Hideaki Kami. 2018. *Diplomacy Meets Migration: US Relations with Cuba during the Cold War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 374. £39.99 Hardback, ISBN 9781108534550.

Why has United States-Cuban animosity survived for such a long time? To answer that question, scholars have moved beyond a narrow focus on the Cold War to also explore the history of US imperialist interventions, dating back to the 1898 Spanish-American War; rivalry between the two countries in Latin America and Africa; and domestic factors such as the strategic importance of the Cuban-American vote, especially in the swing state of Florida.

The latter issue has received considerable attention because every US president since Reagan has sought the support of the Cuban-American community in Miami during their election campaigns. In addition, as William LeoGrande and Peter Kornbluh revealed in their 2014 book *Back Channel to Cuba*, migration control was one of the major topics of secret negotiations between Havana and every US administration from Kennedy to Obama.

Hideaki Kami offers a welcome new perspective on the longevity of US-Cuban hostility and the important role that migration and, by extension, the Cuban-American community played in that history. His book *Diplomacy Meets Migration* is based on an impressive range of sources, including (recently declassified) US and Cuban government archives, records of Cuban-American lobby groups, and supporting materials from the diplomatic records of Canada, Japan, Mexico and the United Kingdom. The insights that Kami derives from these archives, as well as secondary sources that range from diplomatic histories to sociological studies, add up to an original analysis of US-Cuban relations throughout the Cold War.

Kami argues that “because Cuban émigrés in Miami intervened in international politics at critical moments, relations between Washington and Havana also intermingled with the political dynamics of the Cuban-American community” (3). Crucially, he does not merely show how migration control became an issue in secret US-Cuban negotiations, or even how the Cuban-American community played a role in the domestic origins of US foreign policy. Rather, he shows that “Miami” became an international actor in its own right. The result is a relationship that is triangular: Miami, Havana, and Washington pursued independent policies that clashed and converged in complex patterns which in part explain the continuance of US-Cuban animosity throughout and after the Cold War.

The first half of the book, chapters one to three, deals with the first two waves of post-revolutionary migration from Cuba to the United States and the growth of a Cuban-American community in Miami up to the 1980 Mariel

Boatlift. In these chapters, Kami argues that migration was “highly politicized” (41) from the very beginning. Washington initially supported invasion attempts by Cuban émigrés and manipulated migration as part of its policy to destabilize Cuba, hoping that an economic embargo and migration restriction would lead to domestic opposition to Castro. The latter was no stranger to such manipulations, branding all migrants as traitors while allowing groups of Cubans to leave the country when it suited his purposes. Meanwhile, extremist groups in Miami pursued their own campaign of terrorist action against the Cuban government, threatening (but not succeeding) to disrupt secret US-Cuban talks on migration control, taking place due to recurring immigration crises that embarrassed Washington.

The second half of the book, chapters four to seven, is arguably the most compelling, as it presents the strongest case for Miami’s role as an international actor. These chapters deal with the causes and legacies of the 1980 Mariel Boatlift. Chapter four convincingly presents the boatlift as a diplomatic crisis (in addition to a humanitarian one) wherein the actions of Castro and individual Miami Cubans forced the Carter administration to open up a new round of bilateral negotiations on Havana’s terms. Kami also shows that the Mariel crisis had a long afterlife. Among other effects, it contributed to the rise of the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF), a lobby group which acted as though it were a “government-in-exile.” It competed with Castro’s public diplomacy in the United States and managed to gain support among US and foreign politicians and companies for its own vision of a democratic and capitalist Cuba. Meanwhile, Washington’s attitude toward CANF, seeking its backing while continuing to engage Havana on migration control, ended up pleasing no-one. According to Kami, this “contradictory” policy led to a diplomatic stalemate that continued to shape US-Cuban relations long after the end of the Cold War.

Kami’s rich account of the Washington-Havana-Miami triangle makes for a compelling story. He deserves considerable praise for the way in which he manages to shed light on the Cuban side of the story by carefully patching together clues from different sources. Due to incomplete access to Cuban archives, however, Castro’s foreign policy, such as his motivations and expectations for the opening of a *Diálogo* with Cubans abroad (122–123), remains open to interpretation. All in all, though, Kami delivers on his promise to treat Washington and Havana as equals in his analysis.

Readers of *Diplomatica* will be interested to read *Diplomacy Meets Migration* as an example of how diplomacy can be tied to social interests and forces, especially with regard to Kami’s treatment of the Cuban-American community in Miami as an international actor. This works well in several cases, most notably with regard to CANF. However, his use of the term “Miami” can also

obscure the (political) diversity and historical development of the Cuban-American community. While Kami at times mentions CANF's competitors and opponents within that community (e.g. 271, 291–294, and 305), this part of the story remains somewhat underdeveloped.

To his credit, Kami takes care not to oversell his argument about the role of migration in US-Cuban relations. Throughout the book he emphasizes that it was one among several factors that shaped the relationship, be it one that is “hard to ignore” (318). In fact, for anyone with an interest in US-Cuban relations or the connections between migration and international relations it is *impossible* to ignore his important work on these subjects.

Jorrit van den Berk

Radboud University, the Netherlands

j.vandenberk@let.ru.nl