

CUBA IN TRANSITION

Volume 30

Papers and Proceedings of the
Thirtieth Annual Meeting and Virtual Sessions of the
Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy (ASCE)

2020-2021

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(ISBN 979-8-88526-938-4)

Cuba in Transition volumes may be purchased from:

Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy

Treasurer

1007 Queensbury Drive

Winston-Salem, NC 27127

Email: asce@ascecuba.org

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PREFACE

I feel truly fortunate to be ASCE's President at its 31st anniversary. This joy is tempered, however, by ASCE's decision to make this issue the last printed edition of *Cuba in Transition*. The transfer of academic publications to online sites and the rising costs of printing journals has made it difficult for small organizations such as ASCE to sustain the costs of publication.

ASCE can be proud that it provided thirty volumes of a print edition. Few if any of the organizations that represent the Cuban Community have had such a record. That accomplishment belongs to those who have presented excellent papers to ASCE's annual conferences, many for most of the past thirty years, and to those who started later but continue to write today. Most especially, however, credit must be given to Jorge Pérez-López who has been the conference content organizer and editor for most of that time. By unanimous decision, the ASCE Board has voted unanimously to dedicate this issue to him. Thank you, Jorge.

Least this tribute sound like a farewell, I can assure the readers that it is not. The good news is that ASCE will continue to publish the papers presented at its meetings online. Many years ago, the ASCE Board decided to make the work of our members available to everyone through our website. All 31 years of ASCE papers are available on our website, where we will continue to publish in the years ahead. These papers will become part of Cuban history and a major if not prime source of events and contemporary analysis of Cuban economic history.

The pandemic has required a great deal of new thinking, and considerable flexibility from our current ASCE Board. We were accustomed to planning the annual meetings and other initiatives through in per-

son meetings and our biggest concern was keeping up membership and protecting our finances. The move to virtual zoom meetings was a challenge, but we did it and succeeded in holding three successful virtual conferences and five well-attended webinars in 2020–2021. The August 2020 meeting, “Cuba from the Castros to COVID: An ASCE Virtual Conference,” was a well-attended three-day affair led by then-President, Silvia Pedraza. As we had more paper proposals submitted than we could accommodate in a virtual conference, in January 2001 we held a second conference, with the theme “Caught in a Perfect ‘Storm’: Are Havana’s Responses Sufficient?” By the time this event was held, Cuba had devalued the CUP and eliminated the CUC. Several ASCE and Cuban economists analyzed the monetary reform efforts and offered their views on the likely results. The forecasts were not optimistic, but unfortunately were correct. A third conference, “COVID and the Eighth Party Congress: Reforming the Cuban Economy,” was held in September 2021. In September 2022, we will return to an in-person annual conference in conjunction with Florida International University’s Law School.

Our switch to virtual conferences has influenced the method our authors have presented their work. All the panels were on Zoom and most authors chose to use power point presentations; some panels chose to organize as group discussions. Since ASCE recorded nearly all of the panels and posted them on the ASCE website, many of our authors eschewed writing papers. The result is a thinner volume than might have been expected. Nevertheless, the reader will find as usual many excellent and thought-provoking readings that I trust will add to your knowledge.

Gary H. Maybarduk, PhD
ASCE President 2020-2022

