Developing Cuba into a liberal market economy

A discourse analysis of European Union liberal economic policy towards Cuba

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Abstract

In this thesis I aim to critically examine how the European Union (EU) liberal economic discourse towards Cuba is (re)produced and how the discourse enables policy actions. Furthermore, I aim to go beyond the question of how the liberal economic discourse enables policy actions. I will do so by asking how alternative policy actions are disabled through the discourse. This critical understanding of the (re)production of liberal economic discourse, enabling and disabling policies, aims to make it possible to question the dominant liberal economic development thinking. The research uses discourse analysis within a post structural approach, wishing to contribute to critical insights in the field of foreign policy discourse analysis. The analysis of the construction of the Self and the Other, through spatial, temporal and ethical dimensions, aims to shed light on the underlying taken for granted notions embedded in EU discourse. These taken for granted notions are understood to enable and limit policy actions. The goal of the thesis is to destabilize dominant liberal economic discourse and to open up room for plurality.

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Introduction

The tendency within the academic literature to analyse EU foreign policy towards Cuba through a positivist approach, asking *why* questions, triggered my attention. Asking a *how* question instead, enables me to problematize: 'the *possibility* that particular policies and practices could happen' (Doty 1996: 4, emphasis in the original). Apart from a focus on human rights and democratisation within EU discourse, the liberal economic ideas sparked my interest. While there are many different cases in which the EU employs liberal economic policy, Cuba is seen as one of the last remaining centrally planned economies, making it an interesting case to analyse. The development model the island has followed since the beginning of the revolution in 1959, makes it a case where the "reality" represented by the EU liberal economic development model does not always seem "natural". Furthermore, Thomas Diez states that limiting of what is considered meaningful and logical through discourse, has not been studied sufficiently within the literature on EU foreign policy discourse (2014: 29). Therefore I aim to go beyond the analysis of how the liberal economic discourse enables policy actions, by asking how it disables alternatives (Larsen 2004: 68; Milliken 1999: 236). In the coming pages I will aim to answer the following research question: how does the EU (re)produced liberal economic discourse, and enables liberal economic policy actions while disabling alternative policy actions towards Cuba?

The EU liberal economic discourse is part of a bigger picture, that is present in many aspects of our everyday lives; academia, the media, Hollywood, universities and most importantly for this thesis, in development thinking. This discourse is based on liberal ideas ranging from the famous work of W.W. Rostow (1960) on the different stages economic growth takes and Francis Fukuyama (1989; 1992) with his emphasis on liberal democracy as the only option, to the advertising adds on television and the university courses on development economics (Escobar 1995: 79). This discourse brings with it certain taken for granted notions. That development can best be reached through capitalism and free market economy is an important taken for granted notion central in this thesis. I adopt a definition of taken for granted notions understood as the ideas that are not questioned, moreover, they are taken to be true, in the words of Foucault: 'familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought….' (1988: 154-155). The EU liberal economic policy can be seen as an example of the dominance of the liberal economic development model. Destabilizing the dominant discourse is important for dominance gives the ability to practice power (Doty 1996: 170).

The critical post structural perspective I take in this thesis fits the research question, it

follows from the unsettling question of how the worldview, in this case the view on Cuba by the EU, is made possible and shapes policy (Doty 1993: 304; Hansen 2006: 6). This critical questioning aims to reveal the construction of EU liberal economic policies, raising awareness of the mechanisms the discourse provides. It is important to note that it is not my intention to criticise capitalism or liberal economic reforms. However, I do aim to contribute to denaturalizing the dominant liberal economic development thinking. The research focuses on EU liberal economic discourse as part of EU's foreign policy discourse towards Cuba. This choice to focus on one discourse strand within the overall foreign policy discourse of the EU towards Cuba means that I will look at the enabling of liberal economic policy actions and the disabling of alternative policies to those liberal economic policy actions. The main concepts, liberal economic discourse, are understood as follows: discourse is conceptualized as 'a system of statements in which each individual statement makes sense' (Doty 1993: 302). Liberal economy is defined as 'emphasising the concept of the free market and laissez-faire policies, with the government's role limited to providing support services' (Kariithi 2007: 72). Liberal economic discourse is therefore understood to be a system of statements in which the concepts of free market and laissez-faire politics with a limited role for the government is constructed as logical.

EU official documents compiled from 1995 to 2016, and texts that are referred to in the official EU documents for the basis of the discourse analysis. The timeframe of 1995 to 2016 is chosen due to the importance of including several documents over a longer historical time to enable analysis of the (re)production of discourse (Hansen 2006: 70). It is important to note that while 1995 is taken as the starting point for the analysis, discursive practices are never static and build upon older already existing ideas on the topic, and at the same time create new meaning, hence the use of "(re)production" of the discourse (Larsen 2004: 66; Warnaar 2013: 6, 27).[1] I am aware that the construction in the discourse will have changed over time. However, the aim of the thesis is to more generally critique the dominant discourse towards Cuba. The discourse is not only applicable to those years and the basic taken for granted notions continue at present. As the scholarly debate on discourses is on-going and the (re)production of discourse continues, I consciously use the present tense when writing about my findings.

To answer the research question stated above, first I will critically examine how the

[1] The discursive struggle within the EU (the influence of the different bodies and member states) is another interesting field of study. However, in this thesis the EU discourse is studied as a single discourse (Hansen 2006: 67).

(re)production of the liberal economic discourse works. This is followed by the examination of the way policy actions are enabled and how alternative policy options to liberal economic policy actions are disabled. In the next chapter I will focus on the academic literature on EU foreign policy towards Cuba, the liberal economic discourse, and development thinking. Chapter 2 is dedicated to the theoretical poststructuralist approach and the methodology; discourse analysis. In chapters 3 the discourse analysis of the EU documents is presented. Chapter 4 focuses on the way the EU liberal economic discourse enables and disables policy actions. In the conclusions I will come back to the research question and briefly touch upon the possibilities for further research.

1. Literature review

1.1. Debating EU foreign policy towards Cuba

To the best of my knowledge, a research on EU discourse towards Cuba, has not been conducted before. However, a large body of literature exists on EU foreign policy towards Cuba. The scholarly work examined for this thesis on the EU-Cuba relation is mainly aimed at explaining EU foreign policy towards Cuba, through the analysis of important events that took place (Alzugaray Treto 2015; Baresch 2008; Byron 2000; Chofre-Sirvent and Antón-Guardiola 2013; Contreras 2010; Domínguez et al. 2012; Gortázar et al 2004; Krull 2014; McKenna 2004; McGillion 2005; Ojeda Revah 2012; Perera Gómez 2012; Roy 2003, 2006, 2012; Ugalde Zubiri 2010). In line with the academic debate on EU foreign policy, it is asked what the drivers of the EU are (strategic or value driven) (McKenna 2004; Krull 2014). An example is the argument about the objectives of EU foreign policy towards Cuba (Alzugaray Treto 2015; Ojeda Revah 2012: 24; Roy 2012; Ugalde Zubiri 2010: 170). Eduardo Perera Gómez, a Cuban based researcher at the *Centro de Investigaciones de Política Internacional* – CIPI,[2] describes the foundations on which the policy of the EU towards Cuba is based since the fall of the Soviet Union as follows:

> EU relations with the Island are a by-product of the restructuring of the international system after the breakdown of the Cold War equilibrium. The new context strengthened tendencies toward globalization structured around a fundamentalist model of liberal democracy and market economy (Perera Gómez 2012: 102).

What he calls: 'a fundamentalist model of liberal democracy and market economy' (ibid), points towards the importance of the liberal notions used by the EU. The presence of a liberal economic discourse identified here is important for this research, however, the model of market economy is not elaborated upon, nor questioned in greater detail.

The academic debate on the aim of EU policy, and how to achieve it, leads not only to an identification of the liberal worldview on which this aim is build, it also provides some clues about the ideas of the EU on the need for Cuba to change. Joaquín Roy, one of the leading academic writers on EU-Cuba relations, describes the overall conclusions on EU policies as follows:

[2] Centre for Research of International Politics.

> [t]he balance sheet of the experience of the European Union's policies and attitudes on Cuba shows a mixed picture. It is composed of a coherent script of measures intended in the first place for maintaining the communication line open, and secondly for contributing to facilitate the conditions for a sort of "soft landing" in the terrain of democracy and market economy in the event of peaceful transition (2003: 26).

A liberal model of democracy and market economy again stand out, however, also the idea of the need for transition. This aim for change, be it through the use of words such as regime change, transition, or progress, point towards the possibility for development. Perera Gómez, and Roy identify the aim for transition, however, how a developmentalist discourse, that enables policy actions, is constructed, is a question that remains unanswered (Perera Gómez 2012: 103; Roy 2003: 26; 2012).

The unfolding academic debate on the EU-Cuba relations can be characterized by the evaluation and critique on the EU policy towards Cuba, and has mainly seen a problem solving, positivist approach. Even though the scholarly work on EU policy towards Cuba gives insight in the workings of the EU and the forming of policy, influenced by different voices and players in the field, they take the so called reality as a given. How the policy has been made possible in the first place, is not questioned (Warnaar 2013: 16). In the next section I will look at the academic literature on liberal economic discourse and development thinking.

1.2. Liberal economic discourse and development

In the influential work of Ian Manners, on the EU as a normative power, the liberal character of EU foreign policy is identified, however, in his work it is not analysed how it is discursively constructed (Diez 2005: 626; 2014: 36-38; Larsen 2004: 71; Manners 2002: 239, 243; Rosamond 2014). Within EU foreign policy discourse studies, the idea that transition towards development is based on liberal values, has also come up (Larsen 2004: 73-74). Within dominant development thinking liberal ideas are present. The discursive practice of development thinking has its roots in the older colonizing discourse, which is most famously described by Edward Said in his work 'Orientalism' (ibid: 342; Said 1978). The binary oppositions used in the colonizing discourse were reframed after World War II, and institutionalised through the establishment of international institutions such as the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions. From a post positivist approach, Arturo Escobar writes that: '[d]evelopment has been the primary mechanism through which the Third World has been imagine and imagined itself, thus marginalizing or precluding other ways of seeing

and doing' (2005: 342). Within this mechanism of the development discourse, Roxanne Lynn Doty stresses that: '[f]oreign aid, as a set of productive representational practices, made possible new techniques within an overall economy of power in North-South relations' (1996: 128). The construction of needs plays an important role in development thinking. And again, the interpretation of needs within the dominant development discourse is based on liberal notions (Escobar 2005: 348).

One of the important aspects of liberal values is economic liberalism. Ben Rosamond describes economic liberalism as one of the EU foreign policy liberalisms (2014: 219). At the core he argues is the idea of propagation and spread of the market order (ibid). The liberal economic discourse uses economic ideas, going back to classical economic thinkers such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo, based on capitalism and the working of a free market (Escobar 1995: 60). These ideas, now a days often called neoliberal, have been strengthened through the work of, amongst others, Rostow (1960) and Fukuyama (2006 [1992]), which has a huge influence both inside and outside academia. However, I agree with Rosamond's argument, that the liberal economic discourse of the EU cannot be defined as neoliberal. Defining it as neoliberal would be a simplification of EU economic thought (ibid: 143).

Within the discourse, notions of free market economy as the best way for a government to reach growth and development are embedded (Karagiannis 2004: 3; Panizza 2009). It is argued that: 'the development construct has become a framework that rationalizes and naturalizes the power of advanced capitalism in progressivist terms – as the engine bringing those on the bottom "up" toward those who are already there' (Cooper and Packard 2005: 131). Within the framework of development, liberal economic notions are naturalized, constructing the North/South and developed/underdeveloped divides. The importance of opening up to the world economy through the liberalization of trade and investment and the modernization of the state are central to these liberal economic notions (Escobar 1995: 93-94). In order to develop, progress towards a liberal economic model seems to be a given rather than a choice. Before analysing how this works in EU liberal economic discourse towards Cuba, in the next chapter the theoretical framework an methodology will be described.

2. Theoretical framework and methodology

2.1. Poststructuralist approach

In this research a critical theoretical approach is taken to better understand how liberal economic discourse is (re)produced, shaping policy in the act. Doty stresses that: ´[w]hat is explained is not *why* a particular outcome obtained, but rather *how* the subjects, objects, and interpretive dispositions were socially constructed such that certain practices were made possible´ (1993: 298, emphasis in original). A post-positivist approach therefore enables the questioning of the working of institutions and dominant taken for granted notions (Foucault, quoted in Rabinow 1984: 6). This questioning: 'also has clear political and ethical significance, since in explaining discourse productivity, scholars can potentially denaturalize dominant forms of knowledge and expose to critical questioning the practices that they enable' (Milliken 1999: 236). The questioning of the taken for granted notions, on which policy actions are based, makes it possible to: 'denaturalize dominant forms of knowledge' (ibid). The aim of applying a poststructuralist approach is therefore to destabilize: 'dominant modes of making meaning' (Doty 1996: 171; Springer 2012: 140).

The choice for a post-structural approach has theoretical implications. First of all, in its ontology, or how the world is seen, in which the importance of language in the creation of meaning and reality is stressed. The assumption that discourse frames first-order facts that shape policy action becomes possible through this ontological stance (Hansen 2006: 20). Instead of, for instance, asking why the relation between the EU and Cuba developed the way they have, from a poststructuralist perspective the question would be raised how certain policy actions have come about (Hansen 2006: 28; Warnaar 2013: 16). Secondly, in its epistemology, or how knowledge can be derived from the world, post-structuralism looks at the way worldviews are formed, putting effort in the interpretative understanding of the world. Within this poststructuralist approach, the understanding of the subjectivity of knowledge but also the subjectivity of my choices as a researcher is crucial (Aydın-Düzgit 2014a: 357). The choices made in this research show I use a theoretical framework to make sense of the world around me. This critical epistemology is aiming to be self-reflective, by acknowledging that my worldview is also a construction and that I am providing an interpretation of how the EU liberal economic discourse (Doty 1993: 305).

2.2. Discourse analysis

The choice for discourse analysis within a post structural perspective means that I assume that discourse gives meaning to the world, through the positioning of subjects and objects using different mechanism available in language (Doty 1993: 302; Larsen 2004: 63). Discourse gains meaning and policy actions are made possible through the construction of 'particular subject identities, positioning these subjects vis-à-vis one another and thereby constructing a particular "reality"….' (Doty 1993: 304-305). Diez puts it as follows: 'the way in which discourse informs policy articulations works both through providing meanings on which one can build, and through setting the limits of a meaningful and legitimate policy' (2014: 28). The limits of what is considered acceptable, means that the discursive practice also disables policy actions (Aydın-Düzgit 2014a: 355). Through the analysis of texts that are referred to within EU discourse, the way the dominant discourse disables alternatives can be studied. As Lene Hansen argues: '[o]fficial discourse should, however, be situated inside a larger intertextual web that traces intertextual references to other texts, thereby bringing in sources that are constructed either as supporting or as texts in need of repudiation' (2006: 53). I agree with Doty when she states that: 'I do not believe that there are any pure alternatives [to the dominant discourses] … [n]or do I wish to suggest that we are always hopelessly imprisoned in a dominant and all-pervasive discourse' (1996: 171). Thinking outside of the representation within EU liberal economic discourse, enables the destabilizing of the dominant EU liberal economic discourse and generates alternative sites of meaning (ibid: 170).

The elaborated methodological approach of discourse analysis, described in the work of Doty (1993), Milliken (1999), and Hansen (2006), is followed. Doty explains the analytical categories of presuppositions, predications, and subject positioning within the discourse that enable methodologically rigorous discourse analysis (1993: 306). The presuppositions consist of the knowledge that is taken for granted and construct: 'a particular kind of world in which certain things are recognized as true' (ibid: 306). Predications are employed in the work of Milliken, as the search for predicates; verbs, adverbs and adjectives that construct the objects and subjects within the discourse (1999: 232). Finally, subject positioning is a combination of the categories of predictions and presuppositions, focusing on the relationship between subjects, further elaborated in the work of Hansen through the use of the concepts of the Self and the Other (Doty 1993: 306; Hansen 2006). The construction of the Self and the Other is analysed using the three dimensions in discourse, spatial, temporal and ethical, described by Hansen (2006: 42). The first dimension is concerned with inclusion and exclusion through

space and the delineation of it (ibid: 42). The temporal dimension is defined by change or stasis over time, and is for instances relevant in discourses on development (ibid: 43). The last dimension deals with the construction of responsibility, the ethical dimension, and looks at how the Self or the Other is seen as responsible towards another (ibid: 45). The dimensions shed light on the way a discourse is (re)produced.

2.3. Selection and analysis of the documents

The choice for the method of discourse analysis has resulted in a thorough search for relevant documents. EU documents were compiled from 1995 to 2016. The EU database was consulted for documents on Cuba.[3] Different EU documents on Cuba were added along the way, as one document often leads the researcher to another.[4] Documents include amongst others; the Common Position (CP) written in 1996, several 'Council conclusions on Evaluation of the EU CP on Cuba' (2004; 2007; 2009), the 'Country Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme' (2010), and the 'Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Cuba 2014-2020' (2014). The European External Action Service (EEAS) website was consulted and various articles, press statements and declarations form part of the sources used in the thesis. The inclusion of documents from different years and EU bodies has been taken into account to provide a basis of official documents over time and from different EU bodies. Relevant external texts the selected EU documents refer to have also been included in the discourse analysis.

Practically the analysis of the EU official documents and some of the external documents that it refers to, consisted of the identification of the context of the different documents. Coding categories were established after which the texts were coded using different colours. Due to the interpretive character of the research, these coding categories changed somewhat during the analysis. The liberal economic discourse strand was selected for further analysis. The liberal economic discourse strands, were distilled from the discourse. The use of verbs, adverbs, adjectives, as well as the spatial, temporal and ethical dimensions were identified using different symbols. From there the focus was put on the interpretation of the use of words, the linguistic dimensions of the discourse. This empirical and interpretive driven research design lets the discourse speak for itself, the analysis and its outcomes have,

[3] Using the websites of the European Commission transparency document search: http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/?fuseaction=search&language=en and EUR – Lex: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html amongst others.
[4] See Chapter 4 of Hansen 2006 for more on intertextuality.

therefore, constantly nourished and altered the research to finally come to the understanding expressed in the thesis (Milliken 1999: 234).

3. The (re)production of liberal economic discourse

3.1. Cuba: the isolated island

The first formal relations between the then European Community (EC) and Cuba can be traced back to 1988, just before the Soviet Union disintegrated. As the EC established relations with the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, diplomatic relations were initiated with Cuba (Perera Gómez 2012: 110; Gratius 2012: 122; Roy 2012: 118). The first important and larger document on Cuba, after the establishment of official diplomatic relations in 1988, was published by the Commission of the European Communities (1995). The communication of the Commission was followed by responses of the European Parliament in the same year and the Economic and Social Committee in 1996 (European Parliament 1995; European Economic and Social Committee 1996). In these documents, an overview is given of the situation on the island and its relations regionally and with the EU. The new global context, the end of the Cold War, is set as a possibility for political and economic change in Cuba, fitting within the ideas of economic development.

Positioning Cuba within EU policy has been a difficult task. In the Soviet era Cuba was approached as part of the Eastern European countries, whereas after the fall of the Soviet Union it has been spatially identified as part of Latin America or as one of the Caribbean islands that are part of the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of states (ACP) (Díaz Lazcano 2007: 260; De Miranda Perrondo 2003: 41; Gratius 2012: 121-122). In the three documents mentioned above, a universal discourse can be found in the articulation of the international community, constructing Cuba as failing to meet the international principles (Hansen 2006: 43). This enables subject positioning, through: '[t]he construction of subjects along the oppositional dimensions….' (Doty 1993: 313). The Cuban economic model is, in a spatial sense, described as an outsider of the world economy, through the construction of the Cuban model as failed, old-fashioned and not efficient. It is important to note that independently of the developments as they were taking place in Cuba on the ground, the facts are given meaning within the discourse (Warnaar 2013). The Cuban economy is described as being a *highly dependent* economy, *particularly* dependent on sugar production, experiencing a *terrible* economic crisis, suffering *severely* from the disintegration of the Soviet Union, resulting in the *serious* deterioration of the living standards of the Cuban people (Commission of the European Communities 1995: 2; European Parliament 1995: 9, 12). The use of predicates, such as the adjectives and adverbs in italic in the example above, give meaning to the exclusion of the Cuban economic model from the "normal" liberal economic standard that

is followed by the international community.

The Cuban economic model is set against the liberal economic model that is constructed as being able to solve Cuba's economic problems. This is particularly clear in the discourse on the economic reform process that was introduced by the Cuban government in 1993. The description of the reforms fit within the ideas of economic development through the liberalization of the economy. In the text, the authorization of self-employment has yielded '*significant* results', the opening up of agriculture sector to cooperatives has made it '*very much more* efficient', and attracting foreign capital in certain sectors of the economy is '*particularly noteworthy'* (European Economic and Social Committee 1996: 93-94, emphasis added). Later on in the reform process, Cuban state actions that went against liberal economic ideas, are constructed negatively: '[t]he Council expressed regret at the imposition of new restrictions on private enterprise since the last evaluation, with negative consequences for many Cuban people. It repeated its view that the opening of the Cuban economy would benefit all its people….' (Council of the European Union 2004: 1). The negative representation of restricting liberal economic reforms reinforces the construction of opening of the economy as something positive. This spatial dimension, seen within a bigger context of development thinking enables the positioning of capitalism versus communism. This makes it possible to position capitalism as being able to bring countries to the same (economic) level as the Western countries (Hansen 2006: 42; Cooper and Packard 2005: 131). As will be described in the next section, this also counts for Cuba within EU discourse, in which it is given the capacity to develop towards a liberal economy.

3.2. Cuba: the old-fashioned economy in need of modernization

Within the development discourse in the official EU documents, the importance of the temporal dimension stands out. As Hansen highlights: 'the construction of the Other as temporally progressing towards the (Western) Self is for instance a central component of development discourse….' (2006: 43). The (re)production of the Self as more developed compared to the Other enables the taken for granted notion of the need for the Other to develop, desirably to become like the Self (Warnaar 2013: 25). In the discourse, integrating Cuba within the international community can be achieved through political and economic change. This constructs Cuba as being able to become like the Self: fully integrated into the international community. In the European Parliament response to the Commission this is stated as follows: '[the European Parliament] [b]elieves that dialogue is the most positive means of encouraging *evolution* in Cuba towards the achievement of those political and

economic changes which will enable the country fully to integrate itself into the international community' (European Parliament 1995: 6, emphasis added). The word *evolution* in the statement of the European Parliament above, stresses the temporal dimension, in which the change of Cuba is constructed as a natural course of events.

Like the temporal positioning of 'the Balkan' in Hansen's work, Cuba is constructed: 'as different from the West but with the capacity for liberal political and economic transformation' (2006: 42). The encouragement of the EU of liberal economic reforms produces the capability of Cuba to temporally progress towards the liberal model of the EU. The process of transition is described as: 'the adoption … of a series of economic reforms which, although *inadequate* and *incomplete,* at least go some way towards rationalization, the liberalization of economic ties with the world and the beginning of a private enterprise culture' (Commission of the European Communities 1995: 3; emphasis added). This picture constitutes a temporal path, in which Cuba could and should move towards a liberal economy, towards the Self. It also stresses the development of the Cuban economy as insufficient and unaccomplished, through the use of the adjectives *inadequate* and *incomplete*. Through this positioning the discourse not only makes the Cuban economy look old-fashioned, it also presents an image of rationalization, liberalization and a private enterprise culture as desirable and modern. Ideas about modernization are at the core of development thinking, and also ingrained in EU liberal economic discourse. For example when it is stated that: '[t]he cooperation agreement should aim … to help bring the island's economy up to date' (European Economic and Social Committee 1996: 100).

The end of 1996 meant a new era in EU-Cuba relations. Arguably the key text in EU-Cuba relations, the CP, was a response to the developments in Cuba. Amongst others the shooting down of two private plane of the exiled group Rescue Brothers by the Cuban authorities (Byron 2000: 32). It has also been argued that a changing mood within the EU has enabled the implementation of the CP (Gratius 2012).[5] The CP conditioned a cooperation agreement with Cuba on democratization and improvements in the human rights situation, dominating the EU-Cuba relations for many years (Ojeda Revah 2012; Díaz Lezcano 2007: 263).[6] In the CP the EU states that: '[i]t is its firm wish to be Cuba's partner in the progressive and irreversible opening of the Cuban economy' (Council of the European Union 1996: 1). The adjective used to describe the reforms: *tentative*, indicates there is still a long way before a "real" liberal economy is established. The other adjectives used in the second sentence:

[5] Especially a change in Spanish politics under José Maria Aznar has been attributed to the change.
[6] Until the signing of the PDCA in 2016 that repealed the CP.

progressive and *irreversible*, emphasise the temporal direction of the economic opening. The economic opening is progressing towards the Self and there is no way back. The presuppositions are made in the discourse that the opening of the Cuban economy is a progressive act, one that cannot be undone.

In the selected EU documents stretching from 1996 to 2008, the human rights and democratization discourse strands are dominant (Presidency of the European Union 2003; European Parliament 2004; Council of the European Union 2004; European Parliament 2006; Council of the European Union 2007). One exemption is the colourful document published after the EU established its Delegation in Havana on 14 February 2003. The document pictures Cuba as a beautiful old fashioned island, expressed through images of old buildings, a cow in front of a cart in the countryside, and the ever present old American cars. Cuba is portrayed as less developed, less modern and in need of a transition. The main message that stands out, and is literally highlighted in the text, is: 'opening the door to the world economy' (European Commission 2003: 5). With this sentence, Cuba's capacity to become economically integrated into the world economy is reproduced. The writer of the document, Commissioner Poul Nielsen states that: 'I have no doubt whatsoever that Cuba will over time integrate *fully* and *successfully* into this *irreversible* process of globalisation' (ibid: 2, emphasis added). Through the usage of the adverbs and adjectives; *fully*, *successfully* and *irreversible*, the capacity of Cuba to move towards the Self is strengthened. At the same time, the spatial dimension of Cuba as outsider that is (still) not part of the modern, globalised world economy is reproduced.

When in 2003, just after the EU opened its Delegation in Havana, 75 dissidents were imprisoned in Cuba and for the first time in years three Cubans were executed following the hijacking of a ferry, the EU responded with restrictions on diplomatic relations and political measures (Contreras 2010: 10; Roy 2012: 124). The mentions made about the economic situation in Cuba in the selected documents in those years are mostly negative (Council of the European Union 2004: 1; 2007: 7; European Parliament 2008: 378). Within the context of stagnating EU-Cuba relations, the economic, together with the political situation, are described as 'essentially unchanged' (Council of the European Union 2007: 7; European Parliament 2008: 378). This constructs the pausing of Cuba on the temporal transition towards the Self. However, even though the focus of EU foreign policy shifted towards human rights and democratization, the need for economic transition and Cuba's ability to change towards the Self remained (ibid; European Council 2007: 7; 2009: 11).

3.3. Cuba: EU's responsibility

Moral responsibility is implied in the EU discourse. The EU is portrayed as a responsible, moral actor in supporting Cuba to become part of the insiders club (the international community and world economy) (Hansen 2006: 45; Larsen 2004: 69). For example when the Commission of the European Communities states: 'The purpose of this Communication is to show that a peaceful and successful transition to a market economy and political pluralism in Cuba requires the forging of new international and regional bonds, and that, by virtue of its very size, the EU is well placed to play a leading role in that process' (1995: 2). The moral responsibility is sometimes stated literally: '[t]he European Union has a duty to the Cuban people to support its integration in the international system….' (European Parliament 1995: 15). The word duty used by the EU, frames the EU as an actor that has the responsibility to act in support of the integration in the international system. More subtly, it is also expressed in sentences such as: '[t]he EU *should* remain a *reliable* partner.…' (European Commission 2014: 4, emphasis added). The use of modalities, like the verb *should*, presupposes responsibility and adverbs such as *reliable* reinforces the moral character of the EU. The moral positioning is strengthened through the use of active and positive verbs in stressing how the EU will, for example: 'help bind the island republic back into the international community' (Commission of the European Communities 1995: 6). In all documents analysed, the EU structurally uses active positive verbs for itself, while active verbs for Cuba or the Cuban government are less present. Through the use of these positive and active verbs for the Self, the EU constructs an ethical identity enabling it to, for example; take action, support, help, encourage and train.

The EU looks at the responsibility not only as its own, but as a universal responsibility.[7] Hansen states that: '[w]hen foreign policy discourse articulates an explicit international responsibility … a powerful discursive move is undertaken in that the issue is moved out of the realm of the strategic and 'selfishly national' and re-located within the 'higher grounds' of the morally good' (2006: 45). Within the liberal economic discourse this is manifested through the notion of raising the living standards of Cuban people (Council of the European Union 1996: 1). The responsibility of the EU towards the Cuban people is constructed within a liberal economic framework. The support of the liberal economic reforms is seen as a responsibility of the EU towards the Cuban people and their wellbeing

[7] This is especially clear within the discourse strand on human rights and democratization (European Parliament 1995: 6; 2004; 2006; 2008; Hansen 2006: 45).

(Council of the European Union 2004: 1; European Union Action Service 2016b). The construction of international responsibility is especially present in the development thinking (Hansen 2006: 45). For example by referencing Article 21 of the Treaty of the European Union in the 2010 National Indicative Programme for Cuba:

> [t]his objective [eradicating poverty] has to be put into the context of the EU's external action as a whole (see Article 21 of the Treaty on the European Union), including sustainable development, integration of developing countries into the world economy, democracy, rule of law and human rights, preserving peace, preventing conflicts and strengthening international security' in order to reduce and, in the long term, eradicate poverty (European Commission 2010: 7).

The overarching development discourse implies humanitarian responsibility, and is used as a powerful discursive tool. The EUs ethical responsibility for the wellbeing of the Cuban people shapes the EU as a moral entity. Within a liberal economic framework, the EU constructs itself as morally responsible for the wellbeing of the Cuban people (Hansen 2006: 42).

When in 2014 the negotiations for the PDCA started, the seven rounds that took place were reported in more technical language (Council of the European Union 2014; European Union External Action Service 2014a, 2014b, 2015a/b/c/d). However, when the negotiations were concluded in 2016, the responsibility of the EU towards Cuba was expressed in the same context of development thinking (Council of the European Union 2016; European Union External Action Service 2016a, 2016c). Federica Mogherini stated at the Joint press conference: 'I look forward to continuing our engagement with the view to supporting Cuba's sustainable socio-economic development and ensuring better opportunities for all in Cuba' (ibid 2016b). The notion that the EU has the moral responsibility to engage and support Cuba, the ethical dimension, is present in the EU discourse. Would there not be a construction of responsibility, the EU would not engage in development policies with Cuba. In the next chapter the enabling and disabling of policy actions will give insight in the way the (re)production of the EU liberal economic discourse shapes policy actions.

4. Enabling and disabling policy action

4.1. Enabling liberal economic policies

The construction of the Self and the Other, through the spatial, temporal, and ethical dimensions described in chapter 3, endorses certain taken for granted notions. Constituting Cuba as an outsider of the international community and the Cuban economic model as failed, makes it possible to think of Cuba as a country in need of economic change. Next, the idea that liberal economic development is the only way to develop is taken to be true. Within the EU worldview, liberal economic reforms can enable positive, progressive, and irreversible transformation. Therefore it is assumed that opening up the economy will benefit all Cuban people. Finally it is believed that the EU is morally responsible to support the increase in the living standards of the Cuban people. These taken for granted notions enable EU policy makers to design liberal economic policies towards Cuba. In what follows, I will focus on policies and policy actions that are related to the liberal economic discourse, within the development context.

The development cooperation that was started in the first years after the fall of the Soviet Union, is, amongst others, focused on liberal economic development. In 2003, development cooperation was cancelled by the Cuban governments, in answer to the diplomatic sanctions that the EU installed following the human rights crisis. After the sanctions were lifted in 2005, the EU development cooperation was resumed in 2008 (Perera Gómez 2012: 112-113; Alzugaray Treto 2014). The first extensive development plans were presented in the National Indicative Programme (NIP) for the period 2011-2013, followed by the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Cuba 2014-2020 (European Commission 2010; 2014). The NIP focuses development cooperation to three priorities: food security, environment and adaptation to climate change and expertise exchanges, training and studies. In the MIP the focal sectors chosen are: food security and sustainable agriculture, environment and climate change and sustainable economic and social modernisation. Within the first priority and focal sector, the main support is provided to the modernisation of the agriculture sector, decentralisation, and increasing efficiency (Commission of the European Union 2010: 34-35; 2014: 10-11). However, it is especially the third focal sector of the MIP 'support to sustainable economic and social modernisation' in which the liberal economic discourse is articulated. The three expected results of the third focal sector speak for themselves; 1. 'Modernisation measures in the public administration and implementation'; 2. 'Financial and technical capacity and access to innovation for the private sector'; and 3.

‘Access to external markets (trade) and to foreign investment is improved’ (ibid: 18-19). These expected results fit within the discourse context of liberal economic development (Escobar 1995: 93-94). They rest on the taken for granted notions that the EU has the moral responsibility to support the increase in living standards. It is assumed that opening up the economy will enable this (European Commission 2003; Hansen 2006: 45). The assumptions made on Cuba’s needs, liberal economic development as the only option and EU’s moral responsibility, result in a “reality” in which the policies described in the NIP and the MIP are made possible and become real through policy actions.

An example of the policies becoming policy action is the project that trains: ‘business managers in the ways of a market economy.…’ which started in 1995 and remains part of the development programme for Cuba 2014-2020 (Commission of the European Communities 1995: 7; European Commission 2014). The MIP states that:

> [t]o ensure success of this process [economic reform], it will be necessary to enhance the capacity of the relevant national authorities as well as other societal actors such as self-employed, cooperatives and newly emerging small enterprises. They will need support in the formulation and implementation of modernisation measures and in reaping the new opportunities offered by the update of the economic model (e.g. new economic operators, strengthened local authorities) (European Commission 2014: 8).

In the description of the development project above, Cuba’s need for enhanced capacity is combined with the responsibility and possibility of the EU to support what are called “modernisation measures”.[8] The taken for granted notions enable the idea that the liberal economy’s ability, through economic reforms, will be successful (if the capacity of Cubans is increased through help from the EU). It is assumed that the programme for capacity building therefore creates new opportunities. The policy action is enabled through taken for granted notions; Cuba is in need of economic change, liberal economic reforms will enable successful economic change, and this will benefit all. Outside of the taken for granted notions on the liberal economy, the policy actions would not make sense, they would lack meaning.

The lens through which the EU imagines progress and development for Cuba has made possible the liberal economic policy actions. These ideas are present in a broader context of development thinking, that is dominant in the international institutions. This dominant discourse also works to disable alternative policy actions. In the next section I will

[8] These measures consisted of liberal economic reforms such as the decentralization of decision making, ‘introducing elements of a market economy’ (European Commission 2014: 8).

describe how the (re)production of EU liberal economic discourse disables alternative policy actions to liberal economic ones.

4.2. Marginalizing and precluding alternatives

On the one hand, the liberal economic discourse works to enable policy actions that seem logical and meaningful (Milliken 1999: 229). On the other hand, the discourse of the EU disables other possibilities. '[D]iscourses are understood to work to define and to enable, and also to silence and to exclude … endorsing a certain common sense, but making other modes of categorizing and judging meaningless, impracticable, inadequate or otherwise disqualified' (ibid). The taken for granted notions described in the section above, make alternative policy actions to liberal economic ones illogical and even hard to imagine. Because policy makers act within this worldview, they are: 'not concerned with what was precluded, but acted according to what was made possible' (Warnaar 2013: 176-177). The dominant discourse on liberal economic development and the taken for granted notions endorsed by it, disable alternative policy actions. In what follows, intertextuality is important. Those texts that are referred to in the selected EU documents, that are repudiated or reinterpreted, can shed light on the disabling of alternative policy actions.

In the CP for example, the construction of EU moral responsibility towards the Cuban people is constructed against immoral policy of the US. It is stated that: '[i]t has never been European Union policy to try to bring change by coercive measures with the effect of increasing the economic hardship of the Cuban people' (Council of the European Union 1996: 1). The reference is indirectly, however, within the context of the discourse and other direct references to the US embargo and several other texts, the intertextual reference becomes clear (Hansen 2006: 53). This construction of moral responsibility disables policy actions such as harsh economic sanctions, as they go against the taken for granted notion of EU moral responsibility to the wellbeing of the Cuban people. However, this does not lead to disabling alternative policy actions to the liberal economic ones of the EU. Therefore I will turn to another important reference in the EU documents.

The liberal economic discourse displayed in the National and Multiannual Indivative Programme's, the NIP and the MIP, can help understand how alternative policies to liberal economic ones are disabled. The NIP and MIP were written in accordance with Cuban development plans (European Commission 2010: 5; 2014: 5, 8; Partido Comunista de Cuba 2011). The Cuban text that the EU documents refer to, is the '*Lineamientos de la Política Económica y Social del Partido y la Revolución*' or Guidelines of the economic and social

policy of the party and the revolution (Partido Comunista de Cuba 2011). In the Guidelines it is stated that the reforms will be taken within the socialist framework of property of the most important modes of production in the hands of '*el pueblo*' (the people) (ibid: 5; 9).[9] The reforms that are described, are often in line with the liberal economic reforms favoured by the EU. However, overall, the document is much more nuanced and focuses attention to the socialist character of the economic model. The intertextual reading of the document within EU discourse, however, tries to fit its meaning within EU liberal economic development thinking. The reinterpretation of the Cuban government document suit the taken for granted notions of the EU liberal economic discourse.

One of the examples of how the EU discourse fits an alternative to the liberal economic model within its own discourse, is the idea of cooperatives. The alternative concept revolves around cooperatives as a sustainable development alternative to development based on liberal principles and is an alternative interpretation that has also been put to work in Cuba (Díaz Duque 2013; Partido Comunista de Cuba 2011: 12). In this model, ownership and the means of production of businesses is places in the hands of the workers (PRI 2015). In the Guidelines, the cooperatives are describes as a socialist form of collective property (Partido Comunista de Cuba 2011: 12). The cooperatives are mentioned in the EU texts, however, they are constructed as part of the dominant framework, of liberal economic reforms (European Commission 2010: 22-23, 42; 2014: 8-9). For example by stating that:

> [a]t the core of this national priority lay processes of both transfer of the key role in food production from state-owned companies to cooperatives and individual producers, and decentralisation of the decision-making process for the production and distribution of foodstuffs from the central to the municipal level (European Commission 2010: 42).

The cooperatives are positively constructed within the liberal economic idea of decentralisation of the economy and a limited role for the government (ibid). The possibility of the cooperatives being an alternative economic model is not taken into account (Escobar 1995: 98). Even though the alternative interpretation still works within the same discourse practices of economic development, it is: 'a challenge to the dominant framework' (Escobar 1995: 82). Especially because the discourse questions binary opposition such as communism (or socialism) versus capitalism, state versus private and social versus economic.

The EU liberal economic discourse disables alternatives policy actions to the liberal economic policy actions. The discourse does this through taken for granted notions that

[9] My own translation and interpretation.

preclude alternatives. On the ground of the construction of the Cuban need for economic change, the liberal economy being the answer for development, and that the opening up of the economy will benefit all Cubans, alternative readings are put outside of the limits of what is considered meaningful (Aydın-Düzgit 2014a: 355; Diez 2014: 28). However, as described in the section on discourse analysis in chapter 2, I do not believe that 'we are always hopelessly imprisoned in a dominant and all-pervasive discourse' (Doty 1996: 171). Questioning taken for granted notions, that are endorsed in the EU discourse, makes it possible to create space for imagining alternatives. This room for alternative sites of meaning will enable a more plural discussion on development.

Conclusion

I have aimed to show how the EU has (re)produced liberal economic discourse through the analysis of EU documents and external documents they refer to, over the period 1995 - 2016. I have argued that the EU (re)produces liberal economic discourse, through the use of a construction of Self-Other binary oppositions. These oppositions have been analysed through the spatial, temporal and ethical dimensions. In the EU discourse the Cuban economic model is characterized as negative, old fashioned and in need of transition, whereas the liberal economic model is presented as successful, modern and providing possibilities for economic growth. The description of Cuba as an outsider of the global economy, the spatial dimension, makes it possible to construct the need for integration into the global economy. This temporal dimension gives Cuba the capacity, from an EU point of view, to develop towards a liberal economy. This change can be achieved through the support, especially through development cooperation, of the EU to Cuba. This ethical dimension within the EU discourse, portrays the EU as a moral responsible actor, in support of the liberal economic reform process that should lead to progress and better living conditions.

With the analysis of the (re)production of the liberal economic discourse, through the Self-Other construction within spatial, temporal and ethical dimensions, I have aimed to show how policy actions are made possible. The taken for granted notions that are endorsed by the liberal economic discourse have been argued to enable the framework in which liberal economic policy becomes possible. The construction of the need for economy change, liberal economic development as the only option for progress, and the notion that opening up the economy will benefit all Cubans, makes the crystallization of policy actions possible. The liberal economic model is used as a lens through which the EU sees the development of Cuba, in which the economy comes first and development will follow "naturally". Within this context certain policy actions become logical and practicable, they fit in the framework created by the discourse.

The research has also aimed to address how alternative policy actions to liberal economic ones are disabled, which has, not been given sufficient attention in EU foreign policy discourse analysis so far (Diez 2014: 29; Aydın-Düzgit 2014a: 355). In the last section of chapter 4, I have argued that the liberal economic discourse not only enabled certain policy actions, it has also set limits to what is considered meaningful, practicable and adequate (Milliken 1999: 229; Diez 2014: 29). I have done so through the intertextual mechanism in which the EU documents reinterpret an important Cuban document. This is argued through

the example of the discourse on cooperatives, that has been fitted in the liberal economic discourse in EU texts, while it is seen as an alternative model in the Cuban government document. The idea of another possibility or system, is left out because it does not fit within the taken for granted notions endorsed through the discourse. As the discourse on liberal economy of the EU has become so entrenched, it becomes difficult to think outside of it. This thesis therefore has aimed to destabilize the dominant discourse on development that is dependent on a liberal economic model by critically examining the policy actions that the liberal economic discourse enables. The destabilizing of a dominant discourse, such as the EU liberal economic discourse, is important as it aims to reveal the practices of domination that it enables.

Acknowledging the delimitations made in this thesis, due to research choices en restricted time and space, the results lead to possible and more extensive further research. The other important discourse strands on human rights and democratization and the existing alternative discourses on these issues could be included. The foreign policy discourse of the Cuban government and its ability to produce a counter narrative, that might seem irrational in the eyes of the EU, needs further research. A relevant addition would be to go beyond the official government discourses and include alternative discourses to the EU liberal discourse (outside of the documents referred to in EU discourse) to better understand the way the discourses work and how the dominant discourse can be destabilized. Within a broader context, the discourse of international institutions, such as the international financial institutions, would enable a more generalized critique on the dominant development discourse. Finally, how these policy actions also (re)enforce and feed back into the dominant discourse is another important question that needs further study.

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