

<b>Institution: University of Nottingham</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 28</b>
<b>Title of case study: Providing intelligence on Cuba to shape policy and to inform governmental, business, journalistic and diplomatic communities.</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Research undertaken by Professor Antoni Kapcia has had far-reaching influences on policy formation (internationally) and has improved the intelligence base on Cuba for journalists, business organisations and diplomatic missions. It has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helped to inform and shape UK government policy towards Cuba through a sustained advisory relationship between Kapcia and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office;</li> <li>• Influenced the policy community (including U.S. government officials and foreign diplomats) in Washington and internationally through the provision of intelligence to the Americas Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C.;</li> <li>• Contributed new knowledge and insights to a broad-based audience of journalists, business organisations and diplomatic missions (worldwide) through the Economist Intelligence Unit, furthering their understanding of Cuba and informing their approaches and practice.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Key researcher: Professor Antoni Kapcia, Professor of Latin American History (2003-present)</p> <p>N.B. All publications listed below refer not to texts that might themselves have had impact, but rather to texts that illustrate the particular insights of Kapcia's research which have influenced others.</p> <p>Contextual information: The Nottingham-based Centre for Research on Cuba (established 2004) has built an environment for the in-depth analysis of modern and contemporary Cuba. Its seminars and annual conferences (involving the Cuba Research Forum, a network of national and international specialists), and its regular group discussions for Centre participants, have all informed Kapcia's research, enabling it to draw on inputs from postgraduates and postdoctoral researchers, and from colleagues in Cuba, through joint seminars and collaborations.</p> <p>The research underpinning the findings below has focussed on five areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main and most consistent strand has been the focus on the evolution of Cuban revolutionary ideology (carried out between 1994-2000, resulting in reference 3.1) and of Cuban debates about, and definitions of, national identity (carried out between 2000-2008, resulting in references 3.2 &amp; 3.3);</li> <li>• The second focus, clearly emanating from the first, is on the nation-building dimension of the transformations in Cuba after 1959, with special and increasing attention being paid to the concept and role of cultural nationalism and the nature and role of popular participation (1998-present, resulting in references 3.3 &amp; 3.4);</li> <li>• A further consistent strand of Kapcia's research has been a focus on the nature, mechanisms, structures and actors of the Cuban political system (1992-present, resulting in reference 3.5 &amp; 3.9), and current work (for Zed Press) on political leadership since 1959;</li> <li>• Following on from the previous three, a more recent focus has been on the contradictory nature of post-2000 Cuban politics, especially the so-called Batalla de Ideas (Battle of Ideas) strategy and the question of political succession (2000-present, resulting in references 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9 &amp; 3.10);</li> <li>• Finally, as a result of the post-2005 Leverhulme Trust project, the most recent focus has been on the evolution and role of the book and of literature and literary culture within Cuban processes of political transformation and nation-building from 1961 (2004-present, resulting in reference 3.4).</li> </ul> <p>From those different, but closely related research strands, the main insights and findings which have resulted have been:</p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

- i) That the post-1959 Cuban Revolution is best understood as a delayed process of radical nationalist nation-building, and, within a wider context, not so much as an example of 1945-89 Communism as of post-1947 decolonisation in the developing world, i.e. seeing post-1959 Cuba as a special case of post-colonial nation-building; this is an interpretation which, thanks to the dissemination of Kapcia's research, has become more widely accepted among Cuba specialists;
- ii) Therefore, that ideology in post-1959 Cuba should be seen not so much as 'Communism' (in its more conventionally understood forms) but rather as a unique and evolving fusion of radicalism and nationalism, still irrevocably shaping Cuban political culture;
- iii) That the Cuban political system should be seen not as a case of a monolithic state but rather as a more complex, multi-layered, quasi-corporatist matrix, characterised by processes of constant negotiation and structured participation;
- iv) That political protagonism in that system should not be understood in terms of individuals and the force of personality but rather in the context of continual debates and negotiation within a leadership, more collective than the conventional 'Fidel-centric' focus would suppose;
- v) That literacy, books, reading and literature as elements in policy and as social activities have all been fundamental to the post-1961 processes of political socialisation in Cuba.

**3. References to the research**

Books (all peer-refereed):

- 3.1. Kapcia, A., *Cuba. Island of Dreams* (Berg, 2000). Available on request.
- 3.2. Kapcia, A. *Havana. The Making of Cuban Culture* (Berg, 2005). Available on request.
- 3.3. Kapcia, A. *Cuba in Revolution. A History since the Fifties* (Reaktion Books, 2008). Available on request.
- 3.4. Kumaraswami, P. & Kapcia, A., *Literary Culture in Cuba: Revolution, Nation-building and the Book* (Manchester University Press, 2012). Submitted to REF2.

Chapters and journal articles:

- 3.5. Kapcia, A., 'Political Change in Cuba: The Domestic Context for Foreign Policy', in H. Michael Erisman and John M. Kirk (eds), *Redefining Cuban Foreign Policy. The Impact of the 'Special Period'* (University Press of Florida, 2006). Available on request.
- 3.6. Kapcia, A., 'Setting the Stage for a Discussion of Cuban Civil Society: The Nature of Cuban "Communism" and the Revolution's Political Culture', in Antoni Kapcia & Alexander I. Gray (eds), *The Changing Dynamic of Cuban Civil Society* (University Press of Florida, 2008), pp. 20-39 (refereed publication). Submitted to REF2.
- 3.7. Kapcia, A., 'Cuba after Fidel: Continuity and Change', *Global Dialogue*, vol 10 (2008), pp. 120-29 (invited contribution). Available on request.
- 3.8. Kapcia, A., 'Lessons of the Special Period: Learning to March Again', *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 36, Issue 164, No 1 (2009), pp. 30-41 (refereed). Submitted to REF2.
- 3.9. Kapcia, A., 'The *Batalla de Ideas*: Old Ideology in New Clothes?', in M. A. Font (compiler), *A Changing Cuba in a Changing World*, Bildner Publications (Bildner Center for Western Hemisphere Studies, CUNY, 2009), pp. 75-88. Available on request.
- 3.10. Kapcia, A., 'Cuba: Politics in Perspective' (published 22 June 2011), on <http://www.open-democracy.net/antoni-kapcia/cuba-politics-in-perspective>.

Additional proof of quality of research:

**Review of 3.6** by Carolee Bengelsdorf, in *Latin American Perspectives*, Issue 36 (2009), p.142 '... the real strength of the book... lies in its attempt (particularly in Kapcia's essay and in his introduction with Gray) to transform the language of the discussion and force us to reconceptualise our understanding of the post-1991 crisis'.

**Review of 3.3** by Steve Ludlam, in *Times Higher* (4 December 2008): 'The great strength of this book is that it helps the reader to see beyond the simplistic accounts of such aspects, and to understand the wider contexts that explain the Revolution's survival. The insight and detail offered here reflect a work that is the product of a sustained scholarly investigation of Cuba.'

**Research grant:** 2005-2009, £108,572 Leverhulme Trust: *Interactions between Literature, Politics and the Reader in Revolutionary Cuba* (collaborative project with Par Kumaraswami, University of Manchester).

#### 4. Details of the impact

Kapcia's unparalleled knowledge of Cuban politics makes him recognised as 'one of the top Cuba experts in the UK' (5.1). In addition to the examples below, this knowledge has been drawn on in (i) 28 international media interviews (since 2008), adding accuracy and insight to public understanding of Cuba (5.2), and (ii) regular consultations by journalists over a sustained period of time, consultations which have proved 'indispensable' to their understanding of the country and the region (5.3) .

The narrative below describes the influence of Kapcia's research on policy-makers and intelligence units: the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, D.C., and The Cuba Initiative, demonstrating the comprehensive reach of Kapcia's research and the different ways in which it informs and influences policy and practice nationally and internationally.

#### Informing and shaping UK and US government policy towards Cuba

Workshops and briefings presented by Kapcia have enriched the knowledge-base of policy-makers in the UK and the US and have contributed materially to how these two countries understand and make decisions about their relationships with Cuba.

The Senior Principal Research Analyst of the Americas Research Group in the FCO considers that Kapcia has provided significant assistance to the FCO for many years as an external expert on Cuba. Discussions with FCO officials and other external experts during his regular invitations to the FCO in London are considered to be 'important in the development of government policy towards Cuba'. These meetings are often organised around the briefing of senior staff being posted to Cuba: Kapcia has been a key participant in the briefing of the last two Ambassadors who have been posted there. The briefings have covered the future of Cuba after the Castro brothers, the prospects for the economic reforms in Cuba, and the relationships between Cuba and other countries, for which Kapcia has been able to draw on research insights from the published outputs listed in section 3. During these sessions, Kapcia's remit is always to focus on explaining and making judgements on the current political situation in Cuba and assessing possible future developments. This initial briefing has always been followed up subsequently by the British Embassy in Havana, which takes advantage of Kapcia's visits to Cuba to arrange meetings to discuss current Cuban politics and to exchange ideas with the Ambassador, and the First and Second Secretaries of the Embassy. In addition, on four occasions, Kapcia has been invited by the FCO to participate in small seminars run by the FCO's Americas Research Group, with the explicit purpose of providing orientation for new FCO researchers on current Cuban issues. The latest such invitation was in February 2013 (5.1).

Through his contribution to a panel on 'Raúl in Power: What to Expect' (October 2008) Kapcia fulfilled a similar advisory role for the Americas Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, D.C. The panel in which Kapcia participated was part of a series of seven panel discussions between October 2008 and July 2009 examining a wide range of topics related to Cuba and U.S.-Cuba relations. As CSIS's former Director explains, each panel discussion was attended by 'an invited audience of U.S. government officials, foreign diplomats, academicians, representatives of international organizations, Washington-based think tanks, civil society and the private sector and was open to the public in general'. The director commented that 'Prof. Kapcia's presentation on Raúl Castro's relationship with the Cuban Communist Party and the link between the Party and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba was outstanding, providing an excellent perspective on the role of those key institutions in Cuban governance looking forward. His comments provided an excellent framework for discussion on the nature of the exercise of power in Cuba and set the stage for subsequent panels to follow.' The publication pursuant from the panels received 'very wide electronic distribution and was also available in hard-copy'. It was primarily targeted at the policy community in Washington and abroad (5.4).

#### Providing intelligence on Cuba to business agencies, diplomatic missions and journalists

Kapcia has provided political updates and analyses on Cuba to the Economist Intelligence Unit

(EIU) (the research unit owned by the Economist Group) which, through their use by academics (40%), financial services (28%), government and NGOs (including diplomatic missions) (25%), corporate sector organisations (5%) and professional services (1%), and international journalists, have been a significant element in informing external analyses of the country.

The EIU specialises in preparing focussed 'country reports' on current political and social developments in given countries. The reports contain extensive analysis and forecasts of political, policy and economic conditions to help clients understand the current situation and likely future political and economic developments. Given the level of specialist expertise, these reports are highly respected and valued for their depth of analysis, the EIU reports on Cuba being frequently singled out by members of the diplomatic community and journalists as especially perceptive and well-informed, reaching into areas of the Cuban political and economic scene which those observers are less able to cover (5.5). The Regional Director for the EIU suggests that 'the continually firm demand for our Cuba products suggests that clients value the product, and in turn the insights that our contributors provide' (5.6).

The Head of the Reuters Office in Havana sees the EIU's reports as the means through which Kapcia has 'always helped Reuters to understand the country and events'. A reduction in the flow of economic information (both through official channels and leaks) that has characterised President Raúl Castro's term in office means that journalists increasingly rely for information on two key public sources (of which the EIU is one), and in many cases make decisions based on that information. He considers the information provided by Kapcia through the EIU reports to be 'currently indispensable' (5.3).

The Cuba Initiative (CI) is part of the Caribbean Council. It fosters trade, investment and development in the Caribbean and promotes the region's interests internationally (5.5). Kapcia's contributions to the CI (through discussion groups and a broader advisory role) have provided 'an unbiased understanding of the Cuban political system', and have helped the CI 'in arriving at the considered advice we have to give to investors, the private sector, government, the European Commission and others who are involved in the day to day working relationship with Cuba and its Government and enterprises'. Like the EIU, the CI particularly values Kapcia's advice in the current context of Cuba where there is limited access to senior figures in Government, officials and others. It sees Kapcia as being able to provide alternative views or opinions 'based on well-founded and realistic research against which we can measure our own opinions' giving Kapcia's work a 'unique practical application in as much as it also enables us at the Caribbean Council to better consider the impact of new thinking in Cuba on the rest of the Caribbean' (5.5).

#### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- 5.1. Senior Principal Research Analyst of the Americas Research Group in the FCO (Factual Statement)
- 5.2. Media Interviews (selected) (available on file)
- 5.3. Reuters (Factual Statement demonstrating sustained uptake and use of Kapcia's research and comprising testimonials from the ex Bureau Chief, Andean Region (Thomson Reuters) & the current Head of Reuters Office in Havana (Thomson Reuters))
- 5.4. Former Director of the Americas Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, D.C, former member of the career US foreign service, and former deputy assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere Affairs. (Factual Statement)
- 5.5. Director, The Caribbean Council/The Cuba Initiative (Factual Statement) <http://cuba-initiative.org/>
- 5.6. Economist Intelligence Unit Factual Statement (Regional Director, Latin America)