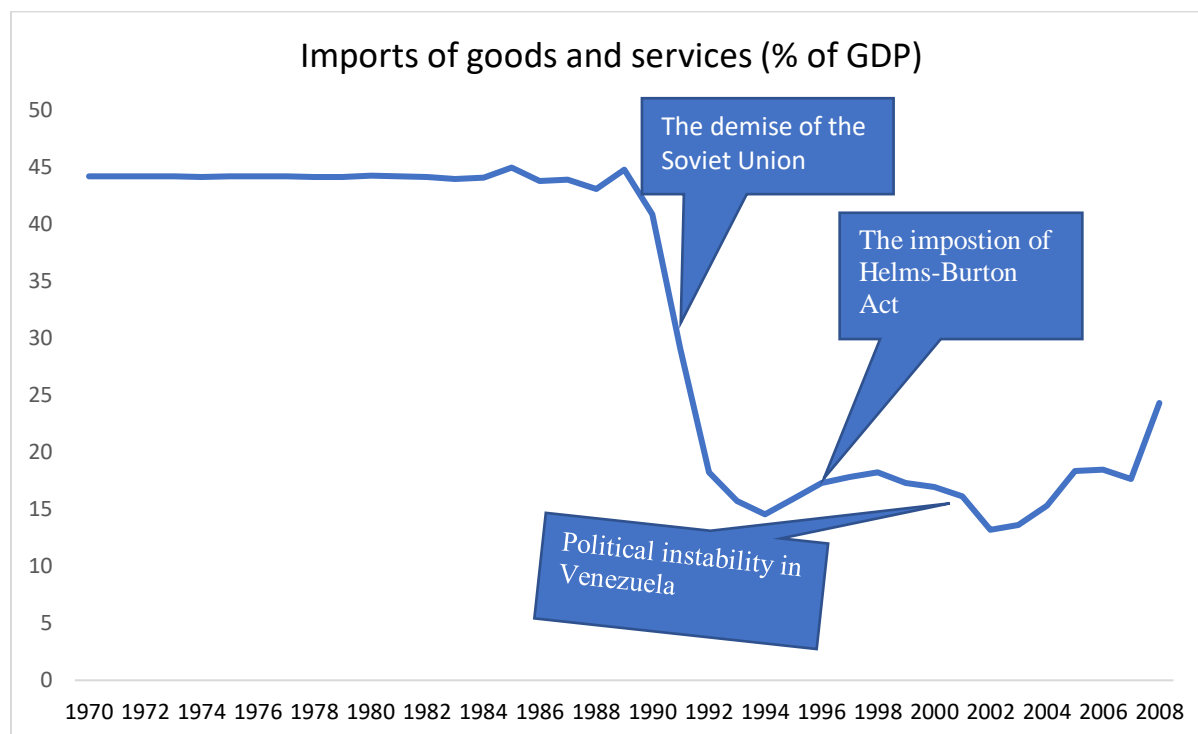


Source: ("Exports of goods", 2019)

Chart 3 illustrates that the percentage share of export in Cuba's GDP between 1970 and 2008. It is evident from chart 3 that percentage share of exports in GDP was stable in Cuba between 30-35% from 1970 to 1983 with a few fluctuations between 1984 and 1990. It took a declining trend thereafter with the lowest point of about 12% in 1993. This trend did not see much improvement until 2002 when it took on a consistent upward trajectory. However, between 1993 and 2002, the trend was unstable with several sudden year-on-year fluctuations. A significant outlier within the period from 1993 to 2002 is the sudden appreciation of exports in the year the

Helms-Burton Act was introduced. The chart demonstrates that the export of goods and services contributed immensely to Cuba's GDP before than after the imposition of the Helms-Burton Act. However, the fact that the change (the drastic decrease) started in 1990, prior to the imposition of the Helms-Burton Act suggests that the instability of the Soviet Union in 1990 was that the cause of the change.

Chart 4: Percentage share of import in GDP from 1970 to 2008



Source: ("Imports of goods", 2019)

Similarly, chart four shows that the percentage share of import in Cuba's GDP between 1970 and 1990 hovered between 40-45%. In 1990, it fell drastically until 1994 and rose from 1995 to 1998. The percentage share fell from 1999 until 2002. It fluctuated from 2003 to 2007 and increased significantly in 2008. As chart 4 illustrates, the percentage share of imports of goods and services to GDP was enormous before the Act was imposed compared to the period after the Act.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union caused the fall in income from Soviet oil exports to Cuba and Cuban sugar to the Soviet Union, who paid above world prices (Gordon, 2012). Before the fall of the Soviet Union, the union engaged in a high level of aid-based sanction busting by providing Cuba with a large number of subsidies, which helped Cuba to sustain its economy. In



addition, Fidel Castro reformed the Cuban economy to adjust to the crisis caused by the fall of the Soviet Union to make Cuba self-sufficient. This reform included sustainable agriculture, decrease in the use of automobiles, improvement in the local industry and the health sector. Cubans were forced to live within their means (Worsham and Esposito, 2018). Again, trade with the EU mostly involved imports, which means that Cuba experienced a trade deficit with the EU (Gordon, 2012). Hence, though import and export were still taking place after the imposition of the Helms-Burton Act, the inflow of foreign revenue was minimum.

A review of Cuba's relationship with its major trading partners will give more insight into the controversial dynamics in Cuba's international trade and investment and the effect of the Helms-Burton Act on sanction-busting activities of those partners. The key players were Russia in the 1990s, then Canada and EU (Spain, Netherlands, Italy and France) took over in the early 2000s, while Venezuela, and China led in the mid to late 2000s (Bain, 2000).

#### i. Relationship with Russia

Figure 4: Fidel Castro meets Putin at Jose Martí airport in Havana in 2000

Source: (Hoyle, 2014)



Russia's relationship with Cuba after the fall of the Soviet Union failed to stand the test of time. Russia's assistance to and trade with Cuba deteriorated massively over time as Russia was experiencing its share of economic downturn after

the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Bain, 2010). Boris Yeltsin who ruled Russia from 1991 to 1999 signed a bilateral agreement with Cuba to revive their relationship. However, Cuba lost its importance to Russia at that time. Thus, both Russia and Cuba sought economic opportunities elsewhere to survive the "Special Period" (1990- 2006) (López Segrera, 2011). According to Early (2010) in an article "Spoiler States and Sanction Regimes: Explaining Sanction

Busting on Cuba's behalf' The relationship between Russia and Cuba was profit driven from the second half of the US sanction episode -which is after the fall of the Soviet Union.

The communist ideological grounds which provided the impetus for the Soviet Union's invaluable assistance to Cuba, from the 1960s through to the end of the 1980s, was no more relevant (Bain, 2010). Vladimir Putin, the successor of Boris Yeltsin, granted a 50 million dollars credit and financial package to Cuba during his visit to Havana in 2000 but was explicit in his assertion that Russia has no ideological agenda to its new relationship with Cuba but seek a relationship that will benefit Russian businesses, Bain (2018) reports. Both countries agreed to diversify their trading commodities beyond oil and sugar. Putin signed an exchange agreement for commodities such as Cuban sugar, rum, medicines, and medical equipment in return for Russian oil, machinery, and chemicals for the period between 2001-2005 (Loss and Prieto, 2012). Though the relationship between Russia and Cuba was not entirely over, trade between both countries fell massively reaching a nadir in 2005 (Early, 2010). As the economic storm was fading, trade increased from 2005 and peaked in 2007 at 285 million dollars (Early, 2010). Albeit, the figures never reached the levels before the fall of the Soviet Union. Russia lost political clout in Cuba, and their influence in Cuba was taken over by Canada and some European Union countries (Spain, Netherlands, Italy, and France).

## ii. Relationship with Canada

Canada's assistance to Cuba was commercially driven. Canada maintained a cordial trade relationship with Cuba until the year 2000. Canada's interest in Cuba was due to the economic benefits generated from the absence of US competition (Spadoni and Sagebien, 2013). Though Canada is one of the main allies of the United States, it had a diverging foreign policy concerning Cuba. Canada's approach towards Cuba was through engagement established by the policy of "Constructive Engagement" initiated by Jean Chrétien in 1994 (Warren, 2003). Chrétien believed that engagement rather than isolation would eventually help the island transition to democracy and improve human rights (Klepak, 2009). Hence, Canada condemned US sanctions against Cuba and violated the 1996 Helms-Burton Act openly until the end of 1999 (Fairley, 2010). Chrétien saw the extraterritoriality of US economic sanctions as meddling in Canada's affairs – proclaiming that "If you want to have an isolationist policy, that's your business. However, don't tell us what to do. That's our business" (Gordon, 2012, p. 71).

Canada was involved in sanction busting on Cuba's behalf through trade, investments and joint projects. Successful Canadian companies went into joint ventures with Cuba in the tourism and mining industry as characterised by the huge success of the Canadian mining company Sherritt International (Beech, 2015). Through a joint venture between Canada and Cuba, Intelcan Technosystem of Ottawa constructed five airports in Havana (Ritter, 2010). According to Beech (2015), Canada and Cuba celebrated the inauguration of the Havana airport in 1998 which was partly financed by Canada's Export Development Corporation (33%) and Intelcan (15%) - an investment worth CDN\$ 52 million. By 1999, Canada and Cuba had about 72 joint ventures and 85 companies operating in Cuba (Ritter, 2016). Canada aimed at modernising the island to promote Canadian export and to initiate projects.

By 2000, tension grew between Canada and Cuba as the Helms-Burton Act caused trading with Cuba to be non-beneficial (Early, 2000). The Act prevented Canada from exporting goods that contained products from Cuba to the United States. Canada exported finished goods containing a large number of Cuban sugar and nickel to the United States. Canada had to converge towards the United States concerning foreign policy on Cuba because of the growing integration via various trade agreements such as NAFTA and FTAA. From 2000 to 2008, the presence of Canadian firms reduced from 75 to just 26, according to Spadoni and Sagebien (2013). Deonandan (2005) argues that the change in foreign policy towards Cuba could be related to the change in leadership who had different ambitions. John Manley was appointed foreign minister on the eve of the 2000 elections. He was widely known to be right-leaning business oriented, and he was hailed for building the relationship between Canada and the United States. He side-lined Cuba during his tenure of office which was exacerbated during the administration of Stephen Harper who objected to the participation of Cuba in the Organisation of the Americas States forum in Panama (Beech, 2015).

Consequently, the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Integration prohibited the foreign ownership of condominiums units and halted other projects that Canada planned to initiate investments. In all, Canada's sanction busting on Cuba's behalf was inconsistent due to its commercial motives. While Canada's place in Cuba diminished, other countries in the EU took over.

iv. Relationship with the EU (Spain, Netherlands, Italy and France)

The EU is assessed collectively because they act under the EU aegis in response to the US extraterritorial measures. In addition, because of the common market created by the EU's trade, EU countries without large market could import goods from Cuba and ship to other EU countries. For instance, the Netherlands port of Rotterdam served as an entry and exit point for EU international trade due to the small size of the Netherlands market (Early, 2010). This justifies why the EU is examined collectively. Trade between Cuba and the EU was significant through the 1990s. The largest partners in the EU were Spain, Netherlands, Italy, and France (Early, 2010). Between 1998 and 1999, Spain's export to Cuba amounted to \$620 million per year from the previous amount of \$300 million a year in 1990-1991 (Mesa-Lago, 2003). In 2001 and 2002, the European Union was the largest exporter of foodstuffs to Cuba amounting to €1.43 billion - with 44% from Spain, followed by France and Italy (Roy, 2003). According to Hare (2008) and Roy (2003), imports from Cuba consisted of only €581 million. The Netherlands held the largest share of Cuba imports, importing a large amount of nickel for refining. This virtual four-one ratio of export to import left Cuba with a decade of a bilateral deficit. Beside cigar and rum, Cuba had few products of interest to the EU, and the Cubans were not wealthy enough to purchase expensive EU products (Hare, 2008).

The EU share of Cuba's foreign trade began to decline from 2003 as China and Venezuela captured a significant market share in Cuba's economy through the subsidised assistance to Cuba (Early, 2010). Additionally, even though the US hardly applied the Helms-Burton Act on EU countries trading with Cuba, the law made it difficult for trade and assistance to flourish. Until 2007, the ING Bank a Dutch financial giant helped Cuban individuals and groups to move money from the US to Cuba which upon US investigation fined ING bank of an amount of \$612 million and pressured the bank to cease operations in Cuba (Gordon, 2012). The US also fined Spanish and Italian banks for engaging in dollar transaction with Cuba. By 2007, most EU and Canadian banks had ceased doing business with Cuba (Gordon, 2012). Beside the strain in the trade relationship, tensions developed between the EU and Cuba when Cuba attacked dissidents and imposed a death sentence on three hijackers whom the regime claims to be agents of the US (Roy, 2003 and Hare, 2008).

Upon engagement with Cuba, the EU acted on a "Common Position" from 1996. The main aim was to engage Cuba in order to encourage a process of pluralist democratic transition, respect

for human rights and fundamental freedoms (Roy, 2000). The EU believed that it was best if the Castro regime voluntarily initiates a peaceful transition to democracy; hence, it did not seek to use coercive measures that would negatively affect the popular masses. The Common Position included applying humanitarian and economic aid and directing funds through NGO's (Irving, 2004). Castro rejected the EU's aid with the view that EU trade and assistance to Cuba is conditional and less beneficial (Roy, 2003). The EU demanded the release of political prisoners and the observation of human rights, which Castro saw as interference in Cuban internal political affairs (Roy 2000). Castro preferred and focused on its relationship with and assistance from Venezuela.

#### v. Relationship with Venezuela

Figure 5: Hugo Chavez by the sick bed of Fidel Castro in 2006, depicting friendship beyond economic and political ties

Source: ("The Life of Venezuela's Chavez", 2015)



When Chavez was elected into power in 1998, on a socialist platform and anti-American foreign policy, he placed his relationship with Cuba at the forefront of his national policy (Martínez-Fernández, 2014).

The alliance between Havana and Caracas came at the right time in Cuba's economic recovery process and increased hostility from Washington (Azicri, 2009). Venezuela's Hugo Chavez granted about 3.5 billion in subsidies to Cuba annually from 1999 (Mujal-León, 2011). Havana and Caracas signed an agreement in 2004. According to the agreement Venezuela was to supply Cuba with 90,000 barrels of oil per day, which eventually increased to 200,000 barrels in exchange for 30,000 doctors, medical personnel and specialists in areas such as music and art (Azicri, 2014 and López Segre, 2011). By 2005, Venezuela was offering about 1.7 billion worth of oil

concessions to Cuba (Ginter, 2013). Venezuela was not a commercially stable country. It depended solely on petroleum exports for economic survival (Piccone & Trinkunas, 2014). However, the substantial assistance it gave to Cuba turned the island's struggle for economic recovery a reality.

Chavez sanction busting lack economic rationale but also moved beyond a political investment. Though Venezuela's aim of supporting Cuba was based on the Bolivarian ideology (a mix of Pan-American, socialist and national-patriotism against imperialism, injustice, inequality and corruption), the two leaders developed a strong friendship and solidarity (Piccone & Trinkunas, 2014). Their friendship strengthened over the years. The two charismatic leaders initiated several joint development projects such as the "Petrocaribe" and "ALBA" to spread prosperity and equality throughout Latin America, which was primarily funded by Venezuela (Yaffe, 200; Piccone & Trinkunas, 2014).

The Venezuela-Cuba economic relationship faced a significant challenge in 2002 during a coup d'état that deposed Chavez for a short period and a general strike by workers of the state-owned oil company, PDVSA. (Ginter, 2013). Consequently, Venezuela's production of oil and funding to the joint socialist projects decreased (Early, 2010). However, this challenged was survived in due course. Chavez won several subsequent elections and continued with his social policies and solidarity to Fidel Castro while reinstating oil shipment to Cuba (Azicri, 2009). Looking at the post-cold war assistance to Cuba, Venezuela was the only country that indulged in sanction busting without any profit-driven motive.

#### vi. Relationship with China

China's relationship with Cuba during the post-cold war era was different from the previous years. By the late 1990s, China's economy was big, strong and flourishing and sought foreign markets for its products. Its growing interest in Cuba and the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean can be envisaged as a broader strategy to politically and commercially capture the region to meet its growing demands for natural resources and an open market for its goods (Early, 2010). China and Cuba's bilateral trade became relevant from 1997; by 2000, China had become the second largest trading partner of Cuba (Hearn, 2009). China imported raw sugar and nickel and exported machinery, dry beans, transportation equipment and light industrial products to Cuba (Xianglin et al., 2015). According to Treto (2014,), by 2006, about 17% of China's total trade was with Cuba, and in 2007, bilateral trade figures amounted to a significant sum of \$2.29 billion and

\$2.24 billion in 2008. China's trade with Cuba was through subsidised assistance. For instance, Bain (2017) states that the Chinese government gave a favourable interest rate of three per cent on loans to Cuba in order to afford the purchase of Chinese goods.

The 2008 global financial crisis did not exclude China and Cuba. Cuba only worsened while China managed the effect of the crisis since it was the second largest economy in the world. China did not leave Cuba in distress. After the beginning of the crisis in 2008, President Hu Jintao of China travelled to Cuba to reinforce the bilateral ties between both countries (Bain, 2017). They signed many accords that benefited Cuba, which included the postponement of ten years repayments of trade debts that Cuba had accumulated from 1995. In addition, China extended for five years a \$7.2 million-line credit that was granted in 1998 (Xianglin et al., 2015). The President of China donated \$80 million towards Cuba's modernisation programme and the repair and refurbishing of health facilities. China sold its products to the Cuban population at a cost below world prices (Treto, 2014). The kind of China's assistance to Cuba is hard to distinguish because it is challenging to separate China's political interest from commercial ones. Politically, China was sympathetic to Cuba's plights, especially when Fidel Castro made a move to amend the lost relationship during the Soviet era (Bain, 2017). Though China provided Cuba with assistance and preferential treatment on some trade deals, commercial interests mainly influenced its trade relationship with Cuba. For China, winning Cuba means winning the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean due to Fidel Castro's influence in the region.

vii. Comparison of Cuban case to North Korean case

The United States imposed sanctions on North Korea in the 1950s and tightened them in the 1980s after North Korea bombings against South Korea (Ramani, 2018). Currently, the main aim of various sanctions against North Korea concerns its nuclear programme, which was first tested in 2006. Under the administration of President Clinton, the US relaxed its sanctions against the country and signed the "Agreed Framework" with North Korea in 1994. Despite the agreement to desist from its nuclear programme, North Korea continued its Nuclear programme and withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2003, followed by its nuclear testing in 2006 (Elberstadt, 2011). Consequently, many countries including China, United States, South Korea, Japan, and Australia and organisations such as the United Nations Security Council and European

Union multilaterally imposed further sanctions on North Korea (“UN slaps trade, travel sanctions”, 2006). Initially, the sanctions were concentrated on trade embargo on weapon-related materials and goods but extended to luxury goods to target the ruling elites. According to Lee (2018), the US and UN sanctions imposed on North Korea comprised banking transactions, financial assets and general travel and trade. Regardless of these sanctions, North Korea has not conformed to the intent of the sanctions (Lee, 2018).

Despite the sanctions, foreign countries have conducted merchandise trade with North Korea. Similar to Cuba, North Korea as a communist state received a substantial amount of trade and aid assistance from the Soviet Union (Noland & Haggard, 2017). External economic relations of North Korea are bewilderingly obscure as the regime considers even general statistics as a national secret (Eberstadt, 2011). Data on trade and investment for North Korea is not readily available, hence, the author uses data compiled by Noland & Haggard (2017) in their book “Hard Target: Sanctions, Inducement, and the Case of North Korea”. Based on Noland & Haggard’s (2017) so-called “mirror statistics”; merchandise trade in North Korea reduced in the early to mid-1990s following a devastating famine that hit the country. However, North Korea’s economic relations expanded from the early 2000s through to the later 2000s though it did not match the Soviet and pre-famine era (Noland & Haggard, 2017). North Korea’s most influential trade partner was China. Due to the Chinese veto power on the United Nations Security Council, sanctions on North Korea were initially narrowly imposed around Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD) related material and major weapons systems. This means that the UN sanctions were not directly targeted to commercial trade, unlike the US-Cuban case.

China’s role in North Korea’s ability to resist US and UN sanctions is unequivocal. Noland and Haggard’s (2017) finds no traces of reduction in Chinese exports to its ally (North Korea), despite the stricter multilateral sanctions in 2006. They found that the 2006 sanctions might have increased bilateral trade between the allies. There was a constant increase in Chinese luxury goods from 2000 through to 2008 (Noland and Haggard, 2017). Analogous to the case of Cuba, China’s sanction-busting activities on North Korea’s behalf offset the losses that transpired from the decline in trade with other countries. Analytically, the absence of susceptibility of the North Korean regime over time emphasises the essentiality of Chinese economic relations with North Korea. China’s trade with North Korea was primarily based on commercial motives. This supports the sanction-busting assumption that even though there is less security for target state in trading



with trade-based sanction busters, their trade activities can escalate when it is advantageous. Another important trade partner of North Korea was its Southern neighbour. Unexpectedly, North Korea, trade with South Korea was characterised by considerable aid assistance during the reign of Kim Dae-Jung between 1998 and 2003 and Roh Moo-hyun between 2003 and 2008 (Noland and Haggard, 2017). South Korea sort to use an engagement strategy to alter the behaviour of its Northern neighbour.

viii. Observational analysis

Based on the observations on Cuba and North Korea's trade and relations with third-party states, it is safe to say that third-party states assistance is an essential factor in the survival of an authoritarian regime. This argument is based on the fact that both communist countries had to find means to attract new trading partners when trading with other partners become problematic. Complete isolation can be seen as an unbearable situation for both regimes. Cuba's involvement in joint ventures and North Korea's acceptance of aid from South Korea unmasked the weakness of their socialist and anti-capitalist agenda. However, these leaders were not beguiled by the engagement of other countries. Exemplification of this is Castro's sudden decision to drive away Canadian investors and reject EU aid, which was presented under conditional bases concerning respect for human rights. North Korea's escalation of nuclear testing when multilateral sanctions were imposed alludes to this thought. Castro's change in engagement with Canada and the EU offers an implication that -the US policy towards Cuba and other foreign policies that assumes that democratic capitalism can forcibly be exported from the west to Havana is flawed.

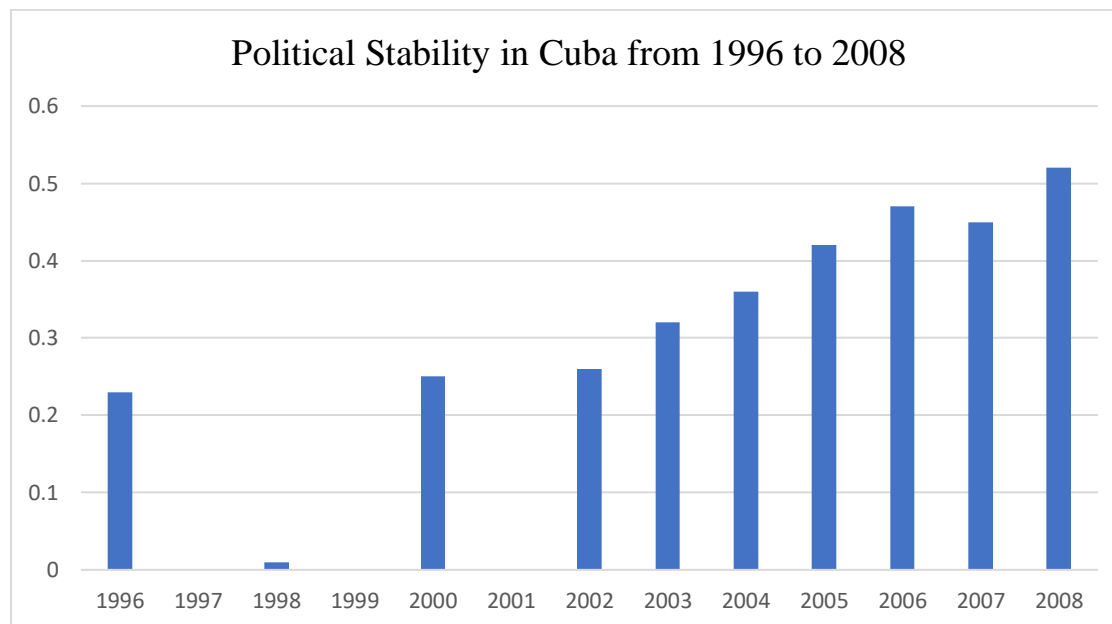
Hypothetically, significant third-party state assistance should render economic sanction ineffective or a target state to survive sanctions. Notwithstanding, the author finds that autocratic target states do not necessarily need multiple trade partners neither do they need excessive assistance to survive. The third-party state assistance Cuba enjoyed after the imposition of the Helms-Burton Act was not as substantial as compared to the period before the fall of the Soviet Union as seen in Chart 3 and 4. As presented earlier, authoritarian states do have few people to please in order to retain power, unlike democratic states; to this effect, once the ruling elites are content, any extra assistance becomes a bonus for the populace. In autocratic regimes, premium is not placed on economic figures, as such the use of GDP as a measurement of economic pressure on such regimes as a result of sanctions can be irrelevant. The conclusion that can be drawn here

is that third-party state assistance to Cuba was necessary but not a sufficient factor for the survival of Castro's regime or the ineffectiveness of the Helms-Burton Act.

### 5.2. *The domestic politics during Fidel Castro's regime*

Economic sanctions senders assume that the imposition of sanctions would induce economic pressure on a target country. Such pressure would lead to political disturbances such as protests and demonstrations by the popular masses resulting in the demise of a regime. Hypothetically, when a regime is politically stable economic sanctions would be ineffective. In that case, it is necessary to measure the political stability of Fidel Castro's regime and how he maintained such stability. Political Stability index also referred to as "Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism index" measures the perception of a country's population of the possibility that a government would be destabilised or overthrown by violence means ("Cuba Political stability", 2019). Chart 5 indicates the level of political stability in Cuba from 1996 to 2008. The index is scored between -2.5 and 2.5 where -2.5 is the weakest and 2.5 is the strongest.

Chart 5: Political Stability in Cuba from 1996 to 2008



Source: ("Cuba Political Stability" 2019)

From Chart 5 it can be noticed that political stability in Cuba was at its weakest in 1998 at 0.01, during the beginning of the open activities of the opposition leader Payá, and the maximum

was 0.52 in 2008. Data was unavailable for 1997, 1999, and 2000. Looking at the figures at first glance, one may say that the figures are low; therefore, Cuba's political stability level was weak. However, from 1996 to 2008 no country scored up to 2.0 on the continuum. Apart from 1998, Cuba has been part of the top 100 politically stable countries in the world with its lowest position being 87th out of 186 countries and best being 69th out of 195 countries. Surprisingly, in some years, Cuba fared better than some western democratic countries such as France, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In 2004, Cuba was more politically stable than all the countries mentioned above. From 1996 to 2008 excluding 1998, it was more politically stable than Spain according to the available data.

The political stability enjoyed by the regime is not surprising. The regime was autocratic; thus, Fidel Castro had few powerful elites to please and derived loyalty from in order to maintain power as abstractly described in the conceptual framework (Hoffman, 2015). According to Corrales (2004), the regime survival depended on three selective groups of ruling coalition: the regime's party members (780,000 people out of a population of 11.4 million in 1997), the military (50,000 troops in 1999) and an unknown size of security apparatus. Even though the Cuban Communist Party was a strong institution, Whitehead (2016) states that its power faded after the fall of the Soviet Union. The party was never at the forefront of Castro's revolution, despite his rhetorical proclamation of the party's role and its legal standing. However, Wairda and Kline (2013) opined that the party members maintained a good relationship and stayed loyal to Fidel Castro for their influence and personal benefits.

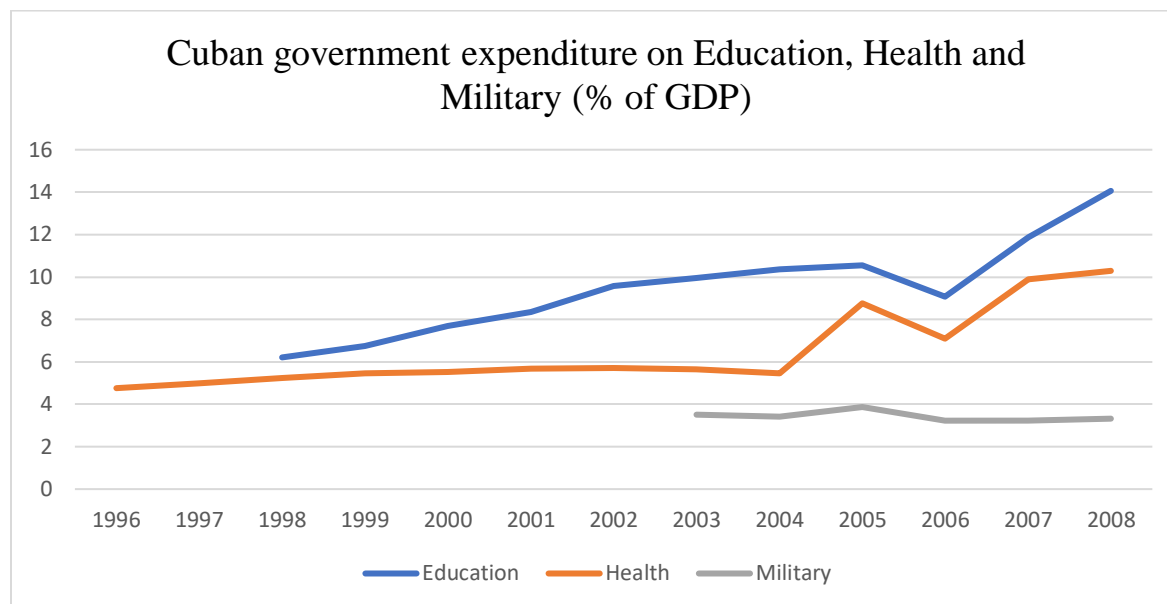
The military, on the other hand, was vital to Fidel Castro. The loyalty of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) was necessary for the survival of Fidel Castro's regime. This line of argument is based on the fact that the loyalty and unity of the military was a priority to the Cuban leadership (Mora, 2007). Since the formation of the FAR in the 1960s, Fidel Castro expanded its missions and boosted its capabilities through close collaboration with the former Soviet armed forces who provided training to the FAR. The fall of the Soviet Union caused the FAR to break ties with its patron and sponsor. In addition, the signing of the peace treaty in Angola in 1988, the fall of the Ethiopian dictatorship and defeat of the Nicaragua socialist party in the 1990s caused the FAR to lose its international standing and important missions (Del Aguila, 2003). Those mentioned above withered the relevance of the armed forces; hence, back home, the FAR took more responsibilities to stay relevant. According to Mora (2007), apart from performing its

responsibility of providing defence, the FAR became the go-to institution for the regime. Fidel Castro stated on several occasions that the FAR is necessary for national defence, socialism and the revolutionary agenda, explicitly indicating that the support of the armed forces is a prerequisite for the regime's survival (Del Aquila, 2003). Wairda and Kline (2013) point out that the activities of the military extended to flourishing sectors in Cuba's economy, including tourism, agriculture, telecommunication and mining. The FAR military-technocrats run a holding company called Grupo de Administración Empresarial, SA (GAESA). The officers that managed GAESA and other military elites lived well, controlled jobs and economic resources. Hence, the loyalty of the armed forces and military elites to the regime and maintaining the status quo inures to their own benefit.

According to Amnesty International, Cuba's Fidel Castro created a totalitarian one-party state that jailed many dissidents and suppressed freedom of expression; and the opposition had no place in Cuba (Fidel Castro's human rights legacy, 2016). For instance, according to Human Right Watch, in 2003, the regime accused 75 human rights activists and other critics of the government of being agents of the United States; consequently, the court imprisoned them after trial behind closed doors (Recknagel, 2016). Fidel Castro's security forces used tactics such as surveillance, beatings, arbitrary detention and public humiliation to instil fear of upheaval. These repressive mechanisms, -what Augirre (2002) calls a "system of social control" reduces the people's participation in protest, room for political alternatives and the space for political mobilisation and communication.

The "system of social control" can also be visualised through the public expenditure of the regime and the provision of particular public goods. Authoritarian leaders can provide certain goods and limit others as a strategy to control their population. The level of public expenditure on education, health and military and the access to telecommunication, internet and good roads portray the social control strategy of the regime. Telecommunications, the internet, presence of the media and goods roads are collectively referred to as "Coordination Goods", which are goods that foster civil openness leading to democracy.

Chart 6: Government expenditure on education, health and the military between 1996 and 2008.

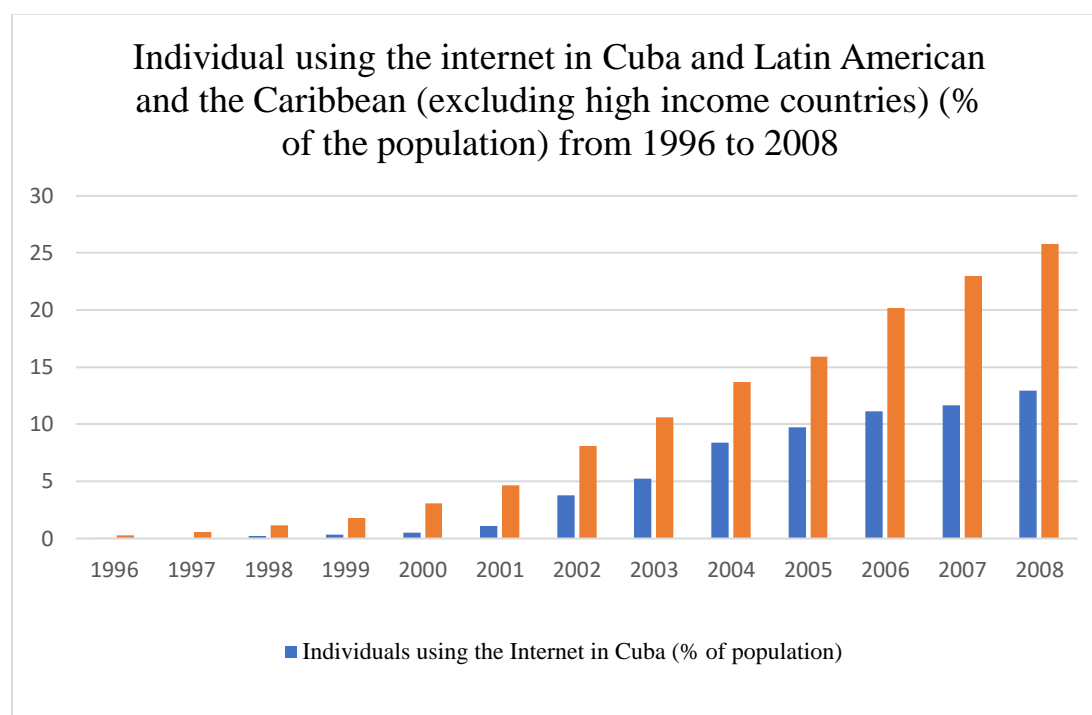


Source: Cuba-Public spending (2017), Cuba-Health (2017) & Cuba- Military (2017)

Chart 6 indicates that Cuba's government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP was the highest, followed by health and the last was military. Unfortunately, data is inaccessible for education for the years 1996 and 1997. However, education expenditure grew steadily from 1998 to 2005; it fell in 2006 and rose again in 2007 and 2008. Expenditure on health was slightly stable from 1996 to 2004 and rose in 2005. It fell in 2006 and regained its upward trend in 2007 and 2008. There is unavailable data for military spending from 1996 to 2002. However, military spending was stable from 2003 to 2005. It fell from 2006 and maintained the rate in 2007 and 2008. As an autocratic regime, the priority given to public goods such as education and health rather than the military is an important finding to take note. This finding, though, is not unexpected as Fidel Castro prioritised social policies during and after the Special Period" as part of his socialist model ignited during the 1959 Cuban revolution.

According to Prieto's report on the Americas (2011), Fidel Castro's priority during the economic crisis was to recover health services, expand access to higher education and focus on the poor through state-run integration programme. Though Castro's social reforms on education and health received worldwide admiration, the provision of coordination goods was dire. Chart seven shows the percentage of individuals using the internet in Cuba compared to middle- and low-income countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Chart 7: Individual using the internet in Cuba and Latin America and the Caribbean (high income countries excluded) (% of the population) from 1996 to 2008



Source ("Individual using the Internet", 2019)

As indicated in Chart 7, from 1996 to 2008, individuals using the internet in Cuba as well as the Latin American and Caribbean region have increased progressively. The percentage of people that have access to the internet in Cuba is far below the level of the average and low-income countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region. The comparison of Cuba with middle- and lower-income countries in Latin America and the Caribbean region is to clarify the fact that it is not because of lack of development in the region but a deliberate action of the regime.

According to the Freedom House data on freedom of the press, which is ranked from 0 (the freest) to 100 (the least free), Cuba ranked 96 from 2002 until 2007 and 94 in 2008. Cuba is reported the worst in freedom of the press in the Americas and last but one globally before North Korea. Data is unavailable for freedom of the press from 1996 to 2001. The Freedom House 2008 report on freedom of the press in Cuba notes that the limitation of access to media, telecommunication and the internet is enshrined in the country's constitution. The Cuban constitution prevents private ownership of media and permits freedom of expression only when it aligns to the ideals of the socialist society. The 1997 law of National Dignity stipulates a 3 to 10 years jail sentence to anyone that collaborates directly or indirectly with the "enemies' media"

(“Cuba”, 2012). According to the 2002 Freedom House report, the only five independent infant news agencies in Cuba were subject to continuous harassment (“Cuba”, 2013).

Augirre (2002) again argues that Fidel Castro’s “system of social control” was not successful only by the use of formal social control mechanism, but the combination of formal and informal social control. The formal control, as mentioned above, comprises the laws and programmes that are enforced by powerful institutions such as the military, police and security forces while the informal control is how the regime created “collective memories and facts” about the world (Aguirre, 2002, p. 69). Since the regime had total control of information, the Cuban understanding of the economic woes and political establishment of the island in the post-cold war era is how the regime portrays it. The regime frequently blames the US economic sanctions and ponders on the necessity to challenge the imperialist agenda of the US as reasons for its political and economic establishment (Wood, 2008).

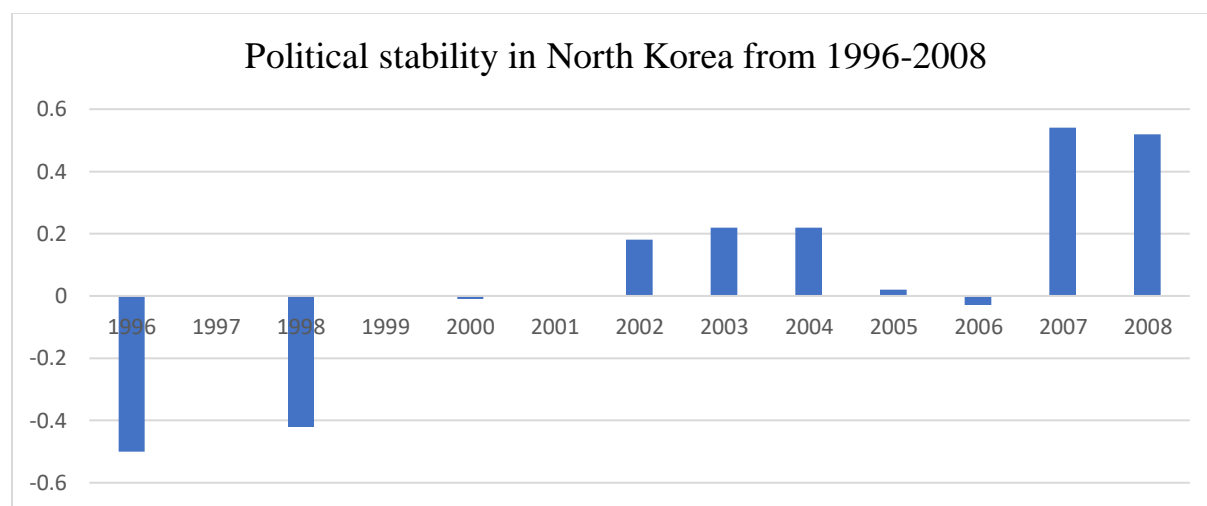
Lamrani (2016) also contends that the historical symbolic orientation of the Cuban people allowed the regime to enjoy such a level of political stability for over 50 years. The Cuban people saw Castro as an architect of national sovereignty and a symbol of resistance as he continually challenged the United States interest in the Latin American region. In other words, Fidel Castro was portrayed as a charismatic leader who established a profile on the global stage that transcended into domestic politics (Hoffmann, 2014). Cuba excelled internationally in many areas such as education, health, and sport through the social policies and provisions provided by the regime. Castro initiated several programmes such as ALBA in 2004 to bring prosperity to Latin America. Thus, the Castro regime used significant resources to legitimise his authoritarian rule. With Castro’s large-scale redistribution policies facilitated by international appeal after the ‘Special Period’ and Venezuela’s support (Vasquez, 2011); he was able to derive legitimacy and sympathy from his people. Hoffmann (2014) describes such a mechanism as the “Soviet social contract” - thus a tacit agreement to exchange social security for political compliance.

The need for the Cuban population to comply with the rules of the regime is enshrined in the Cuban constitution to be enforced by the military and security forces (“New Castro, Same Cuba”, 2009). Mijal-León (2011) explains that Fidel Castro and the majority of the Cuban population struck a pact during his consolidation of power in 1960. Fidel promised the society with social equality and the delivery of universal healthcare, education and housing. In exchange, the people were to expect and accept minimal political freedoms, and a constant struggle against

domestic and foreign enemies; including conflict with the United States. Before Castro assumed power in Cuba, there was widespread poverty and inequality in Cuba under his predecessor (Batista). These woes made the people seek for a leader who would have the interest of the poor. It is on this platform that Castro rallied and galvanised support from the people (Mijal-León, 2011). The theory of the “Social Contract”, defended by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, can explain the relationship between Fidel Castro and the people of Cuba. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his 1762 book “Social Contract” discusses the legitimacy of the authority of the state over its citizens. The social contract argument posits that individuals, one or the other, renounce part of their freedoms in exchange of their remaining rights and social order (Rousseau, 2018). Therefore, the thought of compromising other social rights may have deterred the Cuban people from demanding change.

Finally, a stable domestic political atmosphere is generally vital for the survival of an autocratic regime. Unlike, a democratic regime where citizens can individually express their discontent by voting to get rid of a particular regime, people under autocratic rule do not have that luxury. Citizens in autocratic regimes need a strong opposition backed by strong forces such as the military to denounce the autocratic leader. Hence, the loyalty of the military and security forces to their authoritarian leader signifies a lower/lesser possibility of domestic overthrow. Comparing the strategic control mechanisms of Cuba to North Korea validates the necessity of political stability for the survival of a regime. Chart 8 illustrates the level of political stability in North Korea from 1996-2008.

Chart 8: Political Stability in North Korea from 1996-2008



Source: (North Korea Political Stability, 2019)



Chart 8 indicates that political stability in North Korea was not as positive as it was in Cuba. Despite missing data for 1997, 1999 and 2001, one can still notice that there was instability in North Korea during the mid to late 1990s. According to Snyder (2000), the instability in the mid to late 1990s was due to disruption in the public distribution system. The government distributed food discriminately across regions depending on the citizens' political standing and their devotion to the regime. The disruption resulted from the famine that hit North Korea from 1994 until 1998 due to the loss of Soviet support, causing the reduction of food production and imports (Snyder, 2000). Even though the famine caused political unrest over food shortages, the regime managed to eliminate the threat of political dissidents. In 2002, 2003 and 2004 there was an improvement in the political stability of North Korea ranking at 91, 92, and 86 respectively out of 194 countries. However, in 2005 and 2006 the political stability in the country reduced drastically while in 2007 and 2008, the country became highly stable ranking at 69 and 70 out of 195 countries. The 2005 and 2006 instability may have been caused by the North Korean nuclear crisis, which attracted a series of sanctions from the international community.

Furthermore, similar to Cuba, Snyder (2000) states that the relative stability of the North Korea system of governance and political control in the social and economic sphere hindered the possibility of mass protest against the regime. The regime enjoyed political stability due to the lack of infrastructure and communication channels within the country. In addition, North Korea's isolation from the outside world impeded the possibility of organised resistance from the masses, therefore, leading to the survival of the regime.

North Korea and Cuba share similar characteristics in their strategic means of survival. Though Cuba enjoyed high political stability, North Korea as well maintained its autonomy. The international community and most foreign policy analysts expected that the demise of the Soviet Union and the unification of Germany would have led to the fall of other communist regimes especially Cuba and North who were highly economically dependent on the Soviet Union, but this did not happen. The two leaders' control of their domestic political sphere was vital to their survival. Therefore, the analysis of the domestic politics factor supports the hypothesis that political stability, through the loyalty of the ruling coalition, repression and state control of dissents, is a necessary factor for the survival of the Cuban regime and the ineffectiveness of Helms-Burton Act. Despite, the political stability in Cuba during Fidel Castro's regime, it cannot

explain why the regime was able to drive away western control. This leads us to the last factor - leadership culture.

### 5.3. Leadership culture

Conceptually, the leadership culture of a regime determines how the regime responds to sanctions. If the regime's norms and beliefs conflict with that of the sender, then the regime will retaliate to the sanctions. To analyse Fidel Castro's belief system, the author draws inference from his foreign policies, speeches, interviews and public declarations. In this paper, "Leadership Culture" is defined as a system of beliefs and norms, including ideological and personal beliefs that governs a leader's behaviour in the political system. The author finds that the commitment of Fidel Castro to his system of beliefs and norms, which conflicted with the US and other western democratic countries predominantly, resulted in his survival and the ineffectiveness of Helms-Burton Act.

Figure 6: Fidel Castro points to his mind, depicting the strength of his mind  
Source: (Gilsinan, 2016)



To begin with, Castro retaliated towards the EU's interference in Cuba's domestic affairs and support for the opposition. The EU parliament awarded Oswaldo Payá the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 2002 after President Carter endorsed

and praised Paya's Varela Project, which called for democratic reform in Cuba (Hare, 2008). Not surprisingly, Castro's administration toughened conditions applied to foreign investors -affecting the EU's proposal to cooperate in oil exploration (Gordon, 2012). In March 2003, despite the EU assistance to Cuba through the policy of the "Common Position", Castro unexpectedly refused all private licence and halted all joint venture projects. Coinciding with the US invasion of Iraq, Castro also arrested 75 of the dissidents on the island of which half were organisers of the Valera Project ("New Castro, Same Cuba", 2009). According to Hare (2008), by June 2003, the EU decided to limit its social, political and economic relationship with the Castro regime and related with the

representatives of the opposition groups. Castro retaliated aggressively by rejecting all EU aid and seized Spanish newly renovated cultural centre in Cuba, defending his integrity.

Similarly, Castro retaliatory response is evident in his relationship with Canada. Canada employed a policy of “constructive engagement” towards Cuba, which sought to aid Cuba to transition into democracy and openness in its economy. Canada altered its utterance towards Cuba by preventing Cuba from attending the summit of the OAS in Panama (Clifton, 2015) based on Cuba’s human rights violations. Canada urged Cuba to release political prisoners, but Castro refused. Castro interpreted the request as Canada trying to meddle with Cuban affairs and was upset by Canada’s attempt to take a critical stand towards Cuba to appease the US. Cuba employed a radical approach towards Canada. The Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs prohibited all foreign ownership of condominium units, of which Canadian companies had heavily invested (Deonandan, 2005).

The aforementioned retaliatory actions by Fidel Castro depicts his aversion for foreign interference in his domestic affairs and their keenness to force Cuba to transition into a democratic capitalist society. Castro’s beliefs and norms that informed his response to the interference of western societies is the communist ideology. Communism is an ideology that promotes economic equality through the elimination of private property, economic class and profit making. Communism was developed by Karl Marx who believed that the exploitative and competitive nature of capitalism, would necessitate a revolutionary leader whom Saxonberg (2013) says harbours a “messianic quality” to establish communism in a state. This explains Fidel Castro’s belief that he is destined to bring prosperity to Cuba and the rest of Latin America through his socialist endeavours.

A state would eventually become a communist state through socialism; where the society owns the means of production, and equity is established (Marx, 2009). In a communist-socialist state, workers are not exploited, and profits are shared equitably depending on individual contribution. However, it considers those who cannot work. In sum, a communist-socialist state prioritises the basic needs of the whole society and eliminates discrimination. Castro was highly committed to these communist-socialist principles declaring on Cuban television in 1961 “I am a Marxist-Leninist and shall remain a Marxist-Leninist until the day I die” (Early, 2010, p. 17).

The level of Fidel Castro’s commitment to communism and its belief system is exceptional. His commitment and vision even surpassed his Soviet mentor. For instance, when the Soviet Union

decided to accept political pluralism and a market economy through Gorbachev's "perestroika", Castro constantly refused to follow this path (Loss and Prieto, 2012). Fidel Castro believed that every state holds unique characteristics; hence, they would not benefit from the same system of governance. In a public speech in Havana, he ridiculed Gorbachev's perestroika asserting that one cannot cure the woes of a socialist state with "capitalist medicine" (Loss and Prieto, 2012, p. 230). Even before the USSR fully grasped perestroika, Castro proclaimed the errors and negative propensities of the reform. In Gorbachev's attempt to convince Cuba to follow his direction during his visit to Havana in 1989 and after, Castro stood by his belief and defended the orthodox principles of socialism (Loss and Prieto, 2012). It is as if Castro was a soothsayer; and in summer 1991, Gorbachev himself had detected the danger ahead of the USSR precisely as Castro predicted in his 26 July 1989 speech in Havana (Gugin & Lisnevskaya, 2019). In his speech, he proclaimed, "If tomorrow or any other day we were to wake up to the news that the USSR had disintegrated - something we hope will never happen - even in those circumstances, Cuba and the Cuban Revolution would continue to fight and resist (Loss and Prieto, 2012, p. 231). With such statement and an affirmation from Gorbachev's experience who declared that Cuba should not go the way of the USSR, it is clear that the imposition of the Helms-Burton Act would not persuade Castro to adopt western liberal democracy and capitalism.

The imposition of the Helms-Burton Act did not deter Fidel Castro not only because of his commitment to his beliefs but also because of his reservations about western democracy and the capitalist system. Castro constantly criticised US liberal democracy. In a book he co-authored, "War, Racism and Economic Injustice: The Global Ravages of Capitalism", he detailed the flaws of US political and economic system. He wrote about the structural, procedural and weaknesses in the American political system. He believes the American system have disenfranchised many people when it comes to the important issues but created a political hegemony for a few individuals, although acting from different sides of the divide but with same objectives, ideas and interest, i.e. to promote individual capitalist gains at the expense of the general good (Castro and Keeble, 2002). He bemoaned the incessant rise in the influence big corporations over political heads in the United States, which have led to the exorbitant cost of basic rights such as education and health care (Castro & Keeble, 2002).

Whichever way one may perceive the belief system of Castro, one cannot deny the inherent limitations of western liberal democracy. Undoubtedly, Cuba fares well in many of the social

indicators, especially health and education which Castro contrasts with other democratic countries where there are mounting housing challenges, high illiteracy and poor health care; and wonders why such countries should be perceived better than Cuba (Kronenberg, 2016). According to the World Bank available data on literacy rate of adults (percentage of people ages 15 and above), Cuba literacy rate in 2002 was 99.7% compared to the average world score of 82%. Which means that the imposition of the Helms-Burton Act did not negatively affect the literacy rate in Cuba because, in 1981, it was 97.8% (“Literacy rate”, 2019). Again, Cuba holds the highest number of doctors compared to the rest of the world (Abdullah et al., 2016). Life expectancy in Cuba is remarkable compared to the rest of the world and even in the United States. From the time Castro took power in 1960, life expectancy in Cuba was 63.8 years while the US was 69.7 years and the world stood at 52.5 years. However, life expectancy in Cuba increased continuously during the reign of Fidel Castro surpassing that of the US except 1990 to 1998 where it dropped slightly (“Life expectancy”, 2019) due to the lack of Soviet funds. Cuba then recovered from the effect of the disintegration of the Soviet Union because of Castro’s policy of self-sufficiency. The policy of self-sufficiency proved how resilient and advance Cuba could be. Cubans do not travel elsewhere for medical treatment, and Fidel Castro proved that when he fell ill in 2006. By 2008, life expectancy in Cuba was 78.7 years while the US was 78 years and the average years for the rest of the world was 70 years (“Life expectancy”, 2019).

Of course, health and education alone do not cover all aspects of human development in a country. Unemployment has been an issue in Cuba in recent years, especially in the aftermath of tightened sanctions. However, this is not a peculiar case as there are democratic and capitalist countries that face a high rate of unemployment, especially in Europe. If an autocratic country or communist-socialist state has such remarkable social developments which equally counts as fundamental human rights that every individual needs to enjoy, then the pressure from US and western democracies to force Cuba transition to democracy and capitalist with the aim of liberating Cubans with no guarantees access to such rights and basic social services, seem invalid. One may claim that the repressive nature of the Castro’s regime and the inability of the Cuban population to participate in politics is unacceptable in this modern era of human liberation. This concern is what the US, explicitly proclaimed by President Bush, used as an alibi to defend their foreign policy against Castro. Castro responded to this claim by questioning why anyone will think that

the Cuban Revolution has the ability to sustain its rule without the full participation of the people (Kronenberg, 2016).

Fidel Castro introduced new features to the Soviet-style communism of which he adopted. He emphasised popular mobilisation, devoid however, of actual democratic deliberation. As exemplified in making the people engage in popular votes on the regimes initiatives by a show of hands (Farber, 2016). Indeed, only a few people saw the need to challenge the regime as seen throughout the years of his rule, the only opposition that is popularly recognised was Oswaldo Payá (Doma-Nguez and Dominguez, 2009). To Fidel Castro, the few opponents in Cuba were puppets of the US who were being used to promote the US imperialist agenda, because in his perspective, they lacked clear ambitions. With a strong ability to commit to communism and socialism and having solid reasons to challenge the principles of liberal democracy, the survival of Fidel Castro's regime or the ineffectiveness of Helms-Burton Act was bound to happen.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

The objective of this thesis was to provide a descriptive analysis, using a qualitative and quantitative research method, on the factors leading to the ineffectiveness of the Helms-Burton Act against Cuba. The concepts tested in this paper have all demonstrated to be necessary factors in the survival of the Castro regime. In analysing the key factors that have rendered the Helms-Burton Act ineffective, this thesis compared Cuba and North Korea regarding the effects of third party state assistance, domestic politics and contrasted the beliefs of Castro with that of the Western democracies. The findings suggest that the imposition of the Helms-Burton Act did not entirely deter third-party states from trading with Cuba as envisaged by the extended periods of sanction busting activities by several countries including the EU, Russia, Canada, China and Venezuela. However, the Helms-Burton Act negatively impacted the cost of doing business with Cuba, which reduced the revenue generated from international trade and investment as compared to the pre-soviet era irrespective of Venezuela's large-scale aid-sanction busting.

Although, the sanction busting from the third-party states rendered the Helms-Burton Act ineffective, which is in support of the research hypothesis, it did not prove to be sufficient in the survival of the Castro regime. In interpreting Castro's quest for economic support from Venezuela and China, it can be said that Castro needed some revenue from other countries to survive. Nonetheless, his relationship with Canada and the EU demonstrated that he would sacrifice economic support in order to prevent foreign political interference in Cuba. Therefore, third-party state assistance is necessary but not a sufficient factor for the ineffectiveness of Helms-Burton Act. In other words, the assistance of third-party state alone did not cause Castro's regime to survive.

The use of strategic "system of control" was essential for the survival of the Castro's regime. The results support the hypothesis that stable domestic political atmosphere subdued the effectiveness of Helms-Burton Act. This is attributed to the loyalty and the convergence of the ruling elites precisely the armed forces, the control of the society and the provision of basic needs. In general, the results on Cuba show that having repressive structures and systems in place alone cannot guarantee political stability when the populace is in dire need of basic amenities and rights. However, political stability is not the cardinal factor but rather a part of several factors that worked together to sustain the socialist government in Cuba. Based on the findings, it can be argued that the commitment of Castro and the regime to its communist and socialist beliefs and ideas was necessary and sufficient for the Helms-Burton Act to be ineffective. These beliefs and ideas

conflicted with that of the US, which caused the regime to resist and deflect any attempts made by an external government to influence the internal affairs of Cuba whether through overt or covert economic actions.

Regarding the research limitation, there is inadequate data set for foreign direct investment and inaccessible longitudinal data that would have allow the researcher to carry out empirical regression analysis. Therefore, this research invites future researcher to acquire in-depth national level data set for quantitative analysis.

Future research should continue with broader comparative study concerning the belief systems of non-democratic regimes that have survived and fallen during economic sanctions. This recommendation will provide proper generalisation of the subject of which this thesis is limited. Policy makers should bear in mind that every country leadership has its strength and weakness. Foreign policies implementation using economic sanctions should aim at the target leaders' distinct characteristics in terms of their subjective beliefs to achieve more effective outcome.



## Appendix

The elements of Helms-Burton Act are grouped into four titles according to the Amnesty International 2009 report.

Title 1: “Strengthening international sanction against Castro’s regime” aims at abolishing Cuba means of acquiring economic aid and trade revenue. The US pressured the International Monetary Fund, the International Development Association, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Finance Corporation, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency to ban Cuba from membership (Lowe, 1997 and Gordon, 2012). Should any of these institutions provide loan or assistance to Cuba; the institution will lose the same amount of funds from the US. Title 1 also reaffirms provisions of the 1992 Torricelli Act particularly, the penalisation of foreign companies who economically engage with Cuba (“The US Embargo against Cuba”, 2009, p. 10).

Title II: “Assistance to free and independent Cuba” declares the conditions necessary for the US to terminate the sanctions. The conditions include the election of a democratic government which exempts the leadership of Fidel or Raul Castro and the handing over of properties of US citizens nationalised by the Cuban government after the revolution (“The US Embargo against Cuba”, 2009, p. 10). Lastly, the US should have authority to support “democratic and human rights groups” in Cuba.

Title III: “Protection of Property rights of United States Nationals” demands compensation for US Nationals for confiscated properties and permits them to sue foreign companies generating money from investment in properties of US national before nationalisation (Gordon, 2012: p. 67). The provision aims at thwarting foreign investment in Cuba.

Title IV: “Exclusion of certain aliens” stipulates a travel restriction to the US of individuals, employees and families of foreign companies that operate in the US confiscated properties or conduct business with Cuba (“The US Embargo against Cuba”, 2009 and Gordon, 2012: p.67). The “title” forces foreign companies to choose between trading with Cuba and the US.

Table 2: Definition and Types of economic sanctions

Economic Sanctions: a foreign policy tool used to economically coercion other state to change the unwanted behaviour policy			
Unilateral		Multilateral	
Imposed by one state		Imposed by a group of states or an international institution such as the UN and EU	
	Positive		Negative
	Rewards		Punishment
Comprehensive trade sanctions	Tariff reduction or elimination		Total or partial embargo
Financial sanctions	Financial or investment aid		Prohibition from financial assistance, restriction of capital flows and disinvestment
Targeted sanctions	Humanitarian aid		Travel bans and freezing of assets

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