

# The Latin American Dream

How the Cuban Revolutionary Leadership Framed their Goal of Revolutionary Expansion  
in Latin America between 1959 and 1967



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**Student:** Anna Dilber

**Student number:** 5951100

**Thesis supervisor:** Dr. Stefanie F.M. Massink

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## Abstract

This thesis considers how the Cuban revolutionary leadership led by Fidel Castro and Ernesto “Che” Guevara framed their goal of revolutionary expansion in Latin America, which was part of their official foreign policy, between 1959 and 1967. Inspired by internationalism and socialism, the Cuban leadership developed their own Cuban ideology that hoped to curb US influence and imperialism in Latin America by convincing the region’s population to engage in armed struggle. Drawing on speeches, interviews, and writings by Fidel and Che, this thesis examines how the leaders aimed to convince possible adherents and supporters in the continent to start their own revolutions. With the help of framing theory, this thesis finds that Fidel and Che focused on consolidating the new regime between 1959 and 1962 while aiming to create consensus amongst Latin Americans. They diagnosed problems with the region’s social situation and systems of government, though Che was more outspoken than Fidel. They also began to frame armed struggle as a solution as they attempted to inspire action in the region. When the regime became more firmly established, the leaders actively promoted armed struggle and called the continent to arms between 1963 and 1967. However, Cuba faced complex geopolitical and ideological situations, which led to domestic and international problems. This influenced the leaders’ framing as Fidel became more reserved and Che left Cuba to enact his internationalist beliefs. Armed struggle and revolutionary expansion became less realistic, which led to a reconceptualization of this failing policy from 1967 onwards.

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## 1. Introduction

Fidel Castro, the Cuban revolutionary that opposed the United States of America for over half a century, passed away at the age of 90 in 2016.<sup>1</sup> When Castro and his revolutionary 26th of July Movement deposed the Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista and marched into Havana in 1959, he brought the Cold War to the Western hemisphere. To this day different views exist of Fidel: some see him as a revolutionary, others as a tyrant.<sup>2</sup> These contrasting perspectives indicate that Cuba was an interesting place during the Cold War. As the only socialist country in the region at that time, it remains a curiosity. Cuba's entanglement with the two superpowers of that period, the United States (US) and the Soviet Union (USSR), further garnered many people's attention.

Scholars have also concerned themselves with Cuba. Especially in recent years, the Latin American region during the Cold War has increasingly become an object for analysis. This results from a shift from the usual bipolar focus of the Cold War towards a more global approach that considers the agency of other regions and actors in a more extensive manner. For a long time, regions outside of Europe and the direct spheres of the superpowers have been side-lined. If they were studied, it was often in relation to these global superpowers. This was the case for Latin America and the Cuban Revolution, but in recent years scholars have called for these subjects and actors to be studied in their own right.<sup>3</sup>

Much has been written about the motivations and reasons of the Cuban revolutionary leadership in wanting to spread the Cuban Revolution and its ideas in Latin America and the rest of the world. This expansion was an important part of the Revolution and the government's policy. However, studies on how they attempted to convince Latin Americans to follow their movement and achieve this goal of revolution are lacking. This thesis thus aims to fill this gap and places itself within the recent scholarship on Latin America in the Cold War, by examining Cuba and the Revolution in their own right. Specifically, the question that this research aims to answer is:

**'How can we understand the way that the Cuban revolutionary leadership framed their goal of revolutionary expansion in Latin America, which was part of their foreign policy, between 1959 and 1967?'**

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony DePalma, 'Fidel Castro, Cuban Revolutionary Who Defied U.S., Dies at 90' (version 26 November 2016), <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/26/world/americas/fidel-castro-dies.html> (5 February 2021).

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>3</sup> See for example: Max Paul Friedman, 'Retiring the Puppets, Bringing Latin America Back In: Recent Scholarship on United States-Latin American Relations', *Diplomatic History* 27 (2003) 5, 621-636.

This question will be answered through three subsidiary questions. First, how can we understand the way in which the Cuban ideology of socialism and internationalism influenced Cuban foreign policy in Latin America between 1959 and 1967? Second, how can we understand the Cuban leadership's framing of their policy in Latin America during the idealistic consolidation period of 1959-1962? Third, how can we understand the Cuban leadership's framing of their policy in Latin America during the revolutionary expansion period of 1963-1967?

The hypothesis is that the Cuban leadership, Fidel Castro and Ernesto "Che" Guevara, took on different approaches during this time frame. This explains the division in the time periods in the last two subsidiary questions. It is expected that the Cuban leadership was swept up with idealism and triumphalism when it aimed to expand socialism and revolution in Latin America until it was faced with new dilemmas in 1962-63. Indeed, from the period of 1963, the new revolutionary government had debates on revolutionary expansion to Latin America as they sought to find a balance between idealism and pragmatism. This period of debate lasted until the death of Che Guevara in 1967.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the Cuban situation started to change around 1967 when the country's relationships with regional actors diminished and the prospect of creating armed struggle in Latin America became less realistic. Although Castro remained in power, the goal of sparking revolution needed to be rethought.<sup>5</sup> Further, since this thesis focuses on the two ideological leaders of the revolution, often referred to as Fidel and Che in academic literature, it is expected there are differences in how they framed their ideas on Latin American revolution.

This research is relevant due to its contribution to the current academic scholarship focused on the agency and interaction of the Latin American region during the Cold War. By means of the framing theory, which is explained below, this agency and complexity of Cuban ideology can be analysed in insightful ways. Both the development and articulation of the social movement's ideas can be considered in their own right, rather than in the bipolar and one-dimensional way Cuba and the Revolution have been studied over the past decades. This will create a better understanding of how social movement leaders frame ideas and how frames are used to influence people to participate in movements. The Cuban case is especially interesting because the regime made the mobilization of the Latin American region their official foreign policy.

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<sup>4</sup> Luis Martínez-Fernández, *Revolutionary Cuba: A History* (University Press of Florida 2014) 87.

<sup>5</sup> See for example: Tanya Harmer, 'Two, Three, Many Revolutions? Cuba and the Prospects for Revolutionary Change in Latin America, 1967-1975', *Journal of Latin American Studies* 45 (2013), 61-89.

## 1.1 Historiography

The Cold War period has been studied from the beginning of the conflict in the 1940s and has been reinterpreted until this day. Though there were different schools of thought during the conflict – divided by leading Cold War scholar Odd Arne Westad into orthodox, revisionist, and post-revisionist scholars – most of them had a bipolar focus.<sup>6</sup> The orthodox scholars viewed the USSR as the antithesis to the US, while the revisionists reacted against them by viewing the Cold War as a US effort to force its will upon the world. Tired of the opinionated clashes and insufficient explanations of their predecessors, younger scholars such as John Lewis Gaddis brought the Cold War back to the fore. With US archives opening in the 1970s and 80s, these post-revisionists broadened their horizon by looking beyond the European core of the Cold War. However, they predominantly focused on national interests and viewed the US and USSR as a central aspect of the Cold War.<sup>7</sup> This changed in the 1990s with the end of the Cold War and the growing availability of communist source materials, which resulted in a new approach called the *new Cold War history*.<sup>8</sup> This approach was a culmination of these previous trends into a study of the international history of the Cold War. According to Westad, new Cold War history was ‘multiarchival in research and multipolar in analysis’, and at times ‘multicultural in its ability to understand different and sometimes opposing mindsets’.<sup>9</sup> This history was more comprehensive because it included the role of ideas. Nevertheless, the focus remained bilateral, while scholars were concerned with how the Cold War ended and who was to blame for the conflict.<sup>10</sup>

Around the turn of the century, Cold War scholars became aware of the remaining concentration of Cold War historiography on the US and USSR and their roles in world affairs, while other actors and regions were not studied as extensively. Scholars such as Max Paul Friedman called upon academics to bring other actors, regions, and sources back into Cold War history. For instance, by using Latin American sources and studying Latin American history, space is created for Latin American actors and agency in historiography.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, academics viewed the Cold War as a global phenomenon and started speaking of a *Global Cold War*.<sup>12</sup> Historian Eric Zolov describes this global approach as having a global frame of reference, while combining traditional Cold War subjects such as diplomacy and geopolitics

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<sup>6</sup> Odd Arne Westad (ed.), *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, Theory* (Routledge 2000) 3-4.

<sup>7</sup> Westad (ed.), *Reviewing the Cold War*, 3-4.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, 6-7.

<sup>11</sup> Friedman, ‘Retiring the Puppets, Bringing Latin America Back In’, 626.

<sup>12</sup> See for example: Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (New York 2017).

with social, economic, and cultural history. This approach aims to recover the agency of regions like Latin America, while decentring the usual Cold War narratives.<sup>13</sup> This global approach has also been applied to Cuba, the Cuban Revolution, and the revolutionary government's will to spread revolution to Latin America and the world.

Nonetheless, much has been written on Cuba in the context of a demanding USSR and hostile US. Though international relations scholar Piero Gleijeses uses the global approach, he assesses the actions of Cuba in Latin America and Africa in the context of its relationship with the two superpowers. He concludes that the revolutionary leadership's goal of spreading the revolution was motivated by two things. First, the Cuban leadership considered self-defence to be the best offense: by assisting Third World revolutionaries, Cuba would weaken US influence and create new allies. Second, revolutionary idealism was a strong driving force for Cuba's leaders.<sup>14</sup> The Revolution's internationalist and humanist tendencies created a will to improve the situation in Third World countries (here: Latin American and African countries, which were non-aligned to the US or USSR). However, Gleijeses stresses that doing so was too risky in the US' backyard, Latin America.<sup>15</sup> Still, spreading revolution was Cuban foreign policy from early on in the new revolutionary regime.

According to historian Isaac Saney, the main concern of the Revolution was to create a socialist society that could defend itself against powerful external enemies.<sup>16</sup> This goal became connected to the existing prevalence of internationalism in Cuban society (due to a history of Cuban independence fighting against Spanish colonialism), which led to internationalism becoming official government policy and practice under the Cuban Revolution.<sup>17</sup> To clarify, internationalism is the conviction that 'cooperation between the peoples of all nations serves the common good of humanity'.<sup>18</sup> This perspective became an important aspect of the Cuban Revolution and Cuba's state activity.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the Revolution and internationalism mutually reinforced each other. The belief that all nations should cooperate was combined with the goal of upholding the Revolution and creating socialism in the world.<sup>20</sup> Saney states that

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<sup>13</sup> Eric Zolov, 'Introduction: Latin America in the Global Sixties', *The Americas, Special Issue: Latin America in the Global Sixties* 70 (2014) 3, 349-362, there 350, 354-355.

<sup>14</sup> Piero Gleijeses, 'Cuba and the Cold War, 1959-1980', in: Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume II* (Cambridge University Press 2010) 327-348, there 340-342.

<sup>15</sup> Gleijeses, 'Cuba and the Cold War, 1959-1980', 340-342.

<sup>16</sup> Isaac Saney, 'Homeland of Humanity: Internationalism within the Cuban Revolution', *Latin American Perspectives* 36 (2009) 1, 111-123, there 113.

<sup>17</sup> Saney, 'Homeland of Humanity', 112-114.

<sup>18</sup> Richard L. Harris, 'Cuban Internationalism, Che Guevara, and the Survival of Cuba's Socialist Regime', *Latin American Perspectives* 36 (2009) 3, 27-42, there 28.

<sup>19</sup> Saney, 'Homeland of Humanity', 112-113.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, 111-114.

internationalism thus served as a form of revolutionary self-defence, a way to spread revolution and anti-imperialism, and a way to develop a socialist consciousness and ethos for the new social order.<sup>21</sup>

However, historian Jonathan C. Brown states that although the revolutionary leadership aimed to unite Latin American leftists against imperialism, they were unable to achieve leftist solidarity.<sup>22</sup> The Cuban leadership believed that the Revolution would serve as an example to Latin American people, because its ideas could spread and spark revolutions. They trained guerrilla groups in the Third World, held international conferences on communism and regional solidarity, and harboured political dissidents from other countries. Nevertheless, Brown argues that the Latin American left was too fragmented due to nationalism and ideological particularism. This resulted in a widespread failure of Latin American guerrillas in the 1960s, because the Cuban leadership could not develop an effective anti-imperialist front.<sup>23</sup>

Tanya Harmer, a distinguished historian, has written extensively on Latin America. Regarding Cuba's policy towards Latin America between 1967 and 1975, she concluded that the goal of spreading revolution had been reconceptualized.<sup>24</sup> Previously, Cuban leaders entertained the idea that several revolutionary options existed in Latin America, such as armed struggle, that should be pursued. This hope diminished as time passed and the region's situation changed. Cuba faced disillusionment and setbacks as its relationships with other regional actors altered or soured. This change meant that initiating armed struggle was no longer the dominant pathway for the revolutionary government as other options and processes needed to be considered to export the revolution from 1967 onwards.<sup>25</sup>

In conclusion, much has been written about the motivations of the Cuban revolutionary leadership for their foreign policy, as shown by Gleijeses and Saney. Furthermore, Brown and Harmer argued that the Cuban leadership did not fully succeed, because they faced various problems and developments. Still, much remains to be examined in the region, especially regarding its agency and how the revolutionaries attempted to convince the region to participate in their Revolution, which the discussed scholars have not concerned themselves with yet. This thesis thus aims to contribute to Global Cold War research by examining the Cuban

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<sup>21</sup> Saney, 'Homeland of Humanity', 111-114.

<sup>22</sup> Jonathan C. Brown, 'To Make the Revolution: Solidarity and Divisions among Latin American Guerrillas in the 1960s', *Asian Journal of Latin American Studies* 28 (2015) 1, 1-25, there 3.

<sup>23</sup> Brown, 'To Make the Revolution', 3.

<sup>24</sup> Harmer, 'Two, Three, Many Revolutions?', 86-88.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, 86-87.



Revolution's leadership and how they framed their policy ideas during the early years of the new regime as they sought to mobilize Latin America.

## 1.2 Theory and Analytic Concepts

The Cuban Revolution is regarded as a social movement that aimed to extend its ideas and concepts to Latin America and the wider world. The Cuban leadership aimed to convince other actors to follow in their footsteps from early on in their rule. To analyse and understand the way in which the Cuban leadership, ideologically led by Fidel and Che, framed their ideas of spreading revolution in Latin America, this thesis will draw on the *framing theory or perspective* in the study of social movements. David A. Snow and Scott C. Byrd, two leading scholars in this field, provide the following definitions and explanations of the main concepts of framing theory.<sup>26</sup>

*Framing*, in the perspective of collective action and social movements, views movements as carriers of ideas and active agents that are engaged in producing and maintaining meaning for constituents, antagonists, and bystanders. Framing is thus an activity that social movement leaders and their adherents regularly engage in to increase or promote participation in a movement.<sup>27</sup> In fact, movements concern themselves with the problems of mobilizing consensus and action. *Consensus mobilization* aims to create ideational and attitudinal support among possible adherents, whereas *action mobilization* aims to activate the engagement of adherents for the cause.<sup>28</sup> The function of frames is therefore to articulate meanings to activate adherents, transform bystanders into supporters, get concessions from targets, and demobilize antagonists: this consequently shows that they have strategic imperatives.<sup>29</sup>

To attend to the mentioned problems, movements use three main framing tasks: diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing. *Diagnostic framing*, which addresses consensus mobilization, diagnoses events or aspects of social life or systems of government as problematic. This frame considers that these problems need to be changed or repaired and aims to attribute blame or responsibility. Often, previously bad but tolerable situations are framed as intolerable injustices that need to be changed.<sup>30</sup> According to the Cuban leadership, one of the greatest injustices in the world was imperialism, as seen above. *Prognostic framing*, which

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<sup>26</sup> David A. Snow and Scott C. Byrd, 'Ideology, Framing Processes, and Islamic Terrorist Movements', *Mobilization: An International Quarterly Review* 12 (2007) 1, 119-136.

<sup>27</sup> Snow and Byrd, 'Ideology', 123-124.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, 124.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*.

addresses action mobilization, aims to articulate solutions and general means and tactics for deciding what needs to be done to counter the previously diagnosed problems. Prognostic frames are often contestable, since solutions and strategies do not easily or logically follow from the diagnosed problem.<sup>31</sup> Concerning the Cuban case, Fidel and Che seemed to propose different solutions that some claim led to a colder relationship between them.<sup>32</sup> *Motivational framing* aims to solve the last of the action mobilization problem, which is the elaboration of getting people to act. It is a call to arms that tries to reduce fears or risks that are part of taking collective action.<sup>33</sup> This thesis will attempt to identify how the Cuban leadership endeavoured to convince and motivate possible adherents in Latin America to follow their cause.

There are two discursive processes that help understand the generation of the frames explained above. *Frame articulation* involves making connections and alignments of events, experiences, and morals to present them in a compelling and unified way. In this way new interpretations are created by assembling existing and experienced realities.<sup>34</sup> For instance, the Cuban leadership made connections between the experiences of different Latin American countries, as seen in later chapters. The second process is *frame elaboration*, which highlights certain events, issues, or beliefs as more important than others. This creates a conceptual handle for the articulation process, such as a slogan for the movement.<sup>35</sup> The phrase established by the Cuban Revolution was ‘Patria o Muerte! Venceremos!’, meaning ‘Fatherland or Death! We will win!’, which is examined in later chapters.

These framing theory concepts create an analytical framework for researching how the Cuban leadership developed and articulated their movement’s ideas. It provides a better understanding of the ideological work of the leaders, especially when they attempted to mobilize Latin American actors. The use of this framework will thus result in a better grasp of the Cuban Revolution and Cuban policy towards Latin America, since it analyses the interaction and agency of the relevant actors and their ideas.

However, this theory knows weaknesses, which were identified by another distinguished scholar in the field, Robert D. Benford. First, there is a danger to focus too much on frames rather than the dynamic processes associated with social movements. To counter this, it is necessary to represent the social, temporal, structural, and cultural factors that influence

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<sup>31</sup> Snow and Byrd, ‘Ideology’, 126-127.

<sup>32</sup> See for example: Carmen E. Ramirez and Peter Suedfeld, ‘Nonimmediacy Scoring of Archival Materials: The Relationship Between Fidel Castro and “Che” Guevara’, *Political Psychology* 9 (1988) 1, 155-164.

<sup>33</sup> Snow and Byrd, ‘Ideology’, 128.

<sup>34</sup> Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, ‘Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment’, *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000) 1, 611-639, there 623.

<sup>35</sup> Snow and Byrd, ‘Ideology’, 130.

the movement.<sup>36</sup> Second, socially constructed ideas are seen as separated from the actor that constructed the idea. Benford thus suggests that human agency and emotions should not be neglected, because they influence the actors' framing.<sup>37</sup> However, collective actions and interactions can also be reduced to the individual level, as if they are not happening within a social or cultural construction. The goal is therefore to find a balance between these problems by acknowledging human interaction, discourse, and social construction.<sup>38</sup> Finally, research tends to focus on movement elites, which can lead to the neglect of regular participants and the dialectical process of framing.<sup>39</sup>

It is therefore important that this thesis acknowledges the social and cultural context in which the Cuban leaders were operating. Framing is a dynamic and dialectical process, which is apparent in the Cuban case where the leadership expected the masses to participate in the movement. This thesis will therefore aim to create a balance between the discourse and the actors by recognizing the context in which the actors were operating in addition to their agency.

### 1.3 Methodology, Sources, and Structure

The thesis will first establish the necessary background information of the case study before continuing with the subsidiary questions. The first section will therefore give a brief history of the circumstances under which the Cuban revolutionaries came to power and of the Revolution's ideas. It discusses the historical background and context of Cuba, which predominantly concerns the Cuban Revolution (1953-1959). This will be accomplished with existing historiography on the subject. It must be noted that the goal of this thesis is not to write a history of the Revolution, but to provide context to understand the views of the two leaders.

The research question and the subsidiary questions will be answered by using primary and secondary sources. Because this thesis is concerned with framing processes of the Cuban leadership, the focus will lie on primary sources created by Fidel and Che. With the established theoretical framework, it is possible to analyse the used discourse, which will improve the understanding of Cuba's goals and policies in Latin America. Specifically, the three framing tasks – diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational – will structure the analysis of the primary sources by Fidel and Che. They determine how the leaders framed the identification and solution of problems as well as the mobilization of Latin Americans. By using the other

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<sup>36</sup> Robert D. Benford, 'An Insider's Critique of the Social Movement Framing Perspective', *Sociological Inquiry* 67 (1997) 4, 409-430, there 414-418.

<sup>37</sup> Benford, 'An Insider's Critique', 418-419.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, 420.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, 421-422.

concepts, such as frame articulation and elaboration, the discursive processes of the established tasks are examined.

The first subsidiary question regarding Cuban ideology and its influence on Cuba's foreign policy will be answered with primary and secondary sources. However, there is a limitation regarding the primary sources on this subject since Cuba has not yet opened its foreign policy archives. Cuba's official foreign policy is thus still relatively unknown.<sup>40</sup> This thesis will therefore use archival material from the Cuban Foreign Relations Collection from the *Wilson Center Digital Archive*.<sup>41</sup> This collection has valuable material on Cuba's relationships with the USSR, US, and China. Especially memoranda and reports that were shared with the communist bloc show Cuba's foreign policy goals in Latin America as they discussed these with their allies. By analysing these sources, it is possible to understand Cuba's foreign policy and what ideas were most important to the regime's leaders. This chapter will therefore serve as the foundation for understanding Fidel and Che's perspectives. However, the *Wilson Center* is a US organization with Western funding. Still, this archive aims to provide international historical documents, and attempts to integrate new sources, materials, and perspectives from non-Western archives as seen in the Cuban Collection.<sup>42</sup> The sources therefore do not inherently have a US perspective.

The second question focuses on the Cuban leadership's framing of their policies and goals in Latin America during the consolidation period of 1959-1962. During this time, Cuba made many of its revolutionary transformations and set the foundation of the Revolution's ideas. It was an idealistic period with a strong revolutionary fervour present among the people.<sup>43</sup> First, the context of this period will be elaborated. Second, the chapter will focus on primary sources by Fidel and Che. Relevant speeches and interviews by Fidel will be from the *Castro Speech Database* and the *Marxists Internet Archive (MIA)*, which are both devoted to providing the archived works of Marxist thinkers and writers.<sup>44</sup> For Che the latter archive will also be used. Further, a selection of Che's works will be from the *Che Guevara Reader*, which is a collection of his writings on politics and revolution.<sup>45</sup> Naturally, sources written by the two leaders can be biased, but the goal of this thesis is to critically analyse these sources to create

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<sup>40</sup> Piero Gleijeses, 'Inside the Closed Cuban Archives' (version 31 July 2017), <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/inside-the-closed-cuban-archives> (1 June 2021).

<sup>41</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/>.

<sup>42</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, 'About Us', <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/about-us> (4 April 2021).

<sup>43</sup> Martínez-Fernández, *Revolutionary Cuba*, 45-46.

<sup>44</sup> Castro Speech Database, LANIC Latin American Network Information Center, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/cb/cuba/castro.html>; Marxists Internet Archive (MIA), <https://www.marxists.org/>.

<sup>45</sup> Ernesto Che Guevara, *Che Guevara Reader: Writings on Politics & Revolution* (Ocean Press, Second Expanded Edition 2003).

an image of the Cuban leadership's views on Latin America from the Cuban perspective itself rather than the usual bipolar perspectives.

The final question deals with the Cuban leadership's framing of their policies and goals during their revolutionary expansion period of 1963-1967. This timeframe is known for the debates surrounding the goal of exporting revolution to Latin America. Both leaders had ideas and solutions for achieving this goal, which were tied to debates surrounding the decision on what ideology to follow: orthodox Marxism-Leninism, the USSR's reformist socialism, Maoism, or Cuba's own socialist trend.<sup>46</sup> Now that Cuba's new regime was more firmly established, the focus shifted to socialist expansion. First, this context will be established. Second, primary sources by Fidel and Che on their ideas concerning the revolutionary expansion in Latin America will be analysed. These sources will come from the same databases and book as explained in the previous paragraph. Regarding Che, he was notably active during this period as he created theories on starting revolutions in other countries and travelled to attempt to do so. The analysis ends in 1967, when Che was executed in Bolivia by US-supported government forces.<sup>47</sup> The situation changed drastically as Cuba's goal of expanding socialism in Latin America no longer seemed certain.<sup>48</sup> Though Che's death was significant, the Cuban regime independently realized that its regional approach in Latin America was ineffective and its position in the region was no longer secure. The fact that the guerrilla insurgencies supported by Cuba since the early 1960s were failing also led to a more cautious stance.<sup>49</sup> The period after 1967 consequently saw a change of policy in response to the developing situation.

In conclusion, the last two chapters will analyse the discourse of the revolutionary leadership. Here, the primary sources are crucial. Speeches, writings, and interviews from both time periods, 1959-1962 and 1963-1967, will be discussed according to framing theory. In this manner, the thesis seeks to assess if and how the discourse developed over time and if the views of the leaders changed as well.

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<sup>46</sup> Martínez-Fernández, *Revolutionary Cuba*, 87-88.

<sup>47</sup> Henry Butterfield Ryan, *The Fall of Che Guevara: A Story of Soldiers, Spies, and Diplomats* (Oxford University Press 1998) 101-102, 129.

<sup>48</sup> See for example: Tanya Harmer, 'Two, Three, Many Revolutions? Cuba and the Prospects for Revolutionary Change in Latin America, 1967-1975', *Journal of Latin American Studies* 45 (2013), 61-89.

<sup>49</sup> Harmer, 'Two, Three, Many Revolutions?', 68.

## 2. The Cuban Revolution: A Brief History (1952-1959)

In 1952, the democratically elected president of Cuba, Carlos Prío Socarrás, was ousted by the former president and army strongman Fulgencio Batista in a coup d'état supported by the military. Under Batista's leadership existing problems such as corruption and demagoguery remained or worsened, which fuelled rebellion against the US-supported dictator.<sup>50</sup> For context, during the Cuban war of independence against colonial Spain in the 1890s, the US intervened in 1898 and gained control of Cuba until its independence in 1902.<sup>51</sup> However, Cuba remained limited by mediated deals, such as the Platt Amendment (1902) and the Reciprocity Treaty (1903), which were written and imposed by the US.<sup>52</sup> The first gave the US the legal right to intervene in the internal and foreign affairs of Cuba, whereas the second granted preferential trade concessions to the US. This led to high US involvement in the country. By 1952, Cuba had thus endured the consequences of Spanish colonialism and US intervention, such as the exploitation of its economy and natural resources, a repatriation of its profits, and political and economic subordination.<sup>53</sup>

Moreover, Cuba's economy was historically based on sugar exports, which led to social structures and cultural patterns developing from the sugar plantation. These plantation roots resulted in a tradition of powerful oligarchies, subjugated labour forces, racialized social stratification, and an institutionalization of violence that maintained the hierarchical social order. However, Cuba's history was marked by people revolting against foreign oppression and injustice, of which the revolutionary independence fighter José Martí (1853-1895) was a well-known symbol.<sup>54</sup> This rebellious aspect of Cuba was present when Batista rose to power and Cuban students, workers, intellectuals, and parts of the urban middle class almost immediately opposed the new regime. Citizens regularly held public rallies, while others joined armed opposition against US-supported Batista.<sup>55</sup>

Amongst them was a movement led by Fidel Castro. From a wealthy family of landowners, he became a law graduate from the University of Havana where he was arguably influenced by many ideologies.<sup>56</sup> Together with his younger brother Raúl Castro, he planned an attack on the Moncada army garrison in Santiago and several other locations on July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1953.

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<sup>50</sup> Martínez-Fernández, *Revolutionary Cuba*, 15-16.

<sup>51</sup> Alexis Heraclides and Ada Dialla, *Humanitarian Intervention in the Long Nineteenth Century: Setting the Precedent* (Manchester University Press 2015) 207-208.

<sup>52</sup> Heraclides and Dialla, *Humanitarian Intervention*, 211; Martínez-Fernández, *Revolutionary Cuba*, 16.

<sup>53</sup> Martínez-Fernández, *Revolutionary Cuba*, 16.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem*, 16-18.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibidem*, 20-21.

<sup>56</sup> Nick Caistor, *Fidel Castro* (London 2013) 26-28.

This led to the birth of his rebel movement, the 26th of July Movement. The attack did not go well: many rebels died, but the Castro brothers survived, were arrested, and sentenced to prison.<sup>57</sup>

The claim that Fidel was influenced by many ideologies was extensively debated by scholars. The question was whether the revolution had socialist goals from the beginning or became socialist when Fidel gained power.<sup>58</sup> Many Cubans at the time believed that the Movement's goal was government reform. For instance, after Fidel's arrest in 1953, he served as his own defence lawyer and gave the speech 'History Will Absolve Me', in which he criticized Cuba's economic, social, and political issues, and called for reform.<sup>59</sup> He claimed that Cuba was ruled by sugar and led by a corrupt, brutal, and illegitimate government under Batista. According to him and many other Cubans, big landowners and corporations were at the root of Cuba's economic and social problems. For example, there was high unemployment and poverty, and a lack of housing, education, and medical services.<sup>60</sup> All these factors fanned the flames of revolution in Cuba.<sup>61</sup>

Fidel therefore outlined reforms for Cuba as he called for the return to a constitutional, democratic government.<sup>62</sup> He also believed that agrarian reform, by giving land to regular peasants, was necessary to combat the massive landownership of large companies. Interestingly, Fidel made no mention of the US, though they owned large parts of the country and intervened regularly. Further, better wages for industrial workers and quality housing for the urban poor were needed.<sup>63</sup> Initially, it can be inferred that the Movement's goals concentrated on reform rather than socialist ideas when examining Fidel's 1953 defence. Nevertheless, the Cuban Revolution's turn to socialism led many Cubans to view the Revolution in terms of betrayal, because they had not believed in or fought for socialism.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Martínez-Fernández, *Revolutionary Cuba*, 23-24.

<sup>58</sup> Marifeli Pérez-Stable, 'Charismatic Authority, Vanguard Party Politics, and Popular Mobilizations: Revolution and Socialism in Cuba', *Cuban Studies* 22 (1992), 3-26, there 6.

<sup>59</sup> Fidel Castro, 'History Will Absolve Me', 16 October 1953, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, La Habana, Cuba, 1975, Translated by Pedro Álvarez Tabío and Andrew Paul Booth, Markup by Andrew Paul Booth and Brian Baggins, Castro Internet Archive 2001, <https://www.marxists.org/history/cuba/archive/castro/1953/10/16.htm>.

<sup>60</sup> Martínez-Fernández, *Revolutionary Cuba*, 24-25.

<sup>61</sup> John Foran, 'Theorizing the Cuban Revolution', *Latin American Perspectives* 36 (2009) 2, 16-30, there 18-19.

<sup>62</sup> Fidel Castro, 'History Will Absolve Me', 16 October 1953, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, La Habana, Cuba, 1975, Translated by Pedro Álvarez Tabío and Andrew Paul Booth, Markup by Andrew Paul Booth and Brian Baggins, Castro Internet Archive 2001, <https://www.marxists.org/history/cuba/archive/castro/1953/10/16.htm>.

<sup>63</sup> Martínez-Fernández, *Revolutionary Cuba*, 24-25.

<sup>64</sup> Lillian Guerra, *Visions of Power in Cuba: Revolution, Redemption, and Resistance, 1959-1971* (University of North Carolina Press 2012) 8.

While the Castro brothers and their rebels were imprisoned, there were armed forces, peaceful civilians, and a few political parties that continued the opposition against Batista.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, by 1955, Batista felt in control of Cuba despite this rebelliousness. He therefore granted amnesty to the rebels and freed Fidel. Soon after, the rebels sought exile in Mexico where they trained for the Cuban armed struggle. Here, Fidel met Ernesto “Che” Guevara: an Argentinian revolutionary and doctor that fled from Guatemala after its leftist president was overthrown in 1954.<sup>66</sup> Che came from a middle-class family and had travelled through Latin America in his youth. In his travels he observed the poverty of the region’s masses, which led him to develop his socialist and Marxist views. He saw the continent as a cultural and economic entity that could be liberated through violent revolution, which he aimed to do in Guatemala before he left for Mexico where he prepared for Batista’s overthrow with the Castros.<sup>67</sup>

The Cuban rebels commenced their armed struggle against Batista in 1956. The initial attack resulted in many rebels’ deaths and a long march of the remaining survivors toward the Sierra Maestra mountains, where the force intended to regroup and regain its strength. Batista used violent tactics in the area to smash the Movement, resulting in the rebel forces gaining peasant support in the region due to the protection they offered against Batista’s regime. This popular support helped the Movement in their guerrilla struggle since these peasants provided resources and cover.<sup>68</sup> For the next several years, the rebellion was active in the mountains and the urban lowlands. The 26th of July Movement guerrillas became an inspiration in the struggle and the leading force against the regime as other movements either joined, lost strength, or perished.<sup>69</sup>

Ideologically, Che became openly Marxist and aggressive towards moderate voices in the Movement. Fidel, however, did not plainly state the Movement’s beliefs and portrayed their goals and position as democratic and US-friendly.<sup>70</sup> He emphasized the goal of organizing honest elections and reassured the US of the security of their interests. By 1958, the guerrillas’ territory expanded, the Cuban economy worsened, and Batista lost the support of the US and other allies. The regime’s violence escalated as a terror campaign was unleashed in response to its failing control. In contrast, the rebel army protected the peasants against this violence,

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<sup>65</sup> Martínez-Fernández, *Revolutionary Cuba*, 26.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibidem*, 28.

<sup>67</sup> Jon Lee Anderson, *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life* (New York, Revised Edition 2010) 80-81, 100-101.

<sup>68</sup> Martínez-Fernández, *Revolutionary Cuba*, 29.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibidem*, 33.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*, 34-35.



created social programs, opened schools and medical facilities, and enacted agrarian reform in their territory.<sup>71</sup>

On December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1958, Batista fled from Cuba with almost all its finances. The dictator lost his legitimacy and support as even his US allies were unwilling to provide asylum. The traditional political parties had damaged their legitimacy since many officials had worked for the corrupt state. The military of the old regime was defeated, and its soldiers were demoralized. The police force that had hunted, tortured, and killed rebels, experienced the same problems. At the start of 1959, Fidel and his followers came to power after this period of bloodshed. Batista left a political and military vacuum that was soon filled with rebel forces, as the new leadership aimed to rebuild the country with hardly any finances available to them.<sup>72</sup>

This chapter discussed a short history of the Cuban Revolution, which included a chronological explanation of the most relevant events and actors of the 26th of July Movement. The chapter briefly considered the ideologies followed by the main leaders, Fidel and Che, and what they conferred to the outside world regarding the views of their movement. The next chapter will examine the new regime's foreign policy and its ideological influences.

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<sup>71</sup> Martínez-Fernández, *Revolutionary Cuba*, 34-35, 37.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibidem*, 41-42.

### 3. Cuban Foreign Policy: An Understanding of Ideological Influences

It is now necessary to delve deeper into Cuban ideology to understand the new regime's foreign policy. This chapter aims to answer the question: 'How can we understand the way in which the Cuban ideology of socialism and internationalism influenced Cuban foreign policy in Latin America between 1959 and 1967?'. First, the ideologies of socialism and internationalism are examined before analysing Cuban foreign policy through primary sources from the *Wilson Center Digital Archive*.

#### 3.1 Cuban Ideology: Socialism and Internationalism

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Revolution was not socialist during the insurgent period. The goal of Fidel's movement was to implement social reform in Cuban society, which suffered from a wide range of problems because of its (colonial) history. Indeed, the programme of the 26th of July Movement was dominated by the following goals: achieving national sovereignty and economic independence, while pursuing social justice, education, religious freedom, public morality, civil authority, political democracy, and while establishing foreign alliances, work for all citizens, and agrarian reform.<sup>73</sup> The main intention was to curb US dominance, while addressing the considerable reliance on sugar production and the corresponding social and economic problems. In addition, the Movement wanted to address the discredited political system. Fidel instituted most of these goals of radical change during the first years of the new regime.<sup>74</sup>

Only in 1961, during a CIA-led invasion by Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs, Fidel first described the Cuban Revolution as socialist. In that same year, he identified himself as a Marxist-Leninist.<sup>75</sup> This move towards Marxism was, in a way, a reaction to growing US hostility. To protect the new regime and its reforms, the Cuban leaders turned to the communist bloc led by the USSR. Furthermore, the political climate in combination with the implemented changes laid the foundation for a socialist economy and cooperation with Cuba's existing communist party, the Popular Socialist Party (PSP). Fidel believed this move towards communism was needed because Cuba's and Latin America's problems could not be solved through the capitalist system.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, Marxism could help the new regime in their consolidation since it offered a new common enemy (capitalism rather than Batista), ideological

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<sup>73</sup> Thomas C. Wright, *Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution* (Praeger, Revised Edition 2001) 21-22.

<sup>74</sup> Wright, *Latin America*, 21-22.

<sup>75</sup> Anne E. Gorsuch, "'Cuba, My Love': The Romance of Revolutionary Cuba in the Soviet Sixties", *American Historical Review* 120 (2015), 497-526, there 502.

<sup>76</sup> Wright, *Latin America*, 24-25.

and organizational sophistication, and the support of labourers. Nevertheless, there were many people within the Movement and the country that opposed this move, but their resistance was unapologetically quelled by Fidel, Che, and Raúl.<sup>77</sup>

Internationalism, however, was part of the Movement's ideology from the beginning as Fidel and Che were inspired by the internationalism of the independence fighters of the previous century. This then became revolutionary Cuba's approach to its international relations. To this day, Cuban internationalism aims for cooperation and approaches dynamic global relations by encompassing economic trade, bilateral diplomacy, and social development.<sup>78</sup> It can be understood as foreign relations that reject hegemonic processes of dependency and neo-colonialism.<sup>79</sup> According to scholar Richard L. Harris, there are two forms of internationalism. The first is liberal internationalism, which is concerned with creating international institutions that foster cooperation and help create the liberal ideal of a world governed by just rules.<sup>80</sup> However, this form ignores the exploitative nature of the international order that is prone to self-interested actions by nation-states. In fact, it does not critique the inequality in wealth or power that can exist between states, which leads to ignorance of the exploitative relations of production, labour, power, wealth, and hegemonic domination.<sup>81</sup>

The second form, socialist or proletarian internationalism, is derived from Karl Marx's writings. This form critiques the international exploitation that liberal internationalism ignores, while aiming to develop a working-class movement against capitalism that is 'national and international in its ideals and organization'.<sup>82</sup> Cuba's revolutionary regime followed this form of internationalism by adhering to strategies and policies that support national liberation struggles against capitalist imperialism and international efforts against exploitation, inequality, and social injustice. The revolutionaries were inspired by anti-imperialism from the beginning: not necessarily according to Marx and Lenin's conceptualization, but by the independence fighters José Martí, Antonio Maceo, and Simón Bolívar, who believed in a larger Latin American struggle against imperialism.<sup>83</sup> Their historic independence struggle had internationalist and anti-imperialist objectives, as Latin American countries were perceived to suffer from similar problems that could only be solved through cooperation. The existence and

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<sup>77</sup> Wright, *Latin America*, 24-25.

<sup>78</sup> Robert Huish and Sarah A. Blue, 'Understanding the Place of Cuban Internationalism', *International Journal of Cuban Studies* 5 (2013) 1, 6-9, there 6.

<sup>79</sup> Huish and Blue, 'Understanding the Place of Cuban Internationalism', 8.

<sup>80</sup> Harris, 'Cuban Internationalism', 28.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibidem*, 28-29.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibidem*.

prevalence of this idea within Latin America and its society was then easy to combine with socialist internationalism by the Cuban leadership due to the overlapping ideals and goals with those of the Revolution.<sup>84</sup> Particularly Che advocated for internationalism: he believed that the creation of revolutions and anti-imperialist struggles in Latin America and the world would strengthen the Cuban regime and socialism. The cooperation between these movements would create a powerful bloc that could assist and support each other against imperialism and exploitation.<sup>85</sup>

### 3.2 Cuban Foreign Policy in Latin America

Turning to Cuba's foreign policy in Latin America, this section analyses primary sources. During the first years of the regime, relations were established with communist China and the USSR. In April 1960, China's Mao Zedong and Cuban PSP-member Blas Roca Calderio discussed Cuba's position and foreign policy since 1959. Roca stated that 'all Latin American peoples are friendly towards the Cuban revolution', but that their governments were antagonistic.<sup>86</sup> Possibly, the Latin American governmental leaders feared they would suffer Batista's fate. Furthermore, Roca and Mao discussed Fidel and whether he could accept communism, which suggests he was not considered an official Marxist-Leninist. Though, Roca did emphasize Fidel's good relationship with the PSP and interest in studying Marxism-Leninism. Che, however, was characterized as an enthusiastic communist with much to learn.<sup>87</sup>

Roca also explained that the new regime had set up a Latin American programme focused on establishing foreign relations. Delegations visited the region, and meetings were hosted for supporters of the Revolution.<sup>88</sup> It is likely that the Cuban leaders were cautious during this time because they were trying to establish friendly contact with a region that was hostile towards the new regime. The negativity of the Latin American governments towards the revolutionaries due to the threat they posed to Batista's government, indicates that they were worried the revolutionaries could spark the same ideas in the region. Thus, there was a danger for revolt in their eyes. In response, the Cuban leadership was careful. For example, according to Roca, Fidel asked to remove words like 'socialist' when speaking about Latin American

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<sup>84</sup> Harris, 'Cuban Internationalism', 29.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibidem*, 32.

<sup>86</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, 'Excerpts of the Memorandum of the Conversation Between Mao Zedong and Blas Roca Calderio, the Party Secretary of the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba', 28 April 1960, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA. Translated by Zhang Qian.  
<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115157>.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibidem*.

policies.<sup>89</sup> Presumably, he did not want to cause alarm in the region by mentioning socialism in official foreign policy.

In September 1960, the Cuban regime initiated its goal of spreading revolution in Latin America through its First Declaration of Havana, which was issued in response to the US-led Declaration of San José. At the 1960 Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of American States (OAS) at San José, the US pressured Latin American governments to adopt a resolution that condemned guerrilla insurrection and intervention by extra-continental powers, indirectly referring to Cuba.<sup>90</sup> Fidel, in return, condemned US imperialism and articulated his gratitude and support towards the USSR and China in the Havana Declaration.<sup>91</sup> Most importantly, Fidel proclaimed his support towards Latin Americans fighting for their own rights, which he called their duty. Concretely, the Havana Declaration ‘ratifies its decision of working for that common Latin American destiny that will enable our countries to build a true solidarity, based upon the free will of each of them and the joint aspirations of all’.<sup>92</sup> This heightened tensions with the US, but improved relations with the USSR and China.<sup>93</sup> The document also showcased internationalism by referring to a common destiny for the region, which was exemplified in the call for solidarity. Although Fidel did not identify as a Marxist-Leninist yet, he found allies and support in the communist bloc. This can be understood in the context of Cuba facing intensifying US hostility. Moreover, the Declaration can be interpreted as the foundation of Cuban prognostic framing since it served as the basis of Cuba’s official solution for fighting imperialism in Latin America.

In November 1960, Che met with Mao in China where he discussed Cuba’s domestic and regional situation.<sup>94</sup> The meeting’s memorandum illustrates that the Cuban leaders were preoccupied with consolidating their power as US-sent counterrevolutionaries were operating in Cuba and diplomatic relations with many Latin American countries remained non-existent. According to Che, the main goal of the Revolution at the time was to install reforms and

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<sup>89</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, ‘Excerpts of the Memorandum of the Conversation Between Mao Zedong and Blas Roca Calderio, the Party Secretary of the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba’, 28 April 1960, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA. Translated by Zhang Qian. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115157>.

<sup>90</sup> Samina Ahmed, ‘Cuban Foreign Policy under Castro’, *Pakistan Horizon* 33 (Fourth Quarter 1980) 4, 50-83, there 53.

<sup>91</sup> Fidel Castro, ‘The Havana Declaration’, 2 September 1960, Havana, Cuba, Speech, Fidel Castro, FBIS, Castro Speech Database, LANIC Latin American Network Information Center, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1960/19600902-2.html>.

<sup>92</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>93</sup> Ahmed, ‘Cuban Foreign Policy under Castro’, 53-54.

<sup>94</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, ‘Memorandum of Conversation between Mao Zedong and Ernesto “Che” Guevara’, 19 November 1960, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 202-00098-01, 1-14. Translated by Zhang Qian. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115155>.

improve the domestic situation.<sup>95</sup> However, he believed Latin American revolution needed to be achieved eventually, though US interference was their greatest danger.<sup>96</sup> This remained Cuba's position in 1961 as US-supported operations continued in Cuba.<sup>97</sup> Then, at an OAS meeting in Punta del Este in January 1962, the US and many Latin American countries felt threatened by Cuba's Marxist development and decided that this ideology was incompatible with their inter-American system. Cuba thereupon excluded itself from the OAS as Fidel issued a Second Declaration of Havana.<sup>98</sup> Fidel addressed this presumed US-interference by stating they could never squash the Revolution and by advocating for violent revolution throughout Latin America. In fact, he called upon revolutionaries 'to make the revolution' while warning the US not to interfere.<sup>99</sup> This Marxist-Leninist declaration escalated Cuban-American relations, but improved Cuba's position in the communist bloc.<sup>100</sup> This Declaration then served as the fundament of Cuba's foreign policy, which was rife with prognostic and motivational framing as seen in later chapters.

In a February 1962 meeting with Soviet ambassador Sergei Mikhailovich Kudryavtsev, Fidel mentioned that the Declaration was a message to the Latin American people that the 'aggressive policy of the American imperialism not only can be resisted, but defeated'.<sup>101</sup> Fidel also believed Latin America was facing a revolutionary situation, but stated its communist parties were too weak. If revolutionary situations existed and the continent's populations wanted change, its leadership would have trouble mobilizing them.<sup>102</sup> Most notable however, was Fidel advising the revolutionaries in other countries to achieve revolution but stressing 'for Cuba that peace be preserved for at least another two years'.<sup>103</sup> This implies that Fidel wanted Latin America to weaken the position of US imperialism to remove the US threat towards Cuba. It becomes apparent from the source that the domestic front was paramount because of the

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<sup>95</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, 'Memorandum of Conversation between Mao Zedong and Ernesto "Che" Guevara', 19 November 1960, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 202-00098-01, 1-14. Translated by Zhang Qian. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115155>.

<sup>96</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>97</sup> Ahmed, 'Cuban Foreign Policy under Castro', 54; Dirk Kruijt, 'Cuba and the Latin American Left: 1959–present', *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe* 28 (2017) 2, 30-53, there 33.

<sup>98</sup> Ahmed, 'Cuban Foreign Policy under Castro', 55.

<sup>99</sup> Fidel Castro, 'The Second Declaration of Havana', 4 February 1962, Havana, Cuba, <http://www.walterlippmann.com/fc-02-04-1962.pdf>.

<sup>100</sup> Ahmed, 'Cuban Foreign Policy under Castro', 55.

<sup>101</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, 'From the Journal of S.M. Kudryavtsev, "Record of a Conversation with Fidel Castro Ruz, Prime Minister of the Republic of Cuba, 10 February 1962"', 28 February 1962, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, AVP RF, f. 0104, op. 18, p. 121, d. 3, ll. 71-77. Obtained by James G. Hershberg and translated by Gary Goldberg. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/177822>.

<sup>102</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>103</sup> Ibidem.

persisting US threat.<sup>104</sup> A USSR report of the same year, however, claimed that Cuba had established contact with Latin American revolutionary groups – often bypassing existing communist parties – to which they gave economic support.<sup>105</sup> Fidel believed, according to the USSR, that pushing for armed actions by organized mobile partisan groups would attract peasant support and induce struggle against the region’s regimes. His conviction was that all Central American countries, except for Mexico, were ready for armed rebellion.<sup>106</sup>

However, Cuban relations with the US and USSR became incredibly tense with the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, which altered the existing situation. Furthermore, the Sino-Soviet dispute between China and the USSR about the communist model and ideology worsened.<sup>107</sup> Nevertheless, Cuba increased its security and believed in its ability to protect itself against any aggressions from 1963 onwards.<sup>108</sup> It is likely the USSR’s commitment to protecting Cuba against any danger (the US could pose) led the Cuban leadership to believe itself to be secure. After this period of escalation, the Cuban leadership aimed to avoid aggravating the international situation by accelerating the revolutionary process in Latin America.<sup>109</sup> Fidel recognized that ‘single Latin American countries have diverse situations’ and that a ‘peaceful avenue’ should be taken in some, whereas armed struggle was possible if there were no other options.<sup>110</sup> Though Fidel did not fully agree with the political idea of a democratic route to socialism, he did improve the relations with Latin American communist parties.<sup>111</sup> This suggests that the Cuban leadership practiced a nuanced position and policy as they navigated international tensions.

However, Cuba continued calling for revolution, trained young cadres, recruited insurgents, and supported several guerrilla movements during this so-called peaceful stance.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, ‘From the Journal of S.M. Kudryavtsev, “Record of a Conversation with Fidel Castro Ruz, Prime Minister of the Republic of Cuba, 10 February 1962”’, 28 February 1962, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, AVP RF, f. 0104, op. 18, p. 121, d. 3, ll. 71-77. Obtained by James G. Hershberg and translated by Gary Goldberg. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/177822>.

<sup>105</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, ‘Soviet Report by Cuban Involvement in Assisting Partisans in other Latin American Countries’, 9 June 1962, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Archive of the Federal Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation, File 88631, vol 4. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114518>.

<sup>106</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>107</sup> Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton University Press 2008) 2.

<sup>108</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, ‘Italian Communist Ugo Pecchioli, Report on Trip to Cuba’, 13 August 1963, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 1963 Cuba Estero 492, 2555-2566, Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) records, Fondazione Instituto Gramsci, Rom. Obtained by James Hershberg and translated by Alex Barrow. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115431>.

<sup>109</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>110</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>111</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>112</sup> Dirk Kruijt, Eduardo Rey Tristán, and Alberto Martín Álvarez (eds.), *Latin American Guerrilla Movements: Origins, Evolution, Outcomes* (Routledge 2020) 19-20.



The OAS even condemned Cuba for acts of subversion against the region, which led to sanctions.<sup>113</sup> At a Latin American Communist Party conference in Havana in 1964, Cuba was also criticized by Latin American communist parties for attempting to impose its own revolutionary experience on them, while the Cuban leaders reprimanded the delegations for wanting to take political power by peaceful means.<sup>114</sup> Nevertheless, the delegations agreed that unity and solidarity were necessary in the struggle against imperialism and a decision was made that each party would not interfere in each other's internal affairs.<sup>115</sup> A Latin American revolution remained a common internationalist goal, even if there were internal squabbles amongst the communist parties. Cuba's noteworthy, increasing activity and role between 1962-64 marked an end of its consolidation period.

Nonetheless, throughout 1965 and 1966, Cuba continued propagating armed struggle above all else, which was inconsistent with their agreement to peaceful options and non-interference in previous years. The Bulgarian embassy reported that Cuba considered Latin America's liberation its calling as it was more inspired by its ideology based on Martí and Bolívar, rather than by Marxism-Leninism.<sup>116</sup> The leaders viewed themselves as saviours of the continent and consequently aligned themselves with the Third World and the non-aligned. Moreover, relations with China deteriorated due to the Sino-Soviet dispute and Chinese interference in the region, which contributed to Cuba's 'ambitions to assume the leading role in the world revolutionary process'.<sup>117</sup> In fact, Cuba's brand of socialism had become prevalent from 1963, which held the belief that capitalist states should be overthrown by guerrilla forces through armed struggle.<sup>118</sup> The Cuban leadership thus persistently created small forces in several Latin American countries to spark revolution. Furthermore, according to them, imperialism could only be counteracted by a global strategy of organized movements in the whole continent, because the US could not fight every movement at once.<sup>119</sup> This undeniably

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<sup>113</sup> Gordon Connell-Smith, 'Castro's Cuba in World Affairs, 1959-79', *The World Today* 35 (1979) 1, 15-23, there 21.

<sup>114</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, 'Bulgarian Embassy, Havana (Kulbov), Information Regarding the Latin American Communist Parties' Conference', 3 March 1965, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Central State Archive of Bulgaria (TsDA), Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 51, File 400; translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova, edited by Jordan Baev. Obtained by the Bulgarian Cold War Research Group. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116367>.

<sup>115</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>116</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, 'Embassy, Havana, Report on the State of the Cuban Communist Party', 31 March 1966, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Central State Archive of Bulgaria (TsDA), Fond 1B, Opis 81, Unprocessed Collection, 1967-1990; translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova; edited by Jordan Baev. Obtained by the Bulgarian Cold War Research Group. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116370>.

<sup>117</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>118</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>119</sup> Ibidem.



internationalist notion seemed inspired by the Cuban experience and history of liberation movements that called for a unified Latin American revolution. It therefore suggests that the leadership succeeded in combining socialist ideas with internationalism to create a distinct Cuban policy and ideology.

This trend, however, faced heavy setbacks in 1967. Relations with the USSR had increasingly soured as their ideologies diverged and as Fidel criticized the ally for its lack of support for armed struggle.<sup>120</sup> Moreover, guerrilla forces supported by Cuba were destroyed or brutally punished in countries such as Bolivia, Guatemala, Colombia, and Venezuela, which was often done with the help of outside (i.e., US) forces.<sup>121</sup> The failure in Bolivia was the most painful since it was Che's place of execution. By 1968, insurgent groups were hardly active in the region, which led to Fidel having to question his belief in the armed struggle and turn to more subtle approaches as this foreign policy failed.<sup>122</sup>

### 3.3 Conclusion

In sum, internationalist tendencies and beliefs appeared to be present in Cuban foreign policy for Latin America from the start of the revolutionary regime. As time passed and the Cuban leadership consolidated itself, internationalism became prevalent as notions such as creating a Latin American revolution became policy. These beliefs were not new. Liberation fighters such as Martí had propagated these views during the previous century, which were widely known in the region. Nevertheless, there were developments in Cuban foreign policy due to changing perspectives and needs, mostly in relation to socialism. In the first years, the Cuban leadership and regime were not socialist until they faced the international situation and tension of the blooming Cold War. As conflicts with the US commenced, Cuba turned to the USSR and its communist bloc. Though, this relation fluctuated since Cuba created its own ideology. Indeed, they were young revolutionaries with their own brand of socialism, which found its roots in Cuba's historical experience and existing ideas of internationalism. Cuba's views of their leading (ideological) role also led to tensions with the USSR and Latin American communist parties.

Still, led by internationalist and socialist beliefs, the Cuban leaders continuously promoted armed struggle. That is, until they encountered defeats in the field and deteriorating relations with the region's countries and the communist bloc. Additionally, Che was killed in a

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<sup>120</sup> Gleijeses, 'Cuba and the Cold War, 1959-1980', 333-334.

<sup>121</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>122</sup> Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* (University of North Carolina Press 2002) 220-222.

field mission, which made it harder to continue this foreign policy. Having seen how socialism and internationalism influenced Cuban foreign policy, the next chapter will turn to the framing of Cuba's foreign policy goals by the revolutionaries.

## 4. The Cuban Leadership's Will to Expand the Revolution to Latin America (1959-1962)

This chapter examines how the Cuban leadership, Fidel and Che, framed their beliefs and goals in Latin America. The question this chapter aims to answer is: 'How can we understand the Cuban leadership's framing of their policy in Latin America during the idealistic consolidation period of 1959-1962?'. Before analysing Fidel and Che's speeches, interviews, and writings, the chapter first considers the context of this transformative and idealistic consolidation period, marked by conflict and difficult choices.

### 4.1 A Period of Reform, Transformation, and Consolidation

During its early period, the new regime implemented most of the social reforms and ideas it had circulated in the years before coming to power. The regime removed most of the US' influence in Cuba with these reforms, which was considered a great victory against US imperialism and domination by many Latin Americans. Cuba's conflicts with the US, such as the Bay of Pigs invasion (1961), further established this view of a small country successfully standing up against the Yankee Goliath. Consequently, the Latin American masses, who felt sympathy and support towards the charismatic leaders, had an example to look up to.<sup>123</sup>

Nevertheless, the regime faced difficult choices. While it promised political democracy, this was "postponed" with the reason that all Cubans were participating in a direct democracy and therefore agreed with the regime. Further, the collective nature of social justice affected individual liberties. In addition, the shift towards the USSR was perceived as compromising Cuban sovereignty.<sup>124</sup> However, the regime was simultaneously creating an official army, opening formal and informal diplomatic channels, establishing financial structures, and developing an internal security system and foreign intelligence service.<sup>125</sup> Further, the established social justice system achieved great results in education, health, science, and culture.<sup>126</sup>

As mentioned previously, the Cuban leadership faced choices about what ideology to follow. Fidel was originally not openly Marxist, while Raúl and Che became increasingly radical. However, as representatives of the new government, they had to modify their Marxist

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<sup>123</sup> Wright, *Latin America*, xii.

<sup>124</sup> Ibidem, xii-xiii.

<sup>125</sup> Kruijt, Rey Tristán, and Martín Álvarez (eds.), *Latin American Guerrilla Movements*, 19.

<sup>126</sup> Salim Lamrani (translated by Larry R. Oberg), 'Fidel Castro, Hero of the Disinherited', *International Journal of Cuban Studies, Special Issue: Culture and Institutions: Cuban Dynamics of Change* 8 (2016) 2, 151-168, there 157.

pronouncements so they remained politically and ideologically aligned with Fidel.<sup>127</sup> During these first years, however, socialism was embraced, which developed into Marxism-Leninism and loyalty towards Fidel. Yet, it was Che who personified the internationalist ideals and policies of the regime. The Argentinian came to a foreign country to join a revolution, because he believed it was the first step towards Latin America's liberation from US imperialism and capitalist exploitation.<sup>128</sup> In addition, with the Sino-Soviet dispute coming to a head in 1963, ideological dilemmas were on the horizon, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

By 1962, the Cuban leadership's choices had their effect. The USSR and China were willing benefactors for the new regime while the US isolated Cuba within the Western hemisphere. Concurrently, although the enacted transformations improved the situation of the poorest, the middle and upper classes were negatively affected since many lost their privileges. These educated and professional individuals left Cuba in droves, which combined with nationalization, wealth redistribution, radical social reforms, and effective isolation from the region, led to an economic crisis that would influence the country for the upcoming years.<sup>129</sup>

## 4.2 Similar Ideas, Different Characters

### 4.2.1 Fidel Castro, The Great Orator

A few weeks after Batista's ousting, on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 1959, Fidel gave a speech in Havana in front of a million Cuban workers and peasants and a large group of diplomats and foreign press.<sup>130</sup> He aimed to show the world that the people made the Cuban Revolution and ruled Cuba. In this vein, the speech is interesting because Castro spoke to two audiences at the same time: the domestic and the international. Fidel referred to both as he called the people of Cuba 'a dangerous example for all America'.<sup>131</sup> This is an example of frame articulation, the making of connections between events and experiences, which he continued to do throughout the speech. He did this mainly through diagnostic framing. Fidel diagnosed a problem that was present in Cuba: a dictatorship that 'sold out the nation's interests' and betrayed and killed its own people. Then, he connected this domestic diagnosis to the problems in Latin America.<sup>132</sup> He often mentioned Rafael Trujillo, the Dominican dictator, and referenced the Somoza family,

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<sup>127</sup> Samuel Farber, 'The Cuban Communists in the Early Stages of the Cuban Revolution: Revolutionaries or Reformists?', *Latin American Research Review* 18 (1983) 1, 59-83, there 71.

<sup>128</sup> Harris, 'Cuban Internationalism', 29.

<sup>129</sup> Martínez-Fernández, *Revolutionary Cuba*, 83-86.

<sup>130</sup> Fidel Castro, 'When the people rule. Cuba is a nation which rules itself and does not take orders from anyone', 21 January 1959, Havana, FBIS, Markup by Brian Baggins, Castro Internet Archive 2000, <https://www.marxists.org/history/cuba/archive/castro/1959/01/21.htm>.

<sup>131</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>132</sup> Ibidem.

which ruled Nicaragua for decades. The problems he attributed to these dictatorships were framed as great injustices, as he blamed them for atrocities such as mass murder, oppression, and censorship. Another related problem, according to Fidel, was that the continent was divided and weak.<sup>133</sup>

Though Fidel used prognostic frames in this speech – that is, articulating how to solve the problems – he did so indirectly by speaking about Cuba’s experience. He stated that ‘our revolution was able to present itself to the world as a model of revolutions’.<sup>134</sup> Cuba served not only as an example, but as an ‘aspiration for justice’ because they ousted their dictator and punished those that were blamed for the country’s problems (e.g., Batista’s supporters).<sup>135</sup> Still, in the context of this speech, defining Cuba as an example and aspiration served more as consensus mobilization amongst those who listened to and reported on Fidel’s message. Moreover, there was no mention of larger problems, such as imperialism, as Fidel predominantly focused on dictatorships and how they were a problem on the region’s national level. His framing therefore seemed geared towards creating consensus for support among adherents and bystanders in Latin America, rather than having an activating function. Indeed, the speech’s goal was to show Cuba’s revolution was just and needed to be defended since the revolutionaries only recently came to power.

This diagnostic framing dominated the rest of Fidel’s speeches of the 1960-1962 period as well. In September 1960, Fidel gave a speech at the UN General Assembly on Cuba’s revolutionary policy.<sup>136</sup> This was in response to the US and Latin America increasingly perceiving Cuba’s developing outward-looking policy as a threat.<sup>137</sup> Here, he identified monopolies of the imperialist forces – the US – as the main problem. Again, he articulated this by comparing experiences as he stated that ‘the problems which we have been describing in relation to Cuba can be applied just as well to all of Latin America’, referring to monopolies controlling each country’s most important industries.<sup>138</sup> Fidel gave a solution that could counter

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<sup>133</sup> Fidel Castro, ‘When the people rule. Cuba is a nation which rules itself and does not take orders from anyone’, 21 January 1959, Havana, FBIS, Markup by Brian Baggins, Castro Internet Archive 2000, <https://www.marxists.org/history/cuba/archive/castro/1959/01/21.htm>.

<sup>134</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>135</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>136</sup> Fidel Castro, ‘To the U.N. General Assembly: The Problem of Cuba and its Revolutionary Policy’, 26 September 1960, U.N. General Assembly, Castro Speech Database, Embassy of Cuba, Markup by Brian Baggins, Castro Internet Archive 2000, <https://www.marxists.org/history/cuba/archive/castro/1960/09/26.htm>.

<sup>137</sup> Ibidem; Tanya Harmer, ‘The “Cuban Question” and the Cold War in Latin America, 1959-1964’, *Journal of Cold War Studies* 21 (2019) 3, 114-151, there 122, 126.

<sup>138</sup> Fidel Castro, ‘To the U.N. General Assembly: The Problem of Cuba and its Revolutionary Policy’, 26 September 1960, U.N. General Assembly, Castro Speech Database, Embassy of Cuba, Markup by Brian Baggins, Castro Internet Archive 2000, <https://www.marxists.org/history/cuba/archive/castro/1960/09/26.htm>.

the monopolies' exploitation, which was a call for public investment into the region without political strings so that the countries maintained their freedom and sovereignty.<sup>139</sup> Considering the speech was given before the UN, this was a tentative call for action towards the world to help Latin America. Regarding the region itself, however, Fidel stressed the existing problems that he now deliberately connected to imperialism and the US. Although Fidel took a step towards action mobilization within the international community, he thus remained focused on consensus mobilization within Latin America.

This framing towards Latin America began to change as seen in an interview with the Italian communist newspaper *L'Unita* in February 1961. When asked whether the Latin American people should take up arms to overturn their dictatorial or sold-out governments, Fidel affirmed they should follow the Cuban example. His reasoning was that Latin America consisted of one people with one language and a common history of being 'exploited as colonies first by Spain, and then by the United States'.<sup>140</sup> This is another example of the discursive process of frame articulation. By using frames of a shared history and culture, Fidel created a common identity that could help him influence and lead the region to act like Cuba. Undoubtedly, Fidel portrayed Cuba as a template: it had shown the region the possibility and blueprint of sparking a revolution. Thus, by depicting Latin America as being in the same situation that Cuba was once in, he gave the Latin American people hope that their actions could result in the same change. Furthermore, these articulations represent action mobilization since he asserted that the Latin American people should take up arms like the Cubans did.<sup>141</sup> This is a prognostic frame, because armed resistance was framed as a solution to the diagnosed problem of imperialism.

By 1962, Fidel began to actively call for action from the Latin American region. By talking about a Latin American common enemy, imperialism, the Cuban revolutionaries had been gaining the support and sympathy of the continent's people as seen above. The revolutionaries were more strongly consolidated in their own country, which left them more room to act. Indeed, in an interview with the Uruguayan communist newspaper *El Popular* from June 1962, Fidel said that '[s]ocialists, communists, liberals, honest Catholics, and all democratic and progressive men and women of America must unite to fight imperialism and

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<sup>139</sup> Fidel Castro, 'To the U.N. General Assembly: The Problem of Cuba and its Revolutionary Policy', 26 September 1960, U.N. General Assembly, Castro Speech Database, Embassy of Cuba, Markup by Brian Baggins, Castro Internet Archive 2000, <https://www.marxists.org/history/cuba/archive/castro/1960/09/26.htm>.

<sup>140</sup> Armainio Savioli, 'L'Unita Reporter Interviews Fidel Castro', 1 February 1961, Havana, Interview, Fidel Castro, L'Unita, FBIS, Castro Speech Database, LANIC Latin American Network Information Center, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1961/19610201.html>.

<sup>141</sup> Ibidem.

feudal reaction'.<sup>142</sup> Here, Fidel gave a solution to counter the problem, which was to create unity among the region's leftists. This is prognostic framing since Fidel framed fighting as an action that countered imperialism and feudal reaction. Further, Fidel actively calling for these groups to unite and fight represents motivational framing, because he required people to take part in collective action. However, it must be noted that these 'leftist forces remain disunited in several countries because of old prejudices and sectarian and dogmatic positions', as phrased by Fidel.<sup>143</sup> Indeed, 'they only delay the complete liberation process of America'.<sup>144</sup> Although the leader called for them to unite and fight, it was in response to disunity amongst Latin America's leftists. Thus, though possible adherents were found in parts of the region, getting them to actively engage remained a struggle during this period.

#### 4.2.2 Che Guevara, The Persistent Revolutionary

Unlike Fidel, Che had no problem identifying the US and its imperialism as the main problem Cuba and Latin America were facing in 1959. In an interview with two Chinese journalists, he stated that 'the only foreign enemies who oppose the Cuban Revolution are the people who monopolise capital and who have representatives in the United States State Department'.<sup>145</sup> Che's diagnostic framing thus immediately took on a much broader perspective than Fidel's during this time, when he mostly spoke about dictatorial problems in the region. Yet, Che engaged in the same tentative prognostic framing of setting the Cuban Revolution up as 'an example for every other country in Latin America'.<sup>146</sup> However, he went further by making it seem necessary, and therefore urgent, that the region started its own uprisings and land reforms.<sup>147</sup> Indeed, he framed the region as being in the exact same stage as Cuba on an economic and agricultural level.<sup>148</sup> Interestingly, Che already identified communist elements in the Cuban Revolution, but nevertheless defined it not as 'class revolution, but a liberation movement'.<sup>149</sup> He most likely made this distinction because the US used communism as a

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<sup>142</sup> Ruben Acasuso, 'Castro says Leftist Forces must unite', 5 June 1962, Cuba, Interview, Fidel Castro, Montevideo Correspondent, El Popular, FBIS, Castro Speech Database, LANIC Latin American Network Information Center, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1962/19620605.html>.

<sup>143</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>144</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>145</sup> Ernesto Che Guevara, 'Abstract of: A New Old Interview', 18 April 1959, Published by Shih-chieh Chih-shih (World Knowledge), 5 June 1959, Translated by William E. Ratliff in the Hispanic American Historical Review of August 1966, Markup by Brian Baggins, Ernesto Che Guevara Internet Archive 2002, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1959/04/18-abs.htm>.

<sup>146</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>147</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>148</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>149</sup> Ibidem.



reason for its isolationist and aggressive policy towards Cuba.<sup>150</sup> Further, framing the Revolution as a liberation movement would make it more palatable for any hesitating supporters in the region that opposed communism. Che was thus engaging in diagnostic and prognostic framing, but the tone of the interview suggests that the main goal of the new regime was the defence of Cuba and its Revolution.<sup>151</sup> Still, unlike Fidel, Che made it glaringly obvious who the enemy was in 1959.

In 1960, Che started to write a guerrilla warfare manual for Latin America and the world. In its first chapter, he stated that the Cuban Revolution had made three fundamental contributions to the conduct of revolutionary movements in Latin America. First, popular forces could win a war against an army. Second, the conditions for revolution could be created. Third, armed struggle in Latin America should be held in the countryside.<sup>152</sup> These points are indisputably tactics and means of fighting against oppression, which thus constitute straightforward action mobilization in the form of prognostic framing. In fact, it addressed the passivity any bystander in Latin America could have as Che explained how to engage in guerrilla warfare step by step. Here, a contrast with Fidel can be observed. Che categorically wrote a theory and manual on armed struggle, while Fidel mostly worked politically to create consensus at the time. Yet, at a speech for a Latin American Youth Congress in 1960, Che also politically expressed Cuban solidarity with other leftist movements in Latin America.<sup>153</sup> He, like Fidel, made it clear that Cuba was in danger and defending itself, but that he believed freedom would ‘triumph in every corner of the Americas!’.<sup>154</sup> In general, however, Che seemed more outspoken and internationalist than Fidel in his support for Latin American revolution and armed struggle during this time, though their opinions were similar.

In 1961, Che continued writing theoretical works that diagnosed problems in Latin America. In a piece on whether the Cuban case was exceptional, Che attempted to discern the Revolution’s development and features as he compared it to other countries’ conditions.<sup>155</sup> Regarding Latin America, he identified that the foundation of injustice lay with the existing landholding systems where the ruling classes held all the economic power. In alliance with

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<sup>150</sup> Wright, *Latin America*, 58-60.

<sup>151</sup> Ernesto Che Guevara, ‘Abstract of: A New Old Interview’, 18 April 1959, Published by Shih-chieh Chih-shih (World Knowledge), 5 June 1959, Translated by William E. Ratliff in the *Hispanic American Historical Review* of August 1966, Markup by Brian Baggins, Ernesto Che Guevara Internet Archive 2002, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1959/04/18-abs.htm>.

<sup>152</sup> Guevara, *Che Guevara Reader*, 64.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibidem*, 231.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibidem*, 241.

<sup>155</sup> Ernesto Che Guevara, ‘Cuba: Historical Exception or Vanguard in the Anticolonial Struggle?’, Spoken 9 April 1961, *The Che Reader* 2005, Markup by Ocean Press and Brian Baggins, Proofread by Alvaro Miranda (August 2020), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1961/04/09.htm>.



monopolies, strong and ruthless imperialist oppressors (e.g., the US) gained power in the continent.<sup>156</sup> While Che identified the US and imperialism as the main problems of the region in 1959, it appears he truly expanded his theoretical knowledge in the years after. Indeed, he developed his argument on armed struggle. He now believed that gaining power was the most important thing to achieve in the struggle, which could also follow a peaceful and electoral form.<sup>157</sup> Regardless, Che concluded that peaceful change would be impossible with the current conditions in Latin America.<sup>158</sup> The leading prognostic framing thus remained armed struggle through guerrilla warfare.

In 1962, Che gave a speech to the Cuban Department of State Security on the Cuban Revolution's influence in Latin America.<sup>159</sup> He argued that Cuba was interested in the region because of the shared culture, history, and fight for freedom, while Latin America could influence the Revolution's future and ideological spread.<sup>160</sup> Like Fidel, Che was using frame articulation to create a common experience and identity with the region. Throughout the speech he framed Cuba as an example that had great influence in several Latin American countries. However, he made it clear that every country had different conditions as he analysed the individual nations, which could result in differing approaches to the seizure of power. Nevertheless, Che continuously highlighted that though peaceful struggle was an option, it was unrealistic for the majority of the continent. Armed struggle would ultimately be needed to enact change.<sup>161</sup> Che's prognostic framing was therefore very consistent.

Most importantly, Che started to use motivational framing by often referring to the Second Declaration of Havana, which he defined as 'a document [that] calls on the masses to struggle' in that same speech.<sup>162</sup> In an essay written in 1962 on tactics and strategies for the Latin American revolution, he made it abundantly clear that armed struggle was crucial to defeat the imperialists, while continuously referring to the Declaration.<sup>163</sup> Furthermore, he stated that 'Cuba issues a call to arms to all of Latin America'.<sup>164</sup> However, this essay was published posthumously. Thus, although he had uttered an active call to arms through motivational framing, this had not reached anyone's ears at the time. Consequently, Che's focus

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<sup>156</sup> Ernesto Che Guevara, 'Cuba: Historical Exception or Vanguard in the Anticolonial Struggle?', Spoken 9 April 1961, *The Che Reader* 2005, Markup by Ocean Press and Brian Baggins, Proofread by Alvaro Miranda (August 2020), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1961/04/09.htm>.

<sup>157</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>158</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>159</sup> Guevara, *Che Guevara Reader*, 275.

<sup>160</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>161</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>162</sup> Ibidem, 293.

<sup>163</sup> Ibidem, 294-304.

<sup>164</sup> Ibidem, 304.

and framing during 1959-1962 was fundamentally diagnostic in his theoretical writings and predominantly prognostic in his consistent propagation of armed struggle, which was also the duty of Latin American revolutionaries according to the Declaration. Nevertheless, Che already used motivational framing, though unsuccessfully, like Fidel.

#### 4.3 Conclusion

In sum, both leaders had similar thoughts that developed during this period from a problem-oriented view into a stance that was about finding solutions and activating the Latin American population. This is evident in the development from using diagnostic to prognostic framing, while starting to engage in motivational framing. Indeed, in the beginning emphasis was put on consolidating the new regime and defending Cuba against US aggression and Latin American hostility. Nevertheless, they shifted towards an active foreign policy that could spread revolution beyond Cuba. In contrast to Fidel, Che took this position earlier on and more resolutely, though their framing regularly coincided. Still, Che seemed more established in his socialist and internationalist beliefs that needed to be realised in the continent, as he extensively discussed the possibilities of armed or peaceful struggle. Fidel, however, appeared to be playing a long-term political game by focussing on creating consensus. Thus, Che strongly promoted the idealistic mobilization of the continent in a possible armed struggle, while Fidel seemed more pragmatic as he wanted to create allies. Having analysed this development up until 1962, the next chapter examines the leadership's framing between 1963 and 1967.

## 5. The Cuban Leadership's Debate on How to Proceed (1963-1967)

This chapter considers how the Cuban leadership framed their policies and goals in Latin America during the period of 1963-1967. The question this chapter aims to answer is: 'How can we understand the Cuban leadership's framing of their policy in Latin America during the revolutionary expansion period of 1963-1967?'. The chapter will first set out the context of the time, which was dominated by ideological debate and heavily influenced by the geopolitical situation. Then, primary sources such as speeches, interviews, and writings by Fidel and Che will be analysed.

### 5.1 A Period of Debate and Expansion

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Sino-Soviet dispute came to a head during this period. While the Cuban leadership aimed to maintain their course and to ensure the survival of the Revolution, they had to function within a complex geopolitical situation. The heightening tensions within the communist world – due to the dispute about what communist model and strategy to follow – impacted Cuba's beliefs and goals as well. At the time, the Soviets believed in a gradual transition to socialism and eventual communism in other countries, after a vanguard party gained political power. The Chinese, on the other hand, promoted rural insurrection and immediate implementation of communist institutions, practices, and values. With a worsening economic situation, as explained in the previous chapter, Cuba increasingly depended on these two nations for support. Consequently, there were groups within Cuba that supported either the Soviet or Chinese model, which led to a 'Great Debate'.<sup>165</sup>

Supposedly, Che favoured the Chinese model since he often critiqued the USSR model and strategy. Additionally, Che was the strongest proponent of internationalism and revolutionary expansion. Indeed, he had decision-making power regarding guerrilla actions in Latin America and was the main liaison with the Chinese.<sup>166</sup> However, in a conversation with USSR ambassador Aleksandr Ivanovich Alekseyev in 1963, Che expressed his dissatisfaction about the USSR possibly believing he was pro-Chinese.<sup>167</sup> He therefore adamantly denied the accusations. While the ambassador reassured him that the USSR did not believe he was pro-Chinese, it is interesting that Che clarified this. This was possibly due to Cuba's growing economic dependence on the USSR. In the document, he also told the ambassador that 'you do

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<sup>165</sup> Martínez-Fernández, *Revolutionary Cuba*, 92.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibidem*, 94-95.

<sup>167</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, 'From the Diary of A.I. Alekseyev, Record of a Conversation with Ernesto Guevara, 25 December 1963', 29 January 1964, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 49, d. 760, ll. 27-29, r. 9127. Translated for CWIHP by Gary Goldberg. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117072>.

not approve of my policy of unleashing a guerrilla war in the countries of Latin America'.<sup>168</sup> Indeed, armed revolutionary expansion did not coincide with the USSR model of gradual and long-term communist implementation.<sup>169</sup> This nevertheless implies Che had more in common with the Chinese.

Fidel, however, initially aimed to balance between the two powers, but started to abandon his neutrality. He moved towards the USSR, since he acquired more economic, military, and political support from them. In fact, by 1964 he also voiced public criticism towards China.<sup>170</sup> By 1965, this juxtaposition between the leaders seemed serious when Che resigned from his Cuban governmental posts and participated in armed struggle outside of Cuba. There were arguments that Che wanted to continue the Latin American struggle and therefore left Cuba. Another argument was that Che's divergent foreign policy ideas were no longer appreciated by Fidel, which resulted in a conflict and Che's departure.<sup>171</sup> Further, because the USSR was less predisposed towards Cuban revolutionary expansion, some argued that Fidel compromised in this regard.<sup>172</sup> Concurrently, Cuba's relations with China became increasingly hostile. Moreover, the US and USSR aimed to evade provocations that could lead to another nuclear crisis, though US interventions against the establishment of communist governments in Latin America abounded.<sup>173</sup>

In 1966, Che arrived in Bolivia with a guerrilla force that was supposed to receive the Bolivian communist party's support. However, this pro-Soviet party withdrew its support, and the force came under the attack of the US-supported Bolivian military. Cuba also gave minimal support to Che's force. Worse came to worst when the Bolivian forces captured Che on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1967 and executed him the next day. Fidel consequently blamed the USSR for allegedly forcing the Bolivian communist party to withdraw its support.<sup>174</sup> Thus, as explained in previous chapters, the situation changed drastically in 1967 as Cuban foreign policy started to fail.

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<sup>168</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, 'From the Diary of A.I. Alekseyev, Record of a Conversation with Ernesto Guevara, 25 December 1963', 29 January 1964, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 49, d. 760, ll. 27-29, r. 9127. Translated for CWIHP by Gary Goldberg. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117072>.

<sup>169</sup> Brown, 'To Make the Revolution', 6.

<sup>170</sup> Martínez-Fernández, *Revolutionary Cuba*, 92, 98.

<sup>171</sup> Ramírez and Suedfeld, 'Nonimmediacy Scoring of Archival Materials', 156-158.

<sup>172</sup> Brown, 'To Make the Revolution', 6.

<sup>173</sup> Martínez-Fernández, *Revolutionary Cuba*, 96-98.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibidem*, 100.

## 5.2 The Armed Struggle

### 5.2.1 Fidel Castro, A Practical Man

On January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1963, Fidel gave a speech for the Fourth Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution in Havana.<sup>175</sup> The overall tone of the speech was anti-imperialist as Fidel discussed what Cuba had achieved over the past years despite US hostility. In this vein, he used similar diagnostic framing as in previous years and developed his prognostic framing. In the speech, he put emphasis on the solidarity between Latin American revolutionaries ‘who understand that the duty of all revolutionaries is to create the revolution’.<sup>176</sup> Moreover, regarding certain discrepancies in the socialist camp (the Sino-Soviet dispute), he gave ‘a guide for our people: our task is to unite inside and outside, to eliminate everything that divides us inside and outside, to struggle for everything that unites us inside and outside, the unity of all principles, that is our line, fatherland or death, we will win!’.<sup>177</sup>

Unmistakeably, these quotes represent action mobilization. First, the problem of imperialism was countered by actively creating revolution and showing solidarity among the continent’s revolutionaries. Second, the problem of socialist tension was countered by a struggle for unity in the socialist bloc. This suggests Fidel tried to temper the tensions in 1963. Thus, the main task was to aspire to solidarity and unity. This was further strengthened through the frame elaboration ‘fatherland or death, we will win!’, which highlights the main belief of the revolutionaries: to give everything to achieve revolution and thus to regain the fatherland from imperialism, even if it meant their life. Concerning the method for the united revolution, in May 1963, Fidel gave an unambiguous answer in an interview with the Uruguayan socialist newspaper *El Sol*.<sup>178</sup> He stated: ‘For the majority of the Latin American countries, the only road is armed warfare. There is not the remotest possibility of being able to seize power through elections.’<sup>179</sup> Evidently, using prognostic framing, the only solution left for Latin America was armed warfare.

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<sup>175</sup> Fidel Castro, ‘Fourth Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution’, 2 January 1963, Plaza de Revolución Jose Martí (Havana), Castro Speech Database, Markup by Brian Baggins, Castro Internet Archive 2000, <https://www.marxists.org/history/cuba/archive/castro/1963/01/02.htm>.

<sup>176</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>177</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>178</sup> El Sol, ‘Castro Defines the Theory of the Cuban Revolution’, 10 May 1963, Cuba, Interview, Fidel Castro, FBIS, Castro Speech Database, LANIC Latin American Network Information Center, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1963/19630510.html>.

<sup>179</sup> Ibidem.

This message was prominent in 1964 as well. In a speech from that year, Fidel highlighted Cuba's example and encouraged those fighting for their independence.<sup>180</sup> While this diagnostic and prognostic framing was present for a while, Fidel aimed to take the last steps of action mobilization by using motivational framing. He intended to motivate people to act while reducing the fear of participating in collective action. He did this by giving statements such as: 'We are sure that as the number of people who fight for their independence increases, the struggle will be less costly and less bloody, and it will be harder for imperialism to contain it.'<sup>181</sup> By putting emphasis on the growing number of participants, he aimed to reduce the fear of bystanders and adherents that were hesitating to act. In addition, he highlighted that the struggle would not be as dangerous and hopeless if the movement were large enough. Indeed, he affirmed that 'the struggle of the people against imperialism is growing. It grows, it spreads. It is a historical law that this law will be fulfilled'.<sup>182</sup> By framing the struggle as growing and inevitable, he implied that there was no other option but victory for all those who fought against imperialism. Further, by calling it a historical law, he strengthened this unshakeable certainty of success.

On July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1965, Fidel gave a speech for the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cuban struggle, in which he used the same motivational framing as in 1964.<sup>183</sup> He argued that the imperialists could not intervene in all of Latin America. Certainly, he stated that the revolution was inevitable 'in any part of the world where oppression exists'.<sup>184</sup> Fidel maintained that 'we urge the revolutionaries of Latin America to struggle' even if it posed risks to Cuba.<sup>185</sup> According to him, the imperialists believed revolutionary fomentation could be stopped by liquidating Cuba. In response, Fidel asserted that the people's uprising could never be 'stopped by anybody or anything', even if Cuba fell.<sup>186</sup> This was supposed to motivate the Latin Americans to act as well as demoralize the antagonistic US by spreading the message of certain victory. Furthermore, by indicating the risk lied with Cuba as the perceived leading revolutionary actor, Fidel attempted to reduce the fear of risk for the Latin Americans. It also had a sacrificial tone,

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<sup>180</sup> Fidel Castro, 'Inauguration of José Antonio Echeverría University City', 2 February 1964, Cuba, Speech, Fidel Castro, Havana Domestic Radio, FBIS, Castro Speech Database, LANIC Latin American Network Information Center, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1964/19640202.html>.

<sup>181</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>182</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>183</sup> Fidel Castro, '12<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Attack on the Moncada Barracks', 26 July 1965, Santiago, Cuba, Speech, Fidel Castro, Havana Domestic Radio, FBIS, Castro Speech Database, LANIC Latin American Network Information Center, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1965/19650726.html>.

<sup>184</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>185</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>186</sup> Ibidem.

insinuating that Cuba would give itself up for the continent's liberation if it struggled against imperialist oppression.

In 1966, delegations from Asia, Africa, and Latin America gathered in Cuba at the Tricontinental Conference to discuss anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist issues and to commit their support to liberation struggles. Here, Fidel gave a speech in which he expressed his satisfaction of the unity and solidarity for the struggle against imperialism and colonialism.<sup>187</sup> While some argued that Fidel compromised Cuba's foreign policy for the USSR as mentioned above, he continuously upheld the armed struggle framework in the primary sources. In this speech, he supported his statement that the condition for 'revolutionary armed battle' existed for many Latin American nations.<sup>188</sup> Furthermore, he highlighted that battles were raging in Venezuela, Peru, Colombia, and Guatemala, for which he expressed his support, solidarity, and aid.<sup>189</sup> Additionally, he reiterated that Cuba and every revolutionary should do as the Havana Declaration vowed by emphasizing every revolutionary's duty to effect revolution. Indeed, 'sooner or later all or almost all peoples will have to take up arms to liberate themselves'.<sup>190</sup> By reaffirming Cuba's support and aid for any nation in armed struggle against imperialism and by emphasizing the Havana Declaration, Fidel used motivational frames to convince other revolutionaries to take up arms.

Curiously, Fidel extensively addressed the speculation around Che's absence in this speech. He opposed all rumours, such as Che leaving due to ideological differences or his supposed pro-Chinese and anti-Soviet perspectives.<sup>191</sup> Further, Fidel argued that Che's absence would be explained when it was safe to do so, likely referring to his mission in Bolivia. He also explained Che continued his internationalist fight, which would be supported by the Cuban revolutionary regime.<sup>192</sup> The fact that Fidel devoted a considerable part of his speech to the subject, likely means that many questioned Che's whereabouts and Fidel's role in his absence. Whether Fidel was truthful remains uncertain.

In the summer of 1967, in a speech at a Latin American Conference (OLAS), Fidel continued his consistent encouragement for armed struggle because it was the only way to

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<sup>187</sup> Fidel Castro, 'At the Closing Session of the Tricontinental Conference', 15 January 1966, Havana's Chaplin Theater, First publicly disseminated on 16 January 1966, Source by University of Texas: Fidel Castro Speech Database, Translated by US Government: Foreign Broadcast Information Service from the Havana Domestic Radio and Television Service in Spanish 0249 GMT 16 January, 1966, Transcription by U.S. Information Agency: the Department of Research of the Radio Marti Program, Castro Internet Archive 2006, <https://www.marxists.org/history/cuba/archive/castro/1966/01/15.htm>.

<sup>188</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>189</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>190</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>191</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>192</sup> Ibidem.



achieve freedom from imperialism.<sup>193</sup> He also addressed the debate on whether revolutionary struggle in Latin America could be peaceful as he called this an illusion. He stated that ‘anyone who tries to sell such an idea to the masses will be deceiving them completely’.<sup>194</sup> Fidel stood by his usual prognostic framing of offering solely armed struggle as a solution, but his tone was not as urgent as in previous years. Remarkably, he mentioned that though the revolution would happen, it did not mean it would happen soon, but somewhere in ‘the long run’.<sup>195</sup> The key was that revolutionary ideas existed, and Latin Americans should prepare for the eventual arrival of the revolution. Most surprising, however, might be Fidel’s statement that Cuba did not aim to be the head of the movement.<sup>196</sup> He contended that Cuba was merely defending its revolutionary *ideas*, which would lead the struggle of the Latin American world.<sup>197</sup> By increasingly framing the struggle so passively, Fidel gave the impression that he withdrew from his previous beliefs and motivational frames.

### 5.2.2 Che Guevara, The Unwavering Internationalist

In 1963, Che wrote his well-known work on the guerrilla warfare method.<sup>198</sup> As in 1962, he continued to use the Second Declaration of Havana as his reference point when discussing the revolutionary export to Latin America. Again, peaceful solutions against oppression and imperialism were possible theoretically, but practically, armed struggle remained the only solution.<sup>199</sup> Che’s original prognostic framing thus persisted. Moreover, his internationalist views became more outstanding as he discussed the continental nature of the struggle. He stated that: ‘In all countries where oppression reaches intolerable proportions, the banner of rebellion must be raised; and this banner of historical necessity will have a continental character.’<sup>200</sup> Like Fidel, he used historical certainty to convince Latin American adherents to commence their struggle.

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<sup>193</sup> Fidel Castro, ‘Speech to the OLAS Conference’, 10 August 1967, Havana’s Chaplin Theater, First publicly disseminated on 11 August 1967, Source by *International Socialist Review*, Vol. 28, No. 6, November-December 1967, pp.12-49, Translated by unknown, Markup by Daniel Gaido and Brian Baggins, Castro Internet Archive 2006, <https://www.marxists.org/history/cuba/archive/castro/1967/08/10.htm>.

<sup>194</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>195</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>196</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>197</sup> Ibidem; Eric Selbin, ‘Conjugating the Cuban Revolution: It Mattered, It Matters, It Will Matter’, *Latin American Perspectives* 36 (2009) 1, 21-29, there 24-25.

<sup>198</sup> Ernesto Che Guevara, ‘Guerrilla Warfare: A Method’, September 1963, The Che Reader 2005, Markup by Ocean Press and Brian Baggins, Aleida March, Che Guevara Studies Center and Ocean Press, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1963/09/guerrilla-warfare.htm>.

<sup>199</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>200</sup> Ibidem.



In fact, Che claimed that the advent and triumph of the struggle against imperialism ‘is the inevitable result of historical, economic and political conditions; and its direction cannot change’.<sup>201</sup> He reduced fears by indicating that the entire continent would inevitably struggle and become victorious together, which means Che used motivational framing. His call to arms became reality with statements such as: ‘The task of the revolutionary forces in each country is to initiate the struggle when the conditions are present there [...]’, which would then cause the conditions for struggle throughout the entire region.<sup>202</sup> As he established the methods of guerrilla struggle, Che declared that ‘the eruption of the Latin American struggle has begun’.<sup>203</sup> Furthermore, by speaking about the revolution in the framework of a united continent, he used frame articulation to create an alignment of experiences and morals. This thus contributed to his motivational framing as a united front seemed less risky to participate in for possible adherents.

In 1964, Che gave a historic speech at the United Nations General Assembly.<sup>204</sup> While sharply criticizing the US and its imperialist forces and policies, he expressed solidarity with oppressed and struggling nations. Additionally, he specified that Cuba had no relations with any Latin American countries except Mexico due to US aggression and isolation. Although this was the case, he clarified that Cuba remained concerned with the continent due to ‘the ties that unite us’, such as language, culture, and ‘the common master we had’.<sup>205</sup> This was his only reason for ‘desiring the liberation of Latin America from the US colonial yoke’.<sup>206</sup> By framing Cuba’s relations with the rest of the region this way, Che made Cuba’s actions appear less threatening to the international community while pointing out US imperialist danger and aggression. This cunning articulation thus aimed to create international consensus.

Simultaneously, Che used prognostic framing by continuously referring to the Second Havana Declaration and expressing that the Latin American masses made the ‘decision to fight and to paralyze the armed hand of the invader’.<sup>207</sup> Furthermore, he emphasized that the people were supported by the entire world and the socialist camp, which he specified to be led by the USSR. Moreover, he articulated the people’s cry through the frame elaboration ‘Patria o

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<sup>201</sup> Ernesto Che Guevara, ‘Guerrilla Warfare: A Method’, September 1963, *The Che Reader 2005*, Markup by Ocean Press and Brian Baggins, Aleida March, Che Guevara Studies Center and Ocean Press, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1963/09/guerrilla-warfare.htm>.

<sup>202</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>203</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>204</sup> Ernesto Che Guevara, ‘At the United Nations’, 11 December 1964, 19th General Assembly of the United Nations in New York, *The Che Reader 2005*, Markup by Ocean Press and Brian Baggins, Aleida March, Che Guevara Studies Center and Ocean Press, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1964/12/11.htm>.

<sup>205</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>206</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>207</sup> Ibidem.

Muerte!'.<sup>208</sup> Che had therefore made use of motivational framing by ensuring adherents of global unity, support, and solidarity, and thus indirectly called them to join. Che, overall, seemed to stay in line with Fidel's message. His USSR-reference also implied an acknowledgement of the Cuban position regarding the uncertainties in the socialist world, which made the revolutionary leadership look united.

In 1965, when Che resigned, there was not as much writing on revolutionary expansion or Latin American policy as before. However, Che continued to write analyses of the Cuban Revolution, which could be used and understood as theoretical blueprints for other movements, as intended. In his article 'Socialism and Man in Cuba', he analysed the Cuban struggle and the cultivation of a revolutionary spirit as he framed Cuba and its revolutionaries as the vanguard of the continent.<sup>209</sup> Che's persistent analysis of the Cuban struggle and the conditions of Latin American countries set him apart from Fidel. Essentially, by writing these works of analysis, he was providing a continuous and developing diagnosis of the problems of the continent's social life and systems of government. These established ideas and written guides were therefore rife with diagnostic and prognostic framing, as they served as the fundament for an internationalist fight against imperialism and oppression.

In 1966, Che left for Bolivia. In a farewell letter to his parents, he stated: 'I believe in armed struggle as the only solution for those peoples who fight to free themselves, and I am consistent with my beliefs.'<sup>210</sup> Thus, Che's belief was exemplified. He commenced another struggle in a Latin American country because he believed in the unshakable revolutionary success of the continent, even if he failed. In a letter to Fidel, which had been read in a public ceremony in 1965, Che explained that he had to leave 'to fight against imperialism wherever it may be'.<sup>211</sup> What was perhaps most relevant was the following statement: 'I have always been identified with the foreign policy of our revolution, and I continue to be.'<sup>212</sup> Indeed, the ultimate, crucial, and internationalist goal was the armed struggle that would result in a continental revolution, which lay at the heart of Che's views and Cuban foreign policy. His

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<sup>208</sup> Ernesto Che Guevara, 'At the United Nations', 11 December 1964, 19th General Assembly of the United Nations in New York, *The Che Reader* 2005, Markup by Ocean Press and Brian Baggins, Aleida March, Che Guevara Studies Center and Ocean Press, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1964/12/11.htm>.

<sup>209</sup> Ernesto Che Guevara, 'Socialism and Man in Cuba', March 1965, First published on 12 March 1965 under the title 'From Algiers, for *Marcha*. The Cuban Revolution Today', *The Che Reader* 2005, Markup by Ocean Press and Brian Baggins, Aleida March, Che Guevara Studies Center and Ocean Press, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1965/03/man-socialism.htm>.

<sup>210</sup> Guevara, *Che Guevara Reader*, 384.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibidem*, 386.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibidem*.

diagnostic and prognostic framing thus remained unchanged throughout the entire period. By fighting in Bolivia, Che also led by example and thus motivated others to pick up arms.

In April 1967, a few months before Che's execution, a pre-written work was addressed to and published by the Tricontinental, which was full of motivational framing. Famously known for its call to create 'two, three, many Vietnams', it addressed Latin America and called for the region to start its revolution.<sup>213</sup> In contrast to Fidel, who first aimed to reduce fears and later became more reserved, Che spoke about an armed continental struggle that would be full of hardships and sacrifices, but which needed to be fought to defeat US oppression and imperialism and to gain freedom.<sup>214</sup> Moreover, Che spoke about fighters becoming part of 'the history of Our America' and martyrs sacrificing themselves for continental freedom.<sup>215</sup> This framing of martyrdom was a way to motivate adherents to participate, because it was framed as an honourable sacrifice for the revolution that would be eternally remembered by everyone.

Che thus continued to frame the Cuban Revolution as the vanguard, unlike Fidel, whilst maintaining the goal of developing 'a true proletarian internationalism' that would fight for humanity across all continents.<sup>216</sup> The tone throughout the speech was motivational as Che used determined yet realistic framing of the upcoming fight. Indeed, all three forms of framing are observed in the following phrase: 'Regarding our great strategic objective, the total destruction of imperialism by armed struggle, we should be uncompromising'.<sup>217</sup> The problem, imperialism, could be solved by the strategy of total destruction through armed struggle, showcasing both diagnostic and prognostic framing. Exemplified by motivational framing, this unwavering belief in the revolution that was so characteristic of Che could strike the doubt and fear out of any supporter. Even if the sacrifice would be great, Che's frame of the revolution creating a better future implied that it would be worth it. If the revolutionaries died, their 'battle cry' would be heard and repeated by mankind, which would be united against imperialism until their fight was victorious.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Ernesto Che Guevara, 'Message to the Tricontinental', 16 April 1967, Havana, Published by The Executive Secretariat of the Organization of the Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America (OSPAAAL), Che Guevara Internet Archive 1999, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1967/04/16.htm>.

<sup>214</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>215</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>216</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>217</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>218</sup> Ibidem.

### 5.3 Conclusion

Concluding, the armed struggle was the main focus of the Cuban leadership during this period. Both leaders promoted action mobilization by regularly using prognostic and motivational framing. Yet, due to the geopolitical situation at the time, Fidel and Che appeared to react differently. While Che wrote revolutionary manuals and travelled to enact change in the world as an internationalist, Fidel worked politically to engage the region into armed struggle. Che was more aggressive and proactive in his belief of enacting continental armed struggle, while Fidel eventually became more reserved. Though both had similar beliefs, their policies developed in accordance with their internationalist and socialist views, with Fidel diminishing his internationalist goals. Moreover, the ideological debates made way for a distinct Cuban position, which seemed to be supported by the Cuban leadership. Though, there were clashes within the socialist bloc and the domestic and international community. In the end however, this foreign policy began to fail as explained in previous chapters.

## 6. Conclusion

This thesis attempted to contribute to the historiography of the Global Cold War approach, which aims to recover the agency of regions such as Latin America without a bipolar focus. Many scholars have researched the Cuban case study and its developments, problems, motivations, and leaders, as seen in the introduction. This thesis addressed a gap concerning the Cuban revolutionary leadership and how they attempted to convince Latin Americans to follow the revolutionary movement they started with the Cuban Revolution and aimed to spread to the continent. By using the framing theory and its concepts, the development and articulation of the social movement's ideas were analysed by applying this theoretical framework to speeches, interviews, and writings by the Cuban leadership, Fidel and Che. The goal was to answer the following research question: 'How can we understand the way that the Cuban revolutionary leadership framed their goal of revolutionary expansion in Latin America, which was part of their foreign policy, between 1959 and 1967?'.

By examining relevant primary sources by the leaders, Fidel and Che, the conclusion is that they framed their goal of revolutionary expansion in Latin America according to their Cuban socialist and internationalist beliefs as they aimed to activate and mobilize the region between 1959 and 1967. Both leaders developed their framing according to the domestic and international conditions during this period, while having their own views as different characters. Though there is an overlap in their framing, Che appeared to personify the Cuban foreign policy. A revolutionary inspired by proletarian internationalism, Che was concerned with writing down and spreading his ideas of continental revolution, which would result in the liberation of Latin America from the clutches of the antagonistic US and its imperialism. In contrast to Che's idealism, Fidel also believed in the revolutionary armed struggle, but gave the impression that he concentrated on creating connections between the Latin American countries. Fidel directed his attention to more political aspects of creating unity and solidarity, though he emphasized the armed struggle and expressed his support towards this main tenet of Cuban foreign policy. Nevertheless, he seemed more pragmatic in comparison to Che.

Inspired by the Cuban Revolution, the Cuban leadership enacted the plans they had been fighting for during their own struggle, which they hoped to spread to Latin America. As seen in chapter three, on the influence of socialism and internationalism on Cuba's foreign policy, they were heavily influenced by their own history as they combined their existing internationalist ideas with their foreign policy. Socialism, however, was embraced a few years after taking power, but was easy to combine with their proletarian internationalist position. Consequently, though they connected to the socialist bloc, they created and spread their own

ideology rather than conforming to that of other actors. As time progressed, this led to problems and conflicts on the international stage.

The individual leaders were bound to the context of their time, which is evident in the timeframes of the fourth and fifth chapters. Between 1959 and 1962, the leaders were consolidating the new regime as they diagnosed problems in Latin America, while facing US aggression and isolation and Latin American distrust and hostility. Their resistance towards these antagonists resulted in sympathy among the Latin American masses, thereby showing that the leaders were successful in creating consensus through their framing of the region's oppression and imperialism. The aggression they faced merely proved their point. Che was especially strong in his framing as he immediately pinpointed the US as the main enemy. He quickly considered violent solutions, as he had been promoting during the Cuban Revolution. His behaviour was therefore consistent. Fidel also propagated armed struggle against imperialism but appeared more reserved as he aimed to balance the international situation. As Cuba's main political leader, it is logical that this role influenced his framing as he made diagnoses that developed with the political situation.

The period between 1963 and 1967, however, marked a change as the regime's position strengthened and both leaders actively proclaimed their hope for armed struggle. The diagnostic and prognostic frames that were present previously, were now bolstered with effective theory, strong words, and uncompromising action. Again, Che personified Cuban foreign policy as he was the blueprint of the internationalist revolutionary and as he disseminated his ideas in the continent. His travel to enact change in Latin America, specifically Bolivia, was the climax of his beliefs. Though Fidel supported the same ideas and actively called for and promoted armed struggle, he did not seem as urgent in comparison to Che. However, he made connections with other communist parties and encouraged the spread of the Cuban Revolution's ideas. Still, both leaders engaged in motivational framing. Especially Fidel aimed to reduce the fears and risks associated with collective action as he used traditional arguments, such as the movement being large and inevitably victorious, to get Latin Americans to participate. Che did the same but used an internationalist argument by speaking in terms of a united continental struggle that would be hard and sacrificial, yet necessary for the greater good of humanity. However, Cuba and its leaders acted in a complex time of ideological and geopolitical conflict, which influenced their framing, positions, and foreign policy. Fidel altered his tone while Che left Cuba altogether. Simultaneously, Cuba's regional situation and international relations changed. Thus, 1967 became a year of failures and change that put a halt to Cuba's foreign policy.

The framing theory helped in the analysis of the primary sources by Fidel and Che. The approach gave insight into what the worst injustices and problems in Latin America were and what the best solutions to counter these were according to the Cuban leaders. The hypothesis was realized with this theory since it examined the development and articulation of the leaders' framing. It also highlighted the agency of these actors as they promoted their own perspectives within the wider regional and (geo)political context of the Cold War. However, while the used primary sources were interesting, genuine and official Cuban sources would have contributed to the understanding of the framing, especially on foreign policy. Furthermore, framing is a dialectical process, but hard to examine when analysing sources by movement elites, as Benford mentioned. It became obvious that there was support and sympathy within Latin America and the socialist bloc, but the opposition to the framing remained relatively underexamined, though it is noted that it existed. These limitations therefore lead to new questions.

Much remains to be examined. For further research, the Cuban leadership's framing towards Latin American governments, political parties, and officials could be examined. There was opposition as well as support for Cuba from multiple fronts, including domestic, regional, and international spheres. Further, it would be valuable to examine how these actors reacted to the framing of the Cuban revolutionaries and whether they were moved to action in response to these frames, either in support or opposition. Additionally, though the agency and framing of the Cuban actors were at the centre of this thesis, considering the US and USSR in this context is still relevant. For example, the Cuban revolutionaries attempted to antagonize and demoralize the US, while they aimed to convince the USSR and the socialist bloc to agree to their foreign policy. Although this shimmered through in parts of the thesis, more could be researched in this regard. Thus, the existing curiosity towards the only socialist country in the Western hemisphere during the Cold War will not be exhausted for quite some time. After all, though Fidel died at 90, the revolutionary government did not.

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