

# BECOMING AN AMERICAN POLITOLOGIST<sup>1</sup>

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I was a boy when Fidel Castro,<sup>2</sup> sporting green fatigues as he would for the next 50 years, rode triumphantly into Havana atop a tank.<sup>3</sup> Speaking at the Presidential Palace a day or two later, someone released a flock of white doves. One landed on his shoulder. For many of us, it was a sign from above, a promise of better things to come.<sup>4</sup> And for the next few months we listened, enraptured, for hours on end, to Castro's manly voice assuring us that his Revolution<sup>5</sup> was, as one of his early slogans put it to preemptively deny that he was a communist, "as green as Cuba's palm trees."<sup>6</sup> His image saturated the country. It was an exhilarating time.<sup>7</sup>

Within a year the illusion was shattered. Castro's rhetoric grew increasingly menacing. In July, Manuel Urrutia Lleó, the provisional president, sought asylum in an embassy. In October Hubert Matos, one of Castro's *comandantes* whom he had appointed military governor of Camagüey province, resigned. Castro had him arrested, tried for treason, and sentenced to 20 years in prison. Another *comandante*, Camilo Cienfuegos, disappeared without a trace. Organized mobs demanded *paredón* ("to the wall," i.e., execution by firing squad) for "counter-revolutionaries." In February of 1960, a high-ranking Soviet representative arrived in Havana. The drift of events left no doubt where Castro was headed. It was as if the specter of communism was stalking the island, presaging the coming darkness at noon.<sup>8</sup> Joy turned into terror, hope into desperation. An exodus of Cuban began in earnest. Relatives and friends who never before would have contemplated emigrating stampeded for the exits, frantic to get out of the country via any avenue available before the Iron Curtain clamped shut. An aunt and her children flew to

Jamaica, thence to Miami, where her husband awaited. My parents tried to gain admission to the U.S., but the queue around the embassy was so long they never got to the door before the Eisenhower administration broke off relations. An alternative escape route was through Mexico. So, in April 1961, we (that is, my parents, three younger brothers and I) boarded a Spanish-flag ocean liner bound for Veracruz, Mexico.<sup>9</sup> As the ship sailed out of Havana harbor, half of our extended family, some never to be seen again, waved goodbye with their handkerchiefs. It was a tearful moment. Only a few days later, my favorite uncle, my father's older brother, landed at the Bay of Pigs as a member of the ill-fated [Brigade 2506](#) and was taken prisoner.

Supported in Mexico City by my mother's Godfather for several months, we applied and were granted resident visas to the United States.<sup>10, 11</sup> In September, first by train and then by bus, green cards in hand we made our way to Miami, Florida, then the capital of Cuban exiles, today of Cuban-Americans.<sup>12</sup> An aunt (the wife of my uncle, the Brigade 2506 member captured and imprisoned in Cuba) and her two children welcomed us into their home, where we stayed for almost three weeks during which we found lodging and qualified for Cuban refugee assistance. That entitled my parents to a modest monthly allowance and a package of surplus food (the precursor of food stamps) that included powdered milk and eggs, canned meat, and peanut butter. It was our first taste of these items. Only peanut butter became a life-long staple.

What we thought would be temporary exile turned into permanent expatriation. For some time, I had difficulty adapting. English did not come easily to me. In Cuba I hated the weekly lessons, telling myself, "Why do I have to study this, I'll never use it." That's how much a ten year old knows! In Miami, upon entering the 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Miami Edison in Northwest Miami, like many of my peers I attended an English-as-a-second language program in the mornings,

followed in the afternoons by classes it was believed we could handle, including Math, Music, and Physical Education. I particularly enjoyed the music class. Our young teacher taught us Broadway musicals popular at the time. I liked many of the songs from “My Fair Lady,” a play I have seen many times since, the latest in New York City in 2019. Outside of class, I continued to resist learning English, obstinately clinging to my native language.<sup>13</sup> It was in high school that I began extensively to read in English. I do not remember there having happened anything dramatic forcing me to make the switch. I think it was a natural evolution arising from necessity. My first was *Billy Budd*, assigned in an English class in Northeast High in Kansas City, where we had relocated in December 1962 before returning to Miami the following summer. In any case, read I did. *Pride and Prejudice*, *Silas Marner*, *The Caine Mutiny*, *Marjorie Morningstar*, *A Summer Place*, *The Citadel*,<sup>14</sup> *The Judas Tree*, *Good-Bye Mr. Chips*, *Cheaper by the Dozen*, *I’m a Lucky Guy*, *Tales of the South Pacific*, and the Dobbie Gillis series are some of the titles of the many novels and collections of short stories I remember having imbibed outside of school.

Such reading improved the quality of my composition, so my writing soon outdistanced my verbal skills. It was on the strength of my writing, in fact, that I was placed in a college-prep English class in my senior year. The teacher, upon reading one of my essays, a satire, said to me, “I hope you don’t take offense, but when I read your essay, I couldn’t believe it was you.” Far from offending me, her remark encouraged me, as my dream was to be a writer. Her confusion was understandable, though. My accent was thick and orally I made many mistakes. This was because all my friends were Cuban-born and we conversed in Spanish among ourselves all the time. The unevenness between my written and my spoken English continued for many years, indeed, to this day. In college, I continued to improve. In every book I found many unfamiliar

words, which I would circle and enter the definition from the dictionary along the book's margin and on the pages of a notebook I kept for that purpose. Later still, I filled much of a yellow pad with phrases and entire sentences I liked from articles or stories in such magazines as *Commentary*. One of my favorite reads were the essays and short stories by Joseph Epstein, whose *Never Say You've Had a Lucky Life: Especially If You've Had a Lucky Life* (Free Press, 2024) I read recently. I also enjoyed Norman Podhoretz's autobiography, *Making It* (Random House, 1967).<sup>15</sup>

In 1966, I graduated from Miami Edison and then enrolled at the University of Miami, where I earned a B.A. in Government and Economics, all the while living at home and working part-time at various jobs—at grocery stores,<sup>16</sup> a cafeteria at the Deauville Hotel in Miami Beach ([recently demolished](#)), a bank, in the UM library, and the Department of Government at U.M. This left little time to engage in the extra-curricular activities that traditionally have been typical of what is now called “the college experience.”<sup>17, 18</sup> As a child, I assumed that I would follow my father's footsteps to the law, a path two of my younger brothers took. However, no sooner did I arrive at UM that the prospect of spending my life reading, lecturing, and writing on matters of historical import excited by imagination—and ambition. Three experiences, in particular, made a deep impression on me. In an introductory economics course, I beheld a graphical representation of the law of supply and demand. It was as if the proverbial light bulb had lit above my head, so mesmerized was I by its beauty and elegance. Other economics courses I remember taking were international economics, history of economic thought (with James W. Foley,<sup>19</sup> then a young professor who wrote much of his lecture on the blackboard, a technique I used for many years when I first started teaching). I even dared to enroll in a course on mathematical economics.

Only a handful of us were in that last class. The instructor, Professor [Lanny Evan Streeter](#), was not only a skillful and patient teacher, but a generous grader, as well. Another impressionable experience was reading John Locke's *Second Treatise on Government* in a seminar taught by Professor [Ramon Lemos](#). To this day, it remains a favorite,<sup>20</sup> along with Hobbes' *Leviathan*, and Machiavelli's *The Prince*. The third was the close relationship I had with two professors in the Department of Government. One was Vergil Shipley, the Chairman and in my last year at UM the interim Dean of the College of Business, where the Department of Government was housed at the time. In my last summer at UM, I asked him for a directed readings course and he assigned me Karl Popper's *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. The other was Bernie Schechterman, who taught courses in International Relations. I assisted both on different projects. They in turn welcomed me into their homes and served as character references when I applied to become a U.S. citizen in 1969,<sup>21</sup> and submitted letters in support of my applications to enter a doctoral program. Vergil and Bernie gave me a taste of what an academic life could be like, a wonderful gift.

In my senior year, I debated whether to pursue a doctorate in economics or political science, finally deciding in favor of the latter, for two reasons. One was practical, based on realistic self-knowledge: I did not think I could master the mathematics that was increasingly required to excel in economics. The other was idealistic: I thought economics had solved its basic problems, but not so political science. Attracted to both, I envisioned using economic tools to analyze political phenomena. Starting at New Mexico State University and continuing at the University of West Florida, with co-authors Richard J. Heggen, a professor of civil engineering

from the University of New Mexico and Charles M. Bunderick, a professor of statistics at UWF, I took a stab at doing just that.<sup>22</sup>

By the time graduate school loomed ahead, I applied to several schools: Harvard, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Indiana. All accepted me, and all but Harvard offered me a scholarship or an assistantship. But it was IU that made me an offer I could not refuse: a three-year NDEA fellowship (one of only two awarded that year<sup>23</sup>). I had picked Indiana because Bernie Schechterman had gone there. Unbeknownst to me at the time, I.U. had on its faculty two political economists, [Vincent](#) and [Elinor Ostrom](#), from whom I took courses and, enrolled in one of Elinor's courses, conducted interviews for one of her studies of police work in Chicago and environs.

In September 1969, one month shy of my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, I arrived in Bloomington.<sup>24</sup> In my first interview with the graduate advisor, [Alfred "Freddy" Diamant](#), a native of Austria, I told him I was not interested in studying Latin America. Neither did I care to be pigeonholed. Later, though, looking for a third field in which to take my "comps," I changed my mind. It helped that a new professor, a fresh Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, [David Collier](#), had joined the faculty. Moreover, adding Latin American politics to my repertoire was a sensible choice, since competence in Spanish seemed to offer a comparative advantage (as Gordon Tullock advised me a few years later). Only, it did not, because of the ideological leftism that came to permeate the field, as I will discuss presently. All the while, I minored in economics, taking courses from economist [James Witte](#), a great teacher who kindly agreed to serve on my committee. Via the Ostroms, I encountered the work of [Gordon Tullock](#) (obit [here](#)) and other contributors to the

[Public Choice](#) school. Years later, I would write Gordon, who encouraged me, publishing two of my papers, even as he relentlessly criticized my work.

In graduate school, a number of books made a strong impact. These included Anthony Downs' *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, James Buchanan and Gordon Tullock's *The Calculus of Consent*, Tullock's *The Politics of Bureaucracy*, Friedrich Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*, Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Vincent Ostrom's *The Intellectual Crisis in American Public Administration* (which I read in draft form, as it was being written at the time), Charles W. Anderson's *Politics and Economic Change in Latin America*, Alexis de Tocqueville's *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, and W. Ross Ashby's *Design for a Brain*.

Ashby's book, a fascinating discussion on the attributes of a stable system, was in Vincent Ostrom's reading list. I do not recall whether I was drawn to it because of my concerns about Latin American instability or the other way around. But reading it prompted an intuition: that Latin American dictatorships suffered from "hidden political instability." I had no means, let alone sufficient understanding of the phenomenon or ways of going about testing the idea. It is only recently that I was reminded of it when I showed that there appears to be a "law of political gravity"<sup>25</sup> affecting all incumbents, in dictatorships and democracies alike. The moment a competitive election is held in a regime transition, the ruling party invariably sees the artificially high support claimed during the dictatorship plunge, so much so that many are reduced to marginal status or even disappear.<sup>26</sup>

Also at IU, it was with shock and consternation that I discovered that Fidel Castro's stock among Latin Americanists was high and rising. This seemed to confirm the assessment I had

made as an undergraduate, that political science had yet to solve its basic problems.<sup>27</sup> If interpretations of the Castro regime could be so wide of the mark, the discipline had a long way to go. In the 1980s, simmering indignation boiled over when so many Latin Americanists embraced Nicaragua's Sandinistas with the same fervor many of us had greeted Castro in 1959. I had had enough. In a series of guest columns published over a period of several years in [\*The Times of the Americas\*](#)<sup>28</sup> and a student newspaper at UC San Diego, [\*California Review\*](#), I challenged their interpretation of the Nicaraguan Revolution and the war in El Salvador, ridiculing their sophomoric infatuation with the Sandinistas and their Salvadoran counterparts, the FMLN.<sup>29</sup> Many of these essays were translated into Spanish, and distributed throughout Latin America by [FIRMAS Press](#).<sup>30</sup> (A handful or two are available at [politologist.com](#).)<sup>31</sup>

When it came time to pick a dissertation topic, my concerns about political instability in Latin America led me to propose a comparative study of Costa Rica and El Salvador which David Collier agreed to supervise. I had become interested in Costa Rica at UM, when I read a chapter on that country by James L. Busey in Martin Needler's *Latin American Political Systems*. Noting that it was an island of democratic stability in a sea of political storms, I wondered why. Looking for a contrasting case, I settled on El Salvador, about which I had also read a chapter by [Charles W. Anderson](#) in the Needler reader.<sup>32</sup> However, although intrigued with Costa Rica, and getting to know it became an end in itself, I chose it primarily because I wanted to evaluate a hypothesis I mentioned earlier about a three-way relation between the structure of government, the scope of government, and its stability. To maintain stability, I thought, there has to be a balance between centralization and scope—if one goes up the other must fall. I fancied that someday this might become known as “the law of centralization and



scope,” and conjectured<sup>33</sup> that the key to understanding Costa Rica’s stability was that, unlike its neighbors, it had decentralized as the scope of its government had widened. Long on theoretical speculation, I was rather vague about methodology but anticipated it would be in the traditions of participant-observation and case studies.

Ironically, unbeknownst to me at the time, for I had not yet read it, which only shows an embarrassing gap in the political science education I had received,<sup>34</sup> in *The Politics. A Treatise on Government*, Aristotle discussed the operation of this “law”:

[T]he stability of a kingdom will depend upon the power of the king’s being kept within moderate bounds; for *by how much the less extensive his power is, by so much the longer will his government continue*; for he will be less despotic and more upon an equality of condition with those he governs; who, on that account, will envy him the less.

It was on this account that the kingdom of the Molossi continued so long; and the Lacedaemonians from *their government's being from the beginning divided into two parts, and also by the moderation introduced into the other parts of it by Theopompus, and his establishment of the ephori; for by taking something from the power he increased the duration of the kingdom*, so that in some measure he made it not less, but bigger; as they say he replied to his wife, who asked him if he was not ashamed to deliver down his kingdom to his children reduced from what he received it from his ancestors? No, says he, I give it him more lasting. . . .” (The Project Gutenberg EBook of Politics, by Aristotle, Book V, Chapter XI; emphasis added).

In sum, Aristotle said that by reducing the scope and dividing the power, i.e., decentralizing his regime, Theopompus made it more stable. Something along the lines of what I had intuited.

We spent a year in Costa Rica and five months in El Salvador, returning to Miami in June 1974 with boxes of books, newspaper clippings, and about a dozen or so thick notebooks with my observations and interviews with local officials and citizen activists in cities and towns across both countries. It was in Miami that I wrote the dissertation under the long-distance direction of David Collier (who soon thereafter left for UC Berkeley). Although the dissertation did not and could not accomplish anywhere near what I had initially imagined it would do, i.e., establish a “law of centralization and scope,” it did make a reasonable case for the proposition that Costa Rica’s more decentralized political structure relative to El Salvador’s had something to do with its superior performance in satisfying public demands. It was approved in 1975.<sup>35, 36, 37</sup>

The following spring I received an offer from New Mexico State University, in Las Cruces, where I spent four years before accepting a position at The University of West Florida, where I remain.<sup>38</sup> On the telephone, the department chairman, [John Haltom](#), a retired Air Force officer, told me that I would be expected to contribute to the MPA program and teach the introductory course in American politics, but that there would be no opportunity in the Latin America field, it being already occupied by two other members of the faculty. Actually, being shut out of teaching Latin American politics turned out to be beneficial in unanticipated ways. Drawing on my economics background, I developed a graduate course in budgeting and an undergraduate one in political economy. This enabled—indeed, required—me to read more economics. Among the economists whose work I read were [Ronald Coase](#) and [Jack Hirshleifer](#). That built on my interests in natural resources, as one of the case studies included in my dissertation was an analysis of Costa Rica’s national aqueducts agency. Never having lived in a dry climate before, in New Mexico I began to read about water policies in America’s southwest.

That gave rise to an article, “A Critique of Collectivist Water Resources Planning.” That article led to my being invited to contribute a chapter to a book being edited by Terry Anderson, what became “Appropriators vs. Expropriators: The Political Economy of Water in the West,” wherein I made the case that the American experience was consistent with Locke’s theory of property in Ch. V of the *Second Treatise*.

Relatedly, I attended a Chautauqua workshop held in Austin, Texas. There I met Richard J. Heggen, then an assistant professor of Civil Engineering at the University of New Mexico. On the return flight, we coincidentally happened to sit next to each other. To pass the time I showed him a model I had developed to account for political violence in Central America.<sup>39</sup> He said it was similar to microeconomic models used water resources engineering. Subsequently, we pursued the discussion by telephone and letter, eventually writing two articles based on the initial model.<sup>40</sup> Then we developed a different but related fiscal model of American presidential elections.<sup>41</sup> After a long hiatus, we resumed our collaboration with an article published in *Simulation* (co-authored with Mike Bundrick).<sup>42</sup> A decade and a half later, we were at it again, this time revisiting our earlier articles on the fiscal model, one applied to U.S. presidential elections and the other comparing findings on the U.S. and U.K.<sup>43</sup> Then Richard joined me in analyzing “the cost of governing,” something I had been studying for several years. More about this work presently.

Also at NMSU, reading and thinking about anarchy and the state in the libertarian literature, it dawned on me that, as the eponymous phrase in the articles that followed have it, we never really get out of anarchy altogether.<sup>44</sup> There, too, collaborating on two papers with Cal Clark that, as it happened, never made their way to print, I gained a new appreciation of the

value of statistics in testing hypotheses about political activity, something I had been unreasonably skeptical about in graduate school.<sup>45</sup> It was at NMSU, too, that I produced a paper on “political profit.” I sent it, among other journals, to *The Journal of Economics and Sociology*, which at the time was edited by [Will Lissner](#) (see, also, his last article, “On the Origins of *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*. Its Purposes and Objectives” (AJES, 2001, 60 (2): 423-33). Lissner was a model editor. Expertly, patiently, and with encouragement, he recommended that I, then a green Assistant Professor starting out, do additional readings to buttress my case, and otherwise guided me into converting my rough paper into two articles, what became “Political Profit: Taxing and Spending in the Hierarchical State,” and “Political Profit: Taxing and Spending in Democracies and Dictatorships.” One of the readings he recommended was Karl Wittfogel’s *Oriental Despotism*, a book I cited in one of the chapters of my *Laws of Politics. Their Operations in Democracies and Dictatorships* (New York: Routledge, 2022).

In 2004, I ran into a review of Ray Fair’s *Predicting Presidential Elections and other Things* by [J. Scott Armstrong](#), an expert on forecasting and marketing at the Wharton School. Scott liked the book but lamented that there was no policy variable in Fair’s model. I emailed Scott, attaching one of the articles on the fiscal model, and he responded with a surprising proposition. Let’s create a website to predict the 2004 presidential election by combining forecasts from different sources, including polls, the Iowa Electronic Market, forecasting models by Fair and others by political scientists, and a panel of invited experts on American elections who did not use a forecasting model. I agreed, provided we could interest Randall J. Jones, Jr., whose book, *Who Will Be in the White House* (Longman, 2001), I had recently read. Randy liked

the idea, and we were off. Thus the [PollyVote](#) was born. Traffic at the site was sporadic at first but grew with every additional month. Among the forecasting models I included was the first prospective prediction made with the fiscal model. As it turned out, it was one of the most accurate that year. This opened the way to publish several items on the model in *PS: Political Science and Politics*, arguably the most widely read journal of the American Political Science Association. For the 2008 election, a fourth member joined the PollyVote team, the German scholar Andreas Graefe. Eventually he assumed responsibility for the website and took the lead in authorship in papers and articles by the foursome, plus a book chapter that followed. In 2017, we won an Outstanding Paper Award of the *International Journal of Forecasting* for an article published in that journal in 2014. In 2020, as I was about to start work on my book, I formally “retired” from the PollyVote. The work on the PollyVote accomplished two purposes. One was to demonstrate the value of combining forecasts for greater accuracy, something that had long been advocated by Armstrong. The other was to promote greater attention to my work on the fiscal model and “laws of politics.”

Recall that as early as my undergraduate years I was intrigued by the economic *laws* of supply and demand, that I wanted to see something similar in political science, and that I titled my dissertation “The **Law** of Centralization and Scope. Political Structure and Policy Performance in Costa Rica and El Salvador” (emphasis added). In 2015, *PS: Political Science and Politics* published my “Five Laws of Politics” and, two years later, “Five Laws of Politics: A Follow-Up.” In the meantime, in a synergistic connection between teaching and scholarship, material I used in my syllabi in an undergraduate course (“Modern Masters of Political Thought”) and a graduate seminar (“The Study of Politics”) made their way into two separate

papers. One, titled “Political Principles: Anarchy, Autocracy, and Democracy,” was prepared in fall 2013 and presented at the April 2014 Chicago meeting of the Midwestern Political Science Association. The other, “Elements of Politics,” had its origin in some notes I wrote on the flight to the conference. As I recall, that is what I talked about most in the presentation. I used to have my students in the graduate course read both papers. I thought they should merged into one, but it took me a couple of years to get around to it, as I was involved in other lines of work, including the fiscal model, the PollyVote, and “Five Laws of Politics.” While in Estonia in 2016, I gave it a try and I sent it to one or two European journals, but neither bit. Once back home, in August 2016 I searched for a journal that I thought would consider it and found *Libertarian Papers*. In November, I heard from the editor, Matthew McCaffrey. The paper had received one half-thumb’s up and one down without formal comments. McCaffrey, as good an editor as Will Lissner, thought enough of the paper to encourage me to revise it and respond to the reviewer who believed that it had potential to make a contribution. I worked on it for several months. In July 2017 “Some Principles of Politics” saw the light of day.

By this time, I thought the two lines of work, on “principles” and “laws” of politics, were ready to be enlarged and deepened into a book-length synthesis. I sent an informal proposal to one publisher, attaching these articles, but the editor did not think the plan fit their priorities. Then, in 2019, an opportunity arose when I was asked to review a book proposal submitted to Routledge. I did so and by return email the editor asked if I or anyone else I knew was interested working on a book. Indeed I was. So, during a year-long sabbatical, I spent the 2020-21 academic year (the “Year of Covid”), writing, revising, and proofreading what became *Laws of Politics: Their Operations in Democracies and Dictatorships* (Routledge 2022). Also, that year I

did another paper on the cost of ruling, “The First Two Laws of Politics: Nannestad and Paldam’s ‘Cost of Ruling’ Revisited,” published in *Acta Politica*.

In 2022 and into 2023, Richard and I were hard at work again. Following our work on the political economy chapter that Cal Clark invited us to contribute to what turned out his last book, Richard took an interest in the election data I had accumulated and analyzed in the two “Five Laws” articles and the book that followed. Initially our focus was on state or provincial elections in Australia, Canada, Germany and the U.S. because it is at this level of government where a bountiful crop of election outcomes are available for analysis. Already, our renewed collaboration has yielded three publications.<sup>46</sup>

Thinking back, I see that my breakthroughs in publishing occurred with editors willing to take risks, who either made their decisions on their own or who did not feel bound head and foot by nay-saying reviewers: Murray Rothbard (*Journal of Libertarian Studies*), Will Lissner (*American Journal of Economics and Sociology*), Gordon Tullock (*Public Choice*), John Baden (special issue, *Western Political Quarterly*), R. Gordon Hoxie (*Presidential Studies Quarterly*), M. J. Peterson (*Polity*), Arturo Valenzuela (*Latin American Research Review*), Jaime Suchlicki (*Cuban Affairs*), Matthew McCaffrey (*Libertarian Papers*).

This is not to say that I didn’t have troubles with editors, the absolute worst being an episode with [Irving Horowitz](#), editor of *Society*. In the summer of 1992, on an NEH fellowship, I had written a long critique of the political resolutions of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) for a seminar for college teachers directed by [Joel Best](#) at Southern Illinois University. I sent the article to various people I thought would be interested.<sup>47</sup> Horowitz responded positively, not to say enthusiastically, encouraging me to submit an abridged version for publication in the

journal. So, I did. Shortly after that, I got a letter from him that was rather perplexing. He said he was sending the article for review, which was fair enough, but his words and tone gave me the impression that he was having second thoughts. I gave him a call to see what was going on, and the impression was reinforced. In comparison with his first letter, he seemed to have taken a 180 degree turn. But this was nothing compared to the review and his cover letter. Both were absolutely outrageous. I did a slow burn and set about to rebut it all point by point.<sup>48,49</sup> The story had a happy ending, however. After turning down a revised submission of the essay, Horowitz made one helpful suggestion, namely that I submit it to *Academic Questions*. Which I did. But not without sending a copy to Paul Hollander, with whom I had corresponded in the past, mentioning in passing that I had submitted it to AQ. I think he in turn took it upon himself to recommend the article, which if true was very kind of him. But that wasn't all. Some time later, I received a letter from the first reviewer apologizing profusely for his review and saying he had changed his mind, that he now thought the article should be published. I have a vague memory that we crossed paths subsequently at a conference, at which time he said some more nice things to me, but I can't say for sure. As a coda, it is worth noting that I published another critique of LASA focusing on its resolutions on Castro's Cuba. The editor of the monograph series, Adolfo Leyva, innocent of my history with Horowitz, sent him a copy. In his reply, Horowitz called it a "major statement."<sup>50</sup>

I am often asked if I have visited Cuba. No, I have not; nor am I going to until there is a real regime change there. I refuse to grant the dictatorship authority over me and subject myself to their power. The Castro dynasty is a criminal syndicate, a corrupt and cruel gerontocracy that has made life miserable for millions of people, and not just in the island. They have divided



families, driven more than a million Cubans from their homeland, executed tens of thousands, run hundreds of thousands through their prison and forced labor system, squandered the country's wealth and patrimony, and made themselves rich and famous while running the country's economy into the ground. "But it wouldn't be dangerous for you, would it?" I was asked recently by a friend, also a fellow Fulbrighter whose appointment in Tartu coincided with mine. "It depends how seriously they take some of my writings," I replied.

Recently, one of our graduate students, who was being wined and dined at several universities trying to recruit him for their doctorate programs, related that in one of those visits someone remarked that I deserved credit for being so clear-eyed about the Castro regime. But it did not take any special talent to diagnose the true nature of that dictatorship. The problem did not involve any difficulty in understanding it. It had more to do with the willing blindness and complicity of silence on the part of many academics, including some very accomplished ones, in the face of so much falsehood and wishful thinking spread by committed leftists, presumably for fear of being black-listed by the powers that be at foundations, conferences, and journals.<sup>51</sup>

As I said earlier in this essay, one reason I decided to pursue a doctorate in political science was because of my belief that the discipline was undeveloped relative to economics, and I wanted to see what I could do to move it forward. I think that starting with "Five Laws of Politics," what I have produced within the last decade, solo or with Richard Heggen, may well constitute a modest step in that direction.<sup>52</sup> I want to continue pursuing that path for what is left of my working years, without, however, neglecting opportunities, for the sake of truth and justice, of doing my bit to expose the Castro regime for what it is.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This is a much revised and extended version of “Bridging Two Cultures and Two Disciplines,” in Howard J. Wiarda (Ed.), *Policy Passages. Career Policies for Policy Wonks*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002, pp. 185-193. I much prefer “politologist” (in Spanish, *politólogo*) to “political scientist.”

<sup>2</sup> Few contemporary tyrants have received the hagiography treatment as frequently as Fidel Castro. For a decidedly different view, see my “Is Fidel Castro a Machiavellian Prince?” and “Totalitarianism in the Tropics: Cuba’s ‘Padilla Case’ Revisited,” both available at [politologist.com](http://politologist.com) and [ssrn.com](http://ssrn.com). Here and elsewhere in the essay, along with most others, all items cited by title only are available at [politologist.com](http://politologist.com), [UWF Library Commons](http://UWF Library Commons), [uwf.edu/acuzan](http://uwf.edu/acuzan), or [ssrn.com](http://ssrn.com).

<sup>3</sup> Think of the receptions given to the Beatles when they arrived in the U.S.A., a city celebrating a victory of its team in the World Series or the Superbowl, and a New Year’s party in Times Square all rolled into one, and you have a pretty good idea what it was like.

<sup>4</sup> For a brief account of Cuban history and of its social and economic conditions before Castro, see Chs.14-16 of my *Laws of Politics, Their Operations in Democracies and Dictatorships* (Routledge, 2022).

<sup>5</sup> “Revolution” is how the tyrannical regime the Castro brothers founded has been referred to, even reverently in the case of some journalists and academics, ever since. For an iconoclastic antidote, see some of the essays by Guillermo Cabrera Infante in *Mea Cuba* (Alfaguara, 1999).

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<sup>6</sup> The perceptive observer then as now will note that green was notably absent from the symbol of his organization, the “26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement,” a red and black flag.

<sup>7</sup> Here and elsewhere in the essay, all items cited by title only are available at [politologist.com](http://politologist.com), [UWF Library Commons](http://UWF Library Commons), [uwf.edu/acuzan](http://uwf.edu/acuzan), or [ssrn.com](http://ssrn.com).

<sup>8</sup> For those unfamiliar with them, “the specter of communism” is borrowed from *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*, by Karl Marx’s and Frederick Engels, and “darkness at noon” from the eponymous title of Arthur Koestler’s great novel.

<sup>9</sup> On the Covadonga. The liner was owned by a company originally founded during the colonial era by two Spanish immigrants who made good in Cuba and returned to Spain.

<http://ssmaritime.com/MS-Guadalupe-Covadonga.htm>

<sup>10</sup> An aunt, the widow of my father’s favorite brother, Luis, who had settled in Connecticut many years earlier, vouched for us. She and her daughter traveled to New York City to present an affidavit taking responsibility for us. When my mother died, I found the letter and sent it to my cousin. Sometimes in class I jokingly tell a different version, though: that we swam across the Rio Grande to enter the U.S.A.

<sup>11</sup> Many years later a dear niece, married to a Mexican-American, asked me about those months in Mexico. “I hated Mexico!” I blurted out. “Why?” My answer, condensed for brevity: “It wasn’t Mexico, per se, it’s just that I was hurting so much from the separation, the sense of loss. I felt so alone in school. When I learned we were moving to Miami [which was being flooded with Cuban refugees and two cousins lived and two more were on their way], I was elated. Miami represented hope.” What surprised me was the passion of my response. She definitely touched a nerve I had not felt for decades.

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<sup>12</sup> Remarkably, in the 2016 South Carolina presidential primary, two Cuban-Americans, Senator Marco Rubio of Florida and Ted Cruz of Texas, placed second and third, respectively, behind Donald Trump. “Little Marco,” as Trump labeled him that year, is, as these words are written, President-elect Trump’s nominee for U.S. Secretary of State. A third Cuban-American, Bob Menendez, Democrat, served several terms as U.S. Senator, in his case from New Jersey, until he fell from grace, having been convicted of corruption. Four other Cuban-Americans have served in the House. In Virginia, Jason Miyares, Republican, the son of Cuban refugees, was elected to the Attorney General’s Office in 2021. In the words of Ukrainian-born comedian Yakov Smirnoff’s 1980s signature catchphrase, “What a country!”

<sup>13</sup> Richard Rodriguez, *Hunger for Memory. The Education of Richard Rodriguez* (Bantam, 1983) is a poignant account of Rodriguez’s struggles with language and his searching for a niche between the Mexican culture of his childhood and the American culture in which he grew up, an experience in some ways similar to mine.

<sup>14</sup> Recently I read the memoirs of the author, A. J. Cronin, *Adventures in Two Worlds*.

<sup>15</sup> Biographies and autobiographies are my favorite genre. I like to read how the author recounts his life. I have read very many such memoirs. Among my favorites are Podhoretz’s and Mortimer Adler’s two (!) autobiographies. Interestingly, these authors are or were Jewish. Although a Catholic, I seem to have a special affinity for Jews.

<sup>16</sup> I do most of our grocery shopping and like to do my own bagging.

<sup>17</sup> Many years ago, observing our Model UN team competing on campus, I wistfully wished that I had been able to participate in something like that while in college—until it dawned on me that I *was* presently engaged in something very much like it: I was a member of the Faculty Senate!



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<sup>18</sup> At the start of every semester, I ask my classes how many work at least 10 hours per week, 20 hours, 30 hours, more than 30. Most students respond that they work between 20 and 30 hours. “I empathize. I did the same. What you need to do for the next 16 weeks is to live like a monk or a nun most of the time, spending very little time on leisure. Ten years from now you will not regret not having attended more parties or consumed more beer when you were a student, but rather, of not having applied yourself enough to your studies.”

<sup>19</sup> His specialty was Latin America, particularly Argentina, references to which he incorporated into his lectures. In the 1980s, applying for support for a grant or fellowship which I do not remember, only that I did not get it, I called him to ask for a recommendation and enclosed my “Appropriators vs. Expropriators” essay (see below). That was my last contact with him. In my searches, all I have found by or about him are a few articles or books that he authored or co-authored in the 1970s. But nothing about what became of him.

<sup>20</sup> I have drawn on it in my courses and publications. See, e.g., Cuzán, “Some Principles of Politics” (2017).

<sup>21</sup> To do so I renounced Cuban citizenship. I do not approve of “dual citizenship” or of automatic citizenship by virtue of birth. I think all people born in the United States should choose whether to become a citizen, with all the rights and obligations pertaining thereto, or to remain a resident, subject to the protection of the law but without voting rights. Citizen or resident, all males would assume the obligation to be subject to the military draft and other duties imposed on the population during wartime. In peacetime, as well as military training, citizens would take civil duties, something equivalent to the militia, e.g., service in the reserves, either the military or an auxiliary corps in support of the local police or sheriff or fire or emergency service for a period

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of years. The choice of citizenship or residency should first be exercised when the person reaches voting age, although the decision should not be irrevocable, but open to revision every decade thereafter, but with a lengthier time of service in an auxiliary corps for late deciders.

<sup>22</sup> Cuzán and Heggen, “A Fiscal Model of Presidential Elections” (1984), and its sequels.

<sup>23</sup> The other recipient was [Donley T. Studlar](#) (also, [here](#)). Many years later, both full professors, he recognized me at breakfast in a restaurant, I believe in a hotel abroad. He was headed for an appointment in Scotland. We traded stories before wishing each other well.

<sup>24</sup> A few days after arriving on campus I met Linda Mary née Cipolla. We were married two years later on a Saturday while IU and Purdue met at the football stadium. [IU won, 38-31](#).

Paraphrasing what President Calvin Coolidge said about his wife in his own [autobiography](#), “For half a century she has borne with my infirmities while I have rejoiced in her graces.”

<sup>25</sup> This is my latest label for it. Previously, I called it “the law of shrining support.”

<sup>23</sup> “Five Laws of Politics” (2015), “Five Laws of Politics: A Follow-Up” (2019), and *Laws of Politics. Their Operations in Democracies and Dictatorships* (Routledge, 2022).

<sup>27</sup> In *Reflections on a Ravaged Century* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), Robert Conquest commented on the “mental incapacitation” and moral obtuseness that corrupted the judgment of countless Western intellectuals, including many academics, when it came to assessing the true nature of Stalinism. See also Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims* (Oxford University Press, 1981).

<sup>28</sup> The bi-weekly paper originated as [The Times of Havana](#), the creation of two brothers, [Carl E. Moore](#) and [Clarence W. Moore](#). After their paper was seized by the regime in 1960. they joined the mass exodus out of Cuba and resurrected it with the new name first in Miami and then in Washington, D.C. In the 1980s, on a phone conversation with one of them (probably Carl, but it

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may have been Clarence), remarking on the time he spent on what was a labor of love, he joked that his wife regarded the paper as his “mistress.” After Carl died the paper was sold to a commercial company, which made a botch of it, and it soon folded.

<sup>29</sup> Also in those years, I published a number of scholarly articles on Nicaragua. “The Nicaraguan Revolution: From Autocracy to Totalitarian Dictatorship?,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, I, 1989, (1/2): 183-2004. “Resource Mobilization and Political Opportunity in the Nicaraguan Revolution: The Theory.” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 1990, 49 (4): 401-412. “Resource Mobilization and Political Opportunity in the Nicaraguan Revolution: The Praxis,” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 1991, 50 (1): 71-83. “The Rise and Fall of Communism in Nicaragua,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 1992, IV (1/2): 164-183. “From Communism to Democracy: Conciliation or Confrontation? The Case of Nicaragua.” *The Political Chronicle*, V (1), 1993, pp. 17-23.

<sup>30</sup> Firmas Press was directed by [Carlos Alberto Montaner](#), a Cuban-born, widely-published and read writer (novelist, essayist and columnist). One of his early books, *Informe Secreto de la Revolución Cubana* (Ediciones SEDMAY, 1976; English translation: *Secret Report on the Cuban Revolution*, Transactions Publisher, 1981) has the status of a classic in my mind. It should have put an end to the starry-eyed views of the Castro regime by willfully ignorant fellow-traveling academics and journalists.

<sup>28</sup> I quit writing them after I found that they interfered with my scholarly work, in the sense that no sooner did I submit one I became preoccupied about what I would write the following month. I acquired a lot of respect for columnists who write one or two a week, and publish books on the side, to boot.

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<sup>32</sup> At I.U. I read Charlie's insightful *Politics and Economic Change in Latin America: The Governing of Restless Nations*. Years later, I met him in Pensacola, where he had retired with his wife. We would go to lunch periodically to discuss various topics, mostly in political theory, a subject to which he had migrated intellectually, the study of Latin America having become too hot for a moderate liberal like himself. Busey's *Notes on Costa Rican Democracy* had intrigued me enough to wanted to study it. I wrote him before departing for Central America and, like Charlie, to whom I also wrote, graciously responded. That was the beginning of decades of written communication with Busey. I met him only twice, at conferences. His wife Marian sometimes added notes of her own to his letters. All are deceased.

<sup>33</sup> Conjecture is just the right word. As the Oxford English Dictionary defines it, it means "4.a. The formation or offering of an opinion on grounds insufficient to furnish proof; the action or habit of guessing or surmising; conclusion as to what is likely or probable. . . . 5.a. An opinion offered on insufficient presumptive evidence; an unverified supposition put forth to account for something."

<sup>34</sup> This was almost entirely my fault. The oldest member of the Government faculty at UM, [James Benjamin "Ben" Stalvey](#), taught a course in classical political theory, but only as an elective course, and at the time I did not appreciate that the ancients living in city-states had anything to teach us. I say "almost entirely" because a wise advisor should have disabused me of that youthful error.

<sup>35</sup> The dissertation committee consisted of [David Collier](#) (chairman), [Alfred Diamant](#), [John Gillespie](#), and the economist James Witte. All but Collier have passed away by now.

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<sup>36</sup> Out of it came my first academic publication, *A Tale of Two Sites: Political Structure and Policy Performance in Costa Rica and El Salvador*. Technical Papers Series, No. 12, Austin: University of Texas, Institute of Latin American Studies, 1977. David Collier was instrumental, as he sent it to William Glade, then the chairman of the Institute of Latin American Studies at UT, who published without further ado.

<sup>37</sup> In spring 2022, I taught a course on Latin American politics, the first time I had done so for several years. One of the readings I assigned was a dissertation on El Salvador. So I pulled up mine to review what I had said. I was surprised to find a chapter in which I compared the two countries' road networks. I had completely forgotten it, unlike those on the garbage dump and the national aqueducts agency.

<sup>38</sup> At a social during my first year here, Lucius Ellsworth, Dean of the College of Arts and Science (since split into three), out of my earshot said that "it would take a crowbar" to get me to leave UWF.

<sup>39</sup> Authority, Scope, and Force: An Analysis of Five Central American Countries," *Public Choice*, 35, 1980, pp. 363-369.

<sup>40</sup> Heggen and Cuzán, "Legitimacy, Coercion, and Scope: An Expansion-Path Analysis Applied to Five Central American Countries and Cuba," and Cuzán and Heggen, "A Micro-Political Explanation of the 1979 Nicaraguan Revolution."

<sup>41</sup> Cuzán and Heggen, "A Fiscal Model of Presidential Elections in the United States: 1880-1980," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 1984, 14(1): 94-108; "Expenditures and Votes: In Search of Downward-Sloping Curves in the United States and Great Britain," *Public Choice*, 1985, 45 (1): 19-34.

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<sup>42</sup> Cuzán, Bundrick, and Heggen, “Fiscal Policy in American Presidential Elections: A Simulation,” *Simulation*, 2009, 85 (1): 17-32. <sup>42</sup> “Mike” Bundrick, a mathematician and statistician, co-authored many of my articles on American presidential elections and Latin American politics until a few years after he retired. Among them the following stand out: “Fiscal Policy and Presidential Election: Update and Extension,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 2000, 30 (2): 275-89); “Deconstructing the 2004 Presidential Election Forecasts: The Fiscal Model and the Campbell Collection Compared,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 2005, 38 (2): 255-262.

<sup>43</sup> “A Derivative-Based Fiscal Model of U.S. Presidential Elections: 1880-2020.” In *Political Economy: Theories, Principles and Politics*, edited by Cal Clark and Evelyn A. Clark. Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science, 2022; “Expenditures and Votes in the U.S. and U.K. Revisited.” Cal was one of the very best men I have ever known. A prolific author himself, he was generous with the work of others.

<sup>44</sup> “Do We Ever Really Get Out of Anarchy?” Many years later a new editor invited me to revisit it. “Revisiting ‘Do We Ever Really Get out of Anarchy?’”

<sup>45</sup> That was the third and, I hope, the last time, that I misjudge the value of a field of study.

<sup>46</sup> Richard J. Heggen and Alfred G. Cuzán, “Incumbent Party Reelection in Australia, Canada, and the United States: An Exponential Decay Model.” *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 2022, 55 (3): 490–496. Richard J. Heggen, and Alfred G. Cuzán. “A Geometric Model of Elections in Five Federal Democracies” *Statistics, Politics and Policy*, 2024, 15 (3): 273-86.

<https://doi.org/10.1515/spp-2024-0017> Alfred G. Cuzán and Richard J. Heggen, “A Cruise and Crash Model of the Cost of Ruling.” *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion, and Parties*. 2023, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17457289.2023.2281388>.

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<sup>47</sup> Among them Yvon Lenier, author of incisive critiques of the Castro regime, who became a friend.

<sup>48</sup> I mentioned the incident to Charlie Anderson once without identifying either Horowitz or the reviewer, and he correctly guessed the identity (although I did not confirm it).

<sup>49</sup> The complete correspondence is available electronically at the Penn State University Library Digital Collection of Horowitz Transaction Publishers Archives.

<https://digital.libraries.psu.edu/digital/collection/transaction/search/searchterm/cuzan>

<sup>50</sup> “The Latin American Studies Association vs. The United States: The Verdict of History,” *Academic Questions*, 1994, 7 (3): 40-55; “Dictatorships and Double-Standards: The Latin American Studies Association on Cuba.” Miami, FL: Endowment for Cuban American Studies Paper #13. Miami, FL: the Cuban-American National Foundation, 1995. See, also, “Cuba’s Ranking in the Fitzgibbon Democracy Surveys: Reflecting a Leftist Bias?” *Cuban Affairs, Quarterly Electronic*, 2007, 2 (2). This journal is now defunct and inaccessible but a copy of the article is on my website at [politologist.com](http://politologist.com).

<sup>51</sup> The publication of [“‘Revolutionary’ Fascism: A Review of Jorge Edwards’ \*Persona Non Grata\*”](#) led one academic to say that he did not wish to be “associated” with it and, by implication, with me. Originally published in 1973, Edwards’ book has gone through many editions, including some in English, available at amazon.com. My review appeared in the January/February 1980 of the [\*Libertarian Forum\*](#). Three decades later I returned to the book in “Totalitarianism in the Tropics. Cuba’s ‘Padilla Case’ Revisited.”

<sup>52</sup> “Five Laws of Politics,” “Five Laws of Politics: A Follow-up,” “Some Principles of Politics,” and *Laws of Politics. Their Operations in Democracies and Dictatorships*.

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<sup>53</sup> The Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy (ASCE), which meets in Miami every summer, has been a favorite forum. As I told Yvon Grenier recently, though, I think I have exhausted just about all I had to say about Cuba and the Castros.

<sup>54</sup> Only items highlighted in the narrative are included here. For nearly complete list of publications, see my c.v., at [uwf.edu/acuzan](http://uwf.edu/acuzan).