

EVALUATING CASTROS' CUBA, FRANCO'S SPAIN AND PINOCHET'S CHILE: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL INDICATORS

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The performance of autocracies relative to democracies and to each other is of increasing interest to political scientists.² In this article I attempt a contribution to that literature in a comparative study of three Hispanic dictatorships. They are those of Francisco Franco's Spain, Fidel Castro's Cuba and Augusto Pinochet's Chile which, though not coterminous, overlapped in time.³ The dictators are arguably the most widely recognized autocrats of the modern Hispanic world. In broad strokes I assess a number of indicators—economic growth, life expectancy, infant mortality, literacy, democide, and transition—which allow an evaluation of how Cubans, Spaniards and Chileans fared under their rule. Previewing my findings: Fidel Castro's regime outperformed its peers on

one indicator and one indicator only—unlike the other two, it survived its founder.

EVALUATING THE REGIMES

In this section, I evaluate the three dictatorships on four criteria: economics, social welfare, repression, and transition. Their respective measures are: compound annual rate of GDP per capita growth; improvements in literacy, infant mortality, and life expectancy; democide; and transition process and outcome. The economic and welfare measures are standard and thus need no clarification. Democide is a term coined by Professor Rummel to encompass deaths by government caused by killings or by “reckless and depraved indifference to human life,” such as mass deportations and internments of prisoners in forced labor camps without adequate food, shelter, or

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2. See, e.g., the special issue of *Contemporary Politics* devoted to this topic and the introduction by Aurel Croissant and Stefan Wurster (2013).

3. For some of my previous work on Cuba, see the bibliography.

other protection from the elements, disease, criminals placed in their midst, etc.⁴ By transition process and outcome I mean what followed the dictators' death or retirement. This could be one of three things: a continuation of the dictatorship by his successors (e.g., from father to sons in the Nicaragua of the Somozas), a breakdown of the regime followed by the establishment of another dictatorship (e.g., Cuba from Batista to Castro), or the establishment or restoration of democracy (e.g., Paraguay after the overthrow of Stroessner). The last process can be rated in terms of speed and smoothness.

Keeping in mind the years of the country-specific, politically relevant events, shown in Table 1, I take up the economic criterion first. As shown in Table 2, between 1945 and 1975 (the last year of the dictatorship, Franco having died that year) Spanish real per capita GDP grew at an annual compound rate of 4.7%, a remarkable record. (Henceforth all further mentions to GDP growth refer to this measure.) To appreciate it further, be it noted that between 1900 and 1935 GDP per capita in Spain rose at a mere 1.1% annual rate of growth. Chile comes next. Between 1900 and 1970, its annual growth rate was 1.1%, the same as Spain before the latter's Civil War. During the three years of Salvador Allende's *Unidad Popular* government, the economy actually shrank by 3.5%. After the 1973 coup, it took an additional six years before the economy reached the 1970 level, then it dipped again in the early 1980s before bouncing back. These ups and downs yielded a net growth

of 1.5% per year during Pinochet's regime, better than in the pre-Pinochet's period, although not by much. As for Castro's dictatorship, it fares badly in comparison with Chile, let alone Spain. Between 1959 and 2007, GDP per capita rose a mere fifth of one percent, less than half that of the entire pre-Castro era, which was low to begin with, and well below that obtained during Cuba's democratic period (1940–52), when it grew by 2.5% per year.⁵ Even with the infusion of Soviet subsidies during the first three decades of the regime Cuba could not match the growth rate in the democratic period (2.1% vs. 2.5%). Actually, on account of the Castro regime's idiosyncratic way of measuring economic output, the dual exchange rate, and the lack of transparency in the calculations (Pérez-López 2018) all official figures are suspect. Cuba's GDP estimate, during and after the Soviet period, may very well be overstated, and could the more recent data may be as low as half or even less than what the government claims (Vidal Alejandro 2018). In pre-Castro Cuba "income per capita was 50 to 60 percent of Western European levels and was about the same as Italy's income" (Ward and Devereux 2012, p. 113; see also Smith and Llorens 1998). Today it is a fraction of that. Ward and Devereux calculate that in 2007 Cuba's per capita income was only 72% of what it was in 1955 (2012: 127). Thus, according to them, relative to the 1950s, Cuba's per capita income has shrunk in absolute terms (not gone up by 75% as shown in the Maddison data). Also, whereas Cuba in the 1950s

4. Professor Rummel expands thus: "a death constitutes democide if it is the intentional killing of an unarmed or disarmed person by government agents acting in their authoritative capacity and pursuant to government policy or high command (as in the Nazi gassing of the Jews). It is also democide if these deaths were the result of such authoritative government actions carried out with reckless and wanton disregard for the lives of those affected (as putting people in concentration camps in which the forced labor and starvation rations were such as to cause the death of inmates). It is democide if government promoted or turned a blind eye to these deaths even though they were murders carried out "unofficially" or by private groups (as by death squads in Guatemala or El Salvador). And these deaths also may be democide if high government officials purposely allowed conditions to continue that were causing mass deaths and issued no public warning (as in the Ethiopian famines of the 1970s). All extra-judicial or summary executions comprise democide. Even judicial executions may be democide, as in the Soviet show trials of the late 1930s. Judicial executions for 'crimes' internationally considered trivial or non-capital, as of peasants picking up grain at the edge of a collective's fields, of a worker for telling an anti-government joke, or of an engineer for a miscalculation, are also democide." R. J. Rummel, *Death by Government*, Chapter 2. <http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/DBG.CHAP2.HTM>

5. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the associated "special period," as the Castro regime labeled most of the decade of the 1990s, dealt a blow to the Cuban economy that was even more severe than that experienced during the Great Depression. "During this ["special period"], Cubans essentially experienced a famine...." (Anonymous 2008). The editors of the journal explained that "The author's name has been withheld in order to safeguard her or his right to free communication."

was roughly on a par with Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, or Ireland, Italy and Spain in terms of per capita income, by now it is somewhere in-between Ecuador and Guatemala (Vidal Alejandro, 2018).

Thus, our first comparison yields the following: On per capita income, Franco's dictatorship did exceed-

ingly well, Pinochet's turned in a middling performance, and Castro's scored dead last not only compared to his autocratic counterparts, but just about every other country in Latin America. Under Castro, Cubans experienced not a "lost decade," as Latin America in the 1980s, but a half century.

Table 1. Political Chronology: Spain, Cuba, Chile

Year	Spain
1892	Birth of Francisco Franco Bahamonde.
1931	Proclamation of 2 nd Republic; King Alfonso XIII departs for France.
1936–39	Military uprising— Civil War—Nationalist victory; start of Franco's dictatorship.
1969	Franco, acting as self-proclaimed Regent for the Crown, names Juan Carlos de Borbón as his heir-apparent.
1975	Death of Franco.
1976	King Juan Carlos appoints Adolfo Suárez to head new government. Law of Political Reform dissolving Franco's regime approved in referendum.
1977	Election of Constituent Cortes.
1978	Voters approve new constitution.
1979	First election under new constitution.
1981	Attempted coup fizzles.
1982	Socialist Party, a member of the coalition that lost the Civil War, wins parliamentary election. First peaceful transition of power between parties.
Cuba	
1902	Independence after four years of U.S. military occupation following the Spanish-American War.
1926	Birth of Fidel Castro Ruz.
1940	Cuban Constitution drafted by a multi-party Constituent Assembly is enacted. Strongman Fulgencio Batista elected president in free elections.
1944	Batista's hand-picked successor defeated. Peaceful transition of power between parties.
1940–52	Democratic regime.
1952	Overthrow of democratic regime by former strongman and president Fulgencio Batista.
1953	Fidel Castro launches bloody attack on Moncada Barracks on 26 th of July, the date after which his new political movement is named.
1956	Fidel Castro sails in <i>Granma</i> yacht from Mexico, lands a small expeditionary force in Oriente Province, retreats to the Sierra Maestra mountains.
1959	Fulgencio Batista flees; Fidel Castro enters Havana; start of Castro's dictatorship.
2007	An ill Fidel Castro resigns and transfers power to his brother Raúl.
2016	Death of Fidel Castro.
Chile	
1915	Birth of Augusto Pinochet Ugarte.
1946–70	Democratic period: four six-year terms completed by presidents of different parties.
1970	Salvador Allende, standard-bearer of a socialist-communist coalition, the <i>Unidad Popular</i> , is elected president.
1973	Allende's government overthrown in a military <i>coup</i> ; start of Pinochet's dictatorship.
1980	Approval by referendum of new constitution designed by Pinochet and his team by referendum.
1988	Pinochet loses plebiscite to serve a second eight-year term under the 1980 constitution.
1989	Opposition candidate Patricio Alwyn elected president.
1989–98	As provided in the 1980 constitution, Pinochet continues to serve as Commander-in-Chief of the Army.
1998	Pinochet's term as Commander-in-Chief of the Army expires; he takes seat for life in Senate as provided in the Constitution.
1998–00	During a visit to London, Pinochet is placed under house arrest in response to an extradition request from Spain
2002–06	In Chile, attempts to try Pinochet for human rights violations fail.
2006	Death of Pinochet.

Table 2. Franco's Spain, Pinochet's Chile and Castro's Cuba: Quantitative Comparisons

Indicator	Spain	Cuba	Chile
Total population (millions) ^{K, O}	18.6 (1900)	1.7 (1900)	2.9 (1900)
	25.8 (1940)	4.6 (1940)	5.1 (1940)
	28.1 (1950)	5.8 (1950)	6.1 (1950)
	33.8 (1970)	7.0 (1960)	7.6 (1960)
	35.6 (1975)	8.5 (1970)	9.4 (1970)
	39.4 (1990)	10.7 (1990)	13.2 (1990)
	46.4 (2015)	11.2 (2015)	17.9 (2015)
Net migration rate (average of five-year averages) ^Q	-1.5 (1950–1975)	-3.6 (1960–2015)	-1.2 (1970–1990)
Compound rate of real GDP per capita, various years ^R	1.1% (1900–35)	0.05% (1902–58)	1.1% (1900–70)
	4.7% (1945–75)	2.5% (1940–52)	1.5% (1973–90)
		0.05% (1959–2007)	
Life expectancy ^O	49.3 (1930)	42 (1930)	35 (1930)
	48.4 (1940)	45 (1940)	38 (1940)
	61.8 (1950)	59 (1950)	55 (1950)
	69 (1960)	65 (1960)	58 (1960)
	72 (1970)	71 (1970)	64 (1970)
	75 (1980)	74 (1980)	71 (1980)
	77 (1990)	75 (1990)	75 (1990)
	79 (2000)	77 (2000)	77 (2000)
	82 (2010)	79 (2010)	79 (2010)
	82 (2015)	79 (2015)	79 (2015)
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births) ^{O (M, L)}	91 (1950)	33 (1955) ^M	128 (1960)
	48 (1960)	39 (1960) ^L	68 (1970)
	26 (1970)	42 (1963) ⁴	64 (1973)
	15 (1980)	37 (1970)	28 (1980)
	9 (1990)	17 (1980)	16 (1990)
	5 (2000)	11 (1990)	9 (2000)
	4 (2010)	7 (2000)	8 (2010)
	4 (2015)	5 (2010)	7 (2015)
	4 (2015)		

Continued on next page

On social welfare, the record also favors Franco's and Pinochet's dictatorships, something that may come as a surprise to many taken in by the government's propaganda and falsification of history (Hollander 1981). At fewer than 40 deaths per 1,000 live births, infant mortality was comparatively low in pre-Castro Cuba.⁶ In 1950, two to three times as many nurslings died in Spain and Chile as did in their Caribbean counterpart. But under their respective dictators great strides were made in combating this tragedy. As early as 1970 Spain had overtaken Cuba on this indicator. When, after 17 years in power, Pinochet passed the presidency to his democratically elected successor, Chile's rate had been slashed by 75%, an average of 4.4% per year. By comparison, under Castro the comparable numbers are 85% over his entire

48-year reign, an average of 1.8% per year (or by 41% in his first 17 years, an average of 2.4% per year). But be it noted that Cuba's present ratio may be as high as twice the rate officially reported (González 2015), and that Cuba has one of the highest abortion rates in the world (25 per 1,000 women, three times that of Spain⁷), which may well reduce the infant death rate further by eliminating babies with a lower probability of surviving the first few months of life.⁸

Life expectancy tells a similar story. Before Franco, Spaniards were already on average living longer than the others, and this remained true throughout his reign and to this day. In pre-Pinochet Chile, on the other hand, life expectancy was 7 years lower than Cuba's (64 vs. 71) but by the end of the Captain

6. Locay and González (2005), McGuire and Frankel (2005), Ward and Devereux (2012).

7. U.N. Data. *A World of Information*. "Abortion Rate, 2004." No rate is reported for Chile. <http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=Gender-Stat&f=inID%3A12>

8. See also Stusser (2011, 2012).

Table 2. Franco's Spain, Pinochet's Chile and Castro's Cuba: Quantitative Comparisons (Continued)

Indicator	Spain	Cuba	Chile
Literacy rate (%) ^{N, O}	82 (c.1955) ^B	78 (1950)	79 (1950)
	92.4 (1975) ^C	79 (1960)	84 (1960)
	97.9 (2003) ^F	89 (1970)	88 (1970)
		93 (1980)	92 (1980)
		95 (1990)	94 (1990)
		97 (2000)	96 (2000)
Daily newspapers	38 (1948) ^T	58 (1950s) ^D	10 (1970) ^S
	109 (1954) ^D	10 (1971) ^D	33 (1990) ^S
	115 (1972) ^D	17 (1985) ^D	52 (1996) ^T
	87 (2000) ^C	2 (2000) ^C	40 (2002) ^T
Book production ¹	4,812 (1955) ^G	550 (1950s) ^C	1300 (ca. 1970) ^E
	17,727 (1975) ^G	883 (1970s) ^C	300 (1979) ^E
	35,000 (1985) ^E	1,792 (1980s) ^C	2300 (1989) ^E
	51,692 (1990s) ^{1, C}	773 (1990s) ^C	2600 (1991) ^E
	74,244 (2011) ^A	1800 (1991) ^E	6045 (2012) ^A
		1448 (2003) ^A	
Democide ^H	275,000 (1939–1975)	73,000 (1959–1987)	10,000 (1973–1987)
Democide, percent ²	0.92%	0.81%	0.09
Democide, annual rate ³	0.025% (1939–1975)	0.028% (1959–1987)	0.006% (1973–1987) ^{Not}

Note:

¹ The number is the annual average for the decade using years of available data in C.

² Democide rate excludes the war leading up to the regime's establishment in both countries. Thus, it is based only on the number of deaths attributable to the regime itself, not the fighting or killing leading up to its establishment. Thus, in Spain only deaths from 1936 forward and in Cuba from 1959 on are counted. Also, the democide rates in Cuba include not only executions and others killed but also many others: boat people who died in flight, and Castro's as well as opposing military personnel killed in Angola and Ethiopia.

³ Rummel's data series for Spain covers the entire life of the Franco regime but for Cuba it ends in 1987.

⁴ Earliest available in O.

Source:

^A Books published per country per year. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_published_per_country_per_year

^B World Illiteracy at Mid-Century: A Statistical Study Authorized by UNESCO. Greenwood Press, 1957. Reprinted 1970.

^C UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, various years.

^D United Nations Statistical Yearbook, various years. This source is also cited in Cuba Information Strategy, Internet and E-Commerce Development Handbook - Strategic Information, Programs, Regulations (World Business and Investment Library, 2015).

^E Altbach and Hoshino (1996, pp. 576, 578).

^F CIA, World Factbook that year.

^G Payne (1987: 474).

^H Rummel (1997).

^K Wikipedia, "Demographics of Spain," "Demographics of Chile," "Demographics of Cuba."

^L McGuire and Frankel (2005).

^M Ward and Devereux (2012).

^N Astorga, Bergés and FizGerald (2005).

^O Our World in Data < <https://ourworldindata.org/>>

^Q UN Data. A world of information. <http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=PopDiv&f=variableID%3A85>

^R Calculated from Maddison Project Database <https://www.rug.nl/ggdc/historicaldevelopment/maddison/releases/maddison-project-database-2018>

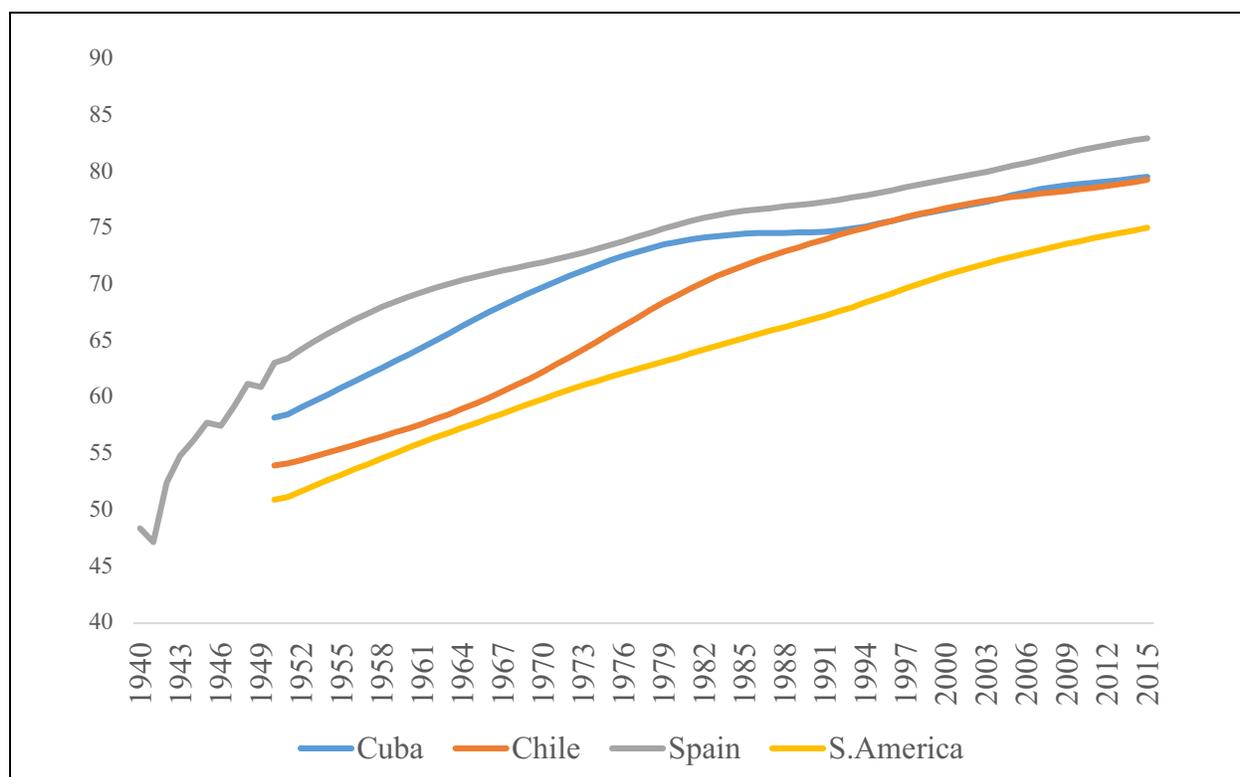
^S http://www.photius.com/countries/chile/government/chile_government_the_media.html

^T <http://www.pressreference.com/Be-Co/Chile.html>

General's reign it was identical (79). Figure 1, drawn from data downloaded from "Our World in Data," graphically illustrates the difference. As well as the three countries, a plot of South America is added as a benchmark. Note that parallel lines of Spain and South America in contrast to those between Cuba and Chile. In the case of Cuba, between 1950 and 1970, that is, during the last decade of Batista's dicta-

torship and the first of Castro's, life expectancy was rising at a steady rate, the fastest of all. However, beginning in the second decade of the Castro dictatorship, the rate slowed down and tapered off, making no progress for another two decades while it continued to improve in the other three countries. As for Chile, note that the steepest rise of the plot occurred during Pinochet's dictatorship, until it caught up

Figure 1. Life Expectancy: Source: Our World in Data (in years)



with Cuba's. In short, in the one area where the Castro dictatorship is given the most credit, it was Pinochet's Chile that did best.

As for literacy, there is no meaningful quantitative difference across the countries before or after the dictators' tenures. The difference lies in the reading material that was available to the population. Even under censorship, under both Franco and Pinochet an independent press survived and grew bolder as their dictatorships waned. So did academic and research centers.⁹ But not in Castro's Cuba, where the university is only "for revolutionaries," only the Communist Party and affiliated organizations were able to

publish, and the material, including that aimed at an academic audience,¹⁰ was (and remains), shall we say, of low quality, dull and euphemistic at best and crudely propagandistic at worst.¹¹ This is in marked contrast to the 1950s, a time when "the Cuban people were among the most informed in the world, living in an uncharacteristically large media market for such a small country. Cubans had a choice of 58 daily newspapers during the late 1950s, according to the UN statistical yearbook. Despite its small size, this placed Cuba behind only Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico in the region. . . ." (IBP, Inc., 2015, p. 248). Also, as Table 2 shows, in the 1970s Spain's book

9. For a study of the influence of social scientists in educating Chile's democratic opposition even under the dictatorship, and their contributions to a peaceful transition, see Puryear (1994).

10. See Yvon Grenier, "Temas and Anathemas: Depoliticization and 'Newspeak' in Cuba's Social Sciences and Humanities," *Revista Mexicana de Análisis Político y Administración Pública*, 2016, 5, 2, pp. 155–182. An earlier version was presented at the 2016 meeting of the Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy, Miami. For an extended treatment of the same topic, including a chapter on the writer Leonardo Padura, see also, Grenier (2017).

11. Kerrigan (1988) observes that during Franco's last years the works of Borges could be found in the bookstores whereas in Cuba in 1986 not only were Borges' books not available, neither were those by Bellow, Sartre, Ernesto Cardenal, Unamuno, Ortega y Gasset, not even Cervantes' *Don Quixote*.

production was 20 times larger than Cuba's (compared to a 4:1 population ratio), which suggests that the opportunities to pursue a life of letters outside politics were far greater under Franco than Castro. Pinochet's Chile, too, appears to have done better in this regard. In 1981 Chile was Latin America's 6th largest importer of books from Spain and a decade later the third largest importer of Argentine books (Altbach and Hoshino, 1996, pp. 579, 588.) In 1980 it imported a total of \$13 million worth of books from all countries and exported \$0.73 million worth; by 1988 the respective figures were \$11 million and \$1 million (Altbach and Hoshino 1996: 579). Cuba does not figure in any of the tables in these pages.

In sum, on enhancing human welfare the Castro regime record scores below those of Franco and Pinochet. Figure 2 illustrates a similar point. It displays the United Nations' Human Development Index between 1980 (the earliest year shown in the source) and 2015.¹² Note that even before the USSR imploded, as with life expectancy Chile had already caught up or exceeded Cuba's value. The latter then fell during the first half of the 1990s (along with those of Russia) during the so-called "special period," before it began to recover, until it flattened out and declined somewhat in the last decade while Chile and Spain continued to forge ahead.

Finally we come to an evaluation of the more explicitly political aspects of these regimes, repression and transition. As shown in Table 2, Franco's Spain and Castro's Cuba were similarly deadly to their subjects, whether democide is measured as the percent of the population (respectively 0.92% and 0.81%) or as an

annual rate (0.025% and 0.028%). Pinochet's Chile appears mild by comparison.¹³ Its democide rate is only 10% that of Cuba or Spain, and the annual rate about one-fourth as high. On this criterion, then, Pinochet's Chile fares best (or least bad).

When it comes to transition, Castro's dictatorship survives under his brother, who though passing the presidency to a non-entity (a maneuver practiced by many a Latin American dictator), retains the control of the ruling Communist Party. As of the time of this writing (summer 2018) it appears that the dictatorship will outlast him, as well. Thus, Castro's Cuba again shows up badly in comparison. On this yardstick, then, the real contest boils down between Franco's and Pinochet's dictatorships.

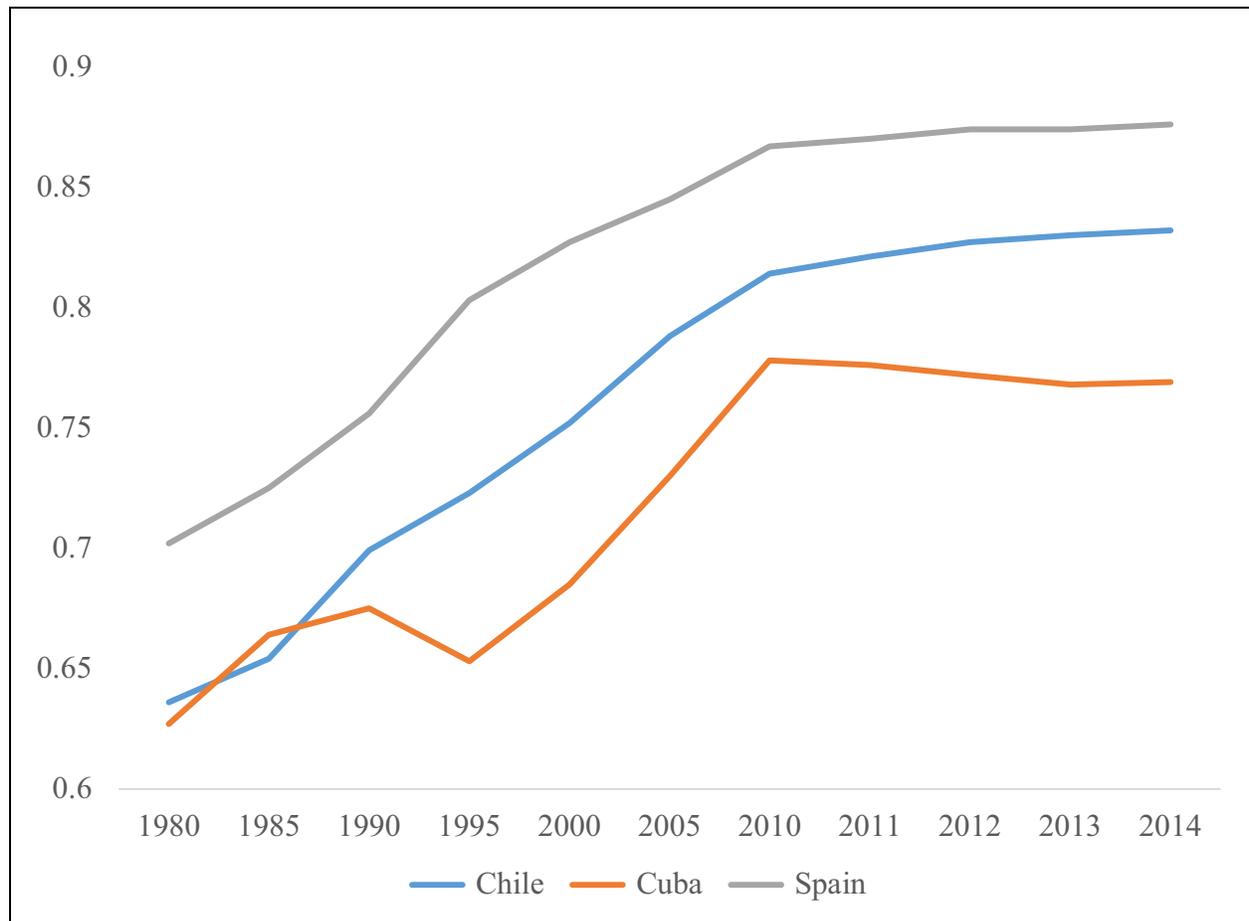
It is not an easy question to decide. Both regimes gave way to a peaceful democratic restoration that ushered into office the opposition party or coalition, faster but initially with less room to maneuver policy-wise in Chile than in Spain. (See Table 1 for the chronologies of the transitions.) But an argument, contestable, to be sure, could be made that the edge goes to Pinochet. This is because alone among the three he provided for a referendum on his rule. When the vote went against him he wavered, but in the end he accepted the result. It is said that in the days after the plebiscite he compared his condition to a boxer who had suffered a knockout.¹⁴ Thenceforth he continued to act within the constraints of the 1980 constitution, even agreeing to important amendments during the transition year of 1989. Along with his health, his power progressively deteriorated and then collapsed. He spent his last years as a

12. An earlier HDI estimate for 1975–2000 uses a different methodology and excludes Cuba. See <http://www.dataverse.pitt.edu/files/HDI Trends 1975-2000.xls>. Also, there are inexplicable gaps in Cuba's coverage and unclear methodology for estimating its HDI (Mesa-Lago 2018).

13. For an argument of why the "Cuban popular process headed by Castro" and the "entrepreneurial/military dictatorship directed by Pinochet" (and, presumably, Franco's regime) should not be compared on the same criteria, see Gallardo Martínez (1999). This article, written while Pinochet was detained in London contesting the extradition order, was the author's attempt at refuting the arguments by Mario Vargas Llosa, Carlos Alberto Montaner, et al., that Fidel Castro, too, deserved the same fate. In Gallardo Martínez's view, even if Castro were arrested, put on trial, and found guilty of human rights abuses, his "commitment and struggle, which condense and express what is best among the different sectors of the Cuban people, would be remembered as an effort, failed and error-prone as it may have been, to make us all more human. . . ." (p. 84). [My translation.] In other words, the symbolism of the Left's aspirations embodied by Fidel Castro excuses his crimes. Lenin, Stalin, and Mao would also get off scot-free on this rationale.

14. Vial (2002, Vol. II: 581).

Figure 2. Human Development Index: Source: United Nations



pariah in his own country and abroad, hounded by seemingly interminable legal proceedings first in Spain and London and then in Chile. Although the initiators failed in their purpose to have him put on trial and imprisoned or worse, the processes took a heavy toll of his condition, already diminished by diabetes and a mild dementia.¹⁵

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Francisco Franco, Fidel Castro, and Augusto Pinochet arguably were the most famous *and* infamous Hispanic dictators of the 20th century. In the language of political science, Franco's and Pinochet's dictatorships were "authoritarian" (although for

about half of its life Franco's edged toward totalitarianism) while Castro's was full-fledged totalitarian, the only such regime in the history of Latin America.¹⁶ The founders of these regimes all acquired supreme power by taking advantage of a domestic political crisis. All three dictators withstood strong international pressures, all had to crush insurgent activity (guerrillas or terrorism) supported from abroad, but only Franco and Pinochet had to contend throughout their tenure with a robust civil society, including the Catholic Church, which sheltered and sponsored various degrees of dissent or even opposition. Even in Spain, which had been in such close alliance with the regime from the Civil War on,

15. Indicative of their respective public standings at the time of their deaths, magnificent monuments were built in which to bury Franco's and Castro's mortal remains following state-sponsored funerals (Castro's was well attended by foreign dignitaries) while Pinochet enjoyed no such honors and the location of his grave is a family secret.

16. See Cuzán (2012).

in the 1960s “an increasingly dumbfounded and irritated Franco found that he could no longer count on the Church in the same way, for by the end of the decade the clergy had been converted into the principal mouthpiece of opposition” (Payne 2014, 446). Alone among the three, Pinochet provided for a referendum on his rule, abided by the negative vote, however reluctantly, and yielded power to a democratically elected president.

When it comes to how their respective populations made out under their rule, the evidence shows that although all three dictatorships repressed their populations, they differed in deadliness, as well as in economic and human welfare outcomes. Economically Franco's was by far the most successful and Castro's the least. Franco's and Pinochet's regimes made the greatest progress in extending life expectancy and reducing infant mortality. On literacy, the regimes tied in terms of quantity but not quality, as the availability of reading material was (and remains) poor in quantity and quality in Castro's Cuba. There no independent press exists while it did in Chile and Spain, albeit under censorship that limited or suppressed all discussion of politics or criticism of the government or head of state until fairly late in the life of the autocracy. Also, in both Chile and Spain domestically produced and imported books and other

reading material nurtured a rich cultural and intellectual life that remains lacking in Cuba. As for repression, Franco's and Castro's were far more lethal than Pinochet's. In short, in none of these measures did the Castro dictatorship do better or inflict less harm than the other two. Apparently, this assessment coincides with those of the dictators' respective populations. Observe, in Table 2, that in 1960 the populations of Chile and Cuba were almost of the same size, but by now Chile's is 50% larger than Cuba's, a divergence that is consistent with the differential in their net migration rate, which in Castro's Cuba is three times that of Pinochet's Chile and almost two and a half times that of Franco's Spain.¹⁷

However, viewed in a different light, Castro's dictatorship was actually a success of sorts. Fidel Castro had the dubious distinction of establishing not only the longest dictatorship in the history of the country, indeed of all Latin America and most of the contemporary world, but endowing it with the resilience to survive not only severe economic crises, the opposition of the United States, and the collapse of its international *patrón*, the USSR, but his retirement, when he managed a succession to his brother Raúl, and death.¹⁸ Of the three, he alone accomplished that last feat.

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17. In a recent survey, half of the respondents said they would leave the country if they could, and 70% of those would choose the “historic enemy” of Castroite propaganda, the United States. Azam Ahmed, “In a Rare Survey, Cubans Express a Hunger for Economic Growth,” *The New York Times*, March 21, 2017.

18. In this succession, the Castros joined three other dynasties in modern Latin America, those of the Duvaliers in Haiti, the Somozas of Nicaragua, and the Trujillos of the Dominican Republic.

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