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## **The Cuban Revolution and Peruvian guerrilla movements in the mid-20th century**

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# The Cuban Revolution and Peruvian guerrilla movements in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century



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*“The Cuban Revolution had everything: romance, heroism in the mountains, ex-student leaders with the selfless generosity of their youth – the eldest were barely past thirty – a jubilant people, in a tropical tourist paradise pulsing with rumba rhythms. What is more, it could be hailed by all left revolutionaries.” (Hobsbawm, 2016, p. 262).*

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## ***1. Introduction***

Wickham-Crowley (2014) divides the Latin American revolutionary uprisings during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century into two waves. The first begins with the Cuban Revolution in 1958 and ends in 1970. Many movements that evolved or started their armed struggle elsewhere were inspired by the Cuban model, especially through writings, such as manifestos and handbooks (p. 221). Several leaders and members of revolutionary movements received guerrilla training in Cuba and applied the strategy in their own country (p. 222). Following the defeats of the revolutionary attempts to overthrow governments in several countries by the national armies and the decline of Castro's emphasis on guerrilla warfare in his speeches, communist and socialist movements distanced themselves from the Cuban model (p. 226). According to Wickham-Crowley (2014), Che Guevara's death in 1967 was the crucial factor that led to this development (p. 227). The second wave of "guerrilla-movements" started in 1970 and roughly ended in 1990. Especially the communist parties emphasized the pacific strategy of electoral politics and denied the effectiveness of an armed struggle. They remained patient until they started an armed guerrilla war. One of the main aims was to gain the support of the indigenous people. Being disconnected from Cuba did not mean the lack of foreign influence. Many movements adopted methods from other ideologies than from "Castroism" or established country-specific tactics (p. 229). Due to the high social, political, and economic diversity of Latin America, one asks how the Cuban Revolution affected specific countries and if the assumptions made by Wickham-Crowley (2014) still hold. I intend to evaluate this puzzle by focussing on Peru in particular, by assessing how the Cuban Revolution impacted the movements of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Andean country is not only topographically different from Cuba but also its societal and political circumstances differ. I contribute to the research of revolutionary movements and the impact of the Cuban Revolution by evaluating whether one can divide the revolutionary waves into two phases. Moreover, I aim to analyse if the first wave was defined by emotional decision making and the second by rational learning.

## ***2. Literature review***

### ***2.1 Definition***

To evaluate the impact of the Cuban Revolution on Peru, one needs to be familiar with the research on diffusion. In general, scholars found that movements do not only evolve

individually in particular countries or regions but also diffuse to other areas (Weyland, 2009; Givan et al, 2010; Fenger, 2007). Diffusion in the context of social sciences “refers to the spread of something within a social system” (Strang & Soule, 1998, p. 266). The “something” that is being diffused can be “behaviour, strategy, belief, technology, or structure” (p. 266). This definition is very broad and does not specify the distinct aspects of what and how something is diffused. Other scholars define diffusion more specifically. Rogers (1995) theorizes that some innovation spreads directly or indirectly across a social system. Using Rogers’ (1995) definition as a basis, McAdam and Rucht (1993) argue that diffusion incorporates several elements such as “a person, group, or organization that serves as the emitter or transmitter” on the one hand and entities that adopt the item, on the other. Furthermore, an “item that is diffused, such as material goods, information, skills, and the like” is present additionally to “a channel of diffusion that may consist of persons or media that link the transmitter and the adopter” (p. 59). In the following thesis, this latter definition is used to understand the diffusion of the Cuban Revolution.

## *2.2 Successful diffusion*

To evaluate whether a diffusion of a movement occurred scholars focussed on three factors that determine the puzzle (McAdam & Rucht, 1993; Givan et al., 2010; Soule, 2004). Firstly, the time of the adoption of an innovation is crucial. The action by the adopter needs to lag behind of the initial actions of the transmitter. Secondly, the two struggles need to be defined by “specifiable common elements” such as a common ideology, the use of tactics or the organizational forms. Finally, there needs to be some mechanism that diffuses the innovation. It can be relational, nonrelational or even both (McAdam & Rucht, 1993, p. 66).

## *2.3 Diffusion mechanisms*

Meyer and Strang (1993) focus primarily on the relational diffusion, by which an innovation spreads among actors that are culturally connected or share institutional equivalence. McAdam & Rucht (1993), on the other hand, criticize this focus on pure relational mechanisms and include nonrelational, indirect means of diffusion. They claim that one cannot differentiate clearly from a direct and indirect relation between initiator and adopter. Even though, the actors might not be connected through personal relations, there still needs to be some interpersonal contact to make diffusion happen. Thus, it is always a mix of relational and nonrelational mechanisms. Therefore, one must focus on the distribution of those channels to understand which is more prevailing (p. 60).

Other authors include both, indirect and direct channels in their analysis, but make a clear distinction between them. According to Soule (2004), relational, or direct diffusion, occurs when individuals are socially connected and in direct contact to exchange ideas. Nonrelational, or indirect diffusion, happens through the basis of a shared identification, meaning similar grievances or ideology, and is nowadays enabled by the mass media. Before the existence of transnational media availability, innovations were spread mouth-to-mouth by strangers (Soule, 2004, pp. 195-196).

Scholars such as Givan et al. (2010) and Tarrow (2011), even add a third mechanism, namely diffusion through mediation, where actors are not directly connected but are similarly related to a third actor, that facilitates the diffusion. In this essay, the framework by Soule (2004) is applied, using solely the relational and nonrelational channels as a basis to explain the relationship between Cuba and Peruvian guerrillas. The research question is how the Cuban Revolution influenced the Peruvian movements. Thus, the diffusion mechanisms are solely a support to find the critical patterns to analyse the relationship.

#### *2.4 The diffusion of revolutionary movements*

Only few scholars focused on the diffusion of revolution. Weyland (2009), analyses the spread of the revolutions of 1848 in Latin America and Europe. The author evaluates whether the movements diffused via external pressure, rational learning, normative promotion or inferential heuristics (p. 397). He argues that the latter, being part of cognitive psychology, helps the most to understand the revolutionary wave. In 1848, dramatic events, such as the ouster of French King Louis Phillipe in 1848, captured much attention, making people put disproportional weigh on them. Adding to that, especially in Europe neighbouring effects made the spread of news and information easier due to geographic proximity (pp. 408-410).

Fenger (2007), evaluated the diffusion of revolutions in five south-eastern European and Central Asian countries. In contrast to Weyland (2009), he found that several domestic aspects have an influence on the extent of the diffusion besides theoretical mechanisms. Additional to existing transnational networks, such as student movements and NGOs, the country's geography plays a role. Moreover, he focusses on the openness of a country, meaning whether independent media is existent and if ideas float freely. Finally, in contrast to Weyland (2009), Fenger used learning, competitive and cooperative independence, coercion, common norms and symbolic imitation as mechanisms to evaluate the existence of movement diffusion (p. 6). His main findings are that revolutions, in those countries with a low level of openness and unstable governance structures, are foremostly caused by domestic aspects. Those enjoying a high level

of openness but unstable governance structures, are more likely to “import” a revolution from other parts (p. 21). According to Weyland (2009) himself, even though those domestic factors do play a role in the extent to which an innovation diffused, it is not enough to explain the whole puzzle without focussing on the mechanisms addressed above (p. 394). Additionally, due to the focus of this essay on how the Cuban revolution impacted different movements in Peru, Weyland’s (2009) mechanisms seem more useful to understand this puzzle because they are also used by Wickham-Crowley (2014) in his attempt to assess the revolutionary waves in Latin America. This essay is based on this assessment and thus, it is useful to incorporate the same theoretical tools to test his findings.

### *2.5 Domestic factors*

Besides diffusion mechanisms, scholars investigated the domestic factors enabling the spread of innovation and the adoption of it (Fenger, 2007; Hale, 2013; Weyland, 2006). Especially the neighbouring effect plays an important role in the facilitation of diffusion (Fenger, 2007). The connection between Bolivia and Peru created a close relationship of guerrillas of both countries supporting each other (Lust, 2016). Additionally, by looking at the existence of civil society and NGOs, the political opportunity structure, and the openness of the media, one can assess how successfully diffusion might occur. If a country already has groups that can adopt the innovation and apply it in their region, it is more likely for diffusion to occur. Similarly, the more liberal and independent the media, the easier it is to receive information about events in other countries. Finally, if the adopter groups are able to apply the innovation without facing a direct defeat by the army or other security forces, the possibility of diffusion increases (Fenger, 2007). Due to the scope of this essay, I only focus on some domestic factors, such as regime change and the socio-economic situation in Peru.

### *2.6 The diffusion of the Cuban Revolution in Latin America*

During the Cold War era, many Latin American countries experienced revolutionary uprisings, starting in the 1960s and ending in the 1990s (Wickham-Crowley, 2014). Especially striking is the substantial use of guerrilla warfare that was adopted by many Latin American revolutionary groups after the success of the Cuban Revolution (Wickham-Crowley, 2018, p. 2). Most scholars use a qualitative research design because of the historical nature of the topic. (Marchesi, 2017; Wickham-Crowley, 2018; Liberman, 2017; Weyland, 2019).

Marchesi (2017) argues that the countries of the Southern Cone, meaning Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil, influenced each other through meetings and exchanges, like the



Tricontinental Conference in Cuba or the Organization for Latin American Solidarity (OLAS) meetings. Leaders of different movements of several South American and Caribbean countries came together to discuss current issues in the regions and exchange ideological and tactical ideas (pp. 2-3). Therefore, he does not find that the Cuban Revolution was the main driver for these movements to arise.

Nevertheless, in contrast to Marchesi (2017), other scholars claim that the revolutionary ideas and tactics or simply the motivation to start an armed struggle against the existing governments, were indeed diffused from the Cuban Revolution (Wickham-Crowley, 2018; Liberman, 2017; Weyland, 2019). This argumentation is based on the observation that uprisings in several Latin American countries began after the Cuban success in 1959 (Weyland, 2019, p. 8). Thus, even though Marchesi's (2017) argument, that these countries interacted in conferences and meetings is indeed true, the main driver for the beginning of revolutionary action was the success of the Cuban Revolution. Liberman (2017) explains this importance of Cuba, underlining the influence on Latin America because of the similarities existing in the region (p. 50). Besides cultural closeness, the struggle against US imperialism formed the base for common grievances, that facilitated the diffusion of the Cuban model (Petras, 2013, p. 78). The surprising success of the revolution led by Fidel and Raúl Castro, accompanied by Ernesto "Che" Guevara, inspired many young leftist activists that were invested in the anti-imperialist struggle, social justice, and national liberation (Kruijt et al., 2019).

Several scholars specifically emphasize the importance of Guevara (Martz, 1970; McCormick et al., 2019). For many, he was a celebrity among Communists and took the role of a "roving ambassador and principal interpreter" (McCormick et al., 2019). This assumption is shared by the great majority of scholars, putting emphasis on the importance of writings and the presence of Guevara in several countries, directly interacting with revolutionary groups. This factor facilitated the diffusion of the Cuban Revolution. (Wickham-Crowley, 2014; Martz, 1970; McCormick, 2019).

According to Kruijt et al. (2019), the Cuban Revolution highly influenced and innovated the repertoires of action for the revolutionary movements in the region (p. 4). Besides the guerrilla strategy, ideas and repertoires of collective action were catalysed by Cuba (Kruijt et al., 2019, p. 4). Those factors can be divided into a behavioural and ideational dimension. The diffusion of movement tactics or collective action repertoires, such as protests, strikes or sit-ins, can be categorized as behavioural. In the Latin American case, the application of the guerrilla "foco" is an example for this. The collective action frames are part of the ideational dimension (Givan

et al., 2010, pp. 4-6). An example of the latter is that the Cuban Revolution added three new factors to the revolutionary struggle of Latin America. Firstly, Guevara (1964) argues that popular forces are able to win against more powerful armed forces. Secondly, there is no need to wait until the conditions for revolution are ready because they are created by the “foco” insurgency. Finally, in Latin America the armed struggle needs to be rural due to the existing social and geographic circumstances (pp. 2-3).

Even though, most authors agree upon the assumption that the Cuban Revolution spread to other countries and thus was the main factor for the revolutionary wave in the 1960s, only few authors focussed on the decrease of Cuba’s influence in the mid-1960s. Wickham-Crowley (2014) claims that movements adopted the guerrilla tactics in the early 1960s but were less convinced in the 1970s and even less so in the 1980s. This observation leads him to divide the guerrilla movements into two temporal phases. He examines the puzzle why these groups reacted differently to the Cuban Revolution, by focussing on several Latin American countries where revolutionary struggles took place between 1960 and 1990. Using Weyland’s (2009) model of rational learning, he claims that it was “the ‘antidote’ to the unthoughtful, emotional-driven, and indiscriminate spread of guerrilla-style insurgency that swept through 1960s Latin America” during the first wave (Wickham-Crowley, 2014, p. 227). Thus, the movements in the 1960s adopted the Cuban model based on emotional and non-rational decisions, whereas those in the second wave, “learned” from the failures of earlier movements. Adding to this, the ideological fragmentation, and the reluctance of Cuba to promote its model during the late 1960s, contributed to the end of the Cuban diffusion (p. 225; p. 229).

Aguilar (1970) takes a similar approach by focussing on the ideological aspects that led to the different impact of the Cuban model on the two waves (p. 3). The author underlines the crucial influence of “Castroism” until the mid-1960s and the shift towards other ideologies, such as Maoism, at the end of the decade (pp. 6-7). This transformation of strategies and ideology can be explained by the change of behaviour of Fidel Castro himself. He promoted his model in the early 1960s but moved back to the Soviet camp and domestic politics at the end of the decade (p. 9).

In contrast to that, Kruijt et al. (2019) argue that instead of two, Latin America experienced three waves of revolutionary movements, whose relation towards Cuba is divided according to rational imitation, rational adaptation, and rational learning (pp. 11-12). Especially the different view on rationality during the early-1960s differentiates Wickham-Crowley (2014) and Kruijt et al. (2019). Since most revolutions that imitated Cuba failed, it is questionable whether

movement leaders thought rationally by adopting these methods. Additionally, imitation implies the assumption that no other factors, such as distinct domestic circumstances, were considered when deciding to adopt it. Thus, the framework by Weyland (2009), including inferential heuristics and rational learning seems more suitable for this thesis.

Moreover, those studies lack the in-depth study of single cases. Latin America is highly diverse in terms of social, cultural, and political factors. Thus, even though the main assumptions still hold, domestic factors might have influenced the process of diffusion differently (Wickham-Crowley, 2014, p. 223). Additionally, the authors mainly focussed on the most known movements, although especially in Peru, many other groups existed. Fragmentation is another factor that makes a general assumption about the diffusion of the Cuban Revolution questionable. Albeit the core movements were indeed influenced by Cuba, others already resisted the guerrilla strategy as early as 1960 (Palmer, 1986).

### ***3. Theoretical framework***

#### *3.1 Classification schemes*

Weyland's (2009) framework is particularly useful to further build on Wickham-Crowley's (2014) assumption that the Cuban Revolution had a different impact on the movements of the first wave than on the those occurring in the second one. According to Weyland (2009), the spread of an innovation can develop horizontally among autonomous actors or vertically (Weyland, 2009, pp. 396-397).

##### *3.1.1 Horizontal diffusion*

Rational learning in this context means that actors observe a situation or an event and rationally reevaluate the case for their own purpose. To create a "rational" decision, actors need as much information as possible to accurately calculate the costs and benefits of their actions. Additionally, adopters act objectively, acknowledging that this is not completely feasible. Therefore, diffusion occurs after a cost-benefit calculation of perceived events (pp. 399-400). In contrast to that, cognitive psychology or inferential heuristics assumes that people do not act objectively and rationally, but subjectively in an environment of uncertainty. Due to the challenging task of getting as many information as possible, decisions are often based on a few striking events, whereby other important incidents might be ignored. The resulting biases prevent individuals from acting rationally due to the lack of information and objective decision-

making processes. Moreover, those decisions are taken emotionally, whereby anger and enthusiasm can increase people's risk-acceptance, which leads to non-rational outcomes (pp. 400-401).

### *3.1.2 Vertical diffusion*

Furthermore, innovations can spread through external pressure from more powerful entities. Their means to impose a particular ideology or regime type can be military intervention or economic sanctions (p. 398). Finally, normative promotion likewise occurs through a vertical channel but lacks the direct coercion of the adopter. If a group or state aims to gain international legitimacy, it is likely to adopt an innovation promoted by the international society (p. 398).

For this study, the rational learning and inferential heuristics are used to evaluate further on Wickham-Crowley's (2014) study in which he defined those as useful to analyse Latin American movements during the 1960s and 70s (p. 7).

### *3.1.3 Mechanisms of diffusion*

Additional to the mechanisms provided by Weyland (2009), Soule's (2004) approach is used to help understanding the relationship between Cuba and Peruvian movements. The model could have diffused via relational or nonrelational channels. Relational diffusion is based on relationships between individuals. Nonrelational, on the other hand, means the spread of an innovation via indirect channels.

## **4. Methods**

To evaluate how the Cuban Revolution impacted the revolutionary movements in Peru, process tracing is the most effective manner to find the causal relations between those two variables (Halperin & Heath, 2020, p. 269). Like Wickham-Crowley's (2014) study, critical events are outlined and assessed. Moreover, the following analysis is based on a single case, namely Peru focussing on the period between 1958 and 1990. According to Halperin & Heath (2020), single case studies allow to investigate the research question in depth (p. 234). In this study, the aim is to increase the internal validity of Wickham-Crowley's approach, by further reconstructing the mechanisms and critical events that influenced Cuba's impact. Even though the author incorporates Peru in his analysis, the study might have overlooked details that could change the outcome of his findings. Adding to that, Peru is one of the most important states in Guevara's struggle to revolutionize the Latin American countries. It was supposed to be the main country

from where his model should have spread to other nations (Lust, 2016, p. 229). Therefore, Peru can be seen as a crucial case, due to its importance for theory testing of Wickham-Crowley's (2014) assumptions. If the outcomes of this thesis vary from his findings, the internal validity is decreased, and his analysis needs to be reevaluated.

Secondary data, such as historical analyses, is used to evaluate this puzzle. Even though, collecting own evidence by conducting interviews with guerrilla leaders would be more reliable than using the work of other scholars, it was not possible in this context. Most members and leaders are either dead or unreachable for such a purpose (Halperin & Heath, 2020, p. 275).

## **5. Concepts**

### *5.1 Social Revolution*

In this essay, social revolution is defined as a “sudden and comprehensive change in social structure and values initiated by violence” (Blasier, 1967, p. 28). Three chronological phases of the revolutionary process are observable. Firstly, “the socio-political breakdown of the old regime”. Secondly, “the seizure of government, including strategies and tactics of ruling and revolutionary elites”. Finally, the “subsequent transformation of social structure and social values” (p. 29).

### *5.2 Guerrilla warfare*

The strategy that has been diffused from the Cuban revolution is guerrilla warfare. It is a means to pursue an objective and used by the strategically weaker actor, that is usually a smaller armed insurgency fighting against the state army. The main strategy is hit-and-run operations so that the state gradually loses control over territories and its population (Ibrahim, 2004, pp. 112-113). According to Che Guevara (1964), guerrilla warfare is a war of the mass or of the people, that can win against the stronger opponent. Drawing his conclusions from the success of the Cuban Revolution, Guevara, argues that it is not necessary to wait until all the conditions are met to start a revolution because the insurrection itself can create them. Additionally, the countryside and the residing peasants are key for a guerrilla uprising (p. 2). The key component is the “foco”, a small guerrilla group that organizes the insurrection (Ibrahim, 2004, p. 120). The “small, mobile revolutionary vanguard” protects itself in the countryside, while educating the rural population (Brown & Fernández, 1991, p. 83).

### *5.3 Marxism*

Besides the diffusion of the guerrilla strategy, ideological aspects were diffused to other Latin American countries. The social revolution was based on Marxist thought, existing since the Industrial Revolution. Marxism focusses on the transition between a capitalist and communist society, where “socialism” is the existing order in between. The optimal social order, according to Engels and Marx, is communism, where workers are not exploited, and not only a few companies and individuals own the majority of the country’s wealth. This final state is achieved through a social revolution by the workers. Some suggestions are to abolish property of land, centralize credit and means of communication and transportation to the state, and transform companies to state-owned ones (Harris, 1988, p. 7).

### *5.4 Maoism*

Mao Zedong based his ideology in China on the Marxist assumption that a revolutionary struggle is needed to achieve communism. In contrary to Marx, Mao focussed on the issues of the “Third World”, such as the oppression by the West (Kang, 2015, p. 13). His two major strategies were guerrilla warfare and a cultural revolution, that transforms the minds of the peasants and petit-bourgeois intellectuals. Due to China’s particular demography, the main actors are peasants, in contrast to workers (p. 15). Thus, compared with Guevara’s vision on guerrilla warfare that assumes the unnecessary of waiting for the conditions to be right, Mao expressed the need for a preparation of the population. This distinction is particularly important for the following analysis, due to the focus on ideological fragmentation of Peruvian revolutionary movements.

### *5.5 Leninism*

Lenin was one of the first to apply Marxism to non-industrialized or “backward” countries (Harris, 1988). He claimed that to achieve socialism and eventually communism, the country first needs to develop the forces of production. This was due to the underdeveloped economy and lack of cultural development of the population (p.9). Additionally, Lenin argued that to attain the transition to socialism, dictatorship and coercion are needed to counter the counterrevolutionary regimes and the resistance of the bourgeoisie (p. 10).

## 6. Analysis

### 6.1 Historical background

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, Latin American countries were ruled by authoritarian regimes and a high inequality prevailed within the domestic societies. The post-World War two period led to an intense urban development, which created social inequalities between the slums of the urbanities and the underprivileged rural population, on the one hand, and the well-situated areas of the cities, on the other (Kruijt et al., 2019, p. 3). Adding to that, many especially young citizens, were highly aware of the influence of the United States in their state affairs. Already during the 1950s, many anti-imperialist movements existed throughout Latin America. Nevertheless, they were still carrying out few activities and experienced a low level of success (Petras, 2013, p. 10). The Cuban Revolution changed the hopeless perception of the situation. As historian Eric Hobsbawm (2016) puts it:

*“The Cuban Revolution had everything: romance, heroism in the mountains, ex-student leaders with the selfless generosity of their youth – the eldest were barely past thirty – a jubilant people, in a tropical tourist paradise pulsing with rumba rhythms. What is more, it could be hailed by all left revolutionaries.” (Hobsbawm, 2016, p. 262).*

This crucial event inspired many leftist movements to begin their own revolutionary struggle. Cuba became a catalyst of strategies, tactics, ideas and repertoires of collective action (Kruijt et al., 2019, p. 4). What followed was a first wave of guerrilla movements throughout Latin America. Many received training in Cuba or were backed up financially by the island (pp. 4-5).

### 6.2 The case of Peru

During the early 1960s, Peru was characterized by remote rural areas, that lacked economic activity and opportunity. The land ownership was highly unequal, with less than 0.1% of the population controlling more than 60% of the land that was under cultivation (Campbell, 1973, p. 45). Other scholars claim that it was about 3% of the population that held 83% of the land (Lust, 2018, p. 9). Those figures show the problematic land distribution, that led to dissatisfaction among the peasants, aiming to work on their own piece of land. The attempt to ameliorate the situation by the newly elected, and US supported, President Belaúnde, through the implementation of land reforms failed (p. 10). In 1965 the Cuban inspired guerrillas Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR) and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) started their armed struggle, which was the opposite of what especially the United States wanted

(p. 11). Even though both movements imitated the successful Cuban model, they failed and were defeated by the national army by the end of 1965 (Lust, 2019, pp. 65-66).

In the following years, new groups were established, such as the Partido Comunista del Perú – por el Sendero Luminoso de José Carlos Mariátegui (Sendero Luminoso), which was a splinter group of the long existing Partido Comunista Peruano (PCP). The PCP was never connected to the Cuban ideology and strategies, which distinguished it from the MIR and the ELN. Following their defeat, the communist party regained influence and fragmented into different splinter groups, such as the Communist Party of Peru – Red Flag (PCP-BR), from which the Sendero Luminoso broke away in 1970 (Navarro, 2010). Abimael Guzmán, SL's leader, was unsatisfied with the reluctance of the PCP-BR to take up arms against the regime (Starn, 1995, p. 404). The focus of the SL was on China and the Maoist model of revolutionary struggle, which according to the leaders suits the socio-political circumstances of Peru better than the Castroist approach (Navarro, 2010). During the late 1960s, the recruitment and radicalization of members intensified in the National University of San Cristóbal de Huamanga, in the region of Ayacucho, where Guzmán was active as a professor of philosophy (Palmer, 1986, pp. 127-128). Additionally, the Sendero movement gained support among the indigenous population in the Ayacucho region, due to aid cutbacks and ineffective program management by the government in the late 1960s and early 1970s (p. 137). The area was neglected by the Peruvian government during the 1980s, leading to an insufficient health care situation and a lack of infrastructure. This is when the Sendero moved to the violent stage of their strategy, by attacking a jail in Ayacucho, releasing suspected “senderistas”. During the third wave of democratization of Peru, the violent activities increased and led to the state of emergency in 1982 (p. 139). Finally, in the mid-1980s, the Sendero Luminoso slowly decreased in importance due to its limited focus on only peasants as the main driver for the struggle, which weakened the support from other parts of the population. Additionally to the fact that there were no other peasant militant organizations in the Ayacucho region, the leadership of the SL was not willing to compromise with other ideologies than their own interpretation of Marxism, Maoism and the approach by Mariátegui. Fighting on their own, it was difficult to defeat the national police forces and the army (p. 140).

In the following analysis, the impact of the Cuban Revolution on Peruvian revolutionary movements is assessed, using the mechanisms of diffusion by Weyland (2009). The aim of the study is to reevaluate the assumption made by Wickham-Crowley (2014), namely the existence of two waves of revolutionary movements. Furthermore, the exact reasons and timing of the



transition from the first to the second wave in Peru are outlined. The events are analysed in a chronological order.

### *6.3 First wave*

According to Wickham-Crowley (2014), the first wave of the revolutionary uprisings began in 1958, with the beginning of the Cuban Revolution. Following the author's assumption, Peruvian movements should have been motivated by this event to start their own struggle. The cases of the ELN and MIR indeed confirm this claim to some extent. The ELN was founded in 1962 in Cuba, by Peruvians who have travelled there in 1961 (Lust, 2019, p. 63). The fact that the Peruvian revolutionaries went to Cuba to learn the guerrilla strategies shows the impact of the island already a few years after the success of the revolution. Besides, the members of the newly created movement came from different backgrounds, some were university students and some even ex-members of the communist party (PCP) that were unsatisfied with the lack of willingness to start a revolution in Peru. The factor that connected them was the admiration for the Cuban model. The diffusion of ideas and strategies was enabled through the relational ties between the Cuban leaders and the Peruvian militants. Besides educating them about the right tactics and ideology, the ELN received material support to start their own struggle (p. 64). The domestic factors in Peru, namely the high inequality between peasants and landowners created grievances that lasted for several years already (Brown & Fernández, 1991, p. 81). Those grievances combined with the sudden and surprising success of the Cuban Revolution might have created hope for many, especially young Peruvians, that were foremost led by those emotions to start an armed struggle.

Another relational tie that might have facilitated the diffusion of the Cuban Revolution is that Guevara's first wife was Peruvian. Guevara visited Peru before the Cuban Revolution and worked for the government leprosarium. Thus, he was already known by some and that he has already lived in Peru and had family ties for some time created, a connection that might not have existed with other countries (Brown & Fernández, 2019, p. 84).

The first action by the ELN and the fact that they created the movement purely based in the Cuban context leads towards the assumption that the adaption of the Cuban model was not rational but rather motivated by emotional behaviour. Nevertheless, the following stages were mostly defined by rational learning. Initially, the Peruvian students came to the island for an academic exchange but observing the impact of the success of the Cuban Revolution had an immense impression on them, which motivated them to invest in organizing a guerrilla movement (Lust, 2016, p. 227). Rather than investigating whether the learned tactics would fit

the Peruvian case, they followed Cuban instructions and aimed to enter Peru from Bolivia to establish guerrilla units in 1963. Nevertheless, they never achieved that first goal because the group was surprised by the police at the border, leading to a gunfight (pp. 227-228). Despite that evidence that this first phase was indeed nonrational, the steps that followed can be seen as such. Due to the first defeat, Peruvian and Cuban leaders started to reevaluate what happened. They found that it was not possible to start a guerrilla war in Cuzco and that the department of Ayacucho, where peasant movements had already been active for a few years, was better suited. In 1966, the ELN shifted its focus from Peru to Bolivia to support Guevara with his continental guerrilla struggle (p. 229). Both attempts were stopped by the army and eventually led to the end of the ELN guerrillas in 1967 (p. 235). Whether the second and third phases of the ELN were truly rational is debatable, nevertheless there is a change from the purely emotional motivation and inferential heuristics as an explanation for the adoption of the Cuban model, to a more calculated way of taking decisions on how to apply it to Peru. It shows that one cannot generalize that first wave as purely based on the cognitive psychological assumption.

Another example of an early Peruvian revolutionary movement is the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR) that evolved from the Popular Revolutionary American Alliance (APRA) in 1962. Its leader Luis de la Puente Uceda was a former member of the APRA and spent some time in exile in Mexico in the early 1950s, where he befriended with Fidel Castro. Back in Peru, his goal was to bring the Odría regime down. However, he got arrested. In 1956 he joined the agrarian reform conference in Havana, which inspired his political development (Brown & Fernández, 1991, p. 89). One could argue that even before the success of the Cuban Revolution, it already influenced activists such as de la Puente. Due to his admiration for the Cuban model, he was expelled from the APRA and thus founded the MIR (p. 90). Besides being heavily influenced by Cuba, the group also followed the example of Hugo Blanco, the leader of the peasant uprisings in La Convención that arose already in the late 1950s (Gross, 2019, pp. 135-136). Some authors claim that Blanco was the Peruvian Castro, who established his own tactics to achieve a substantial land reform and a general amelioration of the unequal agrarian situation (Hobsbawm, 2016, pp. 183-188). Thus, Cuba was not the only important influence, but also domestic groups and factors affected the choice of tactics by the MIR (Gross, 2019, p. 137).

The peasant movement in La Convención is another group that was not directly impacted by Cuba. It started as a small campaign in 1957 and converted into a solid movement in the following years. Nevertheless, it only remained active in the region of La Convención

(Hobsbawm, 2016, p. 182). The peasants were not inspired by Castro's and Guevara's battle in Cuba but were connected through their grievances due to the high inequality persisting in the rural areas of Peru (p. 183). The movement started with strikes, which are supposed to be successful because of reports about harvest problems of cocoa, fruit and coffee (p. 186). In the beginning of the 1960s, the actions turned into mass occupations of the haciendas, which led to the expulsion of several landowners (p. 187). According to Hobsbawm (2016), those peasants were not familiar with Fidel Castro and the events that happened in Cuba simultaneously. The only importance for them was to ameliorate their situation and push the government to implement agrarian reforms (p. 191). Thus, the diffusion of the Cuban Revolution did not reach the peasant movement in La Convención.

#### *6.4 Fragmented groups*

Ideologically, Peru is an interesting case. Marx claimed that the indigenous population is not an important part of the revolution. Guevara does emphasize the importance of the countryside but argues that there is no need to incorporate its people long term into the guerrilla war. Already in the 1920s, revolutionist José Carlos Mariátegui argued that the indigenous people are rather problematic for a true revolution (Brown & Fernandez, 1991, p. 94). The MIR did not focus on the peasants much, especially due to the language barrier; many guerrillas did not speak the indigenous language Quechua (p. 95). Other Peruvian movements on the other hand followed the Maoist model, which specifically underlines the importance of the rural population. The Peruvian Communist Party (PCP) and later its splinter group, the Shining Path, based their ideology on this assumption. The Sendero prepared its revolutionary uprising for more than a decade, to mobilize the rural population for their struggle (Palmer, 1986, p. 128). The PCP and later the Shining Path were opposing Guevara's views on guerrilla warfare.

Interestingly, the Shining Path was initially part of the ELN. It was the Huamanga command based within the National University of San Cristóbal, with Abimael Guzmán as its leader (Palmer, 1986, p. 127). Until 1965 he recruited many members, especially students for the organization. The command broke away from the ELN due to different opinions about opening an armed struggle in the Peruvian highlands. Already at the time the breakaway was more convinced with the Chinese model, to think in longer terms and build up a rural support. Only in 1966, Guzmán and his followers joined the PCP-Bandera Roja faction (p. 128). This historical analysis of the SL shows that there was already an ideological split in the early 1960s as well as a switch to another strategy. Moreover, this demonstrates again that rational learning

occurred earlier than Wickham-Crowley (2014) expected. Observing the failure of de la Puente and Uceda, he chose the Maoist strategy to start a revolution (p. 128).

This leads to another example of a group that opposed the Cuban model, as early as in 1960. The PCP was the first and only communist party in Peru (Navarro, 2010, p. 154). In the late 1950s, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) aimed to increase its influence in Latin America by sending emissaries to the continent. At the same time, the Sino-Soviet split happened which divided leftist communist groups all over the world. Whereas Castro and therefore the MIR and ELN remained closer with the Soviet Union, the PCP converged with the Chinese. Even though, the party was fragmented along this ideological division, it remained mostly pro-Chinese. Those that were unsatisfied with the PCP's unwillingness to start an armed struggle, joined the MIR or the ELN (p. 160). The remaining pro-Chinese factions were convinced that Maoism is the right ideology for the Peruvian case. This was reinforced, when the ELN and MIR failed their revolutionary struggle and were defeated by the Peruvian army. From then on it was clear that Mao's strategy is the only viable approach due to its focus on the peasant and indigenous population (p. 161). In contrast to Cuba, which had lower tensions between peasants and the landowners, Peru's society was defined by disparities between those owning the land and those working on it (Hobsbawm, 2016, p. 31). Thus, it was more rational not to use the Cuban model, because of the demographic differences. In this case the behaviour of the PCP towards Cuba can be explained by rational choice theory, instead of inferential heuristics, even though Wickham-Crowley prognosed this shift to rationality only in the 1970s.

### *6.5 The shift*

Wickham-Crowley (2014) suggested that the first wave of guerrilla movements was crumbling starting with Guevara's death in Bolivia (p. 223). This assumption is indeed partly correct when looking at the ELN and the MIR. Especially the ELN, that operated together with Guevara's guerrillas in Bolivia, was highly affected. Even though the movement remained for another year, trying to establish a Peruvian guerrilla, it was not operational anymore since the coup d'état by General Juan Velasco (Lust, 2016, p. 14). Although, the ELN lost the guidance from Guevara and similarly an important amount of its guerrillas, the regime-change in Peru decreased the necessity of a revolutionary struggle. Velasco aimed to create a revolution from above. Instead of previous military dictators, he tried to ameliorate the economic situation of the peasant population and not from the elite (Cant, 2017, p. 281). His agrarian reforms were targeting the prevailing social and economic inequality, despite previous attempts of Presidents like Belaúnde or Godoy in the early 1960s (p. 282). His goals were to redistribute land to new

corporations and peasant communities (p. 283). Due to this political development, revolutionary groups such as the MIR and ELN did lose their motive and legitimization for the use of guerrilla warfare, which led to their disintegration (Lust, 2019, p. 65). Additionally, the MIR was defeated by the army in 1965 and with the death of its leader de la Puente the guerrilla was eliminated (p. 66). This shows that Wickham-Crowley's (2014) assumption, to put much importance on the death of Che Guevara and on the apparent abrupt end of the first wave, is misleading. The domestic political situation highly influenced the survival and the purpose of the movements.

Moreover, the shift was rather gradual than abrupt. As mentioned above, the ELN already reevaluated Guevara's strategy to apply it in Peru, in the early 1960s (Lust, 2016, p. 226). Furthermore, the several guerrilla attacks and the response by the military happened during a period of five to six years. The ELN had to abandon its struggle in Puerto de Pasco and Junín in 1963 and Ayacucho in 1964 (Lust, 2019, p. 64). The MIR, on the other hand, was planning on having six guerrilla groups in action, of which only two actually were created and active and eventually defeated by the army (p. 66). The several defeats led to the disintegration of those movements, whereby members either joined other groups such as the PCP or retreated from the armed struggle as a whole (Navarro, 2010, p. 161). Even though, one could find that the first wave of revolutionary movements ended abruptly because of the simultaneous end of the ELN and MIR, coinciding with Guevara's defeat in Bolivia, the guerrillas actually started to crumble already before and were diminished step by step. Due to the scope of this essay, it is not possible to go into more detail about the domestic factors that influenced those groups, but the example of how Velasco's coup d'état impacted those movements, gives an insight into the power of domestic circumstances on the MIR and the ELN, besides the more obvious factors such as Guevara's death.

### *6.6 Second wave*

As mentioned before, the accurate divide of the first and second wave is not entirely possible. The Peruvian guerrillas of the first wave disintegrated already in the mid-1960s and movements, such as the Sendero Luminoso, had their beginnings in the early 1960s. Nevertheless, the actual use of a different strategy does apply to this distinction. Instead of following the Cuban example, the Sendero were patient for over ten years until they started their guerrilla war (Palmer, 1986, p. 128). Their attacks were against government staff, the military, opposition parties and labour unions. In general, against those that opposed the movement and its ideology (Breuer, 2014, p. 14).

Even though the case of the Sendero can be seen as evidence for the rational learning approach by Wickham-Crowley (2014), the Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru (MRTA), that evolved in 1982, was following the example of the Castroist organizations of the first wave. Their ideological approach was inspired by the MIR and the radical factions of the PCP that followed the foco strategy to achieve their goals (Breuer, 2014, pp. 24-26). Once again, it shows that it is not possible to generalize the guerrilla movements of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century into a clear cut first and second wave. If the MRTA would had been rational, they would not have used the failed strategy of the first wave movements, but rather chosen a different approach. Although Fidel Castro, long renounced the propaganda for a continental revolutionary wave, Cuba still had some indirect influence on certain movements.

## ***7. Discussion and conclusion***

Wickham-Crowley (2014) claims that the revolutionary movements in Latin America can be divided into two waves. The first is characterized by the diffusion of the Cuban Revolution and its adoption due to emotional, enthusiastic decision-making processes. During the second wave, movements started to learn from the failures of earlier revolutionary attempts and adapted the strategies to the local circumstances. When looking at Latin America as a whole, the approach might be an effective guideline to understand the immense increase of uprisings. Nevertheless, this case study shows that when looking at individual countries, in this case Peru, the distinction between the first and second wave is not that clear. Already at the beginning of the first wave, movements such as the PCP and the peasant movement in La Convención were either not affected by Cuba or directly opposed the Castroist approach (Hobsbawm, 2016; Palmer, 1986).

Additionally, the assumption that rational learning appeared only during the second wave, is misleading. Some movements, such as the ELN already learned from their own failures and adapted their methods to some extent (Lust, 2016).

Another aspect is that the first wave did not end abruptly but gradually declined and merged into the second wave. The best example for this is the existence of the Shining Path already in the mid-1960s (Palmer, 1986). The main factor that ended the first wave, according to Wickham-Crowley (2014) was the death of Guevara in Bolivia, nevertheless, other domestic events such as the regime change by Velasco, the move towards democracy and the agrarian reforms that took place at the end of the 1960s, influenced the guerrillas in Peru heavily (Cant, 2017).

Finally, the second wave appears to be indeed less influenced by Cuban methods, although the MRTA was still inspired by groups of the first wave, such as the MIR and the extremist parts of the PCP, which shows that Cuba remained important to some extent during the 1980s (Breuer, 2014). These findings reveal that to truly understand the diffusion of the Cuban Revolution and the development of the revolutionary movements, one needs to include the domestic factors into the analysis. Additionally, it is not possible to draw general conclusions about such a number of different countries, due to their social, economic and political differences.

### ***8. Limitations and further research***

Due to the scope of this essay, I could not research further to find other factors that might have influenced the revolutionary movements as well. I cannot claim with certainty that there were no other important aspects, such as socio-economic or topographic ones. Additionally, the case study does have a comparatively high internal validity but lacks the possibility of generalization due to the specific circumstances of the country. Thus, for further research it might be interesting to evaluate the relationship of other Latin American countries with Cuba and eventually compare it to the findings of this essay. Although, the internal validity of this paper is higher than that of Wickham-Crowley (2014) because of the inclusion of more details and factors into the analysis, the data used is not unbiased. The evidence employed is from secondary sources, which especially impacts the way how the behaviour of actors in Peru is represented. It cannot be ruled out that previous authors did not have all necessary information for their claims or were not biased due to their ideological background.

Moreover, even though the importance of Guevara's manifestos and handbooks is mentioned, not much attention is paid to the role of Castro and Guevara as charismatic guerrilla leaders. Previous research emphasized that the character of a leader can influence the mobilization for their movements (Freeman, 2014). Thus, further research could include their role in the diffusion of the Cuban Revolution.

Additionally, the relational and nonrelational mechanisms helped to analyse the relationship between Cuba and Peru. Nevertheless, it is a descriptive research and thus does not focus much on the way how and why the diffusion occurred. Further research could evaluate this puzzle by using the channels of diffusions outlined in this essay.

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