Powering the Pearl: A Study of Cuba’s Energy Autonomy

METHODOLOGY

“Triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals (e.g. interviewing both a principal and a student), types of data (e.g. observational field notes and interviews), or methods of data collection (e.g. documents and interviews)” (Creswell, 2012, p. 259). The three methods of data collection used in this study are interviews, artifacts, and literary review.

Interviews

Five interviews were performed during the trip to Havana:
- Employee of a Cuban and Canadian petroleum collaboration
- Electrician of the Cuban National Power Grid
- Hostel Owner in Viñales
- Cuban Tour Guide
- Professor of Economy at the University of Havana

Artifacts

Observations were collected on planned excursions and independent explorations of Havana.

Literary Review

Data that could not be collected through qualitative methods was collected from online sources.
- Personal blogs, online Havana news sources, and other primary sources were

REFERENCES

Interview with and employee of a Cuban and Canadian petroleum collaboration. March 17, 2017.
Interview with an electrician of the Cuban national power grid. March 18, 2017.
Interview with a Cuban tour guide. March 12, 2017.
Interview with a professor at the University of Havana. March 17, 2017
Interview with an economist at an international financial institution. October 28, 2018

ANALYSIS

Cuba’s national pride comes from their projected energy autonomy as a communist country, although they have been dependent on other countries to supply him with resources since the revolution. However, Cuba has a high capacity for various forms of renewable energy. This study analyzes the impacts of Cuba’s decline in petroleum use and the rise of renewable energy. There is a lack of primary research on Cuba’s energy infrastructure because of government censorship, so this study utilizes accounts from Cuban citizens as well as first-hand observations of the country. Research was conducted through interviews, observations, and written accounts of life in Cuba. The decline of Cuba’s use of petroleum has led to an emphasis on sustainability, affecting people’s lifestyles and the economy. The inability to produce enough electricity has created an inequality between those who are involved in tourist industries and those who are not. However, the dawn of renewable energy is helping to close that gap while simultaneously increasing the country’s energy production.

CONCLUSION

Until now, electrical autonomy has not been possible for Cuba. Relying solely on other countries to import petroleum has led to two instances where an unexpected decrease of imports caused Cuba to nearly collapse. In order to protect against another infrastructure collapse and to increase domestic energy production, Cuba is trying to diversify its energy portfolio in both types of electricity production and foreign partnerships. Meanwhile, the exploitation of the tourism industry as a main source of income is greatly affecting lifestyle by creating inequality of electric resources. The decrease in oil imports, and therefore the shortage of electric power has made this inequality more pronounced. The exploitation of solar, wind, and other renewable resources in the areas where these are present could create a more even distribution of resources, boost the economy outside of tourism, and pre-