

From Ideology to Realpolitik in Cuba's foreign policy towards the United States, 1959 - 2016



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Introduction

In March 2016, an historical event took place, which can be noted as a tipping point in the history of Cuban-U.S. relations took place. It was the first time in over 88 years that a president from the United States of America visited the island of Cuba. Barack Obama was the president up to changing the tense bilateral relationship between both countries. Amidst his visit, where he attained the employers of the U.S. embassy in Havana, he expressed how extraordinary and historical the visit was. The president of Cuba of that time, Raúl Castro, was not attending the arrival ceremony, which was subject to discussion. Why would he accept an incoming visit of a foreign president and not welcome this president himself? Raúl Castro did, however, join the meeting with U.S. president Barack Obama on the day after his arrival (Bye, 2016, p. 1698).

The bilateral relation between Cuba and the U.S. has a history of contradictions, collisions and turbulence. Since the Cuban revolution, the countries seem to have become political opposites. Newly installed diplomatic relations were broken off and an export and full trade embargo were imposed. The states became more polarized when Cuba became an ally of the Soviet Union in the Cold War. Furthermore, Cuba's interference in Africa and Cuba's support for the invasion of the Soviet Union in complicated the matter.

Hence the fact that in over 88 years, no president from the United States had visited Cuba is remarkable and raises questions. How can the bilateral relation be so tense between two countries that are only 90 miles apart (Balfour, 1995, p. 175)? What does this visit after 88 years represent? What led to this sudden encounter? What has changed to make Cuba choose for rapprochement instead of the ongoing antagonism? Why did the visit take place in the last year of Obama's presidency and not in the first seven years of his presidency? These questions induce this investigation about the shift from ideological driven political behaviour to pragmatic and realpolitik driven political behaviour in foreign policy.

The foreign policy from one country towards another country may differ over time. This foreign policy making may be influenced by all sorts of circumstances such as the political leader in power of one of the countries or both countries. The relation between the U.S. and Latin America has always been turbulent and especially the relation with Cuba has always been tense. This tension originates in the time of the Cuban Batista regime. During this regime by Fulgencio Batista, from the 1930s until the Cuban revolution in 1959, the U.S. and Cuba had a close relation. The Batista regime started with a coupe, which was supported by the U.S. When Fidel Castro started the revolution, it was his aim to go against the Batista regime. The political differences were the incentives to start the revolution. In that sense, Fidel Castro was not only

against the Batista regime, but also against the United States, which had strongly supported this Batista regime (Franklin, 1997). Furthermore, the Cold War had impact on the relation between the countries. The ideological differences between both countries are key in the turbulent relation. It is clear why the relation between both countries was tense, but the reason for the rapprochement stays unclarified.

This thesis will investigate the reasons leading to the rapprochement between Cuba and the United States as marked by the historical visit of former president Barack Obama to Cuba on 20 – 22 March 2016. Therefore, this thesis will not include events occurring after march 2016. The focus will lay on Cuba's foreign policy towards the U.S. This research is relevant because it answers the questions of why the foreign political attitude from Cuba towards the U.S. changed from ideological driven to realpolitik driven after a time span of 88 years. Because, when the darkest crisis of 'revolutionary Cuba', also known as the Special Period, didn't lead to a drastic shift of incentives for foreign policy, than what did?

The research question that will be answered in this thesis is:

“What factors have led to the shift from ideology to realpolitik in Cuban foreign policy leading to the rapprochement between Cuba and the U.S. in March 2016?”

The objective of this thesis is to find out which circumstances, events or political decisions have led to the change from ideological- to realpolitik driven foreign policy of Cuba in the bilateral relation with the U.S. This investigation is relevant, because existing literature about the rapprochement mainly focuses on U.S. foreign policy towards Cuba.

This thesis has the following structure: the first chapter is the theoretical framework in which the role of ideology, pragmatism and Realpolitik in the forming of foreign policies in Latin America is discussed. The second chapter represents a contextual description of the relation between Cuba and the United States until 2008. The year 2008 marks the year where Fidel Castro officially gave power to Raúl Castro. This chapter is the guideline in understanding the complexity of this relation and the nature of the friction. In order to be able to answer the research question, the third chapter will zoom in on the domestic and international context from 2008 until 2016. This context will be a handle in analysing why the encounter took place from the Cuba side. Factors like crisis, economy, dissidents and the mutual dependence of Venezuela and Cuba are key in this chapter.

At times, the text refers to 'revolutionary' or 'revolutionary Cuba', which indicates the Cuban political system and principles since 1959 until now.

Chapter 1

The clash between the Achievable and the Desirable in Latin American Foreign Policy

The purpose of this chapter is to understand and explain the role of ideological based behaviour and pragmatic based behaviour in the forming of foreign policy in Latin America. The theoretical state of the art around analysing foreign policy in the region is amplified with the objective to form a theoretical base for the third chapter of this thesis. Building blocks, dichotomies, a theoretical framework and the role of realpolitik in Latin American political decision-making are discussed to explain why political decisions are made.

“International Relations cannot properly be conceptualized in linear terms as an autonomous, static, two-dimensional, closed box, but rather as an interactive, dynamic, emergent, and adaptive, complex system among actors that communicate with, continuously adapt to, and learn from each other. The system itself changes as a function of human social intercourse and interactions involving between actors and their ever-transforming environments. International politics is thus a non-linear system.” (Wechsler, 2010, p. 9).

This quotation reveals the complexity of International Relations (IR). All interactions that influence IR lead to the fact that Wechsler calls it a non-linear system, because IR is a dynamic system.

Theories on Latin American foreign policy tend to focus on traditions, agency of individual leaders, principles of foreign policy and international law. For years, theories have been uncoordinated and without any connection to theories in International Relations, according to Houghton(2007, p. 24). Latin American foreign policies mainly focus on; autonomy, development, the relation with the U.S., regionalism, arms control, border disputes, local issues, national security, drug production and trafficking and Third Worldism. Especially the relation with the U.S. is considered to be key in explaining the forming of Latin American foreign policies (Hey, 1997, p. 631).

· Third-Worldism: “Beyond the mere descriptive element in the label that referred to those newly independent countries, the term third world also gave these countries a new status in international politics by virtue of the fact that they amounted to more than half of the world’s population.” (Carlisle, 2005, p. 450).

Hey (1997, p. 633-638) has attempted to organize the complexity of International Relations by classifying three 'building blocks' within theories on Latin American foreign policies: pro-core versus anti-core, autonomous versus dependent and economic versus political-diplomatic. The first building block is based on the dichotomy of periphery and core, where Hey has gathered the following actors under 'core': "the USA, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), US- or European-based multinational corporations and private commercial banks based in the North" (Hey, 1997, p. 633). Foreign policy that has been defined as 'pro-core' is one that does not assume that core actors are 'inherent enemies' of the region, whilst anti-core foreign policy consider core actors to be dominating world politics to the prejudice of the periphery. Within structural realist theories of International Relations, the proximity of a powerful country results in either bandwagoning or the balancing of power by other, less powerful countries. This is an example of anti-core and pro-core foreign policies. Bandwagoning means that a country aligns with the powerful country purely for national interests. When balancing power, the less powerful does the opposite of bandwagoning and seeks to align with other powers in order to prevent the power to become a hegemon.²

An example of anti-core policy in Latin America is policy formed out of anti-American sentiment. The concept of anti-Americanism is often referred to in investigations of the relationship between Latin America and the U.S. as well as investigations on the relationship between Cuba and the U.S. The term 'anti-Americanism' is described as an attitude from countries around the world towards the U.S. rather than an ideology (Griffiths and O'Connor, 2006). Anti-Americanism has also been described as a criticism (Reiss, 2006, p. 2). The construction of the word anti-Americanism shows that a negative attitude against the United States exists. as discussed by van Veen (2008, p. 53), no other hegemons or other countries have the negative attachment 'anti'. For example, there is no 'anti-Russian sentiment', but there is anti-Communism. Where a concept such as 'anti-Communism' describes an ideological aversion, the concept of 'anti-Americanism' is more profound. It does not include other countries, which are also described as imperialistic or capitalistic such as the U.S.

As a world power, the U.S. actively operates throughout the international field. Communism and socialism are ideologies threatening the United States as a capitalist state, causing the U.S. to interfere when the U.S. regards interference necessary. Therefore, these threats are key to U.S. foreign policy. American interference is not a new phenomenon. Diving into history, U.S. actions on foreign soil have taken place over and over again, either to help

² <https://www.iapss.org/2013/09/22/eu-us-relations-balancing-or-bandwagoning/> (visited on 10-11-2019).

another country or the U.S. itself. Consequently, the term anti-Americanism has arisen in the field of international relations (McPherson, 2003). This sentiment, which is hostile pertaining to the U.S., comes forward through foreign policies, political agendas and even terrorist attacks. This anti-American sentiment is mainly situated in the Western-Hemisphere, where the U.S. is a regional hegemony (Biegon, 2017, p. 3). This explains why the concept is called 'anti-Americanism' and isn't a broader concept. Thus, the sentiment is mainly established in Latin America, wherefore a research on anti-American sentiment in Latin-American foreign policies is relevant. The asymmetrical relationship between Latin America and the U.S. gives room for interference by the U.S. (Biegon, 2017, p. 166). The sentiment plays a big role in world politics, since it gives opportunities to other countries, which are not like-minded with the U.S., like China and Russia, for example, to play a role in the region. It is relevant to consider this concept when analysing the foreign policy of Cuba towards the United States, since it effects the attitude of Cuba towards the United States within world politics. Whether this anti-American sentiment has an influence or not, will be evaluated in the analytical part of this thesis.

The second building block within theories on Latin American foreign policies is the dichotomy of autonomous versus dependent policies. The difference is as followed:

“An autonomous regime makes decisions according to perceived national, political or personal interests while a dependent one acts in accordance with the wishes of foreign interests.” (Hey, 1997, p. 641).

However, there is an ambiguity in this building block, to wit in the case of agency. When a political leader forms pro-core policy, this behaviour is assumed to be 'dependent', but a leader can also make this decision anonymously. Therefore, within the debates about dependent foreign policy, there is a contradiction between compliance and consensus noted. Bruce Moon (1983, p. 333) argues that consensus is key in agreements between core and periphery and that ideology is a frequent factor in making agreements between Latin America and the U.S.

The third building block (Hey, 1997, p. 646) treats the difference between economic foreign policies and political-diplomatic foreign policies. Military and security factors have been excluded from this building block, because the Latin American record of inter-state wars is restrained to border disputes and the Falklands war. He states that the region is relatively peaceful between borders. The issue area of economic and political-diplomatic mainly contains topics related to aid, debt, development and diplomatic policy. Economic policies are assumed to be depending on global trends. For example, the shift towards neoliberalism had an impact on the foreign policies in Latin America, because economic cooperation and free markets became key. This shift was however the effect of a global trend. An example of economic

foreign policy is the policy of the ex-president of Chile, Pinochet. He had both implemented domestic and foreign ‘modernizations’ (Wiarda and Kline, 2014, p.139). Political policy shows fewer patterns than economic policy. This issue area is more complex. Hey gives the following example of the complexity and how little patterns there are detectable in political-diplomatic policy:

“Colombia’s Turbay and Jamaica’s Seaga, for example, broke diplomatic relations with Cuba just when many other states were re-establishing them. Chile’s Pinochet certainly did not participate in ‘activist’ foreign policies and even withdrew from the Andean Pact because he thought it had become too political” (Hey, 1997, p. 648).

This citation shows how there are no trends or patterns found in the breaking of or (re-) establishing of diplomatic relations due to circumstances. In this third building block, especially the political-diplomatic foreign policies of Latin American countries seem to be puzzling.

These building blocks have identified three fields which form the base on which foreign policies of Latin American countries differ. After consideration of the subjects as described in these building blocks, foreign policy is formulated. These building blocks are depending on political behaviour which, according to Gardini and Lambert (2011) is based on ideology and pragmatism. These components determine why a nation decides to align with the core power or anti-core power, whether a country is committed to be independent from other countries and whether economic reasons overrule political-diplomatic reasons. They have developed a theoretical framework on Latin American foreign policy making. This framework provides tools to analyse foreign policy making, which will be used in the analysis of this thesis.

In their theory, there is an amalgam of ideology and pragmatism. These two complementary concepts are considered key in defining foreign policies. The objective of the framework is to be a tool in the explanation and analysis of political behaviour of Latin American countries. They state that the tension between pragmatism and ideology is dynamic, where ideology is seen as the desirable whilst pragmatic behaviour is seen as the achievable. These concepts are combined in a different way in every countries’ foreign policy, where they can be either in balance or in disequilibrium (Gardini and Lambert, 2011, pp. 1-3). The reciprocity of pragmatism and ideology can differ over time, since it is influenced by several factors. The election of a new president can result in a different political approach. For instance, maintaining good relations with the U.S. is usually seen as a pragmatic decision, because it provides national interests like security. However, it can also be considered an ideological choice, whereas a capitalist and democratic ideology plays a big role (Gardini and Lambert, 2011, p. 4).

Ideological foreign policy has been defined as followed:

“An **ideological foreign policy** emphasizes principles and doctrinaire solutions over adaptability and the practical consequences of assertions and actions. Compatibility with established principles is the key criterion with which to assess the merit of foreign policy.” (Gardini and Lambert, 2011, p. 17).

This citation shows how doctrine and established principles are prioritized over practicalities. The planning is usually short-term. Ideological attitude may include dogmatic or preconceived positions. Ideological stances are complex and disputed. Van Dijk (2006, p. 728) supports this by stating that the concept is ‘vague’. He argues that the concept of ideology refers to principles controlling social groups and that their multidisciplinary. Ideology functions as an umbrella for all norms, values, goals, and principles of that specific group (Van Dijk, 2006, p. 730). He adds that ideology often drives a wedge between ‘us’ and ‘them’ or contrarily, it unites people within a ‘social group’. Hill (2003) states that ideology plays a role in subjective versions of national interests. Herewith, he tries to emphasize on the idea that a decision maker may think he or she is acting in the name of national interest, but that his or her view of national interest may differ from someone else’s version of the truth. Thus, the values and principles of a decision maker are infiltrated in a way that he or she cannot behave objectively.

Pragmatism has increasingly come to play a bigger role within International Relations (IR). Pragmatism is widely considered as a theory of truth (Putnam, 1995, 291). This rhetorical discipline focuses on “our reasoning, processes by which we evaluate knowledge, and mechanisms through which we disseminate knowledge. These rhetorical elements come so naturally to us that we are oblivious to them. The gist of my argument is that we should continue “to do what comes naturally” (*Fish 1989*). But we should stop being oblivious to it.” (Hellman, 2009, p. 655). One of these rhetorical features, to which we are ought to stop being oblivious, is pragmatism. Thus, the focus within IR has not always been on pragmatism, but rather on ideology. Hellman (2009, p. 639) calls pragmatism a ‘theory of thought and action’, where it operates as a means to consider thought and action. Realpolitik is based on pragmatic political behaviour. This concept originates from 1853 and is a synonym for Realism and Realist (Bew, 2015, p. 5, 289). Ansell (2011, p. 15) argues that pragmatic behaviour has a strong problem-solving component.

Practice is key in pragmatism (Putnam, 1995, 306). Gardini and Lambert (2011, p. 17) agree on this matter and amplify the definition with the following citation:

“A **pragmatic foreign policy** is a foreign policy based on the principle that the usefulness, workability, and practicality of ideas, policies, and proposals are the criteria of their merit” (Gardini and Lambert, 2011, p. 17).

This explanation shows that in pragmatism action is preferred over doctrine. Therefore, the timeframe of pragmatic decisions is medium-term, because short-term plans are not practical and long-term plans are not dynamic enough.

In their framework, Gardini and Lambert (2011, p. 6) utilize five variables considered relevant in analysing foreign behaviour, namely: ‘ends and purposes’, ‘means available’, ‘agency’, ‘process’ and ‘structure’. These variables offer a systematic manner to analyse the extent to which Latin American foreign policy is formed on the base of pragmatism and or ideology. ‘Ends and purposes’ is the first variable, which states the objectives for the formulated foreign policy. In addition, it observes the strategy a country takes on to reach this goal. The second variable, ‘means available’ demonstrates the capabilities of a country. Policy is ought to be implemented wherefore a country needs sufficient means to conduct this policy. The next variable, ‘agency’ contemplates the quality of the political leader in the matter, which is assumed to be fundamental in congressional systems as the majority of the Latin American countries executes. The variable ‘process’ enhances the emergence of the policy. The timing of the foreign policy was developed, accepted and implemented is to be noted to be able to analyse the process. The last variable, ‘structure’, aims to clarify that the background of the forming of foreign policy plays a significant role. The context on domestic and international level, on both historical and political level are consistent in the structure of foreign policy, since it influences the influence of pragmatism and ideology in the decision-making. Especially this last variable will be relevant in the analytical chapter of this thesis, whereas the circumstances in world-politics, with a special focus on the Americas, will substantiate the decision to seek rapprochement between Cuba and the U.S. after 88 years. Analysing the domestic and international context can help explain why this form of harmonization was found needed or acceptable.

The statement that pragmatism and ideology are complementary has been substantiated with examples in the book of Gardini and Lambert (2011). The foreign policy of Chile since 1990 is one example where both pragmatism and ideology played a role. The socialist government led by Salvador Allende from 1970 until 1973 influenced the foreign policy in an ideological way. For instance, the formed policy was opposing the U.S. led imperialism and Chile rather sought cooperation with other anti-Americanist governments, such as Castro-led Cuba. This ideological approach changed with the coupe by Augusto Pinochet in 1973, who

ended up ruling Chile until 1990. The foreign policy of his military regime was characterized by anti-Communism, which reveals the ideological principles. However, according to Gardini and Lambert (2011, p. 36), Pinochet applied economic reforms. The socialist system converted to a neoliberal system. This system is both considered to be an ideological and a pragmatic move, because it both suits the anti-Communist ideology as it suits logical steps to benefit from the economic welfare on the world market economy. Since 1990, newly democratic Chile is considered to have been persisting a realist, pragmatic foreign policy. Nonetheless, Gardini and Lambert (2011, p.50) state the following:

“Yet Chile ultimately remains dedicated to a pragmatic foreign policy that best reflects its own economic and political interests, and which has, with only a few exceptions, remained within the ideological framework of adherence to liberal democracy, the international framework of law and, more recently, free-market economics”.

This Chilean example illustrates how close pragmatism and ideology can play a role in political behavior (Gardini and Lambert, 2011, pp. 35-50). Certain decisions in foreign policy making can be explained as the concepts can intertwine.

The trend within IR that has a pragmatic point of view is called Realism. This theory argues that a state is power seeking and fearful (Mingst and Arreguín-Toft, 2017, p. 76). Walt (1998, p. 31) has divided the trend into (classical) realism and neorealism. Wechsler (2010, p. 4), agreeing with Waltz, argues that Realism is a two-dimensional trend of IR theory. The difference between these two forms of realism is that neorealism is more defensive. Realism assumes that a state has a desire to be dominant, which will always be causing conflicts in world politics. Neorealism assumes a state to be willing to survive and therefore sees making alliances as a means to survive. Gardini and Lambert (2011, p. 4) argue that realists would rather consider the concepts pragmatism and ideology to be hierarchically ordered than hierarchical.

Mingst and Arreguín-Toft (2017, p. 162 - 164) offer models of decision-making in foreign policy. The realist model is characterized by rationalism with clear-cut steps for a state as unitary actor, which are as followed: First, the state identifies the problem, after which a state reconsiders its objectives. Then, the state contemplates alternatives for the current policy for which the state is to execute a cost-benefit analysis before selecting the best alternative policy (Mingst and Arreguín-Toft, 2017, p. 164). This model shows how rational, pragmatic foreign policy decisions are made through a realist approach.

The term Realism derived from the German word Realpolitik that emerged in order to denote a policy, which is based on the knowledge of circumstances and the strategic calculation of actions (Cabrera García, 2014, p. 136). The origins of the concept lay in the Bismarck

chancellor in Germany during a process where Bismarck was striving to reach German unification.

“Realpolitik emerged as a policy based on the use of force, in the political calculation and in the manipulation of the existing social forces to strengthen state unity” (Cabrera García, 2014, p. 138).³

In this phrase, Cabrera García demonstrates the origins of the concept of Realpolitik. The original objectives show how in this policy, the aims of the State were put before ideological principles, which were assumed to be dividing the society.

“The goal of international relations, from a realist perspective, is to seek a balance of power rather than the triumph of ideals.” (Carlisle, 2005, pp. 835-836). This citation shows how ideals are not key in the realist perspective. Besides, national interest and power play a role in world politics according to the school of Realpolitik. Moreover, friendship and morality are not relevant in decision making.

An example of Realpolitik in Latin American foreign policies includes the role of China in the region. Cooperating with China, a counterpart of the U.S. in world politics and international trade can result in a conflict within foreign policy. For instance, Brazil and China are both part of the BRIC countries but Brazil has had common interests with the U.S. for a long time. This results in an ‘uncomfortable balancing act’ as Gardini and Lambert (2011, p. 18) call it. Maintaining good ties with the U.S. is favourable for security and trade matters, but cooperating in BRIC provides economic and strategic advantages. Thus, pragmatism has been dominating Brazil’s foreign policy under both the Lula and the Cardoso administration (Gardini and Lambert, 2011, p. 64). Thereby, China is an important investor in Latin America. Especially in the oil market, China is becoming an increasingly important actor in the region. This cooperation however, is a strategic move from Latin American countries. A striking example of this cooperation is the China-Venezuela model (Hongbo, 2013, p. 28). This cooperation is determined on both pragmatic and ideological base, since both leftist countries ideologically oppose to the rightist U.S. The cooperation is also a pragmatic decision, since the collaboration offers economic assets for both parties.

To summarize, IR is a complex, non-linear system. Theories on Latin American foreign policies can be divided in three building blocks: pro-core versus anti-core, autonomous versus dependent and economic versus political-diplomatic. These building blocks each indicate patterns of dimensions in Latin American foreign policy. U.S. interference in the region is key

³ Own translation from Spanish to English.

in Latin American foreign policy. Where some countries accept this interference out of pragmatic or ideological considerations, other countries have developed an anti-Americanist sentiment within their foreign policy. Thus, ideology and pragmatism are fundamental in this decision-making. These concepts are however, complementary rather than exclusive. Realpolitik is a form of politics where pragmatics are prioritized over ideological principles. This realist way of politics derives from the German Bismarck period and has evolved ever since and so in Latin American foreign policies. Within pragmatic political behaviour, the focus lays on reaching the achievable, whilst in ideological decision-making the desirable underlies. The theoretical framework, developed by Gardini and Lambert, maintain five variables, namely: 'ends and purposes', 'means available', 'agency', 'process' and 'structure'. These five variables indicate handles to determine whether a foreign policy has been formed out of pragmatic and/or ideological considerations.

Chapter 2

U.S. – Cuban Relations until 2008: a Long and Winding Road

The history of U.S. – Cuban relations is turbulent. Since the term of U.S. president James Monroe from 1817 – 1825, Cuba has been an important element in U.S. foreign policy (Rosen & Kassab, 2016, p. 11). The fact that the strait of Florida, which geographically separates Cuba and the U.S. from each other, is only 90 miles, offers ground for the U.S. to intervene in Cuban politics (Rockoff, 2012, p. 1). This fact emphasizes the role geopolitics play in this bilateral relation. U.S. interference in Cuba has occurred in several events, which caused the relation to evolve into a tense, turbulent one. This chapter seeks to discuss the relation between both countries by providing a contextual description of the most important and relevant events with a focus on the bilateral relation since the beginning of the Batista regime. The chronological timeframe of the chapter runs until 2008, because that year marks the end of the presidency of Fidel Castro and the beginning of the presidency of Raúl Castro. The third chapter will go into the run-up to the visit of Obama to Cuba in 2016 from 2008 onwards.

One of the first actual encounters between the countries origins in the Spanish-American war, which was commenced by the U.S. to help decolonize, among others, Cuba from the Spanish colonizer in 1898. Hereby, the U.S. supported Cuban citizens seeking for independence.

The Cuban rebels were not able to reach independence despite of 10 years of war without help of the U.S. (Espinosa, 2009, p. 3). The U.S. initiated this war as part of the Monroe Doctrine. By sympathizing with the Cuban people, the U.S. tried to seek support amongst their people for the Monroe Doctrine. In 1850, the U.S. tried to purchase the island in vain. This shows the interest in Cuba already existed before starting the war. Their campaign to free Cuba from their colonizers started as of the year 1850. According to Rosen and Kassab (2016, p. 9), the U.S. would have tried to take over the island anyways, because it was part of the Monroe Doctrine. The American Civil War was one of the events causing the delay of the U.S. interference in Cuba (Rosen & Kassab, 2016, p. 10). However, in the last decade of the 19th century tides had changed. One of the main drivers for actually starting the war was the explosion of the U.S. battle ship the Maine in the harbour of Havana, Cuba (Rockoff, 2012, p. 51). This three month-war was not only fought in Cuba, but also in Puerto Rico and the Philippines. It was won by the U.S., but instead of keeping the island in possession as a victory

⁴ The Monroe Doctrine has been one of the pillars in U.S. foreign policy since the 19th century. The doctrine opposed European interference in the Western Hemisphere (Brenner & Eisner, 2018, p. 130).

booty, the U.S. settled for the colonization of Puerto Rico and the Philippines instead (Rosen & Kassab, 2016, p. 20).

The independence of Cuba was accompanied by *La Enmienda Platt* or *plattismo*, which was an U.S. attempt at keeping control on the island as part of Roosevelt's *Good Neighbour Policy* (Kami, 2018, p. 20). The amendment instituted what role the U.S. would play in independent Cuba. The U.S. was granted control over the economic policy, the foreign policy, Isla de Juventud and over local policies in Cuba. In addition, it gave the U.S. the right to intervene when it would be necessary and the right to establish three military bases, including Guantánamo Bay (De la Torriente, 1929, pp. 370-371).

"The amendment mocked terms such as "liberty" and "independence"." (Brenner & Eisner, 2018, p. 40)

This citation shows that the amendment did not grant freedom to the first Cuban republic. The amendment granted economic dominance for the U.S. through trade agreements that confined economic development in Cuba (Rosen & Kassab, 2016, pp. 29 – 30). The amendment has served as a base for the U.S. to function as a hegemony in the Americas and meanwhile reinforces the anti-American sentiment. The unpopular Platt amendment was to utmost extent dissolved in 1934 when the Cuban-American Treaty of Relations was signed (Pérez, 1986, p. 336). This new treaty embodies the shift from an occupying hegemonic power towards the good neighbour policy under the Roosevelt administration (Brenner & Eisner, 2018, p. 53). This gesture resulted in the signing of a contract for the lease of Guantánamo naval base with the costs a few thousand per year.⁵ The contract involved a term claiming that dissolution would only be able when both countries agreed on it. Two laws changed the course of U.S.-Cuban relations in 1934. First came the Jones-Costigan, also known as the Sugar Act, which set a quota for importing sugar causing negative consequences for Cuba, because it yielded less export income for the island. Secondly, the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act made European products less competitive by exporting U.S. products at low tariff to Cuba (Brenner & Eisner, 2018, p. 57). These laws resulted in an increased Cuban dependency of the U.S. increasing the inequality in the balance of power.

Six years after the new treaty was signed, Fulgencio Batista officially came to power in Cuba. He has often been described as the U.S. pioneer in Cuba, because he increased the import of U.S. products during the first years of his presidency. He was not the last Latin American politician to be called a pioneer of the U.S. (McPherson, 2003, p. 165). During the Second

⁵ Academic sources come up with divergent amounts of USD and lengths in this particular lease contract.

World War, Batista affirmed fidelity to the Allies of which the U.S. was part. The war caused more economic dependency of the U.S. since European trading partners were stopped by the war (Brenner & Eisner, 2018, p. 59). After Batista's term stopped in 1944, he became president again in 1952 by leading a second coup* (Gellman, 1973, p. 236). He led the coup, because, as several scholars suggest, it had become clear that he would lose the upcoming elections he was running for (Erlich, 2009, p. 19). Notably, Fidel Castro was also eligible for these elections. This manner of Batista to become president of Cuba resulted in an issue for Fidel Castro. The presidency of Batista was characterized by the recognition by the U.S. under the Truman administration, known for its own doctrine. This doctrine was established to provide economic and military aid to Greece and Turkey, which was suffering the threat of communist expansion (Truman Doctrine, 2019).

One of the drivers for the U.S. support for Batista Cuba in these days was the Cold War. The U.S. was fighting a war against communism after the end of the Second World War (Vitale, 2015, p. 780). Cuba was important for the U.S. for geopolitical motives, because under Batista the country could keep Soviet Russia away from the Caribbean, the 'backyard' of the U.S., despite the fact that Batista was a leading an undemocratic dictatorship. However, it was also argued that precisely a dictatorship was for the best after the turbulent decades it experienced (Rosen & Kassab, 2016, p. 40).

The second Batista presidency was not without resistance. Fidel Castro, born in 1926, attempted a coup in 1953. The fact that Batista was considered a pioneer of the U.S. and gained power through a coupe, depriving Fidel Castro to be elected, caused bad blood. Fidel was nationalistic and saw the influence of the U.S. as a cause for problems on the island.

Thereby, Fidel wanted to make Cuba independent again. After the failed coup attempt, he was imprisoned (BBC Monitoring Americas, 2007). After he and his brother Raúl had been granted amnesty in 1955 (The Economist, month issue 2015), Fidel went to the United States and Mexico to live in exile. In Mexico, the Castro's met Che Guevara and other revolutionaries with whom they formed the *Movimiento de 26 de Julio* (Sweig, 2002, p. 1). The group was named after the date of the attempted coup (Erlich, 2009, p. 20). The group of revolutionaries travelled to Cuba in 1956 on a ship called *Granma*, where they would stay in the Sierra Maestra mountains all the while gaining more popularity around the island and launching a guerrilla war (The Economist, month issue 2015). In 1958, the U.S. suspended aid to the Batista led regime.

* The first coup he led was in 1933. Ramón Grau San Martín became president for 100 days, after which his resignation was forced by Batista under U.S. influence (Gellman, 1973, pp. 2-4).

This is, according to Rosen and Kassab (2016, p. 53), motivated by the fact that Castro's popularity and Batista's unpopularity would soon lead to Castro's succession. The U.S. saw an opportunity in the fact that Castro was not communist but nationalist, but was mistaken to assume that Castro would become its new partner to continue its good neighbour policy (Betancourt, 1994, p. 67). His aversion to U.S. foreign policy, allowing the country to interfere abroad, and the earlier developments that made Cuba more dependent of the U.S. such as the Sugar Act, had caused repulsion.

After the fall of the Cuban city of Santa Clara in 1958, Fidel dethroned Batista and officially took over power in 1959 (*The Economist*, month issue 2015). The installing of the revolutionary system had drastic consequences for the relation between Cuba and the U.S. Despite the blame Fidel gave to the U.S. for the Cuban problems of that time, he did seek to have a bilateral relation with the U.S. in the beginning of his presidency. However, he also sought to develop a good relation with the Soviet Union.

For the Soviet Union, Cuba's geographic position near Florida was a motive for rapprochement (Bain, 2005, p. 770). Cuban motives however, are widely discussed amongst scholars. Some argue that Castro was a communist before starting the revolution, whilst others argue that the anti-American sentiment characterizing Cuba's revolutionary foreign policy caused Castro to choose for balancing the power instead of bandwagoning, which was, as asserted by Bain (2005, p. 770), the only option for Cuba. Both of the argued motives are ideological. According to Rosen & Kassab (2016, p. 57), this is a means of weak states in order to gain as much as possible from bilateral relations. The newly induced involvement of the Soviet Union in revolutionary Cuba made the relation more complex.

From this moment on, Castro wanted to abolish all U.S. presence on the island. He started this campaign by including an anti-American rhetoric in his speeches. This, combined with the process of the nationalization of U.S. property on the island, resulted in a tenuous relation with the U.S. The communist Soviet Union applauds these kinds of anti-U.S. actions and thus it made Cuba become closer to the Soviets. During this period, the U.S. was fighting a war against communism which complicated this political triangle. Furthermore, the rapprochement with the Soviet Union influenced Cuba's relation with the U.S. (Rosen & Kassab, 2016, p. 59). In fact, this led to a political polarization (Prevost & Oliva Campos, 2011, p. 17). This explains why in 1959, the Cuban government accepted the check for the lease of Guantánamo Bay for the last time (Brenner & Eisner, 2018, p. 53). In short, geopolitics, ideology and old wounds sharpened political ties in this triangle.

The relation between Cuba and the U.S. became more complex when the U.S. imposed an export embargo in 1960 (*The Economist*, month issue 2015). Ex-president Eisenhower imposed the embargo, which prevented Cuba to access the U.S. trade markets (Kaplowitz, 1998, p. 1). This unilateral embargo was imposed with the goal to ‘free’ Cuba from communism. The embargo is seen as a means within the foreign policy of the U.S. to pressure the Cuban government to change its system, which is based on Marxism-Leninism, into a democratic system (Suchlicki, 2000, p. 9). Because the embargo is seen as an instrument of the U.S. ministry of Foreign Affairs, the lifting of the embargo would be considered as “an important psychological victory for Castro” (Suchlicki, 2000, p. 9) making the U.S. unwavering to annul the embargo. The U.S. government sees the implementation as successful despite the fact that it was not conform the objectives of the instrument. The main goal was the expulsion of the communist government of Fidel Castro, who on the contrary, has been president of Cuba for 48 years despite the trade embargo (Suchlicki, 2000, p. 9).

The U.S. recognized Cuba under the rule of Fidel Castro on 7 January 1959 (Brenner & Eisner, 2018, p.129) and established bilateral diplomatic ties in 1960. Nevertheless, in January 1961, the U.S. broke off the diplomatic relations between Cuba and the U.S. (Van Gosse, 1993, p. 263) just before the end of the presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower (Cockcroft, 1996, p. 303). The withdrawal of diplomatic relations is an impactful means for a country to send a message to the other country. Diplomatic relations are important for the reconciliation between nation-states. Therefore, the withdrawal was a significant step in the unstable understanding between Cuba and the U.S. To put it in perspective, in November 2019 the U.S. does maintain diplomatic ties with unlike-minded countries such as Russia, Syria and China⁷.

In the same year, on April 16, Castro declared Cuba to be a socialist state (Brenner, 1988, p. 99). The next day, on April 17, the U.S. tried to invade the Bays of Pigs (Cockcroft, 1996, p. 303) by invading the island with 1,500 Cuban exiles trained by the CIA. This group was, however, defeated within 72 hours (Brenner, 1988, pp. 13, 99) and resulted in the opposite outcome, since it helped stabilizing the revolution (Henken *et al.*, 2013, p. 114), because the middle-class, which was expected to support the U.S. led invasion, turned to support socialist Cuba (Cockcroft, 1996, p. 303). The invasion, taking place early in the term of John F. Kennedy, is interpreted as a reaction to the Revolution of 1959, despite the diplomatic recognition by the U.S. in 1959. Where initially the U.S. was worrying about the power of Castro’s charisma and his quest for an independent Cuba, concerns raised when Castro did not request any U.S. aid.

⁷ <https://www.usembassy.gov/> (visited 6-11-2019).

The U.S. had hoped that by providing aid to Cuba, it could create a Cuban dependency on the U.S. (Brenner & Eisner, 2018, p. 130).

Later on in 1961, the Mongoose Plan took place. This plan, also known as the Cuban project or as Operation Mongoose, was designed with the following goal:

“To establish a seaborne propaganda balloon launching facility for the infiltration of anti-Castro, anti-Soviet propaganda into Cuba” (Operation Mongoose – Propaganda Balloon Operations Plan, 1962, p. 1).

The project was imposed to launch secret missions of the CIA in Cuba as a backlash to the U.S. defeat in the *Bahía de Cochinos* (Bay of Pigs). In the document, former president John F. Kennedy allowed propaganda actions against Castro and the Soviet Union in Cuba (Operation Mongoose – Propaganda Balloon Operations Plan, 1962). This was part of their War against Communism and it played a significant role in the Cold War. The big role of Cuba in U.S. foreign policy is called bizarre (Dominguez, 2000, p. 305). The commercial embargo, the invasion in the Bays of Pigs and the Mongoose Plan have been actions by the U.S. to counter the Castro regime and as an attempt to keep the Soviets out of the backyard of the U.S.

In 1962, under Kennedy’s presidency, the U.S. pressured the Organization of American States (OAS) to suspend the membership of Cuba (Prevost & Oliva Campo, 2011, p.1). As a reaction to the suspended membership, Fidel Castro declared the following:

“Second Havana Declaration, approved by over a million citizens in a mass meeting in the Plaza the Revolution: ‘The duty of every revolutionary is to make the revolution’” (Castro and Ramonet, 2008, p. 637).

In this citation, speaks to Latin Americans to reject the imperialistic involvement of the U.S. on the continent. This declaration shows his aversion to the U.S. and the increasing of his anti-American sentiment.

The same year, the Cuban Missile Crisis, also known as the October crisis, took place. The crisis was induced after the failed invasion of the Bay of Pigs, because the threat of an U.S. invasion on Cuba was still evident. In search for security, Fidel Castro drafted a public military pact for the Soviet Union, which was backed up by the secret placement of Soviet nuclear weapons on Cuban territory (Henken *et al.*, 2013, p. 115). Before the placement of these missiles, the Soviet Union did not consider Cuba as a socialist ally, but rather as a country that was progressive. But the declaration of Castro in December 1961, calling himself a Marxist-Leninist (Brenner, 1988, p. 99) and the installation of the nuclear weapons meant that Cuba was accepted amongst socialist countries. An end was put to the Missile Crisis when the U.S. threatened to invade Cuba, causing the Soviets to remove the missiles (Brenner, 1988, p. 99).

The support was, however, not mutual as the Soviets did not act to protect Cuba, but used the island as a chess move in the arms race between the Soviet Union and the U.S. during the Cold War (Smith, 1984, p. 14). The fact that Cuba sided with the Soviet Union, provoked the tense relation between Cuba and the U.S. During the same year, the U.S. imposed a full trade embargo, with which the already existing export embargo was extended (The Economist, month issue 2015). In 1963, U.S. president Kennedy issued the first travel embargo (Barrios, 2011, p. 12).

In the same year of the commercial embargo of the U.S. towards Cuba, 1960, the following African countries became independent: Chad, Mali, Nigeria, Zaire, Gabon Congo, Togo, Benin, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Mauritania, Madagascar, the Republic of Upper Volta and the Central African Republic (Villanueva, 2004, p. 282). This encouraged Cuba to interfere on the African continent. Therefore, *Las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de la República de Cuba* (FAR), the Cuban army, recognizes Cuban missions in, amongst others, Africa. The official website of the FAR mentions Cuban interference in Algeria, Congo, Syria, Angola, Ethiopia and Nicaragua.⁸ In 1964, Che Guevara, one of the revolutionaries from the 26th of July movement, went to Congo. In this same year, the political organization leading Cuba became the PCC (the communist party of Cuba) (Gálvez & Todd, 1999, p. 11). This Cuban interference in Congo is an example of the Cuban revolutionary foreign policy. This military internationalism during the Cold War had the objective to support revolutionary groupings. The instability of Africa caused concerns by U.S. president Nixon, as he saw weak states as prey for Communist Soviet Union and China. Therefore, the U.S. got involved in the region as well. Cuban and U.S. presence in Africa aggravated the bilateral relation, because both countries were supporting opposite sides of the conflicts (Brenner, 1988, p. 99). The involvement of U.S. and the Soviet Union went as follows:

“Nevertheless, the United States enjoyed two formidable advantages in the quest for influence in Africa: it could provide far more economic aid than the Soviet bloc, and its European allies retained great influence in their former colonies” (Glejeses, 2002, p. 6).

These advantages became less certain due to the attempt at Communist subversion by Cuba. This unexpected involvement caught the attention of the U.S., who claimed not to be concerned. However, this mission was followed by U.S. intelligence units to analyse this newly formed Cuban strategy, which was to initiate and support the Cuban revolutionary principles around the world (Glejeses, 2002, p. 375). This new foreign policy was both a pragmatic and

⁸ <http://www.cubadefensa.cu/?q=misiones-militares> (Visited on 20/11/2018)

ideological motivated strategy. It was pragmatic in the sense that it was set out for Cuba to be taken seriously by the U.S. and the Soviet bloc. Ideologically seen, it was a manner to spread their revolutionary principles (Glejjeses, 2002, p. 376). After this three-month mission in Africa, Che Guevara went to Bolivia to continue Cuba's new strategy in Latin America. This strategy was concerning the U.S., which explains the CIA action in Bolivia which killed Che Guevara, a symbol of the Cuban revolution, in 1967 (Hardt et al., 1998, p. 352).

Operación Pedro Pan is an example of actions of the U.S. in the war against communism in Cuba. During this action over 14,000 minors were evacuated from Cuba to the U.S. between 1960 and 1962 without their parents. The operation was motivated by the military drills and anti-American propaganda taught in Cuban schools. The scholar reforms also involved the closing of secondary schools and sending the best students to schools in the Soviet Union. The approximately 25,000 children were received by church organizations in Miami. It has been argued that the operation lasted until 1981. This has however not been proven (Dubinsky, 2014, p. 59). The fear of their children being send to the Soviet Union and radio propaganda by the U.S., spreading news about the Cuban government taking away Cuban boys and brainwashing them, supposedly led to voluntary participation in the operation (Operation Peter Pan, 2015, p. 71).

The anti-U.S. elements in Fidel Castro's foreign policy and discourse is well illustrated in his speech on the 23rd of August of 1968 at the central committee of the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC). The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia was reason for Fidel Castro to address the PCC on international relations. In this declaration Castro did not condemn the invasion, but marked it as:

“a moment of great importance for the revolutionary movement around the world” (Blight and Brenner, 2007, p. 215).

Castro used the speech as a momentum to articulate his government's anti-U.S. standpoints and to reaffirm the Soviet solidarity of Cuba. For instance, Castro states that the German Federal Republic functions as “the principal pawn of Yankee Imperialism” (Blight and Brenner, 2007, p. 218). Later on in the same speech, Castro declares that the Czechoslovaks were turning capitalistic and imperialistic before the invasion and calling this movement ‘counterrevolutionary’.

Castro, besides condemning oligarchic governments in Latin America in his discourse, expresses his anti-imperialistic point of view:

“And against the best divisions of the imperialist Government of the United States we are willing, like the Vietnamese, to fight for one hundred years, if necessary. (APPLAUSE)

That is the only slight difference, imperialists and oligarchs. We gladly uphold our positions, and we will uphold them always without being frightened by any kind of threats. PATRIA O MUERTE! VENCEREMOS (OVATION)” (Blight and Brenner, 2007, p. 245).

Castro declares to be willing to fight like Vietnam against the U.S., aiming at the Vietnam War, which had become part of the Cold War, (The Economist, month issue 2015), shows his militancy. With referring to the Vietnamese, Castro added insult to injury as the U.S., supporting for South-Vietnam, was fighting a war to the north of Vietnam, which was China and the Soviet Union oriented. The U.S. eventually lost the war in 1975, which showed the U.S. was not invincible. The Vietnam war became part of the Cold War. After the withdrawal of the troops, Vietnam turned socialist, a result that has been a thorn in the flesh of the U.S. (Proctor et al., 2014, pp. 577-586). This public reaffirmation of the Cuban support to the Soviet Union and public expression of aversion of the U.S. shows how Castro Cuba was still heading in the same, leftist direction.

In 1975, Cuba started interfering in Africa again. In this mission, Cuba supported the Soviet-backed Angola in defending and repelling the militias that were supported by the U.S. It is striking that this mission was an indirect confrontation between Cuba and the U.S. In Angola, Cuba triumphed which led to a better reputation in the Third World (Glejises, 2002, p. 380). This mission lasted until 1991 (Villegas et al., 2017, p. 15). This was not the only public support Cuba gave to Soviet-backed parties in conflicts. For instance, the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 by the Soviet Union was supported by Fidel Castro (The Economist, month issue 2015).

In 1977, U.S. president Carter lifted the travel embargo partially (Sullivan, 2005, p. 2).

In 1983, the U.S. launched *Radio Martí*. This radio station, with the mission to fight communism, was established to spread American news and propaganda around the island of Cuba by the signing of the Radio Broadcasting to Cuba Act (Walsh, 2011, p. 88). Since 1985 the radio started broadcasting to Cuba. Castro counteracted to the first broadcasting of *Radio Martí* by holding off the immigration agreement and no longer permitting migrated Cubans to visit the island. As a reaction, U.S. president Reagan blocked entry to the U.S. for any Cuban government official or member of the PCC, which in practice resulted in a disallow in contact between residents from both countries. In July 1986 Cuban sought rapprochement by proposing bilateral consultations to restore the immigration agreement and come to an accord regarding

* The radio station was named after José Martí. Martí fought for the independence of Cuba during the colonization by the Spaniards. He is famous for his fight against the influence of the U.S. in the Americas (López Segre, 2017, p. 43).

the radio stations. These consultations were put to an end on the first day when U.S. officials walked out (Brenner, 1988, p. 39). In 1982, the administration of president Reagan announced a stricter travel embargo (Sullivan, 2005, p. 2).

The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 had significant consequences for Cuba. Losing its political, economic and military ally was of big impact for the island (Gershamn and Gutierrez, 2009, p. 36). Cuba was already in an economic decline since 1989, which was worsened by the fall of the Soviet Union. The socialist government of Fidel Castro was depending on the Soviets for trade. 70% of Cuba's export products was traded with the Soviet Union. Between 1990 and 1993, the GDP of Cuba fell between 35% - 50% (Henken, 2008, p. 438). The dissolution of the former Soviet Union in combination with the economic sanctions resulted in the commencement of a difficult period for the island, called the 'Special Period in Time of Peace' (Solazar, 1994, p. 308). This period was denounced by Fidel Castro in 1992 and resulted in economic reforms by the Cuban government to survive the extremely difficult conditions (Henken, 2008, p. 438). The reforms were twofold. First of all, food rations and services were diminished. These measurements were paired with attempts to attract FDI's. The second part of the strategy was the reinforcement of the instruments to execute repression and control. This included a constitutional change to be able to determine the right to fight in favour of the revolution and to call out a state of emergency (Gershamn and Gutierrez, 2009, p. 37). In the same year, Clinton added to categories and thereby relieved the travel ban moderately (Sullivan, 2005, p. 2).

The political consequence of the Special Period was an uprising in 1994. Fidel Castro blamed the U.S. for the political unrest and threatened to stop blocking Cubans from fleeing the island if the U.S. wouldn't stop encouraging illegal migration¹⁰. After consultations with Cuba, the Clinton Administration implemented the 'Wet Foot-Dry Foot' policy. This policy was the first officially adopted and implemented U.S. policy formed to control migration from Cuba to the U.S.¹¹ The policy was formed to discourage migration due to the risk of repatriation (Barrios, 2011, p. 8).

The U.S. installed the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 (The Economist, month issue, 2015), which narrowed the yet existing restrictions on trade and travel. It was imposed with the objective to reform the Cuban system without dependence on the Soviet Union (Jefferies, 1993,

¹⁰ The New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/08/06/world/protesters-battle-police-in-havana-castro-warns-us.html> (visited on 9-11-2019).

¹¹ The Wet Foot-Dry Foot policy accepted Cuban migrants who reached U.S. mainland (dry feet) as legal migrants, whilst migrants caught at sea(wet feet) would be repatriated (Barrios, 2011, p. 8).

p. 76). Besides the Cuban Democracy Act, the embargo was additionally legislated in the Helms-Burton Act of 1996¹². Helms-Burton was imposed by president Clinton as a reaction to the attack on two planes by missiles from the Cuban army (Lowenfeld, 1996, p. 419). To summarize, the Act contained restricted sanctions against the Castro government (Treasury.gov, 1996, p. 1), a policy to support the independence of Cuba, the protection of U.S. companies with property in Cuba (Treasury.gov, 1996, p. 2) and “*Exclusion of certain Aliens*” (Treasury.gov, 1996, p. 3). On some titles of the Act the government put waivers, giving the U.S. room to elaborate the economic restrictions to Cuba in the future. The waivers are therefore hanging like the sword of Damocles over Cuba.

The international reactions to this Act were negative. The Helms-Burton Act experienced opposition, who claimed that it counteracts international principles of sovereignty in a country that still is to develop a national identity (Roy, 2000, pp. 182-185). In the margins of the yearly United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Cuba yearly applies a resolution against the embargo of the U.S. and which is usually supported by all United Nations member states except for the U.S. and Israel.¹³

Cuba, forced into dire straits because of the fall of its main ally and economic sanctions imposed by the U.S., was struggling to survive and sought a new, like-minded ally. Castro found one in Bolivarian Venezuela, led by Hugo Chávez. Chávez’s government was influenced by *Chavismo*; a leftist, socialist, anti-U.S. and anti-imperialist ideology focusing on unification and integration of the Latin American countries (Lampa, 2017, pp. 215-216). With Europe becoming less and less socialist and the increasing pressure from the U.S., the timing of Venezuela becoming a like-minded country was crucial for Castro Cuba (Azicri, 2009, p. 99). From 2000 onwards, Cuba and Venezuela closed several healthcare and oil deals.

The shift to the left by Latin American countries from the 1990s onwards is called the Pink Tide. This socialist shift was encouraged by dissatisfaction of the neoliberal period Latin America had experienced Cannon and Hume, 2012, p. 1044). Governments of the Pink Tide include Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Panama, El Salvador, Paraguay, Bolivia, Argentina, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Brazil. The engagement of these countries gave Cuba regional solidarity and opportunities to trade with like-minded countries after the loss of its socialist ally the Soviet Union (Gardini and Lambert, 2011, p. 192). In 2004, ALBA was founded by Cuba and Venezuela (Azzelini, 2014, p. 47). It was established with the objective to impede free-

¹² The official name is ‘The Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (Libertad) Act of 1996’ (Lowenfeld, 1996, p. 419).

¹³ <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/ga12086.doc.htm> (visited on 9-11-2019).

trade agreements with the U.S. and it evolved to a regionalist, intergovernmental cooperation with a focus on the marginalized countries of the Caribbean and Latin America (Cusack, 2017, p. 1). Within ten years, ALBA had admitted 11 members in total. It was installed to as an alternative to the neoliberal shift Latin America had experienced (Cusack, 2017, p. 2). For Cuba, the ALBA offered cooperation in the Caribbean, a larger platform for socialist ideas and cooperation in ‘grand nationals’. One of the key bases of ALBA was the trade partnership between Cuba and Venezuela. The admission of other countries led to intra-ALBA trade. In the period of 2005-2011, Cuba traded for 6,794,828 US\$ with ALBA countries (Cusack, 2017, p. 177).

Piccone and Trinkunas (2014, p. 1) call the bilateral relation of Venezuela and Cuba asymmetrical as Venezuela is less dependent of Cuba than the other way around. Venezuela was the biggest import (USD thousand) and export (USD thousand) partner for Cuba in 2004.¹⁴ After years of economic recovery from unstable politics, Venezuela’s national inflation rate started increasing again from 2006 onwards reaching a new peak in 2008¹⁵. Chávez has received critiques for not taking up opportunities that the oil revenue could provide (Azicri, 2009, p. 130).

The timeframe of this chapter ends with the resignation of Fidel Castro in 2008. After having been interim president for two years, Raúl Castro became president of Cuba in this year. The relation between Cuba and the U.S. has evolved throughout the years and since the ‘revolutionary’ regime of Fidel Castro came to power in Cuba, the opposites have experienced both indirect as direct conflicts. These direct conflicts were embodied through amongst others the failed invasion of the Bay of Pigs in 1961 and the indirect conflicts were fought in the international sphere, where ideology played the upper hand. In short, the 1960s were key in the deterioration of the U.S.-Cuban relation. The Cuban support for the Soviet Union, polarized Cuba and the U.S. more. In this chapter, it has become clear how Castro Cuba and the U.S. under different presidents have polarized. An example for the impact of the change of agency in the U.S. are the travel restrictions: where president Carter lifted the travel embargo, president Reagan re-imposed the restrictions. The impeding from both sides in international conflicts on

¹⁴ <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/CUB/Year/2004/TradeFlow/EXPIMP/Partner/all/Product/Total> (visited on 10-11-2019)

¹⁵ The inflation rate (based on consumer prices) was 30.4% in 2008. (Source: <https://web.archive.org/web/20141107050220/http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-03-07/venezuelans-quality-of-life-improved-in-un-index-under-chavez.html>, visited on 10-11-2019)

the base of ideological motives polarized the countries. Where the U.S. was acting against the War on Communism, Cuba intended to spread their socialist revolutionary principles. *Operación Pedro Pan*¹⁶ and the U.S. interference in the Vietnam War complicated the situation (Villanueva, 2004, p. 283) as did the endorsement by Fidel Castro about the Soviet Union invading Czechoslovakia (Gardini and Lambert, 2011, p. 179). With the fall of the Soviet Union, an economic low emerged for Cuba. For Cuba, struggling to replace its former dependence of the Soviets, timing was crucial when socialist Hugo Chávez came to power. With the new like-minded ally and the beginning Pink Tide, times seemed to be changing for Cuba.

¹⁶ (Bravo, 2013).

Chapter 3

Realpolitik leading to Rapprochement?

Decades of events in the tense relationship between Cuba and the U.S. seemed to have ended with the beginning of the ‘Cuban Thaw’. The thaw, from U.S. side explained by scholars due to change of agency, reached its climax in March 2016 when for the first time since 88 years a U.S. president visited Cuba. This rapprochement is analysed in this chapter. This reconciliation between both countries has been analysed by several scholars. However, academic sources focus mainly on U.S. change in policy rather than Cuban motives to approach the U.S.¹⁷. Therefore, this chapter focuses on Cuban foreign policy. First of all, an analysis on Cuba’s foreign policy regarding the U.S. from 1959 until 2008 will be made on the basis of the theoretical framework of Gardini and Lambert (2011) as described in chapter 1. Thereafter, the developments in Cuba and the region and their effects on Cuba’s political attitude towards the U.S. are analysed to determine the reasons leading to the shift from acting out of ideological motivation to a more pragmatic attitude in Cuban foreign policy.

Before 1959, Cuba had become dependent to a certain context of the U.S. by the imposed Platt amendment and the Sugar Act. The coupe by Batista in 1953 and the influence of the U.S. on Batista Cuba motivated Fidel Castro to overthrow Batista by organizing the revolution of 1959. These developments caused aversion to U.S. foreign policy, nevertheless, Castro still intended to build a bilateral relation with the U.S. after the U.S. recognized Cuba after the revolution. Thus, in the beginning Castro did not specifically form a pro-core or anti-core foreign policy. The attempt of developing a good relation with the Soviet Union however, complicated its relation with the U.S. From that moment on, Castro started an anti-American discourse in his speeches. Whilst doing so, his political behaviour became anti-core. The imposition of the embargo, the failed invasion of the Bay of Pigs and the Mongoose Plan fed the anti-American sentiment. The breaking of off the diplomatic relation in 1961 illustrates the hostility between both countries. The U.S. had tried to increase Cuba’s dependency by providing aid, but Cuba did not request aid. Meanwhile, Cuba had found a like-minded partner in the Soviet Union. Due to ideological similarities, Cuba and the Soviet Union intensified their relation on several levels, wherefore Cuba’s dependency on the U.S. lessened. By balancing power during the Cold War, Cuba acted both out of anti-American sentiment and out of socialist beliefs by aligned the like-minded Soviets. Gardini and Lambert (2011, p. 189) call this

¹⁷ For example, the following scholars write about U.S. foreign policy regarding Cuba; De Bahl (2018), Ryan (2018) and Crahan (2018).

ideological pragmatism. As for Cuban ideology, they state that, despite having Marxist roots, Castro's ideology is more about protecting the Revolution and thus, it's about a radical form of nationalism. Aligning with the Soviets was a rather pragmatic decision, since the like-minded principles and beliefs made the Soviet Union a suitable partner in the defence of the Revolution.

With the fall of the Soviet Union, Cuba's Revolution became precarious. By inducing the Special Period, Castro tried to survive these years of economic crisis (Krull, 2014, p. 12) having no option but to let pragmatism have the overhand in his policy in order to restore political and economic stability. With new imposed measure by the U.S. such as the Helms-Burton Act and the Cuban Democracy Act, the bilateral tug-of-war continued and the ideological differences remained. The emergence of socialism in Venezuela by the election of Hugo Chávez and the rise of the Pink Tide gave new opportunities for Cuba. Having gained new like-minded trading partners gave Cuba room for ideological foreign policy while also execute pragmatism as ideology and pragmatism aligned in ALBA (Gardini and Lambert, 2011, p. 193). The Pink Tide gave Cuba the opportunity to become less dependent of one country and regain economic and political stability.

In short, until 2008, ideological differences between Cuba and the U.S. have increased. Ideology has predominated Cuba's foreign policy. After the fall of the Soviet Union, pragmatism began playing a bigger role due to the economic and political crisis.

2008 marks the year in which the 49 year, revolutionary presidency of Fidel Castro ended. He was succeeded by his brother Raúl Castro. Raúl had already been in function from July 2006 on, due to the health situation of his brother. The fact that Raúl Castro participated as commander of *the movement of the 26th of July* during the revolution, makes it assumable that his government will continue to rule on the same basis of values, beliefs and principles as Fidel's government did. Mujal-Leon (2009, p. 20) states that the change of agency did not started the change in Cuba, but that it had already started with the fall of the Soviet Union. However, the most important political and economic changes came into being under Raúl Castro (López Segrera, 2017, p. 72).

With the failure of socialist Cuba, a pragmatic strategy to survive had to be designed. Raúl's government acknowledged the existence of structural economic problems and the necessity of adjustments in policy (Krull and Pérez, 2014, p. 102). In addition, he stopped solely blaming the U.S. embargo for the economic misery (Latell, 2007, p. 53). Consequently, ideological difference were not predominating Cuban foreign policy toward the U.S. anymore, because a more pragmatic approach was desirable. Meanwhile, the financial crisis had developed global effects. One of the sectors harmed by the crisis was the oil sector. For oil-

dependent Venezuela, this meant inflation advanced (Whitehead, 2010, p. 54). The dependence of oil resulted in that Venezuela (and thus Cuba) experienced more consequences than other Latin American countries such as Brazil and Chile. With the oil prices rising during the crisis, export figures dropped.

Cuba also suffered from the global financial crisis due to the decrease in demand for nickel causing an increase in dependence of Venezuela and China. As a consequence, Cuba's foreign debt in 2008 increased 1.1 billion USD¹⁸. Raúl Castro, realizing that the socialist economic model was not sustainable as it was, implemented an 'update' in the socialist model (Bolender, 2012, p. 155). To summarize, the ideological values and principles are still prominent in Cuban policy, but the necessary reforms originated from a pragmatic consideration. As the theoretical framework by Gardini and Lambert (2011) states, pragmatism and ideology are complementary in this decision-making process.

Another remarkable change under the rule of Raúl Castro was the access to internet. Until the year 2008, computers and modems weren't allowed on the island, while internet was already used worldwide. In 2013, a form of internet, intranet, was launched in Cuba (Escobar, 2013, p. 270). This development however, resulted from the realization of the Cuban government that the prohibition of internet was impossible (Henken and van de Voort, 2014). In short, in domestic policy, some important changes were made. However, this turnover of power was not crucial for these changes according to Mujal-León (2009, p.20) as it had already started when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. The entrance of the Special Period is considered a pragmatic move from the Cuban government since it allowed a dual currency and opened the economy for *cuenta propistas*¹⁹. By executing this 'update' of the socialist system, the strong communist characteristics slightly softened (Mujal-León, 2009, pp. 20-21).

During the same year, Barack Obama was elected to succeed president George W. Bush in the United States. His election campaign had a promised policy toward Cuba that aimed at a thaw in the bilateral relation (Maass, 2018, p. 17). This opposed the position of his predecessor George W. Bush, who had claimed not to be willing to approach the Castro's (Krull, 2014, p. 136). With a focus on freedom, he vowed to commit to pursue the Castro government to make democratic reforms applying a new strategy. He argued that he would alleviate the restrictions for U.S. citizens to travel to the island and to meet with Raúl Castro²⁰. This policy plans differed

¹⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cuba-economy/financial-crisis-one-more-woe-for-beleaguered-cuba-idUSTRE4926DH20081003> (Visited on 10-11-2019).

¹⁹ A *cuenta propista* is a self-employed worker. The permission of opening a micro-business created an opening in the private sector in Cuba (Henken et al., 2013, p. 213).

²⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/may/23/barackobama.uselections20081> (Visited on 20-01-2019).

from the previous president Bush' foreign policy toward Cuba, under whose authority the restrictions were tight.

Brenner and Eisner (2018, pp. 293-294) argue that at the time of the presidential transition, Cuba was experiencing good ties with Latin American, African and Asian countries. On the contrary, at the same moment, the relations with the U.S. and European countries were tense. The warm relations with Latin American countries was related to the Pink Tide (Gates, 2010, p. 3). Neoliberalism caused economic and social inequality in Latin American countries (Petras and Veltmeyer, 2011). Chávez profited from this vulnerable period and benefited from the gap it offered for the rise of his leftist ideology. As discussed in chapter two, this leftist tide created chances for socialist Cuba (Oliva Campos and Prevost, 2017, p. 497). The friendship between Hugo Chávez and Fidel Castro gave Cuba the opportunity to amend its relation with Latin America (Oliva Campos and Prevost, 2017, pp. 497-498). This partnership can both be considered to be formed with a base of pragmatism and ideology. Ideologically seen, the systems of both countries overlap. They wield a comparable set of values and believes. In addition, a good relation with another country was necessary to overcome the economic problems Cuba was experiencing after the critical fall of the Soviet Union.

At the Summit of the Americas in 2009, president Obama declared to be willing to re-establish the bilateral relation with Cuba and willing to develop equality in power amongst all American countries.²¹ This declaration alleviated the position of the U.S. as seen by Cuba. These words have an impact on the anti-American sentiment, as an important element forming the base of the sentiment, the powerful position of imperialistic U.S. in the Americas, was promised to be diminished. The easing of U.S. attitude towards Cuba and Latin America creates less hostility in the bilateral relation.

Another significant event in the Cuban Thaw was the permission for the re-entering of Cuba in the OAS in 2009. As discussed before in chapter 2, the U.S. had pressured the suspension of the Cuban membership of the OAS in 1962. The suspension, known as Resolution VI, was based on the decision that the Marxist-Leninist ideology of Cuba was counterworking decision-making in the institutionalized OAS. Hence, ideological differences derived this termination of the membership (Lopez Levy, 2009, p. 107). The exclusion of Cuba in the OAS resulted in less grip on the country within the Americas (Lopez Levy, 2009, p. 127). From the 1970s onwards, the OAS decided on allowing multiple ideologies, but still the repatriation of the Cuban membership in the organization did not occur until 2009 (Lopez Levy,

²¹ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8004798.stm> (Visited on 10-11-2019).

2009, p. 128). The withdrawal of the suspension was initiated by Venezuela and Nicaragua (Crook, 2009, pp. 585 - 586). However, Cuba had declared multiple times that it did not seek to re-enter the OAS, claiming that the position of the U.S. was too powerful. This shows that the anti-U.S. attitude was still present in Cuba's foreign policy. Thus, despite having become more realistic and pragmatic in its policy towards the U.S., the anti-American sentiment was still present.

In 2012, the negotiations with the FARC-EP (after this FARC) started in Norway and continued in Cuba (Latin America, issues and considerations for the United States, 2016, p. 85). The FARC, one of the actors in the Colombian conflict, has been subject to U.S. interference in Colombia. Colombia, mostly an anti-communist country, had maintained an overall warm bilateral relation with the U.S. since the First World War, even though during some administrations, Colombia had neutral position on the Cuban matter (Randall in Gardini and Lambert, 2011, p. 139). The start of the armed conflict *La Violencia*²² in 1948 led to emergence of, amongst others, the FARC in 1966. The FARC is originally a Marxist-Leninist guerrilla aggrupation that has a historic connection to other communist parties, both national as international (Brittain, 2010, p. 1). The FARC was powerful in Colombia and complicated the conflict when narcotics got involved.

After 9/11²³, the U.S. intensified its antiterrorism policy both in bilateral and regional context (Latin America, issues and considerations for the United States, 2016, p. 79). Having concerns on the trans-nationality of terrorism, the Colombian conflict combined the U.S. *War on Drugs*, *War against Communism* and *War on Terror* all together. Cuba's facilitation of the peace talks is remarkable. Having a Marxist-Leninist organization at one end of the table and an anti-communist government, backed up by the U.S., on the other end, without having a political role in the matter shows how ideology is outweighed by pragmatic reasoning. This facilitation marks a new role Cuba intended to play within the region and the international community. Stated in a resolution, the United Nations Security Council recognized the importance of the role of third countries in the Peace Talks²⁴. This international recognition was important for Cuba, having lost like-minded countries in the region with the downturn of the Pink Tide²⁵, the period of economic decline and the ongoing impact of the embargo imposed by the U.S. are reason for

²² La Violencia started with the murder on the political leader Gaitán (Palacios, 2003), which led to uprisings around Colombia by liberals and communists. In this conflict, 200.000 Colombians died. This period inspired self-defense groups to emerge, which developed into guerrillas (Zackrisson, 1989).

²³ On the 11th of September 2001, terrorists attacked New York and Washington. This attack is known as 9/11 (Latin America, issues and considerations for the United States, 2016, p. 79).

²⁴ <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/2261> (Visited on 17-11-2019).

²⁵ 2016 is often assumed to be the year the Pink Tide ended (Artz, 2017, p. 167).

Cuba to renew its position in the region (Prevost and Oliva Campos, 2017, p. 488). This seems to be a realistic move, because having lost like-minded countries within the region, Cuba's strong, socialist attitude would not yield much sympathy in the international community.

In July 2012, Raúl Castro announced to be willing to talk to Obama's government²⁶. The next public move of rapprochement came in 2013, when president Raúl Castro and president Barack Obama publicly shook hands at the memorial for Nelson Mandela²⁷. Later that year, in secret, had talks accompanied by the pope in Canada and Vatican City. This resulted in a public statement by both Obama and Castro in 2014, announcing the normalization of the bilateral relation with Cuba. One of the first steps to normalize the ties, was to reopen embassies (Miroff, 2015). The relaxing of the tense bilateral relation has created a window for opportunity for charter flights from the U.S. to Cuba. In fact, in 2015 the first charter flight between New York's John F. Kennedy airport and Havana's José Martí Airport was launched²⁸. Additionally, in May 2016, the first cruise between the U.S. and Cuba took place (Gomez, 2016). This boosts tourism in Cuba, because there are more American tourists visiting the island. These are examples of opportunities the thaw has to offer. They illustrate how rapprochement can provide economic advantages.

These developments have led up to the first visit of an U.S. president since 1928 (The Economist, month issue 2016). The visit of president Barack Obama marks an important, symbolic moment in the bilateral relation. Since 2008, with the change of agency on both sides, we have seen that for Cuba, change was already taking place during the presidency of Fidel Castro. For the U.S., the presidential transition from George W. Bush to Barack Obama provided a softer attitude from the U.S. to Cuba. This change in U.S. foreign policy towards Cuba had attenuated the anti-American sentiment predominating Cuba's attitude towards the U.S. Furthermore, the downturn of the Pink Tide and thus, the decline of like-minded countries in the region, destabilized Cuba's economic and political position in world politics. Venezuela, still a like-minded country, was suffering inflation from the global financial crisis, which affected the bilateral cooperation and certainty.

The advantages for Cuba to seek rapprochement with the U.S. involve both pragmatic and ideological considerations. In *Fifty Years of Revolution* (Castro Mariño and Pruessen, 2012, pp. 353-354), a cost-benefit analysis was formulated. This is a realist method to consider the

²⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-18995204> (Visited on 17-11-2019).

²⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mandela-obama-castro/obama-shakes-hand-of-cubas-raul-castro-at-mandela-memorial-idUSBRE9B90E220131210> (Visited on 10-11-2019).

²⁸ <https://www.businessinsider.com/direct-flight-from-new-york-to-havana-cuba-2015-2?international=true&r=US&IR=T> (Visited on 20-01-2019).

reasoning for Cuba for rapprochement to the U.S. However, it does contain both ideological and pragmatic components. First, it was stated that rapprochement would benefit the recognition of Cuba's revolutionary system. This indicates an ideological motives, except that recognition would provide a stronger independent position for Cuba which also indicates a pragmatic consideration. The second benefit involves the possibility of the lifting of the embargo, the Helms-Burton Act and the Sugar Act after the relaxation of the tense bilateral relation with the U.S. In addition, access to U.S. markets would become probable. These prospects could influence Cuba's policy towards the U.S. out of pragmatic concerns. Furthermore, the possibility of cooperation regarding geopolitical issues and the possible improvement of relations with Cuban migrants in the U.S. are mentioned. The benefits are both pragmatic and ideological, however, pragmatic considerations predominate, since the benefits regard economic reasons.

To sum up, after the inauguration of Raúl Castro, important changes were made (López Segrera (2017, p. 72). Some argue that the process of change had already been started after the fall of the Soviet Union, which indicates that the changes in Cuban foreign policy have a rather pragmatic nature. Struggling to keep the Revolution alive after having lost its key ally in trade and politics, the *Special Period at Time of Peace* resulted in the beginning of reforms. The emergence of leftist Venezuela came at the right time for Cuba, as the socialist country now gained a new like-minded trade partner in the Western Hemisphere. Cuba benefited from the welfare of the oil-state. However, the global financial crisis of 2008 has had a great impact on the Venezuelan economy and so it caused collateral damage for Cuba. Thus, the combination of this economic uncertainty as Venezuela became a less reliable partner after the global financial crisis and the newly elected president Barack Obama executing a softer foreign policy towards Cuba, influencing the anti-American element in Castro's ideology, created a momentum for Raúl Castro to review its options as the countries became less ideologically polarized. Having survived an economic crisis once, Castro had learned from the consequences. Even though it was not excluded that the desirable norms and values would not be feasible, by re-approaching its ideological enemy, Castro was aiming to reach the achievable. The realization of the necessity of economic and political reforms and the search for alternative trade partners after the global financial crisis induced the process of rapprochement for Cuba out of pragmatic considerations. The benefits of rapprochement as stated by Castro Mariño and Pruessen (2012, pp. 353-354) show how pragmatism emerged in Cuba's foreign policy.

The shift from primarily ideological based decision-making to a synthesis between ideology and pragmatism in Cuba's foreign policy has been analysed in this chapter. The change of

agency on both U.S. and Cuban side, the decline of the Pink Tide, the decay of Venezuela's economy and position of a trading partner for Cuba and the lessons learned during the Special Period led Raúl Castro to change his political behaviour towards the U.S. up to the extent where the first visit from an U.S. president in 88 years came into being.

Conclusion

International Relations consist of bilateral relations in a complex, non-linear system. Theories on International Relations in Latin America have patterns of dimensions, which have been divided into three building blocks; pro-core and anti-core, autonomous and dependent and economic and political-diplomatic. In addition, the concept of anti-Americanism is relevant in analysing Latin American foreign policy. This thesis has investigated the bilateral relation between the U.S. and Cuba with the objective to analyse at which point Cuba was driven to shift from mainly ideological driven foreign policy towards the U.S. towards the involvement of pragmatism in its foreign policy. The research question was:

“What factors have led to the shift from ideology to realpolitik in Cuban foreign policy leading to the rapprochement between Cuba and the U.S. in March 2016?”

The bilateral relation between the U.S. and Cuba has been analysed on the basis of the theoretical framework of Gardini and Lambert (2011), where ideology and pragmatism are illustrated as two dynamic, complementary concepts that are fundamental in the analysis of foreign policies in Latin America. Cuba's ideology under Fidel and Raúl Castro is a combination of revolutionary, socialism and anti-Americanism. Pragmatic political behaviour focuses on the achievable while ideological political behaviour focuses on the desirable.

Fidel Castro started his presidency willing to maintain a relation with both the Soviet Union and the U.S. Both direct and indirect conflicts in the 1960s between Cuba and the U.S. polarized the countries ideologically. Both countries impeded in international conflicts. These interferences were based on ideology: the U.S. was fighting a war against communism and Cuba's intension was to spread revolutionary, socialist ideas. In short, Cuba aimed for 'the desirable'. This changed after the fall of the Soviet Union, where the desirable had to make room for survival. The emergence of socialist Chávez gave room for a new ideology-based bilateral relation and led to the establishment of ALBA during the Pink Tide. This wave had saved Cuba economically and politically and thus, Cuba could strive the desirable again.

Until 2008, the bilateral relation between the U.S. and Cuba was strongly motivated by ideological differences that had initiated the decades-long conflict between the capitalist U.S. and socialist Cuba. The cold, tense ties between Cuba and the U.S. slowly started defrosting from 2009 onwards. There have been several events leading up to the symbolic visit of U.S. President Barack Obama in March 2016. With the change of agency on both U.S. as the Cuban side, possibilities seemed to have opened up. The symbolic visit of Barack Obama was a big step in the rapprochement between the dogmatic opposites. This détente can rather be explained

as a pragmatic move than an ideological one, because the countries still exercise contradicting systems and they still stand opposite from each other in certain matters.

To answer the research question, the change in Cuban foreign policy towards the U.S., leading to the rapprochement, which is symbolized in the visit of U.S. president Barack Obama to Cuba in march 2016, came into being after a series of events since the fall of the Soviet Union. Cuba barely survived this fall and was saved by Chávez, a new like-minded partner in the region. Still, economic and political changes were unavoidable. Change of agency in the U.S. softened the anti-American sentiment in Cuba's attitude. The decline of the Pink Tide and the receding economy of Venezuela made Cuba's position precarious. Meanwhile, the political pressure from the U.S., illustrated through, amongst others, the embargo, was menacing as a sword of Damocles above Cuba. This has eventually led to the perhaps in evitable pragmatic decision to seek rapprochement with its hostile neighbour. This shows how the shift from primarily ideological decision-making turned into a synthesis between ideology and pragmatism and thus, when Realpolitik emerged in Cuba's foreign policy towards the U.S.. To conclude, these factors have led Cuba and the U.S. from being close enemies to being neighbourly.

In a follow-up research it would be useful to investigate more primary sources. Scholars do not seem to agree on when Castro became communist. A field research in archives of the Cuban government or Cuban newspapers such as *Granma* would be useful to be able to determine this. Besides, *Granma* has not been digitalised, wherefore it was not possible to include Cuban state newspaper articles on events between Cuba and the U.S. before the 2010s. Furthermore, this research focussed on Cuba's foreign policy towards the U.S. in a timeframe until the visit of Barack Obama. Meanwhile, Cuba has a new president, Miguel Díaz-Canel – not a Castro- , who wasn't born before the Revolution yet.

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