

ESSAY

Principled pragmatism: A Latin American contribution for foreign policy analysis?

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Abstract

The key purpose of this paper is to identify key Latin American theories proposed to study foreign policy. The essay points out that Latin America has made a significant contribution to foreign policy analysis. The most important conceptual contribution in the field is the concept of principled pragmatism. A crucial premise is that Latin American nations resort to this type of policy to come to agreement with the United States, address domestic issues, advance national interests, and cope with economic problems. The paper is divided into four sections. The first describes key analytical models and theoretical approaches created to explain foreign policy. The second identifies the Latin American thought on this subject. The third section explains the concept of principled pragmatism. This approach stems from the models and theories explained in the second section and from the Latin American thinking described in the third section. The last segment explains the case study of Cuban foreign policy in the early 1960s using the notion of principled pragmatism.

Keywords

Foreign Policy Analysis, Latin America, Principled Pragmatism, Realism, Institutional Liberalism, Constructivism, Marxism

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Introduction

A general perception is that Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) is an exclusive US-British discipline. Indeed, most of the studies on the subject have been published mainly in the United States and the United Kingdom. The worldwide scope of the US and the British foreign policy partly explains this trend. In other words, both countries have had global influence in world affairs, so there has been high interest in the academic realm to study those cases. Nevertheless, there have been relevant contributions to analyse foreign policy in other parts of the world. In Europe, scholars from France, Germany, Spain, Russia, and other countries have developed interesting perspectives to analyse world policy. In Asia, Japan and China, to exemplify, have also constructed a theoretical basis to explain foreign policy. Canadian scholars have also contributed to the foreign policy field of study. Likewise, some Latin American thinkers have also created ideas and concepts to study this activity.

In this context, the core purpose of this paper is to identify key theoretical perspectives from Latin American thinkers on the subject. In this sense, the argumentative line of this paper is based on three assumptions. The first is that Latin America has significantly contributed to the study of foreign policy. The second is that one of the most important contributions in this field of knowledge has been the concept of 'principled pragmatism'. This approach combines elements of Realism and Institutional Liberalism to try to explain foreign policy behaviour in the region. The third assumption is that Latin American nations resort to this type of policy due to the following factors. The first one is that the United States plays a relevant role in the region, and those nations must use this approach to deal with the country and advance national interests. The second factor is that Latin American countries have domestic political problems, and their governments need to apply pragmatism and principles in foreign affairs to cope with them. Thirdly, Latin American economies are feeble and depend on the external sector. Therefore, they must apply some dose of pragmatism to solve their financial upheavals. In other words, external and domestic factors explain why Latin American nations resort to principled pragmatism.

The paper is separated in four segments. The first describes key analytical models and theoretical approaches created to explain foreign policy. It includes the conceptual proposals from Graham Allison, Kenneth Waltz, and Putnam and the main theories of International Relations: Realism, Institutional Liberalism, Constructivism, and Marxism. The second part identifies the core contributions of Latin American thinkers to analyse foreign policy. This section includes the ideas of authors such as Mario Ojeda, Carlos Escude, Raul Bernal, Luciano Tomassini, Heraldo Muñoz, and Alberto van Klaveren. The third section describes the concept of principled pragmatism, as a method of study for Latin American foreign policy. The last section analyses Latin American foreign policy towards the Cuba issue during the 1960s, using the principled pragmatism notion.

Analytical models and theoretical approaches to study foreign policy

Foreign policy analysis is a complicated duty since various domestic and external factors influence the decision-making process. However, several theoretical approaches help us understand external actions of states. For instance, conceptual tools such as Graham Allison's models, Robert Putnam's double-level game, and Kenneth Waltz's levels of analysis are useful to explain foreign behaviour.¹ By the same token, Realism, Institutional Liberalism, Constructivism, and Marxism are also explanatory orientations to study this subject. Most of these theoretical constructions have a US and European (western) origin. However, many scholars have used them to study foreign policy in Latin America and other parts of the world and serve as a base to construct the concept of principled pragmatism.

In 1971, Graham Allison created three models to explain the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis: The Rational Actor, the Bureaucratic Politics, and the Organizational Process.² Allison's conceptual frameworks became a key turning point in studying the essence of foreign policy decisions since they were highly helpful in understanding that dramatic episode of the Cold War. They also became a cornerstone for foreign policy analysis. On one hand, the rational actor model pinpoints that decision-makers first establish concrete objectives regarding a specific problem or situation, especially when national security is threatened. Secondly, they analyse each alternative to identify the advantages and disadvantages, and identify possible courses of action. Finally, governmental officials choose the option with the greatest possibilities to achieve their objective.³ This perspective is helpful since the decision could represent the state's national interest. However, not all decisions are necessarily rational since other factors, such as the actor's interests or unexpected situations, could influence the process.

On the other hand, the bureaucratic politics model implies that decisions are not necessarily rational but come from actors' preferences. In other words, in the decision-making process, each governmental actor tries to impose his point of view on the matter. In the end, there is consensus and commitment from each actor to the chosen decision, regardless of their preference not prevailing.⁴ This model provides a comprehensive picture of the decision-making process. However, the risk is that the decision could benefit a certain political sector and would not automatically reflect the national interest. Finally, the organizational process model considers

¹ L. Neack, *Studying Foreign Policy Comparatively: Cases and Analysis*, 4th ed. (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2019); J.S. Lantis and R. Beasley, *Comparative Foreign Policy Analysis* (Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics, 2017).

² G. Allison, *Essence of decision. Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Harper Collins, 1971), 30.

³ Allison, *Essence of decision*, 32.

⁴ Allison, *Essence of decision*, 40.

that there is a standard operating procedure (SOP) under any situation or emergency.⁵ That is, each actor has specific functions and must act according to an operational manual previously established. The problem with this model is that reality goes faster than theory. In other words, not all circumstances and situations can be predicted in a determined plan.

These three models have important explanatory power. Their main strength is that they contemplate different aspects of the decision-making process, such as establishing objectives, pondering alternatives, national interests, actors' preferences, and planification processes. The problem is that each model only observes part of the reality. Therefore, using each model individually could be a disadvantage, but it is possible to apply the three simultaneously. Regardless of its flaws, many authors have used them to explain other foreign policy cases in different parts of the world.

The three-level analysis advocates that key incentives for a foreign policy decision or choice could be found at the systemic, state, or individual level.⁶ In the first level, world elements determine the decision-making process, such as power balance, other actors' interests, and international rules and institutions. This level offers a comprehensive panorama of world politics but only observes one part of the reality: the international environment. In the second level, the political system, the economic development model, geographical characteristics, demographic patterns, technological advancements, and sociocultural traits are relevant variables that explain foreign policy. The argument is that states act in the international arena according to internal incentives. In this case, national interests, governmental objectives, international bargaining power, and domestic actors' interests significantly impact external decisions. This level also provides a helpful analytical tool but only shows a partial vision of the whole picture. Finally, the individual method of analysis proposes that biological, psychological, and cognitive factors influence decision-making. Therefore, leaders' personal choices, points of view, and aspirations are variables that impact foreign policy behaviour.⁷ Its main weakness is that it is very difficult to demonstrate that those factors were indeed the main cause of an external action due to its subjective nature.

The three levels of analysis are a useful methodological model that helps understand state conduct in world affairs. They also offer a comprehensive panorama of the decision-making process because they contextualize the systemic, state, and individual variables that can explicate foreign policy actions. However, their main

⁵ Allison, *Essence of decision*, 67.

⁶ The three levels of analysis method were proposed by K. Waltz in *The man, the state, and the war: A theoretical analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001). However, other authors have developed and expanded Waltz's conceptual proposal. See for instance K. Mingst, *Essentials of International Relations* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2001); J. Rourke, *International politics on the world stage* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002).

⁷ Rourke, *International politics*, 63.

weakness is that they, separately, only observe one face of reality. Therefore, a recommendation could be to use them together to have a complete vision of the picture.

Robert Putnam's theoretic method of the 'Two-Level Game' postulates that governments have a hard time making choices of foreign policy.⁸ This situation is tricky as they must consider external actors' interests when reaching an agreement (first level), considering domestic groups' interests (second level) at the same time. According to Putnam, the process must be based on two measures. First, choices should consider foreign actors' interests. Second, actions must also seek to satisfy the interests of national groups and get ratification of the agreement. Furthermore, Putnam reasons that foreign policy decision-making is like playing on two chess boards simultaneously, an international board and a national one.⁹ Hence, the task is to perform on two tracks at the same time to satisfy internal groups while working to reach an agreement with the external actor. This decision-making choice is also called 'double-edged diplomacy'. Another important theoretical contribution from Putnam is his notion of the win-sets. This concept relates to nations' best option in dealing with domestic groups and external partners.

Even though this model was created mainly for treaty negotiations, Putnam's proposal is also useful for another kind of situations, such as foreign policy decisions in general. In the case of Latin American nations, there are not only two game boards, as Putnam puts it. Due to domestic and external conditions, many Latin American governments must deal with four boards. Since there is an ideological division between nationalist and conservative groups, officers must play with two kinds of interests domestically. In the international sphere, a similar situation prevails. Latin American nations must face US interests and, at the same time, they need to interact with leftist countries, as was the case of Cuba after 1959. Therefore, Latin American governments must frequently deal with four boards simultaneously. The main weakness of Putnam's notion is that he only considers two levels of analysis. It is missing the individual perspective. In a particular negotiation, the leader can have a personal preference for the subject. Thus, the decision could be affected by his interest. Nevertheless, the conceptual model is highly useful in explaining foreign policy behaviour.

This two-level game is pragmatic in has a high content since all decisions must satisfy domestic and external concerns simultaneously, which could be exceedingly problematic or occasionally self-contradictory. National groups have a tendency of diverging interests from foreign actors. Putnam's model has this logic at its

⁸ R. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988): 434.

⁹ Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games."

core. Some Latin American authors have used Putnam's model to explain foreign policy behaviour.¹⁰

Theoretical approaches present in International Relations literature can be used to explain foreign policy actions. One of the most prominent paradigms is Realism. Its core idea is that states must act in accordance with their national interests and national security. As a politically aware concept, Realism finds its roots in the writings of Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Morgenthau.¹¹ In their classic works, these authors laid the fundamentals of what later became the realist approach to International Relations as a discipline. For Morgenthau, foreign policy is driven by the notion of national interest defined by power relations. Stated differently, states pursue power in foreign affairs. Therefore, world policy implies a struggle for power, and power will always be the immediate goal.¹² Realists indicate that, in foreign policy, states are rational and unitary. In other words, they act as single entities (high social cohesion) and make decisions based on objectives and interests. Furthermore, from this perspective, national security takes precedence on the foreign policy agenda. Based on these principles, states should prioritize the promotion of their national interest, the protection of national security, and the enhancement of economic growth as their primary foreign policy objectives. Therefore, Realism promotes a pragmatic policy since security and national interests are key motivations for external action.

Realism is a useful approach to explaining conflict, but it is limited to explicating cooperation. However, this perspective is widely used among scholars who study world politics. Since conflict and war are permanent trends in foreign affairs, Realism contributes to understanding better how the world functions. This theoretical view emphasizes the concepts of power, security, conflict, and anarchy as key elements of international relations. Realism has ample explanatory power, especially in conflicts but is limited to making a prescriptive proposal to solve international problems. However, many authors worldwide have used this conceptual approach to explain international politics.

In the context of Institutional Liberalism, the core concept is that states are required to conduct their international relations in accordance with normative and legal regulations. Essentially, international law serves as a framework that shapes a state's conduct. Furthermore, liberals argue that global institutions possess the

¹⁰ See R.V. Flores, "El 'pragmatismo principista' de la política exterior de México en los votos sobre Cuba en la OEA (1962–1964)," *Foro Internacional* 61, no. 3 (2021): 687–765; R.B. Sarmiento, "Política exterior y paz: ¿un juego en dos niveles?," *Desafíos* 32, no. 2 (2020): 1–37; P. Nemiña and J. Zelicovich, "El análisis de las negociaciones internacionales. Reflexiones metodológicas sobre la aplicación del esquema de doble nivel," *Postdata: Revista de Reflexión y Análisis Político* 21, no. 2 (2016–2017): 423–452.

¹¹ See P. Viotti and M. Kauppi, *International Relations theory* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987).

¹² See M.J. Hans, *Politics among nations: The struggle for power and peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948).

capacity to mitigate anarchy, resolve conflicts, and encourage collaboration. Consequently, states should prioritize collective or multilateral approaches rather than unilateral ones. Within this framework, diplomatic negotiations assume a central role in any foreign policy endeavour.¹³ Additionally, liberals advocate for nations to adhere to fundamental principles in global politics, including non-intervention, self-determination, the equal sovereignty of all states, peaceful resolution of international disputes, and the prohibition of the use or threat of military force, among other principles. With this in mind, Institutional Liberalism promotes what we call a 'principled' foreign policy. That is, a policy based on normative values instead of the use of force.

Institutional Liberalism is an excellent perspective to explain cooperation but is limited to explain conflict. In the same sense, it is good to propose solutions, but it is short to explain the causes and consequences. For this reason, it is probably not widely used among International Relations scholars. However, the approach is potentially useful to explain the foreign policy of weak states since they do not have other choices but to resort to international law, world institutions, and principles to deal with stronger peers. Indeed, many Latin American countries adopt a foreign policy based on these liberal notions.

Constructivism is another theoretical approach that has been used to explain foreign policy. This theory assumes that reality is only in the minds of individuals and that international relations are an intersubjective and cognitive construction, consisting of thoughts, perceptions, and ideas, not physical forces. Constructivists assume that these collective ideas are widely shared by society. They also accept that foreign policy must be based on national interest, but they interpret it from the identity concept. In other words, national identity constructs national interests and states act internationally under this criterion. Thus, national identity is a fundamental motivation for external behaviour. Constructivism also postulates that the perceptions of leaders and governmental officials determine foreign policy decisions. If they perceive a threat, then they need to take necessary measures.

Like realists, constructivists accept power as an important element in world affairs. The differences are that realists observe power in material terms and constructivists in a discursive sphere. According to constructivists, the main source of power is ideas.¹⁴ The role of this theory is important because it questions the International Relations mainstream. In short, Constructivism is a useful tool for understanding foreign policy. However, it has been criticized because it has a subjective element.

¹³ See T. Dunne, "Liberal internationalism," in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, eds. J. Baylis and S. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 113–124.

¹⁴ See M. Barnett, "Social constructivism," in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, eds. J. Baylis and S. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 192–206.

Another approach that has also been used to explain foreign policy is Marxism. This explanatory framework emphasizes the differences in the international economic structure. There are rich and poor countries. In this sense, strong nations have domination mechanisms to control weak states. Thus, there is an economic and political dependence from the periphery to the core.¹⁵ This core-periphery model suggests strong nations exploit weaker states through unequal trade agreements, foreign investment, and political pressure.¹⁶ Consequently, Marxist foreign policy focuses on reducing this economic and political dependence. The main criticism of this perspective is that many scholars view Marxism as an overly simplistic and deterministic view of international relations.¹⁷ Additionally, the collapse of the Soviet Union, a major proponent of Marxist ideology, significantly weakened its global influence.¹⁸ However, the core-periphery model remains a relevant concept for understanding the power imbalances within the international system, especially regarding the historical exploitation of resource-rich developing nations.¹⁹ Furthermore, Marxist ideas continue to resonate in Latin America, where many countries have a long history of dependence on external powers and a desire for greater economic autonomy.²⁰

Marxism faces several challenges in its application to FPA. Hurrell sees Marxism as offering a predetermined outcome, with the core inevitably exploiting the periphery.²¹ This doesn't account for agency of developing nations or the rise of newly industrialized countries that challenge the core-periphery dynamic. Gilpin states that Marxist theory prioritizes class struggle as the primary driver of international relations.²² This might downplay the role of other factors like national security concerns, cultural identities, or environmental issues in shaping foreign policy. On the same line of thought, Robert Rosenberg notes that the core-periphery model can be a blunt tool as developing nations exhibit a wide range of experiences, and some may have complex relationships with multiple core states.²³ Additionally, the model doesn't fully capture the rise of regional powers within the developing world.

By comparing and contrasting Foreign Policy Analysis models from various regions, we can identify several key insights. First, this exploration of variables,

¹⁵ For a better account of this approach, see R. Villanueva, *Marxism and the origins of International Relations. A hidden history* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022).

¹⁶ M. Ojeda, *Alcances y limites de la politica exterior de Mexico* (Mexico: El Colegio de Mexico, 1976).

¹⁷ R.W. Cox, "Social Forces, States, and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory," *Millennium* 10, no. 2 (1981): 126–51.

¹⁸ F. Fukuyama, *The end of history and the last man* (Free Press, 1992).

¹⁹ R. Gilpin, *The political economy of international relations* (Princeton University Press, 1987).

²⁰ B. Loveman, *Chile: The legacy of intervention* (Twin Palms Publishers, 1990).

²¹ A. Hurrell, *On global order* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

²² Gilpin, *The political economy of international relations*, 309.

²³ R. Rosenberg, *The Hollowing of the State: The Changing Nature of Governance in the New Global Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

factors and indicators entails the recognition of common themes that transcend geographical boundaries. For instance, the pursuit of national interest is a core concern in most FPA models, though the definition and prioritization of that interest may differ.²⁴ Second, through this analysis, it is possible to identify regional trends that reflect specific historical and geopolitical contexts. Hans Morgenthau emphasizes national security in European Realism, shaped by the experience of two devastating World Wars. His seminal work on Realism in “Politics Among Nations” provides a foundational perspective on power dynamics and national interest, influencing European foreign policy analysis.²⁵ Morgenthau’s realist’ focus on national interest and Michael Doyle’s take on liberal institutionalism reflects a European struggle like principled pragmatism, balancing power politics with normative values is a constant challenge.²⁶ The EU’s concept of “principled pragmatism”, though not the exact term, is evident in its foreign policy, as it strives to uphold democratic values and international law (principles) while pragmatically engaging with various actors, including some with questionable human rights records.

This focus on economic development in Asian FPA models, as explained by Acharya,²⁷ aligns with the concept of “Asian Values”.²⁸ This perspective emphasizes cultural distinctiveness and a preference for non-interference in domestic affairs, shaping foreign policy approaches in some Asian countries. Here, economic development is seen as a way to achieve national greatness and regional influence, sometimes prioritizing this over human rights or democratic reforms. Critics argue “Asian Values” can be used to justify authoritarian regimes.²⁹ Meanwhile, an analytical approach through “Middle Power Diplomacy”³⁰ (MDP) highlights how regional powers like India and Japan navigate the international system without relying solely on military strength. These nations utilize strategies like coalition building, economic statecraft, and international cooperation to pursue their interests. This tactic is particularly relevant for countries situated between major powers, like Canada between the US and China.³¹

²⁴ F. Kratochwil, *The Puzzles of Politics: Inquiries into the Genesis and Transformation of International Relations (New International Relations)* (Routledge, 2010).

²⁵ H. Morgenthau, *Politics among nations: The struggle for power and peace* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1948).

²⁶ M. Doyle, “Liberalism and World Politics,” *The American Political Science Review* 80, no. 4 (December, 1986): 1151–1169.

²⁷ A. Acharya, *The Making of Southeast Asia: International Relations of a Region* (Cornell University Press, 2012).

²⁸ R. Peerenboom, *Asian values and human rights* (Routledge, 2013).

²⁹ Peerenboom, *Asian values and human rights*, 12.

³⁰ J. Melissen and Y. Sohn, *Understanding Public Diplomacy in East Asia: Middle Powers in a Troubled Region* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

³¹ L. Tossutti et al., *Canadian Politics Today: Democracy, Diversity and Good Government* (Toronto: Pearson Canada, 2020).

On the same manner, Mearsheimer³² underscores the importance of considering regional context in FPA. He states that different regions have unique historical experiences, security threats, and economic goals that shape their foreign policy priorities. Canada's emphasis on MDP, for example, reflects the desire to secure its interests in a complex geopolitical landscape. Canada's emphasis on human rights and peacebuilding reflects strong normative principles. However, MDP requires pragmatism in achieving these goals, often through multilateral cooperation and alliances.

On this tenor, the examination of established FPA models used in other regions, can provide insights into how principled pragmatism interacts with existing theoretical frameworks like Realism, which emphasizes national security and self-interest, and Constructivism, which focuses on the role of ideas and norms. Principled pragmatism offers a complementary perspective by acknowledging the importance of both ideals and practical considerations in foreign policy decisions. This approach could challenge some realist assumptions about the primacy of national security by suggesting that ethical concerns can also be a factor. This comparative analysis strengthens our understanding of principled pragmatism's place within the broader FPA landscape by analyzing how other regions grapple with balancing principles and pragmatism.

A global perspective on FPA fosters a richer understanding of the complexities of International Relations and regional studies. This viewpoint allows us to appreciate the unique contributions of Latin America, alongside the valuable insights offered by FPA scholarship from other regions of the world. By incorporating these additional perspectives, we gain a richer understanding of Foreign Policy Analysis from the Global South illuminating the complexities of international relations and providing valuable tools for comprehending and predicting the actions of states on the global stage.

Latin American contributions to foreign policy analysis

At first glance, Latin American theory seems to have limited influence in foreign policy analysis. However, this paper argues that Latin American authors have made significant contributions to this field. They not only engage with traditional Western approaches but also endeavor to develop new perspectives based on their unique regional realities. Latin American nations share some important characteristics that shape their foreign policy. The "United States factor" has been a permanent influence.³³ Many were invaded or intervened, some lost territory, and Washington has often pressured their governments to protect US economic interests. Additionally, most Latin American nations share similar political systems, with a presidential

³² J.J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001).

³³ H. Muñoz, "El estudio de las políticas exteriores latinoamericanas: temas y enfoques dominantes," *Estudios Internacionales* 20, no. 80 (1987): 409.

system prevalent in many. This feature impacts the foreign policy decision-making process, where the president holds broad power.³⁴ Furthermore, they share similar political problems, such as social polarization, corruption, violence, repression, lack of legitimacy in some cases, and populism. Economically, they also exhibit similar traits. Most are classified as developing nations, struggling with low economic growth, high inflation and unemployment rates, significant foreign debt, and widespread poverty.³⁵ Bureaucratic limitations and capacity constraints in their foreign services further impact decision-making processes. Latin American scholars have addressed these shared characteristics to construct their own models of FPA.

The United States as a factor is a permanent influence on their foreign conduct. Many were invaded or intervened, some lost territory and Washington always pressured the Latin American governments to protect US economic interests. Another common characteristic is that most Latin American nations have similar political systems. In many of them, a presidential system, prevails. This feature also impacts the foreign policy decision-making process, in which the president has broad power. Also, they share similar political problems, such as social polarization, corruption, violence, repression, lack of legitimacy in some cases, and populism, among others. In the economic sphere, they also present similar traits. Most of them are classified as underdeveloped nations; some of them have low economic growth, high inflation and unemployment rates, enormous foreign debt, and extended poverty. In the bureaucratic and capacity of their foreign policy, most do not have enough financial resources for external action and suffer from a lack of professionalism in their foreign services. These variables have an important impact on the foreign policy decision-making process. In this context, most Latin American scholars have paid close attention to these traits to construct their own models.

Throughout Latin America, important thinkers have proposed ideas that contribute to the international discipline of FPA in general. In Mexico, Mario Ojeda is a leading scholar.³⁶ His most important contribution, published in the 1970s, systematically analyzed Mexican foreign policy using a theoretical understanding of the world and innovative conceptual tools.³⁷ Ojeda's work is grounded in Realism, examining Mexico's international activities within a hierarchical international system characterized by the struggle for power and security. However, he also acknowledges the interests and strategies of a relatively less powerful country seeking development and autonomy from the United States. Ojeda's analysis emphasizes the interaction between Mexico and the United States, with a notable focus on

³⁴ L. Tomassini, "Elementos para el análisis de la política exterior," *Estudios Internacionales* 20, no. 78 (1987): 125–157.

³⁵ Muñoz, "El estudio de las políticas exteriores latinoamericanas: temas y enfoques dominantes."

³⁶ Ojeda, *Alcances y límites de la política exterior de México*.

³⁷ A. Covarrubias, "Mario Ojeda Gomez: Alcances y límites de la política exterior de México," in *Los clásicos de las Relaciones Internacionales. Ideas y conceptos para la construcción teórica de la disciplina*, eds. R.V. Flores et al. (Mexico: AMEI, 2020), 151.

domestic politics and conditions, which is uncommon from a strict realist perspective. His success in combining these two perspectives demonstrates the value of employing multiple levels of analysis.³⁸ One of Ojeda's key contributions is the "Ojeda formula", which suggests that the United States might tolerate Mexican dissent on issues important to Mexico, as long as they don't challenge core US interests. In exchange, Mexico would cooperate with the US on matters deemed essential for Washington.³⁹ This concept has been widely used by many scholars studying Mexico's foreign policy.

Brazilian FPA offers additional insights. Scholars like Amado Cervo argues that Brazil's foreign policy underwent a significant shift under Lula's first administration. While neoliberalism had some modernizing effects, it also weakened Brazil's position in the international order. Cervo's approach aimed to analyze Lula's democratization of globalization by giving developing countries a greater say in how the global economic system operates. The free-market policies favored by neoliberalism exposed Brazil to negative consequences like foreign debt and loss of control over domestic industries. Lula sought to create "counterpower" by building alliances with other developing countries and advocating for fairer trade rules that benefit emerging economies. This approach aims to give developing countries a more prominent role in shaping the rules of the global economic system. By participating in international negotiations and forging strategic partnerships, Brazil aspires to become a more influential player in the global order. Cervo argues that Brazil's foreign policy can be explained by its historical trajectory as a resource-rich developing nation navigating a world dominated by powerful capitalist states.⁴⁰ He highlights Brazil's efforts to assert economic independence and diversify its trade partnerships to reduce dependence on traditional Western powers.

Leticia Pinheiro and Maria Regina Soares de Lima⁴¹ focus on the role of ideas and identity, through the conception of autonomy, in shaping foreign policy. They argue that the idea of Brazil having a consistently autonomist foreign policy is a misconception. Analysts often label any assertive Brazilian foreign policy as "autonomist" which, according to the authors is inaccurate. True autonomy, as originally defined, involves taking calculated risks and challenging the status quo, not simply being active on the world stage. Their analysis goes on to explain why this misinterpretation happens; confusing diplomacy with analysis. The focus on maintaining a narrative of foreign policy continuity in Brazil has led to stretching the definition of autonomy to the point of losing its analytical value. Brazil's foreign ministry

³⁸ Covarrubias, "Mario Ojeda Gomez: Alcances y limites de la politica," 152.

³⁹ Ojeda, *Alcances y limites de la politica exterior*, 120.

⁴⁰ C.A. Luiz, "Brazil's rise on the international scene: Brazil and the World," *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 53 (Diciembre, 2010): 7–32.

⁴¹ L. Pinheiro and M.R. Soares de Lima, "Between Autonomy and Dependency: the Place of Agency in Brazilian Foreign Policy," *Braslian Political Science Review* 12, no. 3 (2018): 4.

historically favored a certain level of continuity, even during periods that weren't truly autonomist. They go on to highlight key moments where Brazil actually pursued a more autonomist foreign policy.

The "assertive and active" foreign policy under Lula is considered a true example of autonomy, as it involved calculated risks and a willingness to challenge the existing international order. Autonomist approaches recognize Brazil's limitations but believe the country can still leverage its "soft power" to achieve better outcomes in the international system. The authors state that truly autonomist phases in Brazilian foreign policy have been the exception, not the rule. Pinheiro and Soares de Lima⁴² argue that Brazil's pursuit of global leadership and its emphasis on South-South cooperation are driven, at least in part, by its desire to be recognized as a major power and a champion of developing nations. These examples demonstrate the richness and diversity of Brazilian contributions to FPA.

In Argentina, Carlos Escude and Raul Bernal also developed important ideas to study foreign policy. Both were very interested in constructing a Latin American International Relations theory. Escude even created his own theory: 'Peripheral Realism'. As the author points out, this framework is a theory of international relations that comes from the centre and the periphery perspectives.⁴³ The key principles of Escude's proposal are that the foreign policy of a weak nation must have a low profile to avoid confrontation with a stronger state. However, those countries must defend their national interests and material capacities, adapting their political objectives to the dominant power's interests. In the same sense, this foreign policy must be formulated considering the material cost-benefit relationship and the eventual cost-risks. Finally, this policy requires a reformulation and reconceptualization of autonomy regarding the relative capacity and costs of confrontation.⁴⁴

Escude and Ojeda's vision were based on Realism. They coincided with the idea that confronting powerful states was counterproductive for the national interest of weaker countries. Escude's ideas were very close to the Ojeda formula. According to Escude, the only possible policy was based on a realistic acceptance of the limits and differences between the great powers; "If a small country lacks power resources, the option is to promote economic growth, abandoning confrontations on those issues that were not relevant to its economic development".⁴⁵

⁴² Pinheiro and Soares de Lima, "Between Autonomy and Dependency," 10.

⁴³ C. Escude, *Realismo periférico. Fundamentos para la nueva política exterior argentina* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1992), 11–12.

⁴⁴ R. Bernal, "Dos aportes teóricos latinoamericanos de relaciones internacionales y su utilización por el pensamiento chino contemporáneo: los casos de Prebisch y Escude," *Revista de Estudios Sociales* 64 (2018): 75–87.

⁴⁵ Bernal, "Dos aportes teóricos latinoamericanos," 80.

Raul Bernal is also an outstanding Argentinian thinker. He has tried to create a Latin American theory of International Relations.⁴⁶ This author became an influential scholar, and his book was one of the key contributions from the region to this field. He also wrote two papers with the same objective.⁴⁷ Bernal highlights the theoretical contribution from the Dependency theory perspective in his publications. He includes the theoretical elaborations of Raul Prebisch, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Enzo Faletto, Gunder Frank, and Teotonio Dos Santos. These authors tried to explain, from a Marxist perspective, the unequal structure of the international system and stressed the dependence of Latin American nations.

In Chile, an outstanding professor is Luciano Tomassini. In practice, the author proposes five points to be considered in the formulation of foreign policy: 1) the country's vision of the international situation; 2) the relationship with society and history; 3) the areas of external articulation of each country; 4) the internal pressures on the national development project; and 5) the style of policymaking, with cultural and organizational elements.⁴⁸ As for the main variables of the elements of the analysis, he mentions four. The first refers to the vision or interpretation that a country, government, or other international actor has of the external context. The second variable refers to the country's civic culture, political system, or government regime formulating the policy. The third variable defines the national or global character of a policy. Finally, the fourth variable relates to the institutional framework in which the policy is elaborated. Tomassini explains that "the first step in the foreign policy analysis process is to identify the main problems and opportunities faced by a country in the different areas in which its external relations are developed".⁴⁹

Another important Chilean author is Heraldo Muñoz. He has made important contributions to the study of foreign policy in Latin America. The author argued that after World War II the main lines of research on external relations of the countries of the region were concentrated mainly on international law, diplomatic history, or "general descriptions".⁵⁰ In this work, the author sought to analyse the issues and theoretical approaches of Latin American foreign policies based on three specific variables: a) the desire to maximize national and regional autonomy;

⁴⁶ R. Bernal, *América Latina en el mundo: El pensamiento latinoamericano y la teoría de Relaciones Internacionales* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 2005).

⁴⁷ R. Bernal, "Contemporary Latin American thinking on International Relations: theoretical, conceptual and methodological contributions," *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 59, no. 1 (2016): 1–32; See also "Latin American concepts and theories and their impacts to foreign policies," in *Concepts, histories and theories of International Relations for the 21st Century*, ed. S. Saraiva (Brasília: Instituto Brasileiro de Relações Internacionais, 2009), 131–177.

⁴⁸ L. Tomassini, "El análisis de la política exterior," *Estudios Internacionales* 21, no. 84 (1988): 503.

⁴⁹ Tomassini, "Elementos para el análisis de la política exterior."

⁵⁰ Muñoz, "El estudio de las políticas exteriores latinoamericanas."

b) the need to promote development; and c) the crucial importance of the United States in the development of the region.⁵¹

On the first point, the approach is that there is a situation of limited autonomy due to a “dependent insertion in the world political economy” of Latin American countries.⁵² In other words, Latin American countries maintained a relationship of dependence on actors with greater power, which was reflected in their external links. As Raul Bernal puts it, Muñoz emphasizes the work of the Dependency theory scholars, such as Raul Prebisch, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Enzo Faletto, Gunder Frank, and Teotonio Dos Santos and others, who have made important contributions in this case. According to Muñoz, these authors established a structural link between domestic and external factors, assigning transnational capitalism a “common denominator character”.⁵³ Given this situation, Muñoz proposed the diversification of economic links to other regions and greater interregional cooperation to generate spaces of autonomy for Latin American foreign policy.

Heraldo Muñoz also mentions that one of Latin American states’ basic foreign policy priorities is promoting development.⁵⁴ For example, Muñoz quotes Mexican Mario Ojeda, who stated that Mexico’s foreign policy served the purpose of external promotion of the country’s economic growth, projecting an image of stability and progress to the rest of the world, as a means of achieving better conditions for national exports and opening new markets for national products.⁵⁵ This point is connected to the previous one: If the region’s countries promote development, then their dependence would decrease. Therefore, their foreign policy will have greater scope for action. On the last point, Herardo Muñoz recognises that the United States represents a major factor in Latin America’s foreign policy decision-making process.

Heraldo Muñoz also analyses Latin America’s foreign policies from different theoretical approaches. For example, he points out that realism is a methodological alternative to explain the external actions of certain countries, mainly Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, and other nations with significant regional weight. These countries have centred their links on the notion of national security. Herardo Muñoz also considers the usefulness of perceptions and images, which can be framed within the constructivist theory. For this author, it is important to understand how ideas shape the international system; that is, the objectives, threats, fears, identities, and other elements of the perceived reality that influence state and non-state actors

⁵¹ Muñoz, “El estudio de las políticas exteriores,” 410.

⁵² H. Muñoz and J. Tulchin, *Entre la autonomía y la subordinación: política exterior de los países latinoamericanos* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 1984).

⁵³ H. Muñoz, *Globalización XXI: América Latina y los desafíos del nuevo milenio* (Aguilar, 2000).

⁵⁴ H. Muñoz, *Environment and diplomacy in the Americas* (Lynn Reinner, 1992).

⁵⁵ Muñoz, “El estudio de las políticas exteriores,” 415.

within the international system.⁵⁶ Muñoz asserts that those ideas play a prominent role in formulating and implementing foreign policies in Latin American.

Alberto van Klaveren is another Chilean that has been an outstanding author in this field. As Putnam, van Klaveren emphasized internal and external factors in Latin American foreign policies.⁵⁷ This author was not the only one who considered these two variables. Ojeda and Escude also studied both levels of analysis. Much of Latin American foreign policy literature concentrates on domestic and external factors as the main categories of analysis.⁵⁸

While Realism provides a valuable foundation, Latin American scholars have also recognized its limitations. They argue that a strict focus on power overlooks the importance of other factors, such as domestic politics, historical experiences, and regional dynamics.⁵⁹ Additionally, the traditional focus on state actors neglects the growing influence of non-state actors, such as NGOs and multinational corporations. Latin American scholars have made significant contributions to Foreign Policy Analysis by highlighting the unique challenges and opportunities faced by developing nations. They have not only adopted existing Western theories but also endeavored to develop new frameworks that better reflect their regional realities.⁶⁰ By incorporating these diverse perspectives, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of foreign policy in the 21st century.

Principled pragmatism: a key Latin American contribution for foreign policy analysis

The core idea of this paper is that ‘principled pragmatism’ is one of the most significant contributions of Latin American theory to the foreign policy analysis discipline. At first sight, the concept seems to be an oxymoron. However, it makes sense when we talk about Latin American foreign policy. This theoretical framework does not constitute an exhaustive theory of International Relations akin to Realism, Idealism, Constructivism, or Marxism. It does not represent a fully developed

⁵⁶ H. Muñoz, “Las relaciones exteriores del gobierno militar chileno 1973–1984,” *Iberoamericana–Nordic Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 15, no. 1–2 (1985): 155–174.

⁵⁷ A. van Klaveren, “Entendiendo las políticas exteriores latinoamericanas: modelo para armar,” *Estudios Internacionales* 25, no. 98 (1992): 169–216.

⁵⁸ F. Merke and D. Reynoso, “Dimensiones de política exterior en America Latina segun juicio de expertos,” *Estudios Internacionales* 48, no. 185 (2016): 107–130; T. Long, “Coloso fragmentado: la agenda ‘intermística’ y la política exterior latinoamericana,” *Foro Internacional* 57, no. 1 (2017): 5–54; M. Lasagna, “Las determinantes internas de la política exterior: un tema descuidado en la teoría de la política exterior,” *Estudios Internacionales* 28, no. 111 (1995): 387–409; O. Amorim and A. Malamud, “What determines foreign policy in Latin America? Systemic versus domestic factors in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico, 1946–2008,” *Latin American Politics and Society* 57, no. 4 (October, 2015): 1–27.

⁵⁹ Muñoz, “El estudio de las políticas.”

⁶⁰ A. Mintz *et al.*, “The Effect of Dynamic and Static Choice Sets on Political Decision Making: An Analysis Using the Decision Board Platform,” *American Political Science Review* 91, no. 3 (1997): 553–566.

model like those of Allison, Waltz, or Putnam. Instead, it functions as an analytical model capable of elucidating and clarifying the process of foreign policy decision-making within the region. The concept retakes some of the elements included in the theories and models already mentioned. It is also based on the Latin American contributions discussed in the previous part of the paper.

In broad terms, principled pragmatism is a policy approach that merges realistic elements, such as the pursuit of national interests, with principles of morality and legality. It harmonizes a realist foreign policy rooted in self-interest with an idealist one rooted in normative values. While it may initially seem to embody an ideological contradiction, in practice, this amalgamation is not contradictory but rather complementary. For instance, certain governments may make decisions driven by their interests but assert that these actions are grounded in principles, highlighting the central aspect of the principled pragmatism concept.

Many international observers argue that there exists an inherent and insurmountable conflict between Idealism and Realism. While it is true that these two approaches differ in theory, they also share certain foundational assumptions. For instance, they both acknowledge the anarchic nature of the international system and emphasize the pursuit of national interests. However, significant distinctions can also arise. Powerful nations may predominantly adhere to a Realist foreign policy approach, while weaker states may resort to Idealism. In this context, Realism may be characterized as self-interested, utilitarian, and opportunistic, often employing power and force as instruments. Conversely, Idealism may be characterized as altruistic, moral, and grounded in values.

Principled pragmatism is also linked to Constructivism. In this framework, the construction of collective ideas, such as the traditional principles of foreign policy, enjoys wide consensus and is important for decision-making. Besides, Latin American nations have built a strong identity based on cultural and historical elements. This trend is important for foreign policy decisions because, on the one hand, these nations seek to project a foreign policy based on principles while on the other hand, they need to promote their national interests on the ground of identity elements. As for Marxist considerations, strong countries have mechanisms of domination over weak nations. Therefore, principled pragmatism is helpful to eliminate this unequal structure of power and promote the national interest, as Mario Ojeda and Carlos Escude point out.

Principled pragmatism is also related to Allison's conceptual models. First, as the rational actor model suggests, foreign policy actions must be based on interests and objectives. Moreover, the imposition of the actor's preferences also has a pragmatic connotation. Finally, an operational procedure implies normative considerations as a principled policy is carried out. Putnam's game also contains a strong dose of pragmatism since decision makers must deal with domestic and external interests, which sometimes could be divergent. Therefore, they need to find the option with a greater payoff.

According to T.A. Kozlowski: “politics without Realism stops being politics. (...) Therefore, Idealism without pragmatism is politically harmful”.⁶¹ In essence, the author posits that an effective approach in global affairs would necessitate a synthesis of both idealistic and realistic principles. Edward H. Carr also implied the same idea when he wrote:

“Any sound political thought must be based on elements of both utopia and reality. Where utopianism has become a hollow and intolerable sham, which serves merely as a disguise for the interests of the privileged, the realist performs an indispensable service in unmasking it. But pure Realism can offer nothing but a naked struggle for power, which makes any kind of international society impossible”.⁶²

To be precise, adhering strictly to pure idealism would yield limited results. Similarly, a policy exclusively grounded in pure Realism would result in chaos. Consequently, states are encouraged to blend both perspectives to formulate a more effective foreign policy capable of achieving its objectives. Within this context, pragmatism shares a close connection with Jeremy Bentham’s utilitarian economic philosophy. According to Bentham, any policy is morally justifiable if it promotes “happiness or pleasure”.⁶³ In essence, actions must be utilitarian, with outcomes benefiting society. Applied to foreign policy, this concept translates into the pursuit of national interests such as economic growth, security, and social development.

Pragmatism is also associated with the Anglo-American political philosophy that emerged in the 1870s. As a political concept, it represented a departure from traditional European classical thought. Rendering to Karla Valverde, this viewpoint marked a fresh perspective on the world and a renovation of culture. It sought to challenge established European paradigms by applying two fundamental principles: Idealism and Realism.⁶⁴ Hence, the author suggests that amalgamating these two paradigms forms a solid foundation for public policy. As per Jose Luis Orozco, pragmatism originated in the United States as an interdisciplinary cognitive philosophy. It brought together the intellectual efforts of diplomats, philosophers, psychologists, educators, theologians, lawyers, and others to address the requirements of national development in the U.S. Pragmatism departed from traditional categories stemming from idealistic and materialistic philosophies, particularly in the realm of international relations. Instead, it redefined conventional notions of the state and

⁶¹ T.A. Kozlowski, *Nuevos potenciales de la política mundial* (Buenos Aires: Pleamar, 1967), 29–30.

⁶² E.H. Carr, *The twenty years’ crisis, 1919–1939* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 93.

⁶³ J. Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislations* (London: Hafner, 1970).

⁶⁴ K. Valverde, “La política social en la era pragmática,” in *Pragmatismo y Globalismo, una aproximación a la política contemporánea*, ed. O. Jose-Luis (Mexico: UNAM, 1997), 119.

democracy while introducing novel concepts like pressure politics, interest groups, and pluralism.⁶⁵

While the philosophy of pragmatism in the realm of domestic policy has received extensive attention, there has been relatively limited examination of foreign policy through a pragmatic lens. Cecil Crabb made a noteworthy contribution in this regard, being among the early pioneers to delve into this subject matter. According to Crabb, a pragmatic foreign policy is guided by a diverse array of influences and motivations. It refrains from rigid doctrines in problem-solving, opting instead to assess each case on its merits or to take actions based on the feasible alternatives at hand. Crabb also postulates that pragmatism represents a unique fusion of idealism and Realism. He draws upon the ideas of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, asserting that their philosophies consistently embodied a blend of the loftiest expressions of idealism and the principles of political Realism. In his analysis, Crabb leans toward the idealistic tradition, placing emphasis on social well-being, democratic principles, and human institutions.⁶⁶

In the case of Latin America, there are few studies that analyse foreign policy under this notion. For instance, Ana Covarrubias,⁶⁷ Alberto van Klaveren,⁶⁸ Ana Rosa Suarez,⁶⁹ and Laura Muñoz⁷⁰ have studied Mexico's using this perspective. In Colombia, Martha Ardila has also contributed to the analysis of foreign policy decision-making through principled pragmatism.⁷¹ Gian Luca Gardini and Peter Lambert have also tried to analyse Latin American foreign policy from the same perspective.⁷² In 2022, the book: *Latin American foreign policies: Between pragmatism, principism and neoliberalism* was published, which includes nine

⁶⁵ O. Jose-Luis, *Pragmatismo y globalismo, una aproximacion a la politica contemporanea* (Mexico: UNAM, 1997), 9–10.

⁶⁶ C. Crabb, *The American approach to foreign policy: A pragmatic perspective* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 6–7.

⁶⁷ A. Covarrubias, "Mexico's foreign policy under the Partido Accion Nacional: Promoting democracy, human rights, and interests," in *Latin American foreign policies between ideology and pragmatism*, G.L. Gardini and P. Lambert (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 213–233.

⁶⁸ A. van Klaveren, "Mexico: principios y pragmatismo en la politica exterior," in *Las politicas exteriores latinoamericanas frente a la crisis* (Argentina: GEL, 1985).

⁶⁹ *Pragmatismo y principios. La relación conflictiva entre Mexico y Estados Unidos, 1810–1942*, ed. A.R. Suarez (Mexico: Instituto Mora, 1998).

⁷⁰ L. Muñoz, "¿De la diplomacia de principios a la diplomacia pragmática? La política mexicana en el Caribe a lo largo de dos siglos," *Caribbean Studies* 30, no. 2 (December, 2002): 108–129.

⁷¹ See M. Ardila's position on the matter in "La diplomacia intermestica y multinivel colombiana: dependencia, pragmatismo e ideologización," *Latin American Journal of International Affairs* 10, no. 1 (2020): 113–130; "Latin American foreign policy: Toward fragmentation and pragmatic accommodation?," *Eunomia. Rivista semestrale di Storia e Politica Internazionale* 8, no. 1 (2019): 3–21.

⁷² G.L. Gardini and P. Lambert, *Latin American foreign policies between ideology and pragmatism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

foreign policy cases from the perspective of principism, pragmatism, and neoliberalism. This book attempts to becoming an important reference to study this field in future generations and could represent an important contribution to this conceptual framework.

In general terms, these authors assume that Latin American nations resort to principled pragmatism due to the following factors. First, this conceptual framework is useful for dealing with the United States and promote national interests. Secondly, they underwent foreign invasions, lost territories, and endured interventions in domestic issues. This historical experience forged the traditional principles and triggered a defensive foreign policy. Therefore, Latin American nations seek relative autonomy towards the United States. Third, domestic politics also influence a principled, pragmatic foreign policy. Many Latin American governments need legitimacy and social cohesion. This kind of policy can help achieve these goals. The economic conditions also prompt this approach. To improve economic growth, these nations need a dose of pragmatism.

A general perception in Latin America is that a pragmatic foreign policy is negative or immoral. However, this type of policy is practical because it seeks to solve problems or promotes national interest. But excessive pragmatism can lead to failure. Likewise, it is impossible to get very far with a foreign policy based exclusively on normative values. For this reason, it is necessary to apply a foreign policy that combines pragmatism with principism. In this way, the chance for success will be greater.

Principled pragmatism serves as a valuable framework for analysing and elucidating foreign policy behaviour, as it seamlessly integrates elements from Realism, Institutional Liberalism, Constructivism, and Marxism. It also takes components of the analytical models put forth by Graham Allison, Kenneth Waltz, and Robert Putnam. The underlying premise is that the fusion of concrete national interests with normative values enhances diplomatic capabilities, thereby facilitating the achievement of foreign policy objectives. Consequently, this amalgamation can contribute to the enhanced effectiveness of foreign policy. Within this context, principled pragmatism also functions as a foreign policy tool, offering states an alternative approach to attain their external goals and address global challenges.

Principled pragmatism in action: Latin American foreign policy in the case of Cuba in the 1960s

There are many cases in which Latin American nations have applied principled pragmatism in foreign policy decisions. However, one case stands out: the policy towards Cuba during the Cold War. The Cuban Revolution of 1959 marked a significant turning point in the Cold War's impact on Latin America. This episode considerably affected both domestic and foreign policy. On the one hand, several social sectors supported Cuba and demanded a policy based on principles. They were nationalistic and left-wing groups also asked for a policy that showed autonomy

vis-à-vis the United States. But there were, at the same time, some anti-Communist domestic groups which were in favour of a policy against Fidel Castro. They were conservative and right-wing groups. On the other hand, the United States government pressured Latin American nations to support its fight against communism. Some countries feared that Washington could apply sanctions if they did not follow US requests. But they also feared Fidel Castro if he supported guerrilla groups to overthrow their governments. Therefore, the Latin American governments had a significant dilemma. They aimed to assist Cuba in order to placate nationalistic factions, assert their independence from the United States, and deter Castro from funding revolutionary movements. However, they also had to court conservative elements and take into consideration U.S. interests for economic motives, including attracting investments and securing financial aid.

Initially, certain nations expressed sympathy for the Cuban Revolution, while others voiced concerns over the communist orientation of the Cuban government. However, when Castro officially declared his movement to be Marxist-Leninist, the United States initiated a concerted campaign of political pressure against Cuba. This culminated in the United States condemning the Castro regime during the Seventh Consultation Meeting of Foreign Ministers in San Jose, Costa Rica, for its receipt of military assistance from the USSR. Concurrently, the United States backed an invasion at the Bay of Pigs in 1961 with the aim of overthrowing the government led by Fidel Castro. Adhering to the principle of Non-Intervention, some nations rejected the incursion.

In 1962, the VIII Consultation Meeting of the Organization of American States (OAS) was convened in Punta del Este, Uruguay. The primary goal of this meeting was to craft a collective declaration that explicitly stated the incompatibility of Marxism-Leninism with the Inter-American democratic system. Additionally, the United States proposed the exclusion of Cuba from the regional organization and the imposition of restrictions on arms trade with the island.⁷³ In some Latin American nations, nationalist groups demanded to vote against the exclusion; but traditionalists and capitalists were in favour. Furthermore, the United States was advocating for sanctions against Castro. If Latin American governments sided with Washington's position, it might have resulted in conflicts with Cuba. Conversely, if they did not support the United States, it could have created issues with Washington. Navigating this dilemma was a complex task. Hence, they found it necessary to employ principled pragmatism as a strategy to circumvent problems and effectively address the situation.

The meeting witnessed three pivotal moments. Firstly, during the opening ceremony, certain foreign affairs ministers argued that a communist regime was

⁷³ G. Connell-Smith, "The Future of the Organization of American States: Significance of the Punta Del Este Conference," *The World Today* 18, no. 3 (1962): 112–20, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40394173>.

incompatible with democracy. Secondly, when the vote for Cuban exclusion occurred, six nations abstained, citing the principle of non-intervention as their rationale. Lastly, some delegations called for the inclusion of a reservation in the final minutes of the meeting, contending that the expulsion lacked legal grounds since the OAS charter did not contain any provisions for expelling a member. Consequently, they asserted that a charter reform was necessary to establish the expulsion procedure.⁷⁴

The stance adopted at the Punta del Este meeting serves as a notable illustration of principled pragmatism in foreign policy. Firstly, the assertion of incompatibility was a pragmatic move tailored to appease Washington and conservative domestic factions. Secondly, certain Latin American countries were keen to attract U.S. foreign investments as a means to stimulate economic development, which underscored their pragmatic considerations. Third, the abstention in the vote had the intention to demonstrate that Latin America defended the traditional normative principles and that it was independent from the United States. Finally, the reservation indicated that Latin American nations adhered to international law.

The U.S. government displayed a willingness to finance specific Mexican development programs through initiatives like the Alliance for Progress and EXIMBANK.⁷⁵ President Kennedy also expressed a commitment to resolving outstanding issues related to the Chamizal and the Colorado River. Additionally, Fidel Castro conveyed gratitude for Mexico's position and refrained from supporting guerrilla groups within Mexico's borders.⁷⁶ This approach managed to satisfy both domestic conservative groups, who saw Mexico's rejection of communism at the OAS, and nationalist factions, who appreciated Mexico's defence of its foreign policy principles. Consequently, the Lopez administration not only gained domestic political legitimacy but also advanced economic growth—two crucial objectives for the administration—through its stance in Punta del Este.

Subsequently, the situation took a turn for the worse with the outbreak of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. The United States discovered that the Soviet Union was deploying nuclear missiles in Cuba, posing a grave threat to U.S. national security. In response, President Kennedy instituted a maritime blockade to prevent Soviet ships from delivering weapons to the island. A pivotal part of this strategy was to secure an Organization of American States (OAS) resolution to legitimize the blockade. Consequently, he directed U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk to convene an OAS meeting and secure a unanimous vote. This task presented challenges

⁷⁴ Connell-Smith, "The Future of the Organization of American States."

⁷⁵ R.V. Flores, *Principled Pragmatism in Mexico's Foreign Policy. Variables and Assumptions* (MacMillan Palgrave, 2022), 151.

⁷⁶ Flores, *Principled Pragmatism in Mexico's Foreign Policy*, 151–152.

as, during the Punta del Este meeting, six Latin American countries had abstained from the vote to exclude Cuba from the organization.

At the meeting, all Latin American countries voted in favour of the US proposal. Nevertheless, some nations appended a reservation to their vote, clarifying that their approval did not extend to endorsing the use of military force. Here, principled pragmatism was once more evident. Latin American countries cast their votes to accommodate U.S. interests while simultaneously incorporating the reservation to uphold their principled foreign policy. This vote underscored the limited choice Latin American nations had but to align with Washington's interests on matters of high national security significance and avoid confrontation, heeding the advice of Mario Ojeda and Carlos Escude. It has been argued that the OAS resolution served as a crucial tool that President Kennedy used in negotiations with Khrushchev to secure the withdrawal of the missiles.⁷⁷ After a complex negotiation process, the Soviet Union agreed to dismantle the missiles under United Nations supervision. In return, President Kennedy committed to the removal of NATO missiles that had been deployed in Turkey. The result was favourable for the United States, as it effectively eliminated the threat to its national security.

Two years subsequently, at the IX Consultation Meeting convened in Washington in July 1964, Venezuela leveled accusations against Cuba, alleging its involvement in subversive activities. Venezuela further demanded punitive measures be imposed on Cuba, invoking the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance.⁷⁸ The concluding resolution of the meeting resulted in the severance of diplomatic ties with Cuba and the suspension of all forms of commercial exchange. Four countries voted against the resolution, and notably, Mexico remained the sole OAS nation that never severed its diplomatic relations with the Castro administration.⁷⁹ In this instance, Mexico aimed to demonstrate a degree of autonomy concerning its relationship with the United States and chose to support Cuba as a means of appeasing nationalist factions. Interestingly, declassified archives reveal that the United States had concurred with Mexico's position.⁸⁰ It was in the interest of the United States to have Mexico maintain diplomatic ties with Cuba, as it ensured an open communication channel in case it was needed. Therefore, pragmatism was also a factor in this case. Subsequently, Mexico collaborated with Washington in its anti-Castro efforts. For instance, the Mexican government permitted the United States to conduct espionage on Cuba within Mexican territory, compiled a blacklist

⁷⁷ R. Keller, "Responsibility of the 'great ones': How the Organization of American States and the United Nations helped resolve the Cuban Missile Crisis," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 47, no. 2 (2019): 1–22.

⁷⁸ H. Karlsson and T.D. Acosta, *The Johnson Administration's Cuba Policy: From "Dirty War" to Passive Containment* (Routledge, 2020).

⁷⁹ M. Ojeda, *Mexico y Cuba revolucionaria: Cincuenta años de relación* (Mexico: El Colegio de Mexico, 2008).

⁸⁰ W. LeoGrande and P. Kornbluh, *Diplomacia encubierta con Cuba. Historia de las negociaciones secretas entre Washington y La Habana* (Mexico: FCE, 2015).

of all passengers on the Havana-Mexico City flight, shared this list with the CIA, and confiscated any political materials originating from the island. In essence, Mexico maintained a covert but effective blockade against the Cuban Revolution.⁸¹

As Mario Ojeda has pointed out, there existed an unspoken 'understanding' between Mexico and the United States to 'disagree' on matters related to Cuba. In essence, Washington accepted that Mexico could vote against U.S. interests, such as refraining from severing diplomatic relations with Castro, as long as the issue did not pose a significant threat to U.S. national security. Furthermore, it was advantageous for the United States to maintain this stance to assist Mexico in preserving its political stability. Consequently, the Mexican government could, in turn, safeguard U.S. economic interests.

Conclusions

Foreign policy analysis is still dominated by 'western' theory. However, Latin America is making a significant contribution to studying and explaining external behaviour. This contribution is based on the reality and experience of these nations. External factors, domestic politics, economic conditions, and social trends are key factors used to construct theory on Latin American foreign policy.

In this context, this paper sustains that one of the most significant Latin American contributions has been the notion of principled pragmatism. This conceptual approach has been useful for studying and explaining Latin American foreign policy behaviour in recent times. This analytical framework is based on western theoretical orientations but also gains substantially from the Latin American perspective. Principled pragmatism derives from the combination of Realism and Institutional Liberalism but also has some Constructivist and Marxist elements. For instance, principles are collective ideas shared by several nations. Constructivism points out that foreign policy behaviour must promote national interest based on identity, cultural, and historical elements. In the same sense, principled pragmatism could be a tool to reduce the structural differences of power and mitigate the mechanisms of dominations that strong states hold.

Principled pragmatism is also linked to Allison's models, Waltz's level of analysis, and Putnam's double game. On one hand, this policy implies that nations must pursue their interest and own objectives in foreign policy actions, as the rational actor model points out. Similarly, actors' preferences also reflect pragmatic interests when they try to impose their views, according to the bureaucratic politics model. The three levels of analysis provide the systemic, domestic, and individual variables needed to understand why Latin American nations must resort to principled pragmatism. Finally, Putnam's notion adds a pragmatic nature since governments must satisfy domestic groups' preferences and, at the same time, comply

⁸¹ L. Meyer and J. Zoraida, *Mexico frente a Estados Unidos* (Mexico: FCE, 1982), 179.

with the external partner's interests. Sometimes, this endeavour would require an important dose of pragmatism.

This principled pragmatism notion is also associated with the Latin American contributions in foreign policy analysis. For instance, Ojeda's formula and Escude's Peripheral Realism provide an important basis for this conceptual approach. Both authors agree that Latin American nations must cooperate with the United States, avoid confrontation, and promote their national interest to reduce the dependency cycle. This point is also related to Putnam's double-edge notion. In the same sense, Tomassini, van Klaveren, and Muñoz's ideas and theoretical proposals also contribute to constructing this principled pragmatism since they consider the domestic and external variables as key elements to understanding Latin American foreign policy. Principled pragmatism is based on the notion that states must satisfy domestic interests and consider external factors.

Latin American nations must resort to principled pragmatism to deal with the United States agenda; to show autonomy vis-à-vis Washington; to promote cooperation and solidarity in the region; to promote national interests; to appease domestic groups' interests; to solve financial upheavals and promote economic growth; to guarantee national security. Pure pragmatism is not sound for foreign policy matters, but sheer principism will lead nowhere. Therefore, the most effective foreign policy is the one that combines pragmatism and principism in the correct dose. In this way, foreign policy could be successful.

Data availability

No data are associated with this article.