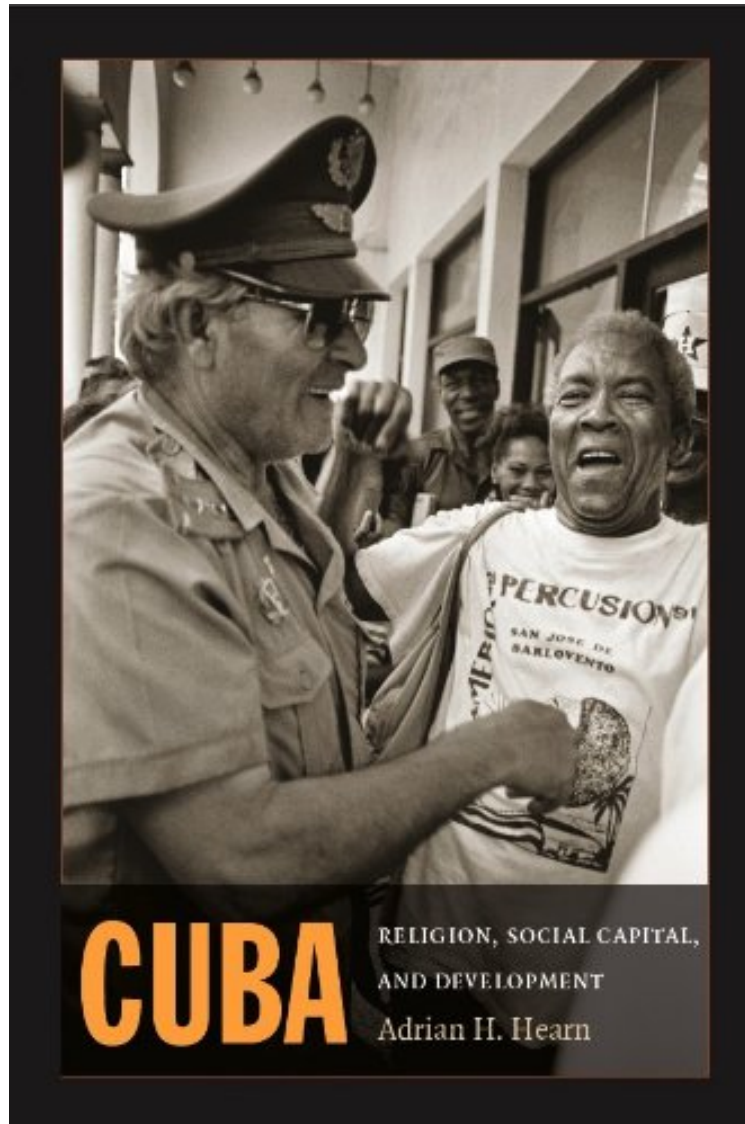


(Download pdf) Cuba: Religion, Social Capital, and Development

Cuba: Religion, Social Capital, and Development

Adrian H. Hearn

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Adrian H. Hearn : Cuba: Religion, Social Capital, and Development before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cuba: Religion, Social Capital, and Development:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent. Highly Recommended!By J. WolffFar too often studies on development focus on the policies initiated by bureaucrats at the top. Hearn avoids this and instead provides a unique account of everyday people building community networks and trust in order to tell a story about politics in Cuba. An anthropologist by training, Hearn gives us access to the rich religious traditions of the country and those who practice them. A must read for anyone interested in Cuba, its citizens and culture.0 of 0 people found the

following review helpful. An Extraordinary Contribution To The Literature on this Topic By A. RICH For anyone interested in understanding Cuba today, this is an essential work. Hearn offers not only penetrating insight into this amazing country but a wonderful overview of social anthropological thought as it pertains to the challenges of developing countries. Finally, he is a terrific writer and his analysis, interspersed with vivid anecdotes from his considerable long-term stays throughout the country, make this a joy to read. Highly recommended! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. First-rate cross-cultural study of contemporary Cuba By Shani In Adrian Hearn works at the fecund intersection of religion, performance, and economic development. While his book is an exercise in traditional, participant-observer cultural anthropology, Hearn's background in percussion affords him access to the Yoruba-descendent *regla de ocha* or *santería*; a religious complex. In fact, the author's closeness to the communities he engages is palpable, approximating complete integration, which rewards his readers an intimacy elusive to many cross-cultural researchers. opens up pathways of knowledge into relationships between *regla*-based grassroots organizations and international non-governmental development agencies. I highly recommend this academic monograph to anyone interested in concurrent--sometimes conflicting, other times cooperative-- political and economic structures in contemporary Cuban society.

When Cuba's centralized system for providing basic social services began to erode in the early 1990s, Christian and Afro-Cuban religious groups took on new social and political responsibilities. They began to work openly with state institutions on projects such as the promotion of Afro-Cuban heritage to encourage tourism, and community welfare initiatives to confront drug use, prostitution, and housing decay. In this rich ethnography, the anthropologist Adrian H. Hearn provides a detailed, on-the-ground analysis of how the Cuban state and local religious groups collaborate on community development projects and work with the many foreign development agencies operating in Cuba. Hearn argues that the growing number of collaborations between state and non-state actors has begun to consolidate the foundations of a civil society in Cuba. While conducting research, Hearn lived for one year each in two *santerías*; a temple-houses: one located in Old Havana and the other in Santiago de Cuba. During those stays he conducted numerous interviews: with the historian of Havana and the conservationist of Santiago de Cuba (officials roughly equivalent to mayors in the United States), acclaimed writers, influential leaders of Afro-Cuban religions, and many citizens involved in community development initiatives. Hearn draws on those interviews, his participant observation in the temple-houses, case studies, and archival research to convey the daily life experiences and motivations of religious practitioners, development workers, and politicians. Using the concept of social capital, he explains the state's desire to incorporate tightly knit religious groups into its community development projects, and he illuminates a fundamental challenge facing Cuba's religious communities: how to maintain their spiritual integrity and internal solidarity while participating in state-directed projects.

"This is one of the best studies on civil society in Cuba that I have read. Adrian H. Hearn combines first-rate ethnography, theoretical sophistication, and a solid understanding of the complexities of the Cuban political context. By focusing on Afro-Cuban religious communities and international NGOs, Hearn shows how the interpenetration of state and citizen action has shaped civil society in Cuba. The result is a fascinating analysis of the ongoing transformations within the Cuban Revolution." — Ariel C. Armony, Katz Distinguished Associate Professor of Government, Colby College