

# **A Postcolonial Analysis of Cuban Foreign Policy Towards South African Liberation Movements, 1959-1994**



Thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (International Studies) at Stellenbosch University

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**Declaration**

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# Abstract

This thesis is a postcolonial analysis of Third World foreign policy, looking at an atypical case of state relations with national liberation movements. It is also an empirical contribution to an area of recent South African history through interrogating Cuba's foreign policy towards South Africa's liberation movements from 1959 until 1994. My starting point has been that meagre scholarship exists within the field of International Relations on this important area of South African history and on Cuban foreign policy. Mainstream scholars have largely overlooked relations between the Cuban state and civil society and liberation movements such as the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party, the Congress of South African Trade Unions and Umkhonto we Sizwe. By interrogating an ignored area of Third World foreign policy, this thesis furthermore aims to probe into the field of International Relations and analyses of foreign policy. Applying the methodology of a postcolonial theoretical critique, I highlight the ontological assumptions within the field that make theorising foreign policy from states and societies in the Third World peripheral within IR, as well as render states and civil society in the Third World as objects rather than subjects of the theoretical endeavour. The conceptualisation of the Cold War as a mere Superpower affair, with states in the Third World as mere sites of conflict between the Superpowers and divorced from the causal dynamics of the conflict, exemplifies the ontological assumptions that exist within the field of International Relations theory.

I use the case study of Cuba's foreign policy towards South African liberation movements in carrying out a qualitative analysis of the available literature and well as conducting interviews with senior participants of South Africa's various liberation movements. A broad reconstruction of relations between 1959 and 1994, as well as post-1994, reveals extensive relations between Cuba and South African liberation movements involving the Cuban state and civil society. The findings of my research include an overview of relations between Cuba and various liberation movements at the political and military level, as well as the role of Cuban civil society in areas such as education and strengthening the role of women in the liberation struggle. Respondents reveal that relations between the two spheres are not uni-directional, but in fact reveal a complex interaction in which the agency of South Africa's liberation movements in determining the content of relations is central.

In conceptualising foreign policy using a postcolonial theoretical framework, I look not only at the Cuban state but also at the role of civil society in Cuba in constructing and carrying out foreign policy towards South African liberation movements. This theoretical framework rejects a strict dichotomy between the foreign and the domestic by looking at social forces within the state as well as the role of ideology in the making foreign policy domestically. Lastly, the extensive relations between Cuba and South African liberation movements that my research reveals points to possibilities for further theoretical investigations within the field of International Relations from a postcolonial theoretical critique.

# Opsomming

Hierdie tesis is 'n post-koloniale analise van Derde Wêreld buitelandse beleid, dit kyk na die atipiese geval van staats verhoudinge met nasionale vryheidsbewegings. Dit is ook 'n empiriese bydrae tot 'n area in onlangse Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis deurdat dit Kuba se buitelandse beleid teenoor Suid-Afrikaanse vryheidsbewegings tussen 1959 tot 1994 ondervra. My beginpunt is dat daar skamele vakkundigheid tans bestaan binne die studieveld Internasionale Betrekkinge met betrekking tot hierdie belangrike area van Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis en Kubaanse buitelandse beleid. Hoofstroom deskundiges hanteer tot 'n groot mate die verhoudinge tussen staat en burgerlike samelewing van Kuba met vryheidsbewegings soos die African National Congress, die Suid-Afrikaanse Kommunistiese Party, die Congress of South African Trade Unions en Umkhonto we Sizwe met min aandag. Deur hierdie geïgnoreerde area binne Derde Wêreld buitelandse beleid te ondervra, is dit ook 'n verdere oogmerk van hierdie tesis om die vakgebied van Internasionale Betrekkinge en die gepaardgaande analises van buitelandse beleid te ondersoek. Deur die toepassing van die metodologie van post-koloniale kritiek, beklemtoon ek die ontologiese aannames binne die vakgebied van Internasionale Betrekkinge wat die teoretisering van buitelandse beleid van state en samelewings in die Derde Wêreld marginaliseer, asook om hierdie state en burgerlike samelewings in die Derde Wêreld tot objekte in plaas van subjekte van 'n teoretiese onderneming te reduceer. Die konseptualisering van die Koue Oorlog as bloot 'n supermag aangeleentheid, met state in die Derde Wêreld as blote ligging vir konflikte tussen die supermagte asook terselfdertyd vervreemd van die oorsaaklike dinamiek van die konflik, beliggaam die ontologiese aannames wat binne die vakgebied van Internasionale Betrekkinge bestaan. Ek maak gebruik van Kuba se buitelandse beleid teenoor Suid-Afrikaanse vryheidsbewegings as gevallestudie om 'n kwalitatiewe analise te maak op die bestaande literatuur asook om onderhoude te hê met senior deelnemers in Suid-Afrika se verskeie vryheidsbewegings. 'n Uitgebreide rekonstruksie van verhoudinge tussen 1959 en 1994, sowel as post-1994, openbaar diepgaande verhoudinge tussen Kuba en Suid-Afrikaanse vryheidsbewegings wat die Kubaanse staat en burgerlike samelewing behels. Die bevindinge in my navorsing sluit in 'n oorsig van verhoudinge tussen Kuba en verskeie vryheidsbewegings op politieke- en militêre vlak asook die rol van Kubaanse burgerlike samelewing in areas soos opvoeding en die verstewiging van die rol van vroue in die vryheidstryd. Respondente openbaar dat verhoudinge tussen die twee sferes nie in een rigting geloop het nie, maar dat dit eintlik 'n komplekse interaksie openbaar in wie die agentskap van die Suid-Afrikaanse vryheidsbewegings om die inhoud van die verhoudinge te bepaal 'n sentrale deel speel. Deur buitelandse beleid te konseptualiseer deur gebruik te maak van 'n

post-koloniale raamwerk kyk ek nie net bloot na die Kubaanse staat nie, maar ook na die rol van die Kubaanse burgerlike samelewing in die konstruksie en uitvoering van buitelandse beleid teenoor Suid-Afrikaanse vryheidsbewegings. Hierdie teoretiese raamwerk verwerp 'n eng tweeledigheid tussen die buitelandse en binnelandse deur te kyk na die sosiale magte binne die staat sowel as die rol van ideologie in die binnelandse skepping van buitelandse beleid. Ten slote, die diepgaande verhoudinge tussen Kuba en Suid-Afrikaanse vryheidsbewegings wat my navorsing openbaar dui in die rigting van moontlike verdere teoretiese ondersoeke binne die vakgebied van Internasionale Betrekkinge vanaf 'n perspektief van post-koloniale kritiek.

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A number of other friends contributed in various ways to critical comments on my thesis. I express my apologies to those who are not individually mentioned but who played an important role in the outcome of this work.

# List of Abbreviations

**ANC** – African National Congress

**CAAC** – Cuban Anti-Apartheid Committee

**CDR** – Comité de Defensa de la Revolución (Committees of Defence of the Revolution)

**COMECON** – Council for Mutual Economic Assistance

**COSATU** – Congress of South African Trade Unions

**CTC** – Central de Trabajadores Cubanos (Cuban Workers' Federation)

**ECLAC** – Economic Commissions for Latin America and the Caribbean

**ECOSOC** – United Nations Economic and Social Council

**FAO**- Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations

**FLN** – Front de Liberation Nacional (National Liberation Front of Algeria)

**FMC** – Federación de Mujeres Cubanas (The Federation of Cuban Women)

**FNLA** – Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (National Front for the Liberation of Angola)

**FPA** – Foreign Policy Analysis

**ICAP** – Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos (Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples)

**IR** – International Relations

**MK** – Umkhonto we Sizwe

**MPLA** – Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola)

**NAM** – Non-Aligned Movement

**NEIO** – New International Economic Order

**NLM** – National Liberation Movement

**OAS** –Organisation of American States

**OAU** – Organisation of African Unity

**OSPAAAL** – Organización de Solidaridad con los Pueblos de Africa, Asia y America Latina (Organisation of Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America)

**PAC** – Pan Africanist Congress

**PAIGC** – Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (African Party of Independence of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde)

**PCC** – Partido Comunista de Cuba (Cuban Communist Party)

**SACP** – South African Communist Party

**SACTU** – South African Congress of Trade Unions

**SADET** – South African Democracy Education Trust

**SADF** – South African Defence Forces

**SANDEF** – South African National Defence Force (post- 1994)

**SWAPO** – South West African People’s Organisation

**TRC** – Truth and Reconciliation Commission

**UN** – United Nations

**UNCTAD** – United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

**UNESCO** – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

**UNICEF** – United Nations Children’s Fund

**UNITA** – União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola)

**WHO** – World Health Organisation

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# Chapter One. Motivation of Study.

## ***INTRODUCTION***

The South African anti-apartheid movement shared a very close relationship with the Cuban state and civil society throughout the period of the liberation struggle in South Africa, beginning in the early 1960s. From the earliest days of Cuba's revolutionary process that began in 1959, the Cuban state formed official relations with the anti-apartheid movement that existed within South Africa and in exile, and denounced the apartheid regime at all international gatherings. Assisting liberation struggles in Africa and throughout the Third World became a cornerstone of a re-orientation of Cuban foreign policy after a process of domestic transformation that began in January of 1959. Cuban foreign policy was in contrast to most Western nations, which lent support to the apartheid regime throughout the early 1960s and 1970s and even into the late 1980s (Gleijeses, 2002; Dosman, 2008; Ellis and Sechaba, 1992; TRC, 1999; Saull, 2005). It is widely accepted in the recent literature emerging on Cuba's role supporting the liberation movements across Africa, that relations between Cuba and African liberation movements were initiated before formal relations were established between the Soviet Union and Cuba. Moreover, relations continued after formal Soviet assistance to African liberation movements ended. The traditional Cold War explanations of Cuba as a surrogate or client state of the Soviet Union have thus begun to be challenged, with a number of attempts to uncover the silenced voices in Cold War history; what is increasingly revealed is the autonomy of Cuban foreign policy and an emphasis on principles over pragmatism in the formulation of its foreign policy (Gleijeses, 1996a; Gleijeses, 2006; Freedom Park, 2009a; Laffey and Weldes, 2008; Brown, 2009; Saney, 2009; Shubin, 2008; Gleijeses, 2002; George, 2005). Cuba's early relations with the African liberation movements, however, also occurred in a context when national liberation had been deemed as legitimate forms of resistance and recognized by the United Nations (UN) as not in violation of the UN Charter's prohibition of the use of force (Dugard, 2007:523). The Cuban state thus stands out during this period, because it was one of the few states which centralised African de-colonisation in the formulation of its foreign policy, furthermore providing a variety of forms of direct and indirect assistance to National Liberation Movements (NLMs).

A number of central leaders of the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) have noted that Cuba played a pertinent role in the fight to end apartheid, speeding up the end of the racist system by its support in combating the South African Defence Forces (SADF) in Angola, aiding to gain Namibia's independence, as well as material support and training to the South African resistance (Ankomah, 2008a). This forms the background for probing into Cuban foreign policy in southern Africa and its relationship with South African liberation forces such as the ANC

and its military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), from 1959 until 1994, which is the case study of this thesis. In this thesis, “South African liberation movements” in the plural is used in order to indicate that the actors, agents, individuals and movements involved were varied and not necessarily unitary or forming part of one single movement; Cuba cooperated and aided Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) but also cooperated with various other agents involved in the struggle to end apartheid. To add to this, Ellis and Sechaba (1992) point out that it is difficult to separate entities such as the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Communist Party (SACP), and MK during the period from 1960 to the early 1990s. Ellis and Sechaba (1992:6) point out that, “In the circumstances of the underground struggle the identity of all three became blurred”<sup>1</sup>. As will be seen, the thesis aims to more directly look at and uncover Cuba’s foreign policy towards South Africa and what this entailed; furthermore, the thesis will give a background illustrating that Cuba had no relations with the apartheid government at the time and only related to the liberation movements.

The rationale of this thesis is based on the observation that only very modest research has been done on this area of South-South relations and recent South African history. It is the hope of this author that others will continue the endeavour to uncover the subaltern voices in this Cuban-South African relationship, to further understand the multifaceted dynamics of both Cuban foreign policy during this period, but also the multiple levels of overlapping actors, political developments and policies which shaped the road to democracy in South Africa. The aim of this thesis is thus to attempt to add a richer historicity of this period and the relations between the Cuban state and civil society towards liberation forces from South Africa to allow for a more empirically-grounded theoretical analysis of Cuban foreign policy.

The Parliamentary Millennium Project of the Republic of South Africa in 2008 organised to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale and its role in speeding up the end of apartheid via Cuba’s assistance. A request was issued for students and academics to begin to research the history of Cuba’s aid to South African liberation (PRSA, 2008; Kasrils, 2008). The Parliamentary Project lamented the lack of research and interest, as well as poverty of knowledge by ordinary South Africans on the role Cuba played throughout the liberation struggle in South Africa. Cuba’s role in the southern African region, in aiding the anti-colonial and liberation struggle is one of significant value to shaping the region’s history, while the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale is only one important facet of that rich and long-standing history which helped shape the struggle against white-minority rule in South Africa (Interview with Kasrils, 2009). The Freedom Park in Pretoria has embarked on a project to research Cuba’s role in South Africa’s road to democracy, and its authors recall that: “Cuba’s active

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<sup>1</sup> This was also the case with the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), which was another organization that was part of the anti-apartheid alliance. In the 1980s SACTU became the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). In this thesis, when pre-COSATU is referred to I will use its old acronym SACTU, and where COSATU is referred to after the name change I will use COSATU.

solidarity with Africa and its people was a result of a principled stand that its leadership and people had taken against colonialism and imperialism. Its interventions were motivated by unwavering commitment to the advancement of revolutionary struggles for socialism, justice and development” (Freedom Park, 2009a:2). It is thus timely that a more academic study of Cuba’s foreign policy towards South African liberation movements is carried out, and it is my aim to probe into this aspect of international relations of the Third World. In this thesis, the terms “Third World”, “Global South”, “the South”, “peripheries”, “the marginalised” or “subaltern” are used interchangeably to denote areas of the world which share common characteristics and a common colonial past and post-colonial present.<sup>2</sup>

Cuba’s domestic dynamics as well as their foreign policy and activities on a global scale have in the past and today, continued to defy conventional wisdom on the role of and opportunities open to poor countries, or countries relegated to the global periphery of the world order. That is, it is assumed that states need to attain a certain level of economic development before they can aim to assist other states or liberation movements in similarly underdeveloped and marginalised states. Cuba’s policy towards South Africa, as an economically marginalised state facing a number of domestic constraints and its privileging of an internationalist foreign policy aimed at assisting governments and national liberation movements in the Third World, is a challenge to those assumptions. Opening up the black box of Cuban foreign policy and making it a veritable unit of analysis challenges our understanding of foreign policy as well as “the limits of the possible.”<sup>3</sup> Yet despite this, the Caribbean island continues to be ignored by International Relations (IR) theory as a valid unit of analysis for theory-building (Gleijeses, 2002, 2009; Saney, 2004; Cooper *et al.*, 2006; Laffey and Weldes, 2008).

Analysing Cuban foreign policy also points to the interlinked and blurred line between the domestic and the external as two dialectically interlinked spheres that cannot be separated or analysed apart from one another, as well as the role of ideology in the making of foreign policy. Although looking at foreign policy from the level of

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<sup>2</sup> That is, the characteristics they share are being economically underdeveloped vis-à-vis the industrialized Core states and developed countries from Western Europe to North America, Japan and Australia; a low percentage of Foreign Direct Investment; underdeveloped agriculture based on colonial past; high rates of poverty and economic dependence on the capitalist Core countries (Mazrui, 1977; Nkrumah, 1965; Galeano, 197). It is both an intellectual position, as well as a geographical and spatial position (Mgonja and Mkombe, 2008). Postcolonial theory exalts the use of the term “Third World” from a position of common identity, common ontological frames of reference and historical origins of oppression, uniting a common history of colonial subjugation and underdevelopment with a common destiny of subaltern emancipation and need to confront a post-colonial present in its neocolonial form (Grovgoui, 2003; Young, 2003; Braveboy-Wagner, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> This is a reference to Robert W. Cox’s (1983) notion of historical structures, as historically specific complexes of ideas, material forces and production that determine ideationally “the limits of the possible”. That is, within the current world order and hierarchical relations of power that exist, a number of opportunities and constraints form the backdrop in terms of the avenues of action conceived of as possible within those limits (Sinclair, 1996). More than material, productive constraints, Cox speaks of ideational constraints that include the ideas, concepts and ideologies that uphold the current world order. It is part of how the social class which subordinates other social classes, maintain their specific form of rule (through what Cox calls hegemony).

the state is a significant part of this thesis, I will also look at the role of civil society and the diffuse nature of foreign policy when one takes into account domestic and international dialectics. However, the case of the Cuban state as the central unit of analysis necessitates looking at state-led foreign policy, since the state is the main interlocutor of foreign policy (Braveboy-Wagner, 2003). In the conclusion of this thesis I look at the implications within IR of looking at Cuba's foreign policy towards South Africa during the complex period between the early 1960s and the mid-1990s, such as: insight into the multiple dynamics of South Africa's struggle to end apartheid, probing into the area of South-South relations, relationships of power in international politics, and adding more critical and subaltern voices within theories of international politics and foreign policy.

## **WHY ANALYSE CUBAN FOREIGN POLICY?**

Upon Nelson Mandela's release from prison in 1991, Cuba was the first country outside Africa he visited to thank for years of support towards the anti-apartheid movement. Cuba, he claimed, had played an instrumental role in South Africa's struggle against apartheid (Mandela, 1991). This occurred in the milieu of protests by Washington of the ANC's decision to send Mandela to Cuba and concurrent undisclosed negotiations taking place between the South African government and individual representatives of South African liberation movements (Sparks, 1994; Taylor, 2001; Marais, 2001). An important side of the history of South Africa's road to formal democracy that is increasingly a topic of interest within academia is Cuba's assistance in combating the South African Defence Forces (SADF) in Angola<sup>4</sup>. Together with combatants from Angola, MK and the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO), Cuban soldiers and military instructors aided to shift the balance of forces against apartheid's military campaign in the southern African region (Dosman, 2008; Gleijeses, 2002, Saney, 2006; interview with Kasrils, 2009). Along with numerous other factors and pressures - both international and domestic - the alliance of regional liberation movements together with the Cubans played a significant role in the South African regime's decision that negotiation would have to take place on the SADF role in Angola, on implementation of United Nations (UN) Resolution 435 which recognised Namibia's independence in 1978, as well as on the unbanning of the ANC and entering into negotiations with the criminalised political parties and social movements (López Blanch, 2004; Mandela, 1991; Gleijeses, 2006, Saney, 2006; Dosman, 2008; Magubane, 2006).

As previously mentioned, Cuba's role in shaping international affairs during the Cold War does not represent a typical case of Third World foreign policy; rather, particular historical events shaped Cuban state/society

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<sup>4</sup> Although the PRSA Millennium Project lamented the lack of research on the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale, on the history of Cuba's role in assisting Angola, Namibia and South Africa, there are currently a number of scholars who have embarked on the challenge of uncovering that history and consulting declassified SANDF documents as well as other important sources from the various sides. See Dosman (2008), Gleijeses (2002, 2009), Saney (2008, 2009); George, 2005 and Kasrils (2008); Baines and Vale (2008); Campbell (1989, 2001; 2008).

relations and formed the background of a particular foreign/domestic relationship of forces and the policies of a distinct form of state within the Global South. It has been asserted that few other Third World states were able to project their influence or shape historical developments beyond their own regions, and yet Cuba was a noteworthy exception to this (Brown, 2009; Persaud, 2001; Gleijeses, 2006:3)<sup>5</sup>. However, a number of other states of the Third World and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) also prioritised the struggle to end apartheid in South Africa in their political interventions at international fora as well as attempted to aid the liberation struggle directly. India, for example, was the first state to implement sanctions against the apartheid state (Westad, 2006; SADET, 2008; Interview with Pahad, 2009; Mxolisi Ndlovu, 2006).

It is important to note that cases of states in the Third World centralising assistance to liberation movements as a cornerstone of their foreign policy deserve further academic study, but it is beyond the scope of this thesis to be able to engage with the multifaceted history of South Africa's road to democracy beyond Cuban-South African relations. Cuba's increasing presence on the international stage was an important example for states and peoples in the Global South, and had an important impact on political developments around the world (Westad, 2006; Houston and Magubane, 2006; Vizikhungo Mzamane *et al.*, 2006; Ellis and Sechaba, 1992)<sup>6</sup>. Cuba, moreover, continues to assert itself internationally, promoting multilateralism and the revival of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM); it has played a central role in advocating for peace negotiations in the civil conflicts in Colombia and Guatemala, and has consistently supported UN Security Council reform (Saney, 2008; Interview with Pahad, 2009; Saney, 2009). According to Grovogui (2003:32), Cuba has carried out many of the common positions developed in multilateral institutions geared towards the post-colonial condition in the Third World: "(1) to support politics adopted by the global south countries in their quest to eradicate colonialism in global affairs; and (2) to establish a new regime of foreign policy, based upon a historical understanding of global subjectivity, a new configuration of subjectivity of the human interest, and new modulations of power."

From the 1960s to the mid-1990s, Cuba sent more soldiers beyond its region than the Soviet Union, and was second only to the U.S. in this regard (Gleijeses, 2006:3). At the height of the liberation wars in Africa, Cuba sent over 300,000 soldiers and more than 50,000 civilians and professional assistance to aid the anti-colonial struggles

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<sup>5</sup> Another state that attempted similar policies was Jamaica from 1962 to 1980, ending after the Manley administration lost the elections of 1980 (Persaud, 2001). Significantly, central to Manley's attempt to assert Jamaica within the world system and to play an important role in the search for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) was largely based on allying themselves to Cuba. Manley's government also aimed to aid the African liberation struggles and play a more significant role in decision-making within multilateral institutions – but this ended in 1980 with Manley being voted out of office and foreign policy returning to its pre-Manley status.

<sup>6</sup> Grenada and Nicaragua also sought support from Cuba, and attempted to affirm themselves on the world stage. This ended with the overthrow of the New Jewel Movement of Maurice Bishop in Grenada in 1983 and the Sandinista government in Nicaragua losing the elections in 1987.

(Ankomah, 2008:b:10). 36,000 Cuban soldiers were in Angola from 1976 to 1986, numbering 52,000 by 1988; 16,000 Cuban soldiers were in Ethiopia in the latter part of 1977; there were also important military missions in Congo Brazzaville, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Mozambique and Benin (Gleijeses, 2003).

Cuban military programs went along with programs of technical and medical assistance, with volunteers in the field of healthcare, education and construction in Angola, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Ethiopia, São Tomé and Príncipe, Tanzania, Congo Brazzaville, Benin, Burkina Faso and Algeria (Gleijeses, 2006:3). Between 1975 and 1988 there were in total over 70,000 aid workers and skilled professionals such as physicians, nurses, agricultural specialists and other professionals providing their services in Africa (Gleijeses, 2006:44). Moreover, over 40,000 Africans have studied in Cuba, all expenses paid by the government of Cuba (Cooper *et al.*, 2006; Feinsilver, 1993). By these estimates, it is evident that Cuba has played a significant role in recent formative African history – the extent of which is still to be studied. In terms of Cubans who fought and died in African liberation struggles, around 2,077 Cubans died fighting in southern African liberation struggles, although the figure is contested (Saney, 2006; Freedom Park, 2008a). Over 350,000 Cuban soldiers, civilians, and doctors actively and voluntarily<sup>7</sup> supported African liberation on the continent from the 1970s to the 1980s (Ankomah, 2008b:10).

Cuba's aid to Africa has continued since the end of the Cold War in forms of development assistance and numerous scholarships offered to African students to study in Cuba. As Cuba confronted a new international order after the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s - with the concomitant implications for Cuba's social and economic development<sup>8</sup> - the overall aims and policy towards states and peoples in the global South remained largely the same and programs of assistance continued despite economic

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<sup>7</sup> The term volunteer is often used when referring to Cubans who participated in combat, training, technical assistance and medical care in Africa, although it can be problematic. A more appropriate term might be *participant*. A volunteer in this case is meant an individual who knowingly consents to participate in an activity or offer his or her labor which does not have as a goal direct personal economic gain. As far as the scholarship and interviews available are concerned, Cubans who participated in any of the various assistance programs were all volunteering - as in agreeing to take on the task asked of them without expectations of remuneration besides basic subsistence. Gleijeses (2003) interviews a number of Cuban participants, from the first doctors sent to Algeria in 1961 to participants in Guinea-Bissau and Angola, who describe a process where the leadership in Cuba made calls for volunteers, and once a group of volunteers was assembled they were repeatedly asked if they wanted to retract their agreements to be sent on a mission before departing. According to Gleijeses (2003) they were informed of the possible negative consequences several times before being sent. López Blanch (2004:1186) writes Cuban combatants served voluntarily in Angola. In terms of the *Operation XXXI Anniversary*, Dosman (2008:223-228) writes that all Cuban soldiers participating were given the option of withdrawal. In this thesis, I recognize that the term volunteer can be problematic, particularly if we consider the role of ideology in the formation of foreign policy.

<sup>8</sup> The Soviet Union and COMECON countries had been the main trading allies of Cuba since the mid-1960s, and Cuba received favorable prices for its goods compared to world market prices for goods such as sugar and nickel (Erisman, 2001). With the fall of the Soviet Union and East Germany, Cuba lost around 80% of its trading relations overnight, becoming the most severe economic crisis in its history as an independent state (Erisman, 2001; Saney, 2004; Alzugaray, 2004a; Erisman and Kirk, 1991; Feinsilver, 1995).

difficulties (Erisman and Kirk, 1991)<sup>9</sup>. Since the end of Soviet aid to Cuba and of the denominated “special period”<sup>10</sup> - a programme has been set up sending physicians, nurses, dentists and other professionals to more than 52 countries in the developing world. This policy is viewed domestically in Cuba as a continuation of the internationalism that began in the early 1960s (Cooper *et al.*, 2006; Saney, 2009; Feinsilver, 1993). In 1999 the Latin American School of Medicine was created, which currently is providing free medical education to over 6,000 students from around the developing world (Cooper *et al.*, 2006:821).

At present there are more than 3,000 Cuban doctors providing services in Africa, without cost to the patients (Ankomah, 2008a). In more than 30 developing countries, the total number of Cuban doctors giving their medical services free in underprivileged areas is close to 30,000 (Montaner and Ramonet, 2007:63). This is the equivalent of the United States sending 900,000 doctors to work for free in the developing world (Montaner and Ramonet, 2007:63). In response to the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster in the Ukraine, Cuba has been treating and continues to treat over 24,000 child victims free of charge in Cuba (Cooper *et al.*, 2006). These are only a few of the examples of Cuba’s heterodox foreign policy and relationship to states and social forces in the Third World. This will be further explored in chapter five by directly looking at South Africa and the relations between Cuba and South Africa both during the liberation struggle and post-1994.

## **RESEARCH AIM**

The extent of Cuba’s role in Angola, in assisting SWAPO and MK in the most significant training camps in Novo Katengue has been downplayed, overlooked, and often misrepresented (Dosman, 2008; Saney, 2006; Kasrils, 2008). Most commonly Cuba’s role is relegated to that of an insignificant actor, and the defeat in 1988 of the South African Defence Forces (SADF) in Angola by Cuban, Namibian, Angolan and South African liberation troops as having little impact on the dynamics shaping the decision-making of the apartheid regime or the dynamics in the region (see Alden, 1996; Breytenbach, 1997; Bauer and Taylor, 2005; Sparks, 1990; George, 2005; Mills, 1994; Saney, 2006). Relations between Cuba and South African liberation forces are almost entirely overlooked in the literature, with the exception of the SADET initiative and the contribution of Hedelberto López Blanch (2008). Although this history remains largely un-documented, at first glance it challenges mainstream notions of how small and seemingly insignificant Third World states interact in the world system and can impact historical developments.

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<sup>9</sup> Indeed, many would argue that the current developments and advances in social welfare in Venezuela and Bolivia could not have happened without Cuba’s massive programs of assistance (Saney, 2009, Cooper *et al.*, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> This is a term which refers to the end of Soviet aid to Cuba and the harsh economic conditions which the country faced from the early 1990s until around 1998, as Cuba’s main trading partner disappeared and Cubans faced a lack of access to basic goods that earlier had been imported, from oil to many other basic energy and nutritional necessities (Erisman, 2000). This will be elaborated on in Chapter 4.

The gap in literature and lack of research on Cuba's role in South Africa's road to democracy and recent history of the southern African region, and a lack of attention to Cuban foreign policy in IR, provides the principle rationale for engaging in this topic. Hence, the aim of the thesis is to carry out a historical analysis of Cuban foreign policy towards South Africa between 1959 and 1994 in order to add to a richer historicity of the dialectic of Cuba's foreign policy towards South Africa's liberation movements, and consequently to add subaltern voices to a postcolonial foreign policy analysis. It is hence both an engagement with historical retrieval and a construction of a richer historicity, at the same time challenging theoretical weaknesses that the lack of attention to Third World foreign policy within mainstream IR demonstrates (Braveboy-Wagner, 2003; Grovogui, 2003; Persaud, 2001; Laffey and Weldes, 2008; Korany, 1986).

The hypothesis of this thesis is that Cuba's role in South Africa's liberation struggle and relations with the liberation movements was extensive, and that the role that Cuba played is not as marginal as much of the literature assumes. An essential goal of this thesis is not simply to add another level of analysis for looking at South Africa's liberation struggle, but to shed light on the multiple, overlapping relationships between states, individuals, social movements and structures in the world system (Lavelle, 2003).

## ***POSTCOLONIALISM AND THEORISING FOREIGN POLICY***

I argue that much International Relations (IR) theory which deals with Cuba is problem-solving<sup>11</sup> in its approach and serves to perpetuate the status quo of the current state of affairs and unequal power relations (for a useful review of the literature see Smith, 1988; Erisman, 1990, and Saney, 2009). That is, much mainstream IR theory insufficiently delves into the historical origins of the Cuban state or motivations for Cuba's foreign policy during the Cold War and today – and rather tries to find single, unitary, simplistic, rational actor explanatory frameworks to analyse the motivations of Cuban foreign policy since 1959. Much of the social sciences have systematically chosen not to look at the extent of Cuba's policy in Africa during the liberation struggles, and often repeat simplistic U.S. centred explanations of Cuba as being insignificant to international politics, as a totalitarian state run by a single self-aggrandising protagonist, or acting as a proxy of the Soviet Union (Smith, 1988; Gleijeses, 2002; Laffey and Weldes, 2008; Erisman, 1990, 2002). Because of these overarching assumptions,

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<sup>11</sup> In challenging the ontological foundations of much mainstream IR theory, it is useful to recall how Cox (1981, 1983, 1987) divides IR theory into two categories that have very different ontological foundations. He posits that IR theory can be divided into problem-solving theory and critical theory. Firstly, problem-solving theory takes the nature of the world system, states and structures as they are, essentially as given. The purpose of problem-solving theory is thus not to question how things came about, or to truly understand the state of the international system, but rather aims at problem-solving, and is largely positivist. Problem-solving theory thus groups together realism, neo-realism, liberalism, and neo-liberalism. Critical theory, on the other hand, does not take the state or the international system for granted, but rather historicizes states and the structures in which they exist and how they came to be. It asks the question of how the prevailing order and structures came about. It is thus an approach of historical structures and historical materialism that Cox calls for, and which the thesis applies in a postcolonial framework.

much of IR has not looked into the history of Cuban-South African relations from 1959 until 1994, and has not attempted to theorise about foreign policy using Cuba as a unit of analysis. Furthermore, implementing a postcolonial framework allows one to look at overlapping levels of analysis, from the individual subjective level, state level of analysis, civil society, to the level of ideology, production and world orders. A postcolonial ontology commences with the starting point that when looking at the Third World, or Third World foreign policy, individual states cannot be isolated from the regional and global context, nor from the structures in the world order. It is important to note that this is not an exhaustive overview of postcolonial theory, as space limitations has not allowed a more thorough investigation into theoretical production. Although engaging postcolonial theoretical critiques within IR, it is an important limitation of this thesis that more thesis has been dealt with. Most important, postcolonial methodologies point out that structures and world order levels of analysis that take imperialism and neo-colonialism into account are a necessary part of theorising Third World foreign policy (Grovoqui, 2003; Laffey and Weldes, 2008).

One of the foremost examples of a problem-solving attempt to explain foreign policy by looking at the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, analyses only the U.S. and the Soviet Union and their respective decision-making processes, treating Cuba as marginal (see Allison, 1989 and Allison and Zelikow, 1999). This is not only a significant oversight, but reflects the ontology of a singular, bipolar world in which the reigning configuration of power is not questioned nor historicised. This is a largely problem-solving ontology that can only seek to explain a very limited problematic, not questioning how things came about or the historical origins of particular norms or decision-making processes. Problem-solving approaches are weak when trying to explain such heterodox cases as Cuban decision-making in international affairs, and fail to explain the autonomy of Cuban foreign policy and the emphasis on principles over pragmatic questions defined by narrow neo-liberal conceptualisations of national interest (Grovoqui, 2003).

By marginalising actors within the Third World and de-historicising contemporary power structures, normative frameworks or world orders, most mainstream IR theory is bereft in attempting to examine Cuba's foreign policy today or in the past. Also, by overlooking the role of ideology in foreign policy and the role of domestic social forces, conceptualisations of foreign policy are not capable of explaining such attempts to centralise a developmental, postcolonial and anti-hegemonic foreign policy (Grovoqui, 2003). This research attempts to enrich the explanations and analyses of Cuban foreign policy towards South Africa by way of a postcolonial methodology of historical materialism, which not only looks at structures, institutions, global production and international norms; but also at the agency of marginalised states and social forces which shape history and are integral parts of state/society complexes and the construction of foreign policies. I place the locus of agency squarely on the Global South using a postcolonial ontology.

For postcolonial theorists such as Frantz Fanon (1963, 1967) and Edward Said (1978), imperialism is the context of the Third World in the current world order, which renders a subaltern ontological standpoint different from a Eurocentric one (Young, 2001; Grovogui, 2001; Laffey and Weldes). For this thesis, the ontological challenge of the postcolonial critique, situating the narrow object of analysis in a historical materialist analysis of the world order, serves as the main point framework for analysing the lack of attention within IR to the lived reality, needs, hybridity and the perception of international affairs and foreign policy of the Third World and the subaltern (Grovogui, 2003; Fanon, 1963).

Situating the Cuban revolutionary process that began in 1959 within a long historical frame of reference, one can view the shift in 1959 as a systemic revolt against its relegation to the dependent peripheries of a hierarchical world order that left Cuba at the behest of Washington's needs and without any formal autonomy. The work of postcolonial theoretical critics is central in terms of the aim of a Marxian theoretical critique that views nominal independence as only one step along the path to an authentic uprooting of the oppressive capitalist system that provided the economic, social, material, institutional and ideational framework for colonialism and colonial practices in international affairs (Young, 2001; Grovogui, 2003; Fanon, 1963). The shift in social forces related to production, and the form of state, as well as state/society relations thus entail a shift in foreign policy aims as well as processes.

In this vein, Fanon (1967:61) writes about the events in Cuba from 1953 to 1959 and how they had a direct effect on a shift in foreign policy towards an autonomous and activist foreign policy defined by solidarity with national liberation movements and anti-imperialism:

*Diplomacy, as inaugurated by the newly independent peoples, is no longer an affair of nuances, of implications, and of hypnotic passes. For the nation's spokesmen are responsible at one and the same time for safeguarding the unity of the nation, the progress of the masses towards a state of well-being and the right of all peoples to bread and liberty. Thus it is a diplomacy which never stops moving, a diplomacy which leaps ahead, in a strange contrast to the motionless, petrified world of colonization.*

After formal independence in 1898, a series of successive neo-colonial regimes that were subservient to the needs and interests of Washington had been put in power, by and with the complicity of the Washington. The Platt Amendment of 1901 is indicative of this neo-colonial order; it gave the U.S. government the right to intervene in domestic and foreign affairs of Cuba as it saw fit<sup>12</sup>. The Cuban Revolution of 1953-1959 initiated a process that is

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<sup>12</sup> The Platt Amendment has been widely cited by scholars for being indicative of neo-colonialism, as it was a pre-condition of U.S. troop withdrawal from Cuba that Cuba put it as an amendment to its constitution. It stipulated that Cuba could only sell land to the U.S.; the set up of a U.S. naval base at Guantanamo, a limited right to negotiate treaties, among other restrictions on its sovereignty, autonomy and self-determination (Williams, 1970). The current blockade against Cuba

still ongoing: to transform the economic, social and political basis of the capitalist system of production, institution and ideational structures in order to begin on the road towards authentic independence (i.e., autonomy) and self-determined, autochthonous development. The diplomacy of this newly independent state is in this context not a trivial affair, but is a practice that is integral to preserving autonomy and is vital to challenging the global hierarchical order and to prioritizing Cuba's domestic social development on its own terms.

For the subaltern, autonomy, sovereignty, and unequal hierarchy are central concepts in the lived realities of imperialism. Thus a radical break from colonialism and its modern structural continuity within international relations necessitates a foreign policy that privileges these concepts. The foreign policy of an independent subaltern Third World state is thus also an attempt to amend the hierarchical world order and global institutions which privilege the sovereignty and interests of the North to the detriment of the Global South (Grovoqui, 2003). An autonomous and activist foreign policy attempts to assert the equal footing of Third World states in the international system, with equality in international system as a precondition for an authentic democratisation of the world order. Analysing the foreign policy of a subaltern state such as Cuba leads one to question assumptions and conventional wisdom on what constitutes foreign policy and the role that history, global structures of power, relations of production and ideology can play in the shaping of foreign policy.

Drawing on the postcolonial critique the starting point of this thesis is that the decolonisation and liberation from direct colonial rule and apartheid were not epiphenomenal to world history, but were central events to shaping the current world order and the scope of foreign policy of states in the Third World, and how states and liberation movements related to one another<sup>13</sup>. It is in this context that this analysis of Cuban foreign policy is situated. The Cuban Revolution of 1959 must hence be placed in its correct historical context in order to understand the foreign policy that the Cuban state leadership has adopted since 1959, and the privileging of South Africa's struggle to end white minority racist rule as central to developing a proletarian internationalist foreign policy. Ideology, which has long been neglected within IR, is necessary to analyse in the case of Cuban foreign policy and is dealt with in chapter three.

To summarise, revisiting the silences in history and engaging in a dialectical study of actors and events that shape historical development is a necessary part of theorising within IR – it is also indispensable to challenge the

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(which began in 1961) is another example of how the U.S. government uses political and economic power in order to strangle states which do not follow its dictates, in a neo-colonial manner and in violation of international norms.

<sup>13</sup> Postcolonial critiques centralise a particular spatial and temporal occurrence as a pivotal moment in world history that will define the future order: the anti-colonial revolutions and revolts in the Third World and the myriad effects of this on the world order, identity and the character of future systemic revolts. Much IR theory mentions the process of decolonisation as simple occurrences, as a sideline to major developments in the high politics of security and relations between the major powers (Mgonja and Makombe, 2008; Grovoqui, 2003). Rather, this context of the growth in numbers of states forming part of the world system, as well as attention to the role of and growth of National Liberation Movements (NLMs) forms the background in which Cuban foreign policy was operationalised.

Eurocentric<sup>14</sup> bias of social science theory and the fact that most IR theory is written from the point of view of preserving the position of power of the North and overlooking examples that lie outside the purview of the epistemological framework of much of IR. IR thus in many ways reifies power and is self-reflexive, in that it privileges the experiences of the North for purposes of theory-building in international politics, silencing those states and experiences that defy IR's own assumptions of the nature of the world system, the nature of states and assumptions of human nature that underlie much of IR (Tickner, 2003a; Mgonja and Makombe, 2008).

## **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

In approaching the topic of Cuba's foreign policy towards southern Africa and South Africa<sup>15</sup> during the Cold War, my research questions include four main questions. On a theoretical level of analysis there are two questions that my research will attempt to answer. The unit of analysis is Cuba's foreign policy at the level of state and civil society. The research is empirical and critical, moreover, implementing an inductive approach that aims to identify empirical evidence before proceeding with a wider theoretical analysis within the framework of political economy.

The main research questions are as follows:

- What were the Cuban state's foreign relations with the South Africa from 1959 to the end of Apartheid in 1994? Or in other words, what was the nature of Cuba's relationship with South African anti-apartheid movements (both armed and non-armed liberation forces) between 1959 and 1994?<sup>16</sup>
- What were the motives of the Cuban leadership and individual Cubans in carrying out their particular foreign policy in Africa?
- Why was the ANC/SACP/COSATU alliance chosen as the main actors with which to form relations, rather than the PAC or other actors/movements?

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<sup>14</sup> The term "Eurocentric" in this thesis draws on a postcolonial conceptualisation of the term. Postcolonial writers may use Eurocentric, ethnocentric or others terms to denote the idea that a Western European and North American (i.e. former and current Core states, which have a historical legacy of colonialism and imperialism) ontological and epistemological biases underlie much of social science theory. This includes everything from privileging sources and academics from the North, to privileging the "common sense" and experiences of the North in a teleological manner. It also includes a Manichean "Us-Them" Euro-American ontology which Said (1978) and Fanon (1963) write about as having its origins in the colonial experience.

<sup>15</sup> In this thesis, Cuban-South African relations is the main focus, but this must be seen in conjunction with Cuba's foreign policy in southern Africa in general since much of South Africa's resistance was located in countries around southern Africa. Additionally, much of the military training and fighting took place in southern Africa. For this reason, looking at Cuban-South African relations necessarily implies looking at Cuba's relations with the rest of the region.

<sup>16</sup> It is central to point out that Cuba did not have formal relations with the apartheid state in 1959, and only had relations with the national liberation movements.

- What domestic role does Cuban foreign policy play in the Cuban state/society complex and how does the domestic interact and overlap with the external?
- What has Cuba's foreign policy towards South Africa been since 1994?<sup>17</sup>

On a theoretical level, these are the guiding questions:

- What is the role of ideology in foreign policy?
- Are neorealist assumptions of security and self-defence as foundational to Cuban foreign policy accurate to explain Cuba's policy towards South Africa during the liberation struggle?
- What IR theory or methodological tools of analysis are more adequate for analysing Cuba's foreign policy in southern Africa during the Cold War?

## ***Data Collection Methods***

The research carried out in this thesis is qualitative in character and combines different methods, known as bricolage (Neuman, 2000:176). Specifically, most historical analysis is qualitative, and since this thesis consults a large number of historical documents, studies, interviews and raw data, it is most appropriately qualitative. Additionally, some measure of informal content analysis is necessary when analyzing speeches, official documents and old interviews. According to Babbie and Mouton (2005:402), "there is no end to the data available for analysis in historical research".

This design of the research that this thesis is based on is historical and exploratory and engages in both second and third-order interpretation in order to outline Cuban foreign policy towards South Africa (second-order) and analysing this within IR theory (third-order) (Neuman, 2000:160). The research is both historical and exploratory since it seeks to look at a specific case study in history and unit of analysis: Cuba's foreign policy towards South Africa from 1959 to 1994. The unit of analysis then is Cuba's foreign policy, both at the state and sub-state level.

The type of research involved is exploring the Cuban state's policy towards South African political, military and social entities during a particular period and is thus historical in nature. The thesis is also largely descriptive as well as involves an explanatory methodology. The explanatory part involves testing the hypothesis as well as engaging in wider theoretical questions which aim to aid in explaining Cuban foreign policy during the period under study, as well as today. Many of the official state documents both in Cuba and South Africa have not been

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<sup>17</sup> This is significant, because if ideology and internationalism are a central, defining element Cuban foreign policy, then one would assume a measure of continuity of Cuba's foreign policy.

declassified yet, and this area remains both under-investigated and marginalised. In order to be able to engage in theoretical analysis of Cuba's foreign policy, much empirical work still needs to be done.

## ***The Case of Cuban-South African Relations***

The data-gathering methods are largely based on secondary sources such as pre-existing scholarship, historical records and official documents but also incorporate primary sources, or raw data, via interviews and official state documents and speeches of political leaders. In terms of analysing this data, the researcher finds patterns among these voluminous details, which involves what Weber describes as ideal types, or "conceptual models composed of the essential characteristics of social phenomena" (Babbie and Mouton, 2005:403).

Thus, in order to gather data for this research project I primarily look at the existing scholarship and historical accounts of Cuba's foreign policy towards Africa between 1959 and 1994, carrying out secondary analysis that is mostly unobtrusive. Additionally, recent scholarship that benefits from recently declassified information and official documents is utilised.

Finally, semi-structured interviews (constituting primary sources) were carried out with former resistance leaders from the ANC, SACP and SACTU and former combatants and leaders of MK (or veterans of the liberation movements more broadly). Some of these are former South African combatants who fought and trained with Cubans in Angola and individuals who represent authoritative voices on the history of the South Africa's liberation struggle and relations with Cuba<sup>18</sup>. Since these interviews involve largely elites or important persons historically in South Africa, the sampling technique for interviewees has largely been snowball sampling, since gaining access to individuals depends on being personally referred and generally trusted.

Semi-structured interviews have been used because they allow the interview more flexibility as well as facilitate the interviewer's ability to formulate better questions as well as compare with the results of different interviewees (Neuman, 2000). Semi-structured interviews are most appropriate given the previously classified nature of the subject matter and the likelihood that interviewees will not want to immediately answer direct and structured questioning, but would rather reveal more information in a semi-structured nature that involves engagement by the interviewer. The analysis of the interviews is qualitative, and organises data into different categories relating to Cuba's relationship with the liberation movements, along with the individual knowledge of and impact this might have had. I compare the different interviews with each other as well as with other

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<sup>18</sup> In this thesis I do not interview former SADF generals or soldiers from the South African side, as I am merely trying to reconstruct a general framework and outline of Cuban relations with South African liberation movements between 1959 and 1994. In the future, a thorough reconstruction of events as they unfolded, adding the Cuban voices as well as voices from the SADF and former apartheid regime politicians would be necessary to reconstruct a more complex and complete picture including the views of all participants. However, that is beyond the scope of the current thesis.

documents and accounts. Anonymity has been provided to the interviewees. A list of the interviewees' names and/or positions (protecting individual identities where necessary) is provided in the appendix. Full transcriptions of the interviews can be provided if requested.

## ***LIMITS OF THE STUDY***

The South African government has not declassified all of the official documents from “Operasie Savannah” - as the South African operation in Angola from the 1970s to 1980s was named in South Africa (Gleijeses, 2006:6)<sup>19</sup>. It would be significant to gain an understanding of the SADF view of Cuba’s role in aiding MK and southern African liberation forces. This is therefore a shortcoming of this thesis, as I was not able to consult any de-classified records from the side of the SADF at the time, which may reveal interesting information on their view of the Cuban role. In the future, it would be necessary to research official state and military documents in South Africa, although these are often biased and cannot be relied on to be fully representative of historical events (Babbie and Mouton, 2005:402-403; Saunders, 2008). The thesis furthermore consults secondary sources from accounts and documents available in South Africa from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) documents and public documents from the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) before being incorporated into the South African National Defence Forces (SANDF) during the transition period beginning in the early 1990s.

It is also a significant weakness of this work that no leaders of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) or the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) have been interviewed. Due to limited time and resources, this has not been carried out, and would have added important insight to further analyzing Cuba’s role towards the anti-apartheid struggle more broadly than the Congress alliance. Additionally, in order to more fully and accurately analyse Cuban foreign policy it would be necessary to conduct research from Cuban archives. In this thesis I am limited to consulting secondary research on work already being done utilising Cuban archival material - such as the work of the scholar Isaac Saney (2006, 2009), Dosman (2008), Piero Gleijeses (2002, 2006, 2009) and Hedelberto López Blanch (2008). Thus, a major shortcoming of this work is the inability to gain primary materials from the Cuban side. Any kind of delving into the inter-subjective ideas experienced by Cubans living in Cuba who participated in internationalist missions to aid South Africa, would also be central to a more multi-faceted analysis of social forces in Cuba and individual Cuban participants.

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<sup>19</sup> Piero Gleijeses (2009), however, relies on a number of South African National Defense Forces (SANDF) declassified documents to recount the events around the Cassinga massacre of 1978 by the former SADF on a refugee camp near the border between Angola and Namibia, used mainly by SWAPO family members and some few SWAPO insurgents who were protecting the camp. Gleijeses will publish an academic work in 2010 on the events in Angola from 1975 to 1988, relying largely on these declassified SANDF documents, memos and letters.

## ***Practical and Ethical Constraints***

There are a number of ethical considerations that are involved in this kind of research project. The nature of the subject matter itself is quite touchy, and involves opening the books on a period of history that in South Africa is quite complex (Saunders, 2008). There are ethical and practical reasons for the present South African government not yet declassifying all the official documents related to this period and the former apartheid regime's involvement in Angola and in fighting South Africa's armed liberation movements outside the borders of South Africa. It is estimated that South Africa's destabilization campaign cost the region over US\$30 billion (Brittain, 1988b; Saney, 2006; Mandela, 1993). According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, the majority of deaths due to the struggle against apartheid and meted out by the apartheid forces occurred outside of South Africa (TRC, 1999; Brittain, 1988a, 1988b; Saney, 2006:84; Saunders, 2008). Given the short period since the first democratic election in 1994, there are a number of ethical and practical issues facing the current South African government that make it difficult to access information and deal ethically with the information provided, particularly when dealing with MK history matters which directly relate to questions of MK rehabilitation, reconciliation and reparations (Ellis and Sechaba, 1992). These considerations are taken into account when carrying out this research.

Finally, in terms of semi-structured interviews with veterans of the liberation struggle, these also involve ethical ramifications. Interviewees may not want to shed light on this side of history due to fear of what it might mean for their current positions, or how they may be viewed in South Africa in light of the information provided. Protecting the confidentiality of the interviewees has been crucial to carrying out the interviews, and care has been taken to protect the personal information of individuals involved or implicated in the information provided by interviews. The purpose of the TRCs was to bring to light information on the liberation movements in order to expedite a reconciliation process and open the books on that history. However, a large number of issues such as this one remain largely under-studied. Saunders (2008) highlights the lack of historical study on the documents provided by the TRC process, and a general unwillingness to deal with this recent history.

One of the constraints of the research and carrying out interviews is the fact that the South African government during the period under study had a deliberate policy of not informing the public on the events of, or developments in the "border war", as the military activities, occupation of Namibia, military intervention in Angola and military activities in both countries from 1975 until 1988 is known in South Africa. George (2003) writes that the SADF suppressed uncensored memoirs, diaries and photos from the war. They also failed to compile accurate records. Moreover, the declassification scheme is still in process. Gleijeses (2003) and Saney (2006) note that this as a significant constraint when carrying out research today. Gleijeses (2003:275) writes that in 1978 the SADF commissioned Professor F.J. du Toit Spies as the "official historian" of the 1975-1976 Angolan

war. This deliberate policy not to declassify or keep the public informed has had a direct effect on scholarly literature available on this period of South African history, which has only begun to be challenged since 1994. However, in the event that access to SANDF military records is possible, all effort is made to point to the historical value of the research, rather than any political agenda. My role as an outsider with no ties to any side of the conflict has been useful in gaining the necessary security clearance.

Lastly, I have not deceived the interviewees on the purposes of the research. Informed consent, confidentiality and protecting individual subject's privacy is absolutely essential in this kind of research that deals with macro-level analysis of the history of South African liberation movements. Additionally, it would be naïve to assume that thoroughly documented history constitutes "historical facts", and account must be taken of different empirical frameworks for analysing the role of history. Since theory builds on these "facts", one must take serious cautionary measures when presenting data gathered and analysed.

## ***STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY***

The thesis consists of six chapters, which I will outline in the following section. Chapter one is an introduction to the topic, summarising many of the details of the project which are elaborated on in later chapters. A general background to the study, rationale, research questions, research aim, research design and methodology are provided in this chapter. Broader implications of the study within IR theory and the conceptualisation of central terms of the study are outlined. Finally, I provide an overview of postcolonial theory and the method of historical materialism, as the most relevant theoretical tools for this thesis – which will be implemented in the remaining chapters.

Chapter two is a review of foreign policy within the field of International Relations (IR) and foreign policy studies as it applies to the Third World. This does not attempt an exhaustive overview of IR theory, which is beyond the scope of this thesis, but is a general overview of some of the more prevalent and commonly used theories and authors within IR. By reviewing the literature, I illustrate the lack of attention to politics – both domestic and internal – from the epistemological and ontological position of the subaltern actor, or the Global South. I review the origins of the field of IR as well as the study of foreign policy, highlighting the lack of analysis of foreign policy of states in the Third World. Following this, there is a brief review of scholarship around Cuban foreign policy as a point of departure for the remainder of the thesis that aims to add to the historicity of Cuban foreign relations with South Africa.

Chapter three looks at Cuba's position in the current world order, the Cuban state and Cuban foreign policy since the advent of the Revolution of 1959 using a postcolonial method. This chapter provides a brief look at the

Cuban state/society complex<sup>20</sup> in the context of an unequal and hierarchical global political economy. The overthrow of the Batista regime in January 1959 and the subsequent social revolution that was set in motion lays the groundwork for a major shift in foreign policy. A historical method in this sense is significant for looking at Cuban foreign policy towards South Africa from 1959 until the end of apartheid in South Africa in 1994 and post-1994.

Chapter four provides a review of literature on Cuba's foreign policy in Africa, from initial relations with Algeria, to Guinea-Bissau, Ethiopia and other states and social movements in the region. It also details the beginning of what eventually become more extensive relations with liberation movements in the southern African region.

Chapter five outlines Cuban-South African relations from 1959 until 1994. First of all this chapter gives an overview of existing scholarship on Cuba's foreign policy in southern Africa and particularly Angola, which is inseparable from studying Cuba's relations with South African anti-Apartheid forces. The struggle to end white minority rule in South Africa was inextricably linked to the independence struggle in Namibia and the civil war in Angola, and therefore the literature reviewed in this chapter is central to understanding Cuba's relations with the ANC and various liberation forces. In essence, to correctly historicise South Africa's complex road to liberation from white minority rule and formal apartheid, one has to begin with the independence struggle of Angola.

On the area of Cuban-South African relations from 1959-1994, the major findings of my research including summaries and content analysis of the interviews is also expounded in this chapter. This chapter also looks at existing scholarship and empirical research in the area of Cuban-South African relations. I look at the content and guiding principles of Cuba's policy towards South Africa. Cuba's engagement with various actors central to the anti-apartheid struggle as well as its international engagement with the anti-apartheid movement, through the voices of participants in that struggle and central leaders, is presented in this chapter. The final sections of this chapter present and analyse the issue of Cuban relations with South Africa after 1994, and continuity with past relations.

Finally, chapter six provides a summary and conclusion. I present the results of my research in a context of pinpointing the problems within IR theory from a postcolonial theoretical critique. This final chapter also provides a summary of the findings of previous chapters. Ideas for future research are assessed. Finally, some of the constraints and limitations of my thesis are outlined.

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<sup>20</sup> This term refers to that used by Cox (1983, 1987) and Persaud (2001) to indicate the conceptualisation of domestic social forces when looking at the state, foreign policy and world orders.

# Chapter Two. Relocating IR from the Perspective of the South: Analysing Third World Foreign Policy.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter reviews the field of International Relations (IR) theory and the area of Third World foreign policy<sup>21</sup> in an attempt to theorise about the foreign policy behaviour, objectives and decision-making of states in the Third World<sup>22</sup>. I will first give a brief overview the field of IR and of the field of foreign policy as a more specified area within IR which addresses states' decision-making and behaviour. The chapter will also look at some of the main problems within the theoretical approaches – particularly the lack of attention to foreign policies of the Global South and a lack of theoretical vocabulary to conceptualise heterodox cases of Third World foreign policy. In addition, this chapter provides an overview of the literature that relates to Cuban foreign policy. In this chapter the lacuna in scholarly literature of adequate treatment of actors in the South is a main starting point. This will serve as a prelude to the historicising of the Cuban state and civil society, as well as its foreign policy within the opportunities and constraints of a hierarchical world order that is the topic of chapter three.

In this chapter I will briefly review some of the major schools of IR with the aim of showing how the experiences of the Global South are largely absent from mainstream theory, as well as how Third World individuals states, regions or as a whole are largely absent from theorising about interstate relations, state behaviour and decision-making within the overarching field of IR. However, because of word limitations it is not an exhaustive overview of the field of IR, and important contributions to the field of IR theory are overlooked due to space limitations. However, for more exhaustive overviews of the field of IR consult Braveboy-Wagner (2003), Gruffydd Jones (2005), Persaud (2001), Neuman (1998) and Tickner (2003a, 2003b).

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<sup>21</sup> The area of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) has been called a sub-field of IR, but many also argue it forms a separate field, or is more closely linked to the field of political science (Hudson and Vore, 1995; Braveboy-Wagner, 2003). How these disciplines or fields are divided, and the debates on their content and origins, is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is important to note that Cox (1981, 1987), Wallerstein *et. al.* (1999) and Gruffydd Jones (2006) argue for a more interdisciplinary approach, where the lines between fields are blurred. Braveboy-Wagner (2003) furthermore points out that when scholars look at foreign policy from the Global South, structural international factors must necessarily be analysed – and thus the lines between what constitutes IR and what is FPA is blurred.

<sup>22</sup> As mentioned in chapter 1, this thesis uses the “Third World” and “Global South” interchangeably. These terms recognize the diversity of states that make up this bloc of countries, as well as of peoples within those states, while at the same time grouping these states together based on their commonalities (colonial history, economic underdevelopment and marginalization in many international institutions – in relation to the “Core countries” or the “North”).

It has become commonplace to note that in the field of IR, the international affairs and policy-making of great powers (or Core states) have been privileged in the construction of theories (Braveboy-Wagner, 2003; Grovogui, 2003; Tickner, 2003a; Mgonja and Makombe, 2009; Persaud, 2001; Hudson and Vore, 1995; Laffey and Weldes, 2008; Mamdani, 1996; Korany, 1986; Clapham, 1977; Gruffydd Jones, 2006). Positing states in the Third World as units of analysis for analysing interstate behaviour, foreign policy decision-making, global and regional historical developments and political affairs has not been regarded as a central task of IR theory. Rather, scholars who look at states and societies in the Global South, and those who attempt to engage in theory building within IR are often regarded as theorists of regional studies, development theorists or third world area studies; on the other hand, their work is not regarded as part of mainstream meta-theoretical debates within the field of IR (Gruffydd Jones, 2005; Tickner, 2003a; Braveboy-Wagner, 2003; Persaud, 2001). Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, and the Pacific Islands are not part of the causal dynamics in the development of historical events, if one follows mainstream IR theory, and therefore cannot be units of analysis for constructing theories (Mgonja and Makombe, 2009; Doty, 1993; Laffey and Weldes, 2008; Braveboy-Wagner, 2003).

According to the significant Realist scholar Kenneth Waltz (1979), constructing theories of international politics based on Malaysia or Costa Rica would be ridiculous (Persaud, 2001; Neuman, 1998). Laffey and Weldes (2008) and Barkawi and Laffey (2002) argue that historical developments which effect the structure and order of international politics, are conceived within IR as following from successive struggles between Great Powers, or the major industrialized powers of the West (see Carr, 1939; Fukuyama, 1992; Keohane and Nye, 1998; Mearsheimer, 2001; Waltz, 1979). This excessive focus within IR and FPA on the actions, behaviours and struggles within the industrialised Core states, implies that states, societies, decision making and events taking place in the Third World are insignificant. That is, both relations between states in the Global South and endogenous features, social movements or uprisings within states in the South are unimportant to the overall causal dynamics of historical change.

## ***IR THEORY AND THE NEGLECT OF THE SOUTH***

A number of postcolonial theoretical critics have noted that mainstream IR theory has had a Euro-centric bias in terms of delineating a unit of analysis which serves as central example on which to draw empirical data that is then used to describe, explain and predict behaviour in international affairs of all states (Gruffydd Jones, 2005; Dunn and Shaw, 2001; Mgonja and Makombe, 2009; Braveboy-Wagner, 2003; Grovogui, 2003; Laffey and Weldes, 2008). For example, reviewing the major strands within IR theory, one observes that none of these central scholars drew on empirical events from the Third World to develop their theories of international affairs, and furthermore, that most of the scholars themselves hail from U.S. or Western European institutions. The work of classical realists such as Carr (1939) and Waltz (1979) focus on Western European states and the notion that the world is anarchical and states are the most supreme actors, acting in their own self-interest. Following from

this example, major schools of IR have constructed their theories by focusing on Core states in the West and the relations between these states, viewing the former colonial states and Third World as epiphenomenal to the causal dynamics of world politics and history (Tickner, 2003a). This reflects a type of Weberian approach to looking at states and state practices, based on very specific examples of states, namely those that make up Western Europe and the developed Core states (Grovoqui, 2003; Young, 2001; Solli, 2008).

Critical IR theorists have also argued that IR theory largely relegates states of the Global South to objects rather than subjects of history and interstate relations (see Neuman, 1998; Young, 2001; Dunne and Shaw, 2001, Tickner, 2003, Mgonja and Makombe, 2008, Persaud, 2001). Rather than looking at the particular configuration of power and the historical legacy of colonialism with its concurrent effects of today's political order, many theorists within political science and IR engage in history-by-analogy in order to more simplistically explain the nature of the state, institutions, foreign policy behaviour, identity, and conflict in the Third World (Mamdani, 1996). Mgonja and Makombe (2008:027) point out that the emergence of IR as a separate discipline and distinct field from economics, sociology, international law and other fields within the social sciences, is itself a result of colonialism - as IR emerged as part of a broader ideological justification for rendering colonial and Third World states insignificant in the world system. Dunne and Shaw (2001), Neuman (1998), and Tickner (2003a, 2003b) contend that IR insufficiently explains global politics and foreign policy as viewed from the South – from the ontological position of the South. Several authors<sup>23</sup> argue that the field of IR and political science has largely failed to address the various effects of the colonial legacy in the Third World, whether economic, institutional, social, or in terms of identity formation and forms of state. Furthermore, IR as a discipline and a body of knowledge which is made up of the theoretical and scholarly production emerging from researchers in the field originates mostly from the global North (Tickner, 2003a; Mgonja and Makombe, 2009). Mgonja and Makombe (2009:028) write that:

*Hence, knowledge produced in IR is a predominantly Eurocentric worldview which mystifies the ways in which states and international systems are anchored in political, social and economic relations. In fact, this worldview remains too parochial to accurately describe, explain and/or predict the behavior of the world in its 'inclusive' manner.*

The attempt here is not to de-legitimise the contributions of many scholars, particularly those who are critical of the ontological, methodological, and epistemological foundations of IR theory. Nor is it an attempt to argue that these approaches and the use of empirical analyses as well as sources from the West are irrelevant. It is rather recognising that even critical theory within IR fails to acknowledge the necessity of centralising the South as units of analysis central for understanding world politics and for theory-building. In any attempt to look at the foreign

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<sup>23</sup> Such as Mgonja and Makombe (2009), Gruffydd Jones (2005), Ayoob (1995), Neuman (1998) and Mamdani (1996).

policy of Third World states, or any attempt at gaining an accurate historical picture of a period such as the Cold War, it is necessary to engage with the experiences, lived realities and ontological position of the post-colonial subaltern and marginalised actors in the South, that make up the majority of states in the world system.

On the other hand, important contributions to analysing power, production and world orders from a critical theoretical perspective can be found in the work of Robert W. Cox and Immanuel Wallerstein (Braveboy-Wagner, 2003). Although they rely largely on the history of Great Powers for constructing their theories, they represent important methodological and ontological challenges to the field of IR that assist in beginning to analyse state relations, relations of power and production and foreign policy of states in the Global South. Cox (1981, 1983, 1987, and 2007) and Wallerstein (1974, 1980, 1988 and 2004) do not look at the South, nor delve into historical specificities regarding the historical evolution of the world system from the view of the South. Despite Wallerstein's (1974,1980,1988) focus on the successive struggles between the Great Powers, the Core states and the effect this had on the peripheries, his expounding of the wide significance of the Haitian Revolution of 1804 and its global and regional effects is an important contribution within IR.

By historicising the current world system and providing relevant theoretical tools of analysis, the normative assumption shared by Wallerstein, Cox and many postcolonial critics is significant. The theoretical and methodological significance of these two IR scholars is their focus on the historical origins of the current world order, their focus on changing relations of production and structures of power - which is central to correctly positing states in the South into a historicised world order. Cox and Wallerstein look at the origins of poverty, the form of state and institutions which reproduce a state of economic dependency and general misery of the lived realities in the Global South as having their origins in the expansion of the liberal capitalist world system by means of slavery, colonisation and neo-colonial relationships of domination and subjugation.

## ***FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS WITHIN IR***

This section looks at the emergence of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) as a distinct sub-field within the academic field of IR, after the Second World War<sup>24</sup>. The persistence of theoretical problems within IR to the area of foreign policy studies include: an absence of voices from the South, lack of attention to the ontological positions of the South, and a poverty of positing states and actors within the South as valid units of analysis for constructing theories of foreign policy.

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<sup>24</sup> Braveboy-Wagner (2003:7) writes of foreign policy analysis: "[IR] scholars view foreign policy as a subfield that focuses not on the international system structure and relationships but on substate influences." However, this in itself is contentious. Whether or not FPA is a sub-field, a separate area, or part and parcel of IR is an important discussion, but in this thesis it will be simplified into an area within IR and part of the field of IR, whether a sub-field or not (Braveboy-Wagner, 2003; Rosenau, 1988; Waever, 1994).

The study of inter-state relations is as old as the formation of states themselves, primarily in Western Europe in the seventeenth century (Hudson and Vore, 1995). However, the emergence of IR as a distinct field and formal discipline occurred in 1919 at the University of Wales in the United Kingdom – and since then it has remained largely a field of study that focuses on the perspectives and ontological positions of the United States and Western Europe (Mgonja and Makombe, 2009). FPA appeared as a separate field of inquiry only after the World War II. Foreign policy has a focus on states, sub-state levels of analysis and state bureaucracies, and is biased towards Core states (Braveboy-Wagner, 2003; Grovogui, 2003). Foreign policy is often conceptualised as the pursuit of state's interests in the international arena, and this realist, rational-actor perspective has taken hold of the conceptualisation of foreign policy within IR (Grovogui, 2003; Persaud, 2001:50).

When the area of foreign policy studies emerged as a distinct area of research after World War II, scholars began to question the overarching aim of IR theory to construct parsimonious theories that would be able to explain and predict state behaviour (Hudson and Vore, 1995; Braveboy-Wagner, 2003). They highlighted the need for more empirical research on particularities of people and groups making decisions, multiple levels of analysis as well as incorporation of theories and concepts from the social sciences, and recognition that foreign policy processes are as important for constructing theories as are foreign policy outputs (Hudson and Vore, 1995:214). That is, from the micro perspectives of IR, foreign policy specialists began to look at more micro-level questions of decision-making, bureaucratic-politics, and domestic institutions, norms and values which effect international state behaviour (Hudson and Vore, 1995; Rosenau, 1966; Allison 1971; Putnam, 1988; Braveboy-Wagner, 2003). FPA scholars also realised the need for the construction of middle-range theory that could incorporate local and micro-level specificities that could be compared on a cross-national basis, rather than overarching and overly simplified theories - which challenged the aim of parsimony which is an overarching feature of IR theory (Hudson and Vore, 1995; Braveboy-Wagner, 2003).

Despite the aims of foreign policy studies to look beyond the goals and assumptions of IR, few examples exist within FPA of adequately historicized and specified attempts to analyse foreign policy from the South, nor to adequately address the question of ideology within foreign policy (for useful overviews of foreign policy approaches applied to the Third World see Persaud, 2001; Braveboy Wagner, 2003)<sup>25</sup>. That is, it is still an area that remains to be researched and explored. According to Braveboy-Wagner (2003:11), “there is clearly a need to at least begin to revisit the ‘understudied foreign policy of underdeveloped nations’.” Despite these limitations, important examples of engaging in the lack of attention of foreign policy studies to states in the Global South, and

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<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, some important contributions cannot be overlooked. See for example: Doty (1993); Dunn and Shaw (2001); George (2005); Korany (1986); Lavelle (2005); McGowan and Ahwireng-Obeng (1996); Mills (1994); Persaud (2001); Taylor (2001); Thomas (1997); Braveboy-Wagner (2003); Westad (2006); Gleijeses (2009), to name a few. However, whether these form part of mainstream IR or FPA is an entirely different question, as many of these works constitute peripheral contributions to IR and FPA theory building practices.

attempting to both apply traditional IR theories as well as constructing more critical theories for looking at foreign policy of the Global South include, among others, the work of McGowan and Nel (2002), Clapham (1977), Kaufman (1977), Korany (1986), Koffie Daddieh and Shaw (1986); Domínguez and Lindau (1986); Braveboy-Wagner (2003); Grovogui (2003); Neuman (1998) and Persaud (2001).

With some few exceptions, there is a general failure to look into the external policies of states in the South and how they are related to internal economic, political and societal dynamics, and their effects on the structure and functioning of global affairs (Tickner, 2003a; Hudson and Vore, 1995; Dunn and Shaw, 2001)<sup>26</sup>. Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific are almost entirely absent from FPA - as if the process of state decision-making and construction of foreign policies of states in the Third World are completely irrelevant to IR.<sup>27</sup>

The will to classify and separate things into distinct categories is not specific to IR or FPA – but has been a constant feature of the social sciences. Without some form of constructed ordering of the social world, it would be difficult to understand the social world, predict, or prescribe any changes. The most simplistic form of classification is at the level of taxonomy (Persaud, 2001:9). Persaud (2001:9) writes that, “Whether one is rationally ordering plant species or states, intelligent statements about the *theoretical object* of research can only be made if seemingly disparate properties/phenomena are parsimoniously categorized on the basis of an explicit principle of delineation.” Without some form of categorization, there would have to be a theory for everything existing and for everyone, which could change from person to person. FPA as a discipline, which can be regarded as a sub-field within IR, takes a decision-making approach to the study of international relations, and engages in a kind of “unpacking the box” of IR theory and approaches to explaining and understanding state behaviour and decision-making processes (Hudson and Vore, 1995).

The concept of national interest that guides states and decision-making entities within a state, which is rational in its character, is at the heart of the realist approach within IR and FPA (Hudson and Vore, 1995:210). The majority of FPA approaches define foreign policy as a function of national interest, or state interest

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<sup>26</sup> Post-positivist, postcolonial and constructivist foreign policy have been able to overcome many of the assumptions within IR and FP, by examining the role of discourse, knowledge production, and the function and role of language within the construction of reality, and inserting these methods into FPA (see Doty, 1993, 1996; Wendt, 1992; Laffey and Weldes, 2009 for some examples). The postcolonial approach to FPA will be presented in chapter three, as a theoretical method for this thesis and for analysing Third World foreign policy.

<sup>27</sup> The exception to this is South Africa, which remains the lone state that has merited some attention from foreign policy analysis (for some useful studies on South African foreign policy post-1994, see Jordaan, 2003; Lavelle, 2005; Leysens, 1993; Marais, 2001; Taylor, 2001; McGowan and Ahwireng-Obeng, 1996; Daniel *et. al*, 2004). Increasingly, those states which merit some attention within FPA are those defined as emerging middle powers (Jordaan, 2003). However, the focus of analysis of these states is usually not the global relations that these ‘emerging’ states construct, but rather their regional state relationships. The assumption underlying this, is that economically weaker states in the global order lack the will and the capacity to act beyond their respective regions and beyond relations with the former colonial metropolises (Erisman, 2000).

(Grovoqui, 2003; Persaud, 2001). National interest is taken as a given reality, and it is assumed that state actors engage in a cost-benefit analysis when determining their own “national interests” – reducing complex processes, actors, ideas and ideologies to narrow neo-liberal economic theoretical precepts. This renders the concept a fixed-universal, assuming that all states are the same, all states behave in a similar fashion, and all states have national interests (Persaud, 2001:202; Grovoqui, 2003). What this underlying assumption in effect results in, as Persaud (2001:202) writes, is “[reducing] extremely complex historical phenomena to mere self-aggrandizement, the latter itself based on the assumption of human nature in the abstract.” This privileging of national interest is also reflected in the almost complete dismissal of ideology within FPA – where ideology is seen as redundant to state behaviour (Persaud, 2001:59). Morgenthau (1978) defines ideology as a system of thought which rationalises a particular social system or position within a social order. The assumption of much of FPA by completely ignoring the role of ideology is to relegate ideology to the role of *ex post facto* ideational legitimisation of objective realities, and objective interests (Persaud, 2001:59).

Assuming a universal rationality and human nature as self-serving, is thus the ontological basis of this assumption within FPA. In fact, much of IR as a discipline is based on the propositions and concerns defined by realism – which in turn remain some of the main concerns within FPA (Tickner, 2003a). Tickner (2003a:299) defines these as three main concerns of IR, which form the basis of IR as a unique discipline: “(1) the subject matter of IR is the study of power struggles, war and peace; (2) states are the primary actors in such dynamics; and (3) domestic and international politics abide by distinct logics.” Traditional analyses of Third World foreign policy are thus often guided by the assumption of realism, and they run into the problem of reifying power (Persaud, 2001:68). FPA theories “commit precisely the error of seeing the international system as an expression of the wishes of Great Powers (Persaud, 2001).” This de-historicizes world orders, by overlooking the fact that world orders are made and constructed, and are not merely an outcome of dictates and wishes of Core states.

Furthermore, states are assumed to be devoid of any class character, and class analyses are almost entirely omitted when looking at foreign policy, state and bureaucratic decision-making or even ideology (Grovoqui, 2003; Persaud, 2001). To summarise a number of the assumptions of much of FPA: the non-existence of a social reality of class division within a state that are reflected in the form of state and methods of production; the objective interests based on objective realities; human nature as essentially self-serving and gains-maximising; a tendency to reify power by de-historicising the making of world orders; de-legitimising states within the South as valid units of analysis for theory building within IR. All of this has the result of destroying any possibility of emancipatory action on the part of the Third World, or any attempt at constructive alternative ideologies, alternative states and challenging the world order. It also overlooks how foreign policies of states in the Third World are integral to the making of world orders, and to the development of history.

To summarise this section, in an attempt to look beyond the simplifying assumptions of much of IR, the field of FPA has encountered similar limitations as IR in terms of overlooking states and societies in the Global South when constructing theories of foreign policy (Braveboy-Wagner, 2003; Grovogui, 2003; Hudson and Vore, 1995). From behavioural approaches, to comparative foreign policy, and organizational behaviour models – FPA has largely disregarded actors in the South as well as failed to historicise foreign policy as a dialectic of domestic and international, effected by the conditions and constraints of the world order and hierarchical systems in which states in the South find themselves constrained to<sup>28</sup> (see Allison, 1971; Holsti, 1970; Putnam, 1988, Rosenau, 1966; Hudson and Vore, 1995). There is a general repression of historical specificity and a teleological assumption that states in the Third world belong to a class of states that are incapable of changing or challenging the character and norms of the international system, and their foreign policies are not independently valuable to the development of meta-theoretical analysis on the field foreign policy (Braveboy-Wagner, 2003; Grovogui, 2003; Persaud, 2001:10).

## ***CHALLENGING THE DOMESTIC/FOREIGN DICHOTOMY***

The de-historicised, positivist, and largely problem-solving<sup>29</sup> nature of much IR and FPA has been criticized by critical IR scholars such as Robert Cox (Braveboy-Wagner, 2003; Cox, 1981, 1983; 1987; Sinclair, 1996). As a starting point, critical IR scholars view the division between IR theory and FPA as superfluous, and call for a more critical approach in which dividing lines between foreign policy and domestic policy are blurred. Cox argues that politics and economics cannot be separated into two separate spheres and the domestic/foreign dichotomy is overly simplistic and problem-solving (Braveboy-Wagner, 2003; Sinclair, 1996; Cox, 2007). He calls for a more interdisciplinary approach that sees the converging lines and mutually reinforcing nature of politics, economics, production and social relations of production. On this point Wallerstein highlights that it is a

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<sup>28</sup> Putnam (1988) is one of the key figures in mainstream IR/FPA who began to look at the interactions between the domestic and the external, and foreign policy as largely connected to the domestic state level, as a two-level game. He, however, largely relies on a number of realist assumptions of power politics and largely utilizes the United States as his central empirical example for theory building.

<sup>29</sup> Recall from chapter one how Cox (1981,1983) divides IR theory into two categories that have contrasting ontologies. He divides IR theory from a meta-theoretical perspective into problem-solving theory and critical theory. Firstly, problem-solving theory takes the nature of the world system, states and structures as they are, essentially as given. The purpose of problem-solving theory is thus not to question how things came about, or to understand the state of the international system, but rather aims at solving immediate problems and treats questions with an a-historical and positivist ontological assumption. Critical theory in contrast does not take the state or the international system as universal but rather historicises the state, power, ideology, norms and structures in which states and state practices exist as well as their historical origins. It asks the question of how the prevailing order and structures came about. Critical theory has the starting point of change and transformation as a constant in the world order, rejecting rationalist universalism and narrow neo-liberal and capitalist ontologies (Sinclair, 1998).

mistake to separate and only study individual capitalist states; rather, it is necessary to place states in the systemic context of one capitalist world order and its historical origins (Wallerstein, 1988: 189).

Drawing on the insights of these critical theorists and criticising the realist assumptions of Putnam (1988), Persaud (2001:139) argues that domestic and foreign policy should not be studied as or regarded as two separate and exclusive fields of activities or spheres of policy making. He writes that, “[t]he two spheres are not only reciprocally connected, but are geared toward the same objectives defined by the government in office, and reflect the balance of social forces in society.” Rather, foreign policy should be seen as a triad between states, social forces and, world orders, in which forms of production, institutions and ideas interact within the domestic sphere as well as relate dialectically to the global sphere. He points towards a historical materialist approach for looking at the foreign policy of the Jamaican state, which takes into account the role of ideology and race – two elements which are largely sidelined in most of FPA and IR. It is an epistemological challenging of mainstream analyses of Third World foreign policy.

Postcolonial and post-positivist approaches to foreign policy, on the other hand, illustrate that social reality is constructed, made, produced and reproduced, based on historically determined material, as well as institutional and cultural conditions (Grovoqui, 2003; Braveboy-Wagner, 2003; Persaud, 2001; Tickner, 2003a; Doty, 1993). Tickner (2003a) argues that by taking into account the everyday life, hybridity and non-universal culture in the Third World, by adding the voices and scholarship from the South into the field of IR, we can come closer to approaching knowledge from the South and to questioning core assumptions within the field of IR, as well as more accurately explaining and historicising foreign policy of states in the Third World.

## ***POWER AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION***

It is important to note that the ways in which the dominant knowledge of the world and theories of interstate relations serve to reinforce power structures in practice. Postcolonial and post-positivist critiques are useful in terms of recognising how knowledge production, and the actual silencing of voices in the South, serves to reinforce a hierarchical world order in which the power and privilege of the Western Core states is reinforced and ideationally rationalised (Tickner, 2003a, Young, 2001; Doty, 1993, 1996; Wendt, 1992; Laffey and Weldes, 2009; wa Thiong’o, 1986, Persaud, 2001).

Ngugi wa Thiong’o (1986) argues that the strongest weapon yielded today by imperialism, against collective defiance and resistance, is the “cultural bomb.” The significance of language and knowledge production in reinforcing imperialism and the current world order is what wa Thiong’o refers to. By silencing the voices within the Cuban state and Cuban society, and its particular view of its own proletarian internationalist foreign policy, knowledge production in effect serves to de-legitimise the Cuban state/society complex as a valid actor on the world affairs, inter-state relations and relations of foreign policy to the domestic order and ideology. However, the

Euro-centric bias of much of IR is increasingly being studied and questioned, particularly when dealing with overarching Cold War narratives (see Neuman, 1998; Grovogui, 2003; Korany, 1986; Braveboy-Wagner, 2003a; Doty, 1993; Dunn and Shaw, 2001; Tickner, 2003a; Mgonja and Makombe, 2009; Laffey and Weldes, 2008; Gruffydd Jones, 2005, 2008). Cuba's voice in the Cold War, from the Missile Crisis to African struggle for decolonisation, is slowly being included and interrogated in terms of re-constructing a historicity of the Cold War (Westad, 2006; Laffey and Weldes, 2008; Gleijeses, 2009).

There has more recently been a concern for looking at IR and FPA "from below" and adding the voices from the South (see for example Westad, 2006; Gruffydd Jones, 2005, 2006; Saull, 2006; Gleijeses, 2009; Neuman, 1998; Dunn and Shaw, 2001; Tickner, 2003a; Mgonja and Makombe, 2009; Laffey and Weldes, 2008; Braveboy-Wagner, 2003). According to Gruffydd Jones (2005:997), "IR's realization of its Euro-centricity and other biases has arrived at a moment when critical approaches in the discipline are influenced by the various post-positivist turns of a textual, cultural and discursive nature." There is also a growing concern within IR for looking at the nexus between power and the production of knowledge (see Laffey and Weldes, 2009; Chimni, 2000, 2002, 2004; Tickner, 2003a, 2003b; Young, 2001; Gruffydd Jones, 2005; Gleijeses, 2009; Trouillot, 1995).

Besides this, increasing attention is also being drawn to the gate-keeping practices of scholarly journals, which have a tendency to exclude scholars and academics from the South and privilege those from institutions based in the Core countries (Tickner, 2003b). Thus, as Laffey and Weldes (2008), Grovogui (2003), and Trouillot (1995) point out: international hierarchies are not only produced by the actions of states and international institutions, but are also reproduced and legitimised in scholarly and popular analyses of world politics. It is on these critiques that a historical materialist/postcolonial ontological approach to looking at foreign policy, outlined in chapter one, is implemented in this thesis – as it takes into account a long historical view and a variety of actors and historically constructed power relations.

## ***CUBAN FOREIGN POLICY WITHIN IR***

This section will review the available literature on Cuban foreign policy, with the aim of highlighting the lacuna in the literature and scholarship within IR and FPA. I will also briefly outline the literature available on Cuba's foreign policy in Africa from 1959 until 1994, which is directly dealt with in chapter four.

Cuban foreign policy is not often studied within IR or FPA, except by Cuban or "area studies" specialists. It is a Third World country that has played a significant role in recent world affairs, and was an important actor shaping the international stage during the period delineated as the Cold War. Nonetheless, few studies within IR and FPA have been dedicated to looking at Cuban foreign policy, or the impact and role played by Cuban foreign policy in Africa. Cuban foreign policy, when the object of study, has been characterised as that of a proxy of the Soviet Union, dominated by the personalism of Fidel Castro, or topologies of supposed interests and foreign

policy prerogative (Smith, 1988; Erisman, 1990; Gleijeses, 2002). Much of the literature remains outside the field of IR, and given its largely peripheral nature to the entire field of IR, many of the studies remain parochial in nature and fail to historicize the Cuban state and foreign policy (Erisman, 1990; see Falk, 1986; Gonzalez and Ronfeldt, 1986; Dominguez, 1989; Mesa-Lago, 1982). Erisman (1990) points out that: “[O]ne looks in vain for lively debates on the relative contributions to Cuban conduct of such factors as Fidel Castro’s personality, Marxist-Leninist ideology, the character of Cuban nationalism or the notion of Cuban national interest, the impact of domestic conflicts or interest groups, and the effect of Soviet influence”. Furthermore, few of these studies rely on Cuban sources, or privilege Cuban voices in their analysis – and can be accused on de-contextualising and de-historicizing Cuban foreign policy, and upholding the view in which Cuban foreign policy is irrelevant for the construction of theories of international politics or foreign affairs.

The quintessential Cold War crisis, known in the West<sup>30</sup> as the Cuban Missile Crisis, has been studied in the field of foreign policy in order to engage in theory building on decision-making processes and conceptualising foreign policy. However, most analyses of the event completely sideline Cuba as an actor in the central crisis of the Cold War, thus rendering it invisible, trivial and silencing the voice of the Cuban subaltern (Laffey and Weldes, 2008). Graham Allison’s (1969, 1971) work, for example, merely treats Cuba as a geographical site of the Cold War conflict, not as a central actor in the event which merits serious treatment when analysing decision-making and bureaucratic processes or organization behaviour models. It is similar to Chester Crocker’s (1992) version of the negotiations and events that led to Namibian independence and to South Africa’s withdrawal from Angola, in which the U.S is presented as the central actor pushing for independence and defending Angolan sovereignty. This one-sided, ethnocentric, and false account of events has become known as the foremost account of the events of those days in 1988 (Gleijeses, 2009). Laffey and Weldes (2008) argue that the Western myth of the Cuban Missile Crisis as a mere superpower affair, with Cuba as a mere geographical locale without any agency, only began to be questioned in the 1990s, when an aim at producing “critical oral histories” which included U.S, Soviet and Cuban participants in the crisis being brought together in Moscow in 1989, Antigua in 1991 and Havana<sup>31</sup> in 1992 (Laffey and Weldes, 2008). Before this, almost entirely Western sources, newspapers and accounts were relied on for analysing the crisis. It is noteworthy to highlight that Cuba’s marginalisation from the historiography of that crisis obscures the *origins* of the crisis in the persistent U.S aggression and threats towards Cuba since 1959. Additionally, by isolating the crisis from its origins and the variety of actors, the decision-making process and the historical context, this ethnocentric superpower myth renders Cuba’s voice, its

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<sup>30</sup> In Cuba it is known as the October Crisis, and in the Soviet Union it is known as the Caribbean Crisis (Laffey and Weldes, 2008; Shubin, 2008). This alone illustrates how the U.S.-centric, Western version of events has taken hold in academia largely without question.

<sup>31</sup> Not in the U.S., because Cuban leaders, scholars and researchers are generally barred from travel to the United States.

concerns for sovereignty and self-defence as inexplicable, pathological, or as “misplaced interests” (Laffey and Weldes, 2008).

There remain few examples of serious study, in which Cuba’s state and revolution is adequately historicised, and Cuban foreign policy is seen in the context on the current imperialist global world order.<sup>32</sup> Saney (2009) furthermore points out that Cuban foreign policy is often largely divorced from its domestic social, material, economic and political context. He points out that Cuban “internationalism” as the guiding ideology for their foreign policy is presented as epiphenomenal and completely severed from the domestic sphere. Others, such as Mesa-Lago and Belkin (1982) argue that Cuban foreign policy can be characterised as “misplaced priorities” and thus adopt a typical realist approach of a rationalist, power politics game of cost/benefit, neo-liberal economic analysis of foreign policy in Cuba.

Saney (2006), Cooper *et al.*, (2006) and Gleijeses (2002) also point out that it is easy for authors who focus on Cuba to present Cuba as existing in a vacuum, completely apart from the Latin American and Caribbean context, as well as the international context, as Cuba is often presented as an anomaly in international affairs. This is a common mistake within IR and FPA in analysing Cuba. This is largely as a result of the widespread idea that Cuba would eventually fall after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, and that any serious study of Cuba would become the “bailiwick of historians rather than specialists in the dynamics of contemporary international relations” (Erisman, 2000). Erisman (2000) defines this view, and this attempt to overlook Cuba as a valid and independent actor on the world state of states, as “wishful ideological thinking” by academia – which has replaced attempts at serious analysis. This is also noteworthy when one looks at the major lacuna in literature on Cuba’s role in the various African struggles for liberation from colonial rule and for maintenance of sovereignty and autonomy, as well as for an end to apartheid aggression in the southern African region (Saney, 2006; Gleijeses, 2002; 2009). Cuba’s foreign policy towards African states is almost completely removed from the historical context, simplified or overlooked as a mere proxy-affair, and in effect marginalized in the historiography of the African liberation struggles or on analyses of foreign policy.

## **CONCLUSION**

Various scholars who are beginning to look at Cuba’s role in Africa from 1959 until today, from its massive presence in Angola, to its assistance of national liberation movements around the continent – have noted that the history of Cuba in Africa remains to be written (Gleijeses, 2002; Gleijeses, 2009; Saney, 2006; Saney, 2009). Most academic textbooks on southern African politics and recent southern African history, intended for students

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<sup>32</sup> Some important exceptions include Erisman and Kirk, 1991; Ritter and Kirk, 1995; Erisman, 2000; Erisman, 2002; Kirk, 1983; Gleijeses, 2002, 2009; Saney, 2005, 2006.

of IR and FPA, barely mention Cuba at all (see Bauer and Taylor, 2005; Mills, 1994; McGowan *et al.*, 2007)<sup>33</sup>. An adequate historiography, or even a study within the field of IR and FPA which looks directly at Cuba's policy in Africa is wanting, and it is the aim of this thesis to add to that lack of study.

This chapter has attempted to review the field of IR from a framework of probing into Third World foreign policy, highlighting the lack of attention to the theoretical relevance of states that collectively make up the Global South. Beyond this, the chapter reviews a number of critical and postcolonial scholars who argue that IR has generally neglected looking at states and social forces of the Global South. The aim of the chapter, and this thesis, is thus to re-focus attention and interest on states of the Global South and their foreign policies, for purposes of theoretical elaboration on foreign policy. Beyond the work of these scholars, I argue in this thesis that a postcolonial approach to Third World foreign policy is useful in terms of engaging the ontological position of the subaltern, and bringing questions of knowledge production into the field of IR.

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<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, the SADET documentation project initiated under the Mbeki administration has attempted to fill the gaps present in much of scholarly work in terms of analysing and documenting the dynamics of the South African liberation struggle. Other histories of the SACP and MK also are a bit more thorough in their treatment of the various interrelated and multi-levelled dynamics of the struggle (see Onslow, 2009; Baines and Vale, 2008; Ellis and Sechaba, 1992; Kasrils, 2004; Meli, 1989; Barrell, 1990; Cilliers, 1987; Motumi, 1994; Waters, 1991).

# Chapter Three. Looking at the Cuban State and Foreign Policy.

## ***INTRODUCTION***

In the following chapter I implement a postcolonial theoretical framework for analysing Third World foreign policy by historicising the Cuban state and social revolution and social transformation, as well as transformation of the form of state and foreign policy that began around 1959. That is, official relations with states and liberation movements in the Third World and particularly African states were formed for the first time in the early 1960s. Thus it is necessary to look at the domestic social, economic and political transformation within the context of the current world order that led to a shift in foreign policy. I argue that the theoretical tools offered by a postcolonial approach and a thorough historiography of the Cuban foreign policy before the 1959 revolution would be necessary to adequately analyse Cuban foreign policy. This furthermore allows one to probe many of the assumptions within IR about the historiography of Cuba's role in the Cold War. A proper historical analysis of the Cuban social revolution of 1953-1959, and of Cuban foreign policy pre-1959 is beyond the scope of this thesis. This chapter implements an historical method to look at the Cuban state and foreign policy by placing Cuba within the regional and world order level of analysis<sup>34</sup>. When looking at Third World foreign policy it is necessary to look at least three levels of analysis: the individual state, the region and the Third World as a whole (Braveboy-Wagner, 2003a). The next chapter will take a more state-centric approach in order to add this level of analysis when analysing Cuban foreign policy towards Africa; importantly, the state remains the main interlocutor through which foreign policy is exercised (Braveboy-Wagner, 2003a). Then in chapter five I look at Cuba's foreign policy towards South Africa's liberation movements at the levels of both state and civil society

## ***METHOD OF HISTORICAL ANALYSIS***

In this thesis I point to a historical materialist approach, which is central to postcolonial methodology. By historical materialist is not synonymous with simply taking history into account and looking at the effects on the present. Rather, historical materialism is methodological, as well as an ontological shift. That is, historical materialism does not take state forms, institutions, norms, ideas, or methods of production as universal and natural. Rather, historical materialism questions where certain state forms, institutions and practices originate from. Historical materialist methodologies furthermore question the relations of discursive practice, and Western narratives within the power arrangements that form the basis of world orders, forms of production and forms of

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<sup>34</sup> This chapter is not a thorough overview of Cuban history, or of the Cuban revolutionary process and transformation of methods of production, institutions and forms of state – but a broad look at historical factors that have shaped and continue to shape the Cuban state and Cuban society, as well as the construction of its foreign policy post-1959.

state (wa Thiong'o, 1968; Said, 1978; Grovogui, 2003). Conditions of local poverty and underdevelopment in the Third World are the specific and cumulative outcomes of historical processes of social transformation that find their roots in world history and shape the ways in which both the formerly colonised and the former colonisers make sense of the world around them. These conditions are reproduced in contemporary historical time through globally structured social relations, related to production, states and world orders, as well as through epistemologies (Gruffydd Jones, 2005:987). This is a relevant starting point for the current analysis, because a historically marginalized state such as Cuba does not exist as isolated from global financial networks, world systems of production and distribution, international institutions that perpetuate and justify the status quo, or from ideational structures that make up people's "common sense" understanding of the world and how it should function. Historicising the Cuban state/society complex helps one to understand the social forces and configurations of actors internally which have shaped, led and carried out the social revolution of 1959 and subsequent transformation, thus pointing to the question of positionality, identity, and power (Young, 2001; Grovogui, 2003; Laffey and Weldes, 2008).

In terms of the methodological approach, Robert Cox (1981, 1983, 1987 and 2004) notes the necessity of placing specific, local analyses into the broader historical context, referring to the *longue durée*. He considers change a central feature of history and thus of IR (Sinclair, 1996:3). To illustrate this one can look at how C.L.R James (2001:305) links the Haitian revolution of 1792-1804 to the Cuban Revolution of 1958-1959, arguing that the Cuban Revolution is a reappearance of many of the same fundamental questions facing the Third World and the West Indies in particular at a specific historical conjuncture, subjectivity and a similar positionality in relations to structures of power in the world order<sup>35</sup>. James takes a long view of history, linking the historical experiences of colonialism and the incorporation of the Caribbean into the world capitalist economy, in order to situate the meaning of historical events, anti-hegemonic processes, state forms and social transformations in the appropriate historical context.

The prefix "post" in postcolonial theory is not synonymous with "after" or "beyond" but rather is meant to indicate new forms of domination and new methods of Manichean subjectivity which relegate the "other" to a status below that of the dominant notion of a Western, capitalist "us" (Young, 2001; Laffey and Weldes, 2008; Grovogui, 2003). It also depicts the focus on the new colonial order in international affairs, thus pointing to continuity with past oppression today, and the myriad understudied effects on subjectivities, states and social orders, as well as the conceptualisation and operationalisation of foreign policy from the Global South. A method

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<sup>35</sup> James (2001:305) writes of the Cuban revolution of 1959 that: "[The] revolution is of the twentieth century as much as Toussaint's was of the eighteenth. But despite the distance of over a century and a half, both are West Indian. The people who made them, the problems and the attempts to solve them, are particularly West Indian, the product of peculiar origin and a peculiar history...The history of the West Indies is governed by two factors, the sugar plantation and Negro slavery."

of postcolonial historicism has also been implemented by Africanists such as Kwame Nkrumah, in his conceptualisations of neo-colonialism (1963). He addresses the situation engendered by the struggle against colonialism in Africa, and the reduction of nominally independent African states into veritable neo-colonies, dominated externally via political economic, cultural, ideological and at times military means. Nkrumah (1963:173) writes that neo-colonialism and its effects represent the greatest danger currently facing the Third World. In terms of explaining the order that emerged and one that continues to be under construction and transformation following the anti-colonial revolts and independence struggles, Fanon writes that, “The apotheosis of independence is transformed into the curse of independence, and the colonial power through its immense resources of coercion condemns the young nation[s] to regression” (Fanon, 1963:77). Furthermore, Nkrumah (1965:239) writes of neo-colonialism and its subtle methods of control:

*Faced with the militant peoples of the ex-colonial territories in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America, imperialism simply switches tactics. Without qualm it dispenses with its flags[...] This means, so it claims, that it is ‘giving’ independence to its former subjects, to be followed by ‘aid’ for their development. Under cover of such phrases, however, it devises innumerable ways to accomplish objectives formerly achieved by naked colonialism.*

Nkrumah, in pointing out the necessity for a historicist approach to analysing current social crises in African states rather than arguing a kind of African exceptionalism, writes:

*It is impossible to separate the affairs of Africa from the affairs of the world as a whole. Not only has the history of Africa been too closely involved with Europe and the Western hemisphere, but that very involvement has been the driving force in bringing about major wars and international conflicts for which Africans have not been responsible. Africa has too long been the victim of disruptive aggression, which still attempts to make a hunting ground of our continent (Nkrumah, 1963:194).*

Frantz Fanon (1963) describes the shift to independent rule in its complex colours, from indirect rule colonial system, state forms and identities, to a situation of neo-colonial domination through more subtle methods of control. He argues that the independence of formerly colonised peoples was not a benevolent response to the struggles of the oppressed masses against their subjugation, but was a historical necessity created by the new needs of global capitalism in securing cheap raw materials as well as expanding market access for Western goods which require more efficient and subtle forms of domination.

Ali Mazrui (1967:74) describes the coining of the term neo-colonialism in African nationalist thought, which took place formally at the All-African People’s Conference held in Cairo in 1961. He describes neo-colonialism as “indirect political and economic manipulation, designed to perpetuate external control in Africa in more subtle ways” (Mazrui, 1967:74). This activity of organized manipulation by an external power is what is

referred to by the term – rather than the condition of dependency (Mazrui, 1967:74; McGowan and Smith, 1978:179-180). Neo-colonialism has also been called “exploitation by remote control” – describing the various manifestations of the maintenance of domination by former European colonial powers and the emerging imperialist U.S., in preparation for formal independence of the colonised peoples. Neo-colonialism describes the ways in which the economic and political configurations of power and production which characterised colonial rule would continue (Nkrumah, 1965:26; Mattavous Bly, 1985).

The marginalisation of the political, economic, psychological and ideational legacies of colonialism in IR theory that looks at the Third World does not erase the fundamental centrality of these questions and what they reveal for understanding the current order, state forms and Third World positionality. A postcolonial, non-Eurocentric approach is necessary to offer a subaltern, critical and historicised approach to analysing contemporary social, economic, and political predicaments in the Third World and how they translate into foreign policies which form part of postcolonial epistemologies (Dirlik, 1999; Young, 2001:65-75; Grovogui, 2003; Gruffydd Jones, 2005:998). Essentially, a postcolonial approach calls for a decolonisation of IR theory in order to focus attention on the legacies of colonialism on state forms, interstate relations, power in the international system as well as knowledge production and Western historical narratives of ‘the other’.

## ***Power and Production***

Configurations of power in the world order can furthermore not be isolated from relations of production in the world system (Cox, 1987; Sinclair, 1996). Eduardo Galeano (1973) has described Latin America as the region of open veins. He writes of all that has been appropriated in the region, “the soil, its fruits and its mineral-rich depths, the people and their capacity to work and to consume, natural resources and human resources. Production methods and class structure have been successively determined from outside for each area by meshing it into the universal gearbox of capitalism.” From 1958 until early 1959, a civil uprising occurred around the Caribbean island, which involved a number of political parties, underground student directorates, workers’ unions, peasant organizations, as well as a guerrilla army in the rural areas. A wide spectrum of popular social forces, civil society, and particularly worker and peasant organizations were involved in a struggle to end a U.S.-backed dictatorship and widespread social, economic and political grievances. The amalgamation of these movements, which culminated in the abdication of the presidency of Fulgencio Batista (and his immediate fleeing from the country) and a victory for the social forces (led by the July 26 movement, the student directorate, the Orthodox Party and other forces on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1959), is known as the “Cuban Revolution” (Hart and Waters, 2004; Waters, 2002; Erisman and Kirk, 1991; Glejjeses, 2003; Saney, 2004). However, many Cuban historians view the 1959 revolution as the culmination of a long struggle for liberation which dates back to the struggle to end Spanish colonial rule in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the subsequent struggle by nationalists to prevent the U.S from

taking over the de facto administration and control of Cuba via neo-colonial methods (Erisman and Kirk, 1991; Gleijeses, 2003; Saney, 2004; NGAPC, 1962).

Cuba's social revolution in 1959 was a response to this relegation by historical forces to the dependent and miserable margins and peripheries of the capitalist world order. It was a thorough anti-systemic revolt that overturned previous relations of production, institutions, social relations, and ideational structures and continues to do so in a dialectical and constantly changing fashion today. Thus, a number of deep structural transformations of both institutions and methods of production, as well as property relations began to change after 1959. As a consequence of the transformation of the Cuban state/society relations which commenced mainly with the land reform, the literacy campaign, the creation of civil society organs such as the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) and the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC), Cuban civil society began a transformation process that is still taking place today (Waters, 2002; Hart and Waters, 2004; Mtintso, 2008). As early as 1959, Cuban foreign policy began a major shift. Cuban leaders began to be more vocal at international summits and at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, and began to speak out against colonialism and in favour of structural transformation of the world order (Feinsilver, 1995; Mtintso, 2008). Cuban civil society organizations began to take a larger part in state decision-making, as well as carrying out public policy (Ritter and Kirk, 1995). As will be delineated in chapter five, civil society and the changing state/society relations affected the manner that foreign policy would shift after 1959 towards a socialist and internationalist-oriented foreign policy. The role of ideology in shaping the changes in state/society relations is thus a central question when looking at the motivations of and content of Cuban foreign policy towards South Africa since 1959.

On the other hand, it is important that the Cuban Revolution of 1959 not be viewed as linear, predetermined, homogenous or economic - but instead as constantly in flux, and both complex and contradictory in its movements. As Cuba's domestic reality began to shift after 1959, so did its foreign policy; foreign policy shifts also helped shape a new domestic reality and the attempts at constructing a new Cuban identity (Guevara, 1965; Castro, 1985; Risquet, 1989; Deutschmann, 1989). Cuban foreign policy in many ways dialectically shaped domestic affairs and social reality, particularly on people's inter-subjective ideas and ideational structures as well as its new and evolving value structures, institutions, political and economic organizations and identities post-1959 (Saney, 2009; Erisman and Kirk, 1991). In the case of the Cuban state, current conditions and state forms are the result of specific configurations of social forces which opposed the violence and degradation of neo-colonialism and imperialism, resulting in a widespread social uprising that culminated in the revolution of 1953-1959. Thus, since 1959 there has been a continuous attempt to avoid regressing into the former status quo of domination by will of the U.S and a lack of any *de facto* autonomy (Gleijeses, 2003; Alzugaray, 2004a, 2004b; Castro, 1985). Thus, a long view of history, dating back to the

European conquest of the Americas is necessary in order to correctly analyse the contemporary Cuban state/society complex and foreign policy.

## ***States and World Orders***

In carrying out a historicist methodology, it is necessary to situate the Cuban state within the level of world order analysis. Cuba is a small island nation of around 11 million people, located only 90 miles from the U.S. Between 1898 and 1959, Cuba had been the subject of U.S. dominance (Williams, 1970; NGAPC, 1962; Saney, 2005). With a combination of coercion and consent, the U.S managed to wrestle Cuba's sovereignty in the Spanish-American war of 1898, beginning with the Platt Amendment in 1901, coinciding with the consent of the ruling classes of Cuba who benefited from the arrangement with the U.S and domination over the majority of Cuban society (Alzugaray, 2004a:3; NGAPC, 1962:46). The Platt amendment allowed the U.S. to intervene in Cuban affairs as well as maintain a military base on Cuban soil. This hegemony ended in 1959 with the Cuba revolution. In 1959, the U.S. shifted to a strategy of reasserting hegemony over Cuba, that is characterized by a combination of coercive measures such as economic sanctions, subversive propaganda<sup>36</sup>, psychological operations, covert actions, armed interventions, diplomatic isolation<sup>37</sup>, political subversion and military coercion (Alzugaray, 2004a:3).

In terms of the restrictions, sanctions and interventions against Cuba emanating from the U.S. government, it is central to understand the dynamics of the blockade<sup>38</sup> against Cuba, which was instituted in 1962. Furthermore, states Alzugaray, "[it is] not a simple 'embargo', as the U.S. Government claims, [...] demonstrated by the fact that it is much more than a refusal to trade with Cuba; it is an all-encompassing policy, which includes elements of extraterritoriality and coercion in order to compel other governments into compliance with U.S. policy and legislation. This is part of the more than 45-year policy of attempting to force regime change in Cuba.

In 1962, the U.S. pressured the Organization of American States (OAS) to isolate Cuba and suspend its membership in the regional organization (Feinsilver, 1995:73). From 1959-on the Eisenhower administration and subsequent administrations have maintained a policy of "regime change" on the island<sup>39</sup> (Alzugaray, 2004b:1-2). The use of coercion against the Cuban regime should not be underestimated. The number of armed interventions

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<sup>36</sup> The U.S. government has ongoing ideological and media warfare against Cuba, using *Radio Marti* and *TV Marti* to flood the island with propaganda (Ankomah, 2008c:23). The National Endowment for Democracy and U.SAID distribute millions of dollars to organizations in Europe to call for regime change in Cuba, and over 65 million U.S dollars to anti-Castro groups based in Florida (Ankomah, 2008c:23).

<sup>37</sup> An example of this is the Alliance for Progress, sponsored by the U.S. in 1961, in which the U.S. organized loans of over 20 billion U.S. dollars to governments in Latin America over 10-year periods, in exchange for the governments aligning themselves against Cuba (NGAPC, 1994:47).

<sup>38</sup> In the U.S. it known as an embargo - while in Cuba it is called a blockade.

<sup>39</sup> This included a CIA "program of covert action against the Castro regime" (Alzugaray, 2004b:1).

and attempted actions against Cuba is difficult to estimate. In 1961, 1,500 Cuban-born mercenaries invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs, they were however, defeated within 72 hours (NGAPC, 1962:46). It is estimated that 3,500 Cubans, and an additional 2,000 seriously injured, have fallen victim to attacks financed by, and organized in the U.S (Montaner and Ramonet, 2007:63; Ankomah, 2008c:24). The U.S. government and CIA also organized and funded the subversion campaign in the Escambray from 1960 to 1961<sup>40</sup> (Waters, 2002:100). Despite this relative isolation, Cuba has pursued a policy of activism in international institutions (Alzugaray, 2004a:10; Feinsilver, 1995:73). On the other hand, Cuba has not taken part in the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization (Alzugaray, 2004a:10). Cuba was a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) as the only Latin American country present in Belgrade in 1961 at the NAM founding Summit (Alzugaray, 2004a:9). Cuba has historically been an active member of the UN and its numerous subsidiary agencies (Feinsilver, 1995:73). It was a founding member of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and has been a long standing member of the UN Human Rights Commission (Alzugaray, 2004a:10). It is very active in ECOSOC, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, ECLAC, FAO, and other UN-affiliated organizations (Feinsilver, 1995:74; Alzugaray, 2004a:10). It has taken the role of voicing concerns on behalf of the Third World, and with the support of the majority of states that make up the UN general Assembly (Saney, 2005). Its role in international institutions can be seen as pragmatic in a hierarchical world system that denies Cuba a voice - which challenges neo-realist and neo-liberal views that see anarchy as the main feature of international order (Neuman, 1998:3; Alzugaray, 2004a:9). Cuba has used its position in these international forums to argue for change in the world system, as well as against policies that it views as imperialistic and those that perpetuate dependency, marginalisation and underdevelopment of the South.<sup>41</sup>

In terms of Cuba's aid to Africa, one must take into account the constraints of this context in which Cuba is marginalised in the global capitalist system both politically and economically, as well as culturally and epistemologically. In light of the afore mentioned difficulties and attempts by Washington of regional isolation, Cuba's internationalism in Africa is in many ways surprising. Gleijeses' (2002) seminal work *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* delves into that vexing question of Havana's

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<sup>40</sup> This was described by CIA director Kirkpatrick: "The initial phase of paramilitary operations envisages the development, support and guidance of dissident groups in three areas of Cuba: Pinar del Rio, Escambray and Sierra Maestra. These groups will be organized for concerted guerrilla actions against the regime." Currently, two Cuban exiles who are accused of blowing up a *Cubana de Aviacion* civil aircraft in 1976, killing 73 people, continue to receive protection in Miami (Montaner and Ramonet, 2007:63). Additionally, there have been at least over 600 attempts against Fidel Castro's life organised by the U.S government and CIA (Ankomah, 2008c:24). The U.S moreover funds hostile anti-Castro groups such as Alpha 66 and Omega 7, which run training camps in Florida and have organized various acts of sabotage, along with bombings in Cuba (Ankomah, 2008c:24). In fact, these organizations and training bases still operate and exist today, and have been involved in the loss of over 3,000 Cuban lives.

<sup>41</sup> This is the case when Cuba used its rotating membership in the Security Council to argue against the first Gulf War and U.S. further plans to go to war in the Persian Gulf (Saney, 2004; Waters, 1991; Alarcón, 1991).

motives, and his work has been accepted as the most comprehensive record of Havana's motives in Angola (Saney, 2004:92). Was Havana acting at the behest of the Soviet Union in its Africa policy? Why would Cuba have contributed so extensively, in such a persistent manner, and risked its own material and human, political and economic well-being to aid African states in gaining independence?

Gleijeses (2002) uses documents from U.S, Cuban, Angolan, South African, British, German and Soviet archives, along with a number of interviews with former combatants and participants of internationalist missions in Cuba, in order to look at Havana's foreign policy in Africa from 1959 to 1976 (Saney, 2004:92). What Gleijeses finds is insightful, but also indicts Western scholarship for its superficial and faulty assumptions. Cuba never acted as a proxy of the Soviet Union but acted independently and often in opposition to Moscow's desires, at times without Moscow's knowledge of Cuba's plans until they were a *fait accompli* (Gleijeses, 2003; Gleijeses, 2006:31-43). This allows the locus of analysis to be placed directly on the Cuban state in order to analyse its foreign policy and to develop theoretical tools to more adequately explain and understand that foreign policy.

## **CONCEPTUALISING THE COLD WAR**

This section uses postcolonial theory to historicise the period known as the Cold War, beginning with the end of World War II and ending approximately with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. Furthermore, through the application of postcolonial critiques of Euro-centric forms of knowledge and ontological assumptions of the Cold War as a Superpower conflict, with the Third World as peripheral to causal dynamics. Taking into account subaltern actors, from states in the Third World to social classes, this section provides a framework for re-conceptualising the Cold War.

In the most recent and significant period of world history, what is called the Cold War has been presented as a succession of events and antagonisms that are bilateral in character. It is a conflict that only engages the major Superpowers and Core states in the international system. On the one side, the U.S and its allies in Western Europe, as well as Japan and Australia – while on the other, the Soviet Union, and its so-called client states (Saull, 2005). This bifurcated reality of world affairs in a period that covered most of the post-World War II period, has led to an oversimplification and distortion of the central dynamics of world politics, foreign policy decision-making and construction of identities and interests on an international scale (Saull, 2005; Laffey and Weldes, 2008). This de-historicized view of the Cold War that much IR theory uses as a starting point for analysing recent international affairs ignores the fact that on a world scale at the time there was a global social conflict of rival social systems of capitalism and socialism. The Cold War has in fact been aptly called a hot war, because of the significant anti-systemic challenges to the capitalist world order which often identified with the main rival of

capitalism at the time: the United Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR)<sup>42</sup>. The number of U.S. interventions which were motivated *not* by the USSR's activities, but of the threat of endogenous social revolts which began to flower against the structures of the capitalist system, or against the brutal rule of U.S.-backed tyrannical regimes, such as Nicaragua's Somoza or Guatemala's Rios Montt (Grovoqui, 2003; Saull, 2005). Many of the anti-systemic revolts that motivated U.S. government intervention originated from the working classes and peasantry within states in the Global South. The Euro-centric explication of the Cold War has thus completely ignored any form of analysis that takes social classes into account. The fact that the major events that shaped the actions, decision-making and construction of national interest of the Core states, were events which occurred in the Third World, is conspicuously absent from much IR and analysis of foreign policy (Grovoqui, 2003; Mamdani, 2004; Saull 2005; Barkawi and Laffey, 2002). That is, the revolution in Indochina, the Cuban revolution, the agrarian reform in Guatemala in the 1950s and ending with the overthrow of Jacobo Arbenz in 1954, and the Iranian revolution of 1979 are only some examples (Grovoqui, 2003; Barnes, 1999; Westad, 2006; Shubin, 2008; Young, 2001; Mamdani, 2004). These events had an indelible effect on state behaviour in the Global North and shaped the needs, interests and identity of Core states throughout the period known as the Cold War - as well as had immeasurable domestic effects on social forces within states in the North and in the Global South.

Saull (2005) analyses the Cold War as a globalised social conflict between states and social forces, in which the Third World played a central role in shaping historical developments and in shaping the actions and decisions of the two Super powers. In mainstream traditions of IR theory, states and actors within the Global South have traditionally been cast as subordinate within the 'high politics' of security and military concerns of the Superpowers (Saull, 2005:253). In his view, the Global South was central to the dialectical developments of the hot Cold War, as well as leading to its end. Noteworthy examples of this include the numerous post-World War II anti-systemic movements that arose in the Global South, that were endogenously constituted, without the instigation or assistance of either of the two superpowers. That is, the Superpowers did not play a role in creating revolutionary movements, but they played major roles in attempting to shape their outcomes.

In the case of the Soviet Union, the simplistic account of a state using the Third World as its proxy also has to be questioned. The Bolshevik Revolution served as an important inspiration to the construction of revolutionary parties around the world, but in most cases the Soviet Union did not instigate the uprisings in other states. The labour strikes in the Caribbean in the 1960s and 1970s, and the land reform process of Guatemala or Bolivia in the 1950s were all autochthonous processes (Ellis and Sechaba, 1992; Saull, 2005; Westad, 2006; Shubin, 2008). Guatemala's democratically elected government attempted a modest land reform and was brutally

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<sup>42</sup> A number of authors who in the 1990s began to challenge the overarching narratives and basic assumptions of the 'Cold War', include but are not isolated to: Saull (2005, 2001); Chomsky (2003, 2007); Shubin (2009); Kaldor *et al.*, (1989) Barkawi and Laffey (2002); Mamdani (2004); Doty (1996); Gaddis (1997); Gruffydd Jones (2006, 2008); Westad (2005); Trouillot (1995); Gleijeses (2002) and by the *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*.

overthrown in 1954 by a U.S.-backed junta (Gleijeses, 1991; Grovogui, 2003). U.S. policy in Latin America during the Cold War was consistently shaped by this event and aimed at preventing a similar attempt to reform methods of production or distribution of land and land ownership (Grovogui, 2003; Gleijeses, 1991; Galeano, 1973). There is thus a centrality to the developments of social forces as well as states within the Global South tied to the dynamics, developments, and end of the Cold War. This re-conceptualisation of the Cold War is therefore essential to historicising Cuba's foreign policy towards South Africa, and to understanding Cuba's foreign policy towards the Third World, its motivations, aims, as well as consequences on a local, state, regional as well as global scale.

By historicising Cuba's role with South African liberation forces, as well as its extensive relations with, and aid to liberation forces, throughout the African continent, Latin America and other states and social forces, it is clear that the traditional accounts of the role of Third World states and actors as subordinate actors or mere locales for Superpower conflict during the Cold War are inaccurate. In this thesis I analyse the role of both states and social forces. Cuba and South Africa are structurally marginalised in the international political economy, and social forces within these states are further marginalised within the literature (Braveboy-Wagner, 2003). In addition, Cuban working class and civil society organisations play a significant role in the events and policies carried out by the Cuban government (Roman, 1999; Saney, 2005). The form of state in Cuba, as well as its foreign policy is a challenge to the world order, yet also revealing the agency open to the Third World to chart its own course apart from the push and pull of capitalist uneven development (Laffey and Weldes, 2008; James, 1980; Galeano, 1973).

Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is imperative to note that the liberation struggles of African states as well as the struggle to end apartheid had a major influence on the rest of the world, and particularly on the form in which the globalised social conflict developed during the so-called Cold War<sup>43</sup>. As Persaud (2001) writes, the struggle against apartheid in South Africa became a global question of interest to the black toiling masses around the world, and became central for the South in its ongoing quest for global democratisation of international institutions and global norms. Cuba's foreign policy centralised the issue of ending apartheid in South Africa and apartheid aggression and occupation in southern Africa. Cuba's policy of assistance to South African liberation forces and to those in southern Africa moreover was significant in shifting the balance of forces against apartheid and its supporters in Washington (Saney, 2006).

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<sup>43</sup> As mentioned in chapter one, Volume Two of the TRC report notes the impact that the apartheid regime within South Africa's borders as well as throughout the region, meant that the majority of deaths attributable to the regime occurred outside South Africa's borders (Saunders, 2008). The full extent of this is still to be seriously studied by historians and scholars in South Africa.

## ***INTERNATIONALISM AND IDEOLOGY***

Cuban foreign policy thus must be viewed in the framework of its social revolution which embarked on a shift in methods of production, land ownership and ownership of the means of production, as well as a re-configuration of social forces and foreign policy. In the period of the Cold War, Cuba's social revolution was an anti-systemic revolt with its own endogenous causal dynamics going back almost a century. Cuba's foreign policy aimed to situate the Cuban state on equal footing in the hierarchical world order, and conceptualised internationalism and a socialist ideology as the main guide for its foreign policy as well as domestic transformation (Saney, 2009). In this thesis foreign policy is conceptualised as those complex actions, behaviours and manifestations of external relations between states acting in an international context. In this case it is Cuba's complex set of relations, policies, actions and behaviours carried out towards South Africa. But these external policies are not divorced from the domestic context, and rather these two spheres are dialectically linked. How the Cuban state leadership and policy makers define "national interest" of Cuba is part of this conceptualisation. However, a strict dichotomy between foreign versus domestic policy is not useful within a critical historicised approach – and therefore foreign policy is furthermore conceptualized as how social forces, ideology, domestic institutions and material capabilities manifest in terms of external relations of states. An amalgamation of narrow national interest, security needs of the regime in Cuba is insufficient to explain Cuban foreign policy. This is because it simply would be a list of attributes, providing little analytical weight.

Rather, by looking at the historical context of the Cuban Revolution of 1959 and how foreign policy after 1959 shifted from previous foreign policy, the question of ideology cannot be ignored. It is common in Realist, Liberal, and Neo-realist, Neo-liberal IR theory to want to overlook ideology, in order to find the more pressing security questions that supposedly define foreign policy (Persaud, 2001; Saull, 2005). The Cuban socialist ideology of internationalism is an often repeated concept in the literature on Cuban foreign policy (Saney, 2009; Smith, 1988; Erisman, 1990, 2000). However, few analysts have treated internationalism seriously in their analyses of Cuban foreign policy motivations. Ideology is often seen as an *ex post facto* justification, not as a motivating factor that provides the framework for the formation of foreign policy (Trouillot, 1995; Persaud, 2001).

Internationalism is meant to indicate the central ideology of revolutionary socialist states, to the necessity of providing assistance to the oppressed social forces and liberation movements, both within industrialised states and developing states. It also means to seek common ground and cooperation among states of the Global South vis-à-vis the dominant order which seeks to maintain developing states as marginal, and to an eternal status of *developing*. Internationalism as a term is derived from the Marx and Engels (1848), the Russian Revolution and V.I. Lenin's call for "proletarian internationalism" as a means to struggle against capitalism, imperialism and for workers to conquer state power.

Dominguez (1989) and Smith (1988) both concede that foreign policy decision-making and construction of objectives and concerns of Cuban foreign affairs is one of the most centralised areas in a state in which production, institutions, and questions of distribution and the organisation of social life is highly centralised. However, Dominguez (1989) also notes that this centralised decision-making process cannot be reduced to a single person. Rather it is the result of a multi-level and coordinated policy and actions of different groups, organisations, ruling parties and individuals in Cuba. Gonzalez and Ronfeldt (1986) and Smith (1988) point to the necessity for understanding the role of ideology in the operationalisation of Cuban foreign policy interests and motivations and their particular conception of national security.

It has always been a central security goal of the Cuban government to maintain the survival of the Revolution and the institutions, ideas and organization of production that the revolution has transformed since 1959 (Dominguez, 1989; Saney, 2004; Saney, 2009). A further goal has been the construction of a new Cuba, with a new humanist identity with values opposed to individualist values that are the core features in capitalist societies (Guevara, 1965). That is, the survival of the revolution and the example that a new society built on different economic ideological structures provides to the world, is one of the central goals of internationalism. Proletarian internationalism at the same time means subordinating the domestic needs of Cuba to the needs of the struggle for socialism on a world scale, and for the national liberation of the oppressed peoples (Saney, 2009; Castro, 1989; Castro, 1991).

As a self-declared Marxist-Leninist state, Cuban foreign policy can be described as following a Leninist prescription of “theory and then practice.” As the First Communist Party Congress in 1975 in Cuba declared, the initial point of departure of Cuban foreign policy as subordination of the needs of the struggle for national liberation and advances in social movements around the world, to the needs of Cuba (Smith, 1988). Moreover, Article 12 of the Cuban Constitution of 1976 (which was approved by a referendum in which 98% of the electorate participated, and carried out amendments up until 2002), declares the proletarian internationalist and anti-imperialist principles of the Cuban state (Constitution of the Republic of Cuba, 2003)<sup>44</sup>. The Second

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<sup>44</sup> “ARTICLE 12. The Republic of Cuba espouses the principles of anti-imperialism and internationalism, and a) ratifies its aspirations to a valid, true and dignified peace for all states, big or small, weak or powerful, based on respect for the independence and sovereignty of the peoples and the right to self-determination; b) establishes its international relations based on the principles of equality of rights, self-determination of the peoples, territorial integrity, independence of states, international cooperation for mutual and equitable benefit and interest, peaceful settlement of disputes on an equal footing and based on respect and the other principles proclaimed in the United Nations Charter and in other international treaties which Cuba is a party to [...] d) advocates the unity of all Third World countries in the face of the neocolonialist and imperialist policy which seeks to limit and subordinate the sovereignty of our peoples, and worsen the economic conditions of exploitation and oppression of the underdeveloped nations [...] recognizes the legitimacy of the struggle for national liberation, as well as of armed resistance to aggression; and considers that its solidarity with those under attack and with the peoples that struggle for their liberation and self-determination constitutes its internationalist duty; i) bases its relations with those countries building socialism on fraternal friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance, founded on the common objectives of the construction of a new society [...]

Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC), which was held in Havana from December 17-20, 1980, passed a Resolution of International Policy, in which the Congress expresses approval of the international activity of the Cuban Revolution (PCC in Taber, 1981). The text reads:

*The Congress notes that the key aim of Cuba's internationalist policy has been and is its contribution to the cause of socialism, the liberation of peoples, progress and peace. The Cuban Revolution's foreign policy is based on Marxist-Leninist principles; proletarian internationalism [...] Aware that the Cuban people's historical goals are the same as those of other peoples, our free and sovereign homeland subordinates its national interests to the higher objectives of socialist and communist progress; the people's liberation; the defeat of imperialism; and the eradication of colonialism, [neo-colonialism], and all other forms of oppression and discrimination of individuals and peoples (PCC, 1980).*

The same congress reaffirms its condemnation of the apartheid regime, and the PCC and Cuban civil society support for solidarity with the struggles of the peoples of Namibia and South Africa. Thus, official government policy since the earliest days of the Cuban revolutionary process has been support of the struggle against apartheid and condemnation of the apartheid regime at all international fora, symposia, gatherings and assemblies. The subsequent sections will look more into the policy of Cuba towards South Africa's struggle against apartheid and the different persons, organizations and groups involved in shaping, carrying out and continuing this policy.

Foreign policy can be conceptualised as a dialectic of domestic and international factors, which involve the actions and ideas of Cuban leaders but also includes consideration of the material base of leadership (forms of production, institutions and ideas) that shape the construction of the new Cuban identity and the struggle to build a socialist state. Ideology, and particularly the Marxist notion of proletarian internationalism and its role domestically, should be taken into account (Saney, 2009). Internationalism is seen as a core value of individual Cubans and the Cuban state – and plays a role in the dialectics of formation of a national identity and the “national interests” of the Cuban state (Taber, 1981; Cooper *et al.*, 2006, Erisman, 2000). Benedict Anderson's (1983) approach to the social construction of subjectivities, nations and the national “self” could serve as a useful approach, albeit outside of the sphere of IR theory. As stated in chapter two, postcolonial theory views the dividing lines between disciplines such as IR, history and development studies as superfluous, and incongruent with the needs and goals of social science (Young, 2001; Grovogui, 2003). A sociological approach to looking at the construction of a new Cuban identity would be a useful undertaking in order to shed light on the domestic role of ideology and foreign policy in Cuba. It is beyond the capacities of this thesis, but I point to it as an important element for further research and theorisation.

The notion of proletarian internationalism is central to Marxist ideology, and finds its origins in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels (Marx and Engels, 1898). In Section II, Marx and Engels write:

*The communists are distinguished from other working-class parties by this only: (1) In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. (2) In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.*

Marx and Engels (1898) write in the concluding section of the Manifesto, “In short, the communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things.” It ends with the renowned phrase, “Workingmen of all countries, unite!” Thus, the source of Cuban internationalism as a central guiding ideology can be found in early Marxist literature and is nothing novel to the Cuban revolution of 1959.

This thesis does not consider the ideology of internationalism as epiphenomenal but rather, by historicising Cuba’s revolution and its position in the global order, can locate this ideology within the state and the interaction between production, social forces, and ideational forces. Internationalism embodies the central goals and character of the Cuban revolution, as a moral precept that guides the construction of socialism, and is thus counter-posed to capitalist individualism and narrow bourgeois nationalism (Guevara, 1965). Cuban foreign policy thus can be viewed as constituting a postcolonial and anti-hegemonic attempt of a state to assert itself globally as a viable actor within international politics. Most importantly, it is anti-hegemonic in that as an underdeveloped, blockaded, marginalised, and geographically mal-positioned Third World state, its foreign policy recognises the historical significance of acting in solidarity with other states of the South, and pushing for change within the unequal and hierarchical global political economy (Grovoqui, 2003; Alzugaray, 2003a; Persaud, 2001). The creation of new values is thus central in this anti-hegemonic attempt at building a more humanistic social order and embedding it ideationally and culturally into the “idea” of a socialist Cuban nation (Alzugaray, 2004a; Young, 2001; Anderson, 1983).

Cuban civil society is not isolated or without agency in shaping Cuban national identity or policy making, and thus the idea, the spread and persistence of the idea of internationalist is significant to understanding how the Cuban leadership constructs objectives and motivations for its foreign policy, and how it is able to recruit a large number of Cubans to participate voluntarily in missions around the world (Roman, 1999; Armony, 2003). Cuba’s Constitution of 1976, which was approved by the National Assembly of People’s Power in 1992, and has added amendments since then, and centralises the importance of internationalism for the Cuban Revolution. In the Preamble, it states:

*[By] those who en masse carried out heroic internationalist missions; GUIDED by the ideas of José Martí and the political and social ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin; BASING OURSELVES on proletarian internationalism, on the fraternal friendship, aid, cooperation and solidarity of the peoples of the world, especially those of Latin America and the Caribbean; (CC, 1976).*

Cuba's internationalist foreign policy is an organic and integral component of both Cuba's domestic and international policies, and must be seen in the context of Cuba's history, politics and sociology, as well as the dynamic shift represented by the revolution of 1959 (Saney, 2004:82). The Marxist vision of society, along with the values surrounding internationalism and aid to other nations and peoples oppressed by the hegemonic world order and the West, is central to Cuban cultural and national identity, as well as is part of the internal legitimacy of the form of state. It resonates with the view of socialism in Cuba creating new men and new women in the process of transformation (Guevara, 1965).<sup>45</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

The abovementioned methods for analysing conflict can be applied to the study of foreign policy. That is, positing foreign policy and domestic policy as binary, as two separate facets of state public policy, is misleading. Isolating one from the other, as well as from their historical context would fail to explain the character of, objectives, identity, domestic dynamics and decision-making processes of Third World foreign policy. A Weberian approach which attempts to seek ideal types of states and foreign policy behaviour of states, and how states *should* behave, is what this thesis seeks to point to as an insufficient method for looking at the foreign policy of states in the Global South (Persaud, 2001). Rather, viewing domestic and foreign policy as dialectically interlinked, and taking into account various levels of analysis allows one to look at social forces, production, states, and world orders in order to better explicate a particular state's foreign policy.

Furthermore, it is important to highlight that there is not a singular typology of 'Third World Foreign Policy' that can unite the various geographical regions under discussion (Braveboy-Wagner, 2003b). Each state/society complex must be analysed in its own right, implementing a historical materialist approach that considers the origins of a particular form of state, its methods of production, its position in the world order, as well as the events that shaped domestic social forces and national identity in that particular state. The methods described are also significant in the analysis of Cuban foreign policy, because it would be inaccurate to describe Cuban state/society relations as monolithic, unitary or set in stone – or being of an equal nature or framework to Bolivia or Angola.

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<sup>45</sup> Che Guevara published later in the Uruguayan journal *La Marcha*, published under the title *Socialism and Man in Cuba*. He writes that in the attitude of Cuba's revolutionary fighters and internationalists, as well as the various volunteers within Cuba and that are sent around the world on solidarity missions, "can be glimpsed the man of the future" (2). He further states, "Proletarian internationalism is a duty, but it is also a revolutionary necessity. This is the way we educate our people."

A postcolonial approach to looking at Third World foreign policy is the opposite of an economic “history-as-analogy approach” which generalises history in an attempt to de-historicise and de-politicise relevant social phenomena (Grovgui, 2003; Mamdani, 1996). Instead, the Cuban state/society complex involves a multiplicity of actors that have set in motion a revolution of social relations and production as well as forms of state and institutions in motion which require a re-evaluation of the state concept itself; that is, since 1959, state structures, societal groups and individuals have challenged a number of ideas, values, institutions and forms of production and foreign policies that are accepted as natural and rational in capitalist societies have been transformed and are in flux (Persaud, 2004; Saney, 2004; Erisman, 2000).

Erisman (2000) argues that the Cuban Revolution must be conceptualised as an ongoing process, and not simplified as a “Cuban model” that is somehow stagnant and completed. The Cuban process is a dialectical and ongoing process that does not exist separated from historical and political developments around the world. It would be overly simplistic to assert, moreover, that capitalist relations of production and the resultant social relations were overturned after 1959. Rather, under the leadership of the July 26 movement<sup>46</sup>, the Cuban Communist party (PCC), the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), The Organization of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America (OSPAAL), the Cuban Anti-Apartheid Committee (CAAC), the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC) and local Committees of Defence of the Revolution (CDRs) have embarked on a number of structural transformations that are still in process – which in turn affect social relations in the country and have an impact in the region. This amalgamation of actors, structures and processes and their historical origins must be taken into account when analysing Cuban foreign policy.

In this chapter the historicist methodology and postcolonial theoretical framework has been used to illustrate the multi-levelled shifts which began to take place in Cuba, motivated primarily by domestic social forces in the context of the Cold War. The changing domestic reality in Cuba must be seen in a historicised framework of colonialism and the ‘post’ colonial world order which relegated Cuba into a state with very little autonomy and self-determination. Ideology in Cuban foreign policy has been central to shaping the new Cuban subject and identity following 1959, and has thus shaped the operationalisation of Cuban foreign policy. Viewing foreign policy as a dialectic of the domestic and international, with overlapping arrows of causality is thus a central analytical precept for looking at Third World foreign policy and hence Cuban foreign policy. In chapter four I provide a background of this shifting foreign policy, in terms of Cuban relations with the African continent

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<sup>46</sup> As will be seen in chapter five, the July 26 movement was one of the central organisations involved in overthrowing the Batista regime in January 1959. However, there were numerous other actors, civil society organizations, the student directorate, workers’ unions, peasant associations and political parties which participated in the Revolution of 1958-1959. The role of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC) in the making of Cuban foreign policy since 1959 is a topic that lies beyond the purview of this thesis – but it will be dealt with in chapter five in terms of Cuban-South African relations.

following 19509. In chapter five I look directly at Cuban-South African relations since 1959, and take into account the multiple actors and social forces which were involved in shaping and carrying out Cuban foreign policy towards South Africa.

# Chapter Four. Internationalism and Ideology in Practice: An Overview of Cuban Foreign Policy in Africa, 1959-1990.

*“Since its triumph on 1 January 1959, after the defeat of the pro-US dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista, the foreign policy of the Cuba revolutionary government has been intimately related to the liberation struggles of the African peoples against colonial and neo-colonial domination, imposed for centuries by foreign powers.”*(López Blanch, 2008)

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will briefly outline and review the literature on Cuba’s foreign policy in Africa from 1959 until 1991, with the purpose of contextualising Cuban-South African relations in a wider geographical and temporal framework. However, in the postscript I will also briefly look at Cuba’s post-Cold War medical diplomacy<sup>47</sup> and various forms of aid to developing countries in order to compare Cuba’s policy during the Cold War towards Africa and its policy after the Cold War and the end of apartheid.

A few researchers have recently begun to utilize primary documents, to interview participants and to try to gain access to officially declassified documents on the various sides. This recent research, in my view, has aided in dispelling the myth of a lack of Cuban autonomy in its foreign relations and decision-making processes (see López Blanch, 2004, 2005; Gleijeses, 2001; Gleijeses, 2006; Saney, 2006, 2009; Erisman, 2000; Dosman, 2008; Laffey and Weldes, 2008; Shubin, 2008; Campbell, 2008). Cuba’s policies, as well as decision-making processes are a significant empirical case study for the development of theories of international relations – which can help to open up the box of Third World foreign policy and international relations theory that traditionally neglects the experience of the South in the construction of macro-theory within IR and FPA.

Furthermore, this chapter demonstrates that despite modest research done on Cuba’s role in southern Africa and the repercussions and implications this had for the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, no scholarly work has been done yet on Cuba’s aid to and relationship with South Africa’s liberation forces. However, a significant chapter in the series *The Road to Democracy in South Africa* (2008), by the South African

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<sup>47</sup> Fensilver (1989, 1993) and Kirk and Huish (2007) and Huish and Spiegel (2008) have classified as “medical diplomacy” Cuba’s program of primary health care provision as a central foreign policy initiative. This consists of, among other things, sending doctors and health practitioners to perform free treatments in poor communities around the Third World, as well as the offer of studying medicine in the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) in Cuba, all expenses paid by the Cuban government, to students from underprivileged backgrounds around the Third World and from the U.S.

Democracy Education Trust (SADET), is the first academic work on this aspect of South African history and provides a significant precedent and guideline for the current work. In chapter five, I will elucidate my findings on the area of Cuban-South African relations from 1959 until today.

## ***CUBA AND AFRICA DURING THE COLD WAR***

In the context of a re-conceptualisation of the Cold War in which the Third World is central to the developments of international affairs - rather than as subordinate to the primary causal dynamics of the Cold War - I will attempt to demonstrate the numerous factors that point to Cuba's autonomous foreign policy and lack of alignment with the Soviet Union. Drawing on the few scholars who have carried out work in this area, I will also outline and attempt to illustrate how Cuba's policy towards states and actors outside Cuba is part of the ideology of a socialist state in the context of a highly unequal and hierarchical world order.

If the Cold War is conceptualised, as Saull (2005) argues, as a globalised social conflict between states and social forces, involving two rival social systems associated with forms of production and institutions associated with capitalism and socialism, then the role of the marginalised is placed at the centre of international politics and foreign policy. The contradictions and struggles in the post-Second World War international system resulted in a number of challenges to that system, from the New International Economic Order (NEIO) to the social revolutions in Cuba in 1959, Africa in the 1960s until the early 1990s - to Guatemala in the 1950s, Grenada, Iran and Nicaragua in 1979 and Indochina in the 1960s and 1970s (Barnes, 1999). If we historicize the time period known as the Cold War, and shift the locus of agency towards states and social forces in the Global South – then it is clear that not only was the subaltern part of the causal dynamics of the period known as the Cold War, but it was also one of the agents challenging the world order and forcing the U.S. and the Soviet Union to arrange their interests and decision-making around containing these social conflicts (Saull, 2005). The Cuban social revolution of 1959, the national liberation struggles in Africa, and Cuba's assistance to these movements must be understood in this context – rather than as Cuba acting as a proxy, as subordinate to the dictates of the Soviet Union.

At the height of the liberation wars in Africa, Cuba had sent more than 300,000 Cuban soldiers and more than 50,000 civilians and professional and technical assistance to aid the liberation struggles around the continent (Ankomah, 2008:b:10). There were 36,000 Cuban soldiers in Angola from 1975 to 1976, and they numbered 52,000 in 1988. So, by 1985 over 200,000 Cubans had been to Angola (Castro, 1986); 16,000 Cuban soldiers in Ethiopia in the latter period of 1977; there were also significant military missions in Congo Brazzaville, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Mozambique, and Benin (Gleijeses, 2003). Before 1975, there was an estimated 350,000 Portuguese settlers in Angola, and by the end of 1975 all but ten percent had fled the country, leaving Angola with almost no trained professionals (Harsh, 1985). From 1975 until 1978, Cuban doctors were the only professionals providing medical care in Angola (Harsh, 1985).

The assistance to NLMs across the African continent included military assistance and training, counter-intelligence and a number of other specialized military training, programs of technical and medical assistance. Medical and technical volunteers in the field of health care, education, engineering and construction worked in Angola, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Ethiopia, São Tome and Principe, Tanzania, Congo Brazzaville, Benin, Burkina Faso and Algeria and South Africa from the early 1990s (Gleijeses, 2006:3; interview with Kota, 2009). Cuba also took a few hundred Namibian refugees who had survived the Kassinga massacre carried out by the South African Defence Forces (SADF) in Angola in 1978 – while the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, and the USSR only took a handful (Gleijeses, 2009).

Between 1975 and 1988 there were in total over 70,000 Cuban aid workers in Africa, mostly doctors and skilled Cuban professionals who were part of agreements in which they provided their services free of charge, or at minimal cost to the host governments (Gleijeses, 2006:44). Moreover, since the beginning of Cuba's aid to Africa by offering scholarships to students to study in Cuba that began in the 1960s, over 40,000 Africans have studied in Cuba, all expenses paid by the Government of Cuba (López Blanch, 2008; Cooper *et al.*, 2006; Kirk and Huish, 2007).

At the same time, Cuba defied the U.S. government as well as Moscow by supporting guerrilla movements across Latin America and the Caribbean (Dosman, 2008; Gleijeses, 2006).<sup>48</sup> During the period of Cuban aid to African liberation movements, Cuba was faced with a number of constraints due to its regionally isolated position, the embargo imposed by Washington, along with threats and subversion by the U.S. government and difficult relations with the Soviet Union due to its policy of seeking détente with the U.S. (Gleijeses, 2006:8; Shubin, 1999). The U.S. had also managed to regionally isolate the Cuban state, by having it rejected from the Organisation of American States (OAS) (NGAPC, 1962; Gleijeses, 2002). A number of the constraints and costs that Cuba incurred due to their involvement on the African continent both on the ground and on the level of

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<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, this occurred in a context where support to National Liberation Movements (NLMs) was accepted within the UN. NLMs were exempted from the prohibition of the use of force in international law, which is enshrined in the UN Charter (Dugard, 2007). Additionally, states were encouraged by the UN to give support to NLMs, “despite the prohibition on military aid to armed bands operating from neighboring countries (Dugard, 2007:523).” Some of the NLMs highlighted by the UN were the African National (ANC), the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). However, Cuba's assistance to NLMs encountered the opposition of the U.S. government. In order to domestically legitimise Washington's position, hearings were held in the 1980s on “The Role of the Soviet Union, Cuba and East Germany in Fomenting Terrorism in Southern Africa” (Ellis and Sechaba, 1992:3). The U.S. government view that Cuba was fomenting terrorism in southern Africa, a view elucidated as well by Chester Crocker (1992), was not a majority opinion held by most states of the UN. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) had moreover approved of the legality of Cuban actions in assisting liberation movements across the continent, particularly in Angola (Dugard, 2007; Gleijeses, 2002; Ellis and Sechaba, 1992). This is in contrast to the doubtful legality of South Africa's actions in militarily intervening in Angola in 1975-76, whose intervention was condemned by the UN Security Council and the OAU, and whose intervention in 1978-1988 was again condemned by the UN Security Council (Dugard, 2007, Gleijeses, 2002; Dosman, 2008).

diplomatic relations, will be further delineated in the specific examples of foreign policy in the region that is tied to the motivations in establishing certain relations with Africa.

Cuba's involvement in Africa came as a surprise to the world and most of all to the United States (Brown, 2009; Dosman, 2008; Gleijeses, 2003; Shubin, 2008). Although the U.S. was aware of Cuban presence in Africa - including Ernesto (Che) Guevara's three-month clandestine trip to Africa in 1964 - it assumed that Cuba would have a minimal, if any, effect on the continent; thus Cuba's presence in the region was largely ignored until 1975 (Gleijeses, 2003:328). To add to this, very little has been written about Cuba's involvement in Africa, besides the work being done on Cuba's role in Angola from 1959 until 1988<sup>49</sup>. This chapter will look at the work of Gleijeses (1992a, 1996b, 1997, 2003, 2006) along with the work of Dosman (2008), López Blanch (2009, 2008), George (2005), Leogrande (1980) and Saney (2004, 2008) - which remain some of the few in-depth analyses and historical accounts of Cuba's involvement in Africa throughout the Cold War and after.

Jorge Risquet was Castro's central liaison in Africa and he was at the centre of Cuba's Africa policy throughout this period, and particularly in Angola (Gleijeses, 2006:3; Deutschmann, 1989; López Blanch, 2008). He will be referred to often in this chapter. Risquet was also one of the Cuban negotiation team at the 1988 tripartite New York Accords that led to the independence of Namibia and South Africa's withdrawal from Angola and Namibia. Extensive interviews with Risquet and other Cuban actors in formulating and carrying out Cuban policies related to Africa, offer insights into Cuba's policy, adding additional facets to understanding the dynamics of Cuban decision-making, goals and motivations for involvement in Africa (Gleijeses, 2006:4; Deutshman, 1989; Dosman, 2008; Risquet, 1989).

The next sections will delve further into these facets and voices in the history of African-Cuban relations since 1959. As opposed to what has been considered the authoritative voice of Namibia and Angola's road to formal independence and the negotiations and events which led to and influenced the New York Accords, by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, Chester Crocker - Risquet offers an entirely different light on the period which preceded the New York Accords and the events and actions which culminated in South Africa's decision to give in to the major demands which they had refused in all the previous negotiations (Dosman, 2008:225). This will be discussed in the final three sections of this chapter.

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<sup>49</sup> The key scholars (hailing from IR, History and Sociology) in this area are Piero Gleijeses, Isaac Saney, Edgar Dosman, Edward George and López Blanch, whose work are extensively cited in this chapter and in chapter five.

## **CUBA INITIATES RELATIONS WITH AFRICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS: ALGERIA, 1961-1965**

Cuba's relations with Africa began before the fall of the Batista dictatorship in Cuba on January 1, 1959, while Cubans were still waging a struggle against the US-supported Fulgencio Batista and his government (Gleijeses, 1996b). Cubans involved in the struggle to overthrow Batista often printed stories about the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN), the tortures by the French and the battle for independence in the Cuban newspaper *Bohemia* (Gleijeses, 1996b:161). Many in the Cuban leadership believed the two revolutions were evolving along similar lines - and the printing of FLN struggle often recalled Cubans fighting the dictatorship, since it was not possible to print stories directly attacking Batista's regime at the time (Gleijeses, 1996b:161; Deutshman, 1989). Cuba established relations with the FLN in 1961 and openly embraced the FLN's cause at the UN; it was alone in the Western Hemisphere in recognizing the Provisional Government of the Republic of Algeria's president Ben Youssef Ben Khedda on June 27, 1961 (Gleijeses, 1996b:160-161).

Algeria's independence was won on July 3, 1962, and in September Ahmed Ben Bella was elected prime minister. Immediately travelling to New York to attend his country's admission to the UN, he briefly met U.S. president Kennedy in Washington on October 15th and flew the next day to Havana (Gleijeses, 1996b). This was October 16: the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis (Gleijeses, 1996b:162). With Washington's open dissent, Ben Bella visited Cuba, stating:

*We will never forget all you did for our refugees in Morocco and Tunisia. We will never forget how you cared for our orphans and our wounded. Comrade Fidel Castro, the National Liberation Front of Algeria has awarded only one medal of honor. We have awarded it to you (Ben Bella quoted in Gleijeses, 1996b:159).*

The assistance that Cuba had provided to Algeria's liberation movement was evident by Ben Bella's symbolic trip and his speeches in Cuba. January 1962 marked Cuba's first military assistance to Africa: a Cuban ship brought weapons to the FLN (Gleijeses, 1996b:160; Leogrande, 1980:9). The same boat returned to Cuba with 76 wounded FLN fighters and 20 war orphans from refugee camps that would study and grow up in Cuba and eventually return to Algeria (Gleijeses, 1996b). Cuba additionally continued to aid Algeria, and at the request of Ben Bella a medical mission was sent in May 1963 which marked the beginning of Cuba's technical assistance to Third World countries (Gleijeses, 1996b:165; Kirk and Huish, 2007). However, this assistance had essentially begun in 1960 with the granting of scholarships to students from the Republic of Guinea to study in Cuba free of charge (López Blanch, 2008; Gleijeses, 1996b). According to Cuba's Minister of Public Health at the time, it was

like a beggar offering his help - but the Cubans knew Algeria needed it more than they did<sup>50</sup> (Gleijeses, 1996b:166).

The significance of Cuba's relationship with Algeria is that it defies the image of Cuba as a sinister Soviet proxy, and provides an indication into Cuba's motivation for constructing its foreign policy. As will be explored in the coming chapters, the role of principle and pragmatism in Cuban foreign policy need to be further explored in the attempt to explain, understand and predict Cuban foreign policy. When Ben Bella asked for Cuban aid to repel the Moroccan invasion of the Algerian border posts of Hassi-Beida and Tindjoub on September 25, 1963, the Cubans did not hesitate to respond, despite the timing coinciding with the worst hurricane to hit Cuba in its history and risking a large sugar contract with Morocco and the wrath of France's president de Gaulle (Gleijeses, 1996b:174). As the Cubans - along with Cuban military equipment - prepared to repel the Moroccans, a ceasefire was signed on 29 October, 1963 in Bamako, Mali (Gleijeses, 1996b:179).<sup>51</sup> It is questionable whether the Cuban arrival played a role in pushing Morocco's King Hassan to agree on a ceasefire. What is known is that Morocco had military superiority until the Cubans arrived, and additionally both Moroccan and international press had overestimated the Cuban equipment and the number of Cubans arriving at Oran (Gleijeses, 1996b:181). The Cubans did not leave without offering training to the Algerians and providing medical services to Algerian troops along with civilian populations in the areas they were involved in military training (Gleijeses, 1996b:182).

With the overthrow of Ben Bella in a coup on 19 June, 1965, the U.S. openly rejoiced (Gleijeses, 1996b:189). Following the coup, Castro delivered a scathing speech aimed at the coup leaders Boumediene and Abdelaziz Bouteflika, calling it a "moment of shame [...] a fratricidal act, against the government and people of Algeria"; the coup was also condemned by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) (Gleijeses, 1996b:190).<sup>52</sup> The Cuban operation in Algeria had been largely covert, and both soldiers and doctors had left their families voluntarily without revealing their destination or the period of time of their stay (Gleijeses, 2003). Originally organized in secrecy, the story was told for the first time by Fidel Castro in a speech in October 1963:

*Men and weapons from our country crossed the Atlantic in record time to fight side by side with the Algerian revolutionaries...Distance did not prevent us from being the first to arrive...We, a*

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<sup>50</sup> Algeria, at independence, was faced with a severe economic crisis, as well as the destruction of seven years of civil war that has been described as the bloodiest war of liberation on the African continent (Gleijeses, 1996b:171). There was a mass exodus of skilled workers, mainly French settlers, numbering close to 800,000, that left the country almost entirely without doctors and skilled professionals (Gleijeses, 1996:171).

<sup>51</sup> The press had initially been shocked at the Cuban arrival with military equipment at Oran, with reports flooding the Western media; but soon after the Bamako ceasefire, the press lost all interest in the Cuban presence (Gleijeses, 1996b:180).

<sup>52</sup> Boumediene closed the offices of Cuban *Prensa Latina* in Algeria, but eventually relations improved; however, they never returned to the same warmth that they had the first years of contact between the two young revolutions (Gleijeses, 1996b:191).

*small country relentlessly threatened by the imperialists, sent some of our best weapons to the Algerian people* (Castro quoted in Gleijeses, 1996b:190).

## **MOTIVATIONS OF CUBAN FOREIGN POLICY**

The history of Cuba's internationalism, its activist revolutionary ethos guiding its aid to liberation struggles in the Third World as well as volunteers aiding in the fight against poverty and oppression thus began in Algeria in the earliest days of the Cuban Revolution – before Cuba established close ties with the Soviet Union and before Fidel Castro became president of Cuba (Gleijeses, 1996b:186; Gleijeses, 2006:49). It was Cuba's president Osvaldo Dorticos Torrado and Che Guevara who spoke out in favour of African liberation movements and against the apartheid regime in South Africa at the UN and diplomatic summits, in the early years of the Cuban Revolution (López Blanch, 2008). Cuba's presence in Algeria allowed it to make contact with the various African guerrilla movements, specifically those of the Portuguese colonies (Gleijeses, 1996b:186). Due to the prestige of the Algerian revolution in Africa, a number of African guerrilla movements were represented in Algiers (Gleijeses, 1996b:170-186).<sup>53</sup> The special relationship between Algeria and Cuba explains why Algiers became the headquarters of Cuba in Africa in the early years of its involvement on the continent (Gleijeses, 1996b:186).

In December 1964, Ernesto “Che” Guevara travelled to Africa visiting a number of countries over a period of three months, in which he indicated Havana's increased interest on the continent (Deutschmann, 1989; Galvez, 1999:28-29; Gleijeses, 1996b:188). He stopped first in Algiers, meeting with Ben Bella, and continuing on to Bamako, Brazzaville, Conakry, Accra, Cotonou, and another two times to Algeria and to Egypt (Gleijeses, 1996b:188). Gleijeses (1996a:5) argues that Cuba's pre-1975 foreign policy in Africa can be divided into three distinct periods: first is the pre-1964 Cuban involvement in Algeria; second and coinciding with Che Guevara's trip to Africa, is the period between 1964 and 1966; last is the post-1966 to 1975 period, marked by the large Cuban involvement in Guinea Bissau, which according to Gleijeses represents a period of ‘maturity’ in its African relations. However, Cuba's involvement continued after 1975 and remains largely overlooked in scholarship, making any kind of accurate typology difficult.

## **EXPANDING RELATIONS IN AFRICA: FROM THE CONGOTO GUINEA BISSAU, 1964-1974**

Guevara's Africa visit in 1964 apparently had two purposes. As Cuban Minister of Industry, he was promoting trade relations with African states. At the same time Guevara was strengthening ties with revolutionary movements in the region and expressing its support for and solidarity with the anti-colonial struggles (Galvez, 1999:28). According to Jorge Serguera, Cuba's Ambassador to Algeria at the time, the alliance between Cuba and

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<sup>53</sup> This was partly due to Ben Bella's speech at the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in May 1963 which had moved the entire assembly (Gleijeses, 1996b:186).

Algeria had as its main aim, “to support the liberation movements and independent nations against colonialism, and imperialism in the economic, political and military spheres in Africa” (Serguera quoted in Galvez, 1999:28). After Che’s meeting with the representative of the Partido Africano da Independencia da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC) in Algeria in 1964, the first Cuban shipment of arms to sub-Saharan Africa was carried out (Gleijeses, 1996b:189). Che’s encounter with Agostinho Neto and Lucio Lara, along with other leaders of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) took place in 1965 (Gleijeses, 1996a:7). The MPLA asked for only one thing from Cuba in the beginning of Cuban-Angolan relations: military instructors (Gleijeses, 1996a:7).

Upon return to Havana, Che Guevara began to argue for the need to organize personnel in order to assist the Africa liberation movements (Galvez, 1999:33). The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba (FAR) began to locate members who would be willing to participate in the missions, and contacted Victor Dreke, a young black Cuban who had fought in the Cuban revolution as well as in the Escambray against the CIA-organized counterrevolutionary paramilitaries (Galvez, 1999:33; Waters, 2002:9-10). From April to November 1965, Dreke would be in charge of organizing a group of Cuban soldiers as second-in-command under Che Guevara for the internationalist mission in Congo Leopoldville, and then from 1966 to 1986 Dreke would head Cuba’s military mission in Guinea-Bissau (Waters, 2002:11; Gleijeses, 2003)<sup>54</sup>.

There were around 400 Cubans in central Africa in the summer of 1965 (Gleijeses, 1996a:6). According to Gleijeses (1996a:6), Che Guevara’s column in the Congo was not one of great battles but rather a story of 120 people thrown into a difficult situation in a completely alien context. On the other hand, Jorge Risquet’s column in Congo Brazzaville aided the host government from falling in a military coup in 1966 through diplomacy and without having to shed a drop of blood (Dreke, 2002; Gleijeses, 1996a:6; Deutshmann, 1989). Risquet’s column additionally trained members of the MPLA in Congo-Brazzaville as well as in the Angolan enclave of Cabinda (Gleijeses, 1996a:7). In the Congo, Che’s column withdrew quietly - having realized that the Congo was not ready for revolution and Cuba’s assistance would not be of much use (Gleijeses, 1996a:6). The Cubans withdrew in 1967, but as in Algeria left a useful legacy in their wake: the doctors who were attached to the military columns had carried out the first vaccinations in the country against polio (Gleijeses, 1996a:6). Additionally, 254 young Congolese, were given scholarships to study in Cuba (Gleijeses, 1996a:6).

Notably, following Guevara’s trip and the organisation of the first internationalist missions to sub-Saharan Africa, the 1960s was a period of change in Cuba’s relations with the continent (Gleijeses, 1996a:6). They no

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<sup>54</sup> In Gleijeses’ (2003) book, he interviews a large number of central participants in Cuban foreign policy, from commanders to soldiers and doctors. Dreke is extensively interviewed for Gleijeses’ book. For more extensive accounts of Cuba’s policy in Africa from 1969 to 1975 Gleijeses’ (2003) book remains the central reading, providing insight into both U.S. and Cuban policy – which have always been conflicting policies. Gleijeses relies in mainly primary sources: mainly declassified government and military documents and interviews. However, Saney’s (2006, 2009) and Dosman’s (2008) work are also significant for looking at Cuban relations with Angola during this same time period, also utilising primary sources.

longer believed that revolution was around the corner but rather focused on assisting the anti-colonial resistance as well as providing assistance that is development-oriented (Gleijeses, 1996a:6). Guinea-Bissau became the focus of Cuba's Africa policy from 1967 until 1974, and at the request of the PAIGC the first Cuban military instructors arrived in 1966 (Gleijeses, 1996a:7). The Cubans would remain there until the country gained its independence in 1974. It was Cuba's longest and largest intervention in Africa until Angola in 1975, as well the most successful campaign (Dreke, 2002; Gleijeses, 1996a:7; Gleijeses, 1997:45).

According to the leaders of the PAIGC, the Cuban role in Guinea-Bissau was decisive in its struggle against the Portuguese for independence (Gleijeses, 1997:45).<sup>55</sup> In light of this, the literature on the war in Guinea-Bissau is almost entirely silent on the role and aid of Cuba and much remains to be studied and recorded (Gleijeses, 1997:45; Gleijeses, 2003). In July 1965, a group of Cape Verdeans who had been studying in Europe boarded a ship in Algiers headed for Havana (Gleijeses, 1997:48). The PAIGC was involved in fighting for the independence of colonial rule for Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde islands (Gleijeses, 1997:48). The situation that Cubans in Guinea-Bissau encountered was completely different from what they had experienced in the Congo - the Cubans were impressed by the discipline and commitment of the PAIGC anti-colonial liberation movement. U.S. reports characterized the PAIGC as "the most effective liberation organization in the Portuguese African territories" (Gleijeses, 1997:46-54).<sup>56</sup>

By April of 1967, Victor Dreke led almost 60 Cubans in Guinea-Bissau, many of whom had previously been in the Congo (Gleijeses, 1997:14)<sup>57</sup>. Guinea-Bissau gained its independence in 1974, after Portugal had received aid for its war effort to suppress the liberation movement from Britain, France and West Germany; Portugal additionally was supplied with weapons by the United States government for suppression of the liberation movement (Gleijeses, 1997:57-58). Cubans were the only foreigners who fought in Guinea-Bissau, with the exception of Cape Verdean students who had been trained in Cuba (Gleijeses, 1997:61-62). Cabral and the PAIGC maintained throughout the war that no foreigners were fighting in Guinea-Bissau and that they would refuse any help from foreigners because Guineans wanted to reassert their own history and identity. This was based on the fact that Cabral and the leaders of the PAIGC had always expressed that they did not want any foreign help, with exception of the Cubans (Gleijeses, 1997:59-64). The leaders of the PAIGC admired the Cuban revolution of 1959 and saw a common identity, historical experiences and cultural affinity among Cubans and Africans - since Cuban ancestry in large part is from African slaves (Gleijeses, 1997:59-64). Additionally,

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<sup>55</sup> The orders from Amilcar Cabral, central leader of the PAIGC, were that the soldiers be black or dark mulatto Cubans (Gleijeses, 1997:49; Galvez, 1999:34).

<sup>56</sup> The Portuguese general Arnaldo Schultz, upon arriving in Guinea-Bissau in 1964, predicted that the war would be over within six months; he was apparently "sadly disillusioned" when he departed four years later (Gleijeses, 1997:55).

<sup>57</sup> Dreke was in Conakry when he learned of Che Guevara's murder in Bolivia, in October of 1967 (Gleijeses, 1997:55).

according to the leaders of the PAIGC, the Cubans made no demands and offered unconditional aid, along with medical care during a period when there were no native doctors operating in the country (Gleijeses, 1997:64). From the arrival of the first Cuban doctors in 1966 until 1968, there were no other medical personnel than Cubans in the country (Gleijeses, 1997:68)<sup>58</sup>.

## ***CUBA IN THE HORN OF AFRICA, 1977***

As of 2006, only a limited number of documents have been declassified of the Cuban archives that relate to Cuba's policy in Ethiopia (Gleijeses, 2006:13). Cuba's involvement in Ethiopia and the debate on its motivation to do so, has received the largest number of criticisms of any of its policies in Africa, given the subsequent oppressive policies of the Mengistu regime, particularly towards the Eritrean liberation movement (Gleijeses, 2006:13). The Soviet Union aided the Mengistu regime throughout its existence, and this has led to criticisms of Havana acting as a proxy of the Soviet Union in its aid to the regime in Addis Ababa in 1977 (Gleijeses, 2006:13).

In 1974, a military junta led by Mengistu Haile Mariam overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie (Gleijeses, 2006:12). In July of 1977, Somalia's invasion of the Ogaden region of eastern Ethiopia unnerved the regime and led Mengistu to urgently request Cuban aid on November 25, 1977 (Gleijeses, 2006:13). Cuba, initially hesitant, responded by sending 16,000 Cuban troops to assist Addis Ababa to repel the invasion after Castro made a trip to the region in order to attempt to diplomatically find a resolution to the crisis (Gleijeses, 2006:13). In April 1977, Cuba had sent doctors and military instructors, but no combatants. As the situation in Ethiopia deteriorated, Cuba finally agreed to send aid; the Cuban troops helped thwart a Somali occupation of the Ogaden region (Gleijeses, 2006:14).

It is important to contextualise Cuba's involvement in Ethiopia, in order to put criticisms of acting at the behest of the Soviet Union as a junior player in a more adequate historical framework. Although depicted as a rogue affair, or as Fidel Castro's calculated attempts to assist the Soviet Union in gaining friends and trading partners, Somalia's actions in invading the Ogaden had been widely condemned throughout the African continent (see Dominguez, 1978; Mesa Lago, 1982; Falk, 1986). The context in which this event took place was one of widespread recognition by the OAU that Somalia had violated the principle of sovereignty, which was the hallmark of the OAU. According to the US National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Cuba and the Soviet Union had legality on their side and the support of African states (Gleijeses, 2006:13). Castro had originally

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<sup>58</sup> This scenario would repeat itself in Angola, since the wars for liberation and their eventual triumph in all cases led to the mass exodus of professionals and doctors from the former Portuguese colonies, illustrated most evidently in the case of Angola (Gleijeses, 2006:10).

denied sending troops to Ethiopia, since it would be impossible for a small and resource weak country to maintain two significant military missions in Africa simultaneously (Gleijeses, 2006:14).

It is difficult to ascertain events for certain around this mission, since the only available documents are from the US, public speeches by Cuban leadership, a few interviews, Soviet documents and a few eastern European documents (Gleijeses, 2006:13; Taber, 1981).<sup>59</sup> Prior to Cuba's decision to send aid to Addis Ababa Castro visited Somalia and Ethiopia in March 1977, as part of a widely publicized tour of Africa in March and April 1977 (Deutschmann, 1989:19). Castro had attempted to convene a meeting between the two leaders aimed at regional conflict resolution (Taber, 1981:115). In relation to the Eritrean question, Cuba's policy was to refuse to fight in the region against the Eritrean rebels. The available evidence indicates that the Cubans adamantly refused to be used as actors in the Ethiopia's government's aggression against the Eritrean rebels: the troops were to be used solely to repel the foreign aggression (Gleijeses, 2006:15; Taber, 1981:116)<sup>60</sup>.

In terms of Cuba acting as a proxy in Ethiopia, it is known that the Cuban decision to aid Ethiopia was met by tacit approval by the Soviets and that the two governments consulted one other closely on the operation (Gleijeses, 2006:15). However, agreement on policy does not equal subservience. Much remains to be researched in this particular area of Cuban-African relations. According to Gleijeses (2006:16):

*Until more documents on the Horn of Africa are released from the Cuban archives, it will be impossible to assert categorically that the Soviet Union played no role in Havana's decision to send troops. However, in my many years of research on Cuban foreign policy I have not discovered a single instance in which Cuba intervened in another country at Moscow's behest.*

Agreeing with this assessment, U.S. National Security Archives furthermore assert that Cuba's Africa policy decisions have not always been congruent to its relationship with the Soviet Union or Soviet foreign policy. Cuban foreign policy rather reflects its "activist revolutionary ethos and its determination to expand its own political influence in the Third World at the expense of the West" (quoted in Gleijeses, 2006:16; Shubin, 2008).

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<sup>59</sup> What is known is that in the early years of the popular revolution in Ethiopia, Castro had been impressed by Mengistu and the revolution, while he was categorically unimpressed by Somali president Siad Barre (Gleijeses, 2006:15). The facts of what was happening on the ground in 1977 were unclear for many, including Castro, although we now know that the Mengistu regime was becoming increasingly oppressive during this period, particularly towards the Eritrean rebels (Gleijeses, 2006:15; Taber, 1981:115). Additionally, Cuba was suspicious of U.S. involvement in Somalia's invasion, and although the U.S. did not directly support the invasion, it is now clear that the U.S. government began arming the Somali regime in 1977, shortly after it cut off aid to Ethiopia (Gleijeses, 2006:14; Taber, 1981:115).

<sup>60</sup> Eritrean liberation forces have additionally confirmed that Cuban troops were not involved in Ethiopia's Eritrean campaign (Taber, 1981:116).

## **CONCLUSION**

This chapter has attempted to provide an overall view of the history of Cuba's relations with African states<sup>61</sup> and liberation movements from 1959 until the late 1980s. The chapter, as an overview of a large period of time and numerous multi-faceted struggles around a variety of geographical regions, involving actors and events taking place at multiple levels of analysis, inevitably overlooks the more nuanced and complex features and multiplicity of actors of each policy and the complex events and decision-making processes related to each historical event. This by no means absolves this author of the responsibility of demonstrating the complex historical factors and agents involved. I attempt to integrate multiple levels, from the individuals involved in decision-making, to combatants, institutions and global pressures, recognizing that any adequate treatment of the time period and policies would necessitate much more in-depth treatment, which is outside the scope of this thesis.

To summarise the current chapter and move on to the next chapter which deals with Cuba's relations with South Africa, this chapter tries to form of a broad overview of events as well as the major accounts and explanations of these events in scholarly work, as a prelude to looking into Cuban relations with South Africa's liberation movement. I have highlighted the accounts of those scholars who give voice to the marginalised actors such as the Cubans and various liberation forces because I argue in this thesis that doing so is a necessary part of and precondition to engaging in analyses of foreign policy, particularly when looking through the lens of subaltern actors. The scholars cited in this chapter thus aid in providing an epistemological framework that takes into account the position of the subaltern, as well as taking into account positionality, identity and power in the making of foreign policy. The central role of ideologies and principles of internationalism and anti-colonialism have been treated by these authors, and serve as important examples for engaging with and historicising Cuban foreign policy. It is commonplace in documents of official interlocutors of the state's foreign policy, such as Fidel Castro, Jorge Risquet and Victor Dreke, to point out that Cuba's involvement in assisting the MPLA against apartheid aggression is due to an ideological conception of internationalism as a duty, and part of constructing a new post-colonial and socialist Cuban identity (Castro, 1985; Deutschman, 1989; Risquet, 1989; Waters, 2002).

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<sup>61</sup> With exception of southern Africa, which will be dealt with in the next chapter.

# Chapter Five. A Heterodox Foreign Policy: Cuban Relations with South African Liberation Movements

*“The very fact that so many Cubans died in the Angolan struggle I think will never be forgotten by our generations. That’s why I am not surprised that in the Freedom Park there is a monument to the Cubans who died in Angola. It is well worth visiting. So for us, you cannot separate our political development, the struggle in South Africa, from the Cubans.” (Interview with Aziz Pahad, 2009)*

*“[We] should not forget those people who assisted us in getting liberated. Cuba is one of those countries.”(Interview with Zou Kota, 2009)*

*“But Cuba was actually playing this extraordinary international role of solidarity, really being a principle force of bringing together the so-called developing world, the anti-colonial movement, the anti-imperialist movement, which perhaps at times the Soviet Union wasn’t so vociferous about...” (Interview with Ronnie Kasrils, 2009)*

*“I was personally conscious that Cuba, along with people so many other countries of the world and perhaps Cuba par excellence, had shown solidarity with the people of South Africa They had played an instrumental role in the process that lead to the liberation of Namibia. It also helped the final coming of democracy in South Africa, not least the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale and that significance for the people of South Africa, which was instrumental in leading to negotiations.” (Interview with Michael Lapsley, 2009)*

*“It was no surprise that the first country we recognized diplomatically after the 1994 inauguration of Mandela - was Cuba. And the first country that we established new embassies with was Cuba – it was no surprise to those who had come through the ranks of the liberation movement.” (Interview with Aziz Pahad, 2009)*

*“Fidel was one of the first heads of state whom we asked to pay a state visit to our country.” (Nelson Mandela, 1995)*

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter delves into the history of relations between Cuba and South Africa’s liberation movements, from the early days of Cuba’s Revolution in the early 1960s until 1994. I will do so by dedicating the first part of the chapter to Cuban relations with Angola and the Namibian liberation movement, as this is inseparable from Cuban relations with South Africa. Without looking extensively into Cuba’s role in Angola, any look at relations between Cuba and the liberation movements would ignore one of the most significant aspects (Saunders, 2008; TRC, 1999). Angola formed the basis of much of Cuba’s support to South African liberation movements, and the struggles in Angola had a significant impact on domestic developments in South Africa, as well as on the Namibian struggle for independence. In the latter part of this chapter I will look at Cuban relations with South Africa since 1994, after official diplomatic relations between the two countries commenced following the ANC electoral victory in 1994.

Given that Cuba had no official relations with the South African regime from 1959 until 1994, and they maintained extensive relations with the liberation movements – only the latter is looked at. It is significant to note that before the Cuban Revolution of 1959, Cuba maintained almost no substantive relations with the African continent. Only with the transformationist agenda beginning in the early 1960s did Cuba begin to form relations with other states and actors in the Third World (Gleijeses, 2002).

I rely almost entirely on the qualitative interviews that were conducted with former leaders of South Africa's liberation struggle, as well as with senior commanders within the former Umkhonto we Sizwe carried out in the course of 2009. Other significant references include the work of López Blanch (2008) as part of the SADET initiative, the prologue in Spanish by Thenjiwe Mtintso (2008), former South African ambassador to Cuba, speeches of ANC and SACP leadership and Cuban leadership, as well as some of the work of Gleijeses (1996a, 1996b, 1997, 2003, 2006, 2009).

As discussed in chapter three, this analysis of Cuban foreign relations with South Africa's liberation movement implements various levels of analysis: the state level, sub-state and societal level, regional and global/structural level. As a Third World country, it is impossible to separate state policy from global structural factors in terms of analysing foreign policy, at the same time as the state-level of analysis cannot be overlooked (Braveboy-Wagner, 2003b). The state is the main interlocutor or organism through which foreign policy is translated in Cuba, but the state-led foreign policy of Cuba cannot overlook the sphere of domestic civil society in the making of foreign policy. The chapter will begin by contextualizing the regional and global context of Cuban foreign policy towards South Africa. That is, the relations between Cuba and South Africa cannot be separated from Cuba's relations with southern Africa - Angola and Namibia in particular (Interview with Kasrils, 2009; TRC, 1999).

## ***EARLY CONTACT WITH LIBERATION MOVEMENTS***

Cuba's relations with African liberation movements began as early as 1959, 1960 and 1963 when members of the Cuban leadership travelled to Algiers to build formal relations with the National Liberation Front (FLN) (Gleijeses, 1996a). Both Ernesto (Che) Guevara and Raúl Castro travelled to Cairo in 1959 and 1960. In September of 1960, Fidel Castro delivered a strongly anti-imperialist speech at the United Nations General Assembly, which dealt in large part with issues facing African countries (Gleijeses, 1996a; Castro, 1960). As described in the previous chapter, Ernesto Che Guevara's trip to Africa in 1963 was also a significant turning point in strengthening Cuba's relationship with the various liberation movements around the continent. In interviews with former commanders of Umkhonto we Sizwe and senior members of the Umkhonto we Sizwe Military Veterans Association (MKMVA), a number of senior MK leadership met with Guevara in Algiers that year to discuss strengthening relations, the nature of the armed struggle and a number of other questions related to

the role of liberation movements on the continent (Interview with Senior MK Commander, 2009; Mxolisi Ndlovu, 2006; Thomas, 1997). This relationship began originally at the political level and occurred in the space of international institutions and bodies which grouped together the countries of the Third World on the basis of common history, common characteristics, and common challenges, as well as more clandestine meetings such as those of Guevara in Algiers and Tanzania in 1963 (Grovoqui, 2003; Young, 2001; Gleijeses, 2003; López Blanch, 2008; Interview with Senior MK Commander, 2009; Mxolisi Ndlovu, 2006; Younis, 2000; Kasrils, 2004).

In 1961 the first Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), was held in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Then president of Cuba, Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado, spoke out against the apartheid government of South Africa and its policies (López Blanch, 2008:1155). This occurred at a time when few Western governments dared to speak out against the South African government and its policies, and many were supporting as well as aiding the regime with weapons that were used to oppress the vast majority of South Africa's population (Mtintso, 2008; Mandela, 1991; López Blanch, 2008). Following Castro's speech at the UN in 1960, Dorticós Torrado's speech at the NAM summit, and Che Guevara's speech at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1964, Cuban officials began to speak out against the apartheid government and its internal policies at international conferences, summits, meetings and assemblies (López Blanch, 2008). Cuba repeatedly called for resolutions and definitive decisions on the elimination of the policy of apartheid in South Africa – and this was a policy that continued until 1994.

The quotes that commence this chapter indicate the very close nature of Cuban relations with South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle, voiced by some of the more prominent leaders and participants. The following sections will try to outline the general character of those relations, and the policy carried out by the Cuban regime and Cuban civil society. This chapter will thus reveal some of the details, motivations and character of Cuban relations with South Africa's liberation movement – recognizing that it is intimately tied to Cuba's overall regional policy in Africa and aiding Africa's anti-colonial struggle.

## ***RACE AND IDENTITY IN CUBAN FOREIGN POLICY***

The question of race, identity and subjectivity is largely absent from the field of IR and FPA (Persaud, 2001; Grovoqui, 2003). However, race oppression forms one of the underlying framework for the project of justifying and giving legitimacy to the European colonial project (Said, 1973; wa Thiong'o, 1986; Fanon, 1967; Sartre, 2001; Césaire, 1972; Tuastad, 2003). Thus "scientific racism" and the various theories that subordinated the colonised 'Other', carry their legacies in the entire Third World, and continue in various forms today. The combination of coercion and consent which was necessary to establish the hegemony of capitalist forms of production and domination, particularly for the colonial project, necessitated an entire regime of apologists to assist in the ideological/ideational forms of power which complemented the brute forms of coercion (Césaire,

1972; Said, 1973; Fanon, 1967); Tuastad, 2003). Within Cuban society and state structures, the question of race oppression and racial discrimination became a significant challenge of the process which began in 1959. As in other European colonies, the ideational force of racism dates back to the earliest period of European colonialism in the Caribbean and has had lasting effects on the island and within state structures and practices (Armony, 2003; Williams, 1970; NGAPC, 1962; López Blanch, 2008). Since the beginning of 1959, combating the legacies of racial oppression in its institutionalized, cultural, and ideational forms became one of the main goals of the revolutionary government. Combating racism and the legacies within the state and society was publicly pointed to by leaders within the new governing structures as an aim of the revolution (Saney, 2004; López Blanch, 2008). Fidel Castro, appearing on Cuban television in three months after the fall of Batista's government – declared that the most difficult of all problems that Cuba would face is to end racial discrimination (López Blanch, 2008; Saney, 2004).

With this background and the opinions of various participants as volunteers in African missions – Cuba's assistance to South Africa's struggle to end the apartheid government's brutal form of institutionalized racist rule can be seen in a longer historical context and within an ideational project that finds its roots in European colonialism and the post-1959 struggle to transform the social, political, cultural and economic state and institutions inherited from colonialism and the Washington-imposed neo-colonial order (Castro, 1991).

During Mandela's visit to Cuba in 1991 and following his speech at the Matanzas rally, Castro spoke of the legacy of racism in the world. He argued that apartheid in essence was no different from the European method of rule in Africa known as indirect rule – a policy of constructing institutions which are based on dividing 'natives' from 'non-natives'; where civil law applied to 'non-natives' and customary law by 'native authorities' would govern natives (Mamdani, 1996). He argued that apartheid was a product of, and intimately tied to the capitalist system and imperialism; that is, apartheid finds its origins in the capitalist system and the methods used for its expansion around the globe (Castro, 1991). In this speech, Castro argues something similar to what Mamdani (1996) argues regarding the nature of apartheid in South Africa, and the significance of combating the political and institutional legacy of colonialism. At a mass rally in Conakry, on March 15, 1976, Fidel Castro explained Cuba's motivations for assisting the Angolans:

*We Cubans have helped our Angolan brothers, in the first place because of a revolutionary principle, because we are internationalists, and in the second place, because our people are a Latin American people and they are a Latin-African people. More than 12 million Africans were taken to Cuba as slaves by the colonizers; an important part of Cuban blood is African blood. (Castro quoted in López Blanch, 2008:1159).*

Although it is overlooked within IR as a valid area of study, the legacy of racism, and the role of subjectivity, identity within the post-colonial order is imperative to the postcolonial theoretical critique (Grovoqui, 2003;

Saney, 2004; Young, 2001). The role of Cuban identity and racism became a salient part of the attempts within Cuba to create a new social order, forms of production and foreign policy (Saney, 2004). The formation of organisations such as OSPAAL and ICAP, and meeting of the Tri-Continental held in Cuba, had the sole purpose to engage with the area of international solidarity, particularly within the Third World (Young, 2001). In speeches of Cuban leaders and in published interviews of participants in internationalist missions, the legacy of slavery and subjectivity in Cuba is pointed to as forming the salient reasons why Cuban internationalism is viewed as a moral obligation (Saney, 2009; Glejeses, 2002; Risquet, 1989; Castro, 1989; Castro, 1991; Waters, 2002).

## ***CUBA IN SOUTHERN AFRICA***

A significant aspect of Cuba's solidarity was its voicing strong stance against the apartheid regime at international fora – from NAM to the UN General Assembly and various UNCTAD conferences. Cuba's support for UN Resolution 435<sup>62</sup> at every international forum on decolonization, as well as its support to the Angolan struggle to defend its independence from apartheid military incursions – was one of the most significant centrepieces of Cuban policy towards South African liberation movements. Cuba's role in Angola was also central to its policy towards the South African liberation movements, as it provided a territorial base of support to the movement in exile and the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). Angola was also a place where MK and SWAPO soldiers received military training, education and other skills from Cuban military instructors (Interview with Kasrils, 2009; Interview with Pahad, 2009; Interview with Nkadimeng, 2009; Mtintso, 2008; Kasrils, 2008). Alfred Nzo, then general secretary of the ANC, read a message in 1975 that reiterated South Africans' support for Cuba's assistance in Angola fighting alongside FAPLA, MK and SWAPO troops against the South African military invasion. He noted that Cuba's assistance to the Angolans was 'invaluable help for crushing South Africa's evil racist and imperialist aggression' (Nzo quoted in López Blanch, 2008).

At the First Congress of the Cuban Communist Party (PCC) Jorge Risquet Valdés stated that Cuba's assistance to and presence in Angola from 1975 was opening up the possibility of extending Cuba's assistance to the South African resistance (Risquet, 2002). In 1977 the Novo Katengue training centre for MK combatants was established (Interview with Kasrils, 2009; Motumi, 1994; López Blanch, 2008:1187). Interviews with Aziz Pahad (2009), Ronnie Kasrils (2009), Zou Kota (2009), John Nkadimeng (2009), Former Senior MK Veteran (2009), and Father Michael Lapsley (2009), who were all part of carrying out and day-to-day coordination of Cuban

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<sup>62</sup> In 1920 South Africa was given a League of Nations mandate over Namibia; Namibia had been a German colony since 1884. With the dissolution of the League of Nations, South African kept its control of Namibia, until independence in 1990. In 1966 the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) initiated its armed struggle against South African occupation. On May 4, 1978 SADF troops carry out airbourne attack on a SWAPO refugee camp in Cassinga, southern Angola. On September 29 of that year, the UN Security Council approved Resolution 435 which calls for Namibian independence and recognizes SWAPO as the "legitimate representative" of the Namibian people (Deutschmann, 1989; Glejeses, 2009).

relations or were involved in the liberation struggle in other capacities, whether with the ANC, MK or SACP, all point to the Cuban role in the southern African region - and Angola specifically - as fundamental to understanding Cuba's role in assisting the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa and for opposing apartheid aggression in southern Africa. These interviewees make the assessment that the role of Cuba in Angola, as well as Namibia, as central to speeding up the end of apartheid in South Africa and the independence of Namibia, and central to facilitating assistance to the South African liberation movements via southern African states.

## **ANGOLA 1975-1991**

The following section will outline Cuba's involvement in Angola beginning in 1975 and ending with the withdrawal of Cuban troops in 1991. As stated in the first chapter, it is impossible to separate the dynamics of the struggle within South Africa as well as the development of liberation movements without taking into account the political and military developments in the southern African region. For this reason, a large part of this chapter will deal with Cuba's role in Angola. It was Angola that laid the platform for strengthening direct engagement at the military and political level between Cuba and the liberation movements from South Africa (Interview with Ronnie Kasrils, 2009; Interview with Senior MK Commander, 2009; Interview with Aziz Pahad, 2009)<sup>63</sup>. Again, the wider regional context of Cuba's involvement in southern Africa is highlighted in order to demonstrate that Cuba, despite the widespread understanding of Cuba acting as a Cold War proxy, has consistently acted autonomously in its foreign policy towards Africa in which both ideological principles has been a significant feature. Cuba's support for revolutionary change in the Americas and Africa reached a high point in Angola in 1988 (George, 2005; Gleijeses, 2006:3). Before 1975 around 2,000 soldiers and aid workers had gone to Africa (Gleijeses, 2006:3). By 1988 the figures reached over 450,000 (Gleijeses, 2006; Freedom Park, 2008b).

Although much has been written on this period of the southern African liberation struggle, very little has been written on Cuban involvement from the perspective of participants (Dosman, 2008; Saney, 2004:81-83). Most accounts mention Cuba's involvement as a rental army of the Soviet Union, as a subservient player to the Cold War rivalry, as a rogue affair guided by the personality of one individual or mention the Cuban role in passing (see Bridgland, 1990, Mills, 1994; Gleijeses, 2006:5-8; Bauer and Taylor, 2005; Mesa Lago, 1982; Falk, 1986; Dominguez, 1978). The few accounts that take Cuban foreign policy in Africa as a serious area of study, with significant historical weight, avoiding the pitfalls of repeating simplistic and cynical characterizations of Cuban foreign policy, remain Gleijeses (2003, 2006), Saney (2006, 2009), Dosman, 2008 and López Blanch, 2008). These accounts also consistently reveal an autonomy of foreign policy, a formulation of aims and motives based

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<sup>63</sup> According to Harsch (1985:99): "Angola has opened its borders to refugees fleeing from repression: some 70,000 from Namibia, 6,500 from South Africa, and 20,000 from Zaire. The government has provided important political and military assistance to both the ANC and SWAPO".

on Cuban experiences and aims, and a self-formulated and dynamic foreign policy, which could be classified, as Putnam (1988), a two-level process in which the lines between domestic and foreign policy are blurred.

The overthrow of the Portuguese dictatorship of Caetano on April 25, 1974 left Angola with three contending independence movements: The Popular Front for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) of Agostinho Neto, the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) of Holden Roberto and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) of Jonas Savimbi (Leogrande, 1980:15; Dosman, 2008; Gleijeses, 2006:5). The three had agreed on the Portuguese High Commissioner overseeing a transitional government until independence on November 11, 1975 (Gleijeses, 2006:5; Leogrande, 1980:13-34). However, civil war broke out in the spring of 1975 with the U.S. and South Africa both involved in parallel covert operations in Angola, supporting the FNLA and UNITA against the MPLA (Gleijeses, 2006:5; Leogrande, 1980:16). Soviet aid to the MPLA was limited and was halted twice: first from 1963-1964 and second in 1972; the Soviet Union also initially refused to send assistance to the MPLA in 1975 after numerous requests (Shubin, 2001, 2008; Dosman, 2008:208). One of the reasons cited is Moscow's distrust of MPLA leader Agostinho Neto and its preoccupation with pursuing détente with the U.S. (Leogrande, 1980:15; Gleijeses, 2006:5; Shubin, 2008; Saull, 2005).

By September 1974, South Africa and the U.S. realized the MPLA was winning the civil war due to their superior rank-and-file as well as leadership (Gleijeses, 2006:5). According to the CIA station chief at the time, the MPLA were better educated, trained and motivated than the other guerrilla movements (Gleijeses, 2006:5; Leogrande, 1980:13). Determined to prevent the MPLA from taking power, on October 14 South African troops invaded Angola heading towards Luanda, with encouragement from Henry Kissinger (Dosman, 2008; Gleijeses, 2006:6). The resistance of the MPLA was weakening and South Africa would have taken Luanda if Cuba had not decided to send troops in November after desperate pleas from the MPLA for aid from Havana (Gleijeses, 2006:6; Kasrils, 2008). According to Fidel Castro: "The objective was for the racist South African forces coming from the south to meet up with Mobutu's mercenaries from the north and occupy Luanda before Angola proclaimed its independence, which was scheduled for 11 November 1975" (Castro in Ankomah, 2008b:15).

Agostinho Neto and the MPLA had made a general international call for aid and support from abroad, but in 1975 only Cuba responded (Saney, 2004:94; Shubin, 2008; Dosman, 2008). Cubans had military inferiority compared to the U.S.-supported SADF<sup>64</sup>, but managed to stop the South African invasion (Gleijeses, 2006:6;

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<sup>64</sup> It is important to note how the U.S. supported the SADF. There was support on the political level, with the US promising not to sanction South Africa, as well as important material support to both UNITA and the SADF (see Gleijeses, 2002: 273-299). The U.S. had furthermore encouraged the SADF invasion of Angola in 1975 (Gleijeses, 2002:389). To add to this, "South African instructors, CIA paramilitary personnel[...] began arriving in Angola at roughly the same time, in late August 1975" explain Gleijeses (2002:351). The CIA covert operation in Angola became known IAFEATURE, and involved President Ford disbursing \$6 million in early July 1975, another \$8 million in late July, and \$10.7 million in August. IAFEATURE was intended to prevent an MPLA government in Angola and supporting Pretoria (Gleijeses, 2002:293). In 1987, Reagan praised the "heroes at Lomba" referring the UNITA and the SADF military victory at Lomba in Angola (Dosman, 2008:213).

Dosman, 2008). This is important because it challenges the realist thesis that the operation was a typical action-reaction military escalation: that is, it demonstrates that neither the SADF nor the U.S. had been motivated to intervene in Angola because of the Cuban presence as was later claimed and used as a bargaining advantage for the SADF (Gleijeses, 2006:7; see Crocker, 1992). The South African government and its ally the United States were aiming to prevent an MPLA-led independent government that could assist the South African and Namibian liberation movements and shift the balance of power in the region (Dosman, 2008). Moreover, although the U.S. was aware of Cuban involvement, the government was apparently not unnerved by the Cuban presence until November 1975 (Gleijeses, 2003:328). In order to gain a more detailed understanding of the entire operation and motivation of the South African government, a declassification of SADF documents would be essential, but that is beyond the capacity and aim of this thesis, and a full declassification has yet to fully take place.

As South Africa became isolated internationally as an aggressor state, and evidence mounted in the Western press that Washington and Pretoria had been working together in the operation, the U.S. drew back and denied any involvement in the operation (Gleijeses, 2006:8; Dosman, 2008; Saney, 2006)<sup>65</sup>. Isolated regionally and internationally, betrayed by the U.S. and threatened by a growing number of Cuban troops, South Africa withdrew from Angola on March 27, 1976 (Gleijeses, 2006:8).

In order to contextualise Cuba's decision to aid the Angolans in repelling the South African incursion,<sup>66</sup> it is necessary to consider the global and regional state of affairs. The decision occurred in the context of Brezhnev opposing Cuba sending troops, the U.S. considering a *modus vivendi* with Cuba, the Organization of American States (OAS) lifting sanctions on Cuba, and Western Europe offering low interest loans and development aid to Cuba, which all represented a significant improvement of Cuban relations with the West as well as a possible easing of economic difficulties in the country (Gleijeses, 2006:8; Ankomah, 2008b:15). Additionally, militarily Cuba faced the serious threat of possibly having to face the full onslaught of the South African army that had the support of the U.S. (Gleijeses, 2006:8; Saney, 2004:93-94). *Realpolitik* explanations of Cuba's foreign policy as guided by a narrow conception of national interest would mean that Cuba would not have jeopardized its relations with the U.S, the West or even the Soviet Union and would have refrained from aiding Angola. According to Kissinger in his memoirs, Castro was the "most genuine revolutionary leader then in power" and he was sincerely opposed to white minority rule (Gleijeses, 2006:8). According to Mtinsto (2008) and interviews with Kasrils (2009) and Pahad (2009) Cuba's aid to Angola was based on principle rather than pragmatism. It was part of the

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<sup>65</sup> It is notable that the CIA did not act as a "rogue" in this affair, but rather CIA aid and support to South Africa and UNITA was approved at the highest levels of the U.S. executive branch (Saney, 2006:93). Pretoria saw the MPLA as a threat to its security and to the stability of apartheid, since the MPLA supported South African and southern African liberation movements and allowed guerrillas to train in Angola (Saney, 2006:93). The U.S., moreover, viewed Pretoria, in the words of Chester Crocker, as 'integral to the global economic system' (Saney, 2006:99).

<sup>66</sup> Cuba would not assist the MPLA in its fighting with UNITA, as they considered that an internal affair; Cuba would only aid in repelling the external invasion of South Africa (Saney, 2006:98).

anti-imperialist and internationalist ideological force that characterized the Cuban state, its new constitution and its foreign relations.

In terms of looking at the Cuban state and society, it is clear that the conception of internationalism and internationalist solidarity, and its role in constructing a revolutionary identity and ethos among the general population - a blurring of the domestic and the foreign is useful for a clearer conceptualization of Cuban foreign policy motivations. The personality of a single individual or narrow national interests, are insufficient explanations of Cuban foreign policy towards African liberation movements. Engaging in a historicity of Cuban state/society relations as well as conceptualizing the role ideology in the formation of foreign policy are thus central. By giving voice to the subaltern (both Cuban and those of individuals of the African liberation movements), it is possible to begin to look at the heterodox foreign policy of a state/society in the Third World and the role that ideology and ideational forms of power play in foreign policy.

Through the assistance in Angola in 1975, Cuba helped to prevent an apartheid-friendly regime from taking the government in Angola. Its actions also had a larger psychological and political impact on the region (Gleijeses, 2006:8; Saney, 2006; Interview with Kasrils, 2009; Ankomah, 2008b). According to Ronnie Kasrils (2009), the lull inside South Africa in the early 70s began to change with the actions in Angola, as well as with the independence of other Portuguese colonies in Africa. By 1976, MK began to receive a wave of young recruits from South Africa, many who had been motivated by the events in Angola and the Cuban “black and mulattoes” fighting side-by-side with Africans (Interview with Kasrils, 2009)<sup>67</sup>. By February 1976, Cuban troops had pushed the SADF to the Namibian border<sup>68</sup>. Gleijeses (2006) quotes a South African military analyst who pointed to the psychological impact of this:

*In Angola, Black troops – Angolans and Cubans – have defeated White troops in military exchanges. Whether the bulk of the offensive was by Cubans or Angolans is immaterial in the color-conscious context of this war’s battlefield, for the reality is that they won, are winning, and are not White[...]White elitism has suffered an irreversible blow in Angola, and the Whites who were there know it.*

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<sup>67</sup> This is further mentioned by MK and SACP historians such as Motumi (1994) and Ellis and Sechaba (1992).

<sup>68</sup> The 1975 battle dealt a huge blow to both South Africa and U.S. imperialism. The U.S. has attempted to rewrite history and denies complicity in Angola. Recently declassified documents reveal otherwise. Following the defeat of South Africa, the CIA and South African propagandists embarked on a massive disinformation campaign (Saney, 2006:97; Dosman, 2008). According to the CIA’s John Stockwell, in testimony before the U.S. Congress, there was: “Close collaboration and encouragement between CIA and the South Africans. The CIA funded and directed the activities of two teams of propagandists inside the [U.S.] and fed them false information to be used to influence the United Nations and the American people. It also placed false stories in American newspapers. There was close collaboration. It was intentional. During the programme, one of the chiefs of the South African service flew to Washington twice and conferred with the CIA director and with the Chief of the African Division.” (Stockwell quoted in Saney, 2006:97).

This operation was known in Cuba as *Operation Carlota*, named after a Lucumi slave that lead slave uprisings in the Matanzas region of Cuba in 1843 (Ankomah, 2008b:15). According to Fidel Castro, Carlota was a symbol and tribute to the thousands of slaves who were executed and killed fighting in the first slave rebellions in Cuba (Ankomah, 2008b:15). 36,000 Cubans fought in Angola in 1975-1976. More importantly, this marked the beginning of Namibia's war of independence, giving the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) of Namibia the momentum as well as ability to operate on the border region between Angola and Namibia, and to combine training with SWAPO and MK cadres and facilitate assistance to the South African liberation movement in exile (Interview with Kasrils, 2009; Interview with Kota, 2009; Ankomah, 2008b; Gleijeses, 2006:9; Dosman, 2008; Gleijeses, 2009).

In the beginning of 1974, a mass exodus of Portuguese from Angola had begun. They represented over 90 percent of the skilled labour force. By 1975 there were almost no doctors left in Angola (Gleijeses, 2006:10). However, by 1976 there were over 1,000 Cuban aid workers in Angola began providing their services without cost to the population, and Cuba began and funded a dozen different reconstruction programs in the country (Gleijeses, 2006:10; Dreke, 2002)<sup>69</sup>. In 1983 there were 4,169 technical advisers from Cuba in Angola (Gleijeses, 2006:23). Cuba provided 3,000 military advisors to the Angolan armed forces during this operation (Gleijeses, 2006:25). In 1977, Cubans began pulling out troops gradually and by March 1977 around 12,000 had returned to Cuba from Angola (Gleijeses, 2006:11).

As stated above, Cuba's presence in Angola provided important training, logistics and support to MK and SWAPO forces, as well as teachers, weapons, and specialized training for the young cadres (Mtintso, 2008; Interviews with Kasrils, 2009, Pahad, 2009, Kota, 2009). The confluence of events in Angola and other regional victories such as the independence of Mozambique, combined with an upsurge within South Africa with the 1976 Soweto uprising, led to an increase in numbers of cadres within South Africa's liberation movement and all of this had an influence on developments in the struggle to end apartheid (Saney, 2009; Kota, 2009; Kasrils, 2009).

## **CASSINGA AND CUBAN RELATIONS WITH SWAPO**

The struggle of SWAPO was highlighted when South Africa attacked the Cassinga transit camp in southern Angola in 1978. Cubans came to the aid of the Namibians in the camp after South Africa had managed to kill over 1,000 people (Nujoma, 2008:27). On May 4, 1978 the SADF carried out one of the most brutal massacres in the history of South Africa's destabilization campaign in southern Africa. The massacre by the SADF in Cassinga occurred eight years after the International Court of Justice and the UN Security Council had declared South Africa's occupation of Namibia illegal and demonstrated Pretoria's unwillingness to relinquish control of Namibia (Gleijeses, 2008:102). Over 600 Namibians were killed in the operation, and the United National High

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<sup>69</sup> The Cubans were the only doctors working in the country and offering medical care (Gleijeses, 2006).

Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) confirmed that Cassinga had been a refugee camp, holding many women and children, and called the massacre one of the darkest moments of modern history (Gleijeses, 2009)<sup>70</sup>. Cuba responded to the attack, and the majority of survivors of the massacre were brought to Cuba for medical treatment – about 600 mostly children (Ankomah, 2008b; Nujoma, 2008; Gleijeses, 2009). The German Democratic Republic took 80 refugees and Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia took only a handful (Gleijeses, 2009). No country had responded as extensively as Cuba in the assistance to the survivors. Sam Nujoma states that, “[They] took hundreds of our children to Cuba, to the Island of Youth [...]” In the end, over 2,000 of our youth were trained on that island. Some of them are now ministers, technicians and army officers in Namibia (Nujomah, 2008:27; Gleijeses, 2009; Mtintso, 2008).

Gleijeses (2009) argues that this attack by the SADF, and subsequent impunity with which it was met, significantly contributed to Cuba’s decision to maintain its troops in Angola as per the request of Neto and the leadership of the MPLA. Cuba was able to continue its assistance to SWAPO via Angola, as well as by taking many Namibians to Cuba for education and training (Interview with Kota, 2009). In terms of Cuba’s role in Angola as well as assisting SWAPO, Sam Nujoma, one of the leaders of SWAPO, argues that without Cuban support to SWAPO, the Namibian struggle for independence may have been a longer and more arduous road (Nujomah, 2008:26).

In my interview with Zou Kota (2009), who was a teacher at one of the schools that Cuba set up for the Namibians and South Africans, she relates how South African and Namibian students went to the same schools. Cuba’s role in Namibia and in its relations with SWAPO remains an under-researched area, and much remains to be learned of this relationship (Gleijeses, 2009). But it is evident that the developments in the Namibian struggle were intimately tied to events in Angola, South Africa and the position of the apartheid regime in the region.

## ***LINKAGE AND THE SADF INVASION OF ANGOLA***

In 1978 South Africa promised to allow for Namibia’s independence, according to UN Resolution 435, as long as Cuban troops promised to withdraw from Angola (Gleijeses, 2006:27). When Ronald Reagan was elected president in 1980, he introduced the policy of “linkage” in order to deal a blow to SWAPO (Gleijeses, 2008:105). Through the language of linkage, Washington and Pretoria were able to equate South African occupation with

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<sup>70</sup> See Alexander (2004) for a cynical account, which is in agreement with the official SADF position that Cassinga was not a refugee camp but rather a major SWAPO military base. The ethnocentrism and cynicism with which the history of this chapter of Namibia’s liberation struggle reflect the official South African explanation as well as the Western media coverage of the event (Saunders, 2008). This reflects an ethnocentrism and largely Anglo-American view of the events, which document the event based on Western sources rather than on interviews with participants (Gleijeses, 2008:103). The attempt to cover up a proper scholarly study on the events around Cassinga and the border war has been under the misnomer of “competing narratives”. (Alexander, 2004) demonstrates how remnants of the apartheid regime and their apologists continue to downplay the extent of apartheid’s regional destabilization, and to portray the events at Cuito Cuanavale as a victory for the SADF (Saney, 2006:82).

Cuban occupation (Gleijeses, 2008:105). By linking Namibian independence and South African withdrawal to Cuban withdrawal from Angola, the U.S. began their policy of “constructive engagement”. This was a campaign of obscuring the question of Namibian independence and complete South African withdrawal from Angola as well as ceasing of its assistance to UNITA, by making Cuban withdrawal a pre-condition. Linkage was adopted by the South Africans under the guiding force of Chester Crocker, Assistant Secretary of Defence at the time (Saney, 2006; Dosman, 2008; López Blanch, 2008; Crocker, 1992). By linking Namibian independence to Cuban withdrawal from Angola, the U.S. and South Africa were able to re-locate the locus of the conflict away from their own responsibility to portray the Cubans as a foreign military invasion of Angola.

In 1975, Cuba had assisted Angola to repel the South African invasion, on request of the Angolans and with support from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) after widespread condemnation of the South African invasion. The Cubans had been asked to stay, since the South Africans remained belligerent and were unabashedly arming UNITA (Gleijeses, 2006; Dosman, 2008; Saney, 2006). Through the linkage policy, Ronald Reagan, Chester Crocker, Defence Minister Magnus Malan and Foreign Minister ‘Pik’ Botha were able to put the focus on Cuba and negotiations would not advance, nor independence granted to Namibia. The Angolans and Namibians thus became hostage to the South African decision on the tempo of the war since they maintained their bases in Namibia as well as support to UNITA in the south of Angola (Dosman, 2008). Dosman (2008:209) writes, that “Apartheid South Africa, welcomed into the [U.S.] fold as a bulwark of Western values against Black African ‘terrorism’ and its Cuban defenders, could occupy southern Angola in a large-scale invasion in 1981 behind Washington’s diplomatic cover and consolidate its control in Namibia.”

The U.S. role in this is significant and is necessary to correctly contextualise Cuba’s policies and decision-making in an accurate historical context. Between 1980 and 1987 no sanctions were imposed on South Africa due to its Namibia policy and refusal to implement UN Security Council Resolution 435 of 1978 (Gleijeses, 2008:106; Dugard, 2007). Cuba’s role in Angola between 1987-1989 were thus occurring in a context of a failure to arm and assist UNITA in Angola, and a failure to grant independence to Namibia, and a state of emergency within South Africa, meaning an increase in repression within South Africa’s borders (Mills, 1994).

Despite the depiction by Crocker (1992), George (2005), Breytenbach (1997), Mesa-Lago and Belkin (1982) of Cuba’s role in Angola as belligerent, recent scholarship that looks at primary Cuban, South African, U.S., Angolan and Soviet sources depicts Cuba’s role in Angola in 1975, 1981 and 1983 as defensive in character and based on the idea of principled internationalism and duty to assist the anti-colonial struggle. Both the U.S. government and South Africa supported UNITA’s campaign to replace the MPLA and destabilize the newly independent country, as well as materially assisted UNITA until at least 1988 (Dosman, 2008). Cuban soldiers defended major urban areas, guided convoys through heavily mined areas, helped guard oil installations (Angola’s major source of export-earnings), and doctors and nurses were providing much needed health care and

trying to build an adequate national health care service after independence (Dosman, 2008:209). The costs of this military and social support by Cuba were tremendous, and when Cuba was sidelined in the Lusaka negotiations in 1984 by the U.S. and with the agreement by MPLA leader José Eduardo dos Santos, it was a major blow to Cuba and its enormous support to Angola (Dosman, 2008).

The Cubans refused to negotiate either with South Africa or the U.S. without consulting Angola - and as a principle prioritized the subservience of Cuban needs to those of Angola, which at the time had called on help from Cuba (Dosman, 2008; Gleijeses, 2006:27). In 1984 South Africa and Angola signed the Lusaka Agreement which stipulated the exit of Cuban troops from Angola without consulting the Cubans (Gleijeses, 2006:27; Dosman, 2008). The agreement did not lead to peace, and South Africa with U.S. support continued its incursions into Angola, its acts of sabotage and its support to UNITA (Gleijeses, 2006:30)<sup>71</sup>. The talks between the Angolans, the U.S. and South Africa collapsed in 1985 and South Africa continued its attacks in Angola and against SWAPO and MK in Namibia and southern Angola (Gleijeses, 2006:34).

## ***FROM LOMBA TO CUITO CUANAVALÉ, 1987 - 1988***

When the talks fell apart in 1985, the Angolan Defence Forces (FAPLA), urged by the Soviets, decided to attack Savimbi's stronghold in Mavinga without Cuban participation or consultation<sup>72</sup> (Saney, 2004:100; Ankomah, 2008b:16; Dosman, 2008). In 1987 the Soviets supported FAPLA to attack Mavinga again, and once more Cuba argued against the operation, which was known as Operation Salute to October. The Cubans refused to participate, and were generally opposed to the idea of their presence in Angola being used to attack UNITA (Gleijeses, 2006:36; Dosman, 2008:210). The Cuban purpose for supporting Angola was to repel the South African occupation forces. Thus, in 1987, the Angolan army under dos Santos suffered a major defeat at Lomba River at the hands of UNITA and the SADF (Dosman, 2008). The accounts of this operation and the battles are quite complete and it is clear that the Angolan/Soviet operation ended in failure. This time the SADF cornered FAPLA in Cuito Cuanavale (Gleijeses, 2006:36). By 1987, Pretoria was once again leading the war in Angola with SADF troops, rather than simply aiding UNITA (Dosman, 2008:211; Gleijeses, 2006). That same year, 1987, Chester Crocker assured the South African government of U.S. support and its promise not to impose sanctions on South Africa (Gleijeses, 2008:107). Dosman (2008:211) writes: "Pretoria viewed a change in regime in Angola, with UNITA replacing MPLA, as a vital safeguard for its interests in southern Africa."

The final offensive against the apartheid army and Savimbi's UNITA was the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale from 1987-1988 (Ankomah, 2008:16). Much has recently been written about this battle (Kasrils, 2008; Breytenbach,

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<sup>71</sup> When Malan headed the SADF in 1979, he said of Jonas Savimbi: "His continued existence directly influences the future of Southern Africa. He has become so important we have to secure his safety" (Malan quoted in Saney, 2006:100).

<sup>72</sup> Which Cuba opposed and refused to participate in, since it argued that South Africa had air superiority in the region (Gleijeses, 2006:37).

1997; Campbell, 1989, 2008; Gleijeses, 2006; Saney, 2006; Dosman, 2008). 55,000 Cuban soldiers were sent for this operation, after being asked for assistance from Angola (Ankomah, 2008b:16). An additional 40,000 Cubans, 30,000 Angolan and 3,000 Namibian SWAPO guerrilla fighters advanced towards the Angolan border with Namibia, ready to wipe out the racist army (Ankomah, 2008b: 16). The best units of the Cuban army and Cuba's most sophisticated hardware and weapons were sent from Cuba to Angola in a less than three weeks, and Castro had decided it was time to force the SADF out of Angola for good (Gleijeses, 2006:37; Risquet, 1989; García Marquéz, 1989; Dosman, 2008). Just as in 1975, Havana did not consult with Moscow on its decision to send troops and military equipment to Angola (Gleijeses, 2006:37). Havana delayed contacting Moscow for eight days while it prepared its final mission in Angola, so that when Cuba finally contacted Moscow, they were faced with a *fait accompli* (Gleijeses, 2006:38). Moscow was pursuing détente with the U.S. and Gorbachev was unhappy with Havana's decision, arguing that Cuba was going beyond what was needed in Angola (Gleijeses, 2006:39). Moscow also did not provide assistance, until much later (Gleijeses, 2006; Shubin, 2008; López Blanch, 2008).

March 23, 1988 was SADF's last major attack against Cuito Cuanavale that according to Gleijeses (2006:40): was brought to a "grinding halt" by the Cuban and Angolan forces. For more than four months the SADF was unable to take Cuito (Gleijeses, 2006:40). Sarcastically remarking to Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Anatolii Adamashin - who travelled to Havana to inform Castro on Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's conversations with Washington - Castro said he should ask the Americans, "Why [the South Africans] haven't [been] able to take Cuito? It has been four months since they banged at the doors of Cuito Cuanavale. Why has the army of the superior race been unable to take Cuito, which is defended by blacks and mulattos from Angola and the Caribbean?" (Castro quoted in Gleijeses, 2006:41). What has been called the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale was in fact a series of events centred around the area of Cuito Cuanavale, which ended in Cubans, Angolans and Namibians forcing the SADF to negotiate and to withdraw from Angola.

Cuban, Namibian and Angolan troops were marching towards the Namibian border (Ankomah, 2008b:16; Gleijeses, 2006:42). On June 27, Cuban planes attacked South Africans at Caleque and Cuba attained air superiority in southern Angola and northern Namibia (Gleijeses, 2006:42). South Africa's failure at Cuito, the Cuban advance towards the Namibian border and strikes at Caleque, led to a discussion of ceasefire in Cape Verde on July 22 between South Africa, Angola, Cuba, and the U.S. (Gleijeses, 2006:43). While negotiations continued, Cuban troops were advancing south and eventually waited at the Namibian border.

The battle of Cuito Cuanavale in most of South African academic discourse has been relegated to the category of limbo, as a stalemate, or even as a victory for the SADF (Kasrils, 2008; Dosman, 2008; Saney, 2006; Gleijeses, 2002). This history, and an adequate treatment of the multifaceted and complex events surrounding Cuito Cuanavale and the other smaller battles between SADF and Cuban, Angolan, Namibian and South African MK forces is out of the scope of this work. In itself, it deserves in depth treatment. For more in depth accounts in

scholarly literature of the events and debates surrounding the battle, see Gleijeses (2003) and his forthcoming book on the events, in which he accesses primary documents. Also see Saney (2006, 2008, 2009), who carries out a number of interviews with former SADF soldiers specifically on the battle, and with MK soldiers and Cubans who fought in the battle. Dosman (2008) also uses primary sources from the SANDF. Saney (2006) points out that the academic discourse which relegates the battle to an insignificant event, or a case of conflicting versions that are irreconcilable, can be grouped into different typologies: (1) there are those who ignore the battle completely; (2) there are those who argue the battle had little impact; (3) those who argue that the SADF was victorious.

On the other hand, recent scholarly research into the events surrounding 1987 and 1988 in Angola indicate that the events of Cuito Cuanavale were decisive in shaping the history of southern Africa, given that it led to the shift in balance of forces in the region decisively against apartheid, and preceded the realization of the need to give significant concessions in the negotiations (Interview with Kasrils, 2009; Interview with Nkadimeng, 2009; Interview with Pahad, 2009; Kasrils, 2008; Interview with Lapsley, 2009). After the SADF defeat<sup>73</sup> at Cuito Cuanavale there was a shift against South Africa in the region, forcing it to negotiate their occupation of Namibia, to relinquish the linkage campaign, and to definitively withdraw from Angola and halt aid to UNITA (Saney, 2004:105; Dosman, 2008; Gleijeses, 2003; López Blanch, 2008; PRSA, 2008). It led to the quadripartite New York Accords on December 22, 1988 that led to the independence for Namibia and implementation of Resolution 435, and an end to apartheid's policy of destabilization in the southern African region (Saney, 2006:81)<sup>74</sup>. Dosman (2008) furthermore writes that the Soviet Union and the UN Contact Group remained largely bystanders in these negotiations.

The historical significance of the battle is recognized even by forces supporting UNITA and South African troops who fought in Angola during this period (see Bridgland, 1990; Saney, 2006)<sup>75</sup>. However, this page of history remains largely an untold story, and according to Saney (2006:81): "A major lacuna in the literature is an adequate account of the impact of the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in southeastern Angola, the decisive defeat of the South African armed forces by combined Cuban, Angolan, and Namibian troops in the largest battle in Africa since World War II." It is estimated that 2,077 Cubans lost their lives in Angola (Gleijeses, 2006:43).

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<sup>73</sup> Calling the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale a defeat is highly contested among South African military historians, who most often refer to it as a stalemate (Dosman, 2008; Saney, 2006; Gleijeses, 2006; Kasrils, 2008; among MK, SWAPO and Cuban soldiers, it was a defeat for the SADF (Interview with Kasrils, 2009; Interview with Pahad, 2009; Kasrils, 2008; Saney, 2006). More scholarship on the specific area of history is constantly being produced.

<sup>74</sup> South Africa's destabilization campaign cost the region over 30 billion U.S.D (Saney, 2004:98; Mandela, 1993). According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, the majority of deaths due to the struggle against apartheid and meted out by the apartheid forces occurred outside of South Africa (Saney, 2004:84). The cost to the region in lives and material destruction is unfathomable.

<sup>75</sup> For a UNITA perspective on the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale, and the final act of the Cuban-Angolan saga, see the account of Bridgland, 1990.

On December 22 the quadripartite New York Agreement was reached which declared that: the SADF would exit Namibia and grant independence according to UN Resolution 435, South Africa would end its support for UNITA and Cuban troops would leave in 27 months (Gleijeses, 2006:37; Ankomah, 2008b:16; Saney, 2006). This dramatic finale to a long struggle against apartheid aggression in southern Africa, for Namibian independence and dealing a political and military blow to the apartheid regime, was intimately tied to the massive, principled and consistent aid from Cuba, as well as Cuba's presence at the negotiating table (Gleijeses, 2006:43; Saney, 2009; Dosman, 2008).

Dosman (2008) and Saney (2006) as well as Gleijeses (2003) and Crocker (1992) demonstrate that it was the Cuban delegation which forced the U.S. and South Africa to accept Namibia's presence at the negotiating table, 18 years after South Africa's occupation had been declared a violation of international law. The Cubans had insisted on this throughout the various attempts at negotiations since 1975 and finally the configuration of forces was in favour of the Cubans, Angolans and Namibians to allow significant concessions by the South Africans. Rather than a case of sudden enlightenment by hard-line P.W Botha and Defense Minister Malan, it was the result of a significant defeat on the battlefield as well as numerous other domestic, regional and international events that forced apartheid to negotiate what they had refused to negotiate before (their immediate withdrawal from Angola, and implementation of Reslution 435). Cuito Cuanavale was a turning point in the struggle and a significant factor leading to the weakening of the apartheid negotiating position (Saney, 2006, 2009; Gleijeses, 2006; Gleijeses, 2009). Declassified documents as well as news reports from Namibia, point to important dynamics taking place on the ground militarily, which formed the backdrop for Pretoria's decisions to allow Cuba at the negotiating table and to cede so many of its sticking points (Gleijeses, 2009). By May 1988, the Cubans were on the offensive and were moving towards the border with Namibia. Cuba had achieved air superiority in southern Angola and northern Namibia, and Pretoria was forced to negotiate (Gleijeses, 2009). Gleijeses (2009:20) writes: "The Cuban, U.S. and South African documents, however, despite the ideological divide that separates them, confirm the truth: The New York Agreements would not have been possible without Cubans' prowess on the battlefield and skill at the negotiating table. Despite Washington's best efforts to stop it, Cuba changed the course of southern African history."

This nearly untold story of Cuba's aid to changing the history of the southern African region, has been marginalized in the West but reached almost mythic stature in black Africa (Ankomah, 2008b; Campbell, 2008). On August 30, 1988 the last of the SADF soldiers left Angola; and as in 1975, the SADF had been forced to withdraw from Angola (Gleijeses, 2009). Gleijeses (2009:19) points out, that as in 1975, Pretoria made sure that "a large group of South African and foreign journalists was flown to the border to create the impression of a victorious retreat."

Cuba's aid has been lauded by a number of African leaders, from Nelson Mandela, to Sam Nujoma, Hifikepunye Pohamba, Agostinho Neto, Oliver Tambo, Thabo Mbeki, along with many other leaders of African liberation struggles (PRSA, 2007:2; Saney, 2004:105-107). In Mandela's (1993:119-124) 1991 visit to Cuba, he commemorated Cuba's contribution to the history of the southern African region:

*The Cuban people hold a special place in the hearts of the people of Africa. The Cuban internationalists have made a contribution to African independence, freedom, and justice unparalleled for its principled and selfless character. We in Africa are used to being victims of countries wanting to carve up our territory or subvert our sovereignty. It is unparalleled in African history to have another people rise to the defence of one of us. The defeat of the apartheid army was an inspiration to the struggling people of South Africa! Without the defeat of Cuito Cuanavale our organizations would not have been unbanned! The defeat of the racist army at Cuito Cuanavale has made it possible for me to be here today! Cuito Cuanavale was a milestone in the history of the struggle for southern African liberation! Cuito Cuanavale has been a turning point in the struggle to free the continent and our country from the scourge of apartheid! The decisive defeat of Cuito Cuanavale altered the balance of forces within the country, was crucial in bringing Pretoria to realize it would have to talk.*

Chester Crocker's (1992) account of the road to the resolution of the conflict in Angola and Namibia has been considered a definitive account of the negotiation process from a central participant – however, Crocker's account remains a largely personal relation of achievements over great odds as well as an *ex post facto* downplaying of the belligerent role which the U.S. played in the conflict as a major supporter of UNITA, FNLA, the South African government and the SADF (Crocker, 1992; Dosman, 2008:225; Gleijeses, 2003).<sup>76</sup>

Dosman (2008:226) highlights that as the negotiations continued after 22 December 1988 between Angola, Cuba and the US, Crocker repeated Washington's intentions to provide arms and assistance to UNITA “notwithstanding an international agreement on the other outstanding items, ensuring that civil war and the destruction of Angola would continue until Savimbi was eventually isolated and neutralized.” While Crocker's

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<sup>76</sup> Several authors, from Gleijeses (2003, 2006), Saney (2006, 2008, 2009) and Saul (1993), to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 1999) documents document how US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, along with the CIA were directly involved in a program of destabilisation aimed at defeating the MPLA and thwarting Namibian and South African liberation movements. Rather than a rogue affair by the CIA, the extensive documentation by the director of the National Security Archive, Peter Kornbluh, and Piero Gleijeses, as well as testimony and evident in the TRC documents illustrate that this destabilising policy was approved at the highest levels of the US administration. While Crocker's (1992) account speaks of his personal achievements and desire to achieve peace in the region, it is now documented that at all levels of decisions-making in the US, actors were aware of the CIA policy of funding UNITA and the FNLA. In fact, Reagan openly praised the SADF and UNITA as the “heroes of Lomba” (Dosman, 2008). US Secretary of State George Schultz in 1987 considered that the UNSC Resolution 435 should be “adjusted to new circumstances” and Reagan had offered to send Stinger missiles to Savimbi's UNITA (Dosman, 2008). This took place after the UN Security Council voted to condemn the SADF invasion of Angola in 1984, as well as the OAU widely condemned the invasion.

(1992) account of his personal achievements in rescuing the negotiations is only one version of historical events, both Dosman (2008) and Gleijeses (2003) point out that it was Cuba's military challenge to South African aggression at Lomba in Angola that provided the context which allowed to U.S. and Crocker to enter the negotiations in a position in which they could save the reputation of the U.S. as peacemaker after the failure of constructive engagement. As Dosman (2008:225) writes:

*While it would be an error to minimize the [U.S.] contribution during 1988 in achieving the New York Accords – it alone had the resources to lead a global southern African peace process – Cuba's role as the creative and driving force behind regional conflict resolution in south-western Africa in the climactic 1987-1988 phase cries out for recognition.*

## **CUBA'S POLICY TOWARDS SOUTH AFRICA**

Encountering scholarly work, interviews and primary documents on Cuba's collaboration with the anti-apartheid struggle is indeed difficult, as both López Blanch<sup>77</sup> (2008) and Saney (2009) agree. An explanation is provided by López Blanch (2008:1156): "Most contacts, visits and exchanges were extremely secretive to protect South African revolutionaries who were persecuted by the regime." Even the South African Communist Party (SACP) Seventh Congress in 1989, the last one to be held outside South Africa, was prepared, held, and had delegates flown to Cuba in strict secrecy (Interview with Pahad, 2009; Interview with Kota, 2009; López Blanch, 2008). The Congress was even unknown to the president of the former Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, when he visited Cuba only three days before the SACP Congress was held (López Blanch, 2008). Since the SACP was an underground and illegal organization at the time, it was paramount that the Cubans provide utmost secrecy and a safe area for the delegates to hold their Congress (Interview with Kota, 2009; Interview with Pahad, 2009; Ellis and Sechaba, 1992).

According to López Blanch (2008:1158), recently declassified documents of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party (PCC) do not have references to direct aid either to the ANC, the SACP or MK. According to López Blanch (2008:1159), in the early 1960s "Most of the solidarity with the South African people was raised in international bodies, but direct contact was frozen. Many leaders had been imprisoned and others had to carry out their activities underground; often they could not leave the country." He (2008) further writes that from 1959 until the early 1970s, Cuba's foreign policy in Africa and its solidarity with liberation movements and the anti-colonial struggles took mainly political form. The process of de-classification of official documents is, however, not complete in Cuba or in South Africa, and thus further research, time and resources would need to be dedicated to unearthing some of the more specific questions pertaining to these relations. For example, a senior ANC/SACP leader recalls:

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<sup>77</sup> He is the only known author of a history of Cuban relations with South Africa's liberation movements.

*The relations with Cuba and both the SACP and the ANC grew much more in the 60s – until 1959 there could be no links between the liberation forces and the Cuba Revolution because we were all still at home and they were far from us. After we went into exile and the ANC and SACP leadership had established their own organizations externally, the links started. Our secretary general Nzo went to the first conference in Cuba – the Tri-continental – in the ‘60s. From then onwards a link was established, a formal political link, both with the SACP and the ANC. I went several times to Cuba, both in the ANC delegations and in the SACP delegations (Interview with Pahad, 2009:3).*

Nonetheless, the data gained from the various qualitative interviews carried out in the process of this thesis point to extensive relations between Cuba and the ANC, SACP and trade union leadership, and particularly with MK cadres as well as in terms of the development of internal discussions within the ANC and SACP on central political questions. The training of female cadres within the liberation struggle via the Federation of Cuban Women, as well as using Cuba as a platform for the South African liberation movement to exchange with other liberation movements from around the world was also part of the relations between the Cuban state and civil society and the South African liberation movements (Interview with Nkadimeng, 2009; Interview with Pahad, 2009).

The expansion of relations in the 1970s included: military cooperation and training to MK, political relations between both the Cuban state and liberation movements. An ANC office was opened in Havana and paid for by the Cuban government. There was extensive educational cooperation and scholarships for South African students and strong relations with the South African Communist Party (SACP), the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU)<sup>78</sup>, the ANC and its military wing. A national anti-apartheid committee was set up, as well as a programme of medical cooperation and a large number of grassroots Cuban participation in the various facets of the anti-apartheid struggle (see López Blanch, 2008; Saney 2006, 2009; Mbeki, 2001; Mandela, 1991; Gleijeses, 2002; Motumi, 1994; Interview with Kota, 2009; Interview with Kasrils, 2009; Interview with Pahad, 2009; Interview with Nkadimeng, 2009; Mtintso, 2008).

In the next sections, some of the multifaceted relations between South Africa’s liberation struggle and Cubans during the liberation struggle will be broadly outlined. The participation of large sectors of Cuba’s population, from workers to professionals, feminist political leaders to members of civil society organizations, demonstrate that it would be a mistake to separate domestic from foreign policy, as the two are interrelated and juxtaposed in a dialectical relationship in the case of Cuban foreign policy.

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<sup>78</sup> And later support to the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

## **ANC MISSION IN HAVANA AND RELATIONS WITH MK**

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, aid and assistance to liberation movements in Africa began in the early days of Cuba's transformation from a subservient client state of the US to a more independent state in the Third World that challenged the structures and world orders that had rendered foreign policy an arena divorced from the domestic sphere. Although very little is known about the earliest contacts between the liberation movements in South Africa - chiefly the ANC, the SACP, SACTU and MK<sup>79</sup> - and Cuba, it is evident that relations were established since the early 1960s (Mandela, 1991; López Blanch, 2008). Nelson Mandela's speech at Matanzas, Cuba in 1991 speaks about the founding of the armed wing of the ANC – Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) - and the launch of the armed resistance to apartheid in South Africa. MK was launched on 16 December 1961, and the manifesto of MK was made public via an illegal radio broadcast given by Walter Sisulu (Motumi, 1994). Mandela speaks of the earliest contact with Cubans:

*I must say that when we wanted to take up arms we approached numerous Western governments for assistance and we were never able to see any but the most junior ministers. When we visited Cuba we were received by the highest officials and were immediately offered whatever we wanted and needed. That was our earliest experience with Cuban internationalism (Mandela, 1991:22).*

It is clear that contact and assistance was established quite early on in the 1960s, even if at a very formal political level. The official ANC Cuba Mission was set up in Havana in 1978 with Alex la Guma as the central representative of the mission (ANC Archives; López Blanch, 2008). La Guma was also a well known novelist and poet, and was the head of the ANC mission in Cuba until his death in 1988 (López Blanch, 2008). The ANC mission was paid for by the Cuban government, and was the centre of anti-apartheid political activity in the Caribbean (López Blanch, 2008; Mtintso, 2008). On the level of military cooperation, Joe Slovo and Joe Modise were the individuals responsible at the highest levels of coordinating all military cooperation between Cuba and the South African liberation movements (López Blanch, 2008)<sup>80</sup>. Relations on the level of military training began in the 1970s with the increased Cuban involvement in Angola; however, in my interviews with Aziz Pahad and Ronnie Kasrils, political discussions took place on numerous occasions between the Cubans and the

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<sup>79</sup> As noted in the introduction to this thesis, the question of why Cuba formed relations with certain liberation movements, to the exclusion of others such as the PAC, lies outside of the limitations of this work. Not only does it involve dealing more thoroughly with the dynamics of the history of South Africa's liberation struggle, but also the limitations posed by not being able to do research in Cuba means that encountering documents related to such discussions is nearly impossible. It remains an area to be further researched.

<sup>80</sup> Joe Slovo was on the Central Committee of the SACP and was a National Executive Committee Member of the ANC; Joe Modise was also member of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ANC as well as a Commander of Umkhonto we Sizwe.

ANC/SACP/MK leadership in terms of the nature of the armed struggle (Interview with Kasrils, 2009; Interview with Pahad, 2009)<sup>81</sup>.

Much of Cuba's contact with the ANC, the SACP and MK cadres took place in different parts of southern Africa, and meetings occurred between Cuban leadership and ANC/SACP leadership in Lusaka, Conakry as well as Harare and other cities in the continental region. Also, from 1976 until 1988 almost all MK training<sup>82</sup> took place in Angola by Cubans and Soviets – mainly in the Novo Katengue camp (Motumi, 1994; López Blanch, 2008). According to my interview with Ronnie Kasrils<sup>83</sup> (2009), the most significant training camp on the African continent was the Novo Katengue camp. According to Kasrils (2009:3): “We had a major camp, which had about 500 people training there at any one time, a year at a time, called Novo Katengue, near Benguele. It was our most advanced camp. And that is where the Cubans immediately came in and provided the infrastructure.”<sup>84</sup>

A long political lull took place within South Africa around 1963 until the late 60s, during which most of the anti-apartheid organizations had forced to go underground and not many young recruits were joining MK (Motumi, 1994; Interview with Kasrils, 2009). The events in Angola in 1975 and the Soweto uprising in 1976 changed this domestic dynamic: a wave of recruits began to join the liberation movement and particularly MK (Interview with Kasrils, 2009; Motumi, 1994; Ellis and Sechaba, 1992). Speaking of the setting up of the camp to train young cadres as well as to provide more advanced military training to cadres who had already excelled in the basic courses, Kasrils (2009:4) describes:

*So that's set up in the beginning of '77, I would say, late '76 even - by that period. Within a year we've got the first graduates coming out, and Tambo takes the parade with the Cubans there (I was present at that parade, it was wonderful). And this was the graduation of our whole detachment, which was named the "June 16 Detachment". And then the second year after that,*

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<sup>81</sup> These discussions took place throughout the 1960s and 1970s and were also influenced by discussions taking place on a global scale on the thesis presented by Regis Debray on the “foco” theory of armed struggle and whether or not the armed struggle can exist without the political struggle and underground political organisations (Interview with Kasrils, 2009; Interview with Pahad, 2009). That is, Debray argued that the armed struggle would determine the political outcome, rather than the armed struggle complementing the political struggle (Interview with Pahad, 2009; Interview with Kasrils, 2009). These discussions were part of discussion within the Fourth International, and stem largely from a mis-interpretation of the lessons of the Cuban Revolution (Interview with Pahad, 2009).

<sup>82</sup> General training consisted of the following: firearms, engineering, politics, communications, artillery, physical training, military topography, first aid, marching drills, anti-aircraft training and military combat work (Motumi, 1994). However, Cuban training was mainly focused on specialized areas such as intelligence and counter-intelligence, highly specialized military training, “special forces” and political training (Motumi, 1994).

<sup>83</sup> Ronnie Kasrils was on the MK Politico-Military Council, a member of the NEC of the ANC, the Central Committee of the SACP.

<sup>84</sup> Motumi (1994) writes that between 1977 and 1988 almost all MK military training took place in Angola.

*which was '78, the next group of 500 who would graduate there, at that ceremony he names them the "Moncada Detachment"<sup>85</sup>. The Cubans were overjoyed.*

The Novo Katengue training camp was for basic military, guerrilla-style training, and then a specialized course was organized for those who graduated the main course (Interview with Kasrils, 2009). According to Kasrils (2009), this was organized by the Cubans, and was carried out in the urban area of Benguele. Kasrils (2009:4) describes the type of training specializations: "how to engage in urban guerrilla warfare, use of disguises, special rendezvous arrangements, burying of weaponry, which I think the main course would have done as well. But it was that finesse." The camp was bombed by the South Africans in 1979 (Dosman, 2009; López Blanch, 2008; Kasrils, 2004; Motumi, 1994). However, only a few Cubans and South Africans were killed, because the Cubans and the ANC/MK had received intelligence reports about the possibility of an SADF bombing of the camp, and at the time the bombing occurred the camp was almost entirely evacuated (see Interview with Kasrils, 2009; Kasrils, 2004; López Blanch, 2008). The cadres in the camp were moved to several other camps around Angola, and the Cuban training and assistance decreased, due to the agreement of gradual Cuban troop withdrawal from Angola which began around 1977 (López Blanch, 2009; Gleijeses, 2006; Kasrils, 2004).

However, the assistance between Cuba and MK, along with the strong relations with the anti-apartheid alliance on a number of other fronts, continued throughout this period into the early 1990s. The Angolans also had asked some Cuban forces to stay, given the SADF arming of UNITA and its presence in Namibia represented a major threat to Angola sovereignty. According to Kasrils (2009:5):

*It's then from '84-'85, I go to Cuba with Joe Slovo, Communist Party delegation, and we have very intense discussions about needing more Cuban assistance for training. And they agree to start taking in Cuba itself, many more people. We, up until that stage maybe half a dozen small little groups of half a dozen or so would be going to Cuba each year. But we now, given the connection between Luanda and that route all the way through to Havana, we start sending our people for training on a very regular basis from that period, I would say '85.*

Kasrils (2009:6) continues to describe how following these discussions with senior ANC/SACP/MK interlocutors, a specialized training regime was set up inside Cuba, which would receive South Africans in small groups. This was apart from the students who were sent from South Africa to study in Cuba, who were usually unaware of

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<sup>85</sup> The significance of naming the second detachment the 'Moncada Detachment' lies in the history of the struggle to overthrow the Batista regime in Cuba. One of the first attacks on the dictatorship, led by a group of young revolutionaries, which signalled the beginning of the peoples' struggle, was an attack on the Moncada military barracks on July 26, 1953. It marked the beginning of the Cuban Revolution and gave the name to guerrilla movement led by Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Raul Castro and Juan Almeida (the July 26 Movement). For a history of the events surrounding the Cuban Revolution see Hart and Waters (2004), Saney, (2004); Gleijeses, (2003); Waters, (2002) and Williams, (1979).

other cooperation or relations taking place on the island between ANC/MK and Cuba (Interview with Kota, 2009; Interview with Pahad, 2009). He writes:

*[The] response then was to create a highly creative training process which was like nothing that we had anywhere I would say. This was taking groups of about a dozen to twenty people, in parallel, so possibly half a dozen groups at a time, well over a hundred people going to Cuba but staying in their own safe house. At any one time there would be something like 6 groups, all specializing. So they would obviously, all of them do brush up; people have already trained, and they would brush up on their shooting, tactics, and politics, etcetera. But we began to get them really specializing in topics such as forging documents, others in organizing underground cells, others in smuggling of weapons, there was a list of about a dozen different topics – they get highly specialized. And that just kept going, from the period of say ‘86-‘89, the next four years (Interview with Kasrils, 2009:6).*

My interview with Aziz Pahad confirms this view. He states:

*Then came the training of our military cadres, besides the students on the island we had other students going to Cuba; so then started the military training of our cadres. And in Cuba we had, I still believe, we had more specialized training both in terms of intelligence and in terms of what we call ‘the best cadres’ receiving very special training in the armed struggle (Interview with Pahad, 2009).*

After 1988 ANC/MK instructors took over the training, as Cuba had then begun its withdrawal from Angola following the New York Accords on December 11, 1988 (Motumi, 1994; Gleijeses, 2002).

On October 29, 1989 a mass rally of 80,000 people was held in Soweto and Walter Sisulu gave the main speech, with a call to maintain the armed struggle (López Blanch, 2008). The people were all carrying ANC and SACP flags. Thus, from 1988 through the early 1990s A number of discussions with the ANC, SACP and MK leadership in Havana, and in the Cuban embassy in Lusaka, involved discussions of Cubans continuing military training and assistance to MK, as well as the sending of equipment and armaments (López Blanch, 2008). López Blanch (2008) writes of a meeting between Chris Hani, Timothy Makwena and other high level MK leaders, and the Cubans at the Cuban embassy in Lusaka, in May of 1990 to discuss the training of officers for the future South African Defence Force. Secret meetings between Cubans and ANC and SACP leadership took place in Lusaka and Harare in June 1987. Joe Slovo visited the Cuban embassy in Lusaka, Zambia 1989 – and made a request for special armaments. Cuban documents from July 1990 detail that armaments were delivered to the ANC/MK in 1987, 1988 and 1989. The report also states that 403 ANC/MK combatants had received special training by Cubans at the time.

In May 1990 in Lusaka, there was an important meeting between Cubans and Chris Hani<sup>86</sup>. According to López Blanch (2008:1191):

*Hani stated that Cuba meant a lot to the ANC and to South Africa, and that it was one of the few friends that the ANC had at the moment, which is why it looked to Cuba, not only because of its high degree of technical and combative specialization, but because of the ideological role that would be played by the personnel trained on the island.*

Much remains to be learned on the side of military cooperation between Cuba and the liberation movement in South Africa, and for this more interviews would have to be carried out, from the Cuban and the South African sides, as well as archival research in Cuba and access to MK historical archives. The next section will look at other areas of relations between Cuba and South African liberation movement.

## ***WOMEN, EDUCATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY***

In terms of direct aid from Cuba to the South African liberation movement, what one can directly ascertain from the interviews and available material, is that relations existed on multiple levels - not only on the level of state leaders and formal relations with the leadership of the liberation movements. Students from South Africa studied in Cuba. In many cases young MK cadres who had no basic education were sent to Cuba to upgrade their levels of education and prepare for a future democratic state. On the other hand, political education also took place for leaders within the women's section of the liberation struggle, a programme organised by the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC). At the level of civil society, Cubans were involved in elevating the status of the anti-apartheid struggle to the level of popular consciousness. In May of 1981, Cuba had helped organize an international anti-apartheid conference in Paris. They also participated in June 1981 at the International Conference on Sanctions against South Africa – and pushed for a more hard line stand against apartheid than the one which had been drafted by the Western European states and the U.S. (López Blanch, 2008). In 1986, Cuba began its own anti-apartheid committee that would work with anti-apartheid committees all over the world on numerous issues. It became known as the Cuban Anti-Apartheid Committee (CAAC), which was aligned with the international anti-apartheid movement (López Blanch, 2008).

Cuba awarded leaders of the South African resistance with numerous awards, from Nelson Mandela to Oliver Tambo. A number of awards were given commemorating cultural icons such as Miriam Makeba and Alex la Guma (Interview with Kota, 2009). Anti-apartheid protests were organised in Havana, and the Organisation of Solidarity with the People of Africa, Asia and Latin America (OSPAAAL) popularised protest art which

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<sup>86</sup> Chris Hani was chief of general staff of MK and leader of the SACP.

highlighted the struggle against apartheid and the war in Vietnam (López Blanch, 2008; Interview with Pahad, 2009; Interview with Kasrils, 2009).

In terms of education agreements between Cuba and the ANC and the SACP, education was provided to South Africans with all expenses paid by the Cuban state (López Blanch, 2008). In 1976 the first South African student arrived in Havana, and in 1977 the first group of South African students arrived in the Isle of Pines, which later was to be called the Isle of Youth (López Blanch, 2008). Twenty-three students from South Africa came in 1986 and 107 in 1988. Alfred Nzo, general secretary of the ANC, and Oliver Tambo, had planned to send a large contingent of South Africans to receive education in Cuba – which eventually did not happen since there was a wave of political activity in South Africa that began in 1988 after Cuito Cuanavale and subsequently the decriminalization of liberation organizations.

By 2005, 272 students had graduated from Cuban universities and technical schools (115 from university and 157 at technical schools). As of 2005, over 400 South African youths were studying for free in Cuba (López Blanch, 2008). According to Mtintso, “out of every 20 South Africans who studied in Cuba, 15 today practice their specialties in the public sector” (Mtintso quoted in López Blanch, 2008:1196). According to Aziz Pahad, “[our] students on the island [...] became excellent cadres. Not military cadres at that time, but excellent political cadres for the ANC” (Interview with Pahad, 2009).

The Federation of Cuban Woman (FMC) – began an important assistance to woman involved in national liberation struggles from all over the Third World. In February 1975, the FMC opened the Fé del Valle School for women which provided a wide variety of education, training over a ten month period, with all expenses paid by the FMC (López Blanch, 2008; Mtintso, 2008). The former ambassador of South Africa to Cuba, Thenjiwe Mtintso, who was a senior MK Commander and member of the SACP Central Committee, was one of the women who was educated in Cuba and spent time training at the Fé del Valle School. The FMC is one of the largest civil society organizations in Cuba, and is definitely unique in Latin America in terms of the policies it fights for and the recommendations it has provided to the Cuban government with regards to questions of pertinence to the expansion of women’s rights in Cuba and inclusion of women and social, economic and political life (Saney, 2004).

The education programme that the FMC had begun was principally in political, cultural and ideological training (López Blanch, 2008). Every year since the school was set up in 1975, various individuals from the ANC Women’s Section would pass through a period of training on the island (López Blanch, 2008). By 1976 there were around 300 women in the program from different countries. Courses for ten months and included French, English, Spanish, philosophy, the history of the women’s movement, history of the Cuban Revolution, political economy, socialist theory and visits to industrial centres (López Blanch, 2008).

## **ANC VISITS AND SACP CONGRESS**

Numerous important visits, with messages between Cubans and the South African resistance also took place throughout the 1960s and 1970s, intensifying after 1975 (López Blanch, 2008). Some of the significant visits to Cuba of South African resistance leaders include the 1988 visit by Cyril Ramaphosa, then general secretary of the South African National Union of Mineworkers. In 1989 Thabo Mbeki<sup>87</sup> visited Cuba. In 1990 John Nkadimeng, then general secretary of the South African Congress of Trade Unions and a member of the NEC of the ANC as well as member of the SACP<sup>88</sup>, visited Cuba. During the trip he had extensive meetings with Cuba's state-affiliated trade unions (Interview with Nkadimeng, 2009; López Blanch, 2008; Interview with González González, 2009). Nkadimeng became South Africa's first ambassador to Cuba following the end of apartheid in 1994, which was the first new embassy established after democratic elections in 1994. According to Nkadimeng, "I felt that Mandela had honoured me by sending me to Cuba, a country that was prepared to do anything for South Africa" (Interview with Nkadimeng, 2009). Nkadimeng (2009) and González González (2009) described the close relations between the Cuban Workers' Federation (CTC) and the militant South African trade unions that formed part of the anti-apartheid alliance. Numerous meetings were held in Cuba between the CTC and SACTU, and then later with COSATU. González González (2009) stated that the close relations between trade unions of the two countries has furthermore extended after 1994, and numerous CTC leaders from Cuba have travelled to meetings with COSATU, to continue relations and exchange among workers' federations.

The seventh Congress of the South African Communist Party (SACP), which was the last to be held outside of South Africa's borders, was held in Cuba in 1989. Several leaders of the SACP and the ANC attended, and the meeting was guarded with complete secrecy due to the difficult moment in which it was taking place and the underground existence of the SACP and liberation movements. John Nkadimeng states, "It was very important because it was a mark of respect and recognition of socialist Cuba. The role they played" (Interview with Nkadimeng, 2009:6). Aziz Pahad recalls of the SACP Congress, "[...] there was no surprise that the Congress would take place in Cuba for many of us" (Interview with Pahad, 2009).

Following the decriminalization of political organizations in 1990, the first Cuban meeting with Mandela took place at the celebration in Windhoek in 1990, and the second was Mandela's July 23-26, 1991 visit to Cuba, in which he spoke to a mass rally at Matanzas, Cuba. The rally celebrated the 38<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the attack on the Moncada Barracks, which marked the beginning of the struggle against the Batista regime. Cuba was Mandela's first country to visit outside of Africa since his release from prison – and it was a significant show of solidarity (Interview with Pahad, 2009; Interview with Kota, 2009; Interview with Lapsley, 2009). After the ANC triumph

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<sup>87</sup> Mbeki also visited Cuba in 2001.

<sup>88</sup> Which later became COSATU.

in the 1994 election, Cuba and South Africa began formal diplomatic ties – and Cuba was the first country recognized diplomatically by the ANC government elected in 1994 (Interview with Pahad, 2009). A new page of Cuban assistance to South Africa began, today geared towards social development.

## **ANTI-IMPERIALISM AND THE DIALECTIC OF FOREIGN POLICY**

The two-sided nature of relations is another facet of Cuban-South African relations that should be further explored, in that the South African liberation forces sought the assistance of the Cubans and were largely influenced by lessons of and information learned about the Cuban Revolution and developments in Cuba. This is an area that has been pointed to by all the interviewees, and reveals a more complex dialectic of relations that take place at the level of ideas and ideology. That is, the Cubans did not only have policies toward South Africa, but in many circumstances South African liberation leaders sought out Cuban assistance, and discussions took place as to what form of relations and assistance would take place between the two sides (Interview with Pahad, 2009; Interview with Kasrils, 2009; Interview with Kota, 2009; Interview with Nkadimeng, 2009).

In 1975, Alfred Nzo had sent a message to the First Congress of the PCC, in which he said South Africans, particularly black South Africans, identified with the Cuban Revolution and grew strength from their solidarity with Africa (López Blanch, 2008). The interviews conducted with ANC, SACP and trade union leaders all point towards a double-sided direction in foreign policy; that is, it is difficult to speak of a Cuban policy towards the South African liberation movements. It would be more appropriate to speak of *relations with*. In many ways, the movement in South Africa drew inspiration from, lessons from and sought contact from the Cubans since even before 1959, while the Cuban Revolution was still being waged (Interviews with Kasrils, 2009; Interview with Pahad, 2009; Interview with Lapsley, 2009). In the words of Pahad:

*Let me broadly start by telling you that we South Africans followed the Cuban struggle long before the '59 Revolution, because whatever literature we got was distributed among the ANC and the SACP. So when the Revolution took place, it was a moment of great excitement because generally the ANC and the SACP and the Congress Alliance as a whole, had a very anti-imperialist perspective. That stems from many reasons: most of the major countries supported the apartheid regime, and the collaboration by the apartheid regime and all the major countries was always a source of serious discussion in our ranks (Interview with Pahad, 2009).*

In my interview with both Ronnie Kasrils and Aziz Pahad, the beginning of Cuban relations with South African liberation movements did not commence with formal political relations. Rather, as young members of the anti-apartheid struggle, Cuba was an example and a future ally in the struggle against imperialism. Pahad and Kasrils mention the numerous demonstrations organized in South Africa in support of the Cubans during the Bay of Pigs Invasion and later the Missile Crisis (Interview with Pahad, 2009; Interview with Kasrils, 2009).

According to Pahad, “I think that what is significant is that in South Africa we organised demonstrations in support of the Cuban Revolution. Similarly when the Bay of Pigs invasion happened – that was before the Missile Crisis – there were demonstrations (Interview with Pahad, 2009:1)”. He continues:

*So there were demonstrations even during the Bay of Pigs. And when Robert Kennedy came to South Africa there were petitions, there were demonstrations on the Cuban issue. So when we were growing up Cuba was one of the inspirations for I think many of our generations, including I suspect the Mandela generation. So we have a long background of anti-imperialism and Cuba for us was one of the best manifestations of international solidarity with countries that were victims of imperialist aggressions (Interview with Pahad, 2009:2).*

As mentioned in chapter three, an often overlooked aspect of Cuban relations with the anti-apartheid alliance is the role of ideology, anti-imperialism and the world order in the shaping of relations between subaltern actors and the formulation of Cuban foreign policy. It is an area that should be further explored, but and lies beyond the purview of this broad sketch of Cuban foreign policy towards South African liberation movements. In interviews with Aziz Pahad (2009) and Ronnie Kasrils (2009), the work of the Cuban Organization is Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America (OSPAAAL) also had an important impact on the South African liberation movement. For example, anti-apartheid posters that became popularised in the 1960s and 1970s drew much of their inspiration from OSPAAAL posters made in Cuba. Cuban artists and graphic designers produced large numbers of these posters, and they were used not only in South Africa, but in the a student uprisings in France in 1968 and around Latin America, the Middle East and Asia (Interview with Pahad, 2009; Interview with Kasrils, 2009; Gleijeses, 2003; Young, 2001). OSPAAAL grew out of the meetings of the Tri-Continental in 1966, which along with the Bandung Conference in 1955, were of great significance in building the framework for a global organization of states and peoples of the Global South, dealing with issues and interests for the Global South (Persaud, 2003; Young; 2001; Grovogui, 2003; Interview with Pahad, 2009).

On the level of political interaction among national liberation movements, according to Aziz Pahad (Interview with Pahad, 2009), Cuba was a place where different movements could meet and discuss political issues and learn from each other. Cuba set up meetings, for example, between the ANC and the El Salvador Farabundo Martí National Liberational Movement (FMLN) (Interview with Pahad, 2009). In the words of Pahad, “The key question that has always been in some of our minds, the closest experience that we can learn from, given our conditions, is Latin America, both in terms of forms of struggle and in terms of forms of alternatives to the Washington Consensus” (Interview with Pahad, 2009:13). It would thus maybe be more useful to speak of a dialectic of relations, which are not uni-directional, but double-sided and complex.

## **CUBA AND SOUTH AFRICA: CONTINUITY IN RELATIONS**

An important manifestation of continuity in this bilateral relationship is the fact that a South African-based solidarity organisation was formed by leaders of the liberation struggle, in the period between 1992 and 1993. According to Father Michael Lapsley, a veteran of the liberation struggle who worked with the ANC and through the World Council of Churches:

*[...] I was conscious from my reading as well as from my first visit to Cuba, of the scale of solidarity to the peoples of the developing world, or at least to South Africa in many respects. Not only Cubans fought side-by-side with us in Angola, but also a number of South Africans who received an education in Cuba. And in fact I had actually just come back from Cuba, from my second visit at the time of the bombing as well. So really that was how we came to form FOCUS. I think from the very beginning we saw ourselves as people who were, if you like, seeking to return the compliment of what Cuba had done with us and for us for so long (Interview with Lapsley, 2009).*

Lapsley formed Friends of Cuba Society (FOCUS) in South Africa between 1992 and 1994. Importantly, FOCUS began before the first democratic elections were held in South Africa. Cuba also began sending a team of doctors to carry out a public health assessment of the country to be used for a future democratic state, between 1991 and 1992 – in the midst of one of the most violent periods in South Africa’s road to democracy (López Blanch, 2008; Interview with Lapsley, 2009). One of these doctors was Carlos Más Zabála (López Blanch, 2008; Interview with Lapsley, 2009). FOCUS includes many veterans of the liberation struggle who have knowledge of Cuba’s relations with the liberation struggle first hand, as well as a younger generation who wish to foster people-to-people solidarity as well as influence government policy to strengthen relations with the Cuban state and civil society (Interview with Lapsley, 2009). The first Southern Africa-Cuba Solidarity Conference was held in Johannesburg in 1995, and was reported about extensively in South African newspapers (Malapanis and Kane, 1995). Since then, FOCUS has organised and hosted a number of important Cuban visitors to South Africa, as well as organized brigades of South Africans to travel to Cuba on educational trips (Interview with Lapsley, 2009).

According to Aziz Pahad, several bilateral commissions have been set up on health, housing, education, and water and forestry systems, and many other areas central to social, economic and cultural development since the early 1990s (Interview with Pahad, 2009; FP, 2009b)<sup>89</sup>. In the area of health, a programme was set up in early

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<sup>89</sup> Both Kasrils and Pahad have been involved in some of the joint commissions between Cuba and South Africa (Interview with Kasrils, 2009; Interview with Pahad, 2009).

1991 to send Cuban doctors to South Africa to assist in carrying out an evaluation of the public health situation in South Africa that a new government would have to confront<sup>90</sup>.

*The first Cuban doctors began arriving in South Africa in 1996, to fill a skills shortage in state hospitals. Initially they were on three-year contracts, but were asked to extend their stay. Cuba is proud to have contributed, according to its possibilities, to the provision of affordable health care in South Africa. Following the signature of the agreement on Co-operation in Health, 463 Cuban doctors were assigned to work in South Africa mainly in rural and previously unserved areas. The two countries also continue to co-operate in areas of health research (FP, 2009b).*

Relations have extended on a number of levels. The first Joint Bilateral Commissions were set up between South African and Cuba in 2001 (Freedom Park, 2008a, 2008b). The CTC and COSATU continue with strong relations (González González, 2009). Additionally, in the Freedom Park<sup>91</sup>, which is still under construction in Pretoria, individual Cubans have been commemorated for their role in ending colonialism and apartheid in the southern African region, and in South Africa in particular. According to the authors of the Freedom Park website, “These Cubans have played a vital part in the history of South Africa. It is therefore fitting that their legacy be recognised and that they are given an honorary place in the history of our country (FP, 2009a).”

## **CONCLUSION**

This chapter has attempted to delineate a broad overview of Cuban relations with South African liberation movements, on multiple levels, both state and sub-state, at the level of international institutions and at the level of ideology. It is a complex history that demonstrated the need to see foreign policy as a dialectic of the domestic and the international, and although the state is the main interlocutor of foreign policy, it would be a mistake to overlook the role of civil society in the formation of implementation of foreign policy aims. The history challenges the images of Cuba’s foreign policy as “cynical ploys of a client state” (Gleijeses, 1998:159). It calls into question Chester Crocker’s (1992) position that Cuba pursued an aggressive, cynical and belligerent policy in Africa in order to further its own self-serving narrow national interests. The views that Cuban foreign policy can be summarized as the individual aggrandizing plot of a single individual, by bureaucratic models of decision-making or narrow conceptions of “national interest” are often simplistic, reductionist and de-historicized attempts to explain what can only be described as a complex, dialectical, and heterodox foreign policy<sup>92</sup>. Finding the

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<sup>90</sup> One of those first doctors who came to South Africa in the period of the early 1990s, and played an important role in future initiatives in health was Carlos Más Zabala (Interview with Lapsley, 2009; López Blanch, 2008)

<sup>91</sup> Wally Serote is the most significant actor involved in developing the Freedom Park. Part of my list of interviewees, I had intended to interview Serote for this thesis. However, I was unable to reach him in the given time period.

<sup>92</sup> This view can be found in the literature. See for example, Mesa-Lago, 1982; George, 2005; Bridgland, 1990, Crocker, 1992; Duncan, 1985; Gonzalez and Ronfeldt, 1986; Bauer and Taylor, 2005.

voices of the subaltern, making space within the study of foreign policy and IR for the Third World as units of analysis for theory building, and looking at the role of ideology and ideational forms of power within the formation of foreign policy are highlighted in this thesis and this chapter in particular.

## Chapter Six. Conclusion.

*“So broadly speaking, I think we in southern Africa owe a huge debt to the Cuban people. I don’t think there is one family in Cuba that hasn’t lost somebody in southern Africa, I don’t believe so.” (Aziz Pahad, 2009)*

*“Our engagement with Cuba and their preparedness to increase the number of doctors, teachers, engineers and other professionals to assist not only South Africa but the rest of the African continent to face the challenges of development, is informed by a desire from all of us, to strengthen South-South relations. Whiles Africans are involved in the important work of finalising the elaboration of the practical elements of the vision of the African Renaissance, Cuban doctors, teachers and other professionals, are already involved in a number of African countries giving practical meaning to our shared objectives of the reawakening of the continent.” (Thabo Mbeki, 2001)*

*“I think also there were many who would say that, the kind of argument that charity begins at home: ‘sort out your own problems before you help others’. And Cuba showed the world that no, as a poor country, they didn’t wait until they had solved all their problems...They were already practically showing solidarity and the meaning of internationalism, very practically.” (Michael Lapsley, 2009)*

*“Cuba and South Africa have similar approaches to the various issues collectively embodied in the South Agenda, which include increased co-operation between countries of the South and a redefinition of relations between the North and South.” (Freedom Park, 2009b)*

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

In this work, I began with the aim of filling a gap in the literature, as well as looking at the implication that this gap reveals within the field of International Relations and the study of Third World foreign policy. In the first chapter I provided a brief background, the aim and methodology of this thesis – as well as highlighted the shortcomings. The lack of access to important declassified and highly secretive documents, the sensitivity of the nature of the subject matter, as well as the inability to access the Cuban voices in this history is due to my lack of resources. In order to gain a more complete picture of Cuban relations with South African liberation movements throughout the period of 1959 until the mid-1990s, access to interviews with Cuban participants, from leaders of the FMC to members of decision-making bodies in the PCC and Cuban doctors, professionals part of bilateral agreements between Cuba and South Africa, as well as Cuban participants in internationalist missions in southern Africa, would be necessary.

In the first chapter I also presented postcolonial theory as the framework for my thesis. Postcolonial theory both provides the ontological starting point of this thesis, as well as guides in the types of questions asked, and the methodology chosen. A historical materialist approach that privileges the voice of the subaltern is the underlying analytical method for this work.

I present an overview of Cuba's foreign policy towards South African liberation movements from 1959 until 1994, as well as after 1994. Firstly, Cuba's relations with and foreign policy towards southern Africa – in particularly Angola and Namibia – defined the relations that Cuba had with the liberation movements in South Africa. It is Angola that provides the platform for a common resistance and cooperation between Cubans and South Africans in a number of areas: from military, technical, educational, to the level of official diplomatic representation of the ANC in Havana and assistance in the international anti-apartheid campaign. I highlight the role of civil society, such as through the work of the Federation of Cuban Women, in organizing a unique programme of training and education for women cadres of the South Africa's liberation movement. The role of the Cuban Confederation of Workers is another area that remains to be explored. In interviews with the first official diplomatic ANC representation in Cuba after democratic elections in 1994 – former ambassador John Nkadimeng – the conferences, discussions and meetings between the CTC and South Africa's liberation movements was a highlight of the relationship between Cuba and South Africa.

It remains a weakness of this thesis, the fact that Cuba's relationship with other liberation movements in South Africa, such as the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) or the Black Consciousness Movement, is largely unexplored. Mostly, a lack of time and resources, as well as the difficulty of snowball methods for accessing interviewees, limited the number and breadth of interviews I was able to conduct. What the scarce literature indicates is that Cuba related more often with the ANC alliance, than other organisations. The decision to relate directly with the ANC, the MK, SACP and COSATU, rather than PAC or other anti-apartheid organisations is one that necessitates further research and interviews.

The double-sided and dialectical nature of relationships between Cuba and the South African anti-apartheid alliance reveals the difficulties of analytically isolating such a study into Cuban foreign policy towards South African liberation movements, conceptualised as a uni-directional causal arrow, is in fact erroneous. A dialectical relationship of relations among Cuba and South African liberation movements, with intentions, policies and aims going in multiple directions, would be important to develop conceptually within a study of foreign policy. The fact that South African liberation movements derived ideological inspiration from, cultural and artistic influence, and ANC/SACP political line of march drawn from examples of the Cuban struggle – is an important element which adds to the understanding of relations between Cuba and South Africa during this period. The setting up of FOCUS and the domestic pressure to build a Cuba solidarity organisation and important bilateral ties with Cuba is important to analysing the dialectic of foreign relations that necessarily involve multiple sides. The area of Cuban-South African relations post-1994 remains another area for further research, as this thesis has only broadly sketched the continuity of Cuban foreign policy towards South Africa after 1994, geared towards a developmental agenda.

In placing Cuban foreign policy as a unit of analysis, and by interrogating the South African voices of resistance to do so, I of course encounter a number of shortcomings from the outset. Gaining the Cuban voice in this history would provide invaluable insights to this work. However, from the data gained in reviewing available literature, and data gained from qualitative interviews, I was able to piece together a broad relationship and structure of Cuban policy towards South African liberation forces that involve both high-level state elites as well as at the level of civil society. From this, it is evident that an overall framework of principles over pragmatism as a guide to understanding Cuban foreign policy would be necessary to carry out a proper analysis of Cuban foreign policy. It would be erroneous to look at Cuban foreign policy without looking at the ideologies, and the ideational narratives that make up the process of constructing the Cuban identity post-1959. By ignoring ideology, and the often repeated principle of “proletarian internationalism” as a guiding force of Cuban foreign policy, as an *ex post facto* justification of foreign policy engagements – one engages in a de-historicising of the Cuban state and civil society, and in a silencing of voices which should be heard, while in the process applying one’s own ideological biases to the study of foreign policy. Embarking on the study of ideology in foreign policy would be an important addition to the field of theory building within IR and foreign policy.

According to Saney (2009), internationalism is not epiphenomenal<sup>93</sup> to Cuban foreign policy. It is in that dialectic of the domestic and the international, at the state and sub-state level, where an analytical focus on foreign policy should be placed. Furthermore, foreign policy defines and reinforces the autonomy of the Cuban state, situates it ontologically as part of the Third World, and as a state that desires change in the hierarchical world order as well as negotiates its position within that order and the traditional roles which are assigned to a Third World state. It is self-reflective, conscious, and planned – rather than pragmatic and haphazard, or at the whims of the constantly changing world economic system. Whether or not Cuba received support from the Soviet Union, its foreign policy aims and initiatives remain the same, pointing to the guiding role of ideology in the making of foreign policy.

## ***THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH***

A selective approach to history and marginalizing of actors such as Cuba and their role in recent South African history is of prime significance for the study of foreign policy and IR when looking at the Third World – for it specifically points to the problematic of Eurocentric knowledge production and the process of theory building as an extension of power relationships in the world order, and as a form of ideational power (Said, 1978;

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<sup>93</sup> Saney (2009) writes that internationalism is not confined to the external, and divorced from the domestic sphere, but rather forms the basis of construction of “socialist values” that lie at the heart of the domestic ideational, material, productive and institutional spheres that make up the Cuban state.

Trouillot, 1995; Laffey and Weldes, 2008; Gleijeses, 2009). As Trouillot (2008) notes, power is not unproblematic to the construction of historical narratives, and historical production involves silences<sup>94</sup>.

Essentially, this thesis does not merely aim to give voice to the subaltern, but rather aims to add a more complex historicity to the dialectics of South Africa's liberation struggle and Cuba's policy towards South Africa in particular. Therefore, a further goal of this thesis is contributing to theory building within IR that the experience of Cuban-South African relations via prioritizing subaltern voices during this specific period. The case study of this thesis brings attention to the third World, and the lack of study of Third World Foreign Policy in the construction of macro-level, parsimonious IR theories (Braveboy-Wagner, 2003). Taking into account the numerous shortcomings of this thesis, I hope to add to the goal of looking at IR theory from the South, by looking at a very heterodox case of South-South subaltern relations.

In the introductory chapter I asserted that this thesis does not proclaim objectivity. Rather, one thinks where one sits. Writing from the Third World, about the Third World, and interested in pinpointing the possibilities for change in the current world order, my choice of subject matter and my reasons for doing so are inherently subjective, and do not aim to be neutral. Robert Cox's (1981:87) assertion about the emancipatory role of theory and of the reflexivity of theory is vital in this regard (Braveboy-Wagner, 2003b). He states that theory is always for someone and for a specific purpose. That is, social theory originates in the necessity of academic convention and the advancement of scientific study of the social world, which necessitates simplification and a sub-division of reality. Social theory also has ontological assumptions which are often overlooked; this thesis thus implements a postcolonial subaltern historicized approach to looking at world politics and foreign policy, recognizing the weaknesses and inherent biases in all social theory, as well as points to areas within IR that are largely overlooked (Lavelle, 2005; Trouillot, 1995; Persaud, 2001; Cox, 1988). The links between knowledge production and power in international relations is one of those areas that postcolonial theory attempts to grapple with. Bourdieu (1980) defines areas that exist outside ontological and epistemological boundaries that exist in social theory and in the social world, as "the unthinkable". He defines the unthinkable as those events for which there are no conceptual tools to categorise, and that defy assumptions about the nature of the international system, the nature of states and even assumptions about human nature in the broadest sense.

Postcolonial theory highlights the idea that theory cannot be isolated from its social, historical background and the social structures related to production that form the backdrop or context of social relations of production, culture, ideas and institutions at a specific point in time and specific place (Mgonja and Makombe, 2008; Grovogui, 2003). Following Frantz Fanon's (1967) and Sartre's (2001) works that espouse a subaltern view

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<sup>94</sup> Silencing in historical production and knowledge production, according to Trouillot (1995) and Said (1978) is a result of uneven power. And silencing in academic production involves "uneven power in the production of sources, archives and narratives" (Trouillot, 1995:27). But silencing is also epistemological, because certain events and actors that are silenced often form part of the generally unthinkable, and do not form part of the vocabulary of the possible (Trouillot, 1995).

of the anti-colonial revolt as the highlight of recent historical and political developments, one can assert that the Cuban Revolution of 1959 was a significant event in shaping the interstate system, and furthermore in highlighting the role of foreign policy as part of reinforcing Third World autonomy, subjectivity and anti-hegemonic processes. Cuba represents, however, a heterodox case within IR, and it is clear that Cuban foreign policy represents an ontological challenge for IR theory to look at the Cuban state after the process set in motion in 1959. However, as Grovogui (2003) asserts, postcolonial theory provides a framework for looking at foreign policy of all states and societies in the Third World from a common epistemological point of view – and the Cuba state and society do not lie outside of this.

The fact that Cuba's foreign policy has been overlooked within the field of foreign policy studies and much of IR in terms of theory-building, this case study reveals an important example of one of the main tenets of postcolonial theory: how relations of power and the hierarchical nature of the world system is reinforced through knowledge production (Grovogui, 2003; Laffey and Weldes, 2008). By silencing Cuba and subaltern actors in the Third World, and thus rendering it an insignificant actor, the field of IR contributes to the hegemonic discourse of Cuba as an insignificant actor, as a Cold War hangover, or a mere locale. However, this is an area that deserves further research. The next section will highlight some further possibilities for research, which have only been very broadly touched upon in this thesis.

A further area that would be necessary to analyse in order to study Cuban foreign policy today is looking at the continuity of relations between Cuba and South Africa post-1994, as well as how policy may have changed. According to the intellectual authors of the Freedom Park in Pretoria:

*The Governments of South Africa and Cuba have a long-standing co-operation, which ranges from the political to the economic fields. One of the most significant agreements signed has been that establishing the Joint Bilateral Commission (JBC), established in 2001. Following the success of co-operation in the sphere of health – a collaboration that involves Cuban doctors and medical professors working in South Africa and South African medical students studying in Cuba - various national and provincial departments began pursuing projects in diverse areas [...] Cuba has also made significant commitments to the reconstruction and development of affordable housing, sports development and human resource development in South Africa. In April 2003, twenty-four Cuban tutors arrived and were deployed to work in seven provinces of South Africa to help to develop teaching skills in Mathematics and Sciences (Freedom Park, 2009b).*

All the interviews carried out for the current thesis indicate a strong relationship between the Cuban state and civil society and the South African state and civil society (Interview with Kota, 2009; Interview with Nkadimeng, 2009; Interview with Pahad, 2009; Interview with Kasrils, 2009; Interview with Lapsley, 2009). Furthermore, as noted by the Freedom Park (2009b):

*Currently, 293 Cuban co-operative personnel are working in South Africa in the construction and health sectors, while a total of 436 South African students have graduated on the island. Another 300 students of that nationality are being trained in Cuba in medicine, education, physical education and sports specialties.*

The interviews of my thesis indicate that much more research would have to be conducted, with a broader list of participants, such as the PAC, the BCM and Cuban actors. Another of the shortcomings of this work is that it briefly touches upon Cuban foreign policy towards the South African state and civil society after 1994.

## ***THEORISING FOREIGN POLICY AND SOUTH-SOUTH RELATIONS***

In chapter one, one of the implications for further research mentioned, is in the area of South-South relations. At face value, this thesis deals with a heterodox case of South-South interactions that does not lie simply at the state-level of analysis, but involves overlapping levels such as the state, sub-state, as well as at the level of national liberation movements that exist both domestically as well as have a transnational presence. This presents areas for further research, looking at foreign policy as a dialectic between the domestic and the international, and as not only as the function of the state but also the interaction and involvement of sub-state social forces. The examples of the FMC, the Cuban trade unions, as well as students in Cuba, are relevant in this sense. However, the complementing of work at the state and sub-state levels on working with the transnational solidarity committee of the international anti-apartheid movement presents another challenge in terms of incorporation into the study of IR. Both the anti-apartheid movement, the anti-Vietnam war movement in the 70s as well as the Palestinian national liberation struggle are struggles that are not only intra-state struggles, but also have an international and transnational character. The example of Cuban foreign policy towards South Africa, in privileging principles of anti-colonialism, national liberation and anti-racism can shed light on transnational struggles and movements into the study of IR.

This thesis has also pointed to the issue of engaging with or strengthening international institutions that put at the forefront the questions, positions, interests of the Third World, and take as a starting point the unequal nature of the world system. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was an attempt to implement the ontological positions of the subaltern in the formation of international organisations as tools to for states to implement and strengthen their positions in a multilateral agenda (Braveboy-Wagner, 2003). This reveals an important area of research within postcolonial theory and IR (Grovoqui, 2003; Braveboy-Wagner, 2003). According to Aziz Pahad, many of the South Africans who were centrally engaged in Cuban-South African relations during the period of the liberation struggle have engaged in an attempt to revitalise NAM (Interview with Pahad, 2009). Pahad notes:

*There were many people who thought that when Cuba took over the NAM chairmanship from South Africa, they would misuse NAM for their very limited interests, and in reality the Cubans,*

*as my experience had always shown, would never misuse multilateral structures for their vary narrow interests. And their chairmanship of NAM reflected that. That's my view on it. They dealt with all the issues, trying to get consensus and working on the way forward on all the major challenges. (Interview with Aziz Pahad, 2009)*

And in terms of South-South interaction under a developmental agenda, through multilateral structures and through bilateral commissions, the Cuban-South African example sheds lights on how to expand the developmental agenda throughout the Third World. According to Aziz Pahad, “We are looking for a developmental state agenda. But sometimes, we are such a young democracy that we are trying to develop it on our own soil. But I still think we could have learned more from the experiences of the Latin American countries in the developmental area [...]” (Interview with Aziz Pahad, 2009).

I conclude this work by way of summarising the conclusions of this thesis in terms of both historical relations between Cuba and South Africa's liberation movements, as well as more recent formal relations between the two states. By pointing to some of the possibilities for future research that this work reveals, I hope to arouse interest in the area of Third World foreign policy, looking at the role of ideology in foreign policy, the dialectical relations between the domestic and the international, South-South relations and possibilities for alternative ontological and epistemological frameworks that postcolonial theory offers. Particularly, the nexus between structures of power and knowledge production is an area that deserves further research within IR and which overlooked subaltern cases such as Cuba's foreign relations with South Africa can help to shed light on.

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# Appendix I.

## List of Respondents

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