

# **Cuban Migration in Germany: Analysis and Perspective Between Two Countries**

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*To my mother with love  
Daisy Naranjo Alba  
Gracias mami ...*

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## **Preface**

While I'm writing the last pages about the Cuban migration in Germany, the Cuban migration law of 1976 is about to be modified. The law 1312 of October 2012 will be in force from the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2013 onwards. The main changes correspond to the derogation of the invitation letter and the exit permit. Any Cuban, who will like to travel, will need only his or her passport and the visa to the country they want to visit. These two modifications will change the conception of traveling out of the island and staying abroad. Cubans, who want to travel, won't be classified as contra revolutionary. They will be just human beings wanting to go from one place to the other in search of knowledge, new perspectives or just for the fun of being in movement.

The stories here described are the struggles of many Cubans when they had decided to go to another country. How they had to fight their way in order to reach their goals. Going abroad, and in this case staying in Germany was a carefully planned strategy, which took sometimes years to be accomplished. These are the stories of people who left precious things behind, who left family and friends with the uncertainty if they could return or when they could return. Long before preparing their luggage they had to fight their way among the many corridors of the Cuban bureaucracy and only their persistency and objectives saved them of not getting mad in this attempt.

The year 2013 will open new perspectives to the future Cuban travelers. The stories that are to come will be told in another book. The stories told here are already part of the Cuban migration history.

## **Abstract**

The present study deals with the migration of Cubans to Germany. This migration flow depends on one hand on broader international migration movements, on the other hand on Cuban politics towards migration. My first concern is to contribute to fulfill the gap regarding central issues of this migration movement. Due to the characteristics of the Cuban migration, it should be possible to differentiate this migration flow from other migration movements from Latin America to Europe.

The two main problems of research are motivations Cubans have for migration as well as the procedures they have to follow when they travel abroad. The other problem is related to difficulties they face in their integration process into the German society and how the Cuban diaspora in Germany maintains relations with its country of origin. Both questions will be explored using the qualitative methodology of Grounded Theory. From its theoretical perspective this research is anchored in new migration theories like the 'transnational migration' and related concepts like social network and social capital. Individual and family decisions for migration are at the center of the analysis.

From the historical perspective I explore how the Cuban migration flow to Germany was and is influenced by the different political constellations since 1960 in the receiving country. At that time Germany was divided into GDR and FRG Cubans arrived in the GDR to study and/or work as part of exchange programs. Arriving in the FRG was only possible through marriage with a FRG citizen. After the reunification it is possible that Cubans travel to Germany especially due to private reasons.

Regarding the motivations leading to migration it was found that being discontent with the political system and dissatisfaction regarding the economic situation in Cuba were conditions participants took into account when deciding for migration. Especially for professionals it was found that difficulties they faced in obtaining a liberation letter and exit permit, made them later take the decision to remain in Germany. As it will be shown, in the case of Cuba, politic-economic conditions play a central role when deciding for migration.

Once in Germany, it is supported the finding that Cubans attempt to be integrated in the German society at politic, economic and cultural level. Integration in Germany is close related to the migration politic in Cuba. Hence, being deprived of their civil rights when they are considered migrants by the Cuban government or the obstacles they face in case they want to return permanently to Cuba, make them struggle for their integration in Germany. Though Cuba treats its migrants as if they were not part of the Cuban nation, Cuban migrants maintain relations with their country of origin and through remittances they support their relatives in Cuba and contribute from abroad to the Cuban economy.

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# **Introduction**

## **Introduction**

Understanding Cuban migration to Germany is not possible if one does not take into account the broader context in which international migration takes place. Though Cuba, due to its persistence and struggle to maintain socialism, is economically quite isolated from the rest of the world, processes of globalization and the resulting economic interchange in the international arena does influence migration flows in and out of Cuba.

The present study is an attempt to address the lack of research regarding the Cuban diaspora in Germany. It will illustrate under which conditions Cubans take the decision to migrate and which challenges they face in their integration into German society. In addition, I will describe the transnational activities in which Cuban migrants participate in order to maintain a connection to their country of origin. Before illustrating this phenomenon, I would like to contextualize how this migration flow exists within a broader phenomenon, that is, Latin American migration to Europe.

After centuries of colonization in which Spaniards, Portuguese and British ruled on the Latin American continent, a movement of people in the other direction began to take place in the second half of the 20th century. Latin Americans began to arrive on a more or less permanent basis in Europe due to the establishment of dictatorships in countries like Brazil, Chile and Argentina or due to civil wars such as in Colombia, Guatemala and El Salvador. By the 1980's when democratic governments began to rule in Latin America, politic exiles had the option of returning to their countries while others chose to remain in Europe. However, new groups continued to arrive in Europe. At this time there were students who came to continue their post-graduate studies but also economic migrants, usually from the middle class, who were in search of better economic opportunities and were affected in their countries of origin due to economic crises and the restructuring of overall fiscal policies (Yépez, 2007: 22).

According to Yépez (2007) at the beginning of the 21st century the terrorist attack on the U.S. on September 11, 2000 tightened border controls. Additionally the militarization of the border with Mexico and an increase in poverty, as well as exclusion for many from social services and programs, have become push factors, which drive people to see migration to Europe as a hopeful alternative to their economic situation and way of life (Yépez, 2007: 22). In the case of Latin America the 'lack of faith' in the nation-state as a stimulator of projects for development, lack

of expectations (Herrera, 2007: 199), corruption, violence, and economic crisis have driven individuals to migrate in search of new opportunities. Europe, on the other hand is immersed in demographic transformations like an aging population. Hence, the continent needs a strong workforce in production sectors like agriculture and construction; in social services like taking care of children and the elderly but also in tourism, transportation, and commerce, as well as highly qualified personnel for the development of IT technologies. In other words, a deficit in the workforce of a given country functions as a pull factor, attracting a young population of working age people from other regions in the world.

However, the dynamic of various push-pull factors as an explanation for Latin American migration to Europe is a lineal model, which cannot explain the continuance of this migration flow in the absence of those conditions, which initiated this dynamic. Furthermore, it is a contradiction that even when Europe is in need of a bolstered workforce, its politics regarding migration tend in the direction of tightening control around its external borders. As a consequence, migrants are seen as a danger to social stability and a threat to the European model of the welfare system. Additionally it creates a gap between European citizens and citizens from the third world in their access to social services as well as the employment market. Thus, immigrants are introduced into a segmented employment market, which only offers access to low-quality jobs with uncertain job contracts and little social protection (Yépez, 2007: 23).

In Europe, the Latin American population is composed of young adults between 20 and 39 years old has been taken into consideration. A trend in the “feminization” of migration has been observed, with more women than men making up the migration flow (Sassen, 2003). Based on statistical data from EUROSTAT Poulain (2007) had found that 70% of the 1,898,160 Latin Americans, who were in Europe at the beginning of 2005 were residing in Spain. In Italy there were approximately 200,000, in Great Britain 125,000 and in Germany less than 100,000 (Poulain, 2007: 248). This data indicates that Latin American migrants choose Spain as a host country due to, among different reasons, a shared colonial past and use of a common language. Successive waves of European migration to Latin America from the 15th century until the first half of the 20th century have intrinsically linked both continents<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about statistical data concerning Latin Americans in Europe see Appendix 11.

According to the Statistisches Bundesamt (2013) in Germany, the largest Latin American communities in Germany in 2012 were: Brazil with 34,945 residents; Colombia with 11,814; Mexico with 11,522; Peru with 8,759 and Cuba with 8,522. In each of these countries the number of women is higher than the number of men. The most drastic differences are noted in Brazil. From the total of its residents in Germany 24,431 are women while 10,514 are men. For Columbia 7,598 are women and 4,216 are men and for Cuba 5,109 are women and 3,413 are men (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2012: 141-142)<sup>2</sup>. All of this indicates that migration from Latin America to Germany reflects the new tendency toward “feminization” of migration.

In the 1990’s the motivation for Latin American migrants to come to Germany can be summarized as follows: 1) Economic Reasons. Men and women migrate in search of better living conditions for them and their families; 2) Family Reunification. In this category marriage between Latin Americans and Germans is included as well as bringing relatives through established migration networks; 3) Intellectual Grounds. Professionals in search of academic positions and specialization; 4) Political Asylum. Especially migrants from Colombia who are victim of the armed conflict; 5) Persons in search of new experiences looking for contact with other cultures; 6) Homosexuals, who are in search of social acceptance (Hernández, 2007: 225-226).

A considerable volume of research in the field of migration has been dedicated to the transfer of remittances, that is sending money back from abroad as a means of financial support to those left behind in other countries. Interest in this subject is due to the movement of capital from developed geographical regions such as North America and Europe to developing regions like Africa, Asia and Latin America. After analyzing statistical data from sources like Financial Fund for Development Projects, International Monetary Fund, the U.S. Department of the Treasury and Western Union, researchers have divergent opinions about the importance of remittances on development (Auroi, 2007; Helmke, 2010). According to Auroi (2007), Latin America is the region that receives the largest amount of remittances worldwide, while North America is the primary issuer of remittances. In 2005 approximately \$53.6 billion were transferred to Latin America. This figure represents 25% of all remittances. While 75% of remittances come from the U.S., 20% come from Europe

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[https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/AuslaendBevoelkerung2010200127004.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/AuslaendBevoelkerung2010200127004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile) (11.11.2013)

(Spain, Italy, United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland) and the rest from Japan and Canada (Auroi, 2007: 313).

Cuban migration in general has some characteristics in common with the rest of Latin American migration flows to Europe. However, some are unique to this group due to certain historical, social and political factors. Therefore it is worth noting that Cuban migration, since the Revolution in 1959, has been highly regulated and certain measures have been taken to protect the country against attacks from the U.S. in order to preserve national security. According to statistical data, 1.7 million Cubans and their descendants live outside Cuba (Aja, 2007: 136), which constitutes nearly 13% of the Cuban population. What statistical data does not reveal are the procedures Cubans must follow in order to reach their destination country. Another important issue involves the return of Cuban migrants to Cuba. When Cubans apply for a permanent exit permit (most often to the U.S. and Canada, countries which have a special migration program) or when they stay more than 11 months abroad, they lose their property in Cuba as well as the freedom to return and live there at their discretion. This factor has an enormous influence on a Cuban migrant's decision as to whether or not to leave knowing that if they are not successful in their country of choice abroad, returning is not an easy option.

In 1959, directly after the Triumph of the Revolution, Law 2 came into effect, in order to control and regulate who would be allowed to leave the country. This law established an application process for an exit permit for all those who wanted to leave (Gutiérrez, 2008: 320). In 1961 Law 989 was established and mandated the confiscation of all personal property when someone applied for an exit permit (Gutiérrez, 2008: 320). According to Gutiérrez (2008) these measures had the objective of controlling the exodus of military personnel and civilians convicted of various crimes during Batista's dictatorship and also outlawed the transfer of money and goods, which were considered the common property of the Cuban people (Gutiérrez, 2008: 320). During the first two decades of the Revolution and as a consequence of this migration policy, applying for an exit permit meant leaving forever the country without the possibility of returning. Hence, thousands of families were separated at a high personal cost. Later new regulations were introduced, which outlined the specific treatment migrants would receive based on their reason for leaving the country. These measures included:

- Migration Law of 1976, stipulated that Cubans who marry a foreigner and are granted a Permanent Exit Permit<sup>3</sup> are entitled to keep their property in Cuba and would be able to visit the country after submitting an application for a reentry permit.
- The above-mentioned permit was modified in 1984 as a Permit for Permanent Residency Abroad<sup>4</sup>. Holders of this permit would be entitled to visit the country with previous authorization from the Cuban consulate in their country of residency.
- In 1992, due to the economic crisis, restrictions were lifted and Cubans living abroad who had had no authorization to reenter were subsequently allowed to do so.
- In 1994 Cuban citizens with a minimum age of 18 were entitled to apply for a Permit to Travel Abroad<sup>5</sup>, which granted a maximum travel period of eleven months. Prior to that only those between the ages of 55 and 60 years old were authorized to travel on a limited basis (Gutiérrez, 2008: 321)

Additionally, as of 2004, holders of a Permit to Travel Abroad, who do not return to Cuba within 11 months may apply for Passport Habilitation<sup>6</sup>, which means they must not apply for an Entrance Permit every time they travel to Cuba and may stay for a maximum of 30 days.

In spite of more flexible measures concerning regulations for Cuban migration, applying for a permanent or temporary exit permit still remains a long and expensive bureaucratic procedure. One of the most controversial measures is Resolution 54 dating from 1999<sup>7</sup>, which stipulates that professionals working in the Health Ministry who apply for an exit permit have a mandatory waiting period in Cuba of five years before a “liberation letter” is granted and they are finally allowed to leave. In all other Ministries there is no such waiting period. This measure is aimed at protecting the country against a ‘brain drain’ of highly qualified professionals. The reality is that these professionals who make up the Ministries are those with the best financial and networking contacts. Any contribution they might make to the system is completely lost.

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<sup>3</sup> Permiso de Salida Indefinido (PSI).

<sup>4</sup> Permiso de Residencia en el Extranjero (PRE).

<sup>5</sup> Permiso de Viaje al Extranjero (PVE).

<sup>6</sup> Habilitación de Pasaporte (<http://www.consulcubacr.com/cb/index.php?id=161>) (10.04.2011)

<sup>7</sup> [www.gacetaoficial.cu](http://www.gacetaoficial.cu) (28.10.2012)

Additional rules concerning migration involve a payment of 40€ for each month a Cuban is abroad<sup>8</sup> and a payment of 90€ is required every 2 years for Cubans travelling to Cuba on a passport which is valid for six years<sup>9</sup>. In recent years Cuban academics, artists both inside and outside Cuba, and Cuban migrants around the world have pleaded for changes in the migration law insisting on making it compatible with new trends of migration where individuals are being allowed much freedom of movement. A further element to take into account when discussing patterns of migration is the presence in Cuba of Cuban citizens with access to a European passport and more specifically a Spanish passport. Descendants of Spaniards in Cuba may apply for a passport under the Law of Historical Memory. Between 2009 and 2011 the Spanish consulate in Havana granted a total of 58,000 passports. In January 2012, it was reported that 89,000 Cubans living in Cuba also had Spanish citizenship (Barros, 2012)<sup>10</sup>. That number represents a high potential of migration from that sector in Cuban society. They have the freedom to travel between Cuba and Europe and have access to all the advantages that implies, for instance access to the European employment market. They also gain the additional advantage of sending remittances home to their families in Cuba, while expanding their migration network if they decide to remain in Spain.

More recently, on October 16, 2012, the Cuban government modified Migration Law 1312 dating from 1976 replacing it with Law 302.<sup>11</sup>, which would simplify the migration process from Cuba. This law will come into effect on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The primary modifications can be summarized as follows:

- Abolishment of the \$150 application for an exit permit.
- Abolishment of the required “letter of invitation” with a fee of \$200 that foreigners or Cuban residents abroad had to send to Cuba in order to apply for a visa or passport.
- Extension from 11 months to 24 months, the time period allowed abroad before migrants lose their rights in Cuba.
- Extension from 30 days to 90 days, the time period that a Cuban migrant may return for a visit to Cuba (Gaceta Oficial de la República de Cuba, 2012).

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<sup>8</sup> Prórroga de Permiso de Viaje al Exterior  
<http://www.cubadiplomatica.cu/alemania/ES/ServiciosConsulares.aspx#PVE> (03.05.2011)

<sup>9</sup> Prórroga de Permiso de Viaje al Exterior  
<http://www.cubadiplomatica.cu/alemania/ES/ServiciosConsulares.aspx#PVE> (03.05.2011)

<sup>10</sup> Barros, Manuel. [http://www.espanaexterior.com/seccion/61-Emigracion/noticia/266190-El\\_Consulado\\_en\\_La\\_Habana\\_ha\\_recibido\\_192.400\\_peticiones\\_de\\_nacionalidad\\_a\\_traves\\_de\\_la\\_Ley\\_de\\_Memoria\\_Historica](http://www.espanaexterior.com/seccion/61-Emigracion/noticia/266190-El_Consulado_en_La_Habana_ha_recibido_192.400_peticiones_de_nacionalidad_a_traves_de_la_Ley_de_Memoria_Historica) (13.05.2012)

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.cubadebate.cu/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/ley-migratoria\\_cuba\\_2012.pdf](http://www.cubadebate.cu/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/ley-migratoria_cuba_2012.pdf) (18.10.2012)

While these new measures increase the possibility for Cubans to travel to other countries or migrate abroad with lower financial costs, the restrictions concerning who can leave and who must remain still remain. For instance, while it is no longer necessary to apply for an exit permit, the government still reserves its right to issue a passport or not. According to Granma, the official Cuban newspaper “So long as there exist policies that favor the ‘brain drain’ designed to take away from us the human resources that are indispensable to the economic, social and scientific development of the country, Cuba will be obligated to maintain measures to defend itself<sup>12</sup>”. In other words, those who had had difficulties when applying for an exit permit in the past would continue to face the same impediments. „Das dürfte wie gehabt Ärzte, Wissenschaftler oder Armeemitglieder betreffen und außerdem Dissidenten. Nach wie vor kontrollieren Passamt und Konsulate die Anträge. Kuba verweist auf das Recht des revolutionären Staates, sich gegen die Einmischung und Unterwanderung durch die USA und ihre Verbündeten zu verteidigen“ (Burghardt, 2012).

It is important to note that Cuba is a country acting as a “denouncer and uninterested State, which treats its emigrants as if they were not part of the nation<sup>13</sup>” (Duany, 2009: 191). They maintain this position although Cuban immigrants, no matter where they are, “ha(ve) not totally broken their family and community ties with Cuba” (Knauer, 2001: 22).

Cuban migration, especially following the 1990’s, has had an influence on Cuban society at many different levels. Migrants return with their accumulated experiences from other contexts, with first hand information about how other societies function and they send remittances, which are considered by families an important source of income. Often these remittances are the only possibility for a Cuban family to have access to hard currency which enables them to meet their daily needs. Hence, Cuban academics (Martín, 2006; Aja, 2007; Gutiérrez, 2008) at Havana University began to study the impact of migration on Cuban society. As a result of years of research the following tendencies within Cuban migration have been identified:

- Dysfunction at a structural level in Cuban society will be taken into account when Cubans decide for migration.

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<sup>12</sup> mientras persistan las políticas que favorecen el "robo de cerebros", dirigidas a despojarnos de los recursos humanos imprescindibles para el desarrollo económico, social y científico del país, Cuba estará obligada a mantener medidas para defenderse en este frente

<http://www.granma.cu/espanol/cuba/16-octubre-editorial.html> (16.10.2012)

<sup>13</sup> (el Estado) el cubano puede considerarse como un “Estado desinteresado y denunciante” que trata a sus emigrados como si no pertenecieran a la nación (Duany, 2009: 191).



- Migration will continue as part of social networks (especially for families) which have increased in number and diversity since 1995.
- Cuba reinforces its image as a migration country.
- Regarding demographics there are certain challenges Cuban society faces, among them are: low population growth and an increase in the aging population as well an increase in migration.
- The main destinations for Cuban migration are the United States of America, Europe, South America, Central America and then the rest of the world.
- Migration to the United States will continue to be considered an issue of security for the Cuban nation and for the Revolution.
- Legal migration will continue as the main form of migration towards different countries.
- Temporary migration will increase.
- It is expected that due to international collaboration, highly qualified professionals who work in different missions outside Cuba, will abandon Cuba and remain abroad.
- Cuban migrants abroad will continue visiting Cuba according to their economic possibilities and migratory status in Cuba and in the host country.
- An increase in application for repatriation is expected, especially from Cubans in retirement and from others who had emigrated in the 1990's and later.
- Cuban migration will continue to be represented by young people between the ages of 20 and 40, which corresponds to migration flows in the Caribbean area.
- Cuban migrants will have an intermediate or higher level of education at the time of their migration.
- Highly qualified professionals will continue emigrating though their number won't increase (Aja, 2009: 130-136).

Researchers in Cuba have come to the conclusion that migration is directly linked to the same survival strategies the Cuban family uses as a way of getting ahead of an uncertain economic situation (Martín, 2006: 228). The same author continues: migration “may be structured as a strategy in daily subjectivity, which could have positive and negative implications. Normalization of this phenomenon, which is socially healthy at the family level, could be accompanied by a depolitization<sup>14</sup>”. The

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<sup>14</sup> (La migración) “puede estarse estructurando como una estrategia estable en la subjetividad cotidiana, la cual tendría muchas implicaciones de sentido positivo y negativo, ya que la naturalización del fenómeno, saludable socialmente en el nivel familiar, puede acompañarse de la despolitización traumática del mismo” (Martín, 2006: 228).

implicit argument of Martín (2006) is that in the analysis of the motivation behind migration waves from Cuba, political elements have been used by the country of exodus (Cuba) and the main host country receiving the Cuban migrants (U.S.) to explain this phenomenon. Hence, the Cuban migration towards the United States has been historically analyzed and treated as a case of political migration. With the depolitization of migration, regardless of the destination of Cuban migrants, it should be emphasized that: “the unfavorable economic situation in Cuba is the main cause for migration. People emigrate because they go in search of economic improvement<sup>15</sup>” (Martín, 2006: 218). She continues: “political nonconformity and social rejection as a cause of migration are maintained in a low profile<sup>16</sup>” (Martín, 2006: 220).

However, as we will see in the second chapter, migration waves from Cuba could also be understood partly as a strategy by the Cuban government toward “decompressing social tensions” (Hoffmann, 2005: 26) at the same time that the regime regains its hegemony when it forces the U.S. government to negotiate about migration issues. When considering transnational theories it is suggested that migrants raise “their voice from the outside, but also (exert) influence on third party actors. In this sense the Cuban emigrant community in the USA provides an outstanding example in efficiently lobbying the U.S. government’s policy towards their country of origin. As a consequence, the importance of exit for Cuban regime stability not only consists of getting rid of the discontent; moreover, the exit-turned-voice of the Cuban exile and its close association with Washington policies continuously nourish the nationalist trump card of the Cuban regime: Its legitimizing construction according to which any domestic political conflict is part of the overarching confrontation with the USA, with the current leadership acting as the indispensable defendant of the Cuban nation” (Hoffmann, 2005: 26). Moreover, political issues in Cuba are closely connected to economic development. Hence, as it will be demonstrated in this study structural conditions regarding migration cannot be isolated from their political components.

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<sup>15</sup> la mayoría de los entrevistados con relación a los años noventa (aclaran que) sigue siendo lo fundamental la situación económica desfavorable y se percibe que las personas que emigran lo hacen para mejorar económicamente (Martín, 2006: 218).

<sup>16</sup> En cuanto a la inconformidad política, la inadaptación y el rechazo social como factores para emigrar en los momentos actuales y en las percepciones de futuro, se mantienen como causales que promueven la emigración en muy bajo perfil (Martín, 2006: 220).

Thus, categorizing Cuban migration solely as a case of economic migration is not possible.

As for the case of Germany, Cubans have been migrating there since the 1960's. First as part of exchange agreements between the GDR and Cuba and, after the reunification, due to economic and political factors in Cuba. In this context, sociological migration theories like 'migration networks' help to explain how the migration flow from Cuba to Germany continues. I would like to point out that though Cubans do not often consider Germany as a destination country, expansion of migration networks over the last 50 years has increased family ties between the two countries. Hence, relations, which were once generated due to agreements, today are part of family and individual strategies in the face of political and economic stagnation.

While Cubans represent a small section of the population in Germany (Appendix 12) as compared to Latin American countries like Brazil, Mexico and Colombia, Cuba as a country is well known due to its history, politics, music and culture. Cubans participate widely in the German economy in areas such as gastronomy, dance academies, tourism offices, and academics as well as working as highly qualified professionals in the natural and social sciences.

Because the majority of Cuban migrants are concentrated in the United States, their presence and integration into that society has been the subject of research for decades. These studies cover all sectors and extend to the second and third generation of Cuban descendents, which points to the significance of this group in the U.S. and explains the political tensions between the two countries (O'Reilly Herrera, 2001, 2007; Pérez, 1999; Portes, Clark and Manning, 1985; Rodríguez, 1997; Torreira and Buajasán, 2000). In Germany this immigrant group has also been the subject of attention especially after reunification. However, few researchers have conducted in- depth studies into this community. Among existing studies, we should mention the analysis of socio-historical and ethnographic characteristics of the almost 30,000 Cubans, who came to Germany as students and/or workers (Adolphi, 2007: 167; Gruner-Domić, 1997a; Mac Con Uhladh, 2005a, b; Werz, 2009). Researchers like Zeuske (2002, 2004) presented historical facts from Cuba to the German public, while others like Hoffmann (2004, 2005, 2007, 2009), Beuer (2002), Gratius (2003) and Niese (2010) analyzed Cuban society, taking into account political and economic factors as well as its cultural relations with Germany. In more recent years new research has

emphasized the differences in cultural and communication factors that influence the Cuban-German couple relationship. On this subject, issues like conflict resolution, norms and cultural values which influence behavior and perception of gender and cultural stereotypes are analyzed from different perspectives. One example is the research of Molnar (2004) and Hollmann (2005). Another perspective is offered by Eggert (2006) when she analyzes transnational family spaces between Cuba and Germany based on participant observation and interviews with Cuban-German families in both countries. I would also like to mention the studies of Köttig (2009), Brandhorst (2009) and Wessenich (2008), which were the result of a teaching project between the Center for Methods in Social Sciences at the Georg-August University of Göttingen (Germany) and the Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution at the Nova Southeastern University of Fort Lauderdale (Florida). The objective of these studies was to analyze and compare the Cuban ethnic *construction of belonging* in both Germany and Florida.

Hence, the presence of Cubans in United States and Germany can be considered a subject of sociological interest in both countries and on both continents. One of those reasons is what researchers refer to as “Cuban Exceptionalism” due to the special historical circumstances of Cuba in the politic arena. Whitehead (2007) argues: “Cuba is the only communist-ruled country where the local Communist Party did not play a leading role in the seizure of power; where the Soviet Union was not expecting, let alone directing, the takeover; and where the ruling party was not even formally constituted until over a decade after the revolution. It is the only communist-ruled country where the “class war” was waged principally by means of the wholesale expulsion of the propertied class to a neighboring country ... It is the only constituent part of the Soviet bloc to have remained under the same leadership and system of government in place before the fall of the Berlin Wall ... It is the only country ever to have succeeded in isolating the United States in a series of international votes (Whitehead, 2007: 3-4). Another position is offered by Torres (1999) when discussing the political exceptionalism of Cuba and how it affects migration flows. He concludes that “the Cuban exceptionalism fades when we understand that other Latin American immigrants face similar situations – including ambivalent relations with their countries” (Torres, 1999: 20). Nonetheless it remains a fact that Cuban exceptionalism, seen from its political standpoint or in relation to migration

movements from Cuba, continue to be considered an aspect of national security and an element, which affects change in Cuban society.

With this study I would like to contribute to a broader comprehension of Cuban migration to Germany putting forth that this migration flow is part of broader international migration movement but at the same time I will consider specificities of Cuban-Germany history and politics. The present study is divided as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction to the main migration theories and concepts, which have guided the analytical explanation of the Cuban migration flow to Germany. At the end of this chapter the reader will find the objectives of the study as well as questions I intended to answer.

Chapter 2: A concise description of the different migration waves from Cuba, as well as their consequences for the Cuban migration policy up to the present. This chapter will provide some insights about the motivations Cubans have for leaving their country and the treatment Cuban migrants receive in their host country, especially in the U.S., the country with the largest Cuban community outside Cuba.

Chapter 3: Description of the journey of Cuban migrants to Germany, first as part of exchange programs for students and workers between the GDR and Cuba and later as a consequence of migration networks established after almost 30 years of diplomatic relations between the two socialist countries. In the same chapter I will provide information concerning political, economic and cultural relations between Cuba and Germany after reunification. The new political environment will provide some clues about transformation of relations between the two countries and how they are inserted in the broader context of relations with the European Union and the U.S. These interactions are considered when analyzing under which circumstances new Cuban migrants arrive in Germany and the possibilities for their integration into German society.

Chapter 4: Research method. Here I describe how contact with participants was established, how interviews were conducted as a qualitative technique in gathering data and how data was analyzed using Grounded Theory methodology. I also provide specific examples of the coding procedure and conclude with remarks about theoretical sensitivity and reflexivity as part of qualitative research.

Chapter 5: Analysis of how the interviewees prepare to come to Germany and which conditions they are experiencing in Cuba prior to their departure. The preparations

they must make for their travel and which barriers they face before leaving the country.

Chapter 6: Analysis of the migrants experience after their arrival in Germany. Focusing on which alternatives they have for remaining legally in Germany and which difficulties they have when integrating into German society. The last part of this chapter is dedicated to transnational practices of Cuban migrants between Cuba and Germany.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and presentation of the results of this study.

# **Research Aims, Questions, and Intended Outcomes**

### **Research Aims, Questions, and Intended Outcomes**

The present research is based on the social, economic and political conditions in which emigrants are embedded before their departure from the country of origin as well as characteristics of their immediate social environment in the host society.

Social conditions in the country of origin and host society are understood as the social space in which the decision for migration takes place. In this regard participants reflect their experiences, expectations and possible perspectives, making sense of their stories and present situation. These narratives reflect similarities and differences of migrant experiences throughout the migration process. Furthermore, in spite of the constrained mobility between the sending and receiving country, Cuban migrants are present in spaces of inter-exchange and non-official social participation in the country of origin. For instance, they send remittances to their families, and the families count on them when making important decisions.

This research responds to the following questions. Under which circumstances the migration process to Germany takes place, taking into account different stages of relations between Cuba and Germany. I also want to explore if Germany constitutes a destination for Cuban migrants or if it is part of a broader international migration. Another task is to analyze how bureaucratic hurdles of migration from Cuba influence the migration process as a whole. Another question refers to opportunities and constraints in the integration process in the host country. How Cubans interact with the host country, how they go from social invisibility to integration. Finally I would like to explore how Cubans maintain relations with their country of origin.

With this research I intend to provide a differentiated description of the migration process from a developing to a developed country. I will also reflect the policy of restrictions concerning migration in the country of origin as well as in the host country. Cuba has historically developed a migration policy to avoid migration flow in general and 'brain drain' in particular. I intend to demonstrate that individuals, who had seen migration as a possibility to break out of their social situation, nevertheless find alternatives in order to reach their goals. I also intend to demonstrate that individuals who are part of a social network of migration are not only more likely to migrate, but rather they undertake steps in this direction when conditions are due. I want to give additional support to arguments in favor of counseling for individuals and their families in the country of origin and host society. This could contribute to sensitize employees in the German institutions when dealing with migrants in general



and particularly with Cuban migrants. I intended to provide the participants of this study with an opportunity to reflect on and make sense of their experiences. By bringing together the empirical knowledge of the migrants and migration researchers' theories from different disciplines, I hope to develop a more comprehensive understanding of migration and in particular of migratory movements out of Cuba.

# **Chapter 1**

## **Migration Theories**

## Chapter 1

### Migration Theories

Migration is not a straightforward concept. Actors involved in it and direction of movement – understanding from which point to which destination – are factors which should be taken into account for inclusion in the definition of the term. Düvell (2006) in his study about forms of migration through history had included the following dimensions for a definition on migration.

- „Da ist zum einen die Dimension der Zeit: ab welcher Dauer spricht man von Migration?
- Zudem gibt es die Dimension der Entfernung: ab welcher Entfernung spricht man von Migration?
- Dann gibt es die politische Dimension: bei Übertragung welcher Art von politischer Grenze spricht man von Migration?
- Weiterhin gibt es die Dimension des Wohn-, beziehungsweise Aufenthaltsortes sowie des Arbeitsortes. Wie lassen die sich klar voneinander unterscheiden?
- Außerdem gibt es die Dimension des Zwecks: welche Zwecke gelten als Migration?
- Dann gibt es die Dimension der Akteure: wird jeder Ortswechsel als Migration verstanden zu werden, dass die den Ort wechselnden Personen auch die jeweiligen Akteure sind?
- Schließlich wäre die Dimension des Charakters der Wanderung zu berücksichtigen: erfolgt sie freiwillig oder ist sie erzwungen?“ (Düvell, 2006: 6-7)

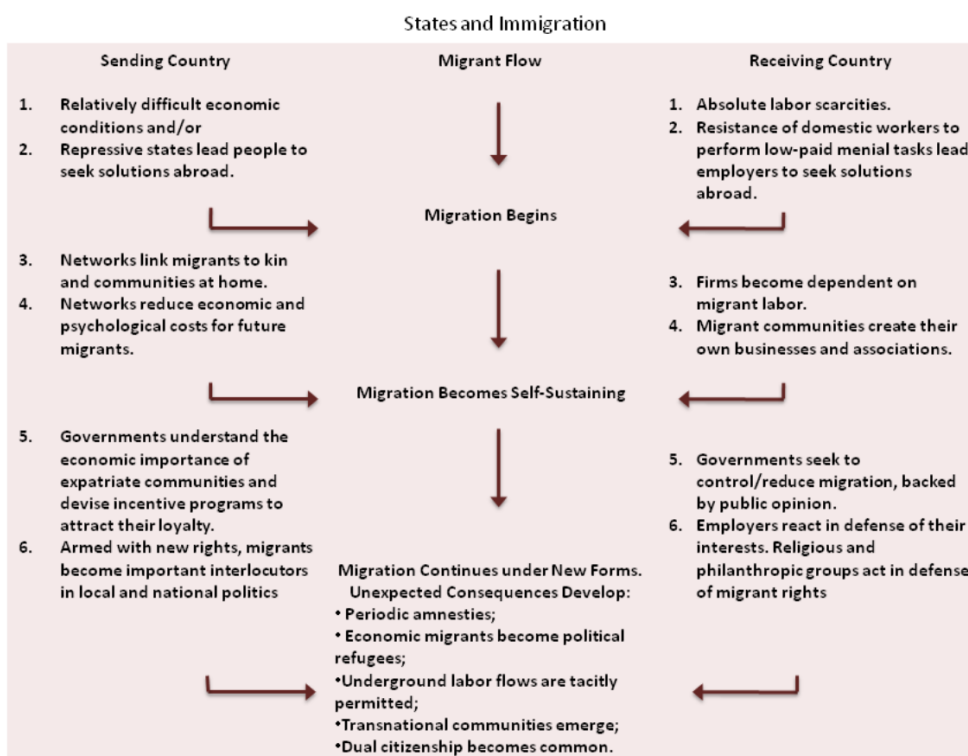
Instead of deciding for only one concept, Düvell (2006) goes through the extensive literature on migration listing concepts related to migration in the social sciences. He decides then to define migration as „Wanderung von Menschen im geographischen Raum, überwiegend über größere Distanzen. Deshalb wird Migration als ein Sonderfall geographischer Mobilität betrachtet“ (Albrecht, 1972 in: Düvell, 2006: 25).

An additional definition is offered by Han (2005). For him migration is „ein Prozess, der, beginnend von der Vorbereitung über den faktischen Verlauf bis hin zu einem vorläufigen Abschluss, in einem langen zeitlichen Kontinuum stattfindet. Der vollzogene Wohnortwechsel ist zwar ein sichtbares Zeichen, aber keineswegs der Endpunkt der Migration. Es kann gesagt werden, dass der wesentlich zeitintensivere

und schwierigere Teil der „inneren Psychosozialen Migration“ erst nach der „äußeren Physischen Migration“ beginnt“ (Han, 2005: 8). Included in this definition is the idea that migration as a process begins even before the person is transported from point A to point B. I would consider preparations before leaving one place as part of the migration process. Consequently migration does not come to an end after arriving at the point of destination, but rather the process continues and can extend further with the integration of the person into the host society.

Actors involved in the migration process are defined as ‘emigrants’ for the act of leaving their place of birth on either a temporary or permanent basis. Once arrived in the receiving country the same actors are defined as ‘immigrants’ when they claim residence permit on a temporary or permanent basis, in a place different from that of their place of birth (Düvell, 2006: 25). Typologies of migration constitute a sort of guide where motivations and causes of migration are included. Düvell (2006) alludes to the complexity of such characterization. „Tatsächlich sind derartige, auf eine Motivationslage, einen Zweck oder ein Charakteristika abhebende Typologien unbefriedigend, da Migranten häufig „multiple Identitäten“ aufweisen, beziehungsweise Migration im Rahmen von komplexen Entscheidungsprozessen erfolgt, das heißt, dass darüber hinaus auch häufig multiple Motive und multiple Ursachen und Gründe festzustellen sind. In biographischen Interviews finden sich häufig aneinander gereiht folgenden Begründungen für eine Migrationsentscheidung: „ich hatte politische Probleme“, was auf erzwungene Migration oder Asylmigration schließen ließe, „einen Job hab ich auch nicht mehr gehabt“, woraus auf ökonomische Motiven schließen wäre, „ich hab hier aber auch einen Onkel“, was auf Familienzusammenführung hindeutete, und „ich wollte schon immer einmal Englisch lernen“, ein Hinweis auf Bildungs-, *betterment* oder *career migration*. Dieses Beispiel sollen veranschaulichen, dass menschliche Entscheidungsprozesse schwerlich anhand von eindimensionalen soziologischen Formeln abgebildet werden können. „Selbstzuschreibungen“ und soziologische oder politische „Fremdzuschreibungen“ weisen in aller Regel gravierende Diskrepanzen auf“ (Düvell, 2006: 32).

Portes and DeWind (2007) had graphically summarized the connection between sending and receiving country and how the migration flow continues under different forms.



(Portes & DeWind, 2007: 8).

Such motivations, objectives, characteristics and typologies of migration as well as migrant – immigrant are anchored in the present study when describing the process of migration from Cuba to Germany as well as the positioning of these individuals as emigrants and immigrants in relation to the sending and receiving country.

Today it is considered that none of the roughly 190 sovereign states in the international system is now beyond the reach of migration circuits. Indeed they are all either countries of origin, transit or destination for migrants, and increasingly are all three simultaneously. Migration circuits span the globe like a spider’s web, with complex ramifications and countless intersections. The current world map of migration is therefore multipolar (IOM, 2003: 4 in: Vertovec, 2010: 3).

Though migration is an ancient phenomena – groups of persons have always been moving geographically from one place to another – the first ever study on migration is attributed to Ravenstein (1885 in: Dorigo and Tobler, 1983). Ravenstein (1885) based his ‘laws’ on insightful, careful scrutiny of census tables from the British population between 1871 and 1881. His ‘laws of migration’ are known as the classic migration theories. They are based on classic, neo-classic and structural economic formulations derived from the analysis of demographic data (Düvell, 2006: 79). Under these

theories, migration is explained through the scope of variations in push – pull factors. “The push factors are those life situations that give one reason to be dissatisfied with one’s present locale; the pull factors are those attributes of distant places that make them appear appealing” (Dorigo & Tobler, 1983: 11).

Economic theories at a macro level, which have been used to explain international migration in the process of economic development, are represented by Lewis (1954); Ranis and Fei (1961); Harris and Todaro (1970) and Todaro (1976 in: Massey et al. 2010: 64). Theorizations on migration at a macro level are known as neoclassical economics. They focus “on differentials in wages and employment conditions between countries, and on migration costs; it generally conceives of movement as an individual decision for income maximization” (Massey et al. 2010: 63). Pertaining to neoclassical economics, a micro theory was developed. In these theories individual decisions for migration stood at the center of the analysis. Developers of this model are Sjaastad (1962); Todaro (1969, 1976, 1989) and Todaro and Maruszko (1987) in: (Massey et al. 2010: 65). In short terms under this approach “individual rational actors decide to migrate because a cost-benefit calculation leads them to expect a positive net return, usually monetary, from movement. International migration is conceptualized as a form of investment in human capital. People choose to move to where they can be most productive, given their skills; but before they can capture the higher wages associated with greater labor productivity they must undertake certain investments, which include the material costs of traveling, the costs of maintenance while moving and looking for work, the effort involved in learning a new language and culture, the difficulty experienced in adapting to a new labor market, and the psychological costs of cutting old ties and forging new ones” (Massey et al. 1993: 65).

In the 80’s new models on international migration, better known as “new economics of migration,” were formulated as a challenge to many of the assumptions and conclusions of neoclassical models. Among its exponents are Stark and Levhari (1982); Stark (1984); Katz and Stark (1986); Lauby and Stark (1988); Taylor (1986) and Stark (1991) in: (Massey et al. 2010: 67). New economics of migration are based on micro level theories. Under this new approach “migration decisions are not made by isolated individual actors, but by larger units of related people – typically families or households – in which people act collectively not only to maximize expected

income, but also to minimize risks and to loosen constraints associated with a variety of market failures, apart from those in the labor market” (Massey et al. 2010: 67).

Explanations about migration based on economic models perform a dual function: “for capital, it is a source of more abundant and less expensive labor; for the migrant, it is a means of survival and a vehicle for social integration and economic mobility” (Portes & Böröcz, 1989: 46).

Almost parallel to the development of migration theories based on economic analysis at macro and micro levels, a set of theories appeared where the discourse is centered on social processes. Düvell (2006) had summarized the ‘new migration theories’ as follows:

<i>Theorie</i>	<i>Charakteristika</i>	<i>Vertreter</i>
Anthropologie der Migration	Behavioristisch	Kubat und Nowotny, 1981; Massey et al. 1998.
Migrationssystemtheorie	Strukturalistisch, behavioristisch	Mabogunje, 1970; Kritz, Lim und Zlotnik, 1992.
Sozialkapital und Migration	Mikro-ökonomisch, strukturalistisch und behavioristisch	Portes und Sesenbrenner, 1993; Espinosa und Massey, 1997.
Migrationsnetzwerke	Strukturalistisch und behavioristisch	Gurat und Cacet, 1992; Espinosa und Massey, 1997.
Akkumulation von Migrationserfahrungen, Kultur der Migration	Strukturalistisch und behavioristisch	Massey und Zenteno, 1999; Massey et al., 1998.
Transnationale Migration	Deskriptiv-analytisch	Glick-Schiller et al. 1997.
Theorien interner Arbeitsmärkte und Migrationskanäle	Strukturalistisch, behavioristisch	Salt, 1990; Findlay, 1990.
Place Utility Theory	Behavioristisch, deterministisch	Wolpert, 1966; Simmons, 1985; Lu, 1999.
Theorien internationaler Migrationspolitik	Strukturalistisch, behavioristisch	Hollifield, 1992, 2000; Cornelius et al., 1994

(Düvell, 2006: 93)

Each of these theories move in the range of middle / short theorizations. Their starting point is the “analysis of a particular migration system linking specific countries of origin, transit and destination, within the context of the wider social relations of globalisation and social transformation. This could lead to theoretical frameworks incorporating both structure and agency” (Castles, 2010: 381).

In spite of advances concerning the construction and development of international migration theories, specialists on the subject agree that migration itself is a far greater

and complex phenomenon than one might anticipate. Changes in the field occur faster than development of theories. Hence, the danger that the theoretical apparatus used to comprehend migration may lag behind its actual evolution becomes all the greater (Portes & Böröcz, 1989: 39). Though all theories play some role for international migration in the contemporary world, different models predominate at different phases of the migration process, and different explanations carry different weights in different regions depending on the local circumstances of history, politics and geography (Massey et al, 1998: 281). At present, there is no single, coherent theory of international migration, only a fragmented set of theories that have developed largely in isolation from one another, sometimes but not always segmented by disciplinary boundaries (Massey et al, 1993: 63). Given the complexity and situational specificity of migration dynamics, types, trends and issues, no ‘unified theory’ of migration is possible. However, better understanding is always possible (Vertovec, 2010: 4).

### **Transnationalism in a broader context**

After examining the new migration theories I have decided to look at the data through the lenses of theorizations about transnationalism (Basch, Glick Schiller, & Szanton Blanc, 1994; Appadurai, 1996; Portes & DeWind, 2007; Bauböck & Faist, 2010). Two other conceptualizations; social networks (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2007; Vertovec, 2009; Gurak & Caces, 2010) and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988) have been incorporated into the body of transnationalism opening up new avenues in explanations of migrants’ experiences between sending and receiving countries. In this part I will also briefly examine the role of remittances in a transnational context and its impact in developing countries. Finally I will offer some reflections about how transnationalism had influences on the discourse of migrant integration in the host society and which consequences this could bring to the implementation of integration policies.

### **Transnationalism: Origins and development**

Explaining economic and political relations in a globalized world has been a complex task. Technological advances like cheap telephone calls, creation of the World Wide Web which offers almost instant communication through emails and chat and cheap plane tickets, to mention only a few of these developments, had shortened distances and accessibility to the most hidden places in the world. This had accelerated the



exchange of ideas, goods, had spread cultural and social practices and had influenced the movement of people from one place to the other.

Traditionally the social sciences had studied social changes of societies taking as units of analysis different processes within national borders. According to Pries (1997) „Die für die Strukturierung menschlicher Lebenswelten und Alltagsroutinen relevanten und dominanten sozialen Räume waren über einen längeren Zeitraum und bis heute vorwiegend im Bezugsrahmen von Nationalgesellschaften eingewoben“ (Pries, 1997: 29). With the expansion of globalization and movement of people social practices are taken outside national borders. Migrants, who take these practices with them, develop new forms of relation with their country of origin as well as in the receiving country. Hence, when individuals move back and forth between two or more nation-States it is known as transnationalism.

This conceptualization was the result of empirical studies in New York, back in the 90's, among migrants of Granada, St. Vincent, Haiti and the Philippines. The authors of these studies, Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller and Cristina Szanton Blanc (1994), observed how migrants created social spaces of exchange and concluded that transnationalism is “the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders. ... An essential element... is the multiplicity of involvements that transmigrants sustain in both home and host societies. We are still groping for a language to describe the social locations (Basch, Glick Schiller & Szanton Blanc, 1994: 6).

At this regard transmigrants are „Einwanderer, die von den wirtschaftlichen und politischen Institutionen, den Orten und Mustern des alltäglichen Lebens jenes Landes, indem sie Leben, einverleibt werden. Sie sind aber auch anderswo engagiert, ... halten Beziehungen, bilden Institutionen, ... und beeinflussen lokale und nationale Ereignisse in jenen Ländern, aus denen sie einst auswanderten (Glick Schiller et al, 1997: 121 in: Düvell, 2006: 109).

However, as it was stated at the beginning, migration is an ancient phenomenon where moving back and forth between nation-States, maintaining communication with relatives in the country of origin or sending remittances was part of the social practices of migrants for more than 100 years. Migrant networks were maintained in sporadic fashion as best as migrants could manage at that time (Vertovec, 2009: 16).

Hence, “the lives of increasing number of individuals can no longer be understood by looking only at what goes on within national boundaries. Our analytical lens must necessarily broaden and deepen because migrants are often embedded in multi-layered, multi-sited transnational social fields, encompassing those who move and those who stay behind. As a result, basic assumptions about social institutions such as the family, citizenship, and nation-states need to be revisited” (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2007: 182).

Theorizations of transnationalism had begun to examine concepts related to migration like State, citizenship, race, ethnicity, identity, class and gender under different perspectives. Other authors had redefined theoretical and methodological aspects of transnationalism: Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2007; Levitt & Nyberg- Sørensen, 2004; Levitt and Waters, 2002; Smith and Guarnizo, 1998. Duany (2009), for instance, had adapted the concept in what he called an intermediate position, as “the construction of social fields through national borders, which is result of circulation of persons, ideas, money, assets and information. Such definition includes different material and symbolic experiences, which link migrants with their country of origin”<sup>1</sup> (Duany, 2009: 192).

There is no doubt that conceptualizations on transnationalism had greatly influenced studies about migration. In the introduction to his book titled ‘Transnationalism’, Vertovec (2009) drew attention to a study of Gustavo Cano (2005). He examined publications that were keyworded ‘transnational’ or ‘transnationalism’ in the *Social Science Abstracts Database* and saw an increase from a mere handful of articles across the social sciences in the late 1980s to nearly 1,300 such keyworded articles by 2003; almost two-thirds were published between 1998-2003. As any current Internet search will reveal, this expansion of interest is evident in a rapidly increasing number of publications, conferences, and doctoral projects within the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, geography, political sciences, law, economics and history, as well as in interdisciplinary fields such as international relations, development studies, business studies, ethnic and racial studies, gender studies, religious studies, media and cultural studies (Vertovec, 2009: 1).

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<sup>1</sup> prefiero una postura intermedia hacia el transnacionalismo como la construcción de campos sociales a través de fronteras nacionales como resultado de la circulación de personas, ideas, dinero, bienes e información. Dicha definición incluye numerosas prácticas materiales y simbólicas que enlazan a los migrantes con sus países de origen (Duany, 2009: 192).

Transnationalism has provided a new analytic optic which makes visible the increasing intensity and scope of circular flows of persons, goods, information and symbols triggered by international labour migration (Vertovec, 2009: 13-14). Ewa Morawska (2003: 20) acknowledges that “although not a new phenomenon in the history of international migration, contemporary immigrant transnationalism, of course, is not an exact replica of the old, but a different configuration of circumstances” (in: Vertovec, 2009: 13-14). Additionally, perspective on transnationalism further develops the idea that in the present context of international migration, there are concepts that can not only be applied in either the sending or the receiving regions but can also refer to emerging transnational social linkages (Faist, 2010: 171).

Some of the most distinctive contemporary developments on transnationalism include the following facts:

- while migrants continue to retain strong bonds of emotion, loyalty and affiliation with families, traditions, institutions and political organizations in their homelands, advances in the ‘technology of contact’ have powerfully affected the extent, intensity and speed at which they do so. Cheap telephone calls, faxes, email and Internet sites, satellite TV, ubiquitous print media and inexpensive and frequent modes of travel have allowed for continuous and real time communication within global migrants and networks;
- the speed and intensity of communication between home and away has created in many contexts a ‘normative transnationalism’ in which migrants abroad are ever more closely aware of what is happening in the sending context and vice-versa. Research demonstrates how even those who have never themselves moved from the home context are powerfully affected by events, values and practices among their transnationally connected relatives and co-villagers abroad;
- the sheer scale of remittances represents both a quantitative and qualitative shift. Currently global remittances officially exceed \$300 billion per year. Now many countries are wholly reliant on remittances for a significant share of their national economies, including for example the Philippines, Pakistan, Egypt, and practically every country in Central America (Vertovec, 2009: 14-15).

Close related to transnationalism the concept of social field was formulated. Through this concept can be traced movement and connection of people. Levitt and Glick Schiller (2007) had defined social field “as a set of multiple interlocking networks of

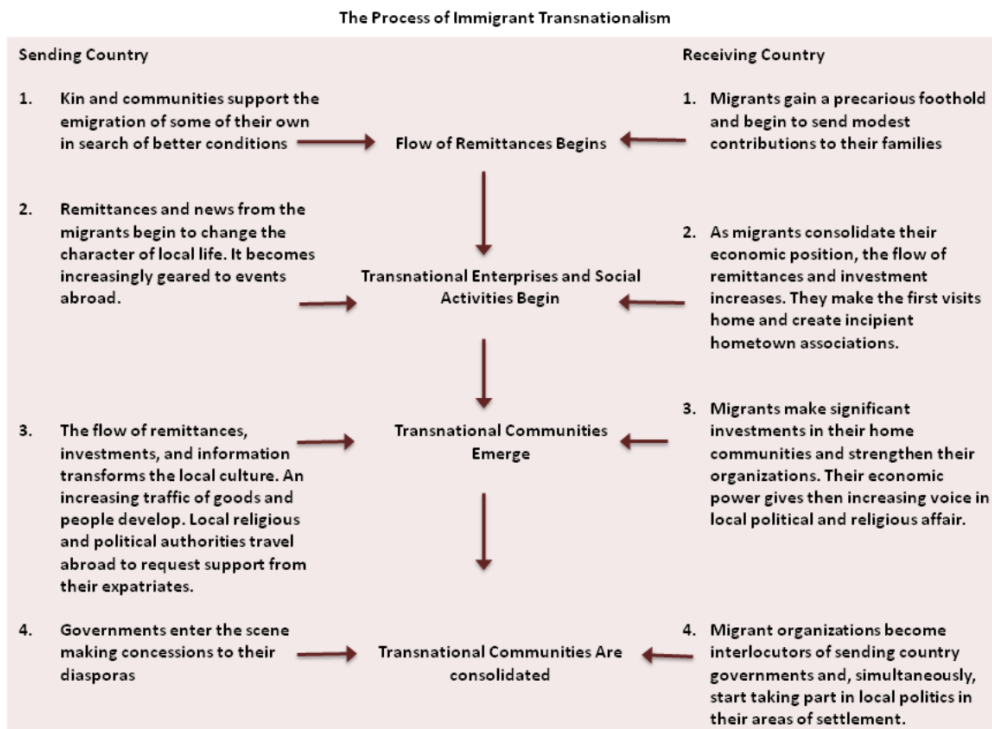
social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed” (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2007: 188).

In the social spaces that transmigrants create there is a difference between ways of being in social fields and ways of belonging. Levitt and Glick Schiller (2007) refer to those ways of being as “the actual social relations and practices that individuals engage in rather than to the identities associated with their actions. Social fields contain institutions, organizations, and experiences, within their various levels, that generate categories of identity that are ascribed to or chosen by individuals or groups. Individuals can be embedded in a social field but not identify with any label or cultural politics associated with that field. They have the potential to act or identify at a particular time because they live within the social field, but not all choose to do so. In contrast, ways of belonging refers to practices that signal or enact an identity which demonstrates a conscious connection to a particular group. These actions are not symbolic but concrete, visible actions that mark belonging such as wearing a Christian cross or Jewish star, flying a flag, or choosing a particular cuisine. Ways of belonging combine action and an awareness of the kind of identity that action signifies. Individuals within transnational social fields combine ways of being and ways of belonging differently in specific contexts. One person might have many social contacts with people in their country of origin but not identify at all as belonging to their homeland. They are engaged in transnational ways of being but not belonging. Similarly, a person may eat certain foods or worship certain saints or deities because that is what their family has always done. By doing so, they are not signaling any conscious identification with a particular ethnicity or with their ancestral homes. Here again, they are not expressing a transnational way of belonging” (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2007:189-190).

These distinctions are useful when identifying under which circumstances a social practice can be identified as an attribute of transmigrants or as a practice acquired in the process of socialization. Thus, misunderstandings are avoided. “If individuals engage in social relations and practices that cross borders as a regular feature of everyday life, then they exhibit a transnational way of being. When people explicitly recognize this and highlight the transnational elements of who they are, then they also are expressing a transnational way of belonging. Clearly, these two experiences do not always go hand in hand” (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2007: 190-191). In spite of application of concepts related to transnationalism and transmigrant practices it is not

assumed that all migrants today engage in sustained social, economic and political engagement across borders. Indeed, modes or types of transnational contact and exchange may be selective, ebb and flow depending on a range of conditions, or develop differently through life cycles or settlement process (Vertovec, 2009: 13).

The following graphic reflects the process of immigrant transnationalism and how sending and receiving societies are linked through the movement of transmigrants.



(Portes & DeWind, 2007: 12)

The transnationalism approach had proved to be fruitful in analyzing the experiences of the Cuban diaspora not only in the U.S. where traditionally Cuban migrant communities had economically prospered (Portes, Clark & Manning, 1985; Wilson & Portes, 1980; Portes & Shafer, 2006). Also in Europe the approach had been useful when explaining the experiences of this group in its relation with the country of origin (Eggert, 2006). Paraphrasing Duany (2009) it can be summarized that the transnational approach provides tools for evaluating the socioeconomic impact of migration in Cuba. First, it allows appraising the sustained social, economic, political and cultural interchanges between the Cuban population and its diasporic communities. Second, it emphasizes that social relations among Cubans are interconnected in multiple territories, markets and States. Third, the transnational

approach allows the location of the Cuban diaspora within regional and world flows of capital, workforce, merchandizes and technology. Fourth, the study of transnational migration in Cuba, as in other countries, fosters the analysis of multiple connections among family networks, remittances and cultural practices. Finally, the transnational approach suggests that remittances deepen socio-economic inequalities between Cuba and developed countries, which promote further migration movements (Duany, 2009: 202).

The experience of being transmigrant in transnational times should be considered more a process than a state. Being rooted simultaneously in two nation-states is not an incipient or immediate condition connected to the experience of migration. Thus, one cannot assert that each experience of migration translates in a transnational experience. Instead it is a complex framework where social networks and social capital create a web of tangled connections difficult but not impossible to trace.

### **Transnationalism and cross-cutting concepts**

In the development of the transnational approach, concepts from the social sciences originally pertaining to different disciplines have been included, adapted and expanded when explaining the experiences of transmigrants in their link between the sending and receiving society. In this part I will focus on how the conceptualizations of social networks and social capital have been used in migration studies and how they have deepened the comprehension of transnational social formations.

### **Social networks**

In the field of migration, a concept that is discussed and maintains attention refers to the connections migrants establish among themselves but also with institutions. The impact of this concept in recent approaches about migration has to do with the fact that nowadays the use of new technologies allows an increasing, intense and almost real-time contact between persons separated sometimes by huge geographic distance. According to Castells (2009) the technologies do not altogether create new social patterns but they certainly reinforce pre-existing ones (In: Vertovec, 2009: 5).

As a method of abstraction and analysis, the social network approach sees each person as a 'node' linked with others to form a network (Vertovec, 2009: 32). When this general concept is applied to migration it could be understood that "migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and

nonmigrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin. They increase the likelihood of international movement because they lower the cost and risks of movement and increase the expected net returns to migration. Network connections constitute a form of social capital that people can draw upon to gain access to foreign employment. Once the number of migrants reaches a critical threshold, the expansion of networks reduces the costs and risks of movement, which causes the probability of migration to rise, which causes additional movement, which further expands the networks, and so on. Over time migratory behavior spreads outward to encompass broader segments of the sending society” (Massey et al, 2010: 79).

Usually the formation of networks occurs spontaneously but within its range of action there is certain organization. Though a migrant network “need not be highly institutionalized but can be a set of relationships that revolve around some organizing principle underlying the networks (reciprocal exchange or other shared common goals)” (Gurak & Caces: 2010: 123).

Migrant networks are important in maintaining migration flow since crossing borders is today more difficult than ever. Understanding how migrant networks begin and develop could be used as predictor of migration flows and its sustainability. The development of social networks may explain the continuation of migration independently from the causes that led to the initial movement. In fact, social networks may often be the foremost predictors of future flows (Arango, 2010: 108).

As it was stated, insertion and connection of migrants in a social network is rewarded in many forms, among them, access to information, reduction of costs when migration occurs or providing accommodation and work in the receiving country. The gain of such participation in a social network perpetuates the migration flow. “Once a number of network connections reaches a certain level, international movements become self-perpetuating because they create the social structure necessary to sustain them. In other words, it is likely that networks of circular migration – a regular circuit in which migrants retain claims and contacts and routinely return home – transform themselves into *chain migration*” (Faist, 2010: 165).

Alejandro Portes and Robert Bach (1985) take a step further when analyzing migrant networks. For them, networks are not only a medium that migrants have to facilitate their migration process. Migration is rather a network, “a process that both depends on, and creates, social networks” (in: Vertovec, 2009: 39).

In spite of the benefits social networks have when facilitating the migration process, Düvell (2006) points to reported negative effects while being included in a network. Individuals rate benefits and disadvantages and when necessary they withdraw from such links. „In Fällen, in denen die Charakteristika von sozialen Netzwerken den sozialen Aufstieg oder die soziale Integration eher behindern, statt ermöglichen, oder in denen die Zugehörigkeit zu Netzwerken gar zu einer Gefährdung des Migrationsprojekts wird, halten sich Migranten mitunter explizit von Netzwerken fern“ (Düvell, 2006: 103).

To sum up: social networks are included in the study of migration flows. They contribute to the understanding of self-perpetuating migration movements, which could, under certain circumstances, become a migration chain. Migrant networks provide information and resources in different stages of the migration process. They reduce migration costs and facilitate the entrance in the receiving country. Nevertheless, when pertaining to a migrant network becomes an impediment to the realization of their expectations and goals, migrants are capable of cutting their ties to the network and they look for other connections that facilitate their objectives.

### **Social capital**

Closely related to the concept of social network is the concept of social capital. Originally this concept was elaborated by Bourdieu (1980, 1986) and Coleman (1988) and applied by Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) to studies on migration. Social capital refers to the “capacity of individuals to command scarce resources by virtue of their membership in networks or broader social structures ... The resources themselves are *not* social capital; the concept refers instead to the individual’s *ability* to mobilize them on demand. That is, social capital is not a property inherent to an individual, but rather it exists in, and is drawn from, that person’s web of relationships. By extension, the concept has been applied to collective groups, communities and even large political structures” (Vertovec, 2009: 36).

Faist (2010) emphasizes which elements are inherent to social capital. They are “patterned social ties that allow individuals to co-operate in networks and collectives, and/or that allow individuals to pursue their goals. Such resources include information on jobs in a potential destination country, knowledge on means of transport, or loans to finance a journey to the country of destination. Social capital also serves to connect individuals to networks and collectives through affiliations.



Social capital thus has a dual thrust: it facilitates co-operation between individual (and group) actors in creating trust and links individuals to social structures. Furthermore, social capital serves to mobilise financial, human, cultural and political capital” (Faist, 2010: 156-157).

Though social capital is generated by individuals and though individuals can access it, it “is not simply an attribute of individual actors. The amount of social capital eventually available to individuals depends on the extent of the network of social ties that can be mobilized and the amount of financial, cultural and political capital that member of collectives or network participants can muster. In short, social capital is created and accumulated in social relations, but can be used by individuals as a resource” (Faist, 2010: 158). Hence, the collectivity and linkage to others is required for the accessibility to any form of social capital.

Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) identified four different types of social capital, which influence expectations for action within a collectivity (Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993: 1323).

- 1- value introjection: Socialization into consensual established beliefs.
- 2- reciprocity exchanges: Norm of reciprocity in face-to-face interaction.
- 3- bounded solidarity: Situational reactive sentiments.
- 4- enforceable trust: Particularistic rewards and sanctions linked to group membership.

(Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993: 1324).

For the authors Portes & Sensenbrenner (1993) this typology provides certain predictions about the accessibility to social capital depending on quality and quantity of contacts within a social network.

In the relation between social capital and migration theories Düvell (2006) found the following connections:

- 1- Menschen werden in migrationserfahrene Strukturen hineinsozialisiert.
- 2- Gefälligkeiten werden in Form der Unterstützung von nachfolgenden Migranten abgegolten
- 3- Es entstehen verlässliche Strukturen, die Migration und den Aufenthalt in einem anderen Land ermöglichen.
- 4- Mangelnde Unterstützung von Migranten im Ausland schlägt auf die zurückgebliebene Familie zurück (Düvell, 2006: 101).

Nonetheless, as it was mentioned, social networks, its generation and access to social capital could result in disadvantages for participants within a social network. „Sozialkapital kann, neben den positiven auch negativen Konsequenzen haben. Beispielweise können die Mitglieder einer ethnischen Gruppe daran gehindert werden, diese zu verlassen, sie bleiben allen Konsequenzen kollektiver Diskriminierung ausgeliefert, obgleich ihre Chancen sozialer Mobilität in Form von individuellen Strategien und außerhalb solcher Netze besser wären. Zudem sind die Ressourcen des Einzelnen nur so umfangreich, wie die Ressourcen des ganzen Netzwerkes (Düvell, 2006: 100).

To sum up: social capital refers to resources, which can be activated by individuals within a social network. How individuals activate these resources depends on the quality and quantity of their contacts. However, social capital is difficult to quantify. When applying this concept to migration it is better explained how migrants, for example, gain access to information, reduce costs in the migration process or find a job in the receiving country.

### **Remittances in transnational context**

Economic improvement is one of the motivations migrants have for leaving their country of origin. Additionally when migrants look for job opportunities in the receiving country they not only improve their situation but send remittances back and thus also improve the economic situation of those left behind. According to Guarnizo (2003) “remittances have become the most visible evidence and measuring stick for the ties connecting migrants with their societies of origin” (Guarnizo, 2003: 666).

Hence, when considering remittances as one of the factors leading to migration it is observed that small groups, and more specifically the family, see migration as the way to diversify their income and possibility of subsistence (Massey et al. 1998, 2010). “In the event that local economic conditions deteriorate and activities there fail to bring in sufficient income, the household can rely on migrant remittances for support” (Massey et al, 2010: 67).

Usually in the receiving country migrants take jobs that are at the bottom of the hierarchies, with low income and without social security. Massey et al (2010) argues that “the disjuncture in living standards between developed and developing societies means that even low wages abroad appear to be generous by the standards of the home community; and even though a migrant may realize that a foreign job is of low

status abroad, he does not view himself as being a part of the receiving society. Rather he sees himself as member of his home community, within foreign labor and hard-currency remittances carry considerable honor and prestige” (Massey et al, 2010: 72). However, among migrants there is variation in how they value the kind of job they do in the receiving society. In my point of view, that will depend on the cultural background and educational level of migrants, as well as the integration level in the host country.

Another aspect previously discussed refers to the way remittances influence the economy and development of sending societies, considering that currently there are countries like the Philippines, Pakistan, Egypt, and practically every country in Central America which depends on remittances for its development (Vertovec, 2009: 15). Among the negative impact of remittances in developing countries Vertovec (2010) found that “remittances tend to: displace local jobs and incomes; induce consumption spending (often on foreign imports); inflate local prices of land, housing, and food; create disparity and envy between recipients and non-recipients; and create a culture of economic dependency” (Vertovec, 2010: 104).

A different perspective is offered by Taylor (1999). He discussed that “an important channel through which remittances stimulate productive investments may, paradoxically, be through migrants-households’ consumption spending” Taylor, 1999: 72). A complementary point of view is offered by Stalker (2000) when he argues: “it can be argued that many forms of consumption, particularly on housing, better food, education, and health care, are a good form of investment that will lead to higher productivity” (Stalker, 2000: 81). In other words, when migrants send remittances back home and the family improves its purchasing power, local economies also improve their productivity. Hence, at a local level the creation of new jobs and the maintenance of others could be observed.

In the case of Cuba, a developing country, the impact of remittances at a micro level was almost instantly registered by researchers inside and outside Cuba (Duany, 2009; Monreal, 1999; Mesa-Lago, 1994). Duany (2009) in particular, when analyzing the impact of remittances in the Cuban family points out that “Cuban remittances are more oriented to the daily subsistence of the Cuban family. On the other hand, they can help in financing other economic activities in Cuba as they do in other countries. A small fraction of remittances is invested in urban micro enterprises, especially those

related with self-employment like renting houses or ‘paladares’; family restaurants” (Duany, 2009: 198).

To sum up: sending remittances back home could be considered a family strategy for subsistence. Hence, the decision about who migrates and who stays would depend on the possibility each member of the family has in providing an extra source of income to the family. Though there is discussion if remittances contribute or not to the development of nations, it remains a fact that at a private level investing remittances in food, education and health care could eventually lead to a higher productivity.

### **Transnationalism and Integration**

In studies about migration, part of the efforts in research has been dedicated to conceptualizing the life of migrants in the receiving country. Hence, how migrants adapt to the new context have been labeled as assimilation, integration, settlement, insertion or incorporation (Vertovec, 2010; Bade & Oltmer, 2005; Castles et al. 2003).

Probably the most influential models about assimilation vs. integration of migrants in the receiving country are those from Shmuel N. Eisenstadt (1954), Milton M. Gordon (1964), Hans-Joachim Hoffmann Nowotny (1970) and Hartmut Esser (1980). Each of these perspectives have elaborated different models, which explain the process by which migrants adapt to the host country. It is worth noting that each of these perspectives consider assimilation vs. integration as a longitudinal process. That means that the integration process of migrants occurs through the basis of more or less consecutive phases. Migrants could be classified as pertaining to one phase and they could remain there or move to the subsequent phase. Esser (1980) for instance, identifies three phases conducting to assimilation.

. Er beginnt mit der „Akkulturation“, dem Erwerb von Eigenschaften, die in der Aufnahmegesellschaft üblich sind. Es kommt zu sozialen Beziehungen, die über die Interaktion der Primärgruppe hinausgehen, wobei es zur Übernahme bzw. Zuweisung eines bestimmten sozialen Status kommt.

. Es folgt die „Integration“ nachdem vielfältige Lernvorgänge die Orientierung in der Aufnahmegesellschaft ermöglicht haben und über die Befriedigung der Grundbedürfnisse noch weitere Ziele in den Blick kommen.

. Am Schluss steht die „Assimilation, die ihrerseits in vier Phasen mit bestimmten Lernschritten unterteilt ist (Oswald, 2007: 110).

Though assimilation vs. integration is a process, other variables could influence the way in which this process takes place. Fong and Ooka (2000) in a study about social consequences of participating in the ethnic economy found that the levels of social integration among immigrants can be affected by sociodemographic factors like; level of education, proficiency of the language, and length of time in the new country. “A higher level of education may facilitate understanding and the ability to obtain more information about the larger society. Proficiency in English can improve the ability of immigrants to communicate with people outside the ethnic community. Finally, immigrants who stay in the country for a longer period of time will develop larger social networks that encourage more intergroup interactions. All these factors are interpreted as obstacles that immigrants need to overcome to achieve a higher level of social integration with the larger society” (Fong & Ooka, 2000: 4).

In Germany the subject of integration of immigrants into the society has drawn the attention of researchers as well as politicians. Though Germany is actually considered a migration country (Meier-Braun, 2002) the politics lag behind regarding measures to facilitate integration of migrants. „Die Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland verfolgt bei den drei Migrantengruppen Asylsuchende, Aussiedler und Arbeitsmigranten) unterschiedliche Zielsetzungen. Wenn man von der restriktiven Asylpolitik absieht, verfolgt sie bei der Gruppe der Aussiedler eindeutig Eingliederungsziele, während sie bei der Gruppe der Arbeitsmigranten zwei ambivalente Ziele verfolgt. Sie versucht, diese einerseits zur Rückkehr in ihre Heimat zu motivieren und andererseits diejenigen, die in Deutschland verbleiben, erträglich in die deutsche Gesellschaft zu integrieren“ (Han, 2005: 334). Thus, integration cannot be considered an individual process but rather a process that is accompanied by state policies, which respond to the interest of a Nation as well as to economic and humanitarian reasons.

According to Markus (2011) in Germany economic, demographic and social factors must be considered when implementing a migration and integration policy. Under the economic factors are considered the higher demand for a high-qualified workforce in order to keep Germany at the best possible economic competitive level. Demographic factors gain in importance as the young population is decreasing. The new generation from today cannot cover the demand for a high-qualified workforce in certain technological and scientific sectors. Additionally social factors are related to migration politics. When new policies target specific sectors regarding migration to

Germany, this could lead to positive effects in the integration process of these migrants into the host society.

Hence, in 2005, in Germany, due to the need to improvise regulations concerning migration a new migration law (Zuwanderungsgesetz) came into force. Markus (2011) emphasizes that: „Politische Intention war es, wie es auch der offizielle Titel bereits vermuten lässt, sowohl eine Steuerung und Begrenzung der Zuwanderung als auch eine Integration der auf Dauer rechtmäßig in Deutschland lebenden Zuwanderer zu erreichen“ (Markus, 2011: 91).

One of the essential aspects, which contribute to integration of immigrants in the receiving society, is the possibility of their integration in the work market. This is currently one subject of interest in the discussion about the integration of the workforce in the market, especially of high-qualified professionals. Researchers indicate that in this field Germany needs new regulations, otherwise the potential and contribution these individuals could bring to the society is lost, with negative consequences for integration and economic productivity (Grigoleit & Wolffram, 2012; Englmann & Müller, 2007).

In the age of transnationalism migrants in Germany move back and forth between countries. Hence, transnationalism and integration are also themes that should be taken into account when discussing integration level of migrants in the German society. Researchers intend to answer the following question: What are the implications of sustained transnational connections for migrants' integration? (Vertovec, 2010: 78). “Belonging, loyalty and sense of attachment are not parts of a zero-sum game based on a single place. That is, the ‘more transnational’ a person is does not automatically mean he or she is ‘less integrated’, and the ‘less integrated’ one is does not necessarily prompt or strength ‘more transnational’ patterns of association” (Vertovec, 2010: 78).

It is then necessary, next to conceptualizations about transnationalism and integration, to accumulate empirical material to continue in the discussion about the subject. Only then new politics can be implemented and they could contribute in the development of more equitable nations, giving space to others without looking at where they come from. In words of Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2010) “Strangely enough, the neo-communitarianism of transnationalism studies also reproduces the standard image of a world divided into nations and thus naturalizes this vision of the world in new forms. Transnationalism semantically refers us to the nontransnational or simply to the

national as the entity that is crossed or superseded. Migrants are no longer uprooted or climbing up to the assimilative ladder to the national middle classes, but they are still the others, foreign and alien to the nationally bounded society. Studies that examine the connections between transnational migrants and actors within the various localities in which they settle and into which they move could carry us beyond the static, reified and essentialized concept of community and into the study of migrants and nonmigrants within social fields of differential power” (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2010: 194).

## **Chapter 2**

# **Four migration waves from Cuba**



## **Chapter 2**

### **Four migration waves from Cuba (1959-1994)**

The image of Cuba is usually drawn by the outside world in two distinct figures; Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, symbols of the Cuban revolution and resistance against the imperialism, which is to say against the United States. But there is also the image of dissidents, political prisoners, people living in exile and emigrants who try to put into practice words like freedom of thinking, movement and speech, or, individuals who are simply trying to live their lives. Representations of both of these images exist today both on and away from the island.

The ideological contradictions concerning the political situation in Cuba have always been present. Looking back on the country's history we see that beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Cubans fought against Spaniards for independence and later against the American desire to manipulate the island politically. Throughout this time emigration played a special role. First in 1895 when José Martí emigrated to the U.S. and then to the Dominican Republic, where he met Máximo Gómez, to prepare a military return to Cuba in an effort to finally wrestle independence from Spain. And again later in 1957 when Fidel Castro, after having planned his revolution in Mexico along with 81 men, disembarked from the yacht "Granma" on the Cuban beach of Las Coloradas. This action sparked the Cuban revolution, which would end victoriously for the rebels in 1959 with Fidel Castro as leader of this movement. In these two instances, the leaders of both political movements left Cuba in order to organize their campaigns and then returned to achieve independence and liberty in the name of a better society. After 1959 we then begin to see new motives behind emigration and are able to identify four specific migratory waves from Cuba. In the following, I will analyze the issue of emigration from its political, economical and sociological perspectives while outlining these four waves of migration.

#### **"Golden Exile" (1959-1962)<sup>1</sup>**

Cuban migration is a heated topic has been a heavily-discussed since the beginning of the Revolution. While Cubans had been migrating throughout history for both economic and political reasons, it is with the triumph of the Cuban Revolution on the

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'Golden Exile' was taken from Olson & Olson (1995).

1<sup>st</sup> of January 1959, that we can first trace a massive exodus of Cubans in the direction of the United States. The first migration wave took place between 1959 and 1962 when nearly 274,000 people left Cuba and chose Florida as their main destination (Aja, 2000). This first migration wave is known as the ‘Golden Exile’ (Olson & Olson, 1995: 53). Cubans who emigrated at that time did so with the idea of returning after a government, similar to the previous one, would be in power again. They were the richest and most powerful segment of society – owners of sugar plantations, heads of commerce, as well as politicians and government security forces– who supported the Batista government until 1958. Their idea was to return to Cuba as soon as the political situation could be reestablished. “They came to the United States full of bitterness about what they had lost in Cuba, and fully committed to overthrowing the Castro regime and regaining their assets” (Olson & Olson, 1995: 53).

The United States also had interest in restoring the government that existed prior to 1959. Cuba represented for them a huge import market as well as a source of raw materials. These commercial interests gave them the impetus for a possible military intervention in Cuba. For over a half-century, since the founding of the Cuban Republic in 1901, the United States saw Cuba as part of its territory (Pérez, 1995). However, things didn’t follow the path that many had expected. Immediately after the Revolution a process of nationalization of private property began and on May 17 1959 the Agrarian Reform<sup>2</sup> was established (Fornés-Bonavía, 2003: 207). In response to the expropriation by the Cuban government of North American owned banks, sugar plantations, telephone and electric companies, hotels and factories, (Mesa-Lago, 1994: 19) the U.S. government declared in October 1960 an embargo on Cuba (Fornés-Bonavía, 2003: 215). Since then the embargo has cost millions to the Cuban economy because of the impossibility to conduct trade with the U.S. and making the import of even basic products very expensive.

In 1961 Fidel Castro declared that Socialism would be the fundamental pillar of the newly established government after the Revolution. Two days later, April 17<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. launched a military counter attack known as the Bay of Pigs invasion (Fornés-Bonavía, 2003: 218). . This invasion was organized by Cubans, who had fled in 1959,

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<sup>2</sup> The First Agrarian Reform Law was enacted on May 17, 1959 and the Second in October of 1963. Among the main measures we can count 1. Limited landholdings to 993 acres. 2. Expropriated Latifunda. 3. Distributed expropriated land to peasants. 4. Nationalized cattle ranches. In: Hugh, Thomas (1998) Cuba or the Pursuit of Freedom. Da Capo Press. New York. pp 1215-1220

with the objective of defeating the existing government. They also had the support of the Kennedy administration. Military troops led by Fidel Castro defeated this attack by the U.S. Army in less than 72 hours.

During the first three years of the Cuban revolutionary government, the issue of emigration was debated, and the Cuban new regime vacillated between two points of view. On the one hand, the government felt that the emigration of discontent groups constituted a “purification” process for the revolution, making it less likely that any opposition group could enjoy enough support to pose a threat to the government. On the other hand, however, “it was clear to even the most ideological officials in the government that the exodus constituted a “brain drain” for Cuba” (Olson & Olson, 1995: 59). While obtaining a visa from U.S. was not as easy as one might think, certain restrictions also arose on the Cuban side. Fidel Castro announced in 1961 that university professors, who had left the country, would be stripped of their rights as citizen and they would not be allowed to return to Cuba (Fornés-Bonavía, 2003: 220). This year it was approved the law 989. This law regulates under which conditions Cubans can leave and return to the country and mandates the confiscation of all personal property when someone applies for an exit permit (Gutiérrez, 2008: 320). It was also contemplated that the Ministry of Govern (Ministerio de Gobernación) would not regulate the migratory process and from that moment on the DIE<sup>3</sup>, which belongs to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MININT) would be responsible of such decision (Brismat, 2009: 154). While changing which sector could control migration (from a civil instance to a military one) the government makes clear how important is this issue for the national security. The law 989 also identifies the act of migration as treason to the country. As punishment to it when people applied for an exit permit all their properties were automatically confiscated. Today this practice is still in force when Cubans migrate to U.S.

The law 989 from 1961<sup>4</sup> was modified in 1976 into law 1312<sup>5</sup>. By then it was contemplated, that when Cubans marry foreigners, they do not loose their properties in Cuba. The Permanent Exit Permit (PSI)<sup>6</sup> was also created. Cubans had to apply for an Entrance Permit if they wanted to visit their relatives in Cuba. Later in 1984 it was

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<sup>3</sup> Dirección de Inmigración y Extranjería (Direction for Immigration and Foreigners).

<sup>4</sup> [http://diasporaydesarrollo.org/index.cfm/files/serve?File\\_id=d9c25cda-4307-4dbe-8425-9ecc9fa2ec34](http://diasporaydesarrollo.org/index.cfm/files/serve?File_id=d9c25cda-4307-4dbe-8425-9ecc9fa2ec34) (14.08.2012)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.acnur.org/biblioteca/pdf/2263.pdf?view=1> (14.08.2012)

<sup>6</sup> Permiso de Salida Indefinido.

introduced the Residence Permit Abroad (PRE)<sup>7</sup>, where Cubans married with foreigners, with previous authorization from the Cuban consulates abroad, can visit the country any time they want (Gutiérrez, 2008: 321). However, Cubans who travel because of work, studies or temporary visits and do not return to Cuba in a term of eleven months their properties are confiscated. Until the present the law 1312 from 1976 is in force.

In the first years of the revolution and until the late 80's people who were preparing to leave the country had to do it in secrecy; otherwise they could risk social punishment like loosing their jobs. In those years some Cubans made a detour through Spain or Mexico before going to the United States. "It is estimated that in the 60's between 125,000 and 200,000 Cubans arrived in Spain, but at least 80,000 of them left for the United States after a time" (Berg, 2008: 18). It was more likely to obtain visas and exit permits for these countries and then make the journey to the U.S. afterwards.

This first migration wave was also characterized by the exodus of children. There were fears about what could bring the new transformations on the island. Hence, parents sent their children alone to the U.S. in what constituted the Peter Pan operation. Parents could apply for a waiver visa, which is granted by the United States for humanitarian reasons. Through the Catholic Church approximately 14,000 minors arrived in Florida as part of the Peter Pan operation<sup>8</sup> (Alfonso, 2005).

This first migration wave affected many families that have since remained separated. Many of the children from the first wave never saw their parents again and many others, whose families came later, were forced to live with foster families or live in orphanages, experiences that still affect them to this day. In more recent periods these same families continue to support family members in Cuba by sending "remesas" (cash remittances) (Duany, 2009: 198). In 1963 flights between the two countries were completely banned and the U.S stopped granting visas to Cubans<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Permiso de Residencia en el Extranjero.

<sup>8</sup> Operation Peter Pan was an operation coordinated by the United States government, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Miami, and Cuban exiles in course of which over 14,000 Cuban children were sent from Cuba to Miami by their parents after rumors were spread that the Cuban government led by Fidel Castro would soon begin taking children against the wishes of their parents to military schools and to Soviet labor camps. The operation took place between 1960 and 1962, and was designed to transport the children of parents who opposed the revolutionary government. With the help of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Miami and Monsignor Bryan O. Walsh, some children were placed with relatives, friends, foster care or group homes in 35 states. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation\\_Peter\\_Pan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Peter_Pan) (15.03.2012).

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.fundacionfaes.org/file\\_upload/publication/pdf/20130423212159cuba-ee-uu-y-el-embargo.pdf](http://www.fundacionfaes.org/file_upload/publication/pdf/20130423212159cuba-ee-uu-y-el-embargo.pdf) (07.09.2011)

According to various studies this first migration wave is characterized by a predominantly white population, which corresponds, as mentioned earlier, to the elite and bourgeois' Cuba. (Olson & Olson, 1995: 61). Due to the political and social changes in Cuba in 1959, this sector, which had all the economic and political power prior to the Revolution, abandoned their properties or they were confiscated, making this first wave paradoxical in nature. Usually was the segment of the population with fewer resources that went in search of better economic perspectives. According to Olson & Olson (1995) Cubans who left the country in those early years of the Golden Exile constituted "the exporting for counter-revolution" (Olson & Olson, 1995: 54). Labeling this first wave as that of political exiles and refugees has defined a whole generation of Cubans as well as their descendants. In "Remembering Cuba" from Andrea O'Reilly (2001), the author goes in search of these 'exiles', who had been leaving the island in different periods. In preparing the interviews she noted that the term "exile" –as opposed to "emigré" – resonates in a variety of ways. "For some it is a politically charged term, in that it implies a very specific legislative status in the eye of the government. For others, the term's conditional nature simultaneously implies the hope of returning to Cuba and a certain resistance to, or refusal to acknowledge, the Castro regime" (O'Reilly, 2001: xxi). But more striking to her was the fact that being "exiled" was an identifying category also used for descendents of Cubans who had migrated during this period. Hence, being "exiled" is a highly emotional term that, at least among Cubans, is a condition passed from one generation to the other. Thus, she had to reconceptualize this term from a physical, spatial, or geographical sense and broaden the category into one, which occupies many alternative places and meanings (O'Reilly, 2011).

As from the Cuban side the categories used for labeling migrants in this period are of 'gusano' and traitor. There is a political connotation in these terms that since then has permeated the image of Cuban immigrants. In the next 50 years the Cuban authorities –following the treatment they give to immigrants– have reinforced this image. Thus each Cuban migrant, independent of their final destination, loose automatically any claim inside national borders. Despite facing rejection when applying for an exit permit or in encounters with authorities during the visits they do in Cuba, each Cuban carry a sense of belonging and national identity better known as 'cubanía', (Ortiz, 1964) which is spread today around the world.

### **Camarioca and “Freedom Flights” (1965-1973)**

With the suspension of direct flights between Cuba and the United States, thousands of Cubans were left without the possibility to be reunified with their relatives in Florida. Between 1962 and 1965 around 30,000 Cubans went illegally to the United States (Arboleya, 1997: 193). They were received there with open arms, which created an unstable social situation in Cuba, because more and more people followed the refugees' example. Another crisis between the two governments emerged, which prompted Fidel Castro to open the Camarioca port in October 1965. A second wave of migration began. Many families came from Florida with boats to pick up their relatives in Cuba. During the 42 days that the Camarioca port was open, 2,979 individuals left the country (Alfonso, 2005).

Further ease of migration was brought about by the U.S. government, under the presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson, who signed the first-ever migration treaty (Memorandum of Understanding) with Cuba in December 1965. This Memorandum authorized an “Aerial Bridge” between Varadero and Miami. These flights known as “Freedom Flights” or “Family Reunification Flights” (Olson & Olson, 1995: 60) brought until 1973 around 260,000 Cubans to Florida (Arboleya, 1997: 193).

Under this agreement Cubans with relatives in U.S. had priority for migration. Both governments had lists with the name of Cubans, who had applied for migration and their respective relatives in U.S. Hence, it was possible in U.S. to estimate, which kind of arrangements was necessary to undertake in order to receive these migrants. “The expected influx of so many new immigrants from Cuba required the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to make preparations for them. Congress passed the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966 to provide for the processing of the immigrants. The legislation stated that any native or citizen of Cuba who was officially processed by the INS only had to maintain residency in the United States for one year to establish his or her right to remain in the United States indefinitely” (Olson & Olson, 1995: 61).

Despite the possibility of the “Freedom Flights” many Cubans had difficulties in leaving the country, even though they had a visa from the U.S. Most affected were people with specific job skills. They had to wait until a replacement could be found for them. Others were fired from their jobs and had to work in the fields until a departure permit was granted by the Cuban government (Olson & Olson, 1995: 61).

Under these repressive conditions of departure many left illegally for the U.S. Up to these days Cubans arrive illegally in the U.S., using self-made rafts, by paying for a speed boat to pick them up in Cuba, or by going through a third country and then crossing over the Mexican border to the U.S., as other Latin Americans do.

The Cuban Adjustment Act is still valid and can be considered a polemic law. From the Cuban side it is harshly criticized because it encourages the illegal departure of citizens who must risk their lives in order to arrive in the U.S. (Aja, 2002). Cuba sees in this law an instrument of oppression from the U.S. side. Human Rights groups criticize the preferential treatment of Cubans over other minority groups such as Haitians, who also arrive in self-made rafts (Gibney & Randall: 283), or the millions of Latin Americans who have no access to a residence permit no matter how long they have been living and working in U.S. territory.

In this second wave motives for leaving also had a political taint. In Cuba second process of nationalization began; by the late 60's small owners had also lost their properties and income, others "had been imprisoned or feared that imprisonment and political persecution were imminent; or simply hated the extent to which the revolution had disrupted the Cuban economy and Cuban social life" (Olson & Olson, 1995: 62). Hence, like the emigrants from the first wave, this group also harbored considerable hostility for Fidel Castro and the revolution.

By 1969 many talented people had left the country and it became evident in a shortage in work force. The Cuban government saw clearly that the country was loosing human capital. Academics, intellectuals, physicians, engineers, among other professionals, were leaving. As a result, the country needed years until it could recover this workforce. As a counter measure, those who wanted to leave, regardless of their destination, had to do it on permanent basis. Hence, Fidel Castro reinforced his vision in 1971 during the congress of Education and Culture making clear that siding with the revolution was the right option, while siding against it would not be tolerated. Therefore, any attempt to leave the country was considered a counterrevolutionary act that had to be condemned. All property of anyone that wanted to leave was confiscated, making it almost impossible that any one who left

would ever return to Cuba. In the same year the Cuban government exercised its own right to refuse new applications for exit visas<sup>10</sup>.

In 1973 the “Freedom Flights” came to an end (Alfonso, 2005). At the end of this program around 615,000 Cubans were in the U.S. (Yanez, 2009). Though migrants from this second wave did it voluntarily and through official channels, following the agreement of 1965, they were still considered ‘political refugees’ and there were no distinctions among persons that arrived legally or illegally to Florida.

Up to the second migration wave the process by which Cubans are authorized to leave the country, especially when heading to the U.S., is labeled as a ‘permanent exit’, meaning that the person has no right to live in Cuba again, losing all their rights as a citizen but, strangely, not their citizenship. Migration has been understood since then as a dichotomy of belonging: staying means being for the government, while leaving means being against it.

This dichotomy had excluded for decades from the political discourse any other individual reason for migration, except the political one. Another contradiction arising from these Cuban migration policies is the fact that it is impossible for Cubans to give up their citizenship. They lose their permanent residence in Cuba, are deprived of any social participation in, and in more recent decades, of any possibility to invest in Cuba. While migrating to the United States today is still considered a definitive decision, individuals migrating to other destinations are given the possibility of applying for a permanent resident permit in Cuba under special circumstances. This topic will be discussed later in the analysis.

This mass exodus and subsequent mass arrival of Cubans in the U.S. compelled the U.S. government to take certain measures in order to provide shelter and social security to the thousands that were arriving. Between 1961 and 1971 the federal government spent more than \$730 million on Cuban immigrant aid programs (Olson & Olson, 1995: 64). Cubans could benefit from job-training programs, English-language acquisition programs, low-cost loans for college tuition, free certification for Cuban optometrists, college professors, teachers, lawyers, physicians, pharmacists, and nurses, medical care, housing subsidies, food stamps, surplus food distribution, cash allotments, and citizenship exemptions for specified jobs. In Florida, Cubans

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<sup>10</sup> Many publications describe difficulties Cubans have for leaving the country. Some examples are the writer Heberto Padilla and his wife the poet Belkis Cuza Malé or the writer Virgilio Piñera, who died without receiving the authorization to leave the country.



made efforts to introduce bilingual education in public schools and multicultural awareness programs. Never before in U.S. history had a refugee group been so well taken care of on its arrival in the country (Olson & Olson, 1995: 65).

To some up, the first and second wave of migration experienced a special feature with reference to their economic situation in the U.S. The economic integration of Cuban refugees in the U.S. economy did not occur on the official job market. It did predominantly happen in the private sector.

Cubans from the golden exile had a difficult time adjusting economically to the U.S. In the beginning Cuban refugees experienced downgrade mobility. Accustomed to being part of the upper- and middle-class in Cuba, they were, at the beginning, confined to lower positions in the host society. Still, “their confinement to those economic levels proved to be temporary, and the reason they became known as the “Golden Exile” was the rapidity with which they improved their economic circumstances” (Olson & Olson, 1995: 65).

Cuban economic success in the United States was a family phenomenon unique among many immigrant groups. The majority of them, around 90%, of all who migrated in this period, already had relatives in United States (Arboleya, 1997: 193), in part because of migration movements previous to the revolution and in part because of migration during the first wave. While the economic prosperity of Cuban immigrants was taken into account, Olson & Olson (1995: 66) noted that women from this group, who worked outside the home, also had a fertility rate lower than other groups in U.S. With fewer children to support, Cuban Americans enjoyed surplus resources, which they could put into their educational development and business endeavors.

Additionally the Cuban immigrants had an unusually large elderly population because it was easier for them to obtain a travel permit, as opposed, for example, to young men of military age. Most of the elderly Cubans lived with their children and grandchildren. Because of that, they were able to contribute to family income in two important ways; by taking care of grandchildren during the day, permitting both parents to work outside the home; and most of the elderly received Social Security or public assistance checks, contributing to the overall income. Finally, Cuban Americans were traditionally more likely than most other immigrant groups to enroll in public education, from pre-school programs to postsecondary learning. As a result

of all of these factors, the Golden Exiles enjoyed a social mobility unknown in other immigrant quarters (Olson & Olson, 1995: 66).

These two migration waves combined constitute the political power of Cubans in Miami, which today has also influence in the U.S. legislature. They are the basis by which the Cuban community in Florida is well known, and they are an exceptional example of a successfully integrated minority in U.S. society.

### **Marief boatlift (1980)**

During the first two decades of the Revolution certain economic measures were taken. However, the Cuban economy was steadily deteriorating, beset with rapid population increase, housing shortages, high unemployment, and severe shortages of consumer goods. The new generation born shortly before the revolution and in the baby boom of the 60's was among the most affected. They had the chance to have better level of education, compared to that of their parents who at the time of the Revolution had not had opportunities to acquire an education. "The number of 15- to 19-year-olds entering the Cuban labor market increased from 800,000 in 1975 to 1,136,000 in 1980, and the economy could not absorb them" (Olson & Olson, 1995: 79). They had no work prospects because Cuba's economy was experiencing a serious recession in 1980. On top of that, American embargo against Cuba made economic transactions difficult. The majority of industries and factories were equipped with North American machinery and it was almost impossible to find spare parts leading to interruptions in the fabrication of consumer goods. The deterioration of the economy caused disillusionment and disappointment even among individuals that up until that moment had supported the revolution.

An additional pressure in Cuban society during the 70's was created by the tense relations between Cuba and the U.S. After the suspension of the "Freedom Flights" in 1973, it was not possible to have any interchange among families. "From 1 July 1973 to 30 September 1979 only 38,000 Cubans arrived in the United States. More than 26,000 of them, except for a few who went to Florida by motorboat or raft, arrived by way of a third country. More often than not, they had to spend some time in Mexico City or Spain before passing through to the United States, while a smaller number did so via Jamaica and Venezuela" (Olson & Olson, 1995: 76).

Hence, Fidel Castro invited a group of Cuban exiles to Havana in 1978 to engage in a dialog where an agreement for family visits was reached (Ojito, 2005: 51). "Cuban-

Americans were allowed to return to Cuba for a one-week visit with their families. Through 1979 and early 1980 about 100,000 people took part in these visits, spending some \$100 million on the island” (Boswell & Rivero, 1988: 1). Returning émigrés usually brought gifts for their relatives in Cuba. As a result of these visits, relatives in Cuba were exposed to another way of life and other consumption standards, which “contrasted sharply with the austere living conditions under the socialist regime in Cuba” (Boswell & Rivero, 1988: 1). Visits reinforced the desire among many Cubans to leave but also created unrealistic expectations about life in the United States for a large number of Cuban workers.

The combination of political and economic factors on the island, problems with the economic position of Cuba in the Caribbean, foreign policies of the United States, and the social and economic needs of the Cuban-American community incited a group of people in April 1980 to violently enter the Peruvian embassy seeking political asylum. Fidel Castro responded immediately declaring that the Cuban borders were open. Cubans in Florida who wanted to pick up his or her relatives in Cuba wouldn’t find opposition. This third wave is known as the Mariel exodus and those who left during this period are known as “Marielito”. From Florida every sort of maritime transportation could disembark in Mariel Port near Havana and transport people to Cayo Hueso in Florida. “Between April and September 1980 around 125,000 Cubans left the country” (Rodríguez, 1996: 7). Counted among those who were waiting to be processed by the authorities, were homosexuals, intellectuals and anyone with a point of view different than that of the revolution<sup>11</sup>. This migration wave was classified – though not exclusively – as a “political exodus”.

On May 1, 1980 in Revolution Square, Fidel Castro gave a speech explaining the antecedents to these events and his decision to open the Mariel port, but most importantly he characterized the population that was trying to flee. He said:

“He who has no revolutionary genes, who has no revolutionary blood, whose mind has not adapted to the idea of the revolution, whose heart has not adapted to the effort and heroism of the revolution, we do not need them in our country” People say: Out of here! ... Mariel port was opened and we strictly stick to our speech: all who want to leave to a country which receives them are free to go; People say: Out of here! The construction of Socialism, the revolutionary movement is a task for free men and women<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> In the autobiographical novel “Before Night Falls” the Cuban writer Reinaldo Arenas (1943-1999) makes a reliable picture of these events. He left Cuba through Mariel port in 1980.

<sup>12</sup> Quien no tenga genes revolucionarios, quien no tenga sangre revolucionaria, quien no tenga una mente que se adapte a la idea de una revolución, quien no tenga un corazón que se adapte al esfuerzo y al heroísmo de una revolución, no lo necesitamos en nuestro país (EXCLAMACIONES DE: “¡Que se vayan!”) se abrió Mariel, y nosotros estamos cumpliendo estrictamente, rigurosamente, nuestra

After this speech the political nature of migration was accentuated. This was another attempt to create a homogenous criterion among the population regarding the Revolution, as well as a way of establishing what kind of individuals would be included into the Cuban society and what kind would be excluded. At the same time repudiation meetings were organized by work centers and the CDR (Comité de Defensa de la Revolución)<sup>13</sup> in front of the houses of people who had applied for a travel permit and visa. They were automatically considered counter revolutionaries and were subjected to violent treatment. Others lost their jobs as soon as it was known that they were preparing to leave the country.

The majority of the Marielito group, 68,9%, was comprised of young men under 35 years old. In its racial composition 66% were white while the rest was distributed among blacks and mixed ethnicities (Rodríguez, 1996: 19). They mostly had no property in Cuba. Only 40% had relatives in the United States (Arboleya, 1997: 195). These characteristics differ from the first two migration waves, in which the majority were whites and some had considerable fortunes in Cuba and relatives in Florida.

All in all this third migration wave from Cuba was not welcomed with open arms by American society in general or even by the Cuban-American community. There were a number of reasons for the suspicion and hostility many of them encountered.

1- there was a widespread impression, inaccurate though it was, that all of the Marielitos were tainted social misfits.

2- the migration caught both Cuba and the United States off-guard. Between April and October 1980, 124,779 Cubans arrived in the United States. They were too many of them to settle in a short period of time.

3- 70% of the Mariel immigrants were male, and a significant proportion of them were single adults. Many of them did not have relatives in U.S. and had no place to go.

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consigna: que todo el que desee marcharse para cualquier otro país donde lo reciban, que se marche (EXCLAMACIONES DE: "¡Que se vayan!"); y que la construcción del Socialismo, la obra revolucionaria, es tarea de hombres y mujeres libres. Speech gave by Comandante Fidel Castro, First secretary of the Communist Party and President of the State Council and Ministers, as commemoration of the 1<sup>st</sup> May in the Revolution Square. Stenographic version. State Council. Havana, Cuba.

<sup>13</sup> Committees for the Defense of the Revolution. The CDR system was formed on September 28, 1960. The slogan of the CDR is, "¡En cada barrio, Revolución!" ("In every neighborhood, Revolution!"). Fidel Castro himself proclaimed it as "a collective system of revolutionary vigilance" to report about "Who lives on every block? What does each do? What relations does each have with tyrants? To what is each dedicated? In what activities is each involved? And, with whom does each meet?" (Speech pronounced on September 28, 1960 in front of the Residential Palace, today is the Revolution Museum).

4- a general economic crisis in the U.S. and the increase in immigration from Asia and Latin America were reflected in an increasing frustration toward the Carter administration.

5- a large number of Marielitos were Afro-Cubans. A large number of Cuban-Americans were prejudiced against them because of their black skin, which led to racial discrimination among Cubans and within the native population (Olson & Olson, 1995: 81-84).

Both governments; Cuban and the U.S., put forth an image of rejection for this group. From the Cuban side social and political organizations, such as the CDR, condemned these individuals not only on the basis of their decision to leave, but also for the fact that some of them had criminal records or were homosexuals, qualities unthinkable in a socialist system concerned with the creation of the “new man”. From the U.S. side, public opinion favored reducing migration (Boswell & Rivero; 1988: 4), the process of stigmatization functioned more at the level of bureaucratic agencies competing for resources and public support based on their role in protecting society from these new immigrants. “Accounts also emphasize the role of race and class in the process, conditions which when added to the politically inspired discrimination, canceled the human capital that the group as a whole brought to the U.S.” (Fernández, 2002: 84-85).

Due to the difficult economic situation in the U.S. and because most of them lacked contacts and a social network in that country, it was difficult for them to find a job. An empirical research on the adaptation experiences of this immigrant wave conducted by Portes, Clark and Manning (1985) shows a more difficult period of early adaptation marked by frequent bouts of enforced unemployment, low-paid work, and dependence on welfare and charity even three years after their arrival. The rate of involuntary unemployment reached 27%, a figure three times greater than that among the Cuban-born population in 1980. Those immigrants with at least one relative in the U.S. at the time of their arrival were more likely to have found paid work. The authors found that the social network factor strongly correlated with occupational status and income in the new society. (Fernández, 2002: 79-80). While the Mariel group’s educational level in Cuba was comparable to that of émigrés of the 1970’s, their backgrounds did not provide an effective gateway into the labor market. Consequently, “the Mariel Cubans have tended to concentrate in the informal labor

market and self-employment, areas that are less well compensated” (Fernández, 2002: 80).

The unexpected difficulties they had to face did not match the expectations some of them had, especially concerning the economic situation. Carvajal (2000) was sure that he could have access to the ‘American Dream’ as soon as he was on North American ground. In his testimony about his reasons for taking a boat in May 1980 he writes: “I left because I wanted to have a better life, I was tired of all that (...). While I was here I was all the time pickax and shoveling, and I said to myself: “It must be different there, it cannot be so terrible as it is said”. If you had to work as you did here, there was not difference. But there you had all you need: clothes, food, women, drinks. I could even have a car” (Carvajal, 2000: 11)<sup>14</sup>. He did indeed buy a car but his economic situation was unstable. He also missed his family and friends. A year after his arrival he had the idea of taking a boat to cross the 90 miles in the direction of Cuba, which he actually did.

Mariel exodus was a mixture of people leaving the country due to political as well as economic reasons. More and more Cuban immigrants resembled immigrants from Asia and Latin America who were also coming to the United States for economic reasons. “The era of special treatment was over, and most Cuban Americans, because of their own misgivings about the nature of Marielito migration, were willing to go along with a change in American immigration policy” (Olson & Olson, 1995: 88).

Despite their reputation and difficulties, the vast majority of Mariel refugees adapted effectively to life in the United States. This rapid adaptation was eased by large-scale financial and social assistance provided by the Cuban-American population that arrived prior to the Mariel wave, despite the conflict between some of the “old” and “new” Cubans (Boswell, Rivero; 1988: 5). A poll conducted in 1990 revealed that Marielitos were virtually indistinguishable from earlier exiles, except in one regard: “They are less politically inclined, shunning political activism and allegiances to any particular group. Like other Cubans, though, the majority of Marielitos want to stay in the United States, even if the alternative were a democratic Cuba; they vote Republican but have sympathies for elements of the Democratic agenda; they support

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<sup>14</sup> “Yo me fui porque quería vivir bien, no quería pasar más trabajo, estaba cansado de todo esto (...). Aquí me pasaba la vida dando pico y pala, carretillando, virando mezcla, un montón de cosas. Y me dije: “Allá tiene que ser distinto; todo no puede ser tan feo como lo pintan”. Si la cuestión era trabajar como se hacía aquí, era lo mismo. Pero allá había de todo: ropa, comida, jebas, tragos. Hasta podía tener un carro” (Carvajal, 2000: 11). (Own translation).

a woman's reproductive choice; they believe that the United States should institute a free national health-care plan" (Ojito, 2005: 276).

Thirty years later, "many Mariel Cubans have successfully adapted to the U.S. and have contributed to the arts, business, society and education. These migrants have overcome the stigma and have disproved the negative stereotypes. Despite this, for many others, the costs of the stigmatization remain very high and adaptation elusive in the face of depression, incarceration and distrust of authority. Levels of unemployment and reported discrimination by others, including other Cuban-Americans, are high" (Fernández, 2002: 87).

The process of stigmatization that this third immigrant wave suffered from both sides – Cuban and the U.S. – is an example of the human costs of a highly politicized migration, which demands that states desist from using innocent people as instruments of conflict. "The Mariel experience and its aftermath should serve as a wake up call concerning the need to depoliticize migrations and to deal with the human and social costs of immigration free from racial, ethnic or ideological stereotypes" (Fernández, 2002: 88).

The Mariel exodus had two consequences for Cuba. The first had to do with efforts to regulate migratory issues between Cuba and the U.S. Thus in 1984 the Reagan administration signed a bilateral migration accord granting up to 20,000 visas to Cubans annually (Hoffmann, 2005: 12). The second consequence was a stabilization of the political and social situation in Cuba. Cuban society was now relatively "clean" of deviant elements and dissidents. Without any real opposition to contend with, the government could now concentrate its efforts on building Socialism on the island. However, the compromise of the Cuban government in this new migration agreement was nullified almost a year later when the Reagan administration approved Radio Martí<sup>15</sup>.

### **Rafter crisis (1994)**

The fourth migration wave or 'crisis de los balseros' was an event in which several factors played a role over the years. Here the relations between Cuba and the U.S. were influenced by the dissolution of the socialist block in Europe and led to drastic

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<sup>15</sup> Radio Martí was established in 1983 by President Ronald Reagan, at the urging of Jorge Mas Canosa, with the mission of fighting the Socialism in Cuba. Today, it broadcasts a 24-hour radio program on short and medium wave. Listening to Radio Martí in Cuba is considered an illegal activity.

economic consequences in Cuba at which point thousands of Cubans began to view migration as a solution to their problems.

Firstly, it is worth mentioning that though Cuba and the U.S. had had a migration agreement since 1984, the U.S government granted only 6,378 visas between 1985 and 1992 (Rodríguez, 1996: 48), a very low number compared to the number of Cuban immigrants that had arrived in the U.S. during the other three waves. An additional mechanism for going to the U.S. was through the 'Exodus' program implemented in 1988. Here Cubans had to go first to a third country like Panamá or Costa Rica and from there they could apply for a visa to the U.S. In 1992 around 8,500 people arrived this way (Rodríguez, 1996: 56). But from all the arrivals, the illegal entries into North American territory counted among the highest, surpassing all legal entries in 1992. Under the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966 these individuals were received as 'heroes' setting a precedent for other illegal attempts to arrive there. A survey conducted in August 1993 among 191 people, who attempted to leave the country illegally and were intercepted by the Cuban coastguard, indicated that 38,2% wanted to emigrate because of economic reasons, 20,9% were in search of personal self-realization, 24,8% reported that it was for political reasons, and the rest specified other reasons. The authors of this study conclude that at that time Cuban migration certainly had multiple motivations (Rodríguez, 1996: 95).

U.S. policy towards Cuba during the 80's, under the Reagan administration, increased the number of restrictions on travel to Cuba and tourist travels were suspended in 1987. "By that time there were more than 40,000 Americans traveling to Cuba annually, and Reagan wanted to cut off that source of hard currency to Castro. Only diplomats, journalists, scholars, and individuals on family business could go to Cuba. The amount of money a Cuban American could send to a Cuban relative could not be more than \$1,200 a year" (Olson & Olson, 1995: 89).

However, at the end of the 80's Socialism would be dealt a mortal blow. Over the decade, while the Cuban government reinforced the construction of Socialism, hardening moral values and pursuing a campaign against deviant elements known as "Proceso de Rectificación de Errores y Tendencias Negativas", the Soviet Union was beginning to implement policies of Glasnost and Perestroika, which gave a different interpretation of Socialism in its political and economic sense. As we know, these processes were marked by two historical events: the fall of the Berlin Wall in October 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.



From one day to the next all subventions from socialist countries to Cuba were cut. Thus according to official data the import capacity decreased from 8,1 million dollars in 1989 to 1,9 million in 1994 (Hoffman, 2009: 104). Cubans, who at that time were living on the island, remember that the country was in a state of paralysis almost like a postwar reconstruction period without enough to accomplish all that society needed. Blackouts, scarcity of food and medical supplies and no public transportation due to the shortage of oil made daily life a question of survival. In 1990 Fidel Castro declared the 'Periodo Especial en Tiempos de Paz' along with cutbacks in all sectors of economy. Among the cutbacks was a reduction of public transportation. People now had to travel long distances by foot or by bicycle. In the economic sector many factories were closed increasing unemployment while in the private sector the consumption of electricity was greatly reduced. Hence, houses were often without electricity between five and twelve hours per day.

By 1993 the entire Cuban population was undernourished. Because 80% of Cuba's imports came from socialist countries, the lack of food was now dangerously high (Niese, 2010: 25) and traditional exports had been concentrated in the sugar and tobacco industry. Other traditional agricultural products like manioc, ñame, boniato and malanga, and fruits like mango, mamey and banana had, by 1990, almost disappeared from the market. In 1986, as part of 'Proceso de Rectificación', Raúl Castro prohibited agrarian markets. Farmers had no incentive to grow any crops. As a consequence, the 'Periodo Especial' was defined by a crippling lack of commerce between Cuba and other countries and a devastated agricultural industry.

In July 1993, in order to ameliorate the economic situation, Fidel Castro announced four new measures: 1) Legalization of dollars. (Up to that moment merely being in the possession of dollars was considered an illegal activity and those caught were sent to jail.) This measure brought Cubans the opportunity to send remittances directly to their relatives in Cuba. 2) Legalization of self-employment. (While the private sector did flourish up until 1996, additional restrictive measures forced many to close their small businesses.) In 2009 only 5% of the population had a self-employment license either as taxi driver, hairdresser or plumber, for example, or they had gained authorization to rent rooms to tourists and Cubans, or to open restaurants and cafeterias. 3) Authorization of internal agrarian commerce and reopening of agrarian markets. 4) Cutbacks in all economic sectors. Here a program of cutbacks was

announced and the prices of water and electricity were increased (Hoffmann, 2009: 112-114)

From that point on, the line between people with dollars, and those without, was evident. Social differences began to appear. This new measure, though necessary due to the difficult economic situation the country was going through, contradicts the principles of an egalitarian society based on equality of conditions and socialist ideas. Purchasing power of certain groups increased depending not on their support of the government but on the relatives they had abroad, the possibilities they had in being self-employed or working in a profitable sector like tourism with access to hard currency (i.e. dollars). Hence, stores dealing in hard currency flourished and it is still possible today to buy all kind of consumer articles and to cover the basic needs of families in this way. However, salaries remained the same and are still paid in national currency. An average salary oscillates today between 10 and 20 dollars per month.

A year after the implementation of these measures the overall discontent was still evident and although the Cuban economy had seen some improvements, that did not stop many people from hijacking boats out of desperation in the summer of 1994 and escaping to the coast of Florida. The media in the U.S. treated them as heroes. This encouraged other Cubans, who for the first time in the history of the Cuban revolution, went out to the streets to protest due to the economic and political hardship. The government response came immediately. Fidel Castro also went to the streets. A few hours after the protest had passed, he – like in the exodus of 1980 – declared that anyone with the intention of going to the U.S. would be not stopped in his or her attempt. Thus, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 1994 a fourth wave of migration from Cuba began.

Between the 5<sup>th</sup> of August and up until the end of that month approximately 36,000 Cubans left the island using their own means (Rodríguez, 1996: 112). In other words, they built self-made rafts and risked their lives in order to cross the Florida Strait. Since then Cubans arriving illegally in U.S. on this kind of unsafe transportation are known as “balseros” (rafters).

Faced with this migration crisis, President Clinton announced on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August that illegal Cuban immigrants would not be accepted as political refugees. They

would be intercepted and sent to military bases located in Guantánamo and Panama<sup>16</sup>. This was the first time that the U.S. government did not accept the ‘balseros’ and was also the first time the Cuban government allowed people to leave on their self-made rafts.

Though these Cuban rafters were not accepted in U.S. territory they continued their exodus in the following days until September when the two governments signed another migration agreement, which was complemented a year later, in 1995 (Rodríguez, 1996: 116). Within the agreement it is stated that the U.S. government will return to Cuba all illegal Cuban immigrants captured on the sea. This agreement had disemboved in what is known as "wet-foot, dry-foot policy." This policy allows Cubans to stay in the United States and seek asylum if they touch U.S. land, but requires their return to Cuba if they are intercepted on water. Those intercepted are treated without privileges as any other illegal immigrant trying to arrive to U.S. nevertheless this policy still encourage the illegal migration since any Cuban, who successfully arrives in this way, is given all privileges gaining a residence permit after a year of arrival.

From the Cuban side, the government is compromised to persuade people in their attempts to migrate illegally to the U.S. Regarding the amount of Cuban immigrants that the U.S. could accept per year, it was agreed that the U.S. government would grant a minimum of 20,000 visas per year (Rodríguez, 1996: 123). Among this quantity are also included people who applied for the Cuban “bombo” lottery. On three occasions (1994, 1996 and 1998) the interest offices of U.S. in Havana announced this lottery. People with intentions of migrating to U.S., that were between 18 and 55 year old, had secondary studies and three years of work experience could apply for it. According to Rodríguez (1996: 134) in the first lottery an estimated of 189 000 people applied for it, while according to Hoffmann (2005: 15) in the last lottery no less than half a million Cubans formally applied for U.S. visa.

Like in the Marielitos exodus, the ‘balseros’ were also trapped in the political conflict between Cuba and U.S. On one side the Cuban government used them as the opportunity to get ride of persons, who had something against the government or were

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<sup>16</sup> For some testimonies about the balseros’ experience and the treatment they received from the U.S. guard coast see *Las Noventa Millas Interminables*. Alberto Domingo González Valdés (1999) and *La inocencia de los balseros*. Eduardo de Acha (1995) Ediciones Universal. Miami. Florida.

dissatisfied with the economic and social situation on the island. They were used as 'safety-valve' (Hoffmann, 2005) responding to the social pressures created in the country. On the other side the U.S. government has not stopped its policy of encouraging illegal migration.

The fourth migration wave had among its consequences that the idea of having a way of live different to what was proposed by the Socialism in Cuba was now more than ever possible. Because it is too risky to cross the 90 miles in a self-made raft, many used their contacts with Cubans who were already abroad or with other foreigners in order to get an invitation letter<sup>17</sup>. Hence the destination of Cubans was more diversified. Many, who had the chance to go as students to Europe or invited by organizations, enterprises and universities did not hesitate in staying abroad. Others are still invited by a tourist, who after a visit in the country starts a relationship with a Cuban. After a brief period getting to know each other the tourist invites the Cuban to go abroad where they can continue in the relationship and sometimes even get married.

According to researches in Cuba, in 2005 the distribution of Cubans around the world was of around 105,800 in Europe, more than 23,700 in South America, more than 21,000 in Central America and more than 5,700 in the Caribbean. In Africa and Asia were reported 2,800 Cubans. At the present there are Cubans in 148 countries. 98% of all Cubans living abroad are concentrated in the following countries; the U.S, Spain, Venezuela, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Germany, Italy, Canada, Colombia, Nicaragua, France, Chile, Argentina, Sweden, Switzerland, Russia, Ecuador, Panama and Brazil (Aja, 2006-2007: 9).

This exodus reinforced in potential emigrants in Cuba expectations regarding well-being and possibility of self-realization in the host society. Due to the diversification of destinies potential migrants transport this imaginary of prosperity into other scenarios. Some face later frustration when expectations do not match their experiences.

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<sup>17</sup> In order to go abroad all Cubans need an invitation letter from a foreign part. The letter could be issued by an institution or a private person. Usually without this letter Cubans cannot apply for a passport.

## Summary

As it was analyzed, each of the four migration waves was triggered by different causes. However, it should be noted that, while economic and social motivations were present in all of them, political causes and a discontent with the political system played an important role.

In the first migration wave, the Golden Exile, which was basically constituted by big landowners, political causes were closely connected to economic interests. Landowners were dissatisfied with Cuba's political turn and were afraid of new limitations to their economic power. They had the expectation that the new system would not last, and went abroad with the intention of returning to Cuba as soon as the previous system was reestablished. Nonetheless, as a response to the political escalation, on May 7, 1959, the agrarian reform came into force and landowners were expropriated. Under this new social situation, people who migrated could only return under specific conditions, and their properties were confiscated. This was regulated under the law 989, which is in force until today.

In the second migration wave, political and economic motivations can also be identified. Between 1965 and 1973 the government established measures against small owners. When their properties were expropriated they joined the migration flow. This group can also be considered as political refugees.

In 1980 the third migration wave was the result of a political incident accompanied by economic and social problems. There was a worsening of economic conditions in the country. As a way out of the situation a group of people violently disrupted the Peruvian embassy and asked for asylum. The Cuban government, in order to maintain its prestige in the international arena, reacted by opening its borders to anyone who wanted to leave. For a short period of time all travel restrictions were suspended. A political exodus began. In his speech of May 1, 1980, in Revolution Square, Fidel Castro made clear that Cubans who did not support socialism in the country were no longer accepted and were therefore free to leave.

A distinct characteristic of this group, compared to the previous migration groups, was its labeling as social scum. They were mainly the unemployed or socially rejected, like criminals and homosexuals. They were in search of the 'American dream' but were not received with open arms. Nonetheless it is shown that 30 years

after the Mariel exodus, this group has integrated into U.S. society. Thus, they have overcome their social stigma.

The fourth migration wave was also politically motivated though the economic and social situation in Cuba still played an important role. An antecedent to this exodus, better known as the 'Rafters Crisis' (Crisis de los Balseros), was the acute economic crisis. Immediately after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Cuba lost all subsidies coming from former socialist countries. To lessen the crisis, new measures were implemented like the decriminalization of dollars. Cubans with relatives abroad could receive remittances in hard currency, which created a much more visible distinction between a social sector with access to hard currency and higher purchasing power, and another sector devoid of it. After a spontaneous protest that erupted in the summer of 1994 in the capital Havana, Fidel Castro, similar to the Mariel exodus, opened the border by eliminating travel restrictions. This successful protest was the people's response to the economic crisis and extreme rationing measures during the 'Periodo Especial'.

A consequence of this fourth exodus was that the U.S. and Cuba reached migratory agreements: the U.S. would deport all Cubans who tried illegally to arrive in the U.S., and Cuba would not penalize them upon their deportation. In spite of these efforts Cubans continue to arrive illegally in the U.S. under what is known as wet-foot, dry-foot policy. Those who are intercepted at sea by American patrols are returned back to Cuba, while those who safely arrive to U.S. shore can apply for the Adjustment Law. Under these circumstances Cuban migration remains an issue for discussion between both countries as well as an issue of social and political concern for Cuba.

Cuban migration in its four waves constitutes part of Cuban history after the Revolution. In various analyses, scholars have tried to capture this complexity from its political (Masud-Piloto, 2005) economic (Mesa-Lago, 1994) sociological (Duany, 2009) and historical (Pérez, 1995, 1999) perspectives but have also tried to examine its consequences (O'Really 2001, 2007). In an accumulative process of experiences others have narrated difficulties they went through, hardships they had to overcome but above all how their lives had been transformed by their migration experiences (Ojito, 2005; Paris, 2002; Carvajal, 2000; Acha, 1995).

A different approach has been presented by Bert Hoffmann (2004, 2005, 2007, 2009). He applies the theoretical postulates from Albert O. Hirschman (1970 in: Hoffmann, 2005) in an attempt to explain how Cuban migration can be interpreted as stabilizer element of the Cuban government. Originally Hirschman's scheme (1970) of exit and

voice was developed to explain under which conditions members of organizations, firms, or consumers would remain loyal to the places they belong, work, or consume, and under which conditions they will change their behaviors. Under 'voice' it could be understood complaining about the situation in order to change it. 'Exit' is then the option people choose to look for the conditions they want in other places. The alternatives of 'voice' and 'exit' when applied to nations would mean raising a voice in order to change actual conditions or emigrating as an individual option. Hirschman (1970) postulates an essentially 'hydraulic relation' in these concepts "the easier available the exit, the less likely is voice" (Hirschman, 1970 In: Hoffmann, 2005: 8).

When this model is applied to the migration phenomenon in Cuba and more specifically to the migration waves, Hoffmann (2005) reaches the conclusion that Cuba is a typical example, where this model fits: "At times, the voice-weakening effect of exit is consciously utilized by the authorities: permitting, favoring, or even ordering the exit of enemies or dissidents has long been one – comparatively civilized – means for autocratic rulers to rid themselves of their critics, a practice revived on large scale by Castro's Cuba" (Hirschman 1986; In: Hoffmann, 2005: 9). Thus, Cuba maintains a status as 'gatekeeper state' (Palafox, 2001) where the state controls ways of access of migration and determines under which modalities it takes place. Exodus from Cuba has, according to Hoffmann (2005), a safety-valve function.

When thousands of people try to leave no matter how, it could be seen – in a superficial analysis – as a weakness of the Cuban socialist system. It is however immediately transformed in a strength on the Cuban side, when the U.S. government is urged to negotiate about migration issues with Cuba. In fact, Cuba is one of the few countries, which has signed migration agreements with the U.S. (Gratius, 2005: 166).

Despite multiple agreements between the two countries, the flow of persons is restricted from both sides. The U.S. ended in 1980 with the policy of 'open arms' during the Mariel's exodus when Cubans were not welcomed as before but it keeps still an ambivalent migration policy towards Cuba. The 'Adjustment Act' and 'wet-foot, dry-foot' policy are still in force. Each of these policies confers preferential status to Cubans, who arrive illegally in U.S.

Based on the Cuban migration case Hoffmann (2005) broaden Hirschman's model of 'voice and exit' in two ways: "To focus less on the numbers, but on the modalities of exit, with the Cuban state politically capitalizing on its gatekeeper role regarding emigration; and to address the transnationalization of voice and exit, which

significantly counters the assumed see-saw mechanism between both and challenges conventional wisdom of exit being a clear-cut dichotomous variable” (Hoffmann, 2005: 7).

The gatekeeper role is mastered by the Cuban government when it still applies restrictions for people that want to leave. One is the mechanism of permanent exit permit when people emigrate to U.S. The other is the category of immigrant applied from Cuba to all persons that did not return to the country in the term of eleven months, and the other one is to delay in five years or more the exit of persons with special professional skills like professionals working in the health system, those who had worked in administrative and leading positions or in the army, and others who are considered dissidents to the government. Nevertheless not all are restrictions from the Cuban side. The government has adjusted some of its migration policies allowing intellectuals and artists to work outside the country as many times as they prove they have a work contract abroad. They are also exempt of 40€ payment per each month they are outside, facilities the rest of Cubans who visit other countries do not have. This measure could be seen as an alternative not to loose professionals while giving them the possibility to ameliorate their economic situation.

The transnationalization of voice and exit in the Cuban case has to do with the dispersion of voices all around the world. Traditionally Florida has been the Cuban enclave where Cubans have a voice that is heard by the U.S. government. Nevertheless, especially since the 90’s, more Cubans look for other destinations spreading their presence all around the world. Cubans in European countries like Spain, France, England, and Germany raise their voices. They all diversify the discourse about Cuba. With the publication of the magazine “Encuentro de la Cultura Cubana” in 1995 in Spain, Cuban intellectuals, who do not live in Cuba, contribute from abroad approaching the Cuban society in a different way<sup>18</sup>.

Regarding the migration waves from Cuba along the way the image of Cuban migrants has changed from exiled to political refugee to immigrant. In this classification is also implicit part of the motivations under which Cubans migrate. Whereas at the beginning of the Revolution Cuban migrants were treated as political exiles, in the last migration waves this image has changed. Today Cubans move to

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<sup>18</sup> For transnationalization of Cuban culture in Spain, migration and identity issues see the documental “Voces de un trayecto” de Alejandra Aguirre Retrieved June 10, 2010 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.produccionesatalaya.com/2010/05/voces-de-un-trayecto-un-documental-de-alejandra-aguirre/>



other destinies due to family reunification or looking for other economic opportunities and life-projects. However, when Cuban migrants go to Cuba to visit their families, right at the airport they sense a differential treatment from the authorities. They are reminded that they do not belong to the nation as such. This is reflected, for example, in the custom controls when Cubans arrive to the airport when they visit the country. While they have to pay an additional tuition fee for luggage independent of what they already paid to the corresponding airlines, foreigners can go through the custom without paying extra fees.

Thus it is important today to demystify the image of Cuban migrants as exclusively political refugees or exiles, image that has been manipulated from the side of the U.S. government as well as from the Cuban side. Migration can be also understood as an individual project reflecting freedom people have to move wherever they like and can. Vallejo (2004) points to this aspect of migration “migration it is not only a way in which persons find a solution to problems like unemployment or income. It is rather a reconfiguration of personal life projects in relation to the nation” (2004:113)<sup>19</sup>.

The impact of the Cuban migration in the Cuban society and outside U.S. is a phenomenon that has received little attention. Besides the impact of remittances Cuba has been transformed in other ways taking into account the influx of foreigners accompanied with the experiences Cuban migrants bring from their new home countries. New networks among persons and information facilitate an interchange, which creates in Cuba expectations about what could be achieved outside the Cuban borders. These transformations are more evident since the existential crisis in the 90’, which is accompanied of political components. People see migration as an alternative to their problems. Basically they do not see perspective in their jobs, professional development or personal projects in the Cuban society from today. It is important to look for alternatives to put an end in breaking ties with the country of origin and improve living conditions for those who are still in Cuba.

At the political level it could be important from the Cuban side to apply more flexible measures concerning migration, and reducing its political connotation. Cuban migrants should be incorporated into the Cuban State beyond its national border rather than being deprived of their civil rights. Cuban regulations concerning

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<sup>19</sup> “la migración no es sólo un modo en que los individuos solucionan sus problemas de desempleo o ingresos sino que representa la reconfiguración de los proyectos de vida personales en relación con la nación” (Vallejo, 2004: 113). Own translation.

migration have proved to be an obstacle in maintaining flexible relations with the Cuban diaspora. Some of the limitations for Cuban migrants include constraints in the time allowed for visiting their country of birth; restrictions and long bureaucratic procedures for those who would like to return to Cuba; and the impossibility for Cuban migrants to make investments in the country of their ancestors. A modification of this policy should take into account the interest of Cubans, no matter where they are, in their country of origin. This change would eventually benefit Cuba, its inhabitants and its diaspora.

## **Chapter 3**

# **Cuban migration in Germany**

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Revolutionary Cuba and the divided Germany**

In this chapter I will discuss briefly the impact of migration policies in the FRG and GDR from 1949 until the reunification. Based on researches and historical analysis I will contrast which treatment each country gave to the arrival of foreigners. In the second part I will look more specifically into the relations both Germanys established with Cuba since the Triumph of the Cuban Revolution until the German reunification. I will emphasize how Cubans from 1961 until the present arrived to the divided Germany.

For the discussion of both phases the official material available was rather scant. I complemented the information conducting informal conversations with Cuban migrants in Germany, especially those who are engaged in a bicultural marriage between a Cuban and a German.

The third part of this chapter deals with the continuous migration of Cubans to the reunified Germany. In these regards, I analyze the context in which this migration occurs taking into account the participation of Germany as a member of the European Union (EU).

These topics are analyzed as follows: In contrast to the GDR, Cuban maintained tense relations with the FRG. Between the two countries there were not exchange programs. Hence, only a limited number of Cubans arrived previous to the reunification. These were mainly Cubans married with Germans or Cubans, who after finishing studies or work contract in the GDR fled into the FRG. Two factors should be considered when looking at the lack of literature concerning the presence of Cubans in the FRG. The first has to do with the limited number of this group, which does not appear in statistical data about foreign population until 1990. The second one is the interest of researchers, which was concentrated in the debate about guest workers and their impact and integration in the German society (Meier-Braun, 2002), as well as political laws to control the entrance and presence of this group inside the German territory (Bade, 1994). In order to illustrate arrival of Cubans in the FRG I had relied on interviews conducted with Cubans, who came to the FRG in 1980. Additionally informal conversations with Cubans had helped me to construct a broader picture concerning the presence of Cubans in West Germany. These testimonies should not in any case be understood as a definitive and accurate description about the way Cubans

arrived there. However, these accounts open new perspectives about the arrival of Cubans in the FRG and the opportunity of deepening in the historical approach of the Cuban migration in Germany.

The next part is about the arrival of Cubans in the GDR from 1961 until the reunification. The GDR was one of the first countries that recognized the new Cuban government and the socialist character of the Cuban Revolution. Hence, Cuba was inserted into the network of East Socialist countries receiving benefits through economic agreements and exporting products like citrus and banana. Cubans benefited directly from these agreements through cooperation programs. Thus, in Cuba it is estimated that more than 30 000 Cubans had the chance to work or study in the GDR (Adolphi, 2007: 167). Though in less number others went as students or as part of exchange programs to Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Poland, and Rumania.

In order to analyze the arrival of Cubans in the GDR I have used different materials such as previous researches conducted in Germany about living conditions of workers and students in the GDR (Gruner-Domić, 1997ab, 2002; Werz, 2009; Weiss & Denis, 2005; Mac Con Uladh, 2005a; Garay, 1995). Testimonies of Cuban workers and students are compiled in the book “Regresé” (Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009). In this book besides finding partial transcription of the interviews, readers have also access to an audio CD with almost the totality of each interview. I analyzed and used them to obtain a broader picture of this group. They were also valuable in bringing some light into areas less explored like experiences of discrimination in the GDR, formation of couple relationship between Cubans and Germans and treatment Cuban and GDR government gave to workers and students after the fall of the Berlin wall.

I also decided to include in this part family issues form Cuban-German families that during the time of the GDR lived in Cuba or the GDR. This topic is almost non-existent in all the research, which until the present have treated the presence of foreigners in the GDR, probably due to lack of interest on this topic in previous years or because the access to these families was restricted or almost silenced from both governments. Though different authors, and persons, who were through this experience agree that marrying a foreigner in the GDR was an event subjected to many difficulties, some managed to do it. While some couples broke-up, others are still together. Today they live in Cuba or in Germany. Some of its descendents have decided to remain permanently in Germany. Thus, for accounts on family issues in this part I had only relied on interviews, testimonies and informal talks, which I

conducted during this research with Germans and Cubans, who were married before 1989. In analyzing this different kind of conversations I could broaden the information about Cuban-German families. Regardless of their residency – in Cuba or in the GDR – they expose difficulties and restrictions in the communication with their respective families. It was also valuable the information given by children of these marriages. In this case interviews and informal conversations were conducted in Germany.

Family ties between Cuba and Germany could be understood as part of the continuation in migration movements between the two countries, which was reinforced at the family level immediately after the reunification when German-Cuban families migrated back to Germany. In the 90's concepts like 'transnational migration' (Pries, 2010; Basch, Glick Schiller & Szanton, 1994) and 'transnational networks' (Cervantes Rodríguez & Portes, 2010; Massey, Arango & Hugo, 2005) had opened new perspectives in migration studies. Since then there is a re-conceptualization of family ties beyond borders, which opens up again new venues in transnational studies. They provide also a human and bidden connection between countries. Traditionally some links among countries are the result of their relations situated in a colonial period. For these countries issues of ethnicity, national identity and even internal affairs are linked to the colonization. However, in absent of these aspects considering the relations of Cuba and Germany from the time of the GDR until today, I could conclude that the center of debate is placed into family issues as well as political aspects of relations between these two nations around the discourse of democracy.

In the last part of this chapter I explore the continuation of migration flow between Cuba and Germany after the reunification. Immediately after the German pacifist revolution in 1989, political and commercial relations between the two countries radically changed. All agreements for students and workers were suspended. Since then the relations are based in one part on bilateral agreements which include political and economic interests of both countries, and on the other part on the Common Position<sup>1</sup> of the European Union towards Cuba. Though migration to Germany

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<sup>1</sup> I will discuss later in this chapter which consequences the Common Position towards Cuba had brought to the island. It is worth to note: "EU relations with Cuba are governed by the Common Position, as approved by the European Council of Ministers in 1996, which is updated every six months following regular evaluations. According to the Common Position "the objective of the European Union in its relations with Cuba is to encourage a process of transition to a pluralist

continues, it is limited to the family reunification, to some interchange programs especially between universities and in exceptional cases to the concession of political asylum. I have based the account of this part in recent research, which explores political, economic, and cultural relations between the two countries after the reunification. This research has placed the debate in the role Germany has played concerning the common position of the European Union towards Cuba (Niese, 2010; Gratius, 2003). The analysis is also based on personal experiences of Cubans, who have migrated to Germany and experiences of Germans, who have lived in Cuba as students or collaborators as part of different exchange programs.

The time of intense collaboration between the two countries is completely gone, turning into a more diplomatic era, where political interests are motivated over economic development and collaboration. In this context migration between Cuba and Germany could be considered a topic where political and economic interests from both sides are revealed. The actors of these processes are migrants and their arrival and integration into the host society reveal also the state of relations between the two countries.

### **Cuban students in the GDR**

For a comprehensive description about the situation of Cuban students in the GDR, different perspectives should be taken into account: their selection based on their political participation; language barrier in the GDR and their difficulties in natural sciences; difficult living conditions regarding accommodation, clothes and diet; conflicts in couples' relationships due to cultural differences; and participation in Cuban student organizations in the GDR. In spite of all difficulties Cuban students saw in the GDR a model of socialist country. In the following I will develop these different aspects.

As stated before, in 1961 the first Cuban students arrived in the GDR. Some even witnessed in the summer of that year the construction of the Berlin Wall (Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 150). They were selected among many other students to represent Cuba in a socialist country. They had proven in previous years their loyalty to the

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democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as sustainable recovery and improvement in the living standards of the Cuban people". Cuba rejects the Common Position as interference in its internal affairs. There is an EU Delegation in Havana that works under the responsibility of the EC Delegation in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic". [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuba\\_%E2%80%93\\_European\\_Union\\_relations#EU.27s\\_common\\_position](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuba_%E2%80%93_European_Union_relations#EU.27s_common_position) (22.03.2011).

Revolution and their sympathy for and collaboration with the clandestine movement or were also active in the transformation process immediately after the Revolution had triumphed. Seeing as they neither know the language nor the German culture, this experience impacted their lives in a profound way that has lasted until today<sup>2</sup>.

Even though the GDR had been receiving foreign students since the 1950s (Mac Con Uladh, 2005a: 175), the arrival of Cubans had to be organized. Their accommodation had to be improvised in a hurry. For instance, Otero Enamorado (In: Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 147) lived with a German family until he finished his studies in East Berlin. Through the contact with this family he was able to learn the language nearly fluently and could better understand and appreciate the new culture.

Because the initial agreements between the two countries, which regulated the presence of Cuban students in the GRD, did not contain all the restrictions they would later adopt it was even possible for some Cuban students to get married, have children and live as a family (Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 71)<sup>3</sup>. This situation changed later when the agreements became more explicit and all details concerning life of students in the GDR was regulated. Experiences among students, not only from Cuba but also from countries like Mozambique, Algeria, and Bulgaria were the basis for the agreements that the GDR later signed with countries like Cuba, Vietnam and China regarding workers (Mac Con Uladh, 2005a: 176).

It is estimated that between 1951 and 1989 almost 78.400 foreign students from 125 countries graduated in the GDR (Mac Con Uladh, 2005a: 175). Cuban students received scholarships from the GDR. The criterion for selection to come to Germany, the courses they took, and time of residency in Germany varied from year to year and depended on which kind of specialists Cuba needed and availability of student places in the GDR. Students, who arrived in 1961, had no knowledge of the German language. They were partly sent to Herder Institute in Leipzig, a school that was created with the objective of not only teaching them the language but also preparing them in the areas of Marxism-Leninism and Natural Science. They should learn the ideological basis of the socialist system and reach a similar level of knowledge as the one given in the GDR. After a minimum of six months of intensive courses they could start attending regular lectures at various universities where they were assigned. They

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<sup>2</sup> All the interviews which appear in "Regresé siendo otra persona" (Vogel, 2009) are a testimony about how the experiences of students and workers in the GDR had influenced the life of these persons.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Sonnia Moro (Vogel, 2009: 65-79).



came to study a wide array of professions; history, music, social sciences, medicine, and different technological careers like engineering, economic, mathematic and physics.

During the 70s agreements between Cuba and the GDR for studying in the GDR were further developed. More students could come as part of the agreements. Offer of studies was also expanded. Students who wanted to study a profession in any country inside the Socialist block had to go through a selection process. They had to have good grades and prove their allegiance to socialism in Cuba. After being selected they had to spend a year in Cuba learning the language and taking extra courses in natural sciences. The experience with students in previous years had shown that the requirements in the universities of the GDR in various subjects were higher than in Cuba (Runge, 1990: 68). After this year of preparation it was assumed that students could upon their arrival in Germany immediately take part in lectures and fulfill homework requirements.

In the fieldwork for this research, I found that agreements concerning students varied frequently from one year to the other depending on certain specializations that were required in Cuba<sup>4</sup>. For instance, in the 80s the Cuban government decided that in addition to focusing on the development of industries, Cuba could also compete with other countries in the field of biotechnology. However, the country had to invest previously in education. Through agreements with the GDR, students who had already begun their studies in Cuba came over to complete those studies in the natural sciences. Today they work in scientific fields like biotechnology, biochemistry, and the development of vaccines. Beginning in 1986 these future Cuban scientists received intensive training in the German language in Germany itself instead of in Cuba, and when they finished their studies they began working in the newly inaugurated Centro de Biotecnología e Ingeniería Genética in Havana. The Ministry of Education in Cuba was responsible for the agreements and the selection of students. Usually the students had to be part of the Communist Youth (UJC), but not exclusively, or they had to prove that their attitude towards the country was in favor of the socialist model. After all, they would represent Cuba abroad.

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<sup>4</sup> In the analysis part I explain in more details how Sergio – one of the interviewee – came to Germany as part of a group, which graduated in natural sciences with the objective of being future scientist in Cuba.

One of the problems students found immediately after their arrival in Germany was that after a year of preparation in Cuba, the agreements between the two countries had changed and the career they were supposed to study toward was not offered anymore. They began studies which were different from what they had expected, or they were sent to other universities different from the one where they thought they would originally go<sup>5</sup>.

However, they did not always accept these conditions. There were students who had specific objectives and they took an active role in reaching their goals, in spite of the difficulties and barriers they confronted. First they had to prove to other professors what they were capable of and only then was it possible for them to change universities. In 'Regresé' (2009) Olavo Alén talks about his experience as an ethnomusicology student in Germany.

I did not want to study the classics of the European music. In Cuba we had enough professors for that subject ... my professor ... wanted that I study the musicology in Germany, in the Humboldt University in Berlin. The ethnomusicology studies were concentrated there ... to my surprise ... because of bureaucratic arrangements from Cuba and Germany I went to the Martin Luther University in Halle. ... When I arrived I complained because I was not supposed to be there ... When I look back I think they wanted to let me know that I did not know a thing about European music and that's what I should learn first and only later the Cuban music. (Interview with Olavo Alén in: Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 51-52)<sup>6</sup>.

After talking with professors in Halle and proving his knowledge about European music, Alén was transferred to Berlin. He finished his studies in 1979 and founded in Cuba the Research Center for the Development of the Cuban Music<sup>7</sup>.

Despite the one-year intensive German language course that Cuban students had received in Cuba, they had difficulties mastering the language. The initial months after their arrival were the most difficult. They had to attend lectures in various subjects and had, in some cases, only a partial comprehension of what was discussed.

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<sup>5</sup> This information was confirmed in the interviews. When Isabel arrived in the GDR in 1972, she thought that the group of students, to which she belonged, could study in Berlin, as it was told to them during a year in the preparation course in Havana. However, immediately after their arrival they were told that that was not possible. While only 2 students could stay in Berlin, the rest was sent to Dresden to study a similar career. This news caused some commotion but they did not have other choice as to do what it was planned for them.

<sup>6</sup> No quería estudiar a los maestros de la música europea. Ya de eso teníamos varios profesores aquí en Cuba ... mi profesor ... quería que yo estudiara la musicología en Alemania, especialmente en la Universidad Humboldt de Berlín, porque allá estaban concentrados los estudios etnomusicológicos ... para mi sorpresa ... por manejos burocráticos tanto cubanos como alemanes me ubicaron en la Universidad Martin Luther de Halle. ... Cuando llegué estaba tratando de protestar por mi errada ubicación. ... Me da la impresión de que la idea era demostrarme que yo no sabía nada de la música europea y por lo tanto primero debía aprender esa música, para después aprender la cubana (Interview with Olavo Alén in: Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 51-52).

<sup>7</sup> Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo de la Música Cubana (CIDMUC).

Some students even had difficulties in the basic subjects of natural sciences such as chemistry, physics and mathematics. The proposed solution was to take extra language courses parallel to their studies or to prolong their studies another year, which students received with no enthusiasm at all<sup>8</sup>.

In order to overcome these difficulties Cuban students helped each other. Who could better master the language could take notes during the conferences and passed the others or explained the content in Spanish. Who had better knowledge, for instance in Mathematics, explained later the lesson. Solidarity among students was for many the possibility they had to go further, pass exams and eventually graduate. Failing in one exam could mean the return of the student to Cuba or his/her transfer to another study<sup>9</sup>.

Regarding their living conditions Cuban students sometimes shared a room with German students. For some it was a rewarding experience. They could discuss their studies with each other and Cubans could also improve their skills in the German language and receive first hand information about the culture and customs of the GDR. (Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 172)<sup>10</sup>. Nevertheless, needs and priorities among Cuban and German students were rather different. While German students could go and visit their families on vacations and change their wardrobe according to the season, Cuban students were limited to a small closet where they had little variety of clothing. They obviously needed more space. Another problem was regarding food habits. Though cooking was not allowed in student rooms, when Cuban students had the chance to share the same room, they could manage a stock of provisions with packages sent from their families in Cuba, making their diet more varied and consisting of Cuban products.

After rooms were distributed among students, it was difficult to make changes, and they were usually not allowed. Nevertheless, after a year of residency and having a better idea of who was in charge of the administration, Cuban students could often manage to negotiate a room with more space and even to share a room just with one person instead of two or three as it was the norm. These dorms had a midnight curfew

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<sup>8</sup> Difficulties with the language were expressed for all interviewed students, at least in the first semester. This information was additionally confirmed by E.H., former Cuban student of Engineer in the GDR between 1965 and 1971 (Telephone conversation, 10.12.2010).

<sup>9</sup> Interview with EH, former student in the GDR (07.04.2011).

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Carlos M. Menéndez (Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 167-178).

and students had to report if they wanted to spend the night somewhere else. That was the typical case when someone had a relationship (Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 61).

Relationships and heartbreak are of course issues passionately discussed among young people. Cuban and German students were not an exception. Often when the relationship was strong enough and the couple decided to remain together, it was difficult to obtain the requisite authorization from both countries for marriage. This particular issue was not contemplated in the agreements between the two countries and the way to deal with it was through heavy restrictions. Nonetheless some couples succeeded and were able to marry. From the Cuban side it was arranged that Cuban students could marry other Cuban students at the end of the second year and foreign students only when they were in the penultimate or last year of their studies<sup>11</sup>. However some students managed to do it much earlier<sup>12</sup>.

In the realm of the couple relationship cultural differences regarding issues like how to start, maintain and, when necessary, end a relationship were discussed among Cuban-German couples. The machismo –a predominant perception of the masculine gender role regarding the relationship in Cuba– dictates that the man has to take the initiative in the relationship and make decisions such as, when to start having sex. It is assumed that they may have more than one relationship at a time, or they may impose how the woman should behave. For Cuban men, especially those who came in the 60s and 70s, it was a shock to discover that German women were more emancipated and they did not follow such patterns. On the contrary, Cuban women found relationships with German men more comfortable – at least in the first phase of the relationship – because they felt less controlled by their partners. However, they had to deal with the group pressure from their male compatriots, who believed that a Cuban man could start a relationship with a German woman, but Cuban women should exclusively date Cuban men. This difference on expected behavior for men and women was changed over the years. By the late 80's it was more frequent that Cuban women could choose with whom they wanted to begin and maintain a couple relationship.

Concerning the organization of Cuban students in Germany it can be said that they were organized in groups of around 40 persons. These groups formed a hierarchical

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<sup>11</sup> This information was extracted from the interview CD with Mercedes Portilla. This part is not transcribed in “Regresé” (Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> In ‘Regresé’ (2009) Lourdes María Serra Otero talks about her experience to marry. She and her partner did it when she was in the second year of her study. For her that was possible because her parents were working in the Cuban embassy in Berlin and that helped her to become permission from the Cuban Justice Minister (Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 181-198).

structure similar to that in Cuba. Aside from the leader of the group another person was in charge of the ideological work. They held regular meetings to discuss their educational development but above all they discussed ideological issues. When the results of their studies fell below expectation, they had to return to Cuba.

Beside poor exam results, another reason for students to return to Cuba was to be in possession of hard currency (FRG marks). With it articles in the Inter-shop could be bought. Inter-shops were stores where articles from west countries were sold. Usually they had a higher quality than products from the GDR and were in high demand. Although students received scholarships from the GDR and they were able to cover their main expenses, they also wanted to save money and buy articles that were difficult to buy in Cuba or were non-existent like electronics, household appliances and certain clothing. One of the alternatives was to deal in the black market or do some extra jobs to earn some money. However, here again Cuban students were faced with restrictions from the Cuban side. It was more difficult for them to work and earn some extra money. They also had limitation in the kind of articles they could buy. While Cuban workers were allowed to buy a motorcycle and all equipments they needed, students were only allowed to take with them a maximum of 20 kgs. In the 80's it was also possible that students –with their savings– could buy and send articles in a container to Cuba<sup>13</sup>.

Apart from studying, it was stipulated in the agreements that students could go on vacation for two months to Cuba every two years. Travel expenses were covered by the Cuban government. The government also decided when they would go and when they would return. It was possible, for instance, that students had to stay in Cuba longer than two months because planes back to Germany were full in September. Students could decline these vacations if they wanted to stay in Germany to travel. Another reason for staying over the vacations was their participation in voluntary works. The money earned was donated for other causes like financing the Vietnam guerrillas during the U.S. invasion (Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 96), to cover in Cuba expenses like the preparation of the World Festival of Youth and Students in 1978 or to help the country in buying raw material or spare pieces important for the functioning of the economy (Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 148).

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with EH, former student in the GDR (08.04.2011).

Compared to Cuba, which had a difficult economic situation in the 70's and where products of all kind were in short supply, Cuban students found in the GDR a prosperous and "the most productive state in the communist bloc" (Fullbrook, 2004: 205). It was expected that Cuba could someday achieve that level. René Caparrós –a Cuban student in the GDR– saw in Germany a good model of a socialist country and one to which Cuba could aspire.

My stay in the GDR was like a visit in the future of my country. When I see in other places what potentially could be the future of my country I try to put in practice in my country those experiences from that potential future, and in doing so I can make life better in the present. (René Caparrós in: Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 126)<sup>14</sup>.

The Cuban government planned that once students returned; they could occupy important positions at different levels. Cuba had implemented some German technology into their system and former students knew how to use it to the benefit of the country. The administrative infrastructure of many enterprises was based on the GDR model. For instance, students of Economics could later apply their knowledge in the Ministry of Finances.

Studying in Germany and receiving a degree could only be achieved when students gave the best of themselves. In spite of their difficult living circumstances (nostalgia, loneliness, missing their families, friends and even food, as well as being partially segregated) they still had the illusion that they could change the world and change Cuba, making it a better country. With that spirit they went back, eager to work and focus their energy on a social project.

However, the working experience in Cuba was for some rather disappointing. After their arrival they had to take positions for which they were over qualified. One of the reasons was that their studies in Germany were highly specialized and Cuba had not yet achieved the same economic and technological level of sophistication to match their qualifications. Others had to convince their managers or others in positions of power to find them a position, which corresponded to their new qualifications. Nevertheless they constituted the new intellectual elite of the country and as such were regarded. Still today some of these former students occupy leading positions in the economic, social, or intellectual sectors in Cuba.

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<sup>14</sup> Mi estancia en la RDA era como una visita al futuro de mi país. Cuando vislumbro en otros lugares lo que en potencia podría ser el futuro de Cuba, por supuesto que intento poner en práctica en mi país ciertas experiencias tomadas de ese futuro en potencia, con el objetivo de hacer la vida más fácil ya en el presente (René Caparrós in: Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 126).

### **Cuban workers in the GDR**

Different from the situation of Cuban students, the experience of Cuban workers in the GDR proved far more difficult in all aspects of their lives. Cuban workers had to work hard in factories in a foreign culture, operating unknown technology. German organization and discipline in the work environment was unfamiliar to them. They were subjected to discrimination and racist attacks much more than the students. But in spite of all these problems Cuban workers remained optimistic and hoped to be able to use their newly acquired skills at home.

With regard to partnership and marriage, both groups experienced the same problems. In both cases a rigid bureaucracy strained relationships. All of this is based on the political background of the GDR.

After the division of Germany in 1949 into FRG and GDR differences between the two social systems were evident. In looking for better working and living conditions nearly three million emigrants headed from the East to the West until the summer of 1961 (Bade & Oltmer in: Haan, 2005: 39) when the GDR decided to build a wall halting the flow of people. East Germany had simply been losing too much of its workforce and professionals at that time. Subsequently the GDR government began negotiations with socialist countries regarding foreign workers. Besides a shortage in the workforce other reason, which lead to such agreements were a low increase of the population. "Der Bevölkerungszuwachs zwischen 1950 und 1970 betrug insgesamt nur rund 140 000 Personen. Für die Auswanderung aus der DDR wird heute für denselben Zeitraum über eine Million Menschen angenommen, wobei der größte Teil der Auswanderer bis zum Bau der Mauer 1961 das Land verließ" (Gruner-Domić 1997b: 5-6).

Hence, the first workers from Poland and the Soviet Union came in 1962. Subsequent agreements were signed in 1967 with Hungary; 1973 with Vietnam; 1974 with Algeria; 1978 with Cuba; 1982 with Mongolia; 1984 with Angola; and 1986 with China and North Korea. With countries like Vietnam, Algeria and Cuba the GDR signed agreements oriented to the qualification of young individuals in professions closely related to the production in factories and industries. Rather than receiving a scholarship as apprentices from the GDR government they received a salary as workers (Gruner-Domić, 1997b).

The GDR saw the possibility of recruiting workforce in Cuba based on its experience with workers from socialist countries or with countries with socialist sympathies like

Algeria (Riedel, 1994). Thus, in 1978 the first 1 206 Cubans arrived in the GDR (Gruner-Domić, 1997a: 6). Further developments of this agreement incremented per year the number of Cubans, who were employed in different industries.

In der DDR wurde von 1980 bis 1984 durchschnittlich circa 6.000 kubanische Arbeiter jährlich beschäftigt. Zwischen 1984 und 1987 verdoppelte sich ihre Zahl. Sie wurden vorwiegend als Produktionsarbeiter in der Reifenproduktion, Chemiefaser-, Textil- und Werkzeugindustrie sowie bei Montageprozessen des Fahrzeugbaus eingesetzt. Sie verrichteten dort wenig qualifizierte, unattraktive und schwere körperliche Arbeiten, daher waren zum Beispiel von 9.400 Kubanern im Jahr 1986 nur 16 Prozent Frauen. Darüber hinaus wurden sie auch im Verkehrswesen sowie in der Frost- und Nahrungsmittelwirtschaft beschäftigt. (Gruner-Domić, 1997a: 7).

The GDR had need of workforce and in Cuba, because of the demographic explosion in the 60's, many young people in working age had not the chance to find a job. There were signs of unemployment among the young population. Besides, since the triumph of the Revolution the Cuban economy had a slowly increase. The few resources the country had were equally distributed among the population but that also meant that there were huge deficits in many sectors. The demand was higher than the supply and many needs could not be covered. Additionally Cuba, the only socialist country in the American hemisphere was isolated from the rest of North and South American countries making the commerce and acquisition of hard currency more difficult.

Moreover internal measures created an invisible wall around the country, which made formal and informal contacts with institutions and organizations outside the Cuban borders almost impossible. As consequence commerce and interchange was limited to the socialist countries, which contrasted with the intense commerce Cuba had before the revolution with the U.S.

Hence, the population, especially among young workers, greeted the agreements with the GDR. They would directly benefit from these agreements. It was their opportunity of working in another place, learn an occupation, make savings and buy articles, which were non-existent in Cuba. The whole family could receive some economic benefit or improve their commodities at home. An extra motivation to go to work to the GDR, which should not be underestimated, was the opportunity young people had to get to know another culture and see another reality beyond Cuban borders.

Part of the agreements for workers between Cuba and the GDR contemplated that besides occupying a workplace workers would additionally receive a preparation in an occupation, which later they could apply in Cuba. So long as the agreements were in



force some individuals hid which qualification they already had. Thus they had still the chance to be hired as workers<sup>15</sup> (Gruner-Domić, 1997a: 10).

The agreements for workers signed since 1978 specified that young workers (men and women between 18 and 35-year-old) from everywhere in the country could apply to be selected in order to work in the GDR. They had to fulfill a formulary, write a CV, obtain a certificate of their healthy condition from a doctor, a letter from the CDR describing their political engagement in their neighborhood, and men had to receive the confirmation that they had finished the military service. Usually it took between three months and two years to conclude the selection process and be sent as worker to the GDR (Runge, 1990: 42). This waiting time depended on which kind of connections individuals had. For some the whole documentation could be ready in only few weeks. People without connections had to wait longer.

In the 80's soldiers coming from their military service from Angola received priority. They were young men, who had been in battle in the Angola war. For them it was more difficult to find a job in Cuba because they went directly to Angola after finishing high school and had no work experience in the country. Moreover some returned with post-traumatic stress disorders after seeing their comrades die in battle<sup>16</sup>. Sending these ex-soldiers to Germany fulfilled in one hand the agreement of workforce and qualification signed between Cuba and Germany. On the other hand was a kind of 'compensation' the country gave in return to their services.

At the beginning of the agreements only single people were accepted. Later young married couples could apply together. However, under any circumstance they were not allowed to have children so long as they worked in the GDR. If women were pregnant they had to return to Cuba.

Though there are not available data about demographic characteristics of Cuban workers in the GDR, when we take into account the conditions above described about the situation in Cuba it could be hypothesized that a larger percent of Cuban workers came from the East provinces, where unemployment was higher and qualification of

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<sup>15</sup> In an interview conducted with David (05.04.2008) for this research he confirmed this information. In order to get a contract as worker in the GDR a cousin, who was receiving the applications for workers, recommended him not to present his certificate as technician.

<sup>16</sup> There is almost no research about experiences of soldiers during and after the Angola war. Some references of it can be found in: Hatzky, Christine (2008) "Os Bons Colonizadores": Cuba's Educational Mission in Angola, 1976-1991 pp. 53-68 In: Safundi. The Journal of South African and American Studies. Vol. 9. Nr. 1. Other experiences are collected in form of songs. Frank Delgado (2007) From CD "A Guitarra Limpia" Song: "Veterano".

workers was lower than in the capital. This contrasts with students, who came mainly from the capital or bigger cities. The later distribution of workers and students in the GDR (workers were located mainly in the proximity of factories outside big cities whereas students were located in the proximity of universities in big cities) combined with characteristics of workers and students above described made that workers, more frequently than students, had experiences of racism and discrimination in their workplace or in confrontation with the German population. I will come back to this issue later.

In order to facilitate the agreements between the two countries, the enterprise Cubatecnica<sup>17</sup> was founded in Cuba. From the GDR side the Ministry for Work was in charge of enlistment, regulations and control of workers (Gruner-Domić, 2002: 280). Besides recruitment of personnel for the various factories they were also responsible for the transfer of money to Cuba. In addition Cubatecnica organized the leadership of Cuban groups in the different factories. Each group leader was responsible for 40 to 50 workers. They had to take care of workers in the factories and when there was a new production plan or when Cuban workers had a complaint, they had to mediate between German administrators and the Cuban group (Cala, 2007).

Work contracts for Cuban workers normally lasted four years but in some cases workers could stay longer depending on the level of specialization they had in their job. They could go on vacations to Cuba once every two years. In all cases plain tickets were organized and paid from the Cuban side. The German side gave workers a residence permit for the duration of their work contract. Residence and work permit could be extended with authorization from Cuba. Workers who were well disciplined in their workplace, had cordial relations with the rest of their colleagues and managers, and had no police record could extend their residency in Germany. In “Kubaner im realen Paradies” Roberto Cala (2007) narrates his memoirs as a translator in the GDR. Although he had a contract for four years, he remained for almost ten. Homesickness, heartbroken, stress related with his work, and long workdays eventually made him take the decision to return to Cuba.

Transfer of workers’ salaries to Cuba was organized by Cubatecnica. While students received scholarships from the German government, Cuban workers earned a salary

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<sup>17</sup> Empresa de Contratación de Asistencia Técnica. This enterprise was founded in the 70’s. Along the years the enterprise has extended its services including today the employment of foreign professionals to work in Cuba in different economic sectors.

comparable to that of the Germans. However, Cubans classified in the last scale of salaries because their work contracts were limited to four or five years. They received 350 German Marks monthly (Gruner-Domić, 2002: 281), which corresponded to forty percent of their salary; the other 60% was transferred to Cuba and deposited in an account. Once in Cuba they received the money in national currency (Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 31). The transferring of money was partially used by Cuba to pay its debt with Germany<sup>18</sup>.

Another responsibility from Cubatecnica was to organize courses for translators who were like mediators or communication facilitators between the Cuban workers and other German institutions both in and out of the factories. For instance, they had to translate during factory meetings, accompany workers to the doctor when they were sick, or to the police station when Cubans had a legal problem. Over the weekends, especially in small cities, Germans and Cubans had quarrels in bars or at parties (Cala, 2007: 33). Translators played a central role in factories due to the fact that usually Cuban workers had less preparation in the German language compared to Cuban students.

Similar to students, Cuban workers had to spend in Cuba several months to learn the language. However, once in Germany, the language became for some a real problem. In such cases the German interpreter assigned to the group helped them to understand what was happening around (Cala, 2007). In the second half of the 80s, new groups arriving to Germany had an instructor. This person knew Spanish and his job was to introduce Cubans to the customs and culture of the country within the first few weeks. They organized excursions to historical places, showed them how to buy a tram ticket, and enriched their vocabulary (Runge, 1990). Josefina Noa, who came as textile worker to the GDR recalls difficulties she and her group had concerning the language.

When we left we did not have all the information we would need. We had little preparation especially in the language. German lessons were short (two months) only the essential to communicate in the factory ... There we received a language course related only to technical terms. We got some lessons two times a week to learn how to communicate with other workers and about technical issues. We were four years there (Josefina Noa, In: Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 134)<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Since beginning of the 60's the GDR began with investments in Cuba in different economic sectors, among them are included cement, textile and chocolate factory (Langer, 2010: 27). Though Cuba in exchange exported products like sugar, citrus and tobacco to the GDR it accumulated a debt. Transfer of money from the GDR to Cuba through salary of Cuban contract workers helped to pay this debt under favorable conditions.

<sup>19</sup> Cuando salimos de Cuba no teníamos toda la información que hubiéramos requerido. Era muy poca la preparación que nos dieron y también muy poca la preparación en cuanto al idioma. Nos dieron clase de alemán muy rápido (dos meses) que sólo nos servía para comunicarnos en la fábrica ... allá

As stated above, it was part of the agreements between the GDR and various socialist countries to offer courses to improve the language as well as a technical qualification. Workers could apply back in their countries experience and knowledge in industries. However, due to the shifts in the factories and the many hours of hard work, learning the language or acquiring a qualification became rather a harder task (Runge, 1990; Cala, 2007). Especially for Cuban workers it was closely controlled assistance to the German courses, discipline in the workplace, meeting daily quotas in the factory, and active participation in political activities organized by the Cuban group. Workers, who did not fulfill these requirements had not right to buy and take back to Cuba articles like a motorcycle.

Cuban workers arrived first to Berlin. They used to be welcomed with a reception and later were transported to the different factories assigned to them. As part of the welcome and in order to facilitate their accommodation during the first weeks, workers received in the factories 300 Marks for buying groceries and articles of daily use. In the first months this amount was deducted from their salaries. Another 300 Marks were for buying winter clothes but that was not deducted (Cala, 2007: 48; Gruner-Domić, 1997a: 13).

The first 4 to 6 weeks after the arrival were considered an adaptation phase in which workers got to know their new environment. In this phase excursions were planned to cities near the factories. If workers were in Berlin they had the opportunity to go to museums and historical places. They had time for shopping, get to know their German colleges and had the obligation to visit an intensive language course.

Once integrated into the production process they had to learn the functioning of the machine they would work with. Usually the last group, which arrived had to begin doing the most difficult tasks. Additionally they had to work using the oldest machinery. For newcomers it was difficult to accomplish quotas. For this reason they were paid less. With the time they could work with better machinery or change to another activity. However, most of the time they were confined to the most difficult works in factories.

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recibimos también una capacitación del idioma muy técnica. Nos dieron algunas horas de clase dos veces en la semana para que tuviéramos una idea de cómo comunicarnos con los trabajadores y para aprender las cosas técnicas. Estuvimos cuatro años así. (Josefina Noa, In: Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 134).

Among the expectations of Cuban workers was to make savings and buy articles to send to Cuba. Because 60% of their salaries was automatically transferred to Cuba (Gruner-Domić, 1997a: 27) especially before the end of their contracts they used to work extra hours in the factory or other places. Each hour used to be paid in an amount between 30 and 50 marks and was exempted of the 60% transfer to Cuba .

Accommodation of Cuban workers was designated near factories. Each room was usually occupied by four workers with 5 m<sup>2</sup> for each. Though conditions of dormitories were regulated by the MfAL/SA-AKK<sup>20</sup>, these varied depending on resources of each factory. “1974 kam es zu einer Revidierung die in allen darauf folgenden Regierungsabkommen zu finden war. Die Zimmerbelegung war nun auf ein Maximum von vier Arbeitern begrenzt, mit fünf Quadratmetern persönlichen Raum. 1980 wurde die Vorschrift, dass die Wohnausstattung den DDR-üblichen Bedingungen gleich kommen möge, ganz gestrichen. Es wurde jetzt gefordert, dass jeder Vertragsarbeiter in „Gemeinschaftsunterkünften angemessenen Wohnraum“ bekommen sollte. Da jeder Betrieb diese Formulierung anders interpretieren konnte, wurde 1982 eine neue Regelung erlassen, der zu Folge die Unterkünfte Massivbauten und nicht Baracken oder Flachbauten sein mussten. Da die neue Regelung eine Zimmerausstattung mit „strenger Sparsamkeit“ und einer klar definierten Vorlage befahl, lässt sich vermuten, dass die zentralen Behörden hier tatsächlich zumindest Grundstandards weitgehend erzielten“ (Mac Con Uladh, 2005b: 53 in: Weiss & Dennis).

In order to have some privacy spaces were separated with a wardrobe. Men and women were separated in different rooms. Couples were not allowed to stay together. However, some managed to do so or shared a room with another couple (Gruner-Domić, 1997a). Cubans used their connections with the leader of the group or through friendship with the German responsible in each dormitory.

In some dormitories there was a kitchen in each room whereas in others workers had to share a kitchen among 40 persons. When that was the case it was not allowed to cook in the rooms. Nevertheless they did it continuously. Workers in general had lunch in work canteens. The food offered contrasted with traditional Cuban food. For example, while in Germany the base of carbohydrate is provided by potatoes, in Cuba this source of nutrient is provided by rice and beans. Hence, in the evenings Cubans

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<sup>20</sup> Ministerium für Arbeit und Löhne/Staatssekretariat für Arbeit und Löhne – Ausländische Arbeitskräfte.

would rather cook for themselves balancing their nourishment with traditional Cuban dishes.

As in the case of students, also in dormitories for workers there was someone responsible for the security. Only Germans could do this job. They were responsible for maintaining organization in buildings but above all to control visits and closing the main door at midnight. However, soon after Cubans arrived to the factories they could persuade Germans in control of the security, to let other Germans to visit them and even to spend the night with them. Cubans, from their side, after previous authorization from the responsible of the group, could spend the night with their German couple outside the factory. It was even possible that when factories were located near big cities like Berlin, the Cuban partner could spend most of the nights with the German partner. At the end of the work contract some Cubans were already living with their German partner, sometimes even as a family though that was possible only for men.

Cuban workers, and students alike, were quite embedded in the machismo culture – a sexist approach in issues surrounding relationships and sexuality. This was reflected in the differentiated treatment among men and women. It was expected that women would be responsible for contraceptives and family planning, while men had more freedom to have a sexual relationship whenever they wanted and did not feel responsible for contraception or family planning. In case of pregnancy, women had to return to Cuba even if they did not want to. The would-be fathers, however, could stay in Germany until the end of their work contract. Mercedes Portilla, a Cuban textile worker relates these differences:

It was not allowed to marry or get pregnant. If you were pregnant, you had to return to Cuba. The same if a Cuban man was responsible for the pregnancy. You could only once do an abortion: the second time you had to return to Cuba (Mercedes Portilla, In: Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 42)<sup>21</sup>.

Beginning and maintaining a couple relationship between a Cuban and a GDR citizen could be transformed in a painful issue. The couple had to struggle with bureaucracy if they wanted to stay together. Usually after receiving permission from both countries for the wedding, and in case the Cuban partner wanted to remain in the GDR after finishing the work contract, he or she had to return to Cuba in order to apply for a

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<sup>21</sup> “no era permitido ni casarse ni embarazarse, si te embarazabas, te regresaban a Cuba. También si un hombre cubano era responsable de un embarazo. Nada más podías hacerte una sola interrupción: a la segunda te regresaban para Cuba” (Mercedes Portilla, In: Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 42).

residence permit in Germany. In interviews conducted for this research, informal conversations, review of researches and articles, which deal with the presence of Cubans in the GDR, I found reports of couples, which due to bureaucratic restrictions had never had the chance to be together again. In most cases the Cuban partner had not received permission to go to Germany or the German partner did not get authorization to go to Cuba<sup>22</sup>.

How far and depth the GDR government until 1989 and the Cuban government still today influence private lives of its citizens is reflected in treatment and regulations to control couple relationships and family reunification. Each state had intended to control behaviors of citizens inside national borders. Individuals feel constraint in their actions and devoid of any possibility to claim their rights. Nevertheless some couples succeeded in their attempts to be together either in Cuba or in Germany. I will come back to living conditions of Cuban-German families in Cuba and Germany in the next section.

Among experiences of workers in the GDR we can find reports and researches about discrimination of foreigners in the GDR (Runge, 1990; Cala, 2007; Weiß & Dennis, 2005). Though some authors have attempted to analyze how Cubans dealt with expressions of discrimination and racism, it seems as if Cubans were intentionally avoiding any discussion on this topic. In the personal testimonies of Cuban workers, which appear in *Regresé* (Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009), Cubans in general try to distance themselves from such experiences. Only when Vogel (2009) directly asks about situations in which they had felt discriminated, do they talk about this subject but sum up their answer by telling a story in which the beginning of a racist experience turns out to be a friendship. Cala (2007) assumes an individual strategy. Confronted by a tense situation in a bar, he addresses his interlocutor letting him know that despite the dark color of his skin, he is a Cuban, who knows about German customs and culture. As result embarrassing situations are transformed into amicable conversation (Cala, 2007: 53).

It could be hypothesized that Cuban workers had, compared to Cuban students, more difficulties in integrating into the GDR society. They had also difficult living

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<sup>22</sup> One concrete example is from Yrene Hampe. After studying Chemistry in the GDR for ten years, being married with a Germany and having three children, she decided to return to Cuba. Her husband did not received permission to go to Cuba and they never saw each other again. <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,4723066,00.html> (20.10.2011). Another example is Alfredo Suzarte in: (Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 93). After returning to Cuba he did not received authorization to go to the GDR and visit his son. After the German reunification his son can visit him in Cuba.

conditions and were more isolated from the rest of the native population. In bars, parties, discos and any other place where alcohol was consumed, there were probabilities that at any point Cubans and German could begin a fight. Cuban workers did not let pass any provocation and before Germans could clarify their intentions, the fight had already broken. Germans, from their side, let go in such occasions their resentment against foreigners. This attitude was more evident in East Germany after the fall of the Berlin wall. An example, which shocked the German society, was the attacks against foreigners and political refugees in 1991 in the cities of Hoyerswerda, Rostock-Lichtenhagen, Hünxe, Solingen and Mölln.

The reluctance of Cubans to talk about discrimination and racism in the GDR probably had to do on the one hand with a distinctive image they tried to achieve among the rest of foreign groups. On the other hand Germans had also a differentiated relationship with Cuba. The island was the only socialist country geographically distant from the former socialist East European countries and the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, some GDR citizens could travel on vacations to the exotic Caribbean island, which reinforced the image of Caribbean socialism. It could be assumed that through this exchange, GDR citizens had a more positive image of Cuba and of Cubans.

When work contracts were over, Cuban workers could send a container with articles they bought in Germany. Buying what they needed back home was one of the motivations they had had in applying for a work contract in the GDR. Though apparently from the German side there were no restrictions about the kind of articles Cubans could buy, the Cuban side imposed conditions for especial articles. For instance, buying a motorcycle was authorized only when the Cuban worker had fulfilled some requirements. Almost at the end of the work contract it was decided in a meeting who had the right to buy a motorcycle. Among the conditions required it was taken into account having a good discipline, assistance and punctuality in the workplace, attaining the required quotas, which were established in the production process and been active in political and cultural activities organized in factories.

In Cuba, in the 80's, it was almost impossible for a worker to have access to any kind of personal transportation. Even bicycles were rather scarce. Motorcycles could not be bought in stores. They were not produced in Cuba. All kind of transportation was mainly imported from socialist countries. When motorcycles, cars or any other transportation arrived in the island, they were distributed to provide service in



factories and enterprises. Being in possession of any kind of transportation for private use was very rare. A motorcycle brought mobility and independency of public transportation, features which are still today appreciated due to the bad functioning of transportation in the country. A Cuban worker expressed which was her motivation for buying a motorcycle:

„mein Mann und ich kaufen zwei Motorräder, eines davon können wir dann zu Hause gegen ein Häuschen tauschen. Und falls wir uns einmal trennen, habe ich das Haus und er sein Motorrad“ (Runge, 1990: 47)<sup>23</sup>.

In those years the value of a motorcycle was equivalent to the value of one-room apartment. For young workers this was appreciated. They could potentially live independent from their relatives. It is worth to note that besides transportation Cuba has deficit in building new apartments and houses. It is not exceptional to find three-generation household living under the same roof, which create conflicts, make family life difficult and it is one of the causes of divorce in Cuba (Álvarez, Díaz, Rodríguez & González, 1996; Álvarez, 1997).

Until here it could be summarized that in spite of all the difficulties Cuban workers had to face in Germany such as: adapting to a different climate, learning a new language, being away from relatives and friends, performing hard work in factories, confronting racist and discriminatory attitudes from German workers and other citizens; they went back to Cuba full of hope about what they could accomplish in their homeland. It was also important for them to go back with electronics, household appliances, furniture, and in some cases even a motorcycle, which definitively made their homes more comfortable and improved the quality of life for the whole family. They also experienced a different kind of discipline, structure, organization and planning in the workplace, not to mention punctuality even in their free time, but above all they were enriched by the experience of being part of a different culture. They incorporated this newly acquired knowledge into their daily life. For some individuals these changes and experiences affected them so deeply that they have become part of their personality traits.

Once in Cuba and besides the difficulties they could face in finding a new workplace, they experienced a ‘status gain’ compared to workers who had not had the experience of traveling abroad and working. Going abroad was at that time for almost all Cuban citizens out of their reach. In their return they showed to family, friends and society in

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<sup>23</sup> The original language of this quotation (Spanish) does not appear in the book ((Runge, 1990: 47).

general what could be accomplished while working abroad. They improved living standards for themselves and their families.

In the reviewed literature about foreign students and workers in the GDR (Runge, 1990; Elsner & Elsner, 1992, Gruner-Domić 1997a, b) seems as if these two groups were considered passive victims of the system. As if they were to accept restrictions imposed upon them. I agree with Mac Con Uladh (2005b) when he writes:

Obwohl es immer wieder Bevormundungsversuche durch den SED-Staat und das Entsendeland gab, konnten Vertragsarbeiter immer wieder auch Einfluss auf ihren Alltag nehmen. Es ist nicht von der Hand zu weisen, dass Ausländer nackten und versteckten Rassismen in der DDR ausgesetzt waren, ihr subjektiver Alltag war jedoch nicht nur durch diese Tatsache geprägt. Als „Subjekte sozialen Handelns“ waren Vertragsarbeiter, genau wie auch die DDR-Bevölkerung, zumindest teilweise in der Lage, die Bedingungen und Grenzen der DDR-Gesellschaft zu erkennen und in ihnen eigenständig zu handeln (Mac Con Uladh, 2005b: 51-52).

In the interviews I have conducted, Cubans that were in the GDR as students or workers appreciate their skills to mediate and negotiate their status. After a period learning rules and restrictions imposed by the two governments, they were able to change their situation. For example, students and workers could manage to spend the night or live together with their German partners as long as they were in the GDR. Another area they handled was the possibility of sharing an apartment and/or room with less persons as possible, and for Cuban couples they managed to stay together though men and women were separated in different apartments.

Nonetheless, in the GDR, for many workers and students these experiences also had a dark side. On this other side there are broken hearts, lost love, couples and families torn apart and children, who to this day still do not know that they have a Cuban father. There are also many Cuban men, who do not know that they have children in Germany. The policies and agreements between Cuba and the GDR, which aimed to have control of individuals, didn't take into account that they couldn't control decisions about love and family. The day should come in which both governments unify efforts and aim to heal these wounds.

### **Cuban-German families in Cuba and the GDR**

This chapter will discuss the difficulties of intercultural marriages. Workers were more affected by bureaucratic hurdles than students.

Studying family ties among nations has constituted a subject of attention since the development of transnational migration theory (Pries, 2001, 2010; Vertovec, 2009;

Basch, Glick Schiller & Szanton Blanc, 1994). Under this new light few studies have pointed to the formation and maintenance of transnational family ties in the Cuban context. Usually these studies are more related to the money transfer from U.S to Cuba and how Cuban families make use of this resource to face the economic crisis (Duany, 2009). In Germany this subject has been less explored among Cuban migrants who came to Germany after the reunification in 1991 (Eggert, 2006).

When exploring the extended literature about transnationalism and family ties (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002; Beck-Gernsheim, 2009; Pries, 2001) one might ask if the characteristics found in these families could be applied to the development of such ties among Cuban-German families across generations. In order to answer this question I decided to include this section in which it will be explored origins of Cuban-German families in Cuba and Germany and how migration policies from both governments have played a major role in regulations applied to these families.

Though in the research about foreign students and workers in the GDR the subjects of couple relationship and marriage appear as a complicated decision to take and carry on for the couple (Runge, 1990; Krause-Fuchs, 2008) few has been done to explore this subject. In this part I will clarify which difficulties Cuban students and workers had to face when they married a citizen of the GDR. The main source of information about this topic constitutes interviews, and informal and telephone conversations with Cubans and Germans, who at the time of the GDR married, as well as interviews with descendents of these couples. The totality of interviews and conversations were conducted in Germany.

Because the subject of foreigners in the GDR was a matter of state, and because official statistics were kept in secret until 1989 (Berger, 2005: 70) it is difficult to trace how many Germans married Cubans and went to Cuba, and how many Cubans remained in the GDR married with GDR citizens. In spite of it in 1989 there were reported 414 marriages between Cubans and Germans (Mac Con Uladh, 2005b: 65). In the totality of interviews I conducted with former Cuban workers and students in the GDR they knew of at least another Cuban, who had a relationship with a German, in case they did not have it themselves. For some young Cuban men and women, the experience in the GDR meant the beginning of their sexual relationships<sup>24</sup>, for others

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<sup>24</sup> In the interview with Mercedes Portilla she said: "I was the youngest from my group. I came to Germany when I was 18. In the group almost all were over 30. They were all women and when I left Cuba I was still maiden. That was a big sensation ... because I was maiden everyone took care of me

the confrontation with new codes regarding courtship and gender perspective in the couple relationship<sup>25</sup>. In spite of language barriers and cultural differences when approaching the relationship, love flourished among these couples.

Due to the living conditions of Cuban students and workers in the GDR and regulations from side of both countries concerning organization and discipline in universities and factories, it could be established differences in how both groups managed the subject of couple relationship.

The main difference corresponds to the frequency and variety of contacts among Cubans and Germans. Hence, in general for workers the contact with Germans was limited to the work place. Factories were usually placed outside big cities. Workers could visit cultural centers in cities like Leipzig, Dresden, and Berlin, only when excursions were organized from the responsible of each group, sometimes in collaboration with the direction of each factory (Cala, 2007: 104, 139). Most of the time daily life of workers was confined to the limits of the factories. There they had a room to sleep, a small supermarket, where they bought what they needed over the week, and if they were sick a doctor and a nurse were also there. Additionally it was established that Cubans could not visit Germans to the places where they lived, which limited the frequency of private contacts.

Hence, Cuban workers were limited in the contact they could establish with Germans outside their workplace. This also limited for Cubans the practice of the German language, which proved to be problematic especially if relationships were established during the first year when Cuban workers arrived in Germany. Though workers had a language preparation in Germany during the first two to three months after their arrival, this knowledge of the language was limited to the essential vocabulary related to their workplace. In these cases the mimic and the good will to understand the other were the key at the beginning of these relationships. It could be assumed that workers, who established a relationship with a German, were able to improve their level of the German language.

It seems that depending on the moment of arrival for workers or the place where they

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(Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 39) when I came on vacation my father did not let me go out. I said to him that I was not maiden any more” (CD: 37:20). (Own translation).

<sup>25</sup> In the interview with Olavo Alén he talks about his first experience in the GDR with a German girl when she invites him to go to a discotheque in Alexanderplatz: “for a Cuba man it is difficult when women take the initiative. I had to wait that she takes me to a place and I hoped that that was what I expected. I could do nothing. German women are determined. That was my first cultural shock (Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 60).

went to work in the GDR there were differences concerning regulations for marriage. Thus, in the interview with Mercedes Portilla, (Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 37-46) who worked in a textile factory from 1986 to 1989, she makes clear that workers were not allowed to marry. However, in an interview conducted with Sr. Ludwig in 1989, who was responsible for Cuban workers since 1979 in the Elektro-Apparate-Werke Berlin-Treptow, he said:

Die Kubaner können heiraten, das Problem ist dann das Hierbleiben. Kubaner müssen nach 4 Jahren zurück. Da müssen sie einen Antrag stellen, dass sie wieder aus Kuba ausreisen können und in die DDR kommen dürfen. Es sind auch schon viele kubanische Jungs mit DDR-Bürgerinnen verheiratet, die so auf diesem Wege wieder in die DDR einreisen. Ich habe aus den alten Gruppen ungefähr 20 Kubaner, die wieder im Betrieb angefangen haben. Die haben hier Frauen und Familie (Runge, 1990: 71).

In order to marry the Cuban partner had to receive authorization from his or her workplace. The German partner needed also an authorization from authorities (Krause Fuchs, 2008: 53-55). Family members also played a role. Especially in small towns if the family did not agree with the relationship the German partner opted for ending it (Cala, 2007: 25). German parents were afraid they could not see their sons and daughters again or they were insecure about the living conditions they would have to face abroad.

Though Cuba was recognized from the GDR as socialist country, and though the island was since 1972 part of the Comecon (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance), its position in Latin America surrounded of capitalist countries made that traveling to Cuba was subjected to the most rigorous control. Additionally there were not direct flights between the GDR and Cuba, what made that planes had to make intermediate landing in capitalist countries like Ireland and Canada. These landings were used for GDR and Cuban citizens to flee to capitalist countries. For this reason going to Cuba in official mission, as well as marrying a Cuban citizen and going to Cuba was subjected to rigorous control from the German authorities.

It is also possible that in the acceptance of relationships –from the side of German families– racism and discrimination could have been a reason for not letting a family member to continue a relationship. Though there are no statistics available about race distribution among students and workers, different narrations of Cubans in the GDR indicate that among workers there were more persons with dark skin compared to students. Thus, relationships ended in spite of love they felt.

Despite the many difficulties Cuban-German couples had to go through if they planned to marry, after the wedding the Cuban partner had to return to Cuba and from

there begin the application for a residence permit in Germany. Those who returned to Germany before 1989 –especially workers– could usually continue working in the same factory they did before. However, those who returned in 1989 or immediately after the reunification could not continue working in the same place, usually because factories were closed. They had to look for a new work place, which meant in most of the cases moving to another city with the partner and/or family where they could have more opportunities of finding a job.

Students had from their side a different approach to the German society. Studies were conducted in universities located in the main cities of the GDR like Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden and Weimar. They were much more in contact not only with German and foreign students but also with the population of the city where they studied.

Another factor that facilitated the contact with potential German partners was their level of the German language. Before arriving in the GDR they had to spend a year learning the language. Later at the university they were permanently exposed to the language and culture since lectures, seminars and laboratory experiments were conducted only in German. Depending on the study they should do and contracts established between both countries, some students arrived without any knowledge of the language (Interview Sergio 19.07.2009, former student in the GDR). Before beginning the studies many of them were concentrated in Herder institute, a language school located in Leipzig (Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009: 93, 123). After an intensive preparation during six months they were sent to the universities where they would continue their studies. Being in contact with students of different nationalities using German as a common language helped them to improve their skills. Furthermore, those who later shared their rooms with German students learned and enriched faster their vocabulary.

However, contact with other German students and Germans in general did not mean that Cuban students were not subjected to control from German and Cuban authorities. Like Cuban workers they had to return to dorms before midnight, and they had to report if another person was staying with them in their rooms. They had to follow the same procedure if they spent the night somewhere else. All this control placed some difficulties in arranging meetings with German partners.

Cuban students faced regulations concerning when they could marry. If the partner was Cuban they could do it after the second year of studies but if the partner was German or had another citizenship they could only ask for authorization after the

fourth year, which in case of some studies was the last year<sup>26</sup> (Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009). The authorization for the marriage was a procedure in which the whole group of Cuban students had to participate. In this meeting each student had to give his or her opinion about the person who wanted to marry. The behavior of this person was analyzed, if for instance they participated in political activities organized by other students and which were the academic results. If the group agreed, the person could marry (Telephone Interview with E.H. 10.12.2010).

As for the German counterpart they had to go through a similar process. If the partner was also a student, the rest of the group decided if his/her behavior was according to the socialist principles. Thus, they wanted to avoid that marriage could be used as a way out to flee the GDR. Party member conducted an investigation asking in the neighborhood about political position of this person. It is also possible that the MfS (Ministerium für Staatsicherheit<sup>27</sup> or Stasi) would look if the person had already records pointing to political activities. There are reports that as soon as the person was emotionally involved with a foreigner the MfS conducted an investigation. Family members were also implicated in this process. They gave not only their opinion; they could also make some pressure trying to persuade the person about the marriage (Telephone Interview with M.E. 13.12.2010).

If the couple decided to live in Cuba they made sure before and after the wedding to buy all articles they would need. The German partner was already “warned” that due to the U.S. embargo it was extremely difficult to buy household objects. Relatives and friends helped them to get what they needed. All these articles, from electrodomestics to all kind of furniture could be sent in a container. A well-equipped apartment in Cuba gave the impression of wealth and prosperity. Still today some households preserve in Cuba design and flavor of the GDR.

Life in Cuba of GDR citizens married with former Cuban students and workers in the GDR was all but simple. They had to struggle against the many difficulties placed upon them from both governments. For families in the GDR they had to come to terms with the idea that a family meeting could be possible only once every three years or more. Beside difficulties above described when traveling between the two countries, other barriers were added. German relatives, for instance, could travel to

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<sup>26</sup> This information was extracted from the audio CD which is attached to the book “Regresé” (Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009).

<sup>27</sup> Ministry for Internal Security.

Cuba only after they were retired. This privilege was mainly reserved to GDR citizens with relatives in Cuba (Telephone Interview with M.E. 13.12.2010 & Krause-Fuchs, 2008). Traveling to Cuba from the GDR was possible by plain or in a passenger ship. Family visits from Cuba to the GDR were only possible for GDR citizens and their children once every two years. At the beginning of the 70's the Cuban government established new regulation allowing Germans to travel only once every three years. Permission to travel to the GDR was granted by the International Financial Bank in Havana. The bank made a transaction from Cuban pesos into hard currency maintaining the change one to one. Each plain ticket cost around 700 pesos. With the check in the hand individuals could make a reservation in a plain several months before their departure. Cuban students, workers and people traveling to the GDR in official mission had priority in each flight. Reservation was also subjected to some restriction because Germans with children in school age could travel only during the vacation period, which in Cuba is from July to August.

The next step was to arrange authorization from migration offices. This was also a complicated process because offices were not well organized. Each person had to outfill an original application form and four copies taking the risk those papers could get lost in the offices and starting the procedure again. In 1980 after the Marielitos migration wave, migration offices were better organized. The number of copies was reduced to one and the process in general was better standardized resulting in shorter waiting time and less bureaucracy (Interview with ME, married with EH since 1971: 10.04.2011).

As mentioned earlier Germans in Cuba and their children could travel once every three years. The bank had the control of who went to Germany and where. If the three-year period was not ended, it was difficult for Germans to travel to the GDR. The typical case was when parents were very sick or when their attendance was expected at a funeral. Usually they received the news too late or the permission was not granted in due time. If they still could manage to travel, the next visit to Germany had to wait between five and six years.

Cuban citizens had no rights to make private travels to the GDR. For this reason it was rare that the extended Cuban-German family could meet at one time in one place. The relations with the Cuban partner were restricted to what the German partner could tell in these visits or to what the family could experience if they had the chance to travel to Cuba. In a limited number of cases the Cuban partner had a work position in



Cuba, which allowed them to do work travels to socialist countries including the GDR. When that was possible they managed to visit their family-in-law. They could also ask for extending their work travel in a couple of days in order to have the chance to visit the German family.

Communication between the two families, in Cuba and the GDR, was very difficult. Until the 80's there were not the diversity of speedy communication technologies as chats, e-mails and inexpensive telephone calls. Most families neither in Cuba, nor in the GDR had access to a telephone. In both countries having a telephone could take years. This form of communication was restricted to few families. Relatives and friends with access to a telephone in both countries helped to facilitate this communication when telephone calls could be predetermined to certain days and hours. In spite of high prices for an international call from Cuba, it was possible until 1989 to pay this amount in national currency<sup>28</sup>.

Another way of communication was through letters. Families had to be patient while waiting for news from their relatives. A letter could take from three to four months to arrive to the addressee. This type of communication was not used if someone wanted to transmit urgent information. Letters were not considered a secure communication. The Stasi had a system to read and confiscate letters. So families in Cuba and the GDR were very careful about the content and possible interpretation of what they wanted to say to their relatives.

In Leipzig the Stasi had at its disposal 120 employees to open between 1,500 to 2,000 letters daily in its headquarters in the Runde Ecke (Round Corner). These letters had been removed from the normal post and dispatched to the Runde Ecke. Those which were cleared to be sent on to their addressees, were usually copied first by operatives wearing gloves and returned to the postal service within 12 hours (Childs & Popplewell, 1999: 91).

Children of Cuban-German couples, who were born in Cuba, were first considered Cubans<sup>29</sup> though they had access to German citizenship. After the reunification, when many of these families decided to return to Germany, being in possession of a German passport helped them to continue studies or look for a job. Other advantages

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<sup>28</sup> Since 1990 with the beginning of Periodo Especial in Cuba telephone calls abroad were restricted. In 1994 when dollars were allowed as payment telephone calls abroad were possible only when paying in hard currency.

<sup>29</sup> In Cuba is applied the principle of *jus soli* (right of the soil) regarding the citizenship. It is a right by which nationality or citizenship can be recognized to any individual born in the territory of the related state.

concerned social help and access to a student loan (BaFög)<sup>30</sup>, a credit given to German students under the age of 30, which must be returned under favorable conditions when individuals begin to work.

Though some German parents had the intention to talk to their children in German that was not always possible. Spanish was the main language they used at home, especially if they lived with other family members like grand parents. During vacations in the GDR, children and adults communicated more often in German. For parents it was important that children could at least understand the language. Thus when going on vacation to the GDR, they could understand other family members. Basically the language was maintained through these contacts. When for any reason the German partner and children could not travel to the GDR, the opportunity to improve the language, being in touch with relatives and being part of the culture was lost, what parents saw with regret.

At the beginning of the 70's Germans who arrived in Cuba had not difficulties in finding a job. That was the time when Cuba needed qualified workforce. The majority of professionals had left the country during the first two migration waves. In the 80's finding a job was more difficult. For this reason some couples had no other option than returning to the GDR where both of them could have a job (Interview conducted with Pedro 16.01.2009).

Because these couples met in Germany the German partner usually had not knowledge of Spanish. They began communicating in German. After their arrival in Cuba learning Spanish became an imperative, with exception of the partner other family members could not communicate in German. Nevertheless courses to learn the language in Cuba were not planned but if the person was working, they could –with a letter from their workplace– apply for admission in a language school. They could visit an intensive three-months-course. Courses of an advanced level were not offered. A better proficiency of the language was acquired through daily contact with Cubans at home and in the work place (Interview conducted with ME 10.04.2011).

Germans in Cuba were invited two times a year in occasion of historical celebrations to the GDR embassy. Here they could get to know each other. Until 1989 they did not have any organization where they could meet or make activities out of these official encounters in the embassy. Encounters were organized more at a private level among

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<sup>30</sup> BaFög is the abbreviation from 'Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz' (Law for education support).

friends. After the reunification Germans in Cuba in collaboration with Cuban ex-students and workers in the GDR reorganized and re-activated the Cuba-German association in Havana (Deutscher Verein in Havanna<sup>31</sup>), which was originally founded in 1846. In the Humboldt house in Old Havana Germans and Cubans meet to revive their shared memories from the time of the GDR. They also organize activities of solidarity with Cuba. But probably one of the most rewarding informal services they provide is to relocate in Cuba fathers and relatives from German children, who travel to Cuba with the hope to meet for the first time their Cuban family. I point that they provide an informal service because though this is not contemplated among the main activities of the foundation, they had built in the last years an extended network, which make possible these contacts. Unfortunately the foundation is active only in Havana making contacts in the rest of the country more difficult. Neither the Cuban embassy in Germany, nor the German embassy in Cuba has among their interests to provide a service, which could bring together the Cuban-German families.

It could be concluded that daily life of Cuban-German families in Cuba was subjected to restrictions from both governments. However, living conditions of these families were usually higher compared to conditions of Cuban families. That was possible due to the possibility of the German partner to travel to Germany once in three years. After these visits they could return with objects they needed at home or replace those, which were broken. Additionally some Cuban partners –ex-students or workers in the GDR– had as worker in Cuba a position which would allow them to travel to socialist countries many times a year. Cubans and Germans had the perception of these families as having a higher status because they could travel and could buy objects, all of which was not possible for the rest. Freedom of movement, though in the socialism is restricted to places and time, was a highly regarded issue, which partially blurred any other restriction these families had to face in Cuba and Germany.

### **Cuba and the FRG**

Due to the political situation after the Second World War, official Cuban migration to the FRG did not take place, particularly due to the influence of the Hallstein Doctrine (1955-1969). The way to arrive in the FRG was through marriage to an FRG citizen. Nonetheless they had to go through further bureaucratic barriers. Another way of

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<sup>31</sup> For more information the following address can be accessed in Internet <http://www.deutscher-verein-havanna.org/home.html> (12.04.2011).

arriving in the FRG was to abandon an exchange program or an official visit, after a Cuban was already in the GDR. In both of these cases Cubans were considered deserters and they lost their right to return to their country of origin.

Because Cuba was on the side of the GDR and along with it the Soviet Union, the FRG had, since the missile crisis in Cuba in 1962, a closer relationship to the U.S. This constellation meant that the two Germanys had a very different relationship with Cuba in which the FRG was more distant and, until 1991, they did not have any cooperation agreements. In 1963 when the GDR began diplomatic relations with Cuba, the FRG immediately pulled its representation in Havana based on the Hallstein Doctrine, named after Walter Hallstein. This was a key doctrine in the foreign policy of the FRG beginning in 1955. It established that the “FRG would not establish or maintain diplomatic relations with any state that recognized the GDR (Fulbrook, 2002: 164). Important aspects of the doctrine were abandoned after 1970 when it became difficult to maintain, and the West German government changed its policies towards the GDR. Diplomatic relations between Cuba and the FRG were reestablished in 1975, 12 years after the GDR had already established relations with Cuba.

In 1963 Cuba sent an ambassador to Berlin, capital of the GDR and in 1975 a representative to Bonn, provisional capital of the FRG. Through this Cuban representation in both countries it was possible that in 1978, for the celebration of the World Festival of Youth and Students, a delegation of West Germans, specifically from West Berlin, could travel to Havana.

In the period between 1975 and 1989 there is not much information about specific cooperation agreements between Cuba and the FRG. The two countries had rather tense relations, which correspond to the period of the Cold War, and which were reflected in the relations between Cuban and West German citizens. As part of my field research I was able to do interviews with Cubans, who were living in the divided Berlin before the German reunification. From these interviews was clarified that the only possibility to come to the FRG was through marriage, in contrast to the GDR, which had several agreements and much cooperation with Cuba, while the FRG had none. Hence, it was difficult for a Cuban to come directly to the FRG. Also from these interviews was clarified that most Cubans who were indeed able to come to the FRG were those who had been working or studying in the GDR. On their way back to Cuba planes had to land in Canada or Spain. After landing they could continue travel

to the FRG. Their knowledge of the language and their work experience in the GDR were valuable in starting their new life in the FRG. Others remained in the countries where they landed, while others decided to continue to travel to the United States, where relatives or friends were waiting for them. In all these cases they were considered deserters by the Cuban government because they had fled to a capitalist country.

In spite of the tense relations between capitalist and socialist countries, some West German citizens studied in socialist countries where they met Cubans and married. Others had the chance to go to Cuba in 1978 to participate in the International Festival of Youth and Students or simply as tourists. From these encounters some new relationships flourished. From the Cuban side it was extremely difficult for these individuals to have their marriages authorized. The Cuban Minister of Justice was the only one who could give such authorizations (Interview with Ana and Blanca 2009).

Ana and Blanca were both married in Cuba to German citizens. Because their respective husbands could not stay in Cuba, they decided to go to the FRG. However, they had to take some precautions before leaving the country. That was in 1980, when mass protests were organized against people who wanted to flee via Mariel. At that time there were no clear distinctions among people leaving to other destinations. Ana, for instance, had to postpone her departure because she feared that neighbors could stage a protest at her front door.

In 1990 with the reunification of Germany a new era of diplomatic relations began. They had faced their ups and downs and have prevailed until today. In 1991 Cubans, who were in both Germanys, conformed a single national group.

### **Revolutionary Cuba and the reunified Germany**

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of socialist countries in East Europe, Cubans in the reunified Germany faced considerable difficulties.

From an economic point of view their subsistence was tenuous. Workers lost their jobs when factories closed, and Cuban students could not finish their studies. The new social situation carried disadvantages for migrants. There were frequent racist attacks especially against black people.

Uncertainties about the political situation in Germany finally caused the Cuban government to suspend the exchange programs, forcing Cuban students and workers to return to Cuba. The Cubans who decided to stay in Germany lost their right to

return to Cuba and were immediately considered emigrants. Only for humanitarian reasons, and later in 2004 when the ‘Habilitación de Pasaporte’ procedure was established, were they allowed to visit their country of birth.

It is controversially discussed whether the majority of Cuban students and workers living in the GDR remained there after the reunification, or if they returned. The fact is that since 2002 the number of Cubans in Germany remains stable.

This complex situation is described as follows: In 2002 ‘Las cuatro fugas de Manuel’, the last novel of Jesús Díaz, a Cuban exiled writer in Berlin, was published. Though it is a novel, the story was inspired by real events. Manuel, a Cuban student of Physics in the Soviet Union, was ordered to return to Cuba because he was not adhering to the tenets of the Cuban Communist Youth. He was told, “He should not go around with foreigners, he should attend conferences, he should not deliver subversive pamphlets about independence in Ukraine, should not talk much about the idiot of Gorbachev, perestroika or glasnost ... he should go to meetings and study Fidel’s speeches ...)he should cut his hair very short, as real men do, he should not wear sandals, as the ones he was wearing” pp.33-34<sup>32</sup>. He was extremely focused on his experiments and studies. Shortly after receiving the news that he had to return to Cuba, the Berlin Wall fell and the very existence of socialist countries was threatened. In spite of all his insecurities about the future he decided to remain in the Soviet Union until he managed – after four failed attempts – to go to the West and landed in Germany, where he was able to remain after providing evidence that he had German ancestors.

This story is just an example of many Cuban students and workers who, immediately after the collapse of the socialist system, decided to remain where they were or relocated to other countries either because they had relatives or friends there, saw better chances of finding a job, wanted to finish their studies, or because with the demise of so many socialist countries, they saw no opportunities in the midst of so much political upheaval. From this moment on Cuban migration ceased to be a phenomenon occurring predominantly in the U.S., but began to spread around the world. What is today known as the ‘Cuban diaspora’ has been the subject of much

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<sup>32</sup> “que no anduviera con extranjerías, que fuera a clases, que no estuviera por allí repartiendo octavillas diversionistas sobre Ucrania independiente, que no hablara tanto del comierda ese de Gorbachov, de la perestroika, ni de la glasnost ... que asistiera a las reuniones del colectivo y a los círculos de estudio sobre los discursos de Fidel ... que se pelara cortico como los hombres, que no usara sandalitas como las que tenía puestas ahora mismo” (33-34). Own translation from: Díaz, Jesús (2002) *Las cuatro fugas de Manuel*. Espasa Calpe. Madrid.

research mainly in the U.S. and Europe (O'Reilly Herrera, 2001, 2007; Berg, 2007; Duany, 2009; Sánchez, 2008).

In 1990 and 1991, Germany was one of the predominant countries where Cubans, who were already in a socialist country, decided to remain because it was –among socialist countries– the country with better economic development (Adolphi: 163. In: Cala, 2007). Additionally, after the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 1989, borders between the two Germanys were now open. East Germans and foreigners alike could now settle in West Germany where they saw more employment opportunities.

Still today there is a long discussion running among historians and other scholars about whether the fall of the Berlin Wall could have been predicted. (Fulbrook, 2002; 2004). While among the Cuban population there was sporadic information about the processes of glasnost and perestroika that were taking place in the Soviet Union under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev, Cuban leaders remained rather skeptical and distanced themselves from any proposals that may have lead to reforms of the socialist system. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 1989, Mikhail Gorbachev made an official visit to Cuba at which point the Cuba-Soviet Union allegiance was reaffirmed. Fidel Castro made an official speech in which the position of the government regarding the changes that were taking place in the Soviet Union was clarified.

“If a socialist country wants to build capitalism, we have to respect its right to build capitalism, we cannot interfere, in the same way we demand that nobody has the right to interfere in the decision of any capitalist or semi-capitalist country from the developed world to build socialism. The principle of respect to each people and each country is a golden rule under the principles of Marxism-Leninism (Acclamation)<sup>33</sup>.

Throughout 1989, the Cuban government reinforced its vision of socialism in Cuba, turning their back on changes in Eastern Europe. By that time publications like ‘Novedades de Moscú’, ‘Pravda’, and ‘Sputnik’ were pulled from the Cuban market. These were important sources of information regarding the current events in Eastern Europe, especially in the Soviet Union. In spite of proposals of reform to the socialism system, the rapid transformation that took place in Eastern Europe was unthinkable, especially in Germany. While East Germans, in cities like Leipzig and Berlin organized protests under the slogan “Wir sind ein Volk”, they did not imagine

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<sup>33</sup> si un país socialista quiere construir el capitalismo tenemos que respetar su derecho a construir el capitalismo, no podemos interferirlo, del mismo modo que exigimos que nadie tiene derecho a interferir la decisión soberana de cualquier país capitalista o semicapitalista del mundo desarrollado o del mundo subdesarrollado de construir el socialismo. De manera que el principio de respeto irrestricto a la voluntad soberana de cada pueblo y de cada país es una regla de oro de los principios del marxismo-leninismo (APLAUSOS). Own translation.  
<http://www.cuba.cu/gobierno/discursos/1989/esp/f040489e.html> (20.04.2011).

that these protests would culminate in the fall of the Berlin Wall and would follow with German reunification in less than a year<sup>34</sup>.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell, it was reported in only a few lines in the national newspaper ‘Granma’ in Cuba. Immediately after, it was unilaterally decided by the Cuban government that all workers and students, who were in any socialist country, had to return to Cuba. Many workers had contracts, which were valid until 1990 and many students hadn’t finished their studies. In an interview conducted at the end of 1989 with Jürgen Schröder, at the Ministry for Employment and Salary<sup>35</sup>, the division responsible for the foreign workforce, explained the situation of Cuban workers:

**Stimmt es, dass die DDR gegenüber Kuba die Verträge nicht eingehalten hat?**

Nein. Richtig ist, dass die kubanische Seite vor kurzem einseitig das Abkommen im Prinzip aufgekündigt hat. Bis Ende 1990 sollen die hier arbeitenden kubanischen Werk tätigen schrittweise abgezogen werden. Das wurde in keiner Weise damit begründet, dass die DDR irgendwelche Verträge nicht eingehalten hat. Uns wurde mitgeteilt, dass Kuba auch aus der ČSR, Bulgarien und Ungarn die Arbeitskräfte zurückholen wird. Immerhin sind das für uns fast 10 000 Werk tätige, die teilweise schon seit einigen Jahren hier arbeiten und sich qualifiziert haben. Natürlich werden sie uns fehlen (Runge, 1990: 111).

Taking into consideration uncertainties surrounding the political situation in Eastern Europe, it is easy to understand that the Cuban government wanted to bring back all workers. At the end of 1989 there were reports in various cities of racist confrontations and attacks on the foreign population in East Germany. Factories were closed from one day to the other without prior notification. German and foreign workers alike were left without any other source of income. Mercedes Portilla, a textile worker in Niederschmalkalden, a small city which is located about 80 km southwest of Erfurt, related the situation of Cuban workers in 1989:

“When the socialist block disappeared we suffered because they did not let us go out ... The Germans organized protests because factories were closing. Because the factory was not far from our dorms they were worried that something could happen. They took care of us, absolutely nothing could happen. Two days after the Berlin Wall fell, the factory was closed and we could not stay there any longer ... we all lost our jobs ... they said that they could not pay us and that the system had changed. We learned about it when we went to work and they said the factory was closed ... a week after the Wall ... we went to the other Germany ... We did not know when we could return to Cuba ... We had to be careful because on the streets there were roaming groups ... that attacked dark-skinned people ... We were there for about two months neither with a job, nor with money ... We could stay in our dorms ... The Cuban government helped us during

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<sup>34</sup> Visual documentation about these events can be found in: Spiegel TV (DVD) Nr. 9. 2007 ‘Der Fall der Mauer’ and Spiegel TV (DVD) Nr. 21. 2009 ‘9. November ’89: Das Protokoll eines historischen Versehens’.

<sup>35</sup> In German: Ministerium für Arbeit und Löhne (MfAL).



those two months ... and then we came back” (Own transcription from Audio CD in: Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009)<sup>36</sup>.

However, not all factories were closed immediately after the fall of the wall. After orders were given from Havana that workers had to return immediately, some married in a rush with the hope of returning to Germany after receiving a residence permit in Cuba. Others remained in Germany, whether married or not, while others returned to Cuba even though they had a family in Germany. They felt compelled to follow those orders because they feared they could not return to Cuba anymore.

Students also had to return immediately to Cuba. However, for some, the situation was slightly different. In 1989 many students had not finished their studies in Germany and were under extreme pressure to do so although they were still far from graduation. An additional problem was that many students were doing coursework that was not available in Cuba. Returning meant they could never finish their studies, as they could not continue them in Cuba. The alternative was to begin other studies in Cuba or to take on whatever work was available. In an interview Teresa Sánchez, an art student in Weißensee, Berlin, explained the situation:

“I returned to Cuba at the beginning of October 1989 ... the wall fell after me ... Two of my fellow students returned a year later. They were in their last year of study when the change came. ... The school in Halle let them continue and finish their studies. They did not have any problem with the school; on the contrary, their problem was with Cuba because they had to return. That was a conflict for them because they would have been forced to return without finishing their studies and in Cuba there was nothing similar ... because of that they decided to remain there and did not return” (Own transcription made directly from Audio CD in: Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009)<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> “Cuando se terminó el campo socialista sufrimos mucho porque no nos dejaban salir ... Los alemanes hacían protestas porque cerraron la fábrica. Al quedar la fábrica en el mismo entorno del albergue nuestro tenían miedo de que nos sucediera algo. Nos cuidaban, ahí no podía sucedernos absolutamente nada. Cuando tumbaron el muro de Berlín, como a los dos días cierran la fábrica y ya no podíamos seguir ahí ... Al cerrar la fábrica todo el mundo perdió su trabajo ... nos dijeron que no tenían para pagarnos y que era otro sistema. Nos enteramos cuando fuimos a trabajar y nos dijeron que estaba cerrada la fábrica. ... Después de la semana del derrumbe ... conocimos la otra Alemania, visitamos ... No sabíamos cuándo veníamos realmente para Cuba. ... Siempre nos decían que tuviéramos cuidado, que no podíamos estar hasta tarde en la calle porque estaban los grupos ... que atacaban a los morenos allá. ... Allí estuvimos casi dos meses sin trabajo y sin dinero ... No nos sacaron de la fábrica. ... El mismo estado cubano nos mantuvo esos dos meses ahí ... y después nos trajeron” (Own transcription and translation made directly from Audio CD in: Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009).

<sup>37</sup> “Yo vine para Cuba a principios de Octubre de 1989 ... después se cayó el muro detrás de mí ... Los dos estudiantes que se fueron detrás de nosotros un año después, pues estaban cursando su último año cuando ocurre el cambio. ... La escuela de Halle les permitió continuar los estudios y terminar. En realidad ellos no tuvieron problemas con la escuela, sino todo lo contrario, con Cuba, que les exigía el regreso. Eso fue un conflicto muy grande para ellos porque resultaba que tenían que dejar los estudios y no había un estudio análogo en el país. ... Esa fue una razón que hizo que esos dos cubanos se quedaran en un inicio allá y no regresaran al país” ( Own transcription and translation made directly from Audio CD in: Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009).

For students and workers alike, taking the decision to remain in Germany was quite complex and difficult. First, they had to legalize their status after their work or study permit had expired, but probably even more difficult than that was their decision to give up to their country of birth. Not returning to Cuba meant they would be considered traitors and as such they lost their right to regularly visit their country and family. Thus, deciding to remain abroad meant to reach a point of no return. Every visit to Cuba was bound to an entry permit, which might be, or might not be granted. As of June 2004, Cuban emigrants have the right to apply for ‘Habilitación del Pasaporte’ (Passport habilitation). This application does not require a fee. Cubans who have such authorization can travel to Cuba any time they like and can remain there for a maximum of 30 days, which can be extended for another 30 days<sup>38</sup>.

When I am asked about the subject of my research, I usually reply in a general way, saying that my research is about Cuban migration to Germany. Some respond by saying, “Yes, right, most Cubans remained in Germany”. Along the course of this research, I have ascertained that, in fact, many Cuban workers and students returned to Cuba instead of staying in Germany. According to a statistic from 1990, the number of Cubans in Germany at that time was 4,317 (Mac Con Uladh, 2005: 52) and in 1991, a year after the reunification, that number had decreased to 3,362 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2004: 12).

During the 90’s however, due to the economic crisis in Cuba, many Cubans managed to return to Germany because they were previously married to German citizens or because a German friend issued an invitation letter. These former Cuban students and workers in the GDR, who returned to Germany, overlaps with the Cuban-German families who came at that time and with other Cubans, who usually married Germans in Cuba. Hence, it is likely that this constellation gives the impression to an external observer that Cubans remained in Germany, when actually it is more about Cubans returning to Germany in addition to others coming for the first time. It’s in the early 90’s when transnational networks among relatives and friends in Cuba and Germany began their influence in the migratory process from Cuba to Germany. Compared to the previous decades, when there was an intensive governmental interchange between the two countries, now the only possibility Cubans had to come to Germany was

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<sup>38</sup> <http://emba.cubaminrex.cu/Default.aspx?tabid=10633> (26.05.2011)

through personal contacts. Hence, motivations to come to Germany changed its character from an opportunity provided by the state to a more individual decision.

Nevertheless, in spite of the number of Cubans coming to Germany –now under new circumstances since there were no longer agreements between Cuba and Germany for students and workers as had existed at the time of the GDR– they have never reached the same level as in the 80’s. The number of Cubans in Germany has remained relatively stable since 2002<sup>39</sup>. There were reported to be 8,383 Cubans in Germany in 2004. (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2004: 5). This could point to factors like the number of Cubans who had obtained German citizenship balanced with the number of Cubans who had newly arrived and remained in Germany. It is worth noting, that since 2006 there has been a slight declining tendency regarding the number of Cubans in Germany from 8,851 in 2006 to 8,512 in 2010. (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2007: 88 and 2011: 94). One possible reason is the approval in August 2007 of changes in § 28 of the Foreign Law<sup>40</sup>.

That is, when citizens of third world countries marry Germans they have to prove, before they receive their visa, that they can communicate in the German language at a basic level. If these skills are not proved the person cannot come. The introduction of this procedure has resulted in the fact that many couples remain separated for a

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<sup>39</sup> For number of Cubans in Germany from 1978 until 2010 see Appendix 1.

<sup>40</sup> **§ 28 Familiennachzug zu Deutschen**

(1) Die Aufenthaltserlaubnis ist dem ausländischen

1. Ehegatten eines Deutschen,

2. minderjährigen ledigen Kind eines Deutschen,

3. Elternteil eines minderjährigen ledigen Deutschen zur Ausübung der Personensorge

zu erteilen, wenn der Deutsche seinen gewöhnlichen Aufenthalt im Bundesgebiet hat. Sie ist abweichend von § 5 Abs. 1 Nr. 1 in den Fällen des Satzes 1 Nr. 2 und 3 zu erteilen. Sie soll in der Regel abweichend von § 5 Abs. 1 Nr. 1 in den Fällen des Satzes 1 Nr. 1 erteilt werden. Sie kann abweichend von § 5 Abs. 1 Nr. 1 dem nichtsorgeberechtigten Elternteil eines minderjährigen ledigen Deutschen erteilt werden, wenn die familiäre Gemeinschaft schon im Bundesgebiet gelebt wird. § 30 Abs. 1 Satz 1 Nr. 1 und 2, Satz 3 und Abs. 2 Satz 1 ist in den Fällen des Satzes 1 Nr. 1 entsprechend anzuwenden.

(2) Dem Ausländer ist in der Regel eine Niederlassungserlaubnis zu erteilen, wenn er drei Jahre im Besitz einer Aufenthaltserlaubnis ist, die familiäre Lebensgemeinschaft mit dem Deutschen im Bundesgebiet fortbesteht, kein Ausweisungsgrund vorliegt und *er sich auf einfache Art in deutscher Sprache verständigen kann*. Im Übrigen wird die Aufenthaltserlaubnis verlängert, solange die familiäre Lebensgemeinschaft fortbesteht.

(3) Die §§ 31 und 35 finden mit der Maßgabe Anwendung, dass an die Stelle des Aufenthaltstitels des Ausländers der gewöhnliche Aufenthalt des Deutschen im Bundesgebiet tritt.

(4) Auf sonstige Familienangehörige findet § 36 entsprechende Anwendung.

(5) Die Aufenthaltserlaubnis berechtigt zur Ausübung einer Erwerbstätigkeit. <http://www.aufenthaltstitel.de/aufenthaltsg.html> (20.03.2010).

prolonged period of time and has hindered the reunification of the couple<sup>41</sup>. In the analysis chapter I will come back to this point.

## **Political, economic, cultural, and scientific cooperation between Cuba and Germany**

### **Political relations between Cuba and Germany from 1990 until the present**

Political relations between Cuba and Germany are, on one side, strongly influenced by EU politics due to Germany's membership in the EU. On the other side, Germany has oriented itself towards the U.S. regarding politics with Cuba.

European politics towards Cuba is not based on a stable continuation of relations, but rather on a sequence of intense contacts. It is of note that any economic support by the EU depends on political demands made on Cuba, like opening the country to democratization and revising the situation of Human Rights. Until today the Cuban government has rejected European politics towards Cuba because it considers it a form of intervention in its internal political affairs, and against Cuba's sovereignty and independence.

Concerning the Cuban-German politics in 2008 there was a 'softening' of relations when the FDP-faction proposed to separate the economic and political approach to Cuba under the argument that economic help to Cuba should not depend on political changes. „Die Bundesregierung tritt für eine Fortsetzung der bilateralen Wirtschaftsbeziehungen mit Kuba ein und setzt hierfür auch außenwirtschaftliche Förderinstrumente wie offizielle Messebeteiligungen und Exportkredit-Garantien ein. Die Bundesregierung hält Wirtschaftsrestriktionen nicht für ein geeignetes Mittel, politische Veränderungen in Kuba zu erzwingen.“ Bundesregierung: Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Marina Schuster, Florian Toncar, Christian Ahrendt, weiterer Abgeordneter und der Fraktion der FDP. Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 16/9177 vom 13.05.2008, S.4 (In: Niese, 2010: 91-92).

In relation to a democratization process in the country it is worth mentioning the Cotonou Agreement as well as the Varela project. After intense negotiations from the

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<sup>41</sup> Information about this procedure in different languages can be found under <http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Flyer/familiennachzug-flyer-de.html> (18.06.2011)

first, and the compilation of signatures from the second, they failed in their promise to open up Cuba to a more flexible politics.

The context of Cuban-German politics is considered as follows: The relationship between Cuba and Germany after 1989 has been characterized as an interplay between distance and rapprochement. International and national circumstances directly affect the state of these relationships. Additionally, since 1990, Germany, a country that is part of the European Union (EU), has based its international policy towards Cuba from an EU perspective on the one hand, and an American perspective on the other. In order to preserve a 'good state' of relations with the U.S., Germany has shaped its policy toward Cuba by taking care not to interfere with the U.S. economic embargo imposed on Cuba since 1960. This state of affairs has kept opposition groups satisfied –especially in the U.S. but also elsewhere– as they have attempted unsuccessfully for more than 50 years to overthrow the Cuban Revolution. However, this has not changed internal politics in Cuba very much. Only the Cuban people suffer the consequences of these policies as dictated by Washington and Brussels. In a form of passive opposition to all the restrictions and hardships borne of these policies, thousand of young people choose emigration each year as a way out of this situation.

As long as the socialist countries in Eastern Europe were giving their support to Cuba –especially the Soviet Union, which gave economic help in the amount of 2 million dollars per year (Inotai, 2009: 248) and East Germany, whose economic agreements were based on high subsidies and payments (Langer, 2010)– the Cuban economy, helped along by the import of products from these countries, could cover the primary needs of the population. The collapse of the eastern bloc socialist countries was brought about by circumstances that left Cuba unprepared for the drastic changes to come. Thus, almost from one day to the next, the delivery of products like raw materials to sustain industry, along with oil, food, and spare parts for factories came to a halt. By the end of 1990 all economic bilateral agreements with East Germany were suspended. Around 90 projects from which Cuba benefited were eliminated. One of the projects, which abrupt ending had negative consequences, included the delivery of milk powder, a substantial part of the subsidized diet for children. (Niese, 2010: 60).

From 1990 until 1998, under the government of Helmut Kohl, relations between Cuba and Germany were rather tense. Aside from the suspension of all bilateral agreements,

Germany demanded the payment of all debts Cuba had accumulated with the GDR (Gratius, 2003: 282). The German government probably assumed that after reunification, when socialism in the GDR was replaced by a capitalist economy and a democratic regime was transported from West Germany, something similar in Cuba would occur. Contrary to many expectations, the socialist character of the Cuban Revolution was in fact reinforced.

Without the support of socialist countries, the economic crisis in Cuba, better known as ‘Periodo especial’, began. In order to ameliorate the crisis and with the objective to include the island in the flow of international commerce, new measures were taken by the Cuban government. Along with the legalization of the dollar for the first time in more than 30 years since the Revolution, foreign investment was now permitted. German investors were interested in this opportunity and began to invest primarily in tourism. In the economic arena, a new model of relations had begun.

Up until 1995, the EU also played an important role in intensifying political relations with Cuba. Specifically, in 1993 an important delegation of the European Parliament held talks with Fidel Castro and other Cuban political members. As part of the collaboration between the EU and some Latin American countries, a specific program for Cuba was developed, which included a gradual increase of economic development aid with funds that in 1995 reached 30 Million ECU (Euros) (Gratius, 2003: 249).

Gradually the EU put pressure on Cuba to make the development aid dependent on a transition process toward democracy and the improvement of human rights in Cuba. In 1996, Manuel Marín –member of the European Parliament– met Fidel Castro in Havana. At the top of the agenda were issues concerning democracy and human rights in Cuba. These conversations, from the European view, were rather fruitless. Several days later, the Cuban army shot down two American planes, which belonged to the organization “Brothers to the Rescue”, based in Miami. These planes had entered Cuban airspace without authorization. From this moment on, a chain of international decisions were taken, which until today affect the triangle of relations among Cuba, the U.S., and Europe.

The first of these decisions concerns the signing of the Helms-Burton Law,<sup>42</sup> which tightened the embargo against Cuba and includes specific articles that hinder any kind

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<sup>42</sup> The Helms-Burton Law extended the territorial application of the initial embargo to apply to foreign companies trading with Cuba. About application of the Law and how has affected foreign companies see (Gratius, 2003) and (Inotai, 2009).

of foreign investment on the island. Consequently the U.S. government, under Clinton's presidency, urged European countries to harden their political stance toward Cuba. Hence, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1996, the EU signed the Common Position on Cuba, a paper which provides the basis for a common foreign policy and makes any development aid dependent on a transition process to democracy as well as on the improvement of human rights in Cuba. The Common Position includes these points:

- grundsätzliche Bereitschaft zur Kooperation durch begrenzte wirtschaftliche und humanitäre Zusammenarbeit sowie der Intensivierung des politischen Dialogs
- die Konditionierung einer vertieften Zusammenarbeit an Fortschritte im Bereich der Menschenrechte und politischen Freiheiten
- Förderung eines friedlichen Wandels und Ablehnung jeglicher Form von Zwangsmaßnahmen
- Anerkennung der kubanischen Regierung als legitimen Verhandlungspartner (Breuer, 2002: 54).

Throughout the years, Cuba has protested all aspects of the embargo, Helms-Burton Law and the Common Position of the EU by the UN, to no avail. The Common Position is updated every six months in the European Parliament following regular evaluations. In order to be abolished all 27 members would have to agree. Countries like Sweden, Czech Republic, Poland, and Germany have stated that in matters of human rights Cuba has not fostered enough development. The Cuban government argues that each of these decisions interferes with Cuban internal affairs and is an attempt to hinder Cuban sovereignty, which is intolerable. Values like independence, sovereignty, national dignity, and patriotism, are deeply rooted in many aspects of Cuban identity and nationality. Hence, when any other country attempts to reach an agreement regarding Cuba, it feels these values are threatened and it is not possible to maintain a dialogue regardless of any economic advantage for Cuba. Though an examination of the formation of the Cuban identity is not part of this particular research, it is not possible to understand the Cuban position in the absence of this problematic.

The Common Position to Cuba is a controversial issue when one takes into account that the EU maintains bilateral and regional agreements with countries where the democratic system and state of human rights are questionable and where the death penalty is applied, as is the case in China and the U.S. However, in both of these countries the EU has large economic interests and the application of the principle of

conditionality when establishing economic agreements could directly affect the economy on both sides of the Atlantic.

In this context Cuba criticizes the link between economic development and democratization and accuses the EU of applying an ambivalent policy. “(The EU) tries to impose, under a wrong understanding of ‘supremacy’ its European values as if they were the best and imperative in the whole world and at all levels of socio-economic development. Critics points that politics based on conditions, instead of helping less developed countries to get out of poverty, deepen underdevelopment because they ignore or consider of a second order objectives for the development<sup>43</sup>” (Inotai, 2009: 257).

It could be considered that the Common Position is a sort of political embargo by the EU towards Cuba, which corresponds with the policy of isolation that the U.S had implemented as part of its approach to Cuba. Though the Common Position is an impediment toward establishing broader cooperation programs, this does not prevent individual European countries from maintaining bilateral agreements with the island in sectors like economy, culture and scientific cooperation. In fact, while the EU maintains its restrictive policy, countries like Spain, France and Italy have profited from their favourable position in Cuba to expand commerce in the sectors of service, tourism and communications.

Under the government of the German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, from 1998 until 2005, some steps were taken towards normalizing relations between the two countries, though each time proposed economic agreements, which could have been beneficial to Cuba, failed when Cuba felt its internal politics threatened. At the end of 1999, the BMZ (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung<sup>44</sup>) granted 3 million DM for development projects in Cuba in the area of environmental protection. In May 2000, the German Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Wieczorek-Zeul, visited Cuba (Gratius: 2003, 283). Her exchange with all members of the Cuban government were viewed from both sides as a new beginning in the political and economic collaboration between the two

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<sup>43</sup> “(La Unión Europea) trata de imponer, en el conocimiento erróneo de ‘supremacía’ sus valores europeos como si ellos fueran los mejores e imprescindibles en todo el mundo, y a todos los niveles del desarrollo socio-económico. Las críticas también subrayan que políticas basadas en ciertas condiciones, en vez de ayudar a los países menos desarrollados para salir de su pobreza, profundizan la miseria y el subdesarrollo por ignorar o considerar secundarios los objetivos de desarrollo” (Inotai, 2009: 257). Own translation.

<sup>44</sup> Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.



countries. One of the most important agreements reached in this period was the regulation in 2000 of the Cuban debt with the former GDR. The debt was settled in the amount of 230 million Marks (Niese, 2010: 89), which Cuba would pay over the course of 21 years (Gratius, 2003: 284). With the settlement of the debt, new credits were approved and German investors were confident in making new investments in the area of tourism, such as the hotel chain Maritim and in the automobile sector with Mercedes Benz.

This same year Cuba gave a step forward in its approximation to the EU. The main motivation was the interest Cuba had of being part of the Cotonou Agreement where it has participated merely as an observer since 1999. This agreement, which contemplates an economic help and sustainable development among the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, could have supposed an alternative to Cuba in receiving support for its integration in the world economic market. Though in principle the Cuban government accepted the conditions to be part of the Cotonou agreement, only few weeks before the visit of a European Delegation to Havana, the government retired its entrance application. The reason for it was a vote from European countries like Poland and Czech Republic in the UN against Cuba concerning the situation of Human Rights in the country (Gratius: 2003: 251).

Over the next three years the EU, Germany included, began a new dialog with Cuba looking for normalizing their relations at all levels. Thus, at the beginning of 2003 a representation office of the EU was opened in Havana (Niese, 2010: 53). Through this representation, cooperation agreements could be discussed and it could bring proximity in the political dialogue. Nevertheless a series of internal political decisions in Cuba froze the progress that had been up to that point. In these political decisions the influence of the U.S. played an important role.

How could it be possible when the EU and Germany had made such positive steps toward constructive dialogue and collaboration that these could not be developed any further? In May 2002, the former U.S. president Jimmy Carter visited Cuba. He was also interested in opening a political dialogue with Cuba. Jimmy Carter held conversations with Fidel Castro and was invited to give a speech in the Aula Magna at Havana University<sup>45</sup>. The speech was broadcast via television and radio and this was when many Cuban citizens heard about something called 'Proyecto Varela' for the

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<sup>45</sup> Fragments of Jimmy Carter's speech in Aula Magna.  
<http://www.cubanet.org/CNews/y02/may02/15o4.htm> (29.04.2011)

first time. This project, having been organized by Oswaldo Payá –a Cuban dissident– since 1998, was an attempt to achieve political reforms and gain more individual freedom as well as procure the liberation of political prisoners, all of which resonate with the principles of democratic societies. According to the Cuban Constitution of 1976, in its article 88(g), a proposed law can reach the National Assembly if 10 000 voters sign the petition. Payá collected 11, 020 signatures (Payá, 2005: 7) which were supposed to be presented in January 2003 to the National Assembly.

After Jimmy Carter’s speech the Varela Project became a symbolic term for Cubans and an issue that the Cuban government could no longer ignore. Immediately after Carter’s speech, a counter project was launched with the objective of modifying the Cuban Constitution declaring the Cuban revolution a socialist revolution. Consequently in June 2002 the campaign, launched by the government,<sup>46</sup> resulted in the collection of 8 million signatures, which corresponds with 98,97% of all voters<sup>47</sup>, and led to the transformation of the Constitution. The Cuban government argues that the Varela Project is mainly supported and financed by Cuban exiles in Miami and was at that time underwritten by the George Bush administration. Hence, the project itself is a direct attack on the principles of independence and sovereignty of the Cuban people and such interference in internal political affairs would not be tolerated.

The EU had remained simply an observer during the unfolding of these events, but responded a couple of months later, in December, when Oswaldo Payá was awarded with the Sakharov prize for Freedom of Thought. This prize has been granted every year since 1988. A short list of candidates is proposed to the European Parliament and it chooses the winner, individuals or organizations that have dedicated their lives in defense of human rights and freedom of thought<sup>48</sup>.

In January 2003, the National Assembly convened its sessions and the Varela Project was not even mentioned. In spite of it, in March of 2003 an EU delegation travelled to Cuba to continue with the political dialogue. However, these talks came to an impasse

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<sup>46</sup> Initiative of modification of Cuban Constitution.

<http://www.cuba.cu/gobierno/documentos/2002/esp/i100602e.html> (29.04.2011)

<sup>47</sup> [http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proyecto\\_Varela](http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proyecto_Varela) (29.04.2011)

<sup>48</sup> Until now Cuba has been awarded three times with the Sakharov prize. The first was Oswaldo Payá in 2002, the second time were Las Damas de Blanco in 2005 and more recently Guillermo Fariñas in 2010. All of them fight for more freedom and for the liberation of political prisoners in Cuba. They are part of the opposition movement. The Cuban government, from its side, considers that dissidents are paid by the U.S. government. They are rather an instrument of pressure and propaganda against Cuban. Only Oswaldo Payá could personally receive the prize. The Cuban government denied the exit permit, which is compulsory to obtain for all residents in the island when travelling, to Las Damas de Blanco and Fariñas.

a couple of days later when the Cuban government arrested 75 members of the opposition, and then sentenced them to prison terms from 10 to 30 years. These arrests are known as 'Black Spring'<sup>49</sup>. In addition to that, the government executed three men, who had hijacked boats in order to flee to the U.S. (Niese, 2010: 53). After these actions the Cuban government was the target of critics from the international community, especially from Europe and refused any economic help toward its future development, which had been previously agreed upon with the EU. Cuba maintains this position until today. As a consequence Cuba remains separated from influential economic circuits and looks for alternatives to impulse its economic development like financing development projects through private funding from pro-Cuban organizations, which have no affiliation with any government.

In June 2003, the EU reacted to these events and four measures were taken against Cuba. "So beinhalteten diese politischen Maßnahmen die Einladung kubanischer Oppositioneller zu den Nationalfeierlichkeiten der Mitgliedstaaten, die Einschränkung der Besuche auf Regierungsebene, die Reduzierung der kulturellen Aktivitäten sowie die vorzeitige Überprüfung des „Gemeinsamen Standpunktes“ (Niese, 2010: 54). In words of Bernd Wulffen, German ambassador to Cuba from 2001 to 2005, an ice age of diplomatic relations began (Wulffen: 2006). The EU intended with these measures to give an image of disapproval to the current political situation in Cuba and pressured the government to purchase political changes. Cuba, from its side, ignored these measures and continued its internal politics regardless of pressures from the international community.

Nonetheless, in 2005 the EU suspended diplomatic sanctions against Cuba and was now open to continue with development projects in Cuba. Approximately 30 million Euros were approved at that time. (Mathieu, 2008: 5). A complete suspension of sanctions occurred in 2008 when Raúl Castro, the acting vice president and brother of Fidel Castro, substituted Fidel as President of the Council of State and the Council of Ministers of Cuba. Fidel Castro had retired from the government in 2006 after intestinal surgery. The suspension of the sanctions was largely criticized by the Cuban government and its dissidents. Fidel Castro characterized the suspension of sanctions as 'hypocrisy' citing that the EU had waited until a change in the government was

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<sup>49</sup> A list of prisoners and the article of the law, by which they are condemned, can be found here [http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primavera\\_Negra\\_de\\_Cuba](http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primavera_Negra_de_Cuba) (29.04.2011).

approved by the National Assembly<sup>50</sup>. The logic behind this decision was to clear the path for possible cooperation agreements between the EU and Cuba. Taking into account that Raúl Castro was now in power, some regulations were approved on the one hand to please some demands of the population, and on the other hand to improve the economy, especially that of agricultural production<sup>51</sup>. These measures could have been interpreted by the EU as the beginning of a new policy in regards to Human Rights and the stimulation of Democracy in Cuba, both topics included in the Common Position of the EU towards Cuba. Criticism toward this change focused on an opportunistic approach by the EU where economic interests and possibilities of investment in Cuba were said to be the motivation.

The FDP<sup>52</sup> fraction in Germany proposed at this point an approach to Cuba in which economic and political interests should be separated and not dependent on one another. „Die Bundesregierung tritt für eine Fortsetzung der bilateralen Wirtschaftsbeziehungen mit Kuba ein und setzt hierfür auch außenwirtschaftliche Förderinstrumente wie offizielle Messebeteiligungen und Exportkredit-Garantien ein. Die Bundesregierung hält Wirtschaftsrestriktionen nicht für ein geeignetes Mittel, politische Veränderungen in Kuba zu erzwingen.“ Bundesregierung: Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Marina Schuster, Florian Toncar, Christian Ahrendt, weiterer Abgeordneter und der Fraktion der FDP. Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 16/9177 vom 13.05.2008, S.4 (In: Niese, 2010: 91-92).

After years of negotiations between Cuba and the EU, and pressure from the EU and the U.S. to change the political and economic system in Cuba, very little has been achieved. Each time Cuba feels threatened in the political arena, it responds with a suspension of political and economic agreements, like the suspension of Cuban

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<sup>50</sup> <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/aufhebung-der-sanktionen-gegen-kuba-castro-kritisiert-europaeische-heuchelei-1.219803> (22.06.2008)

<sup>51</sup> Among the new measures Raúl Castro took in March 2008 are included facilities to Cubans they did not had before. It was allowed the sale of computers, cell phones, other electro domestic equipments and Cubans can rent a room in hotels, which was until that moment only possible for tourists. <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/wirtschaft/kuba-schwenkt-um-zum-leistungsprinzip-gehaltvoller-sozialismus-1.214510> (14.06.2008). When these measures were taken it was more important for Cubans the possibility they had to access these facilities. With a normal salary –between 15 and 20 dollar per month – is difficult to finance a computer, which is sold for 700 dollars in a store. Still these measures were saw as some steps of flexibility for some, while others consider that they are only cosmetics measures and did answer to the changes Cubans are waiting for. [http://www.elpais.com/articulo/internacional/EE/UU/tacha/cosmeticas/medidas/liberalizadoras/Raul/Castro/elpepuint/20080418elpepuint\\_10/Tes](http://www.elpais.com/articulo/internacional/EE/UU/tacha/cosmeticas/medidas/liberalizadoras/Raul/Castro/elpepuint/20080418elpepuint_10/Tes) (19.04.2008)

<sup>52</sup> The Free Democratic Party (German: Freie Demokratische Partei), abbreviated to FDP, is a centre-right classical liberal political party in Germany.

involvement in the Cotonou agreement. Up to now, it is clear that both for European countries as well as for the U.S., any changes in Cuba will come about as an internal decision within Cuba, and not as a result of pressure from other countries. In fact, when pressures are set upon Cuba like the Torricelli (1992) and Helm-Burton (1996) Laws from the U.S. and the Common Position (1996) from the EU, the Cuban people and government stick together and proclaim their adherence to Socialism more than ever.

### **Economic relations between Cuba and Germany**

The topic of foreign trade between Cuba and the EU is partially regulated by the Common Position of the EU regarding Cuba. Under this basis an economic cooperation with Cuba could be possible if Cuba changes its politics and is more open to a democratization process, as well as a revision in its Human Rights politics. At the same time the country had allowed European investments through bilateral agreements. However, since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Cuba had favoured economic relations with Asia and Latin America over Europe.

After the collapse of socialist countries and with the end of subsidies in different sectors of the Cuban economy, the country had to increase imports. However, the amount of exports is considerably lower than imports, which creates an imbalance in payments.

In order to decrease the Cuban debt, the country created measures to facilitate foreign investment through joint ventures. Hence, foreign companies began to invest in Cuba, above all in the tourism sector but also in the auto industry, as is the case in investments made by Mercedes Benz. They also invested in a search for Cuba's natural reserves like oil.

In the following section these aspects are discussed: Aside from changes in the Cuban government since 2006 and a new approach from Raúl Castro to ameliorate the bleak economic situation in Cuba, the EU continued on the one hand with the ratification of the Common Position, while on the other it approved economic help for its development. In 2009 Louis Michel, EU Commissioner of Development, visited Havana where he declared the Common Position an obstacle for relations between Cuba and the EU. He also announced that Cuba would receive 7, 5 million Euros and

another 4 million Euros were to be given to contribute to the devastation caused by the hurricanes in 2008<sup>53</sup>.

Part of the economic help Cuba receives from the EU is considered humanitarian aid. Nevertheless, in the 90's each EU country, according to its economic and political interests, began to establish bilateral commercial agreements with Cuba. Though commerce has been intensified, the volume of importation reached 10,250 million dollars in 2011<sup>54</sup>. Importations exceeds exportations (see Appendix 2)<sup>55</sup> which creates a deficit in payments and increases the external debt of the country. In 2011 it was estimated that the Cuban external debt is almost 20 billion dollars (Henkel, in interview with the economist Pérez Villanueva. TAZ. 14.04.2011).

Though the EU was an important commercial partner in the 90's, in the last decade countries like Venezuela, China, Spain, the U.S. and Brazil also count as important commercial partners today. The leader in Europe is represented by Spain, with an amount of 8,4% of the total of importations<sup>56</sup> (See Appendix 3). According to Cuban sources, Germany is fourth among European countries with importations to Cuba, though they have drastically decreased from 2,268,864 thousand Cuban pesos in 2008 to 169,117 thousand Cuban pesos in 2009<sup>57</sup>. Exportations are another form of hard currency income for Cuba. Traditionally the country had exported sugar, tobacco and rum and more recently exportation products have been extended to nickel, vaccines and other biotechnology products. However, in the last few years there is a tendency toward decreased exportations, which could be attributed to inefficiencies in production, low coordination among enterprises in Cuba and a low level of new investments. Particularly in the agricultural sector, production has been affected either by drought or by hurricanes. The main recipients of Cuban products today are China, Venezuela and Brazil followed by Spain and The Netherlands in Europe. Germany is the sixth recipient of Cuban exports among European countries after the Netherlands, Spain, Russia, France and Italy. Exportations to Germany have increased from 21,092 thousand pesos in 2004 to 27,041 thousand pesos in 2009<sup>58</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> <http://www.radiolaprimerisima.com/noticias/49469> (20.04.2009)

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.indexmundi.com/es/cuba/importaciones.html> (28.05.2011)

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.indexmundi.com/es/cuba/exportaciones.html> (28.05.2011)

<sup>56</sup> Wirtschaftsdaten kompakt: Cuba. [http://www.gtai.de/ext/anlagen/MktAnlage\\_9690.pdf?show=true](http://www.gtai.de/ext/anlagen/MktAnlage_9690.pdf?show=true) (01-06.2011) Look in Appendix Graphic 3.

<sup>57</sup> Look in Appendix 4 with the countries from where Cuba receives more importations.

<sup>58</sup> Look in Appendix 5 with the countries to where Cuba exports.

These few statistics give an idea as to how the EU, though it was an important commercial partner for Cuba in the 90's, has lost its position as a leader in commerce with Cuba. The island had pursued a strategy to increase exports to Asia and Latin American countries in response to the Common Position from the EU. In the search for new markets for its products, Cuba wanted to ensure that economic pressures would not affect internal political realities. Hence, from the commercial point of view the economic interests of Europe in Cuba are currently not enough to put pressure on political changes in the country.

In general the Cuban economy benefits highly from tourism, with more than 2 million visitors per year since 2004. Most tourists come from Canada, England, Spain, Italy, Germany and France<sup>59</sup>. This number has remained relatively stable and has not surpassed 2.5 million visitors per year. However in 2000, revenue from tourism contributed to 40% of Cuba's total income (Figueras Pérez, 2004: 92) and this is also a leading sector where the consumption of Cuban products is rather high. In collaboration with foreign enterprises food production in Cuba has increased and is sold within the tourism sector in order to offset importations and raise profits.

Though Cuba is relatively isolated from economic trade circuits, new steps were taken in 1995 in order to attract foreign investment. This was possible due to the formation of joint ventures where actions and profits are shared between Cuba and the investor country. Statistics in this area are difficult to find because Cuban authorities are concerned that "the U.S. Government, as part of its economic sanctions against Cuba, would use the information to punish foreign investors in the island, or to discourage those businessmen who are considering investing in the island. However, it may also reflect an interest on the part of Cuban authorities to give the impression that investment flows are more significant than they actually are, creating some competition among prospective investors, and improving the overall investment climate" (Pérez-López, 2004: 105).

It is estimated that in the period between 1993-2001, the total of foreign investment was 2.2 billion dollars (Pérez-López, 2004: 106). More than 50% of the foreign investment comes from the EU. Spain is the European country with the most joint ventures in Cuba; in 2004 those totaled 101 (Pérez-López, 2004: 110) and were concentrated in the sectors of tourism, transportation, industry, and oil. Germany had

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<sup>59</sup> Look in Appendix 6 from where come tourists to Cuba.

7 joint ventures in 2004 in the areas of tourism and hotel services ((Pérez-López, 2004: 113).

The number of these joint ventures diminished from 400 in 2001 (Pérez Villanueva, 2004: 60) to 258 at the end of 2009<sup>60</sup>. Structural problems as well as a delay of payments from Cuba and the difficulties for foreign investors to transfer their profits out of Cuba caused many to liquidate their investments. That was the case with a telecommunications investment from Italy, which sold its participation in 2007 to a Cuban enterprise<sup>61</sup>. Outside the EU countries like China and Venezuela have consolidated their investments in Cuba. Hence in 2007 Venezuela and Cuba signed 15 bilateral agreements, which included a number of joint ventures and again in 2009 to increase their number of enterprises in both countries<sup>62</sup>.

A last issue concerning the Cuban economic situation is the increase in the transfer of money better known as 'remesas' (remittances). According to unofficial statistics, Cuba receives around one billion dollars each year in the form of remittances sent by Cuban exiles in the U.S. (Inotai, 2009: 270). It is estimated that 60% of the population benefit from these transfers. In a survey conducted by Manuel Orozco and Katrin Hansing (2009), among 500 Cubans –300 living in the U.S. and 200 in Cuba– it was confirmed that the impact of remittances on the Cuban economy and the autonomy it provides Cubans in Cuba to engage in entrepreneurial endeavor is very high. An important aspect of this research was to ascertain that in 2005 around 81% of remittances came from the U.S., while in 2008 only 53% had this provenance. Also noteworthy is the fact that the number of Cubans living in Europe –especially Spain and Germany– as well as in other Latin American countries who send remittances has also increased.

Linking Cuba and its European diaspora through remittances is one expression of diversification of Cuban migration in the world. At the same time this represents an economic consolidation of this group in European countries. This contributes to strengthen relations between the continent and the island and to a possible influence

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<sup>60</sup> <http://www.hoy.com.ec/noticias-ecuador/empresas-con-capital-extranjero-sale-de-cuba-383465.html> (30.05.2011)

<http://patriaeshumanidad.blogcindario.com/2009/10/00543-empresarios-extranjeros-frustrados-por-no-poder-repatriar-sus-ganancias-desde-cuba.html> (30.05.2011)

<sup>61</sup> [http://www.iberglobal.com/frame.htm?http://iberglobal.com/images/archivos/cuba\\_iec.pdf](http://www.iberglobal.com/frame.htm?http://iberglobal.com/images/archivos/cuba_iec.pdf) (01.06.2011)

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.



of Cuban migrants, who from Europe could contribute to the development of the country in all sectors.

### **Cultural relations between Cuba and Germany**

A number of German institutions like Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst (DADD), Goethe Institute, Hans Seidel and Heinrich Böll Foundation, among others, maintain cultural relations with Cuba. Though there is relative stability in cultural relations between the two countries, until today there are no agreements at a national level. The advantages of cultural exchange agreements, or learning and participating in another culture, are rather limited. It is worth noting that cultural exchange among countries is closely related to economic and political relations. As it has been analyzed, these kinds of relations between Cuba and Germany, and the context in which they take place, are rather complex.

That means, in spite of the vicissitudes in political relations between Cuba and Germany, cultural relations have been relatively stable over the last three decades. Important organizations in Germany like the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD)<sup>63</sup> and the foundation Ludwig have contributed to the cultural exchange.

The DAAD began its activity in Cuba in 1990. Through this institution Cuban students and scholars have benefited from scholarships, either to continue studies in the German language, or to conduct post-graduate studies in universities and institutes in Germany. The DAAD also facilitates interchange and bilateral agreements between German and Cuban universities. One example is the annual interchange of students between the Language Department at Humboldt University in Berlin and the Faculty of Languages (FLEX) at Havana University. Students participating in the interchange get to know the other culture and enrich their personal experiences while pursuing their studies.

German students additionally have the opportunity to work as volunteers on different projects in Cuba, which are organized by the German embassy in Havana, such as the international theater festival, where German theater groups give presentations in addition to various projects in music and painting. Other students can teach their

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<sup>63</sup> German exchange service for academicians.

native language in ‘Cátedra Humboldt’, a language school belonging to Havana University.

Though Germany has made many efforts since 2000 to open a Goethe Institute in Cuba, this has not been possible due to the political crisis between both countries. Until today neither of the countries has reached an agreement concerning the opening of the institute. Nevertheless the representative office of Goethe Institute in Havana – in spite of limited work– continues with the organization of activities representing the German culture in Cuba and the Cuban culture in Germany. A good example of this collaboration was the invitation to Germany in April 2011 of five young Cuban talents to read their works in the Maxim Gorki Theater in Berlin.

The above-mentioned ‘Cátedra Humboldt’ has been a bit more successful in spreading the German language and culture in Cuba. This institution receives a yearly donation of books and materials from the Frankfurt Book Fair (Telephone conversation with Dr. Iván Muñoz, director of ‘Cátedra Humboldt’ 24.05.2011). They also organize film presentations in the German language and other activities where students and professors share their knowledge of German culture, history and customs.

Another institution with offices in Cuba since 1993 is the Foundation Ludwig Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen). In its early years the Foundation’s objective was to encourage the collaboration between Cuba and Germany in the plastic arts, but today they also organize lectures of young writers and expositions in Cuba and Germany with painters who have graduated from various art schools in Cuba.

After the political crisis between Cuba and Germany in 2004, when German authorities withdrew the participation of German publishers from the International Book Fair in Havana, subsequent years have seen the forging of new cultural agreements. Personal interest from German publishers in collaboration with the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation and Cuban journalists have made it possible for projects like the publication of the book ‘Regresé’ (2009) to be realized. This book is about the experiences of Cuban students and workers in the GDR. For the first time Cubans are able to talk about their time in the GDR and the experiences that they brought back with them to Cuba. In 2010, the Spanish version of the book was presented at the Book Fair in Havana and in 2011 two former students were invited to make a tour of various German cities to promote the book and share their experiences with the public.

The list of cultural exchanges between the two countries would be long. I would like to point out, however, that at the moment there are no governmental agreements that regulate such activities. Bernd Wulffen (2008), former German ambassador to Cuba from 2001 to 2005, recognizes that Germany backed other European countries in the area of cultural agreements with Cuba especially after the political crisis in 2003. “Most of our partners in the EU had cultural relations with Cuba. However we (Germany), followed instructions. We reduced considerably our cultural work. Germany risked to be let behind in the cultural sector compared to France, England and Italy<sup>64</sup>” (Wulffen, 2008: 253-254).

Diverse German foundations like the Hanns Seidel, Friedrich Ebert, Heinrich Böll, and Rosa Luxembourg foundations have tried to open the spectrum of activities in Cuba but have faced many bureaucratic restrictions from Cuban institutions. They have opted for organizing activities and have invited mainly artists, students and academics to Germany. That the German culture could be shared in Cuba and the Cuban culture in Germany is possible due to the efforts of individuals, who, using their own resources, have pushed to organize activities in both countries. With stronger institutional support from both sides it would be possible to strengthen these relationships, but that will depend highly on the interests and will of both countries. While cultural relations among countries preserve friendship and contribute to the development and education of their people, they are more successful in times when political and economic relationships are also in balance. In this regard, some work between Cuba and Germany is still to be done.

### **Some considerations about the current situation in Cuba and its relation to the EU and Germany**

The current situation in Cuba has two peculiarities. The first relates to Cuba’s treatment of its political prisoners, and the second relates to economic measures discussed in April 2011 as part of the Congress of the Communist Party. Relations between Cuba and the EU should be considered taking into account this internal political context.

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<sup>64</sup> “La mayoría de nuestros socios en la Unión Europea mantenían relaciones culturales completamente normales con Cuba. En cambio nosotros (Germany), obedeciendo a las instrucciones, habíamos reducido el trabajo cultural de forma considerable. Alemania se arriesgaba a quedarse atrás en el sector de la cultura respecto de Francia, el Reino Unido e Italia” (Wulffen, 2008: 253-254). Own translation.

After the death in 2010 of a political prisoner, who was on hunger strike, the Cuban government was criticized by the international community. As a consequence, political prisoners were liberated. That was possible due to the mediation of the Catholic Church in Cuba and representation by the Spanish government. Spain offered asylum to politic prisoners and hoped for an improvement in the relations between Cuba and the EU.

In April 2011 new economic measures were discussed in the Congress of the Communist Party. These measures meant to contribute to Cuba's economic development, with the Cuban government maintaining control of its economic sectors. One of the adopted measures was the release of workers, since it is not possible to guarantee full employment to 1 million Cubans. In this regard a privatization of the economic sector is not considered though new possibilities for self-employment were approved. Among the measures discussed was the possibility of granting credits to small entrepreneurs, especially in the area of services. Thus, it is presumed that this incipient private sector could absorb the majority of unemployed.

When considering the economic as well as the present political situation in Cuba, the EU decided it could financially support the island. Though Cuba is looking for alternatives to further improve its economic situation and is open, to a certain point, to discussing political issues, the European Common Position towards Cuba continues to be an obstacle in establishing relations, especially at the economic and political level.

The EU could contribute with more foreign aid to Cuba, which the country is in need of, by reinforcing the status of Cuban migrants as transnational agents. In this case Cuban migrants could contribute their potential, for instance, in the form of investment, not only from a financial perspective but also in other contributions like investing their acquired knowledge and experience in their country of birth.

Political changes inside Cuba were the target of international criticism and attention when, in February 2010, the political dissident Orlando Zapata Tamayo died after being on a hunger strike for 86 days<sup>65</sup>. Immediately after this event many voices were raised in Cuba and abroad demanding the liberation of political prisoners in Cuba. A month later another political prisoner, Guillermo Fariñas Hernández, began a hunger strike in the name of liberation for those political prisoners, who went to jail during the Black Spring 2003 and were now very sick. In the face of these events, the Cuban

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<sup>65</sup> <http://www.elmundo.es/america/2010/02/24/cuba/1266967804.html> (10.03.2010)

government decided to reach an agreement with the dissidents claiming at the same time that the government will not tolerate any pressure from the U.S. or the EU to change the course of its politics. The Catholic Church played the role of intermediary between the Cuban opposition and the government pleading for the liberation of political prisoners<sup>66</sup>. After discussions in May 2010 with Raúl Castro and during the visit in July the same year of Miguel Ángel Moratinos –Minister of External Affairs in Spain– it was agreed that the government would release 52 political prisoners over the course of three to four months<sup>67</sup>. A consensus between Cuba and Spain was also reached whereby all political prisoners and their relatives could travel immediately to Spain. The Cuban government granted freedom to these first political prisoners upon the condition that they leave the country. Spain received the largest amount of prisoners along with their relatives. Those prisoners, who decided to stay in Cuba, were the last to be freed.

In the process of negotiation regarding political prisoners, the EU was represented by Spain, a country that has conducted several meetings with the Cuban government in order to open the political dialogue. It should not be underestimated that Spain, independently of its historical links to the island and the colonial past, also has economic interests in the country.

This step made by Spain in order to bring political relations between Cuba and the EU to a new level did not hinder the fact that in October 2010 Guillermo Fariñas Hernández received the Sakharov prize<sup>68</sup>. A couple of days later the EU submitted a new vote regarding the revision of the Common Position towards Cuba. Yet again, on this occasion the Common Position was maintained, although Cuba had begun a process of economic reforms<sup>69</sup> in the previous two years and had shown its willingness to begin conversations in the political arena.

Nonetheless Cuba remains a socialist country under the leadership of the Communist Party. Until today the opposition movement has not emerged with a clear leadership. The conditionality of political prisoners to be released if they agreed to go into exile

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<sup>66</sup> <http://www.noticias24.com/actualidad/noticia/155847/raul-castro-se-reunio-con-autoridades-de-la-iglesia-catolica-cubana/> (20.05.2010)

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.elmundo.es/america/2010/07/07/cuba/1278525697.html> (08.07.2010)

<sup>68</sup> [http://www.elpais.com/articulo/internacional/Eurocamara/premia/disidencia/cubana/elpepiint/20101022elpepiint\\_4/Tes](http://www.elpais.com/articulo/internacional/Eurocamara/premia/disidencia/cubana/elpepiint/20101022elpepiint_4/Tes) (22.10.2010)

<sup>69</sup> The economic measures, which Raúl Castro announced in 2008, had been considered reforms and are still far of the demands made to the Cuban government as important steps towards democratization. [http://www.elpais.com/articulo/internacional/Raul/Castro/aparca/reformas/Cuba/elpepuint/20080728elpepiint\\_1/Tes](http://www.elpais.com/articulo/internacional/Raul/Castro/aparca/reformas/Cuba/elpepuint/20080728elpepiint_1/Tes) (30.07.2008)

in Spain indicates that the government, though capable of discussing political issues with deputies of other countries and the Cuban Catholic Church, ignores, avoids, and leaves members of the opposition without a voice, arguing that they are mercenaries paid by the U.S. government and their target is to conduct contra revolutionary activities in Cuba<sup>70</sup>.

Another turning point concerning the liberation of political prisoners is related to their condition as emigrants, and not as exiles, in their host country. Up until today all political prisoners, who abandoned the country, could not return to Cuba and their possessions were confiscated. The release of these prisoners points to a new labeling from exile to emigrant. Under this condition they are allowed to return to Cuba with previous authorization from the Cuban government and they maintain their property in Cuba<sup>71</sup>. There is no doubt that being considered an emigrant has its advantages over the status of political refugee. They can remain in touch with the country where they were born. However, in the case where they decide to continue with their political activities, they must be conducted from a distance, which limits their active participation in any event in Cuba. The Cuban government, for its part, has shown an apparent openness regarding concessions made for former political prisoners. At the same time, the group formed by the opposition is now even more dispersed than it was in 2003.

Among the new measures created in Cuba to address the current political and economic situation was the convening of the VI Congress of the Communist Party as announced by Raúl Castro in October 2010. The VI Congress is the most important meeting for all members of the government, where new agreements are now ratified. These agreements are first discussed and if approved they are introduced into practice, sometimes even creating new laws or modifying others. In April 2011 the Congress took place in Havana. The different sessions focused on the future economic strategy

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<sup>70</sup> Since the beginning of the Revolution the Cuban government claims that all contra revolutionary activities are paid from the U.S.A. Though in the first years of the Revolution events like the attack in the Bay of Pigs or the multiple attempted assassinations to Fidel Castro were organized and paid mainly from Maimi, today dissidents finance their activities from other sources like support received from European groups. Others are able to finance their projects like Yoani Sánchez, who has published books in Europe and had received many prizes. Through her blog “Generación Y” it is possible to make donations from everywhere in the world.

<sup>71</sup>[http://www.tribunalatina.com/es/notices/los\\_presos\\_politicos\\_cubanos\\_que\\_acogera\\_espana\\_tendran\\_el\\_status\\_de\\_emigrantes\\_27566.php](http://www.tribunalatina.com/es/notices/los_presos_politicos_cubanos_que_acogera_espana_tendran_el_status_de_emigrantes_27566.php) (11.07.2010)

of Cuba and how the economy could be improved without the introduction of privatization while still maintaining the socialist character of the country.

At the end of four days of discussion, the main conclusions of the VI Congress were: „Zunächst 500 000 und später mehr als eine Million Staatsangestellte sollen entlassen, die Lebensmittelkarten abgeschafft werden. Außerdem ist künftig der Verkauf von Autos und Häusern gestattet. Brachliegendes Staatsland soll Kleinbauern zugänglich gemacht werden, um die Abhängigkeit von Nahrungsmittelimporten zu senken. ... Industrie, Energiepolitik und Tourismus sollen gestärkt werden, ausländische Investitionen zunehmen. Auch die Gehälter werden sich verändern ... Unklar war bis zuletzt, wie die Doppelwährung aus einheimischem und dollarähnlichem Peso aufgehoben wird. Auch über die Einführung privater Bankkredite wird debattiert“ (Burghardt, 2011).

What the conclusions of the Congress did not clarify is how these measures would be financed. Raúl Castro's government approved licenses for 178 occupations. However, it would be difficult for these occupations to absorb 1 million workers, who would lose their jobs as part of the new economic measures. It is worth noting that „Auf 20 Milliarden US-Dollar sind die Schulden bei den Gläubigern angewachsen, wobei die Altschulden bei den ehemaligen Partnern des sozialistischen Lagers nicht eingerechnet sind“ (Henkel, 2011).

Cuban economists like Pérez Villanueva have discussed alternatives, such as microfinance, the development of an internal market, and concession of credit from other countries. „Es sind zwei Dinge, die es bisher nicht gibt. Das eine sind Programme mit Kleinkrediten für die neue Selbstständigen, und das andere ist ein Markt, wo sich die neuen Selbstständigen legal und zu vernünftigen Preisen mit Rohstoffen und anderen Betriebsmitteln versorgen können. ... Um allerdings ein funktionierendes Kreditsystem für die neuen Selbstständigen aufzubauen, brauchen wir finanzielle Hilfe aus dem Ausland“ (Henkel, 2011).

Part of the financial aid could come from the EU in the form of an economic agreement. However, as explained before, the EU maintains its Common Position, which is conditional to political and economic changes in Cuba. In the last meeting of European countries regarding this position Javier Solana, previous High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, made explicit

that Cuba should introduce clearer and faster economic reforms<sup>72</sup>. Hence, the situation of Human Rights in Cuba was relegated to second place after political prisoners were released. Now that Cuba is experimenting and trying to follow ‘new paths’ in the economic arena, it is the EU’s turn to respond to changes proclaimed after the VI Congress of the Communist Party in Cuba.

Independent of the Common Position, the EU had approved the investment of around 20 million Euros in Cuba during the period of 2011-2013 in the sectors of food supply, environmental protection, climate change, as well as academic exchange, vocational training and post graduated studies<sup>73</sup>. In case of favourable reaction from both sides it could be possible that in the next years cooperation between Cuba and the EU increases.

A last issue to analyse in this constellation between Cuba –which is immersed in economic changes and in need of international aid – and the EU –which has the resources to provide this aid – is related to the role Cuban emigrants could play as transnational actors between both continents. Though the Cuban government, since the beginning of the Revolution, has made it difficult for Cuban citizens to leave the country, today more than one and a half million Cubans are dispersed around the world. The majority of them and their descendants; 1,240,685 are in the U.S. (Prieto, 2009: 6). Nevertheless, in more recent years Europe has become an attractive place for many of them. According to statistical data from Eurostat around 92,000 Cubans have their residency in an European country<sup>74</sup>. Hence, Cubans abroad are a resource the Cuban government could benefit from and are given advantages when they make investments in the island. Investments are considered not only in the form of financial capital but also in human capital, something which Cubans had certainly accumulated as part of their experiences abroad. Additionally each Cuban could enhance transnational relations, which facilitate interchange among countries.

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<sup>72</sup> <http://www.rebellion.org/noticia.php?id=115931> (27.04.2011)

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Aussenpolitik/Laender/Laenderinfos/Kuba/Aussenpolitik.html> (26.04.2011)

<sup>74</sup> In Appendix 7 there is detailed information about number of Cubans in some countries of the European Union until 2013.



## **Summary**

In this chapter I have covered aspects concerning the relations between Cuba and Germany from the 60's until today. In the first part I discussed the differentiated relations between Cuba with the FRG and the GDR. The first country was oriented after WWII towards a capitalist system maintaining rather distant relations with Cuba. The FRG was in its international politics oriented towards the U.S. Hence, diplomatic relations were tense and there were not economic agreements for exchange between the two countries, except in a limited spectrum of Cuban export products like cigars.

Regardless restrictions imposed from the Cuban side concerning contact of its citizens with citizens of capitalist countries, some love stories between Germans and Cubans flourished. Germans could travel to Cuba as tourists or as part of solidarity groups. The possibility these couples had to remain together was through marriage. The Cuban partner had then the possibility to migrate to Germany. Until 1989 only a limited number of Cubans arrived in this way in the FRG. Other possibilities for migration were almost excluded.

However, the GDR, a socialist country since 1949, was one of the first countries to recognize the Cuban revolution. Until German reunification, the GDR maintained close relations with Cuba, which included the spheres of economy, culture, sport, sciences, and extended agreements for interchange of workers and students. Taking into account the information provided by researchers, testimonies, interviews and informal conversations with individuals who participated in the interchange programs, I was able to depict the situation of these two groups up until German reunification. Students were the first to arrive in the GDR in 1961 (Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009; Mac Con Uladh, 2005a). Their education was possible due to scholarships received from the GDR. The Cuban government paid transportation costs from Cuba to Germany. Though at the beginning some students were living with German families, when the interchange programs were more defined, students had to stay in dormitories near their respective universities. Though they had some restrictions for receiving visits in the dormitories, they were able to establish relations with students from Germany and other countries. They also attained a high proficiency of the language, which helped them to better communicate with others.

Most students after returning to Cuba occupied important positions in ministries where they applied the knowledge they had acquired as well as their practical experiences. Others were incorporated into research centers or occupied positions as

academics in different universities. They were considered the new intellectual elite and the avant-garde for the technical and scientific development in the country. Students who were in the GDR studying arts like music, painting or theatre developed later in Cuba artistic codes where the socialism found its way to be represented.

Likewise there were students who after their arrival in Cuba could not find a workplace according to their new qualification. Cuba did not have the technological development needed to incorporate these former students into the workforce. Nevertheless the qualification acquired in Germany gave them access to important positions whether in industries, ministries or research centers.

Cuban workers, however, arrived in the GDR in 1978 as a result of agreements between the two countries (Mac Con Uladh 2005b; Gruner-Domić, 1997a). Besides being part of the production system in different factories they also learned an occupation, which they could later develop in Cuba. While students received a scholarship from the GDR government, workers received a salary, which varied depending on the place they worked and the number of hours they put in each week. Usually they received 40% of their salary; the rest was transferred to Cuba and deposited in an account. Overtime and holiday work were fully paid. This was additional motivation to perform their job well, as they could save some money and buy articles to take back to Cuba.

Cuban workers lived near factories and while they had the opportunity to go on excursions to other cities they were actually segregated from the rest of the population. Contact with other Germans was usually limited to their workplace. Only after the reunification of Germany some researchers had brought some light into issues concerning living conditions of workers in the GDR (Elsner & Elsner, 1992; Runge, 1990; Beier-de Haan, 2005; Behrends, Lindenberger & Poutrus, 2003; Riedel, 1994; Motte, Ohliger & Oswald, 1999; Gruner-Domić, 1997a; Werz, 2009).

In each factory Cuban workers had a group leader responsible for the discipline of the group and for connecting the group with the direction of the factory. Group leaders also transmitted information from the Cuban embassy about actual events in Cuba. In each factory there was also a translator, who was present at all meetings among Cubans and Germans. They were mediators in these meetings and responsible for communication from both sides. When workers had a problem or needed assistance of any kind (to go to the doctor, for example) the translator helped them to communicate

with others. For these reasons many Cuban workers did not develop language skills at the same level as the students did.

When Cuban workers returned to Cuba they usually found that they could not continue doing the same job as they did in the GDR. Factories in Cuba were not on the same technological niveau. Hence, many of them returned to the same activity they had had before going to Germany or started a completely new job. Nevertheless Cuban workers, who returned to the island from the GDR, enjoyed a somewhat higher living standard as compared to other workers in Cuba. They had had the chance to travel and get to know other countries and culture, all of which was difficult to attain for any other worker in Cuba. Additionally, upon their return they brought with them all kinds of electronic and household devices, improving living conditions for them and the whole family. Only those who were good workers and received approval from the group could return with a motorbike, which became a status symbol in Cuba.

Over the years many workers and students were the target of racist attacks in the GDR. Their presence in the socialist Germany was a contradictory issue. On the one hand the GDR proclaimed a society where solidarity and internationalism should have been above differentiation among individuals. Under socialist ideology men and women of all origins and races should be treated equally. On the other hand foreigners were rather isolated in their contact with the rest of the society. Outside the political propaganda their presence was ignored. Furthermore immediately after the end of their contracts they should return to their countries of origin. Remaining in Germany because of marriage was not contemplated in these agreements. Hence, the government did not develop any measure to make possible integration of foreigners. An interplay among these factors created a distorted image of foreigners, which was reinforced after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Attacks on foreigners were then a valve of escape in front of social insecurities surrounding closing of factories and a dramatic increase of unemployment.

Nonetheless in remembering those times many Cubans have chosen to take a rather distant stance from the negative experiences they had. Their narratives are rather nostalgic, a nostalgia for a country that no longer exists. With the suppression of such memories, they also opted to preserve their positive experiences. In Cuba the image of a socialist GDR with ideals of cooperation and internationalism had been reinforced.

Though Cuban workers and students lived relatively segregated from the rest of the German population, and though they had to follow some prescribed rules from the

Cuban and German governments, they also found a way to achieve a certain degree of autonomy. They established spaces dedicated to hobbies like playing baseball, dominos, dancing, or cooking Cuban food, with ingredients sent from their relatives in Cuba. One area of autonomy is reflected in couples' relationships where in spite of limitations to establish contacts with the German population, and barriers imposed to couples wanting to marry, some managed to establish a family either in Cuba or in Germany. Unfortunately many other families had to suffer separation usually because one of the partner whether in Cuba or in Germany did not receive authorization from their respective government to travel to the other country. Still today children from these relationships have not had the opportunity to get to know or meet again their other parent.

Cuban-German couples in the GDR were assimilated into the system. The Cuban partner had the chance to find a job –in the case where they had completed studies in the GDR– or continue with the job they had already been doing. For Cuban-German couples living in Cuba, it was relatively more difficult for the German partner to find a job. Another common problem was simply finding a place to live and the couple was usually confined to live with other relatives like in-laws. For these reasons some decided to go back the GDR. Whether in Cuba or in the GDR, they were perceived as couples with privileges, especially in Cuba, because they could travel to visit their relatives. Visits to the GDR were greeted happily by both families. After these visits when the German partner returned to Cuba they could bring new electronic or household devices and also replace those that were broken.

Immediately after the breakdown of the socialist countries in Eastern Europe and the incidents that followed in 1989 in Berlin, Cuban students and workers under orders from the Cuban government had to return to Cuba. In 1991 there were only 3,362 Cubans in Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt: 2004) compared to the 12,492 that were reported in 1987 (Mac Con Uladh, 2005b: 52) (See Appendix 1). Uncertainties surrounding their future in Germany and the insecure political situation in Europe accelerated this process. On the other hand, many Cuban-German couples in Cuba decided to return to Germany. Reasons in doing so were the economic crisis in Cuba and to be near their German families in a period of uncertainty immediately after the reunification.

A new era of relations between Cuba and Germany began in 1990 after German reunification. Germany cancelled all contracts and interchange programs with Cuba –

the same occurred with the rest of the socialist countries— as a consequence, an economic crisis known as ‘Periodo Especial’ began in Cuba. At this point international relations between Cuba and most European countries changed in character. Because socialism disappeared in Europe, Cuba began economic relations with Western Europe. Countries like Spain, France, Italy and the reunified Germany showed commercial interest in Cuba, all of which was possible after the legalization of dollars in 1994 and after new laws for foreign investment in the island were approved. However, economic interests were soon conditional upon political changes in Cuba.

The European Union signed the Common Position in 1996, a position which makes economic interchange dependent on democratic changes in the island. The Common Position is considered an interference in Cuban internal affairs and it is not accepted by the Cuban government. Cuba also considers the Common Position to be a quasi-embargo on the part of the EU. Under this agreement Europe attempts to maintain a position, which pleases the U.S. concerning its embargo on Cuba. Though the Common Position is an obstacle to maintain commerce with Cuba, this has not hindered many European countries from establishing bilateral agreements and investing in Cuba. Nevertheless bureaucratic difficulties and the world economic crisis in 2008 resulted that in 2009 many enterprises withdraw their investments or sold their shares in Cuba. Cuba has, in turn, invited new investors, especially from Venezuela and China, to start businesses on the island (Oficina Económica y Comercial de España en la Habana, 2011: 22). Hence, unlike the 90’s in which Europe was the most important commercial partner to Cuba, today Cuba engages in more economic activity with Latin America and Asia than in prior years. The Cuban government has made very clear that under political pressure from outside the country will look for other resources and partners in order to maintain its autonomy and independence. I agree with Wulffen when he writes: “Cubans are very proud of their sovereignty and national dignity. They will not accept any external interference. They will decide which path they will take in the future<sup>75</sup>” (Wulffen, 2008: 8).

After much criticism from European countries, as well as from the rest of the world, concerning the situation of human rights in Cuba, the country began to release

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<sup>75</sup> “Los cubanos, un pueblo orgulloso de su soberanía y de su dignidad nacional, no aceptarán ningún tipo de injerencia externa. Ellos mismos decidirán el camino que seguirán en el futuro” (Wulffen, 2008: 8). Own translation.

political prisoners, who had been incarcerated in the black spring of 2003. Despite the liberation of these prisoners and the promise from President Raúl Castro to ameliorate the economic situation in Cuba, the European Union has not banned the Common Position. Some political and economic changes are expected to come immediately after the celebration in 2011 of the VI Congress of the Communist Party in Cuba. Any improvement in the economic situation in Cuba will depend on the results of the VI Congress, as well as future European participation in the Cuban economy.

Whether Cuban migrants in Europe will play a role in these changes to come is not yet certain. However, their resources could be an instrument to strengthen relationships at all levels. That will depend on the willingness of Cuba to embrace their influence, not to mention the interest Cuban migrants show towards such transformation. This issue is still open for discussion and remains a topic for further research.

# **Chapter 4**

## **Methodology**

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### **Methodology**

This chapter is dedicated to the introduction of the methodology used in the presented research. In the first part the importance of qualitative methodology in the social sciences is discussed. Next origin and development of Grounded Theory (GT) are discussed, which is the method employed in the presented research. The following sections illustrate how the research was conducted, the process of data collection and analysis, the technique used for gathering information and sampling the participants of the research. The last part explains how the analysis and interpretation of data was conducted following the logic of grounded theory. In the end I will discuss my own position as researcher in the study and how this has influenced interaction and interpretation of data.

#### **Using qualitative methodology**

Nowadays studying migration has become an interdisciplinary subject of interest from economics to ethnology, pedagogy, political science, psychology, urban development, demography and sociology, to list but a few. In sociology, research on migration is based on quantitative as well as qualitative methodologies depending on the researched topic. Usually when there is an interest to look into motivations for migration and how individuals take the decision to migrate, researchers tend to use qualitative methods (Gruner-Domić, 2005; Eggert, 2008; Hein, 2006; Berg, 2009ab; Brandhorst, 2009). Qualitative research is understood to refer to “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 17).

Kleining recommends the conduction of a qualitative research when “die Gegenstände und Themen nach allgemeinem Wissensstand, nach Kenntnis des Forschers oder auch nur nach seiner Meinung, komplex, differenziert, wenig überschaubar, widersprüchlich sind oder wenn zu vermuten steht, dass sie nur als ‘einfach’ erscheinen, aber – vielleicht – Unbekanntes verbergen” (Kleining, 1995: 16 in Böhm, 2005: 90). The complexity of themes, which can be approached using qualitative methods, covers a wide spectrum, particularly because this kind of research “is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world ... This means that qualitative



researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people brings to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011: 3). These characteristics of the qualitative research also apply to the presented study. As stated in previous chapters there is little information and systematic research concerning the Cuban migration in Germany (Gruner-Domić, 1997a; Eggert, 2008; Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009).

Working with qualitative methods implies a more open and flexible approach to the data. The interpretation process relies on interaction between researcher and data. As Denzin & Lincoln (2011) express, “research is an interactive process shaped by one’s personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity and those of the people in the setting” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011: 5). However, working in this way implies that the researcher resist some degree of uncertainty. Though qualitative methods provide a set of tools to analyze data, while immersed in the ‘how to do it’ following step by step, researchers could feel not only alone but also insecure and they continually ask themselves if the path they follow is the ‘right one’ or if they have missed something in the way. Because the ‘how to do it’ is connected to the subjectivity of the researcher, which implies his or her own academic formation, experiences and, why not, his or her own taste in research<sup>1</sup>, qualitative studies were considered insufficiently scientific for many decades. In contraposition “the experimental (positivist) sciences (physics, chemistry, economics, and psychology, for example) are often seen as the crowning achievements of Western civilization, and in their practices, it is assumed that ‘truth’ can transcend opinion and personal bias” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011: 2).

However, in the establishment of sociology and psychology as scientific disciplines, the use of quantitative methods was regarded as objective because they look for representative samples, apply standard instruments like questionnaires and produce replicable results. In contrast qualitative methods were regarded as unreliable because the production of knowledge is based on interpretation, which cannot be measured and/or counted. In spite of this, quantitative and qualitative methodologies have coexisted throughout the development of human sciences. Inductive analyses of social phenomena like “The Polish Peasant in Europe and America” by Thomas and Znaniecki, which appeared for the first time in 1918 and Sigmund Freud’s (1899)

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<sup>1</sup> All these aspects are conceptualized in the Grounded Theory methodology as ‘theoretical sensitivity’ (Glaser & Holton, 2004).

case studies, which gave birth to psychoanalysis, have been carried out since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was not until after the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, that social scientists began to question the rigidity in the implementation of quantitative methods.

After more than half a century in the systematic use of qualitative methods, its subsequent theoretical development and commitment of researchers with in-depth social understanding, there is a general consensus that “qualitative interpretations are constructed” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011: 14). Reflexivity from the researcher’s side digs into layers of multiple meanings. Through this action new voices are raised. They come from disadvantaged groups, ethnic minorities, and individuals excluded in their social participation from the state. In the same light, the presented study is a constructed interpretation regarding Cuban migration and their strategies of integration in the German society.

Furthermore, I as researcher as well as you, as reader, should bear in mind “that there is no clear window into the inner life of an individual. Any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity. There are not objective observations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of – and between – the observer and the observed. Subjects, or individuals, are seldom able to give full explanations of their actions or intentions; all they can offer are accounts or stories about what they did and why. No single method can grasp the subtle variations in ongoing human experience. Consequently, qualitative researchers deploy a wide-range of interconnected interpretive methods, always seeking better ways to make more understandable the worlds of experience that have been studied” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011: 11-12).

### **Grounded Theory as methodology employed**

Among the array of qualitative methods I decided to analyze the data using the grounded theory approach. According to Böhm (2005), „Grounded Theory ist besonders für die Untersuchung von Phänomenen geeignet, bei denen die Art der persönlichen Erfahrungen bedeutungsvoll sind“ (Böhm, 2005: 92). The subject of the study is the Cuban migration to Germany. My main interest is to look into the experience of Cubans, who had taken the decision to migrate and now reside in Germany. While this is a subject little explored in Europe, research based on a

grounded theory design furthermore provides the opportunity of approaching the theme from an actor-centered perspective.

By choosing qualitative methodology in general and grounded theory in particular, I have taken into account critical restrictions to the methodology (Thomas & James, 2006). For instance, it is held that when using grounded theory one should approach the subject under study with an open mind and without previous knowledge or without a set of concepts and theories in mind. The researcher should start like a 'tabula rasa' (Glaser, 1978). This is possible when researchers begin a study with little knowledge about the studied subject. However, many researchers – including the presented research– investigate a subject because it is close to personal experiences. Hence, while I am a member of the studied group –Cuban migrants in Germany – my previous knowledge and experience in the subject are also part of the research. It was important in this sense to be constantly aware of it and have a critical view in all steps of the research.

But, what is grounded theory about and what kind of results are derived from such a methodology? Although there are disagreements among authors (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1997; Charmaz, 2006; Bowers & Schatzman, 2009) about how grounded theory must be conducted, some guidelines are common to different interpretations and applications. Strauss and Corbin emphasize that grounded theory “is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 23).

Morse (2009) argues that “grounded theory enables the identification and description of phenomena, their main attributes, and the core, social or social psychological processes, as well as their interactions in the trajectory of change. In other words, it allows us to explicate what is *going on* or *what is happening* (or *has happened*) within a setting or around a particular event” (Morse, 2009: 13-4).

Charmaz (2011) understands grounded theory as a methodology, which provides “flexible analytic guidelines that enable researchers to focus their data collection and to build middle-range theories. These guidelines emphasize studying processes in the field setting(s), engaging in simultaneous data collection and analysis, adopting

comparative methods, and checking and elaborating our tentative categories” (Charmaz, 2011: 360).

When building a theory and in the course of a research process, the researcher gets involved in different steps, which cannot be understood as a linear process but rather a circular one where data collection, analysis, interpretation and literature review are recurrent spots before a grounded theory emerges. Charmaz (2006) identifies following components in the practice of grounded theory.

- Simultaneous involvement in the data collection and analysis
- Constructing analytic codes and categories from data, not from preconceived logically deduced hypotheses
- Using the constant comparative method, which involves making comparisons during each stage of the analysis
- Advancing theory development during each step of data collection and analysis
- Memo-writing to elaborate categories, specify their properties, define relationships between categories, and identify gaps
- Sampling aimed toward theory construction, not for population representativeness
- Conducting the literature review after developing an independent analysis (Charmaz, 2006: 5-6)

In other words, grounded theory involves the study of phenomena and their consequences. Data collection and analysis are part of the same processes. Following the principle of theoretical sampling, new data is collected. The analysis of data consists of building codes, which are grouped together in categories. As categories are developed, connections among categories are established. In an advanced stage of the analysis a core category emerges. Around this category the rest of developed categories are connected. Thus, the level of conceptualization attained explains variation in data and brings some light into the phenomena studied. In order to develop codes and categories the researcher constantly compares them with the data already collected and the new ones brought into the analysis. Charmaz (2011) summarizes the constant comparative procedure as this: “We compare data with data as we develop codes; next, we compare data with codes; after that, we compare codes and raise significant codes to tentative categories; then, we compare data and codes with these categories; subsequently, we treat our major category(ies) as a concept(s),

and last, we compare concept with concept, which may include comparing our concept with disciplinary concepts” (Charmaz, 2011: 361).

How theoretical sampling is conducted, which codes and categories are developed, and which relation among categories can be established, is explained in the rest of this chapter. Eventually “a grounded theory research report is a description of how the processes make up the discovered theory and often includes a comparison of how this theory and existing theory adds to our knowledge” (Stern & Kerry, 2009: 68).

Before discussing how I proceeded in the application of the methodology I will briefly offer a panoramic view into the origin and development of grounded theory.

### **Origin and Development of Grounded Theory**

Back in the 1960s two American sociologists, Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser joined their efforts at the University of California to work together in a research project, which they titled ‘Awareness of Dying’ (1965). Strauss had studied at Chicago University, where researchers of the Chicago School were embedded in the tradition of pragmatism and privileged ethnographic field research based on the research method of George Herbert Mead. In contrast, Glaser had a foundation at Columbia University, whose tradition is rooted in positivism. He worked under the guidance of Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Robert K. Merton (Bryant & Charmaz, 2011). Strauss’s as well as Glaser’s perspective was “rooted in pragmatism and symbolic interactionism, with its emphasis on structure and process” (Corbin, 2009: 37).

The revolutionary aspect of the cooperation between Glaser and Strauss was the development of a methodology to analyze qualitative data while using an inductive procedure. The idea behind the methodology is to develop conceptual explanations in form of middle range theories. In so doing, they challenged the contemporary way of doing science based on a linear understanding of conducting research, which mainly uses a deductive approach, and where theories are not generated but tested using quantitative methods. Glaser and Strauss have called their methodology Grounded Theory, which came to light in 1967 with the publication of “The Discovery of Grounded Theory”. In this book “they intended to show how such research projects could produce outcomes of equal significance to those produced by the predominant statistical-quantitative, primarily mass survey methods of the day (Bryant & Charmaz, 2011: 33). Seen historically, Grounded Theory represented a resolution of different epistemological positions and a solution to a broader problem about perceptions of the

status of qualitatively based knowledge in the social sciences (Thomas & James, 2006: 768).

“The Discovery of Grounded Theory” constituted guidance to the analysis of qualitative data in subsequent decades. The philosophical roots of the methodology indicate that “reality can be discovered, explored, and understood. From this perspective, reality is unitary, knowable, and waiting to be discovered” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2011: 34). It was also assumed that the external reality could be grasped for any researchers in the same way. Hence, “all observers would see much the same thing in the field” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2011: 35).

Despite the efforts from Glaser and Strauss (1967) to be clear in the depiction of the methodology, inconsistencies and ambiguities in its application have been signaled by researchers (Thomas and James, 2006, Allan, 2003). One of the most discussed issues refers to the coding procedure and how researchers interact with the collected data. Strauss and Glaser had different perceptions about the analysis process, which resulted in the end of their cooperation. Glaser’s Columbia University positivism and theoretical background in structural-functionalism and Strauss’s University of Chicago pragmatism drew on conflicting philosophical and methodological presuppositions about the nature of reality, objectives of inquiry, and the research process and practice (Charmaz, 2011: 365).

Among researchers grounded theory was divided into a Straussian and a Glaserian approach (Morse, 2009; Jones & Alony, 2011). This breach became manifest with the publication of “Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory” by Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin (1990). This book was originally thought to be used as textbook when teaching the methodology. The authors give explicit guidelines about how to conduct the coding procedure, introduce axial coding and are specific about which question researchers should ask and look for in the data.

Grounded theory became more and more a methodology accessible to be implemented in research. As part of its development, Charmaz and Bryant (2007) published “The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory” where authors from disciplines such as education, health care, sociology and information technology among others develop further processes like theoretical sampling, writing memos, coding procedures, which are essential parts of the methodology. References to grounded theory have not remained exclusively connected to its founders. For decades Glaser

and Strauss (1967), though working separately, have been teaching the method; hence, a new generation of researchers (Morse; Stern; Corbin; Bowers; Charmaz & Clarke, 2009) developed Grounded Theory further, adapting the method to new times and applying computer technology in the interpretation of data.

In more recent years, Charmaz (2006) has gone a step further, challenging the unitary and unchangeable assumption of reality. Since its origins, Grounded Theory “builds on the fluid, interactive, and emergent research process of its originators but seeks to recognize partial knowledge, multiple perspectives, diverse positions, uncertainties, and variation in both empirical experience and its theoretical rendering... A repositioned grounded theory method assumes that any rendering is just that: a *representation* of experience, not a replication of it” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2011: 51). From this starting point she develops a constructivist approach to the methodology of grounded theory. In constructivist grounded theory, “realities are multiple and the viewer is part of what is viewed. Subjectivities matter. Values shape what stands as fact. To the extent possible, constructivist grounded theorists enter the studied phenomenon and attempt to see it from the inside. Researchers and participants co-construct the data through interaction. Data reflect their historical, social, and situational locations, including those of the researcher. Representations of the data are inherently problematic and partial” (Charmaz, 2011: 366).

The constructivist approach of Grounded Theory recognizes partiality of knowledge in all stages of research. For constructivists, generalizations remain partial, conditional, and situated. Moreover, generalizations are not neutral (Charmaz, 2011: 366). Reality is embedded in multicausal and complex interactions, which are difficult to grasp and explain. That does not mean that reality cannot be explained, but rather it refers to the way of doing research, where researchers in their selection of research subjects and the interpretation of data assume a position, which especially in the social sciences is far from neutral.

During the research process “constructivist grounded theorists contend that researcher’s starting points and standpoints, including those occurring throughout inquiry, influence the research process and product” (Charmaz, 2011: 366). Besides previous knowledge and experiences, which shape the research, in constructivist grounded theory interaction with data enriches the own experiences. Corbin (2009) describes this viewpoint, which I also employ, as “the constructionist viewpoint that concepts and theories are constructed (they don’t emerge) by researchers out of

stories that are told by research participants who are trying to explain and make sense out of their experiences and/or lives, both to the researcher and themselves. Out of these multiple constructions, analysts build something that they call knowledge” (Corbin, 2009: 39). She continues with a quotation from Schwandt (1998) “In a fairly unremarkable sense, we are all constructivists if we believe that the mind is active in the construction of knowledge. Most of us would agree that knowing is not passive – a simple imprinting of sense data on the mind – but active; mind does something with these impressions, at the very least forms abstractions of concepts. In this sense, constructivism means that human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as construct or make it. We invent concepts, models, and schemes to make sense of experience and further we continually test and modify these constructions in light of new experience” (Corbin, 2009: 39).

It has been a long journey before gaining clarity what grounded theory is about and its implication for research in the social sciences. It was not a straightforward path I have followed and many questions sprung out at me at once: Do I have to choose one of the ‘variations’ of the methodology and continue with the coding by sticking to the analysis of one of them only? Ideas and analysis of data for each of the grounded theory variations at the beginning felt ‘right’ for me. I began with the analysis doing open coding, integrating categories, looking for relationships among categories. In the process I realized that though I adhered to the analysis of data from a constructivist position (Charmaz, 2006, 2011), I also share Corbin’s point of view that, “Perhaps it would be better to think of grounded theory as a compendium of different methods that have as their purpose the construction of theory from data, with each version of grounded theory method having its own philosophical foundation and approach to data gathering and analysis, while sharing some common procedures” (Corbin, 2009: 41). Experts in grounded theory will find here that I did not follow all steps described for only one of these techniques, but rather made sense of the data while I was reflecting through memos on how I conducted the analysis. In the words of Charmaz (2011), “Constructivist grounded theory adopts the methodological strategies of Glaser and Strauss’s classic statement but integrates relativity and reflexivity throughout the research process. As such, this approach loosens grounded theory from its positivist, objectivist roots and brings the researcher’s roles and actions into view ... Constructivist grounded theory views knowledge as located in time, space, and



situation and takes into account the researcher's construction of emergent concepts" (Charmaz, 2011: 364-365).

Throughout this research two aspects have remained a constant reference. The first is the interaction with data in the construction of reality. The second is the reflexivity at a meta level in how the researcher interprets and is influenced in the interaction with data. Reflexivity was present in all stages of research and was reflected in form of memos.

When students today approach the qualitative methodology they immediately begin using software programs, which have been developed to analyze qualitative data. They are known as Computer Assisted/Aided Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS). On the market products like Atlas.ti, MAXQDA, NVivo, or HyperRESEARCH, just to mention a few, have drawn attention in all fields of qualitative studies. Grounded theory had not escaped this technical discussion. The days in which Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommended scissor, glue and color pencils to differentiate codes and facilitate grouping them in categories, have been left behind. Students and researchers working in the field of qualitative analysis undertake training in at least one of these software programs. However, due to my academic education in Cuba, where access to CAQDAS is rather limited, I did have a limited knowledge about the possibilities of such software in the beginning.

After being immersed in the coding process I began looking for alternatives in order to have easy access to the codes already developed, gain a quick overview and instantly link connections among codes to the correspondent data. After coding three interviews using pencil and paper I was drowning in pages and pages of transcript and codes. Through the Mailingliste Qualitative Sozialforschung from Free University in Berlin I contacted another researcher, who had also interest in working with a CAQDAS developed for the Apple operating system. We joined our efforts and began coding our interviews with the software TAMSAnalyzer (Text Analysis Markup System). TAMS proved useful for me during the open and axial coding. I could also insert memos and through the graphic function I found visualization of relations among codes. In spite of all advantages from the software I returned to paper and pencil during the last stages of the coding procedure but also when writing memos. One reason was that at a certain point the complexity of using such software took much more time and attention than I wished. I realized that instead of concentrating on the coding process I spent much more time looking which function I could use to

obtain specific information from the data. Another reason was that while revising the literature about migration theories and Cuban migration I immediately started taking notes, which I later developed in memos. On occasions, typing memos afterwards in the corresponding place and linking them to codes was more time consuming than writing directly in the text I was working on.

In general, TAMS has been a valuable tool when organizing data. However, I had to keep in mind that while coding it was important to keep trace of the coding process itself and not to get lost while learning how to use the software. There is not a definitive answer about how the introduction of technologies can influence the interpretation of data in qualitative research (Flick, 2011; Flick, von Kardorff & Steinke, 2012). Nevertheless the use of CAQDAS is not a criterion for the validity and quality of research. They remain what they are, tools for the organization of data and a support in analysis, interpretation, and construction of theory in the social sciences.

### **Conducting the research**

Right at the beginning of the research and before collecting the first data I realized that being Cuban was not sufficient to facilitate my entrance into the field. Certainly as Cuban I had some advantages. It was possible for me to get to know other Cubans. Our shared experience because of our place of birth was important in building empathy from the first moment. Another advantage was to recognize meeting places for Cubans like restaurants and bars where I approached Cubans, especially in advanced stages of data collection.

However, when asking about the possibility of being part of the research and if I could conduct some interviews with Cubans, who were living in Germany, I received a varied array of responses. Partly joking and partly serious a person asked if I was ‘spying’ for the Cuban government. In other words, they tried to clarify my position among Cuban migrants. If I had been studying in Germany with authorization from the Cuban government, some would have seen me as someone ‘too close to the government’. Others asked if I had a PRE<sup>2</sup> (Residence Permit Abroad) – meaning authorization by the Cuban government to live abroad – or if I had received a permit to travel and then decided not to return to Cuba. In the latter case, Cubans receive the

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<sup>2</sup> Permiso de Residencia en el Extranjero.

status of ‘migrant’ from the Cuban side. These attempts at categorization which Cubans implicitly perform are a form of classification, which almost includes a political orientation of the person living abroad.

In relation to Cuba I have a position of ‘immigrant’<sup>3</sup>. This means that after being eleven months abroad I decided not to return. My position as immigrant in the view of the Cuban authorities influenced how much information interviewees, after agreeing to participate in the study, would share with me, especially regarding their political opinions. Former workers, for instance, who stayed in Germany because they married immediately after finishing their work contracts chose to be more careful about their political opinions or avoided the subject, while those who had an ‘instrumental marriage’ or were ‘immigrant’ like me were more open in their opinions.

While recruiting interviewees, some asked if I had a questionnaire to apply. In that case they wanted to see the questions before deciding whether to participate in the study or not. When I explained that the study was based on open questions, some opted not to participate. The argument was that they would only answer questions after being prepared.

Collection of data took place in Berlin and Bonn, with most of the interviews conducted in Berlin. The cities were selected because of their accessibility and the presence of a Cuban consulate in both of them. The two consulates are a result of the relations Cuba had with the GDR and FRG, with Berlin the capital of the GDR, Bonn of the FRG. After the German reunification the two Cuban consulates continued their services to Cubans in both West and East Germany.

Before conducting the interviews I visited places in Berlin, which are associated with Cuba. The first place I visited was ‘La Bodeguita del Medio’ in allusion to the restaurant of the same name in Havana. The decoration of the place includes symbols like the Cuban flag and photos of Cuban heroes. Customers can stamp their signature in all surfaces like tables, chairs and walls, as it is the custom in the restaurant in Havana. Once a week a Cuban band plays there. On these occasions I could contact other Cubans, who went to listen to the music, dance and taste traditional Cuban dishes.

Other places that drew my attention were bars and a disco. Coming to these places is for some Cubans a kind of refuge, for in this atmosphere they feel closer to their

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cubadiplomacia.cu/alemania/ES/ServiciosConsulares.aspx> (13.08.2012)

country of origin. Cubans regularly also meet at ‘Alexanderplatz’ (Alexander Square), once the meeting place per excellence in Berlin during the time of the GDR, today still an encounter point due to its accessibility with public transport. Former workers of the GDR but also Cubans, who have recently arrived, meet there to exchange information concerning procedures to follow in Germany or to discuss about current Cuban affairs.

Especially in Berlin, cultural institutions like ‘Instituto Cervantes’ and Ibero American Institute organize activities with Cuban artists and show Cuban films. On such occasions not only Cubans but all persons with interest in the country exchange ideas. Going to lectures and expositions also was of interest to contact Cubans in a different atmosphere.

The Cuban embassy in Berlin organizes cultural activities like ‘Fiesta de Solidaridad’ which refers to the celebration of 26<sup>th</sup> July, the second important festivity in Cuba after the 1<sup>st</sup> January, the revolution day. For this occasion, Cuban musicians from Cuba and Germany are invited. During the exchange programs between Cuba and the GDR it was agreed that Cubans could take that day as holiday, so that Cubans are able to celebrate patriotic dates outside the country, which provide a sense of nationalism and belonging among Cubans, no matter where they are.

Besides this celebration, the Cuban embassy in Berlin supports the organizations ‘Cuba Sí’ and ‘La Estrella Cubana’. ‘Cuba Sí’ was founded in 1991 with the idea of supporting Cuba from Germany after all treaties between the two countries were cancelled and Cuba lost economic advantages after the transformation of socialist countries. ‘La Estrella de Cuba’ was founded in 2010 with the objective of supporting Cuban migrants in Germany during the first period of their residency. In the Appendix 16 I have listed Cuban places and organizations in Germany.

In Bonn, former capital of the FRG I contacted Diego, who has lived there since 1995. Diego is an active member of the organization DeCub, which was founded in 1988. Among the objectives of this organization is getting to know the Cuban culture and promoting exchange between Cubans and Germans. DeCub has a more critical approach to the Cuban society and invites journalists, academics, and students to discuss the current situation in Cuban in their publication CubaJournal.

After situating myself in the Cuban landscape, I began the process of data collection and analysis.

## **Data collection**

The period of data collection was extended between February 2008 and March 2011. Data collection followed the principle of theoretical sampling as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967: 45). In order to collect information I analyzed interviews, informal conversations, accounts of experiences former Cuban students and workers had in the GDR and observations. All data was analyzed and integrated into the different categories.

While coding the interviews, when necessary, I looked for other sources of information. That was the case, for instance, when coding for the category ‘Strategies to remain legally in Germany’. I realized that when Cubans arrive in Germany with a tourist visa and decide to stay, they look for alternatives in order to obtain a residence permit. That meant that the decision to stay in Germany was closely related to the possibility to remain legally. While coding the interviews it was evident that in order to understand the procedure, by which foreigners can reside in Germany, it was necessary for me to understand better the German regulations concerning migration.

One step in this direction was to consult the German migration law (Aufenthaltsgesetz). I then decided to conduct an interview with a lawyer specialized in taking cases from refugees who apply for political asylum in Germany. I assisted also in a workshop with a lawyer specialized in family issues between Germans and Spanish-speaking foreigners. With the information obtained I could better understand the main recent changes in the German migration law. This reference helped me during the coding process to clarify strategies and procedures Cubans followed to remain legally in Germany taking into account during which period they arrived.

A valuable source of information was the book “Regresé siendo otra persona. Cubanas y Cubanos en la RDA” (Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009). This publication collects a series of interviews with former Cuban students and workers in the GDR. The interviewees arrived in Germany between 1961 and 1987. After concluding their studies and / or work they returned to Cuba, where they live today. These Cubans narrate their experiences in the GDR. The analysis of the interviews was an important complement to trace the diversity of exchange programs between Cuba and Germany, as well as living conditions of Cubans in Germany.

The most striking experience during the period of data collection was when I decided to participate in the V meeting of Cubans in Europe, which was celebrated in October

2010 in Prague. All Cuban organizations based in a European country meet once a year to discuss Cuban politics. That year, the Cuban embassy in Germany invited all Cubans with residency in Germany to participate in this meeting. I went to Prague with the reference I had from a similar encounter, which took place in Berlin, in April 2010. The organization in Prague accepted my application. However, once there, a few minutes before the meeting began, the organizers denied my participation. The expressed argument was that I was not an active member in any of the Cuban organizations recognized by the Cuban embassy in Germany. Though the invitation sent by the embassy included all Cubans resident in Germany, at the last minute the criterion of admission was no longer Cuban with residency in Europe but membership in one of these organizations. The underlying reason was my participation and relationship with the director of the film 'Havana, new art of making ruins'. In Cuba this film is criticized and its public screening is not allowed.

In search of information between Cuba and Germany I had the opportunity to interview Heinz Langer, ambassador of the GDR in Cuba between 1975 and 1979 and later between 1983 and 1986, and Bernd Wulffen, ambassador of Germany in Cuba between 2001 and 2005. The information they provided was quite helpful in complementing the research with insights into past and present relations between the two countries at political, economic and cultural level. Two additional interviews were conducted with two German students who were in Cuba between 2008 and 2010. One of them was working in cultural projects in Cuba and the other teaching German language in a language school.

### **Overview of the sample**

The sample is composed of 35 interviewees who at the time of interviews had been living in Germany an average of 11 years (See Appendix 15). The person with the least time in Germany was Manuel with three months; and Pedro with 31 years the longest. 7 interviewees had a temporal residency in Germany, 5 had a permanent residency and 23 have the German citizenship. Pablo commutes between Cuba and Germany. He has been working in Germany for six months a year since 1994, the other half years he spends in Cuba.

In the sample, 21 are women and 14 are men. The age average is 39 years. Both the youngest and the eldest are men, with 19 years and 68 years respectively. 5 persons came as students to the GDR and 2 as workers, all of whom returned to Cuba after

finishing their studies or work contracts. Of this Cuban-GDR sub-sample only 2 students, one woman and one man, returned to the GDR, for during their studies they had married a German citizen. Two women came to the FRG (West Berlin) in 1980 after marrying a German. From the remaining 31, who came since 1990, 6 did so as students, 2 with a work contract, 7 with a tourist visa (and then decided to stay), 16 after marrying a German citizen in Cuba or elsewhere, and one came as part of an exchange program.

21 persons of the entire sample have children. Of these, 7 decided to have their children in Cuba. All but 2 came with their children. At the time of interview, 21 were married, 6 were divorced or separated, 5 living with a partner and 3 single.

Concerning their work situation, 9 were unemployed, 6 were students, 19 working either employed or self-employed, and 1 person retired.

In order to protect the identity of all participants their names and personal data, which could be used for their identification have been changed.

### **Conducting interviews and transcription**

The interview is one of the techniques commonly used in qualitative research. Around a research question, researchers gather information from the participant's perspective. Hence, it is assumed that participants had gone through the experience, which is at the centre of the research. For Kvale (1996), interviews are particularly suited for studying people's understanding of the meanings in their lived world, describing their experiences and self-understanding, and clarifying and elaborating their own perspective on their lived world (Kvale, 1996: 105). While the interviewer poses the questions, the interviewee does much of the talk (Charmaz, 2006).

Thus the interview "goes beyond the spontaneous exchange of views as in everyday conversation, and becomes a careful questioning and listening approach with the purpose of obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge. The research interview is not a conversation between equal partners, because the researcher defines and controls the situation. The topic of the interview is introduced by the researcher, who also critically follows up on the subject's answers to his or her questions" (Kvale, 1996: 6).

From a constructivist perspective, the interview is understood as a social situation of interaction where the information obtained is rather a product of the two participants. As Rosenthal (2012) writes, „eine Form der gemeinsamen sozialen Produktion

sozialer Wirklichkeit durch Interviewer und Befragten” (Rosenthal, 2010: 127). In other words; the “interview as such is neither an objective nor a subjective method – its essence is intersubjective interaction” (Kvale, 1996: 66).

It requires ability from the researcher to obtain the information needed. In this regard, an interview training should not be underestimated and is recommended before or right at the beginning of the research (Flick, 2011: 235). After deciding which type of interview I would apply, I conducted two pilot interviews in order to gain some training and applied the open coding technique in analyzing, since it was the first time I analyzed data with the procedure of grounded theory. After completing the first transcription, I analyzed carefully the way I conducted the interview. This prompted clues how to avoid some mistakes such as interrupting the interviewee before she could finish her idea. Being conscious of my own mistakes made me listen attentively what the interviewee said. I afterwards wrote down questions, which I could ask at the end of the narration or in a second interview. It helped me also to improve my strategy when conducting interviews. I agree with Rosenthal (2010) that researchers should become conscious of which techniques they use when conducting open interviews (Rosenthal, 2010: 130). Otherwise they risk directing the interview into specific themes leaving outside others of interest for the interviewee. At the end of each interview I wrote a memo, giving my impressions and noting incidents, which I did not expect.

At first glance one might think that because of my status as Cuban living in Germany, the access to the ‘Cuban community’ in Germany would have been smooth. However, once in the field I had to clarify my interest in studying the Cuban migration in Germany. During informal conversations other Cubans wanted to know where I was studying and whether I received support from the Cuban government. In a visit to a restaurant, where a Cuban band was playing, a musician wanted to know if after concluding the research I would go back. Then, as part of a joke he said that he wanted to know that before considering to participate or not because I could go back to Cuba taking information about who had expressed negative comments about the country. He was referring to the fact that Cuban authorities have been known to revoke the permit to travel to Cubans who have been open against the government<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.consulcubaer.com/cb/index.php?id=161> (08.08.2012)



Through this joke, he wanted to express his concern regarding what I would do with the information obtained and if the participants could be identified. Assuring that data, which can be used to identify participants, would be changed, I explicitly addressed these concerns in advance to any interview. I applied the principles of anonymity and confidentiality which “implies that private data identifying the subjects will not be reported” (Kvale, 1996: 114). That was essential not only in the access to the information but also considering the status interviewees have in Germany and in relation to their contact to relatives in Cuba. The participants, who still have relatives in Cuba, were concerned that in case they express some critical views regarding the actual government in Cuba, their family could suffer some coercion after the publication of the study. Others expressed concern related to visits to Cuba thinking that in case the government could discover the identity of the persons involved in the study, could later be denied entry permit to Cuba.

Furthermore, I realized in the field, that talking about migration among Cubans is a sensitive subject, because political issues are intertwined. Due to this it was not possible for me to reach Cubans covering the whole spectrum of political ideas regarding Cuba. At the same time, exclusively discussing politics is outside the scope of this research. Thus, I could observe during the interviews that some Cubans were cautious about their opinions concerning the government. In general, Cubans, who had successfully applied for political asylum in Germany, were more open in their critical views about the political and social situation in Cuba.

I realized that the first disclosure of information was an attempt to break what Kvale (1996) calls “an asymmetry of power” (Kvale, 1996: 20). My position as researcher was permanently challenged, probably because I also share with the interviewees the same cultural background. The sometimes rigid asymmetry within the interview was several times broken when the interviewee asked questions related to my own migration story. Only after giving information about myself I could begin or continue with the interview. Disclosure of experiences from both sides was part of the opening and building rapport. At the same time I was able to maintain a balance between distance and closeness and keep a relaxed atmosphere during the interviews.

Using the technique of snowball sampling, I first contacted Cubans who had been living in Germany for five or more years. I went to concerts of Cuban musicians, visited lectures with Cuban and other Latin American writers, and went to Cuban restaurants. These interviews allowed me to gain a picture around the migration

process from Cuba as well as about integration in Germany. I felt free in deciding which type of interview to use for collecting data. According to Glaser and Holton (2004), grounded theory uses all types of interviews and, as the study proceeds, the best interview style emerges (Glaser & Holton, 2004: 7). This means that after open and axial coding of each interview I then looked for further interviewees with characteristics I wanted to explore in more detail while taking into account the category system developed up to then. Interviews and coding was a process, which took around three years.

Qualitative research includes a wide variety of interview types. They vary from structured interviews (Glaser & Laudel, 2004), where questions are formulated following a precise order, to narrative interviews (Rosenthal, 2010) where after an instruction is given to begin with a narration afterwards questions are formulated according to the structure of the story telling. Taking my research topic into account, I decided to apply 'episodic interviews' (Flick, 2011). This kind of interview „gibt Raum für kontextbezogene Darstellungen in Form von Erzählungen, da diese einerseits im Vergleich zu anderen Darstellungsformen Erfahrungen und ihren Entstehungskontext unmittelbarer enthalten. Andererseits verdeutlichen sie die Prozesse der Wirklichkeitskonstruktion bei den Befragten ... Dabei richtet sich die Aufmerksamkeit im Interview auf Situationen bzw. Episoden, in denen der Interviewpartner Erfahrungen gemacht hat, die für die Fragestellung der Untersuchung relevant erscheinen. Sowohl die Darstellungsform (Beschreibung oder Erzählung) der entsprechenden Situation als auch die Auswahl von Situationen kann dabei weitgehend vom Interviewpartner nach Gesichtspunkten subjektiver Relevanz gestaltet werden. Ziel des episodischen Interviews ist, bereichsbezogen zu ermöglichen, Erfahrungen in allgemeiner, vergleichender etc. Form darzustellen, und gleichzeitig, die entsprechenden Situationen und Episoden zu erzählen“ (Flick, 2011: 239). This type of interview seemed best suited for exploring the processes of migration and integration.

When conducting the interviews, I first asked the person to choose a comfortable location. Most of the participants invited me to their homes, only few felt more comfortable talking in a cafe. I arranged my schedule according to the time participants had and assured myself that in case the interview had to be interrupted, it was because the person had other obligations and not because I was in a hurry. Otherwise they could have felt my stress, which affects the quality of the information

obtained. The opening question was improved over time. I took note about how the interviewees reacted to the first question and my own reactions to the course of narration. Hence I decided to begin as follows:

*“I’m interested to know about your migration experiences. How you left Cuba and came here and about your experiences in Germany. You can begin as you like. Take the time you need. I won’t interrupt you. I will take some notes and later I’ll ask some questions”.*

Beginning interviews in this way gave interviewees specific indications about what I was interested in. I also made clear that after listening to the story they had to tell I would ask questions to clarify passages or to add details to their narration.

According to Charmaz (2006), “In Grounded Theory interviewing differs from much in-depth interviewing because we narrow the range of interview topics to gather specific data for developing our theoretical framework as we proceed with conducting the interviews” (Charmaz, 2006: 29). In my case, however, I chose to begin the subsequent interviews with the same opening question. After the interviewee finished the main narration, my questions were directed to broadening the category system. For instance, when following their narratives I coded passages related to their participation in social spheres like work and/or studies, family, and relationships. In further interviews I then decided to explicitly ask about these conditions and grouped them under ‘Living conditions in Cuba’. In subsequent interviews I could saturate this category and its properties.

According to Glaser and Strauss (2006), the way to conduct interviews through a research project varies. At the beginning “respondents are allowed to talk with no imposed limitations of time. Often the researcher sits back and listens while the respondents tell their stories. Later, when interviews and observations are directed by the emerging theory, he can ask direct questions bearing on his categories. These can be answered sufficiently and fairly quickly. Thus, the time for any one interview grows shorter as the number of interviews increases” (Glaser & Strauss, 2006: 75-76). Again I had in the field a different experience. The length of each interview varied between two and six hours. With most of the respondents it was necessary to make two appointments in order to finish the interview. Probably the subject of investigation generated rather lengthy narrations. Though participants had the freedom to begin their narration any way they liked, they usually began narrating their experiences in Cuba and how they took the decision to migrate. When it was

necessary we scheduled a second appointment where they narrated their experiences after the migration to Germany. All in all, conducting interviews and coding was a process which took three years.

### **Theoretical sampling and coding procedure**

One characteristic of qualitative methods refers to the criteria for selecting the sample. In the frame of grounded theory the process by which the sample is collected is known as theoretical sampling. Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasize the importance of this process as the basis for the analysis, which leads to the formulation of the theory. “Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges ... The initial decisions for theoretical collection of data are based only on a general sociological perspective and on a general subject or problem area” (Glaser & Strauss, 2006: 45).

Hence, I identified Cubans living in Germany as the target group for data collection. The two conditions I initially took into account were being born in Cuba and having migrated to Germany after coming of age. I excluded from the sample Cubans born in Cuba but having come to Germany as minors because in this case the decision to come was taken by their parents. I included Cubans who were born in Cuba, obtained a German passport because one parent was German and decided to migrate after coming of age. This decision was based on the fact that Cuba grants nationality or citizenship on the grounds of *ius soli* for all persons born on Cuban territory. Thus, their applications for an exit permit were handled the same way as those of other Cuban citizens.

In grounded theory the decision how to continue with the sampling procedure is based on emergent categories after the initial coding with the first interview is concluded. Theoretical sampling is the strategy which “helps a researcher to discover variation in the category and differences between categories” (Charmaz, 2011: 363).

Glaser (1978) identifies two steps in data collection. In the first step the characteristics of the sample are minimized. By doing so the researcher ensures development of categories and its correspondent dimensions. In the second step the researcher maximizes differences within the sample. The selection process “must become very directed and deliberate, with conscious choices made about who and

what to sample in order to obtain the needed data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 187). In this way categories created develop further until reaching the point of saturation.

My snowball sampling began with a woman married to a German. At the time of interview she was studying pedagogy at the university though in Cuba she had already finished her studies. Continuation of studies was a requirement to validate her qualification in Germany. Only after finishing her studies again, she would be able to apply for a job in the area of her specialization. She was ‘looking for better perspectives’ within her profession. In the same interview the category ‘mastering the language’ in Germany was key in connection to the professional perspective. Hence, I then aimed to find more cases with specific perspective on finding a job requiring professional skills in combination with different levels in mastering German. Later I extended the sample to Cubans, who were engaged in workplaces like services, where a high proficiency of the language is not required.

I then began sampling persons who at that time had a job in the area of their studies. From here I moved to persons who came in application for a student place. After comparing six interviews in the category ‘looking for better perspectives’, when it was related to the profession, I found that the profession itself was used as the vehicle to leave the country.

Continuing in the vein of studies and work I then sampled then Cubans, who came as students or workers as part of the exchange programs during the time of the GDR. Comparison among interviews in the themes work and studies as motivation to leave the country deepened my understanding under which circumstances a person would leave. Additional interrogations were opened. Though studies and work seemed to be initial motivations to leave the country, permanence in Germany was related to foundation of a family in Germany and to regulations from Cuba regarding status of Cubans living abroad. I continued by sampling Cubans, who came because they were married to a German in Cuba. While coding for motivations to leave the country and comparing among interviews, I could deepen this category.

I knew that some Cubans came to Germany and stayed despite difficulties from Cuba in granting permission to go abroad and from Germany in granting and prolonging visa. Difficulties from both sides were narrated by Osvaldo. He came with a work contract, then, while working in Germany, decided to stay. He applied for political asylum although in Cuba he was not persecuted for political reasons. While coding this interview I concentrated on the strategy employed to remain in Germany. He

knew that political asylum would not be granted but still by the application he ‘bought time’ until he could find another way of staying legally.

After this, I looked for someone who had applied for political asylum for actual persecution in Cuba due to his political ideas. The opportunity came during the screening of Cuban films in a Cafe in Berlin. There I met Ernesto, who fulfilled this characteristic and agreed to an interview. Again, while coding, I realized the complexity of the process in ‘applying for political asylum’. In order to gain a better comprehension of the process, I then conducted an interview with a lawyer who had represented Cubans applying for asylum in Germany. This interview introduced questions about the procedure for asylum in Germany and how individuals position themselves while using this strategy for remaining in Germany.

I then asked myself how someone, who was not politically persecuted in Cuba, experienced the process of ‘applying for political asylum’ with the objective of ‘buying time’ before she could marry a German and stay legally. I felt that asking directly could not bring me to the persons I was looking for, because they were unlikely to admit a fraudulent application for asylum. Instead I continued with the snowball sampling procedure targeting persons who had come as tourists. In this regard I did not have to wait for long until I found Doris, who came invited by her sister and applied for political asylum before her tourist visa expired. She knew that her application would be denied but this was her only opportunity to remain in Germany for longer while looking for someone to marry her so she could remain legally.

While sampling for the category ‘applying for political asylum’, I decided for a less direct strategy. Hence, I did not ask Cubans for someone who had applied for asylum. Instead I explored how people had come. I was aware at the beginning that it could take a while before finding someone with the required characteristics. Meanwhile I contacted Cubans in different milieus where they could feel confident enough to narrate their stories. Looking for someone who had applied for political asylum as a strategy for ‘buying time’ before the person could remain legally in Germany introduced some uncertainty concerning how long I would have to look for someone. However, I decided to wait rather than pushing this issue. I wanted to approach persons who were willing to talk about their experiences.

I experienced the theoretical sampling as an active process. After building the first categories, the researcher moves on looking for properties until the categories are

saturated. The coding procedure was guiding the sampling process. As the researcher “collects data his job is to deal with exactly what is happening, not what he would want to happen, not what his own interest would wish the data to be. The data is not ‘truth’ it s not ‘reality’. It is exactly what is happening” (Glaser, 2001 in Gynnild, 2007: 423). Emergence of categories was the criterion to decide where to look next and in which themes to deepen my understanding. I had to remain flexible at the same time as tolerating uncertainties. For instance, when receiving a negative feedback from someone refusing to participate in the study, I reflected on the situation and came back to the list of persons I already contacted and simply continued with the snowball sampling.

### **Initial coding**

The essence of grounded theory is the breaking apart of data and labeling or conceptualizing each segment. As result of this conceptualization categories emerge. In this part I will clarify how I applied the coding procedure using examples of data. One of the main difficulties at the beginning of the coding procedure was the absence of guidelines how to code. I asked myself several times what should a code look like? Am I really coding or interpreting data from other perspectives? Discussing and coding my own data with the support of researchers and students was of valuable help in clarifying the procedure and later in looking for theoretical codes.

Charmaz (2011) explains the logic of grounded theory as “fragmenting empirical data through coding and working with resultant codes to construct abstract categories that fit these data and offer a conceptual analysis of them” (Charmaz, 2011: 361). Being confronted with the data for her implies “asking what is happening in small segments of data and questioning what theoretical category each segment indicates” (Charmaz, 2011: 363). However, as Berg (2007) points out, there are no descriptions about “specific tactics for developing categories or to suggest how to go about defining (operationalizing) these tactics” (Berg, 2007: 315). It is then left to the researcher to find her own way of coding, though the coding procedure and construction of categories should be clarified.

While doing open coding, the idea is to handle codes as tentative labeling and remain open for new hypotheses and interpretations. How the researcher is open to new interpretations is part of the flexibility while analyzing data. Below there is an

example of initial coding. In this segment, Roberto relates to the circumstances in which he took the decision to remain in Germany.

<p>I was supposed to leave Cuba only for six months. I mean, I wanted to leave the country, somehow, but when I left I didn't have the idea "I will stay somewhere else" but rather; I leave, I'll see what happens, how I feel, which perspectives I have in the future and then we'll see.</p>	<p>Leaving temporarily Wanting to leave Having no plan Testing options</p>
<p><b>Did you think about returning?</b> Yes, during the first three or four months I thought that I will return, and I lived as if I were to return. I mean... in six months in Europe one wants to see as much as possible, to gather other experiences. I traveled. I came direct from Cuba and after three months I was already a week in Holland, a week in Italy, I was in Munich, Berlin, and I did all that because I wanted to take with me as many souvenirs as possible. At the end all that made me change my mind and I decided to stay.</p>	<p>Thinking to return Living for returning Accumulating experiences Traveling around  Taking souvenirs Changing his mind Deciding to stay</p>
<p><b>How did you reach that decision?</b> It's interesting but I think that the weather had to do with that. I mean, I arrived in April, it was cold, the way it's here, very cold, but it started to get better, each day was a little bit better, and then in June, July and August in Kiel was nice, a wonderful summer. It was sunny, there is a beach ... I had the chance to see many things and I had a wonderful summer. At certain point I didn't miss Cuba at all, or just a little. After that I decided that the best for me would be to stay here. It was a coincidence that at that time a professor, a friend of my professor, came to the institute to give a conference. He came from Chicago. I said to him; I have been here during four or five months and I decided that I'd stay. I want to go on, do a Ph.D. And he offered me to go to Chicago. I was naive. I mean. I went to apply for a visa at</p>	<p>Having nice weather  Improving weather  Accumulating experiences Not missing Cuba Deciding to stay  Meeting a professor Confirming decision Wanting to go on Offering a Ph.D. position Applying for US visa</p>



<p>the American embassy. Of course they turned me down. I had a German visa for only six months. At that time they used to stamp your passport with the letters “Visa denied”. I don’t know why but that stamp became the reason for not going back. Now that I think about it I say: what I should have done was to lose my passport and ask for a new one in the Cuban embassy, if I really wanted to return with a clean passport. The first thing I thought was; well, with that stamp I’ll never go out of Cuba again. I had an official passport and you know that once in Cuba you have to return it. If they see that I tried to go to US without their approval that would be all. The deed is done ...</p> <p>Then I started to look for other possibilities in Germany.</p>	<p>Being naive  Turning application down  Stamping passport  Denying visa  Denying opportunity  Having a reason not to return  Looking back  Changing behavior  Lying  Reflecting about alternative  Loosing possibilities  Having official passport  Returning passport  Trying to go to US  Crossing border without authorization  The deed is done (taking a decision)  Looking for other alternatives</p>
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When doing initial coding I began labeling segments of data line-by-line. Though I was aware that this kind of coding would generate hundreds of codes I kept on coding in this way. My purpose was not only to conceptualize data. I was also looking to be immersed in each fragment, each story, and I wanted to feel confident with the material I had in front of me. Interaction with data in this way gave me a feeling of trust, like talking with a friend, getting to know her in word and meaning. For Charmaz (2011), initial coding “helps to define implicit meanings and actions, gives researchers directions to explore, spurs making comparisons between data, and suggest emergent links between processes in the data to pursue and check” (Charmaz, 2011: 368).

In doing initial coding, I was observant of Charmaz's suggestion (2011) to label data fragments by use of gerunds<sup>5</sup> due to their emphasis on action. Gerunds also help "to define what is happening in a fragment of data or a description of an incident. (They) enable grounded theorists to see implicit processes, to make connections between codes, and to keep their analyses active and emergent" (Charmaz, 2011; 368).

Just as I feared I came up with a list of around 300 codes. I used TAMSAAnalyzer for the initial coding. This software gave me the possibility of connecting each code with fragments of data within one and several interviews. This function helped me in comparing the same code in different settings. However, while comparing I came back to pencil and paper looking in which context fragments of data had appeared, which were relevant in the analysis. Subsequently I could print the list of codes to continue with the focused coding, which is the next kind of coding in grounded theory.

### **Focused coding**

With a list of codes on my hand, I began the focused coding. Charmaz (2006) synthesizes focused coding as follows: "Focused coding means using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through larger amounts of data. Focused coding requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize your data incisively and completely" (Charmaz, 2006: 57). I asked the data which processes are related to each code and I began grouping codes per theme. Then I named one category 'looking for better perspectives'. I situated this process at the beginning in Cuba when codes like 'being better paid for my job'; 'having my own place to live'; 'supporting my family'; 'helping my mother'; 'getting to know another culture' appeared.

I compared then this group of codes against data. At the first glance it looked as if 'looking for better perspectives' was what motivated Cubans to go abroad for those who left after 1989. I asked if Cubans, who came to Germany as part of exchange programs were also motivated by 'better perspectives'. Certainly they wanted to improve conditions for themselves and their families with the difference that at least during the preparation for travel to Germany they had the intent to return to Cuba.

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<sup>5</sup> It is worth of note that I coded the data in Spanish, which is the language in which most of the interviews are conducted. However, just as in English also in Spanish gerunds bear the connotation of processes and actions occurring in a prolonged period of time.

Studying and working in the GDR was the opportunity they saw to improve their living conditions in Cuba. Getting married or insecurities regarding the course of political and social changes then made them remain in Germany.

Focused coding implied an intense comparison among codes and data. The software used helped me compare codes within an interview and to compare the same incident and code among interviews. Glaser and Strauss (2006) emphasize the application of constant comparative analysis as the basis to ground categories and with them the theory in data. “The purpose of the constant comparative method of joint coding and analysis is to generate theory more systematically ... by using explicit coding and analytic procedures ... This method of comparative analysis ... is designed to aid the analyst ... in generating a theory that is integrated, consistent, plausible, close to the data” (Glaser & Strauss, 2006: 102-103). Comparison among data and incidents serves to relate concepts and develop properties of categories (Christiansen: 2007: 409).

Hence, in working with codes and organizing them into categories I began developing properties and dimensions, in such a sense that “properties are the characteristics or attributes of a category, and that *dimensions* represent locations of a property along a continuum” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 69). I then identified codes related to ‘living conditions in Cuba’ as the context in which migration takes place. These conditions represent which issues respondents take into account when they evaluate the decision to migrate. Other codes were associated to strategies respondents had when they had already taken the decision to migrate. Following I have given two examples of categories and the codes grouped within:

### **Living conditions in Cuba (before departure)**

Living with (extended) family

Studying (beginning – ending)

Working (unemployed – employed / self-employed)

    Disappointment in workplace

    Attaining professional excellence

Having couple relationship (beginning – ending)

Experiencing social pressure (remaining – leaving)

Relying on social network

Changing view (social – political)

## **Managing strategies (to migrate)**

Planning a strategy

Work

Studies

Couple relationship

Counting with resources

Own resources

Family resources

External resources (friends – institutions)

Relying on social network

Though through focused coding relevant themes were identified, I gave categories a provisional treatment and kept record in memos about development of categories. I continued sampling. However, while working on focused coding, the coding procedure was directed to categories already identified. I included in categories in vivo codes, which are “words and phrases used by informants themselves” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 69). For instance, one participant labeled his decision to remain in Germany as ‘quemar las naves’<sup>6</sup>, another one used the term ‘one way ticket’; ‘not coming back’ meaning that taking such decision was a point of no return. Remaining in Germany meant for them to continue life in Germany without the possibility of living in Cuba again, at least as long as regulations in Cuba concerning treatment of Cuban migrants do not change.

Categories constructed in focused coding gave shape to the results. From here I continued with the coding procedure, they guided the sampling procedure and were the basis for writing the result chapters.

## **Axial coding**

Axial coding is done after open coding is completed and consists of intensive coding around one category (Berg, 2007: 320). This type of coding was further developed by Strauss & Corbin (1990). The researcher puts data together in new ways by “making connections between a category and its subcategories” (Strauss, Corbin 1990: 97).

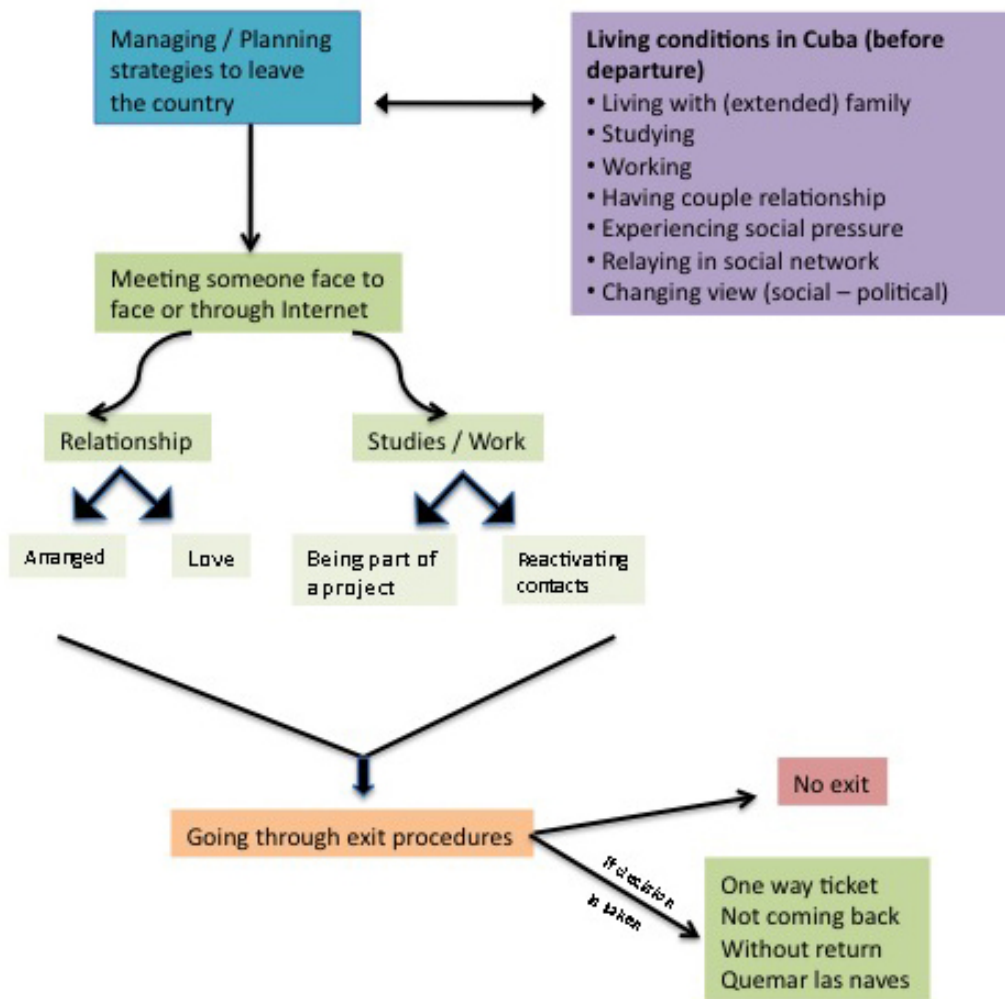
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<sup>6</sup> It is said that this expression was used by Hernán Cortés (1519) when he communicated his decision to go into Mexican territory and conquer this land in the name of the Spanish crown. He sunk the fleet in the shore making clear to all his subordinates that going back was not possible.

The objective in axial coding is to identify from the categories created which phenomenon they point out but also in which context this phenomenon is embedded. It is about “specifying a category (*phenomenon*) in terms of the conditions that give rise to it; the *context* (its specific set of properties) in which it is embedded; the action /interactional *strategies* by which it is handled, managed, carried out; and the *consequences* of those strategies” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 97). Hence, “conditions”, “interaction among the actors”, “strategies and tactics” and “consequences” are the elements of the “coding paradigm”. This paradigm model is used “to think systematically about data and to relate them in very complex ways” (Strauss & Corbin 1990: 99). Once these connections among categories are identified, one or two categories emerge as central in the construction of the theory.

In axial coding I began relating categories to each other. As Strübing (2008) points out, thus the relations among categories are made explicit. “Dabei werden hier noch stärker als im offenen Kodieren Relevanzentscheidungen getroffen” (Strübing, 2008: 21). In order to link categories, I supported myself with visualizations to provide a different perspective and quite relevant in analyzing under which circumstances one category is related to another.

One of the early diagrams generated in this stage related the categories ‘Living conditions in Cuba’, ‘Managing strategies’ and ‘Going through exit procedures’:



This first graphic had a provisional character and it was further developed. In chapter 4, links among categories are analyzed in more detail. In this regard, working with visualizations was a valuable visual support for the explanation of the studied phenomenon – Cuban migration in Germany.

Though for the preparation of the present research I had a notion about theories on migration and had consulted research on Cuban migration to the US and Europe, it was only during this stage that I came back to reading and analyzing previous literature on the subject. Glaser (2004) treats the analysis of present research on the studied subject as data. However, for him this analysis begins almost at the end of the research “to be integrated into the constant comparative analysis process once the core category, its properties and related categories have emerged and the basic conceptual development is well underway. The pre-study literature review of QDA is a waste of time and a derailing of relevance for the Grounded Theory Study” (Glaser,

2004: 12).

Instead, as Heath (2006) recommends, I began reviewing the existing literature on Cuban migration earlier in the analysis. In doing so I was able to compare the categories with existing concepts. It was also helpful in clarifying links among categories. My own data was challenged by concepts of other authors. For instance, when analyzing the professional trajectory of Cubans in Germany I labeled their experiences while looking for a job as ‘downward professional mobility’. This code, which was later further developed, explained how Cubans, who had finished studies in Cuba, experienced their search for a job during the first period in Germany. In the context of migration they targeted jobs, which were below their qualification. Nevertheless, they saw it as a transit period until gaining security and being better established in Germany. I compared this code with the concept ‘downward economic mobility’ discussed by Oliver and O’Reilly (2010) when analyzing British migration to South Spain. In the case of Cubans in Germany I privileged the term ‘downward professional mobility’ and not the economic connotation since Cuban migrants in Germany, regardless which kind of job they take, are better paid compared to their qualified jobs in Cuba.

Axial coding resulted in an intensive treatment of the data on conceptual level. During this stage of the coding procedure, I relied more on pencil and paper than coding software. Developed memos were of help during the last phase of the coding.

### **Theoretical coding**

The sense of coding data, first line-by-line, construction of categories and linking categories one to each other, renders the ultimate objective of grounded theory, which is conceptualizing, grounding, and discovering a core category. “The core variable is that particular concept that is more related to the other concepts of the emerging theory. The core variable is also that concept of the theory that explains most of the variation in the data or in the studied behaviour” (Christiansen, 2007: 404).

Arriving at the core category involves the last stage of the coding procedure. According to Charmaz (2006), “theoretical coding is a sophisticated level of coding that follows the codes you have selected during focused coding ... These codes may help you tell an analytic story that has coherence” (Charmaz, 2006: 63). Strauss and Corbin (1990) see it at the point of integration “at a higher, more abstract level of analysis” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 117).

It took time and efforts, until I was able to analytically tell the storyline of Cuban migrants in Germany. It was also confusing when reading texts about grounded theory looking for orientation, especially concerning the core category. Is it possible to develop two instead of only one category? Strauss and Corbin (1990) are clear on this: “Sometimes two phenomena in the data strike the investigator as being equally important or of interest. **It is essential, however, to make a choice between them** in order to achieve the tight integration and the dense development of categories required of a grounded theory. ... **The way to handle this problem is to choose one phenomenon, relate the other category to it as a subsidiary category, then write it as a single theory**” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 121-22). After more analysis and further interviews I labeled the process of Cuban migration as ‘Leaving Cuba ... Forever?’

Comparing categories with data pointed to migration as an unfinished and unresolved process. Taking into account that interviewees are first generation migrants, their perspective on migration was subjected to questioning. For some, the alternative of returning to Cuba was not explicit in their discourse and though some had played with the idea of returning, barriers and difficulties from the Cuban side concerning actual regulations made migration an open process and not a definitive resolution.

In order to arrive to the core category the rest of categories had to reach the point of saturation. Glaser and Strauss (2006) signaled that “theoretical saturation means that no additional data are being found whereby the sociologist can develop properties of the category. As he sees similar instances over and over again, the researcher becomes empirically confident that a category is saturated” (Glaser & Strauss, 2006: 61). However, I agree with Strübing (2008) when he asserts „das Kriterium, dass die Daten nichts Neues mehr für die theoretische Kategorie ergeben, ist auslegungsbedürftig und nicht objektiv aus den Daten ableitbar” (Strübing, 2008: 34). At this regard going back to the data and comparing categories and data under a new light as well as an additional sampling was the alternative I used to examine if no other codes and properties changed content of categories and its relations with the whole.



## **Memos**

In order to keep track of development of categories, observations and analysis, grounded theory researchers store their thoughts in form of memos, a cornerstone of grounded theory. Memos are a quite specialized form of written records containing the products of our analysis. “Memos represent the written forms of our abstract thinking about data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 198). They are an essential tool through the whole coding process because it prompts to analyze the data and codes early in the research process. In the memos we write our main ideas about the coding and we condense theoretical thoughts. They also enable connections among categories.

At the beginning, the memos take a form of loose ideas in direct connection to the data. Further in the analysis they take a more conceptual form. “Memos, especially early ones, are often messy and incomplete, with undigested theories and nascent opinions ... as incipient ideas are recorded and explored through the memoing process, they grow in complexity and association” (Lempert, 2011: 248-249).

Thus, in early memos I described how Cuban workers and students came to the GDR as part of exchange programs. I coded passages of interviews with workers and students and I continued describing under which circumstances they came to Germany. In these early memos it seemed to me that workers and students were elected to come. In other words, the approval for studying or working in the GDR depended on other persons, as if individuals were not able to take their own decisions. I continued later coding interviews of Cubans who came after 1990, when there were no more exchange programs. I wrote then memos describing what I labeled ‘strategies to leave the country’. It seemed to me, that in absence of exchange programs, individuals were active in taking the decision to come to Germany. I came back to the first interviews with ex-students and workers in the GDR and wrote the following memo.

Memo: Strategies to leave the country. 17.09.2011

*“Until here I was coding for ‘strategies to leave the country’ and then at the first glance it seemed that students and workers in the GDR did not have any strategy when coming to Germany. I’ve got to go back to content of interviews. Cubans who came after the reunification, and when they were conscious that they wanted to leave the country, they were certainly explicit about planning a strategy to leave. However, Cubans who left the country as part of the exchange programs with the GDR had not*

*had a strategy in the sense of planning. What they had, and that could be part of the strategy, was a good behavior in front of others, which guaranteed their eligibility to come to Germany, and here they had to plan a strategy. Students had to fulfill requirements with studies and participation in political activities organized in schools. Workers had to be considered reliable. In this sense, their self-presentation for the others or how they wanted to be seen by others, was their strategy. When they proved and showed a 'good' behavior, a behavior in correspondence to what was expected from them, then they could be proposed for coming to Germany or they could apply for coming, and that's a strategy also".*

In this memo I gave "a space and place for making comparisons between data and data, data and codes, codes of data and other codes, codes and category, and category and concepts and (articulated) conjectures about these comparisons" (Charmaz, 2006: 72-73). Reading other research and articles on subjects like migration and keeping me updated in what is happening in Cuba today, prompted ideas, which I could link to my own data. It was like having an analytical conversation with myself about the research data (Lempert, 2011: 247).

When coding, I felt for moments insecure; memos helped me clarify ideas and remain focused on the subject of interest. At other times I included quotations from interviews in memos to keep track of analysis and data in the same place. "Including respondent voices in memos provides an immediate illustration of the analytical topic, keeps researchers grounded by keeping the data in the forefront of the analyses, and makes the data easily transferable to final written documents" (Lempert, 2011: 256-257).

While coding the passage of Roberto's interview about how he gradually took the decision to remain in Germany, I noted the in vivo code 'quemar las naves'. This phrase enclosed what other interviewees labeled as 'the drama in the Cuban migration' meaning the impossibility to return to Cuba once a Cuban takes the decision to remain abroad. I produced the following memo:

Memo: 'Quemar las naves'. 29.10.2011

*"What it means 'quemar las naves', an individual reaches the point of no return. Still it describes one way of taking the decision to migrate and one of its consequences: the person cannot live in Cuba again and breaks the link to the country of origin. This code, however, in spite of its visual force, does not contain other forms of taking a decision to remain in Germany, for instance, when someone gets married in Germany*

*and afterwards apply for a PRE. Hence, 'quemar las naves' is how Roberto labeled his decision to remain in Germany; it is more a 'strategy to remain in Germany'.*

Memos have the function of allowing the researcher to get into a dialogue with her own data. But they also have the function of contributing to the composition of drafts, especially when memos have reached a theoretical level. I first went through all memos, sorting them by theme and theoretical consistency. That was my guide in what the reader will find in the next two chapters.

### **Theoretical sensitivity and reflexivity in conducting research**

I would like to conclude this chapter with two topics inherent to qualitative methodology, which have also been discussed by founders and followers of grounded theory. The first refers to theoretical sensitivity. For Strauss and Corbin (1990) “theoretical sensitivity refers to the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn't” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 42). However, it might sound abstract, how researchers achieve a level of interpretation of data and with it the ability to go to the core of phenomena by discarding what is not essential. Such considerations touch upon philosophical and epistemological questions of interpretation and knowledge, which exceed the scope of this chapter.

Bryant (2009) asserts that “theoretical sensitivity is critical to GTM, but describing theoretical sensitivity or explaining how one can develop this skill is not easy” (Bryant, 2009: 30). However, without the skill for interpretation, the data cannot be conceptualized. “Some aspects of research really do depend on the skills of the specific researcher; methods alone are necessary but not sufficient. Researching is not simply the case of collecting data or evidence, the researcher is a key factor in the research landscape, a link in the chain that reaches iteratively around data, codes, concepts and tentative theories” (Bryant, 2009: 29). In the debate about theoretical sensitivity it is clear that the researcher himself is a tool in doing research, the researcher gives meaning and makes sense from the data. Nonetheless these abilities are learned and trained.

One way of enhancing theoretical sensitivity is “to enter the research setting with as few predetermined ideas as possible” (Glaser & Holton, 2004: 11). Avoiding prior knowledge is a prerequisite when working with grounded theory. At this regard I agree with Thomas and James (2006) when they say “a priori assumptions are what

make study a) worthwhile, and b) possible” (James & Thomas, 2006: 19). For the present research previous knowledge and own experience – I as researcher interpreting experiences of interviewees and I as individual with a personal migration story – were two inseparable stances subjected to permanent scrutiny. One way of solving this dilemma was a permanent self-observation and reflexivity in all stages of research, which include research design, data collection, analysis and writing from the first to the last draft.

I cannot get rid of my own preconceptions but what I can do – in words of Strauss and Corbin (1990) – is to challenge my own assumptions, delve beneath my experience, and look beyond the literature in order to arrive at new theoretical formulations (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 76). I expected, for instance, to hear the most dramatic stories about how Cubans migrated to Germany, about separation of families and the impossibility of returning. Nevertheless, though migration is in itself a disruptive process in a personal biography, my assumption was challenged by stories in which migration was facilitated by relatives and friends and where being immersed in a different culture and language is not seen as an unbearable barrier in the integration process in the new society.

Reflexivity – and this is the second theme of conclusion – was the other tool to enhance theoretical sensitivity and to deepen the understanding of the data. Being reflexive and critic about the own research meant questioning the procedure and decisions taken concerning the direction given to the research. In this sense, research and researcher become one during the research period in all its phases. According to Corbin (2009) “We don’t separate who we are as persons from the research and analysis that we do. Therefore, we must be self-reflective about how we influence the research process and, in turn, how it influences us” (Corbin, 2009: 40).

Being self-reflective reveals the active role of the researcher in all decisions taken – an aspect inseparable from any research. Strübing (2008) emphasizes that „die Forschenden seien nie allein neutrale Beobachter, sondern zwangsläufig als Interpreten ihrer Daten und als Entscheider über den konkreten Gang der theoretischen Argumentation immer auch Subjekte des Forschungsprozesses“ (Strübing, 2008: 16).

One way of being self-reflective is writing memos, by which it can be traced how the researcher built argumentations or arrived at certain conclusions. “This is an essential part of the research process and a means of communicating oneself to the reader”

(Heath, 2006: 522). Additionally, through memos the researcher gains in consciousness concerning all decisions taken throughout the research. Another technique in reducing bias due to activation of preconceptions and prior knowledge is the use of the constant comparative method when analyzing data.

Grounded theory shares with other qualitative methods its characteristic of ‘subjective product’ (Strübing, 2008: 16). As such reflexivity helps the researchers and readers to understand the process followed in the construction of this subjective product.

The sections that follow are a journey into the results and application of the methodology. On this journey I intend to add new pieces of understanding about Cuban migration and to show that “the ultimate criterion of good research should be that it makes a difference” (Bryant, 2009: 32).

## **Chapter 5**

### **Farewell Cuba...Forever?**

## **Chapter 5**

### **Findings**

The following two sections are devoted to the analysis of the Cuban migration to Germany. The first process entails the necessary preparations and procedures one must undertake before going abroad. While the second process involves the integration of Cubans into German society, each of the phases comprehended in these two processes will be mentioned and explained based on the category system created with the method of grounded theory. The relationships among categories will also be explained.

#### **Farewell Cuba...Forever?**

In this section I discuss how Cubans take the decision to leave the country. Migration is not for participants of the study a straightforward process; neither is it the notion of permanence in Germany their ultimate goal. Through passages of interviews I illustrate social and political conditions in which participants are embedded. These conditions are the context of their actions. In retrospect their narrations about their living conditions in Cuba before their departure are intertwined in an argumentative chain which leads to their decision to migrate and remain in Germany. However, at which point this decision is reached is a highly individualized process. In order to leave the country several strategies are brought into action. They are not a lucky handle of situations, but rather a strategic planning sometimes years before migration takes place. Once the possibility to travel abroad had crystallized they face additional hurdles from Cuba as well as from German authorities. Analyzing these processes clarifies further in which context migration process takes place and consequences for the actors in their present and future.

#### **Living conditions in Cuba before departure**

Living conditions in Cuba before departure refers to the social and political context in Cuba before individuals come to Germany. Not everyone who comes to Germany has a clear idea whether he or she will stay or not. However, what the living conditions in Cuba are before leaving are definitely taken into account when they must take the decision whether or not to return to Cuba or stay on in Germany. Five main issues are considered here; educational level attained in Cuba, having a job, having a couple relationship vs. family and if the person has his/her own place to live or if they must

live with other relatives, and changing their political view regarding the social situation in Cuba. Regardless of the contact these individuals have had with Germany, these conditions are of importance when considering to remain in Germany.

The area 'Educational level' of the interviewee is also connected with the category 'Exit/Departure procedures' which will be discussed further in more detail. Individuals with a degree obtained in Cuba face countless difficulties when they want to visit friends and/or relatives abroad or stay permanently in another country. Restrictions imposed to Cubans with a degree when applying for an exit permit could be interpreted as a measure to control vs. avoid the 'brain drain' of professional workforce in Cuba (Casaña, 2006; Gutiérrez, 2008).

Living conditions in Cuba also affect those who, before 1989, married a German, then went as a family to live in Cuba and decided later to return to Germany. These individuals arrived for the first time in Germany as part of the exchange programs between the two countries. One might suppose that for these individuals returning to Germany a couple of years later would be considered a smooth path especially because they already know the language and the country. However, they also face some difficulties due to the fact that the country they left behind was different from the country they later encountered.

### **Attaining educational level in Cuba**

There is no doubt that since the beginning of the Revolution the educational level of the population was a matter for the state. In this regard, one of the first measures considered by the revolutionary government was to declare free education at all levels for everyone. At this point, those who came from a lower economic status or who were discriminated against because of their color were also immediately included in the new policies. The participants in my research were all born a few years prior to or after the revolution. In terms of their educational level, it means that six generations of Cubans have been educated under the system established by the revolutionary government with all the advantages and disadvantages that this implies. As Isabel argues, these various generations of Cubans were all aware of the possibility they had in pursuing a degree.

In our lives everything was fine. I had the chance to study because of the revolution and that was clear for all of us (I. 62-3).



Shortly after the revolution new schools at all levels were established and many educational projects brought the educational level of the population to standards never seen before. One of the most important educational projects was the inauguration of the IPVCE (Instituto Politécnico en Ciencias Exactas) Vladimir Ilich Lenin (Polytechnic Institute of Natural Sciences) on January 31, 1974. Later other schools of this kind were opened in other provinces. Here the students received a high level of education with an emphasis on the subject of Natural Sciences (Mathematics, Biology, Physics or Chemistry). This boarding school was conceived as a system where students would spend six years (later it was shortened to three years) in pursuit of a general education prior to the university level. Many of the students, who later came to Germany to study at the university level, before and after reunification, had previously attended this school.

Though the ‘special period’ meant a drop in the quality of conditions in the whole educational system, this school maintained a certain quality in regards to the kinds of students that were accepted there each year. And while other high schools were transformed into junior colleges, this school did not drop its teaching rigor or quality. Hence, many of the students graduating from this system had high expectations as to what they would find later in their employment. When these expectations did not meet the workplace they found; the former student could have decided to either move into another area where they could apply the knowledge they had acquired.

This is the position that Judith takes, when trying to explain the exodus of university educated students from Cuba. She was the child of a mixed couple: a Cuban woman and an East German man. She is part of a new generation of Cubans with access to two passports (Cuban and German). Therefore after finishing the high school she decided to study in Germany and came over three years ago. Once here she had access to all the benefits a German student has such as, BaFög<sup>1</sup>. She sees it as a contradiction that after receiving a free education in Cuba, which can be compared in its level of quality to the education received in a developed country, one is confronted with low standards and pay in the Cuban workplace. Thus, some graduates decide to go abroad where they have other prospects in terms of their careers.

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<sup>1</sup> Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz.

(I studied) at 'la Lenin'. I paid nothing. Students there prepare themselves and are intelligent and (...) they go to the university and after their studies they want more. That's something they cannot find in Cuba. That's the problem and that's why they want to leave. I would like to do something in Cuba because the system gave me the education I have, something you hear in all the speeches, but it's true. With very old books, but it's true (J. 387-92).

Though she certainly still identifies herself as Cuban when it comes to what university graduates are able to actually do in Cuba with their education, her narrative becomes detached in relation to them. From the distance she gives an explanation about why university graduates leave the country. Again, from the distance, she contemplates the alternative of going back to Cuba as a form of paying back for the education the country gave her.

Judith is not explicit about what 'more' the Cuban graduates want and what they are unable to obtain there. This 'more' is then part of the experiences other interviewees have had in their workplaces and that will be developed in the following sections.

### **Having a job**

Having a job is about performance of Cubans in their workplace. Here I will analyze what kind of job the interviewee had in Cuba, their motivations to remain in or change their workplaces and the regulations that influence decisions they take concerning their job before and during the application of an 'Exit permit'.

From the 35 interviewees, 20 had a job provided by the government while 6 were involved in a sort of self-employment, which has been allowed in Cuba since 1993 and is regulated by Law 141 from the Ministry of Work and Social Security. 5 were unemployed before leaving the country and 5 were students. The government itself is the main source of employment. For that reason all workers have to have the authorization of their workplace when changing their job or going abroad. Additionally students have to have authorization from their schools when they go abroad.

At the same time working life of all university graduates is regulated immediately after their graduation for a period of three years as prescribed by Laws 1254 and 3771 from 1973 and 1974<sup>2</sup> respectively. This includes those students who

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<sup>2</sup> Website. Ministry for Work and Social Security. Cuba. <http://www.mtss.cu/legislaleyes2.php>. (14.06.2010)

graduated from a university and those who learned an occupation from a junior college but also those students that received a scholarship from the Cuban government to study abroad. This period is known as *servicio social* (social service).

The social service is considered a continuation of the learning process for graduates in the frame of a socialist society. This stage of life as a worker is also a training period for learning the practicalities they will face as workers in the future. Graduates work where their knowledge and ability is needed. That is a sort of repayment in exchange for the free education they obtained. We could consider social service as a critical period for all graduated because on the one side they would like to receive or have the perspective of a good salary. On the other side, those with motivation for their professional development would like to begin in a workplace where they could continue further qualification. If the workplace where they begin does not provide conditions they are looking for, they develop strategies to continue qualification somewhere else. In this period they are a valuable qualified workforce, usually without family attachment and high potential of mobility, conditions which make this high qualified workforce attractive to employers. As consequence young qualified professionals face barriers when they ask for a permission to go abroad.

As mentioned earlier, the social service is also compulsory to all graduates who had obtained scholarships to study abroad in the former socialist countries. When they returned to Cuba after finishing their studies, a workplace was assigned to them and there they had to work during that period of time. Isabel was one of those students. She finished her studies in East Germany in 1983. During her studies she married a German and wanted to have a family with him. Her expected project was to complete the social service in one of the enterprises Cuba had at that time in Germany, where she could also apply her knowledge. Instead of that she was informed that she had to work in Cuba performing the social service requirement and then returned to Germany three and half years later.

(When I came) in '79, almost 30 years ago, I was not aware of it. I came in '79 to study and returned to Havana in '83. I had to remain there for three and half years because of the social service requirement. I don't know if you have heard about that.

*Mmm.*

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I had to stay there three and a half years even though I was married (I. 7-11).

With a sense of shock she and her family received the information that she would not be allowed to leave Cuba to return to Germany even though she already had the authorization of a Cuban workplace in Germany. The new decision was communicated to her at the airport just a few minutes before boarding the plane that should have taken her back to Germany where her husband was waiting for her. Almost thirty years later it is still difficult for her to find an explanation of what happened then.

It was a shock. When I talk about it today I think I'm dreaming, that it didn't happen, that it wasn't true. It was a shock not only for me but also for my family. Because my family was, as they say in Cuba, an "integrated family". Until that moment we had had positive experiences from the revolutionary government. We were all integrated. I was part of the communist youth. We had a normal life. That was the way it was at that time and we hadn't had any negative experiences (I. 56-61).

Because of the social service, Isabel had to postpone her personal plans. Three and half years later she indeed returned to Germany where she works today and lives with her family.

Postponing personal and professional plans along with doing the social service is viewed by the interviewee as a restrictive period. Though they can take specialized courses depending on where they work, these courses have to be authorized by their superiors. The graduate cannot decide for himself if he will continue in a Ph.D. program or in any other kind of exchange program in Cuba or abroad. That is the case with Luis. While doing his social service in 2006 he was authorized to take a course abroad. After a three-month residency at a university in Spain, he accepted an offer from a professor to continue with his Ph.D. there. When he returned to Cuba, he said that he had the chance to continue with his Ph.D. but because that was not part of the previous arrangement he was not authorized to go.

My boss in Cuba had made contact with the professor in Spain and I began with an exchange program. I learned a lot in those three months ... The professor liked what I did and he proposed that I start in their Ph.D. program; between Havana and the other university. But because of the way things were when I arrived in Cuba, they penalized me because he had made the offer and I had accepted it. In other words, because I only first checked with the university after I accepted his proposal. What should I have said? –Please, talk with the university or with my boss. No, I'm a person. I mean, I have motivations and plans for my future. Nobody can decide for me. Well, when I arrived in Cuba, I talked about my plans and they penalized me. That was a battle with my boss ... the one who started the exchange program. In our disagreement she told me very clearly that she is the one who takes the decisions for me, and I made it very clear to her that nobody can decide for me and that we cannot work together (L. 140-69).

Seeing his freedom restricted by the decisions of other people, he decided to abandon his work and began work in a place where he would not have those restrictions on travel when he had the chance to continue his studies abroad. At the time of this interview Luis was doing his Ph.D. in a university in Germany. He obtained authorization from the last place where he was working in Cuba. By then he had finished the social service.

When a graduate does not complete the social service, his degree can be invalidated. Due to the compulsory nature of this procedure, graduates that cannot start working immediately after graduation are given the option of starting in a place of their choice where their abilities are needed. They can apply for employment in places related to their career but not in enterprises involving foreign capital.

Alina had the expectation to do the social service in a place where she could also have time to take care of her sick mother. She did not start working in the place assigned to her. After her graduation in Biology she was unemployed. Four months later she found a job in the laboratory of a hospital.

I remember that I worked between February and August 1999. In August 1999 I left because I was wasting my time and I decided to go home (A. 12-14).

Later they told me that they had a very good project and I had the chance to do my master's. They told me: At the beginning you should learn what the technicians do. I learned what they do but from the project I heard nothing (A. 136-39).

Think about it, eight hours at my desk without doing a thing (A. 161).

Then I started going home earlier ... before four o' clock. I used to leave at three-thirty. And I said; I'm doing nothing. – It doesn't matter. You have to stay. Then I quit and left. (A. 171-74)

I was working there for six months. I started with lots of enthusiasm because of everything they had told me, but after a while you have no motivation at all because everything stays the same. And then you stop, think about it, and ask: What am I doing here? (A. 222-25).

Though in principle the government ensures a workplace for all graduates, it has been a challenge to maintain a high occupational level for those who start working. One of the consequences, for example, is that work that can be done by one person is done today by three or more. The low work content negatively influences the motivation of people while working. It stymies their interest in what they are doing and they sometimes feel rather detached from the productive process. In other words; they do not fulfill any function at work because the goal they are supposed to achieve doesn't really exist.

Six months after working in a hospital without a concrete task and with a declining level of motivation for what she was doing, Alina decided to teach Spanish to

German tourists at home and there she met her future husband. That was the solution she found. Although she was doing something which was not related to her career, she could keep herself busy and improve the economic situation of her family. Her mother was also giving Spanish lessons. Thus she found an occupation in the incipient private sector.

I took an intensive course to start as a Spanish teacher. My mother's colleague gave it to me. She showed me the book, ... She gave me the course because many students were coming and they needed more professors. ... I earned 25 or 30 dollars per week ... after two weeks I had 60 dollars. By Cuban standards that's very good (A. 227-43).

As I previously illustrated at the beginning of this section, self-employment is a new form of employment, which was allowed and regulated in 1993. This was the most difficult year of the special period. The economy was completely devastated. Through this measure the government allowed for the first time after the revolution individuals to create their own source of income. Many services related to the tourism industry flourished. Next to Spanish teachers –as is the case for Alina and her mother – other services like taxi driver, tourist guide, salsa teacher or running a family restaurant known as a 'paladar' are counted among the new enterprises.

In the face of these new employment prospects some enterprises were created following a more dynamic model. Each worker has a direct responsibility to the productive process and his earning power depends on this productivity. Miriam finished her social service as a professor of history in a high school. She worked later in a research center investigating different historical issues but her salary was too low. She decided in 1998 to work in the Customs Office where her work conditions and salary improved.

At one point a friend told me; there is a job opening up where I work. She had a good salary. People working in the customs house had contact with clients, usually foreign companies. They also received a bag each month with different amenities and received presents from different clients. As you know all that is attractive in Cuba (M. 324-29).

For Miriam it was important to work in a place where she could have a better salary though the content of her new job bore no relation to her career. Better working conditions like access to the Internet and a higher salary motivate many graduates to select one of these jobs. However, once they are working, the expectations they have built regarding their job are often not met.

This was the case for Iris. She finished her bachelor's in Psychology in 2002 and went to work at a consulting firm. Her decision to work there during the social

service period was based on three criteria. It should not be a place related to the Ministry of Public Health (I will show in the category 'Exit procedures' which restrictions the personnel working in this ministry have), the place should offer a good salary and amenities, and she should have internet access. Her expectations about what a psychologist could do in a consulting enterprise were not fulfilled and she quit her job two and half years later before finishing her social service.

I finished my studies to become a consultant. I was doing my social service and I had to work as a consultant. I had to do the same work as the rest. We had a very rigorous economic plan based on numbers. Where I worked –though it was immersed in the socialist system – had a very capitalist function. You had to fulfill that requirement. You had to be productive. ... It was an interesting job but I left because I was always under stress, looking for clients. Besides the work atmosphere was tense (I. 260-305).

In general I could say that at the moment they left Cuba some of the interviewees weren't motivated in the work they had or they weren't working at all in one of the jobs provided by the government. Hence, returning to Cuba to the work place was not considered an option.

### **Having a family and/or relationship, but where?**

The family is a central issue in the life of each individual. In this context family is not only understood as the family we come from, but also the family we create. In this section I will analyze which role the family plays in Cuba when an individual decides to emigrate. I have also decided to include the couple relationship because that is the traditional basis of the family. I will illustrate in this section that the couple relationship is an essential component when weighing the decision between remaining in Cuba or going to Germany.

In the previous section I analyzed the situation that Luis had in his job when his boss did not let him return to Spain to continue in a Ph.D. program. In addition to that his family situation was not comfortable for him. He married in 2004 immediately after finishing his studies in Chemistry and that same year they had a child. Two years later he went to Spain for three months as part of an exchange program. When he returned from Spain the relationship ended.

As soon as I returned we got the divorce ... I wanted to return to Europe. There was no point staying in Cuba because I already had some problems at the university and my family was not with me (L. 415-20).

After the divorce Luis' wife moved in with her new partner and though he continued visiting his son and spending some time with him over the weekend, during the next

two years Luis concentrated his efforts on his new job and on sending applications to different universities around the world in order to be accepted into a Ph.D. position and receive a scholarship. The family as a unit had not longer the same function for him and probably due to that he persevered with the idea of returning to Europe in spite of the negative response he had initially received from his boss.

For Miriam it was different. Her sister invited her to come to Germany and wanted her to stay. In Cuba she left a relationship that was not solid enough. When her tourist visa was about to expire she carefully considered what she had left behind.

I had a Cuban boyfriend and he happened to have a German surname, ... I was with him because he liked me a bit but I already wanted to come here. Everything remained like that. I mean, the boyfriend was not a reason to return to Cuba (M. 46-50).

These two examples illustrate how the relationship formed by the couple in Cuba was not a reason to stay in or return to Cuba. Affections and feelings were not a part of the relationship. Hence these individuals did not have an emotional attachment. At the moment of their arrival in Germany they were not in love and felt that all possibilities were open to them.

In other cases the couple relationship was the reason for leaving Cuba. Some couples spend time going back and forth between the two countries. Though Cuba is the country with more restrictions on travel – as I will illustrate in the next two sub-categories of this section – these couples explore which possibilities each country can offer them. Especially during the time in East Germany, and because of the exchange programs and contracts between the two countries, it was possible for some Germans to live and work in Cuba. For the Germans from West Germany that was not the case since it was the time of the cold war and citizens from capitalist countries were regarded suspiciously, particularly if they had the intention of remaining in Cuba.

Ana and Dieter met in Cuba in 1978 during the celebration of the World Festival of Youth and Students. Approximately 18 500 students from more than 145 socialist and capitalist countries attended this meeting<sup>3</sup>. Dieter came from West Germany. In the first year of the relationship Dieter traveled several times to Cuba until they married in 1980, one and half years after beginning the relationship. After getting married Ana went to Germany and became pregnant. Because she was not familiar with her new environment she decided to have her baby in Cuba and therefore be close to her family. Her husband followed her and started looking for a job.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World\\_Festival\\_of\\_Youth\\_and\\_Students](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Festival_of_Youth_and_Students) (07.06.2010)



He left his job and we went for a year to live in Cuba. R was born there. When R was six months old we had to return ... Everything was very difficult. We did not have any money, I did not have any job. Nobody wanted to give him a job in Cuba. They did not trust him because he came from a capitalist country (A. 245-51).

Political tensions prevailing among capitalist and socialist countries influenced the couple's relationship. For Dieter and Ana their decision was to go to Germany where they would at least have their own place to live and where, as a family, they received welfare benefits.

Other couples that met in socialist Germany eventually decided to live as a family in Germany though at the beginning that was not their plan. Carlos went to East Germany in 1985 to work in a brake factory. Two years later he met Ulrike and they married because it was the fastest way for her to receive an apartment. They married in East Berlin, had a romance and shortly after that, in 1989, he had to return to Cuba when the Berlin wall came down and the exchange program between Cuba and East Germany abruptly ended.

Almost a year after we married, the border was opened and we (Cubans) had to leave ... I definitively left but when I arrived in Cuba I had to face some problems with my work situation. Seven months later she came to see me in Cuba, she was pregnant and I decided then to go to Germany again (C. 8-13).

For Carlos the decision of returning to Germany was essentially based on family circumstances. His wife needed him and wanted him to be present, fulfilling his role as father in the future family. Carlos and Ulrike are still married and have two children.

Other couples met in Cuba after 1989. Up to this point the European socialist countries disappeared as such. Due to the economic depression in Cuba it has been more difficult for foreigners to work there. Hence, when a couple meets it is usually the German partner who has a more stable economic situation in Germany. Usually the Cuban partner during the first phase of his/her arrival invests much of the time learning the language. Thus possibilities of working are at least in this phase rather limited. The economic stability of the German partner is likely one of the implicit arguments for many couples when taking the decision, without discussing it extensively, that the Cuban partner will move to Germany and not the other way around. Though it is clarified by the couple relatively early about where they will live together, some decide to spend a trial period in which the Cuban partner visits Germany for three months. During this time they collect their first impressions about the country and have the chance to get to know each other better.

Alina met her husband Johannes in Cuba just after she left her job as a Biologist in the laboratory of a hospital and decided to teach Spanish to German tourists. Johannes had bought a vacation package to Cuba, which included salsa, Spanish lessons and private accommodation in Havana. In this way he could live the 'real Cuba' closer to the Cuban perspective and a little bit less like a tourist. Alina and Johannes were together for three weeks and decided that they would like to get to know each other better and see if the relationship could work.

Before leaving he told me: I think the only chance we have to get to know each other better is for you to come and visit me. I said: That's fine. And that was all. I then prepared for my travel (A. 45-47).

If during this visit the relationship works, the Cuban partner goes back to Cuba and starts the procedure of returning again to Germany and getting married. For Alina getting to know her partner in his environment was an important step. Shortly after her visit to Germany they had the possibility of being in Cuba again for a few weeks getting to know each other even better.

I was in Hamburg for three months between May and August 2000. Everything worked well. We did not have any problems. From the beginning we understood each other very well. He came to Cuba in October of that year and was there for two or three weeks. My aunt was in the U.S. at that moment and I was alone at home. I lived with my aunt. That was a second honeymoon. We were alone, getting to know each other, in Cuba. We had the chance to live together in Germany, as it is in Germany, and in Cuba, as people live in Cuba (A. 79-84).

For Alina it was important to consider the circumstances under which they met. As close as possible to the conditions each of them had in their countries of origin and separates from the clichés in Cuba related to, for example, the notion of sex tourism (Fernández, 1999; Kummels, 2004). At the time of this interview they were still together, had a daughter and were planning to have a second child.

But there are also cases in which the decision about being together must be taken quickly. The period of getting to know each other before living together on a permanent basis is shortened due to economic factors (i.e. the couple cannot economically afford traveling back and forth between countries) or because the Cuban partner has to face many difficulties in order to make a three month visit to Germany. Because of that he or she eventually decides to stay in Germany. In the section devoted to the category 'Exit procedures' this issue will be analyzed in more detail.

This was the case for Iris and her husband, Andreas. In 2004 Andreas went to Cuba as a student and after studying for one semester there he returned to Germany and

met Iris in a chat room on the Internet. After that he decided to continue research for his master's in Cuba. In collaboration with one of the universities in Cuba he returned for a few weeks and met Iris for the first time face to face.

He decided to go to Cuba and said; I can go there and we could meet. It was during the film festival. I was constantly going to the cinema with my friends and it was difficult for him to contact me. We met only once and we talked around two or three hours before he left ... Later I wrote him and he said; I have been thinking about you and we wrote more. But as a German he is also very practical and said; we have to take a decision. He told me then that he wanted to propose something to me and he did it. I thought about it first but eventually I accepted the proposal to come here (I. 157-70).

This sole encounter and their almost daily e-mail and chat exchanges led them to take the decision to spend some more time together and see if, during the three-month-visa granted by the German consulate in Havana, the relationship could work. Probably what she attributes as a 'practical' characteristic of Germans is framed by the traditional patterns of gender roles prescribed for women and men in the sense that she was waiting for his proposal to come for a visit, which was an alternative if they wanted to get to know each other better. Additionally, the procedure for leaving the country, aside from its stressful aspects, is that it is linked to high costs and is usually the foreign partner that pays for it. Hence she waited for his offer also because that would mean that he was in the position of economically supporting this exit procedure. More details about this procedure will be discussed in section 'Going through/managing Exit Procedure'.

However, obtaining the travel permission from the Cuban government was not easy for her. She had to wait for the liberation letter – a document that all graduates have to obtain from the Ministry. Because she had quit shortly before taking the decision of visiting Germany, her boss was not supportive of her and did not want to grant her the liberation letter. Six months later and after several meetings in which her case was discussed, the letter was eventually granted and she traveled to Germany.

I wanted to concentrate on our relationship ... the only thing we talked about during that time – before we decided to get married – was that in our relationship everything was fine and I said; When I return to Cuba it won't be possible to do the same again. He was clear about it. We had to wait around six months for the liberation letter. That was clear. He took the decision. I think he had already decided that and we married (I. 428-35).

In contrast to Alina and Johannes, for Iris and Andreas the decision about remaining together in Germany was taken rapidly and without having the common experience of living together. On the other hand that was the solution they found in the face of a

restrictive system that imposes so many barriers on the graduates when they want to go abroad.

Love can also be a reason for an individual to decide whether to stay in Germany or return to Cuba. When the couple in question is Cuban and one of them decides to go abroad, in order to remain together the one who leaves will do all he can and invest resources to bring the other over. In an informal conversation with Sergio he told me how he issued a letter of invitation for his brother-in-law. Sergio's sister and his daughter were in Cuba and though they were separated for four years, they eventually managed to come to Germany. The love they shared and the desire to remain together as a family was stronger than the years, distance, and difficulties they had had to face while they were not together.

The decision about where the couple will eventually live is preceded in some cases by travel back and forth between countries. For others it means looking at how the relationship develops once they have the chance to live as a couple abroad and then consider what they might face as a couple in case they return to Cuba.

Concerning the role of the family and the couple relationship among the interviewees I can conclude that individuals who have a relationship with a German, decide in most of the cases to live as a family in Germany. For some couples – as is the case with Ana and her husband – though they wanted to live in Cuba that was not possible, mainly because the foreign partner could not find a job and she was still in maternal leave. Others did not have a solid relationship or at the moment of coming to Germany had just broken up with their partner in Cuba. Other couples begin their relationship in Cuba and almost without getting to know each other they marry. In this way they assure the legitimate permanence of the Cuban partner in Germany and spare themselves from a new separation, additional costs in planning a second travel and avoid going again through an exit procedure which outcome is rather insecure. Usually the marriage takes place before their tourist visa expires. In terms of the integration process these individuals depend emotionally and economically – at least during the first period of their arrival in Germany – on the person they are with, always a risky decision and sometimes a lucky one.

### **Having a place to live**

Another element that I will discuss under ‘Living conditions in Cuba before departure’ refers to whether the interviewee has a place to live. In his speech of defense known as “History will Acquit Me”<sup>4</sup> delivered after the attack on Cuartel Moncada in 1953, Fidel Castro outlined what his program would be after the triumph of the revolutionary movement he was leading. Among the issues he claimed as a priority was the housing problem. After the revolution rents on housing were abolished making each Cuban the owner of the place where they were living. Selling, buying, and renting houses and apartments were prohibited though it is still allowed to swap houses among families. Hence, each family can live in a place better suited to their requirements. According to Álvarez et al. (1996) in the Census of 1981 it was reported that 47% of all houses and apartments in the country were built after 1958.

Due to social and demographic changes it was necessary not only to improve the housing conditions on the island, but also to construct new houses and apartments. Thus the Microbrigada Project is one of Cuba’s master projects, whereby all new construction of homes directly corresponded to the number of employed people. Depending on the capacity the Microbrigadas has, each worker can join them for a period that varies between three and ten years. After this period it is decided at a meeting among all workers who deserves the house or apartment depending on the merits of the person and his/her family conditions.

Despite the efforts made by the Cuban government to ameliorate the housing problem many people do not have their own place to live. They depend on the goodwill of other relatives. Young couples and single adults are most affected. When young people decide to live together and have a family they consider in which parent’s house they will at least have a room. The family has to adjust its patterns of communication while three different generations must share the same space. For single adults who, for instance, find a job in another province, they only take it if they have relatives in that place and if the relatives agree to offer them accommodation.

Another phenomenon that affects housing conditions is the internal migration in the country from rural to urban areas. People looking for better work opportunities

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<sup>4</sup> The speech “La Historia me absolverá” was published by Editoria Política, La Habana in 1964 and it could be consider the political platform and basis of the Cuban Revolution.

immigrate to the cities creating settlements in the sub-urban area.<sup>5</sup> Other social problems like overcrowding, lack of sanitary conditions and promiscuity are some of the problems created in these settlements.

Among the interviewees, the question of having their own place to live and general housing conditions were factors they considered when taking the decision between remaining in Cuba or going abroad. Housing conditions varied among individuals. While some had their own place to live, others had to live with relatives and/or friends.

Pedro and Magdalena went to Cuba in 1983 with their seven-month-old son. They met in East Germany while Pedro was studying music at the university. In Cuba Pedro was living with his mother in a very small apartment. Thus they decided to live with one of Pedro's friends for a while.

The problem was that where my mother lived was a very small place. We did not even consider the possibility of going there. The apartment has two rooms, a living room and a bedroom but very small. That's why we had to live with a friend of mine. We took a container from Germany with all the things you need in a house and we had all of it in my friend's living room. We waited until the government could give us a house because I did not have time ... At that time you had to go to the Microbrigada but I had to work and I could not leave my family alone (P. 378-85).

While they were waiting for an answer from the government about getting a house, Magdalena was also looking for a job as a journalist, a profession she had learned in East Germany. A year later she was informed that she did not have authorization to work as a journalist in Cuba. Because she did not have a job and lacked a place where the family could live, they took the decision to return to East Germany.

For other interviewees housing arrangements and a place to live were taken into consideration while still living in Germany. That was the case for Miriam. She received an offer to work 160 km away from her home. She was living there with her family but when she received this job offer she decided to move. One of her cousins was living in Havana and invited her to move in.

I lived in Havana for many years with my other cousin. She has two daughters. I had a bedroom but I started having some problems because her daughters needed the room. And where was I supposed to stay? I had nothing. Going back to Cuba meant returning to my mother's house and I didn't want that because I had already lived in Havana (M. 52-57).

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<sup>5</sup> Buscándote Habana. (2007). Documentary film. Regie: Alina Rodríguez Abreu. Runtime: 21 mins. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehgi0aC8Ics> (21.06.2010).

Miriam left Cuba and after doing so she could not return to the same place she had left. Returning would mean going back to her family. She had the experience of internal migration, from a rural area to the capital. It is possible that returning to Cuba might be viewed by her as a defeat in her struggle for a better life.

### **Changing political view**

In this section I will analyze the political orientation of the interviewees. How they describe the transformation they have experienced with their political ideas and how they speak about it more or less explicitly. For some, their political ideas are part of a transformation process in which they are aware of these changes and willing to talk about them, while for others it is an area they would rather not discuss openly.

For some of the interviewees their political ideas and criticism of the current government in Cuba have inspired them to take the decision to go abroad and more precisely to stay in Germany. Especially in 1989 with the collapse of the socialist system in many countries, all contracts Cuba had in the Eastern Block ended abruptly and many Cubans had to return to Cuba. However, having witnessed all these transformations they brought new perspectives and ideas back with them. In this regard there were students who came back with fresh information and experiences about what was happening. In contrast to the workers, who lived mostly in the suburbs and had less contact with the natives, students shared more time with other native students and had more access to the media.

José, for instance, lives today in Berlin. He went to study in the Soviet Union in 1984 as part of a group that would learn and be trained there in order to work in Cuba in the first thermonuclear factory. His arrival in the Soviet Union coincided with Mikhail Gorbachev's rise to power.

When Perestroika began, in 1985, we had begun our first year and changes had begun to take place. In Cuba you did not see it but there (in the Soviet Union) you did. One thing that made people aware of it was Glasnost, the transparency of information. The sacred cows were falling, biographies were published and they showed some documentaries and films. Professors and historians published and gave conferences. The truth was coming out about what happened in those years (J. 181-89).

With this new perspective of 'political transparency' José returned to Cuba in 1988. His studies were shortened by a year due to the perceived political instability in the Soviet Union. He continued working in Cuba installing electrical systems and started questioning the relative political passivity in Cuba and its position as a mere observer regarding political changes in Eastern Europe.

The year '94 began. If you remember well that was the year of the Party's congress. They encouraged people to say what they were thinking, in order to change. That was the time of the rectification of mistakes and negative tendencies. They saw that Perestroika was near. All socialist countries collapsed, Gorbachev was in Cuba and talked with Fidel. They wanted to know what Cubans thought about Perestroika and the fall of the Berlin wall, which was in '89 and all that. We were influenced by Perestroika. A meeting occurred, first with the Party and the communist youth and later with the other workers. Most of us were very critical. I was more critical than the rest. I said that in Cuba we should have some changes and I came up with examples from Russia; transparency of information, creation of political parties, acknowledgment of mistakes, going back to our history and rescuing national values that we were losing because of Socialism, being creative, innovative, capable ... I did not have any political compromise and we said all that. The secretary of the communist youth, a girl who had a good friendship with me, told me; 'no one will back you up when it comes to you'. She was right. Four months later I was fired (J. 323-66).

This period in which José was unemployed in Cuba coincides with a period in which many people were fired because of the economic crisis. However, through his statements he made his position clear concerning political changes in the former socialist countries and what could be done in Cuba. He advocated for more flexibility within the system. As long as he was employed, his voice had to be taken into account. As an unemployed citizen his voice did not count. Once without a job, he was not able to speak in meetings about his perspective regarding political changes. In 1996 after two years without work he asked a friend, who was in Germany at the time, to invite him to come over and once in Germany he decided to stay.

Sergio experienced a similar situation. He came to Germany in 1982 to study Physics and returned to Cuba in 1987 to work in the most important biotechnology research center. In the initial period, immediately after his arrival in Cuba, he describes his political views as follows:

At that time I still believed in Communism. I liked Socialism and that was fine for me. I saw Fidel Castro as a guarantee for Socialism in Cuba (S. 241-43).

The research center where Sergio was working had very good working conditions. Nevertheless as soon as the 'special period' began these conditions changed. Many workers, including Sergio, became more critical and his opinions were not always well received.

Several people came to see me; they talked to me because I said some things in a meeting. I started having political problems. When the special period began people were desperate. And then people talked more openly (S. 45-49).

In the middle of this situation he received the proposal of going again to Germany to learn new techniques in a laboratory for three months. With a scholarship granted by the DAAD he came to Germany in 1992. This was an intense political period in Germany. Part of what was silenced in the socialist era was focused upon later in



heated discussions. Sergio was not immune to this new atmosphere.

One thing that draws my attention now is that when I came again in 92, the wall fell 2 years earlier. I saw how people were living in freedom and that fascinated me. I used to talk here a lot about politics. In Cuba I did not talk much about politics but here I did it. I wanted to find my way of looking at things. A German politician, whom I met in Cuba took me to the quarters of the Communist Party and gave me some flyers. I went to my apartment and I read all of them. I read about everything that Stalin had done and Honecker, things I did not know. They were adjusting their party. It was not only about good and bad guys. That was for me like a revelation and I decided that I had to do something. I went back to Cuba but later I had many more problems (S. 245-54).

For José and Sergio being in touch with political changes after the collapse of the socialist countries made them see the political situation in Cuba under a new light. They had access to new information and returned to Cuba having a different view about what Socialism means but also particularly about Socialism in Cuba. Instead of being open to changes – what they expected for Cuba – they found a restrictive and contradictory social situation. On one side the Cuban government wanted to start new reforms and asked what people thought about it. On the other side the ideological and political discourse was tightened and people with different ideas were and are still not tolerated.

In the second half of the 90's people continued to be critical regarding the government. They question the restrictions they endure. Though they recognized some values of the revolution like free access to education and health care, they also demanded better salaries, a unified currency and the possibility to travel without restrictions. These individuals questioned the system and are critical when they look at their own experiences. This questioning could be understood as a conflict among generations. Those who are in power remain in their positions giving almost no opportunity to the new generation to take decisions by themselves or even to occupy positions in the government.

Luis, for instance, is part of the new generation who questions the government and looks for answers. During his studies at the university he was part of the Students' Federation. Its function was to represent students and give them a voice in front of the government. Though he was part of this organization, he describes himself as someone who had his own position and was ready to engage in a polemic and contribute to dialogue.

After he finished his studies he remained at the university working as a professor. A year later he went to Spain as part of an exchange program and there he wanted to continue studying in a Ph.D. program but when he returned to Cuba the answer from

his department was that he had to stay in Cuba and only if the department would decide that it was time for him to go abroad again, then they would let him do it. This was probably the moment in which Luis reconsidered his political position or, at least, what he really thought about the government. As long as he was part of the Students' Federation and doing what was expected from him everything worked well. As soon as he asked for the authorization to continue with his studies and this was denied, he reconsidered his political position.

The university was an open place, at least much more than other places. Being president of FEU (University Student Federation) did not mean that I always had the same political perspective as the government. I always had my own point of view. Later it was more radical. That was after I had all those problems. I realized that part of the problem was not because someone took an arbitrary decision, but because the system created that and legitimated the power they have (L. 631-36).

Being part of the system meant for him to take an active role in political issues. One of the possibilities he had as a student was to be part of the FEU. Contrary to what he expected, being part of the system in this way was not a guarantee for having more autonomy later. Here autonomy is referred to as the freedom individuals have in taking their own decisions. At this level, autonomy was denied to him. As Luis expresses above, the decision taken of not letting him continue with his studies at a Ph.D. level, involved not only the decision of other individuals, but was also part of a political decision in which individuals are restricted in their actions.

Hence, the different political perspectives among the interviewees could be considered part of the process. Their ideas and perceptions change according to their experiences. There is no doubt that the collapse of the socialist countries was an irreversible process. Political and philosophical ideas were and are still today questioned. However, Cuba took the path of being faithful to its ideology. Moments of contradiction between the Cuban government and its people are perceived when the people feel restrictions in their freedom of action. For these individuals the resolution of this contradiction was to emigrate. Thus, politics is one of the conditions they considered when taking the decision whether to remain in Cuba or to leave their homeland.

### **Summing-up 'Living conditions in Cuba before departure'**

The previous analysis helps us to understand how Cubans lived in Cuba before they were determined to go to Germany. Each condition is not weighed in the same way in every case. Hence, for some losing motivation in their jobs or being disappointed

after a boss decides something against what they were expecting could be the trigger that makes them consider the possibility of going abroad. For others it was more about the difficulties they faced in finding a place to live, being disappointed in their relationship or simply not having one. However, from the 35 interviewees, 23 came over because they had already met someone from Germany or had a contact – a relationship or relative – while 12 came because they were accepted into a graduate program with high qualifications or came to work.

Thus after 1989 the crucial element that made it possible for Cubans to come to Germany is the contact they have in Germany either with a person or an institution. Out of the total number of Cubans who come to Germany each year, a higher proportion is made up of those invited by relatives, friends or spouses (in the case where they had already gotten married in Cuba). A lower proportion corresponds to those who continue their studies in Germany or come over as highly qualified workers.

When discussing living conditions, it is important to note that none of these conditions can be considered isolated from the rest. For each interviewee the decision between remaining in Cuba or going abroad was made depending on how important that condition was for the person or the combination of them.

### **Strategies for leaving the country**

In this section I will analyze which strategies Cubans use in order to migrate to Germany. These diverse strategies are also related to the kind of permit people must obtain from the German consulate in Havana. Hence, when a Cuban arrives in Germany he usually has a Schengen visa<sup>6</sup>, which is issued by the German consulate in Havana. The distance that separates Cuba from Germany – around 8400 km – with the Atlantic Ocean in the middle is a geographical factor that, along with permits and visa regulations, influences the way people come over. Thus it is more likely for a

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<sup>6</sup> The Schengen Visa has made traveling between its 25 European member countries much easier and less bureaucratic. Traveling on a Schengen Visa means that the visa holder can travel to any (or all) member countries using one single visa, thus avoiding the hassle and expense of obtaining individual visas for each country. This is particularly beneficial for persons who wish to visit several European countries on the same trip. The Schengen visa is a “visitor visa”. It is issued to citizens of countries who are required to obtain a visa before entering Europe. The countries included in the Schengen treaty are: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

Cuban to arrive in Germany on a Schengen visa rather than through illegal means, as is the case for Cubans arriving in the U.S. (Rodríguez, 1996).

Moving to Germany is mainly possible after individuals had created a social network including contacts with Germans or someone living in Germany. These strategies are then aimed to facilitate this contact. As will it be further discussed, these encounters could be by chance, or as many of these stories reveal, they are also the result of a planned strategy.

### **Planning a strategy to leave the country**

When someone develops a strategy and puts it into action it usually means that it is accompanied by a goal the person wants to achieve. Here it will be discussed how some interviewees planned their exit. The planning phase could be extended to some weeks before the departure or it could take years. During this time the person takes a series of decisions that eventually leads him or her to a position in which they can leave the country. Individual and family factors are also contemplated here.

Cuba has a large migratory tradition. Since colonial times many Cubans have been going abroad in pursuit of education and determined to improve their economic level or because they had to go into exile due to their political ideas. In research (Aja, 1991) as well as in literature (Ponte, 2005; Valdés, 1995; Piñera 1998) the theme of Cuba as an island (la insularidad) has sparked explanations about what motivates Cubans to leave their country on a temporary or permanent basis. A more systematic line of research about these issues can be found in Cuba (Álvarez, 1996) and in the U.S. (Duany, 2009) emphasizing the period after the Cuban revolution.

The Cuban Diaspora has spread all around the world and has fed the imagination of what life looks like in other places. This imagination is influenced by the contact Cubans have with relatives that live abroad or with foreigners – mainly tourists – who visit the island. Other sources of information, like news on the Internet, are limited due to the control the government has over all media.

There are many generations of Cubans, who at some point ask themselves what they might find beyond the borders of the island and dream about the moment in which they will cross these borders. Iris is one of the girls born after the revolution. Part of her family is in Miami. So, she was always confronted with the fact of having a divided family and that sparked her idea quite early on of getting to know something different.

I think that since I was a child I wanted to leave Cuba. We had relatives in Miami. When children grow up they look and say; look, that's from Miami; there everything is better. Going to Miami is like an illusion. But when I grew up I never wanted to go to Miami because I knew there are a lot of Cubans there and it would be like in Cuba, just another Cuba. I wanted another world, something completely different, something much more open (I. 236-42).

Iris was born in a small town in the East side of the country. Her family comes from a rural area. Having in mind the idea of going abroad she thought that one way could be to go to the capital, where she could have the opportunity of being in touch with people in a more intellectual milieu. She finished her college studies with very good grades and decided to study Psychology, a career that was offered in Havana.

I was glad that one was able to study psychology in Havana. I knew that if I wanted to leave, I had first to be in Havana (I. 233-35).

With one goal in mind she took the first step and moved from the rural area to the capital. Her studies in psychology opened to her other perspectives and so she gained in security about what she expected in her future. Hence, she took two other crucial decisions in her pursuit of attaining her goal. One decision was related to her relationship and the other was related to the place where she wanted to work after finishing her studies. She says:

I always thought that I did not want to marry a Cuban. I wanted something else, something completely new. I did not want to sacrifice things like love. I also did not want to be with someone who did not like me. I did not have to, but I said; I want to know the world and love, like in my dreams (I. 191-94).

She decided in the beginning that she did not want to have a long, serious relationship with a Cuban. If that had been the case she would have been committed to someone in a place where she did not want to stay. Under these conditions she decided to close her affections, at least for the time being.

She also had to take some decisions regarding her job. After finishing her studies she considered the option of working as a psychotherapist, which is the specialization she liked the most. However, psychotherapists work in clinics or hospitals and with it they are employed by the Ministry of Public Health. As I will analyze in the section corresponding to 'Exit procedures', this Ministry has many restrictive internal regulations concerning the permits it grants to its workers if they want to go abroad. Thus she decided to work in another Ministry where she would not have to face so many restrictions in case she decided some day to leave the country.

I always wanted to do psychotherapy, counseling. I liked that much more. But it was also clear to me that some day I would leave Cuba. That was clear to me ... so when I started working I said to myself that I had to do something different. When it was my turn to select one of the options they still had good some things. I decided for a

consulting enterprise (I. 251-58).

Though her motivation and desire were related to another workplace, her decision was based on considerations external to the profession she studied. In her decision she wanted to leave the door open to possibilities that would lead her to her ultimate goal.

Other interviewees made careful decisions even earlier in this process and began to weigh the pros and cons of beginning a study and possibilities of jobs they could access later on. Luis wanted to be a doctor. That was his dream. He finished college with good grades and in 1997 he decided to study medicine. The first four semesters were the best for him. However, little by little, he also learned about the limitations doctors have if they decide to go abroad. While he did not have any concrete plan, he did not want to have later any kind of limitations. He also wanted to leave the door open to all possibilities.

I studied medicine for two years. ... Medicine is more of a political, rather than a vocational decision. As medicine student I was much better than what I was later when I changed to biochemistry. I was very conscious of the fact that I had traded vocation for my freedom ... I thought that I could find a crack in the system; that I could finish my medicine studies and later do basic science, something away from hospitals. That is the problematic part of public health (L. 654-64).

In these cases, I have introduced individuals who did not want to leave to chance their perspectives. They would rather take control of the situation where they can plan their future in relation to their careers but also to their private lives. Their preliminary decisions avoid early commitments that might hinder them in their freedom of movement. In that early phase they do not know when or how they will have the opportunity to leave the country. For many the process of planning their travels and going abroad is mired in frustration. Though their first steps are based in their personal goals and ideals and not in a concrete possibility which takes them abroad, they keep on trying. For instance, they avoid to begin a relationship where they could be attached or they avoid to take jobs where later the permission to go abroad could be denied. Especially in the young generation, avoiding attachments is based in the idea that life is better somewhere else. In doing so they postpone plans which, they should be able to make true in another place and they close themselves to the potential perspectives in their environment. They mortgage their present in search of a better future somewhere else. In spite of difficulties and uncertainties around they plan their next steps and take action in areas that could lead them to a new future and take them in the directions they want to go.

### **Meeting someone**

In general when Cubans want to go abroad, they previously had to have contact with someone who lives outside the country, usually that person is a foreigner or a relative living abroad. I will discuss here how these contacts are made focusing on Germany as the host society. Though Cuba and East Germany had signed contracts and since 1978 it is estimated that around 30 000 Cubans went to work in East Germany (Adolph, 2007: 167). Cubans that decided to stay in East Germany before 1989 until the reunification did it because in most cases they already knew a German. Usually they were involved in a relationship, and because of this it was possible for them to apply for a residence permit. In the late 70's and 80's Cubans who came to Germany for work had to return to Cuba when the exchange programs abruptly ended (Con Uhladh, 2005a; Langer, 2010; Niese; 2010). Nonetheless a few returned to Germany because they have left a relationship, were married or even had a family. Having a contact in Germany was usually a critical factor in their decision to leave the country and to land in Germany.

As I discussed before, in some cases these individuals have already decided to leave the country and 'meeting someone' becomes a strategy in order to attain their goal. The result of the contact with Germans could be the beginning of a relationship as it was previously discussed. Meeting someone and being involved in a relationship can also be considered part of a strategy to leave the country. In the previous section it was analyzed how Iris had no intention of being emotionally involved in a relationship with a Cuban. It is plausible to conclude that looking for friendships on the net was a conscious strategy where she could make contact with foreigners.

Another strategy in 'meeting someone' is the case of arranged marriage. The convenience of getting married does not mean that the individuals remain together. This strategy doubly benefits the person that wants to leave the country. On the one hand the required procedures from the German side ensures up to a certain point that the person may enter the host society on the red carpet, meaning that the person has rights and a legal status for his/her residency. On the other hand the person receives a permit from the Cuban authorities to remain abroad known as PRE (Permiso de residencia en el extranjero). With this permit the person does not lose his/her property in Cuba and can return there for vacations or to live anytime he/she wishes.

But 'meeting someone' does not necessarily imply the beginning of a couple's relationship because of love or convenience. Other encounters are based on a collaborative project for continuing further studies or working in Germany. As stated above some people already have the plan that someday they will leave the country. While planning, it is still not completely clear for them where they will go or how they will do it. However, they use all the contacts they have and all the possibilities available in order to get to know someone or to be integrated into a project that allows them the possibility of traveling. In this sense they build an extended social network with ramification outside Cuban borders. When Roberto graduated from Havana University he wanted to get to know other countries and continue to develop his research but in the area where he had to do his social service there wasn't any project that would allow him to participate in an international exchange. He decided to present his first research paper at a congress and there he met a professor who invited him to Germany to be part of a research team.

That was a nice coincidence. A professor from a German university was at a congress in Cuba organized by my university. We met there (R. 6-8).

His strategy was to meet someone that, through his scientific work, was related to his research. Their similar professional interests made their contact possible. Roberto took the opportunity to be positioned in a place where contact with professionals from other countries would occur in an atmosphere in which they could discuss their projects. In this strategy the Cuban part begins a contact where he presents what he can do, his potential and interest in a certain area while the foreign contact shows with which resources he counts and which common interest can be pursued. Both parties reach an agreement in which the Cuban is invited to Germany to participate in a scientific project. Hence the profession is a means used to attain a goal.

Also for Luis his profession was the means for leaving the country. When he returned from Spain to Cuba after participating in an exchange program, he received the offer of returning to Spain to do his Ph.D. His boss did not allow him to go to Spain again, considering that he took a decision without consulting the appropriate department. He decided to quit that job but he also wanted to continue with his research at a Ph.D. level. His strategy was to continue sending applications for studies and scholarships to different universities where his research might be accepted.

I decided to go abroad and I had a plan: A, B, C, D, E. They all included a university ... a university in Mexico, in Canada, here in Germany and one in Spain. For the program



in Mexico I had to write some papers and I was doing that, at the same time I was doing the applications for the Ph.D. (L. 191-94).

At this point Luis was determined to leave the country. For him it was not important where he would go but instead where his project might be accepted. In this process it was also important for him to be in touch with people that could give him some kind of information about places where it was possible to send applications for studies and grants.

I had finished my master's that year and a year and a half later there was a Ph.D. position at the university in Germany, where a friend of mine is. He told me about that Ph.D. position and recommended me to the professor, who made the offer and that is how I came here (L. 16-18).

His connection to Germany was made through one of his former professors who was in a German university at that time. Hence it was possible for Luis to send applications to different universities in other countries but also to be in touch with people he already knew and with others he met in the virtual world that could help him with his plan of going abroad and studying. So the person has to be active in making new contacts or in nurturing existing ones. The social network originally begun in Cuba expands abroad which in turn exponentially creates new connections. Hence 'meeting someone' becomes a strategy whereby the person places himself in various contexts where contacts with foreigners are more likely. Though some encounters are a matter of fate many others are the result of careful planning. Through their positioning in specific places, individuals in Cuba with a departure project are more sensitive to certain signals in their environments. They look for opportunities, which could result for instance, in an exchange program between universities or just a means to facilitate their exit as a student or highly qualified worker to another country.

### **Summing-up 'Strategies for leaving the country'**

In this section I have clarified which strategies Cubans use when they try to leave the country. Many factors, which are out of the control of these individuals also play a role and should not be underestimated. However, in attaining their goals Cubans are very conscious of their strategy. The strategies they use are also predicated on a plan. The following graphic summarizes 'Living conditions in Cuba before departure' and 'Strategies for leaving the country'.

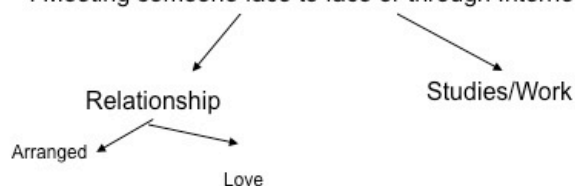
## Farewell Cuba... Forever?

### Living conditions in Cuba before departure

- . Educational level in Cuba
- . Having a job
- . Having a family and/or couple relationship
- . Having a place to live
- . Changing political view

### Strategies for leaving the country

- . Planning a strategy to leave the country
- . Meeting someone face to face or through Internet



### Going through exit procedures

Diagram 1

These interviews make clear that going abroad is not always a matter of chance. It is often a premeditated event as well as a decision involving much reflection. Planning a strategy to leave the country shows how Cubans, especially the younger generation, conceive a plan and take an active role in reaching their goals. They mobilize their resources in the form of contacts with other people that could help them or they place themselves in certain positions where traveling could be more likely than in other positions. In other words, they expand their social network outside the Cuban borders.

For some individuals leaving the country is a goal they have. During the planning time they prepare themselves by looking for opportunities where travel abroad would be possible but they also take some decisions concerning studies and work. For instance, some individuals decide to study something where later there may be fewer restrictions to leave the country whereas others decide to work in places where permission to go abroad would not be so difficult to obtain.

The goal of these strategies is to leave the country. In contrast, the place where they will eventually arrive is not necessarily previously planned. In this regard, while planning their strategies the place where they will go depends more on the contacts they have and who they might meet.

Concerning the contacts some individuals have abroad, there is the possibility with the use of new technologies, for instance, to get to know someone through the internet as a potential partner in a relationship or just meeting someone who could help with the exit procedures. The other alternative is to look for places abroad where the person could work and/or study. In most cases contacts established through the internet are followed by meeting face to face in Cuba and then going to Germany, or sometimes it doesn't even involve a face to face meeting. That is, in some cases, Cubans who go to Germany do it without having personally met their German contact. Instead these contacts begin and take place in the virtual reality of internet. It is worth noting here that from Cuba there are restrictions on the use of the internet. Only a limited number of Cubans has access to it. As a result meeting a foreigner face to face either through friends, tourism, studies, work or exchanges are direct alternatives in building and expanding a social network.

Planning a strategy to leave the country is for the interviewees a priority. However, Germany is not necessarily the main target of Cuban migration, at least after 1989. Nevertheless, we should consider the possibility that in the years following 1989 and due to the increased number of Cubans in Germany, the country may have been a target for some migrants due to the existing connections they had with friends and relatives that had been settling here since the 70's, which strengthened the migrant network between the two countries.

### **Going through/managing exit procedures**

Gathering all the information and necessary papers to present their case to the authorities and migration office in Cuba and obtaining the 'exit permit' – which is indispensable when a Cuban citizen travels abroad – could be considered a kind of Odyssey, not only because of the difficulties one faces but also because of the time it takes waiting for the documents and authorization. The procedure that ensues contains many uncertainties due to the fact that the required information about how to apply for an 'exit permit abroad' changes continually. Up until 1989 –which saw the collapse of many socialist countries – new measures and procedures were implemented mainly because more and more people were applying for this permit. The destination for Cubans was not only the U.S., as it traditionally had been, but also Europe (Aja, 2002, 2007; Rodríguez, 1997). Cuba needed other sources of economic support and investment in order to be able to participate in international

transactions. With a lagging sugar industry and low prices in the international market, the country invested more and more in the tourism industry. Each year thousands of European tourists visit the country. Private and official contact among tourists and Cubans increased the number of applications streaming into the immigration offices in Cuba. Thus the mechanism had to change in order to process and reply to – giving authorization or not – the thousands of applications these offices received each year.

In this section, I will analyze the procedures Cubans follow when they want to come to Germany as a tourist, student, to work or to marry. Thus this section details different steps a Cuban follows before leaving the country. Among these steps are: receiving a letter of invitation, applying for a passport, receiving a liberation letter (which is compulsory for persons with a degree), applying and receiving an exit permit and finally applying for a visa.

It must be mentioned that each country belonging to the EU has different procedures. However, I will limit myself here exclusively to the procedures between Cuba and Germany. I will also illustrate the differences among these procedures taking into account the specific period when people came, which also corresponds to the changes in the migration policies in Cuba, particularly in the last 20 years.

### **Receiving a letter of invitation**

The first thing a Cuban needs when traveling abroad is a letter of invitation, which must be presented to the Cuban and German authorities in Cuba. A private invitation can be issued by any German citizen or a Cuban with permanent residence in Germany. They have to go to the police department in Germany and pay an amount of 25€ for the Letter of Intent<sup>7</sup>. This paper is then sent to Cuba and presented later in the German consulate in Havana in order to apply for a visa to Germany – people living in other provinces have to travel to Havana. Parallel to this procedure the person who invites from Germany must go to the Cuban consulate in Germany and make a letter of invitation<sup>8</sup> for the Cuban. This paper is then presented to the immigration offices in Cuba in order to apply for a passport and exit permit. This procedure is charged in an amount of 200 euros.

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<sup>7</sup> In German this letter is known as ‘Verpflichtungserklärung’ and can be obtained in a department at the police station in all German cities.

<sup>8</sup> Until 2005 it was possible to make a notarized translation in Cuba of the letter of intent and this was presented in the immigration offices in Cuba as letter of invitation. Office of International Law (Consultoría Jurídica) was the office authorized for this procedure. They charge an amount of 150 CUC for each document.

In the early 90's, once certain Cubans were established in Germany, more relatives were invited over. Due to the fact that the income of Cubans in Germany is lower compared to that of a German, Cubans manage to invite their relatives sending a letter of invitation under the name of a German. In this way the invitation had a reliable character raising their effectiveness compared to that sent by a Cuban with residency in Germany. Hence, when Miriam came to Germany it was her sister, Doris, who was already living here, who prepared the papers for her. However, the invitation was issued under the name of Doris' husband.

(The letter of invitation) was officially issued by my sister's husband. It is, and always will be, a fact that a German issues a letter more frequently than a Cuban. Cubans do not have too much credibility when they go to the embassy and sometimes they do not have good work contracts. They do not have too much money, and that's why he issued the letter of invitation for me (instead of my sister) (M. 415-19).

Using the name of a German could raise the chance that later the German consulate in Cuba grants a visa. However, it is the Cuban partner who handles the expenses related to travel. In order to do that they make savings and decide to invest them in bringing over a close relative. Doris, for instance, decided to invite her sister Miriam. She needed some support for her and her child while she was working and learning the German language. As soon as she had the necessary amount of money to issue the invitation to her sister she invested the money toward that.

In addition to private individuals, German institutions can also issue a letter of invitation. Thus Cubans can come to Germany to study and /or work. Here the letter is sent to the place where the person works in Cuba and from there the rest of the procedure takes place. When Roberto met a German professor in Cuba they agreed that Roberto would participate in a research project in Germany. However, the department in Cuba where Roberto was working and the department in Germany did not have an exchange program. Thus, there wasn't any interest from the Cuban side as to whether Roberto could participate in this research project or not. When the letter of invitation was sent to Cuba for the first time, Roberto was not informed about it. In the second attempt he finally received the letter.

That was... a tragedy. I was working at an institute that had nothing to do with what I did for my thesis. They were not interested in whether I was going to Germany or not. The congress was in December and in January the professor sent the invitation to my work. There the letter disappeared; they did not say a word. Four or five months later someone from the marine research institute came – they already had an exchange program – and he asked me if I was not interested in the scholarship because they sent me the papers four or five months ago. I realized that some people had no interest in my case and it was all the same to them if I went or not. I started playing with some diplomacy in order to leave. And then I got the papers with the invitation again (R. 35-46).

For the rest of the procedure Roberto had to persuade his boss in order to obtain the other permits. When an official letter of invitation is issued the rest of the procedure is paid in national currency, which is cheaper compared to the same payments the person has to make when the letter of invitation is privately issued. Additionally, this implies that the workplace takes responsibility for what the person does once abroad. Traveling back and forth between countries while being part of a research project brings prestige to the place the person works in Cuba. At the same time if the person decides during one of this travels to stay abroad, this brings a negative image to the place and also to the people who gave their authorization for traveling in the first place. This is one of the reasons that the procedure involving the workplace is so long and uncertain. Regardless of the research project and independent from the collaboration the two places may already have, the individual as such must prove not only her professional qualifications but must also express her loyalty to the government through various official activities.

Others use a combination of both types of letters of invitation. This was the alternative Luis used. He was accepted as a Ph.D. student in Germany. Usually the official letter of invitation issued by a German university is accompanied by a scholarship or the confirmation of a workplace in Germany. This is presented to the German consulate in Cuba in order to obtain a student or work visa. Luis established contact with the university through a friend who was working in Germany. As a consequence, he did not have the support of any Cuban institution that could represent him at the Cuban immigration offices. In order to obtain the rest of the permits from the Cuban side he had to activate his social network in Germany to obtain a private letter of invitation that he could present to the Cuban authorities.

We started with the procedure and that was terrible. A friend of mine in Berlin had to invite me. In Cuba they do not accept ... letters from institutions addressed to individuals. In other words, they only accept private invitations to individuals. And then though I had a letter of invitation and that was enough for the embassy – a letter from a university in Germany – I had to talk with a friend and she sent me, through the Cuban embassy, a private invitation saying that she could take care of me in economic and personal terms. In other words, if I rob a bank she is responsible for it. That was crazy (L. 304-13).

Presenting a private letter of invitation to your workplace – as Luis did – liberates the workplace of any responsibility when the person decides to stay abroad for a period longer than 11 months.

As stated here, receiving a letter of invitation is the first step a Cuban has to take

when wanting to travel abroad. The rest of the procedure will hinge upon that. This letter must be presented to the German and Cuban authorities. Without the contact of a person or institution abroad the letter cannot be issued, making subsequent steps like authorization and application for a visa impossible to obtain.

### **Applying for a passport**

Most of the time when someone travels from one place to another, especially crossing borders, a passport is imperative. After receiving the letter of invitation in its Spanish version the person presents it to the immigration office in order to request a passport. Obtaining a passport could take from a week to two months. The timeframe depends on the availability of passports in the country but also on whether the person travels with an official letter of invitation and has previous authorization of her workplace or on a private letter of invitation. With an official letter of invitation the department of international relations that corresponds to the place where the person works, arranges the procedure and the expenses are paid in national currency (around 60 Cuban pesos which is the equivalent of 3 CUC). With a private letter of invitation the person goes directly to the immigration offices and applies for a passport, which is paid in hard currency (around 60 CUC which is the equivalent of 1200 Cuban pesos). The time needed to obtain the passport also varies depending on the kind of letter of invitation one presents, taking a shorter time when an official letter is presented.

When the person wants to travel after obtaining a private letter of invitation, she has to fill out a form where she is asked, in addition to name, age, place and date of birth, whether she has completed her studies, at which level and in which subject. In the case where the person has completed her university studies, she has to ask at her place of work, or in the place where she last worked, for a 'liberation letter'. (This procedure will be discussed in the next section.) When Miriam went to the immigration office she knew about this. So she decided to say that she neither had a job nor had she received a university degree.

When I went to the immigration office in Havana I told them that I was working in customs. I did not say a word about education. If I had said that I was a professor, I would not have the chance to leave, so I did not say a word (M. 401-03).

This is one of the control procedures for individuals who have completed their degree. In doing this the government can detect who has qualifications and which level of studies they have completed. When the individual has received their

university degree then she must receive authorization from the Ministry, adding an extra step to the exit procedure.

Alina also tried to write on the passport application that she did not have any qualifications making it easier for her to obtain the rest of the permits. But the person that received her application was a neighbor who knew her.

That was a string of bad luck. First I wanted to tell a story that I did not have a university diploma. They have no way to know about it. But the person who received my application was my neighbor and she said: 'Look, I cannot do that because if they realize that our addresses are the same I will have a problem. You have to declare that you have a university diploma and get a liberation letter (A. 55-59).

When the passport is issued in Cuba the person's qualifications appear on the first page, which leads to the application for a 'liberation letter'. However, when the Cuban passport is issued abroad the line for the profession disappears as though when living abroad the person automatically lost the acquired qualifications. Thus, the application for a passport is one of the mechanisms of control of the Cuban government to know whether the person who applies for an exit permit already has qualifications or not. The omission of this line also has a symbolic meaning. Once abroad the person no longer has any right to be considered a 'professional' in Cuba, diminishing her status in Cuban society.

### **Obtaining a liberation letter**

Obtaining a 'liberation letter' is the most critical point of the process for professionals. It is a very uncertain process because the person does not know when, or if, it will ever happen. It is a very stressful time not only for the person waiting for this authorization but also for the person who issues the invitation. Two main characteristics differentiate this step from the rest of the exit procedure. The first thing is that the liberation letter is the only document free of charge and the second is that it is compulsory for all individuals who have obtained a degree. Depending on the place the person works, a specific Ministry is in charge of signing their letter. Even if the person does not work at the time she receives the letter of invitation, she still has to ask for a liberation letter, which is conveyed from the last place she worked until it reaches the Ministry.

At this point the reader may have noticed that going through the exit procedure is a chain of steps. Each step is closely linked to the next and it is difficult, if not almost impossible, to go through the next step without completing the previous one. It seems



the government has established this process in an effort to prevent the possibility of bribery and/or corruption that could occur within the system because the minister is the only one that can sign the letter and it is unlikely that one could get that kind of access to the top. (In this same section it will be discussed under which circumstances bribery may be possible). This process has also been established to prevent ‘brain drain’ (Casaña, 2006; Gutiérrez, 2008). The country does not want to lose its professionals and the solution it has found is to implement restrictions on anyone with a degree that would like to leave the country on either a permanent or temporary basis.

In 1999 new regulations were implemented and those that already existed, like laws 1254 and 3771, which regulate the social service for graduates of universities, were applied in full force. The most restrictive regulations are those applied to all professionals working in the health industry.<sup>9</sup> Doctors and nurses have to wait five years in Cuba before receiving the ‘liberation letter’. That is the time needed for other students to graduate and obtain a job before they leave. Those working in laboratories and all health technicians must also wait before eventually leaving. Family reasons, like being married and having children with a foreigner, are not taken into account. Doctors and researchers working in the health industry receive the authorization to travel if they are going to present their papers at international congresses; otherwise they have to wait five years after marrying a foreigner or after applying for a residence permit abroad before receiving authorization to travel.

For individuals who have finished a degree it is possible to ask for a liberation letter only after completing three years of social service (See section ‘Having a job’). Iris was working in a consulting enterprise after finishing her Psychology studies. After almost three years of working there she wanted to start in another place where she could have a better salary. That was when her boyfriend proposed that she come to Germany for three months and she asked for a liberation letter.

When I asked for the liberation letter they told me that in the Ministry there is an internal regulation. All graduates have to work at least 3 years if they want to have that letter. At that time I was already working for 2 years and 3 months. They told me; ‘Go back where you were working, work for another year and then come back again’. I said; I cannot go back because I quit. I do not work there any more. Well, they said, no, but I did not give up. I kept trying, I wrote letters and I had meetings with the communist party. They wanted to discuss my case. I also told them a lie because what I said to them about why I wanted to come to Germany was something different. I said that my sister was here, she

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<sup>9</sup> The Minister of Public Health Dr. Carlos Dotres Martínez signed the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1999 the 54-99 Resolution, which was published in the “Gaceta Oficial de la República” the 15<sup>th</sup> July 1999.

was about to have a baby and she needed me. That is not true. I have no sister in Germany but if I had said that I had a German boyfriend they would not let me go. I had to go through several meetings and had to wait many months. Everything started in March or April. The same day I got the letter I went to the migration offices, that was the end of August. I came September the 1st. I had to wait several months for that letter not knowing if I could get it or not because the minister had to sign it (I. 37-54).

During the five months it took her to obtain the letter, Iris employed various tactics. She made up a more or less credible story with the hope that first the commission and later the minister would believe her and would sign the letter. This commission is in charge of evaluating the political views of the person in question regarding the government. In the case where the person receives a negative evaluation, the letter would not be signed or the person has to wait longer. It is also interesting to note that Iris had to give reasonable grounds as to why she wanted to go to Germany. It appears that having a relationship is not good enough reason to receive permission to go abroad. Hence, obtaining a liberation letter depended on receiving a positive political evaluation as well as having a convincing reason to go to Germany. One can then draw the conclusion that only Cubans with a positive political evaluation are awarded a liberation letter, while others with a negative evaluation have to wait longer.

As stated above, obtaining the liberation letter is the only document free of charge while going through the exit procedure. Miriam already mentioned that filling out the required form in order to obtain the passport is one measure of control the government uses to deny the letter to someone with qualified studies. However, so far there are no reports of an archive where the name and occupation of Cuba's population might be stored. That is why Alina tried to 'hide' her degree, which in the end was not possible because the person in the migration office knew her. Alina also worked six months in a hospital, meaning that her last job was directly related to the Ministry of Health. The chances that she could get the letter were low because she had not finished her 'social service'. Then she decided to buy the 'liberation letter' in the Ministry of Culture where it is easier to obtain.

That was blood, sweat and tears. ... I had to buy the liberation letter, as you say, as the slaves did, didn't they? ... Those six months that I worked, I did so in a hospital and you know that public health workers do not get the permit for going abroad. I could not say that I had worked in public health. I bought a liberation letter. A friend of mine had another friend in the Ministry of culture. There you received the letter from the province; it must not be signed by the minister. That was easier and that was the solution (A. 48-67).

After a three-month visit to Germany, Alina returned to Cuba. She and her boyfriend had decided to continue their relationship. Due to his job in Germany they thought the best approach would be for them to live in Germany together. However, for her second travel to Germany she needed a liberation letter again. She considered the official path, which is working for six months in Cuba and then officially requesting the letter but she did not find a job. She then purchased a second liberation letter.

We wanted to get married and that was the only solution because we wanted to be together. In February 2001, I returned to Germany in the same way, with the same letter, from the same woman (A. 88-90).

Knowing that it would be difficult for her to receive the letter from the Ministry she used an illegal alternative. Hence, though the exit procedure is extremely controlled by the authorities – a control that aims to make it difficult to exit the country – some still manage to bribe the system when the process imposes too many barriers and difficulties.

Roberto also needed a liberation letter but the only possibility he had was to obtain it from the place where he was working. First he had to wait for the letter of invitation, which he received directly at his workplace. However at the very beginning no one was interested in his project. In order to receive the letter he first had to persuade his boss and gain his support.

As soon as I had the papers in my hand I made people aware of my project. They were not scientifically interested in that because the subjects were different. However, you know that in Cuba everyone is interested in going abroad. I convinced my boss that if we participate in the project we could all go abroad. In other words, that if I could go abroad so could he. I received the support from my boss and he started talking to people. He talked with his boss ... We rewrote the project in order to make it more interesting to the heads of the institute ... until I had my boss and his superiors on my side. We wrote a proposal about how to start an exchange program and we went to see the head of the institute. He was more inclined to sign all papers. The whole process took me a year and half (R. 51-66).

Persuading others was, for Roberto, the key factor in receiving the liberation letter. Here the scientific quality of the project was relegated to a secondary level. The most important thing was that, while supporting his project, others would also have, theoretically, the opportunity to go abroad. In his strategy many people were involved. All of them had to be in agreement. This example makes clear that asking for a liberation letter is a vertical process with a distinct hierarchy. Usually the person that applies for it is placed at the lowest level of this hierarchy and the lower the level, the more difficulties they face.

In spite of all barriers, difficulties and time-consuming challenges, when individuals with a degree have a project abroad – scientific or personal – they are active in finding a solution about how to obtain a liberation letter. They do not wait patiently for it. Rather they are active in persuading their superiors at all levels of the hierarchy even if that implies making false promises or making up stories. Bribery can also be part of their strategy. In other words, they do not easily give up. They invest personal and material resources in order to attain their goal.

### **Applying for an exit permit**

Another document that is compulsory for all Cuban citizens and foreigners with residency in Cuba wanting to go abroad is an exit permit or ‘white card’<sup>10</sup> as it is also known. The exit permit is granted or denied by the migration offices in Cuba and must be paid in hard currency when the person receives a private letter of invitation. The amount to be paid is 150 CUC. In the case of official invitations the person pays this amount in national currency. Without this permit and its full payment the person cannot board a plane.

The types of procedures people go through, including the mechanism to apply for an exit permit, have been modified in the last thirty years, covering the spectrum from total restriction of travel, to restrictions on people working in special sectors like in the public health system, as is the case today. Pedro, for instance, got married in East Germany in 1981. He came over as a music student. That same year his son was born and a year later the family went to Cuba. Things were not as they thought they would be. First his wife had no possibilities to work there and second they did not have a place to live. Faced with this situation they decided to return to Germany where both found work and a place to live. However, in the early 80’s obtaining an exit permit was very difficult.

In ‘84 nobody received the exit permit, neither students nor anyone else. Well, she wrote lots of letters. In ‘86 we had permission to leave. I was one of the first from that group that could leave. Later they did authorize the others. We were all married but we did not have permission to leave ... at that time I was playing in the national symphony orchestra. They asked about my reasons for quitting the job and on the form you could check only one of the following: 1: Due to a death in the family, or 2: Because I am a “worm”. (Worm was the label given to anyone wanting to emigrate to the U.S.) That man did not know what to write on my application form. Family reunification was not among the reasons. He wrote it down, with a pencil (P. 32-53).

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<sup>10</sup> Permiso de salida o tarjeta blanca.

Until the third Cuban migration wave in 1980 – which for many researchers on the subject is considered a political wave of migration (Grenier & Pérez, 2003; Olson & Olson, 1995) – internal policies regarding the granting of an exit permit were modified. Still until this moment going abroad for private reasons like family reunification was not differentiated from going abroad due to political motives. Thus, anyone applying for an exit permit was considered a traitor and political enemy. Though reasons for traveling to another country are fairly diverse including tourism, family and humanitarian reasons, the migration office still has the right to decide in which cases the permit will be granted or denied.

When the exit permit is denied the authorities usually keep the reason for denial to themselves. Some individuals are informed about it in the airport just a few minutes before their plane takes off. Isabel went through this experience. She studied in East Germany between 1979 and 1984. In 1983 she married a German. However she returned to Cuba in order to arrange her work permit in Germany. Her husband was waiting for her but she was not allowed to board the plane. She went to Cuba with the idea of remaining there a month, time enough to prepare her papers and return to Germany. Instead her exit permit was denied and she had to wait three and a half year before returning to Germany.

I wanted to stay here in Germany as I had an offer from the embassy to work there. The papers were ready but when I went to migration they decided that I could not leave. I had to wait for the exit permit from migration. When I was in the airport I was informed about it (I. 42-47).

Until today Isabel cannot clarify why in the last moment her exit permit was denied. She still feels nervous every time she is in an airport going through passport control. Such stories are quite widespread and probably because of that many people – especially if they are travelling for the first time out of Cuba – are certain that they will leave only when the plane finally takes off.

Going through the exit procedure is a rather chaotic process. After obtaining their passport, people can be confused and they did not know if the next step would entail applying for the exit permit or for the visa. Though it is possible to do both applications simultaneously, the process from the Cuban side usually takes much longer than the application for a visa to Germany. Delay in any of these procedures could mean losing time and money. Miriam was aware of this but when her sister invited her to go to Germany she took the risk of applying for the exit permit and visa at the same time.

The other problem was that you had to spend lot of money, go to the embassy, and then if you did not get the visa everything was lost, including the famous 50 dollars you had to pay for the white card. Sometimes they also asked for a reservation and you had to buy a plane ticket. All that has changed. Today you complete the rest of the papers after obtaining the visa, but before it was the other way around (M. 392-95).

Changes in the procedure were implemented after many people complained due to the amount of money they had lost (around 800€ taking into account they had bought a plane ticket and paid for the exit permit) when a visa was denied or the exit permit took much longer than what was planned.

Another condition the person has to fulfill when applying for the exit permit is an additional payment of 40 CUC per month depending on how long the person would like to stay abroad. An exit permit is granted from the Cuban side for a period of 11 months. If in this period the person does not return to Cuba, she loses all rights in Cuba and is considered an emigrant. All her property is confiscated and she can only travel as a tourist to Cuba after applying for an authorization to travel there at the Cuban consulate in Germany.

Aside from the exit permit, which is valid for 11 months; Cubans who are already married to a foreigner can also apply for a Resident Permit Abroad (PRE: Permiso de Residencia en el Extranjero). This permit provides some advantages to Cubans, among them worth mentioning is the preservation of their property there and the freedom of returning to the country whether for a visit or on a permanent basis. Because only married people are entitled to apply for such a permit, those who travel out of Cuba with any other permit or for any other reason besides being married, lose their rights in Cuba but not their citizenship.

Though obtaining a PRE takes longer than an Exit Permit, these interviews make clear that lately Cubans who go abroad with the intention of staying for a long period of time would rather wait longer for a PRE than leaving without it. Thus they ensure themselves a better legal status in Cuba while staying abroad. As stated before, Judith came to Germany because she wanted to study here. Her father is German and can support her during the time she studies; besides she is also a German citizen and has access to BaFög. However, for the Cuban authorities she remains Cuban and had to apply for an Exit permit. Though she is not married to a German she is entitled to obtain the PRE but it was still difficult for her to get it in 2006.

What I have is a PRE; a permanent permit to live abroad. That means that I neither have to extend it nor to pay for it. I can go to Cuba and return any time I want to. Very few Cubans have something like that. Most of them have it because they are married. At the beginning they did not want to give it to me because I'm not married, but I'm the

daughter, get it?. I'm the perfect case. I have German citizenship, I'm not married and I do not have to if I want to stay in Germany. But I need a PRE because that's my right to go to the other country, legally speaking. They gave it to me at the end and I'm here. I can go to Cuba anytime I want (J .41-49).

Due to the advantages and freedom of movement between countries that the PRE affords Cubans living abroad, not only those who are going through the procedures to go abroad, but also many Cubans who already live abroad, are applying for the PRE. Thus, having the PRE will also allow many individuals to return with their families to Cuba, to live there for longer periods, or to bring their children over for vacations. Luis is one of the interviewees who would like to change his migratory status; from a permit to travel abroad (PVE: Permiso de Viaje en el Extranjero) to the PRE.

I can also marry here and obtain a residence permit abroad. I think that's the ideal option because you do not have to pay for each month you're abroad. I can bring my son over without problems. I cannot bring my son now – and that's something I would like to do. If I stay longer than 11 months and do not return to Cuba, my son cannot come and visit me. There is no chance. Only if he comes to stay permanently and in doing so I would have to get lot of documents. That's why I would rather pay 40 euros and try to marry before losing my right of residency in Cuba. But if I get a residence permit abroad, a PRE, my son can come and visit me without it being a definitive exit (L. 508-22).

The required payment of 40 € per month, which does allow Cubans to return to Cuba, can and must be questioned. Primarily it adds some pressure to the precarious economic situation these individuals already have. Aside from financing their lives in Germany and in case they do not want to be considered emigrants in Cuba they, or the person who supports them, have to be ready to pay this amount if they want to keep their rights in the country where they were born. Secondly it challenges their individual autonomy because it also reminds the individual that she is restricted in the kinds of decisions she takes. In this case, deciding not to make a payment and not returning in the time they are suppose to, the consequences directly affect the status the person has in the eyes of the Cuban authorities. And finally it could be considered a sort of long distance control, which each month reminds the person where they come from. Even from that distance it binds the individual to the place where they originally belonged. In other words, these individuals are forced to underscore their belonging to Cuban society through a monthly payment, which in return reminds that they are part of the sending society.

However, not all individuals are ready to accept the conditions inherent in obtaining the PRE –though they can apply for it. Included here are those individuals who, at the moment they leave the country, did it while being very conscious of the decision

they were taking. They had planned their exit for a long time and at the moment of leaving they also knew that they wanted to start a new life somewhere else. Though previous to their departure they were not entitled to apply for a PRE, now they can do it because they are married in Germany, but some have decided not to apply for it.

Iris addresses this dilemma in the interview.

Once I wanted to do the PRE in case I would like to go back. But then I said; No. I do not want to do the PRE and I was aware of what I was doing. I said; I have nothing with Cuba. I'm a tourist there and I want to be like that. I do not want to have anything to do with the system and I do not want any permit. I left Cuba and that's it. That's my status (I. 829-32).

This attitude could be understood as a conscious rupture with the place she was born, or more precisely, it is a rupture with the system. She determines on her own what her relationship with the country will be and how she will interact with it. An additional element to her statement is the status that Cubans living abroad have in Cuba. Though Cubans do not lose their Cuban citizenship when they live abroad, they subsequently are considered Cuban tourists in Cuba. Under this label they must, for instance, pay for almost all services in Cuba in CUC, especially if they need to ask for any official document like a birth certificate. They are then considered a different kind of Cuban, which exposes the multiple contradictions the country has particularly concerning the migration issue.

### **Applying for a visa**

The procedure that follows, when Cubans apply for a visa, depends on the new migratory laws in Germany, which were modified in 2007 but also on the Cuban procedure. An example is the compulsory requirement of the Liberation Letter for all individuals who have a degree from a Cuban university. Since 1999 it has been possible to apply for a German visa only after the person has obtained the Liberation Letter, which must be presented to the German consulate. Therefore, the consulate will refuse to grant a visa to the individual who only has a letter of invitation under the argument that in case the visa is granted, it could expire before the Liberation Letter is granted to the individual and presented to the consulate.

The German Consulate in Cuba is located on 13<sup>th</sup> street and B in Vedado, Havana. It is the only German Consulate in the country. People who do not live in Havana have to travel there when they apply for a visa or when they have to perform any other procedure with the German authorities. The consulate is open to the public from



Monday until Friday from 09:00 until 12:00 except for German and Cuban holidays. Through in the internet<sup>11</sup> you can find all necessary information in order to apply for a visa. Due to the limited internet access for Cubans, most need to make a phone call or go to the consulate in person in order to obtain this information.

As explained in section corresponding to the Letter of Invitation, Luis had to present the Cuban authorities a private letter of invitation, while at the German consulate he presented the official invitation from the university. Because he came to Germany as a Ph.D. student with a scholarship, the process to obtain the visa was short and without difficulties.

I never had any problem; in two days I got the visa. I had an invitation from a public university. Besides, I have a visa, that later allowed me to apply here for a residence permit, because I came to study. That's what the letter of invitation said (L. 389-92).

Applying and obtaining a visa for Germany is facilitated because the person comes as a student and already has qualifications. Hence, for the German authorities these individuals are perceived as having a high potential to be successfully integrated into the German society (Markus, 2011).

An additional requirement since 2007 for all foreigners married to a German citizen, who have the intention to live in Germany, is testing their basic knowledge of the German language (Ausländerrecht, Migration- und Flüchtlingsrecht, 2010). The test is done at the consulate at the moment the person applies for the visa. Though there are language schools in the country, it is in Havana city where most German courses are offered. Again the number of places is quite limited and the possibility of admission occurs just once a year. Another option is to take private lessons. In my visit to Cuba in 2010, after a five-year absence, I overheard a conversation in front of the consulate between two Cuban women who wanted to apply for a marriage visa for Germany. While for one woman it was her first attempt at obtaining the visa, for the other it was her third. They both had had difficulties finding a school or a private teacher to learn German and as a result their knowledge of the language was very limited. Failing the test at the consulate also means that these individuals have to wait longer before they can live with their partner in Germany.

Cubans who apply for tourism, study or work visas do not have to take the German test. Those who apply for study or work visas can extend their visa once they are in Germany. In contrast the tourism visa is granted for only three months and cannot be

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.havanna.diplo.de/Vertretung/havanna/es/01/Visabestimmungen/Visabestimmungen.html>

extended. In the case of study and work visas, the person first receives a three-month permit that is then extended in Germany according to the purpose of the visit. If the initial visa is granted the person can then buy a plane ticket and go to Germany.

Up to this point, I have outlined the process a Cuban goes through when applying for a visa to go to Germany. Two other elements are added to the cost of the travel. One has to do with the price of plane tickets. It is difficult for a person from Cuba to have access to offers from international airlines. Hence the prices are quite high. The other one has to do with an additional payment of 25 CUC in the airport, which is done after the person passes the check in. This 25 CUC is a sort of airport tax, which is not included in the price of the ticket. All travelers boarding a plane in Cuba are required to make this payment.

### Summing-up ‘Going through/managing Exit Procedures’

In this section I have analyzed the procedure an individual goes through when she wants to go abroad. This procedure, aside from being time consuming and expensive is also quite uncertain. It is difficult to predict when someone will actually obtain the Exit Permit. The following graphic traces the procedure a Cuban has to go through when applying for an Exit Permit.

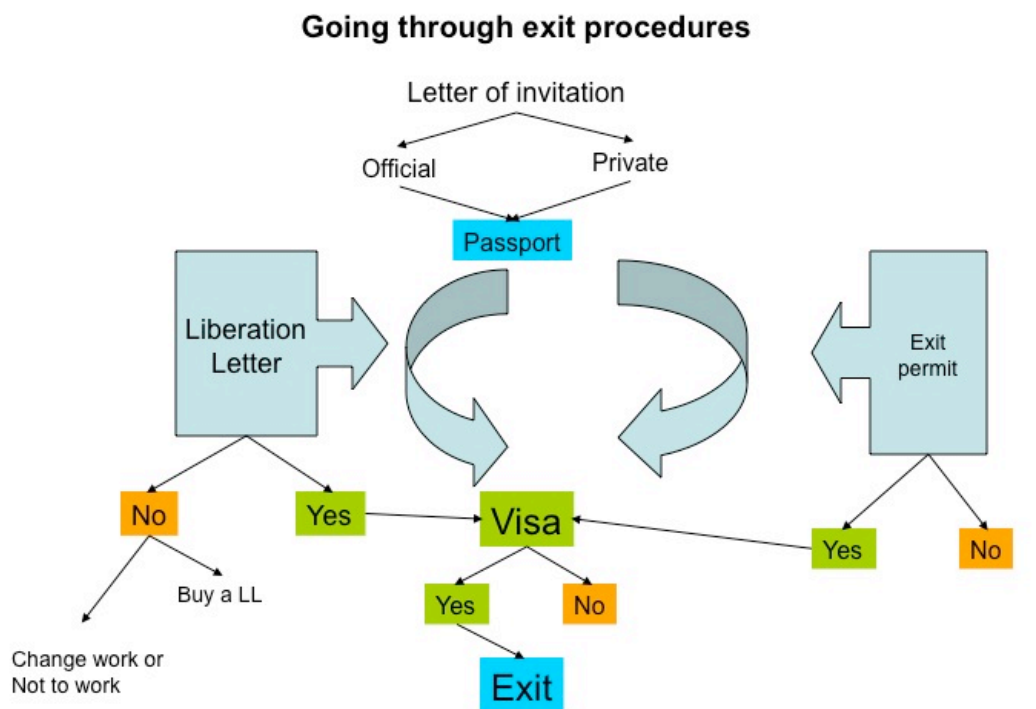


Diagram 2

Applying for an Exit Permit begins when the person receives a Letter of Invitation. How the rest of the procedure will unfold depends on the economic resources and the qualifications of the individual. The more qualified the person, the more difficulties she will face when awaiting the Exit Permit. Hence, individuals with a diploma have to wait for a Liberation Letter, which is signed by a particular minister depending on the place they work when applying for the Exit Permit. Some of these individuals take an active role and employ certain strategies that facilitate their procurement of the Liberation Letter. Some of these strategies are: changing workplace, quitting a job, or buying the Liberation Letter.

It can be concluded that the government itself applies some restrictions to qualified individuals in an attempt to reduce the exodus of professionals. Nevertheless, these individuals invest personal resources and have access to an extended social network, which help them to overcome difficulties and barriers in this process.

While highly qualified individuals face difficulties in getting permits from the Cuban side, those with no qualifications face difficulties when they apply for a German visa. Since 2007 when the new migration law was approved in Germany, individuals with no qualifications who would like to migrate to Germany because they would like to marry a German, have to pass a German language test. As a consequence the process of coming over to Germany could take more than a year for some of these individuals. One of the reasons for this is the lack of access to German courses in Cuba.

Obtaining the Exit Permit could be considered a distinctive feature of the socialist system. Every single individual is bound to a system, which gives little room for personal decisions like, for instance, where I will be in the next days or years. Thus, individuals must ask for permission and authorization and are permanently reminded that others have control over their lives.

### **Summary for the Cuban part**

This section was devoted to the analysis of the process that precedes exiting Cuba; an exit which depends not only on the decision of the person but also on opportunities and conditions in Cuba that make a trip to Germany possible. I named this category ‘Farewell Cuba... Forever?’ in an attempt to grasp the insecurities and uncertainties before and during the process a Cuban goes through when applying for and awaiting authorization to leave the country. ‘Farewell Cuba...’ refers to that part of the process

in which the person considers how living conditions are in Cuba. Migration then appears as a possibility – among many others – that will certainly change many aspects of her life. The second part of this category ‘Forever?’ also makes reference to the uncertainties surrounding the time that the person will be abroad, specifically in this research, in relation to Germany.

As it was analyzed, in the initial phase before their departure but also after it, individuals do not have a concrete idea if they will permanently remain in the destination country. Additionally, the kind of permit these individuals receive from the Cuban authorities defines which kind of rights they have in relation to Cuba and if a return is possible. Therefore returning to Cuba is not exclusively a personal decision but also contingent upon the kind of permit the person receives at the moment of her departure.

Before, during, and after the decision to migrate individuals first took their ‘Living conditions in Cuba into consideration. Topics like having a job, having a family and/or relationship, having a place to live and changing political view are taken into account when they make a balance of their decision. These topics include the main issues that allow the functioning of each individual at the social and private level.

From a historical point of view it was interesting to analyze political changes at both a macro and micro level as they occurred in Cuba and East Germany after the collapse of the socialist block. Socialism as an ideology and form of government was and still is questioned, especially in the early 90’s when the Cuban economy collapsed. As a consequence, the country experienced a dramatic drop in the production and consumer sectors affecting the quality of life. Furthermore, when students and workers, who were in the former socialist countries returned to Cuba, they introduced to the social construct the notion that Socialism as a form of government is not infallible.

However, the response of the Cuban government in the face of global political changes was to remain faithful to the socialist ideology, bolstering and securing the positions of all those individuals who sympathized with the government, and removing from the government those who openly questioned the system and sought political reforms. To the slogan ‘Patria o Muerte’ the phrase ‘Socialismo o Muerte’ was added to each of Fidel Castro’s speeches, as a political statement regarding the permanence of the socialist government in Cuba. The response was a massive exodus

of Cubans to the U.S. in 1994 followed by a surge in migration levels to Latin American and European countries.

Hence, these changes are reflected in the analysis of 'Strategies for leaving the country'. I was surprised when I found that in the process of leaving the country, individuals plan a strategy to leave the country sometimes many years in advance. Here the person takes some decisions like studying or pursuing a career outside the Ministry of Public Health or avoiding taking jobs in that Ministry. In the phase of planning their departure, the decisions the person takes focus on opportunities which will be free of future restrictions in case the person decides to ultimately go ahead with the Exit Procedures. Another feature of this process is that Germany did not figure exclusively as the destination country. Instead the goal of this planning is devoted to the efforts of the exit itself leaving open both departure date and exact destination.

As part of the strategy for leaving the country, it is essential that the Cubans have previous contact with a foreigner or a relative who already lives abroad. Without this contact the exit procedure cannot take place. That means that in this process the personal relationship is paramount. This could take the form of an intimate or study/work relationship.

The last subcategory that revealed itself comprises the 'Exit Procedure'. Here all the steps a Cuban goes through when applying for an Exit Permit are included. The main distinction corresponds to individuals, who had obtained a degree in Cuba, or abroad, in comparison to individuals without a degree. Those with a degree face more difficulties and obstacles when applying for an Exit Permit. However, disregarding all the obstacles in their way they use all the resources they have and build an active and extended social network in order to achieve their goal of leaving the country.

Hence, in this section the main factors surrounding the decision of an individual in Cuba when he/she decides to go abroad are analyzed. The decision whether to remain abroad permanently or to later return is not yet taken by all interviewees. In any case, leaving the country could be considered for many a goal they want to achieve, where they invest personal and economic resources and where individuals must play an active role in this process. This makes migration a conscious turning point in their lives rather than a consequence of fate or an impulsive action.

## **Chapter 6**

# **Living in Germany... Forever?**

## **Chapter 6**

### **Findings**

#### **Welcome Germany... Forever?**

In this section the integration process of Cubans in the German society will be discussed. As it was previously analyzed, there are several motivations and conditions in Cuba and Germany that have been bringing Cubans to Germany since 1959. Among these conditions are the exchange programs and treaties between Cuba and East Germany from 1961 until 1989 that were discussed in chapter 2, and among the motivations are counted doing studies in Germany, working in factories or high specialized positions, looking for better economic perspectives, coming because an invitation from a friend or relationship was issued, or getting married. Regardless of the reasons, all these persons try to find their place in the German society.

As follows the topics, which compose the process of integration of Cubans in Germany, are discussed. Each category corresponds simultaneously to different areas of integration like family, studies and work. In the interaction of these areas combined with the performance of the actors in the host society the process of integration takes place.

#### **Deciding to remain in Germany**

Though Cubans have been a noticeable presence in East Germany since 1961, it is not necessarily the country where they plan to migrate and eventually stay. Some people arrive in Germany with the expectation of going to a third country; others arrive with the idea of returning to Cuba. Because of changes in the migratory process from Cuba and the procedures Cubans have to follow when going abroad, the decision about remaining in Germany is not taken in all cases in Cuba. This decision process was described by Cubans who arrived in Germany during and after the reunification in 1990. According to the interviewees it was possible for Cubans at the time in the GDR to marry and stay there. Hence, especially in this period one could observe a more bidirectional migration flow between Cuba and Germany where sending and destination countries were clarified. Through official contracts until 1990 between Cuba and the GDR, students and workers knew that Germany will be the country where they will stay during a relatively long period of time or for the rest of their lives.

Nonetheless after the collapse of the socialist countries the ways by which Cubans came to Germany were diversified. Besides marriage, work and studies Cubans began coming also as tourists with mobility access to other European countries. As it was analyzed in the previous sections, while for some going abroad from Cuba is preceded from a plan, for others it is an unexpected event. In any case, once abroad individuals go through a process in which they eventually decide whether they will return to Cuba after their visa and exit permit are expired or whether they will remain in the country they are, in this case in Germany. For some of the interviewees going through this process is rather difficult. Looking in retrospective they recall difficulties, doubts and uncertainties. Deciding for Germany without renewing an Exit Permit from Cuba, means a rupture with their country of origin, which could be temporary or permanent. It is also for some one of the most troublesome, stressful and difficult decision they have ever taken.

It is important to note that the process, which accompanies the decision about remaining in Germany, is a process rather experienced for individuals who are not married to a German. In case of marriages between Cubans and Germans, the destination country is usually clarified as it was discussed in section 'Meeting someone'. However, for individuals who arrive in any other way as mentioned above, six main factors characterize the decision process concerning their stay in Germany, as well as the integration process in the host society. The six factors identified are: (1) changing migratory plans, (2) running out of time, (3) weighing possibility of obtaining another liberation letter, exit permit and/or visa in case of return to Cuba, (4) tacit and open support from family and friends in Cuba, (5) looking for better opportunities, and (6) support and social network in Germany.

Each of these factors emerged from the analysis of the interviews conducted with Cubans, who went through this process. The decision to remain in Germany is not based solely on one factor. It is rather a more complex process, in which some of these factors interact simultaneously without following a chronological order.

The category 'Deciding to remain in Germany' is applied to persons, who have been coming to Germany after the reunification and decide to remain. They come with the expectation to return to Cuba or to migrate to a third country. Usually they come invited by a German as a tourist, student or worker. Furthermore after their arrival to Germany and before their Visas expire, a short time thereafter the decision to remain in Germany is a difficult decision because individuals could face being without



papers in Germany. At the same time they have restrictions if they want to return to Cuba or because of Cuban regulations some cannot return at all.

Deciding for Germany implies a period of stress where Cubans are exposed to internal and external pressures. Internal pressures come from their own expectations in what they would like to accomplish in Germany, while external pressures could come from relatives and friends in Cuba or Germany and also in their struggle to find a legal way to remain in Germany.

From this category are excluded individuals who married in Cuba or Germany before and after the reunification. In this case they are aware, even before traveling, that Germany is their destination country where they will stay for a long period of time. Additionally after the marriage regulations in both countries allow Cubans to obtain a residence permit in Germany. The permission granted by the Cuban authorities allows them to travel without restriction back and forth between countries, so long as their economic situation allows them.

This category will be illustrated with extracts of two interviews. First will be presented the process Miriam followed in her decision to remain in Germany. She arrived in Germany in 2001 with a tourist visa invited by her sister for a three-month visit. The other case is Roberto. He was invited by a Biology professor in 1999 to take part in a research. Roberto received authorization from his workplace to go to Germany and obtained a student visa.

Miriam went through the process of *deciding to remain in Germany* short after her arrival in Germany. In spite of uncertainties she had concerning receiving exit permit and tourist visa while preparing her papers in Cuba, she thought at the time that after three months she would return to Cuba. Nevertheless after her arrival in Germany a three-month visit turned out in something different. Her sister, who invited her to come, insisted that she should stay in Germany.

I wasn't like other Cubans who said; I want to leave, go abroad, never. I came here and I wanted to return, really. Since the first day when I arrived my sister wanted me to stay. We had in her kitchen very long conversations. She tried to convince me. I reached the conclusion that I had nothing in Cuba, nothing except my mother (M. 39-45).

Discussing with her sister about her future perspectives in Cuba made Miriam to be aware of her situation. She considered what she had left behind. This was analyzed in section 'Living conditions in Cuba'. At the time while she was going through the exit procedures she had no job, had not a solid relationship and because it is not possible to rent a place to live, she had to return to her mother's house. The attachment she

had in Cuba was her mother. Thus, the decision about not returning to Cuba was also taken after considering what conditions she had there. At this regard she saw *better opportunities* in Germany and what she could accomplish in case she remains. However, she still considered her return to Cuba. Until then she had not considered the possibility of migration as a step she could do.

Miriam's sister, Doris, though married with a German, was living alone with her son. She did not know the language and had no regular job, all of which made her feel depressed. Under insistence from her German husband Doris claimed the Kindergeld<sup>1</sup> for her son, which until that moment the father was receiving. With the intervention of the competent authorities the father had to transfer all the previous months, when he had received the money though his son was already living with his mother. Besides covering the needs the child had, Doris decided to invest part of it for the exit procedure and bring her sister to Germany.

My husband wrote a letter saying where the child was staying. The father had to return the money. There were around 2 thousand marks. I bought things for my son. Half of the money I used to bring my sister and my husband paid the plane ticket. He helped me to bring Miriam here because I felt lonely and depressed (D. 363-7).

For Doris, bringing Miriam to Germany was a sort of investment in two directions. Miriam could be a support for her and her child but at the same time she could work and both of them could economically help their family in Cuba. Because Doris had an unstable economic situation and, though she managed to invite Miriam, it would be difficult for her to send a second letter of invitation and to pay a second time for the whole procedure. *Obtaining an Exit Permit and visa for Miriam had limitations because of lack of economic resources.*

Miriam felt pressure from her sister in the attempts to convince her to stay. This form of pressure was also the way Doris had to *support*, and to show that Miriam was not alone. In case Miriam stays, Doris could mobilize her own *social network* in order to give the information Miriam needed to legalize her situation in Germany after her tourist visa had expired. Additionally Miriam asked her family in Cuba what they thought about Doris' proposition. Miriam argued first that she wanted to return to be nearer her mother and family. But when she asked what they thought about this decision, her mother supported and encouraged her to stay abroad (*support from relatives*).

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<sup>1</sup> Part of the social assistance; amount of money each child receives in Germany until he/she arrives 18-year-old. If the child continues studies, this amount can be paid until the age of 27.

Until this time Miriam had decided that she won't return to Cuba but she was also not sure about staying in Germany. Due to her status as tourist, it is possible neither to change the visa, nor to extend it. At this point she considers the possibility of going to the US. In contrast to Germany, where it is difficult to obtain a residence permit, there Cubans have some advantages. Under the 'Adjustment Law' they become residency and obtain a work permit within the period of one year. However, obtaining a visa from Germany and going legally to the US with a Cuban passport is easier said than done. Usually the visa is denied. If that is the case, as it is discussed here, the next step is to find a way in which individuals could prolong their stay in Germany and eventually remain legally.

Hence, Miriam decided first not to go back to Cuba and considered the possibility of going to the U.S. where she has relatives that have been living there for more than 10 years and that could support her after her arrival. Through her relatives in the U.S. it would be easier for her to find a job. Another advantage was the language. She learned English in school and with practice and some courses she would be able to improve it. A second consideration was to go to Spain, where she would not face any language barrier, but there she knew nobody and it would be difficult for her to obtain a legal status.

After considering these options, going to US seemed to her the right decision. She took contact with her relatives in US, explained what she wanted to do and started the visa application. While beginning in 2001 the application process for a visa, Miriam was surprised to see on the news the attack to the Twin Towers in New York.

When I started with the application September 11 happened and my plans changed completely. September 11 changed my life and not because a relative died there. From that moment on entrance controls were reinforced and now it is difficult to go to U.S. If that would not have happened, I wouldn't be here, but I'm and that's what counts (M. 1043-47).

Hence, Miriam had to *change her migratory plans*. The possibility of obtaining a visa to US was evaporated. Germany became for her the country where she would stay. When Miriam looks back she realizes how the circumstances played a role in her permanence in Germany. What it should have been a three-month visit turned out to be a nine-year residency in Germany. Thus Germany became final destination rather than an intermediate one.

Roberto went also through a difficult decision process. He arrived in Germany in 1999 with a scholarship to do research during six months in a laboratory. In spite of

the difficulties he had when waiting for the 'exit permit' he thought that after finishing the research, he would return to Cuba.

During the first three or four months I thought that I would return, and I lived as if I were to return. I had a permit for six months in Europe and I tried to see as much as possible, to have experiences. I travelled as much as I could. ... I did it because I wanted to take with me as many souvenirs as possible (R. 189-93).

Once in Europe Roberto visited different German cities and other countries. Europe opened to him like a space he wants to conquer. In these short travels he set foot in places that for many Cubans are just a dream. Taking souvenirs with him is the way he had to show others and to himself that Europe is not a dream anymore. He could return to Cuba giving the image of the traveler and the scientist, who besides being in the major European capitals like Paris, Madrid, Berlin and Amsterdam, had also the chance to improve his professional skills.

For Roberto even the weather was on his side. He arrived in April and little by little the days turned warmer and the nature blossomed giving the impression that everyone is welcome to take part in this reborn. Additionally the university that Roberto attended at that time is located in a city close to the sea. Being near the sea and having the chance to go to the beach gave him the impression that he was in a familiar place. Hence he thought for the first time that after all it could be a good idea to stay longer.

I had the opportunity to see many things and summer was really nice. After a while I realized that I did not miss Cuba, or almost nothing. Then I decided that probably I could stay (R. 102-04).

Few months after Roberto's arrival, he considered that after all it could be better not to return to Cuba. He is immersed in favorable living conditions and began to consider the possibility of staying abroad. His experiences what in the literature about insertion of migrants in the host society is known as 'honeymoon phase' (Oberg, 1960). Usually this phase involve great expectations and a positive mind-set in the new surroundings. It is also a phase in which travelers feel as tourists in the new place, they make some visits to museums and places of interest and are involved in practical issues like learning how to buy a ticket at the automats, what is the best train connection to return home, or where is the nearest supermarket.

In contrast with Miriam, who had no job or place to live when returning to Cuba, Roberto had received an official authorization to go abroad from his job and had his own place to live. The good weather conditions –which are added in favor of the 'honeymoon phase' – cannot be considered the solely reason that made him decide to

stay in Germany if one takes into account that in Cuba more than half of the year is sunny and warm. He ‘saw things’ which made him reconsider his actual situation and rethink his future. Among the things he saw were the status his professor and his friends had. With their salary they can cover their expenses and were not compelled to do extra-jobs in order to survive. Roberto saw himself as someone with a good educational level. He will not have too many difficulties in finding a job in Germany and with that he could reach a quality of life with a status similar to that of his professor. While staying abroad he could have access to *better employment opportunities*.

Five months after his arrival in Germany he had almost decided that he would not return to Cuba. He gives a step forward in *changing his migratory plans* but still he was not sure about where he would eventually stay. He was weighing other possibilities. During that time another professor from a university in Chicago went to give a cycle of conferences where Roberto was doing his research. The subject in which Roberto was working was similar to the project this professor had in Chicago. They were very enthusiastic about the idea of working together in a project after Roberto finished his research in Germany. Besides it was the opportunity he was looking for. That would allow him to stay longer abroad and continue with his studies. Looking further into this alternative one might guess that once in U.S., the chances to obtain a work permit are higher than in Germany. Hence, he gave a try to this alternative and applied for a visa to the U.S.

I was stupid. I went to the U.S embassy and applied for a visa. Of course they said ‘no’ because I had a six-month visa for Germany. They stamped my passport with ‘visa denied’. I took it as the reason for not returning (R. 109-12).

The stamp of ‘visa denied’ had a symbolic meaning for Roberto. He traveled to Germany with an official authorization; he also received an official passport, which had to be returned once he arrived in Cuba. The migration offices could easily see that he had applied for a visa to go to U.S. and his chances to go a second time abroad would have been almost non-existent. Applying for a visa to U.S. is also seen in Cuba as an act of betrayal<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore the exit permit he obtained in Cuba –through the

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<sup>2</sup> There are differences in applying for an Exit Permit to the U.S. or to any other country. Because of the rivalry between Cuba and US, in case someone plans to immigrate to the U.S. they receive a permanent Exit Permit. Individuals lose all their properties in Cuba. However, in case they immigrate to other countries, they can apply for a PRE with entitle them to return to Cuba any time they want and preserve what they have left in Cuba. Differences concerning rights of Cubans when they immigrate to the U.S. or other countries reveal political rivalries between Cuba, the U.S., and the rest of the world.

intervention of his workplace— was exclusively oriented to his visit to Germany, which excluded any other place.

Another element in Roberto's attempt to stay out of Cuba as long as possible is based on the difficulties he had to face when waiting for the authorization from his workplace to go abroad. In the section 'Managing exit procedures' it was analyzed the exact strategy he used. All in all it took him one and half years to convince his chief about the importance of his project. It is plausible to think that Roberto was unwilling to go through the same process one more time and go through *difficulties for obtaining another exit permit*. It could be discussed here that the many barriers professionals face when leaving the country, could make them later reconsider returning to Cuba or not. These barriers are assessed according to the position of individuals in their workplace. Usually going abroad and taking post-graduate studies or completing training is reserved to professionals with more work experience as a kind of reward for their achievements. Additionally it is assumed that professionals with more experience in Cuba are more identified to their workplace, usually they have a family of their own, which could be seen as a reason to return. Roberto had not completed his second year work when he began the procedure to go abroad. Hence, for him the procedure to obtain a permit was longer and full of difficulties. Nonetheless it would be mistaken to think that this is the only valid explanation when analyzing the decision of Cubans who stay abroad, but it is surely one factor that influences this decision.

While deciding whether or not he would stay in Germany, Roberto asked his family what they thought about this decision. His parents supported him. He recalls it in this way:

They always supported me, always. They said: it's your decision and you've to go on, we understand you. I think they were proud of me. But they suffered a lot. Well, I guess that's normal, that could happen when you've a child who you see every day, who lives with you and suddenly is not there (R. 216-21).

Finding the support from his parents was important for him. That gave him the energy to carry on with his decision. He was not alone and his parents understood and respected that Roberto wanted to develop his profession abroad. In this sense they felt 'proud' of it. But his parents suffered. His decision meant the separation of the family

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Political differences influence how the migratory issue is treated. Hence, Cubans who decide to go to the U.S. are automatically considered traitors to their country of birth regardless their migratory motivations.

during a longer period. Accepting that Roberto could not return made them face other social pressures. In their neighborhood they were considered revolutionary people and their image could be affected when knowing that Roberto decided to stay abroad. His parents were also aware that in Roberto's workplace he would be considered a traitor. Nevertheless they thought that if Roberto stayed abroad, he would have access to better work opportunities and the economic situation of the family could improve. Besides his parents, the professor who invited him supported him in his decision. Furthermore, taking the decision to remain in Germany is possible when the person counts with support of people around him. Those that would like to, and are able to, help him. Roberto's professor –a migrant himself having come from Hungary– understood Roberto's position.

My professor is a great person. It was a lucky coincidence. He had emigrated. He escaped from Hungary, during the revolution in 1956. The Russians made their entry with tanks into Budapest and the border with Austria was opened. Many people escaped. So he came to Germany. Actually he had a story quiet similar to any other Cuban. I mean, he finished high school but access to further study was granted only to the supporters of the government and he got nothing ... he obtained refugee status here, got a scholarship, and studied Chemistry. He understood why people wanted to escape, to see things different from the communist regime. When I told him I would like to stay, he supported me too (R. 138-51).

Through his professor's story Roberto sees some parallels when he compares the repression in Hungary with the Cuba's present situation. Though in Cuba the army does not implement an open repression against people, the atmosphere of repression prevails when someone opposes the regime ideas<sup>3</sup>. Being part of the opposition in Cuba is to be marginalized. Chances of professional development are reserved to those who agree with the government's politics. Instead of organizing massive protests part of the population decides for the migration as a valve of escape (Hoffmann, 2005). Hence, in this parallel is not only implicit the idea of reaching better professional standard abroad as compared to what could be accomplished in the own country, it is also about individual freedom and being away from the restrictions of the Cuban socialist system.

Roberto's professor helped him first to get in touch with professors of Chicago University, where he could immediately begin with his research. When his visa was denied, this professor helped Roberto to be in touch with other research institutes in Germany where later he started his Ph.D. Roberto found *support* and was *inserted in*

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<sup>3</sup> A well known wave of repression is known as 'Black Spring' (2003) when the government incarcerated 75 dissidents. In 2010 most of them were release and today they live in exile with their families in Spain.

*a social network*, which was decisive for his decision of remaining in Germany.

In both cases Miriam and Roberto made the attempt to go to U.S. where Cubans can apply for the Adjustment Law and receive residence and work permit after a year of their arrival. Nevertheless obtaining a visa to US from a second country while having a tourist or student visa is very difficult. After this alternative is frustrated they decide to find a way, which allows them to stay legally in Germany.

The decision process in which Cubans are implicated when weighing alternatives between returning to Cuba or staying in Germany is a process limited in time (*running out of time*). The decision cannot be largely postponed. On one side individuals are confronted with the fact that they have a visa that will expire and they risk remaining without a valid permit in Germany. On the other side the exit permit<sup>4</sup> granted by the Cuban authorities has a validity of eleven months, which is subjected to a payment of 40,00€ per months. So long as individuals make this payment they can return to Cuba. If after the eleventh month no payment is done and returning does not take place, they lose their civil rights and properties in Cuba but not their citizenship<sup>5</sup>. They are widely called ‘quedados’ and officially reported as ‘emigrants’. Hence, placed between Scylla and Charybdis the decision has to be made.

### **Summing-up ‘Deciding to remain in Germany’**

Remaining in Germany was not a goal among the interviewees who arrived because of studies or with a tourist visa. As in the examples analyzed they tried to arrive to US or to go to another European country, but social and political conditions at the moment of their arrival in Germany make them stay here. What makes Germany to change its position from a transit into a destination country is a combination of factors. Among them can be mentioned tacit and open support from relatives and friends in Cuba, support and social network in the destination country, changing migratory plans due to impossibility of obtaining a visa to a third country, perceived difficulties in obtaining another exit permit and/or visa once in Cuba because of

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<sup>4</sup> PVE. Permiso de Viaje al Extranjero.

<sup>5</sup> According to the Emigration offices in Cuba and the information given in the internet by the Cuban consulates in different countries, Cubans with a PVE are allowed to stay abroad for a period of 10 months and 29 days. Before returning to Cuba they have to pay (in case they are in Germany) an amount of 40,00 € per months <http://emba.cubaminrex.cu/Default.aspx?tabid=9807> (30.07.2011). The extension of this permit is not possible after the 11<sup>th</sup> month. What happens if a Cuban does not have the money to pay this amount and want to return to Cuba during this term, it is something that is not clarified. The person should contact a Cuban consulate and wait for an answer.



difficulties in going through the exit procedure or lack of economic support, running out of time because of expiration of visa in Germany as well as the exit permit from Cuba, and evaluation of better opportunities in the destination country.

Though the combination of these factors could point to a kind of economic migrant, the restrictions Cubans face while going through the exit procedure in Cuba; social, economic and political situation in the country as well as regulations applied to them as long as they are abroad point to the influence of the Cuban political context in the decision to migrate. When Cubans take for instance into consideration what they leave behind and what they could gain abroad, they do not only evaluate their situation in terms of economic gain. They do also consider advantages in their profession and freedom they have in taking their own decisions. The Cuban totalitarian regime, which restricts individual action in the private sphere, is less present or non-existent abroad.

In this phase the support from relatives and friends from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean are also considered when deciding to remain or not in Germany. The interviewees are almost unanimous when they say that their decision is consulted with their relatives in Cuba. The family usually agrees when children marry a German. They know that while separated, the Cuban has the chance to travel to Cuba and visit their relatives when they have the chance to do it. However, when someone with an official authorization to travel abroad decides to stay, usually it takes between three and five years for them to receive an authorization to visit their relatives in Cuba. They also risk that in case the individual travels through official channels, this permit will not be granted. Hence, they consult their relatives and look for support. It is also the way they have to communicate that they will be separated for a longer period of time, sometimes even several years.

Taking such decisions impact the family at all levels. From that moment on the family won't have the opportunity to be reunified, except for the short period of time the emigrant is authorized to stay in Cuba<sup>6</sup>. Though the family can economically benefit from the 'remesas' sent from relatives abroad, that cannot substitute the emptiness, loneliness and lack of physical support, from those, who are far away.

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<sup>6</sup> When a Cuban is classified as emigrant, she or he can visit the country for a period of 30 days, which can be extended to another 30 days after making the correspondent application and paying the amount required by the Cuban migration offices in Cuba.

[http://www.abogada.com/abogados/cuba/pasaportes/Habilitacion\\_de\\_Pasaportes\\_Cubanos/](http://www.abogada.com/abogados/cuba/pasaportes/Habilitacion_de_Pasaportes_Cubanos/)  
(30.07.2011)

But also in the host country Cubans count with the support of relatives and friends when they take the decision of staying. The social network in which they are inserted at the moment of their arrival provides valuable information about which steps they can take in order to legalize their situation in Germany. They also provide shelter. Without this support system, arriving in Germany and the initial stay would be more difficult. But above all, after taking this decision, individuals do not feel alone. In contrast to the Cubans who arrived in East Germany as part of the exchange programs between 1970 and 1989 those that arrive today have had previous contact with a German or another Cuban in Germany. That means that the social network abroad, which has been growing since 1989 until today, remains in contact with its country of origin and has a direct influence on the person relocating and facilitating the migratory process of other Cubans to Germany.

The decision of remaining abroad is not exempt of difficulties. Cubans who are not married to a German face a period of being without papers in Germany or the deportation. However, they are willing to go through this instead of returning to a place where they see fewer opportunities and where the political and economic environment hinders individual development.

Remaining in Germany is not a decision interviewees take solely while they are in Cuba. It is rather a process, which denouement occurs in Germany after considering the factors above mentioned. This decision process varies from person to person. Hence, for those who come after being married to a German, it is relatively clear that Germany is the country where they will stay. At this regard the advantage of being married consists in the legal status individuals become in front of German and Cuban authorities. However, those who come as tourist or with a student or work visa, decide after a while, if they will return or not to Cuba. When these individuals decide to stay in Germany, social network and social support from relatives and friends help them to abide during this first period. In case of Cubans arriving in Germany, part of the contacts were already made in Cuba, which points a continuity and stability in these relationships across the ocean.

A collateral element to take into account when analyzing the decision process of remaining in Germany has to do with the age of the participants in the study. They

were in their twenties or begin thirties when decided to stay here.<sup>7</sup> Being young and not having a family of their own in Cuba place them in a position in which they consider what they have reached and what future they plan for themselves. Family and professional issues are still open. Hence, the decision of remaining could also be considered as chance and risk.

This finding is related to other migration studies where it is reported that economic migrants are rather young, healthy (Castles et al., 2003; Massey et al., 199) Find reference and in some cases in possession of valuable skills which are appreciated in the host society. Though Cuban migrants share these characteristics the simplification of their motivations to leave the country, as well as their decision of staying in Germany based solely on economic reasons, do not comprise the complex combination of economics and politics in Cuba.

All the interviewees agree that though taking the decision to come to Germany was something wanted, expected and even planned, they also agree about how difficult it is still to be away from parents and siblings, especially if they communicate their decision once they are in Germany. It is in this phase when the individuals cut some ties with the country of origin and they consider their situation in a new light. The 'honeymoon' is left behind and they are faced now with the process of remaining legally in Germany, as well as with the integration in the host society. That means, finding their place in a new place.

### **Strategies for remaining legally in Germany**

Once in Germany and when the person has decided that she/he will stay, the next step is to look for an alternative in which the residence permit could be granted. In contrast to other European countries like Spain and France, where some measures have been taking in the last twenty years regarding the regularization of immigrants (Arango & Jachimowicz, 2005) in Germany until today that has not been possible. Hence, the chances to remain legally in Germany are scarce. Nevertheless, Cubans who come to Germany usually develop a strategy, which allows them to obtain a residence permit. All of the interviewees had a legal status in Germany. In this section it will be discussed which strategies they used in order to remain in Germany.

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<sup>7</sup> Among the interviewees there are two exceptions. Pablo, who came to Germany to work in 1994 when he was 47 years old, since then he lives between Cuba and Germany. The other case is Ernesto, he came in 1993 as political refugee when he was 46 years old.

These strategies are; getting married, extension of work and/or study permit, and applying for political asylum.

### **Getting married**

One of the possibilities for foreigners –especially those who come from a country outside the European Union– to remain legally in Germany is getting married with a German. Some Cubans come to Germany because they have met a German in Cuba and they get married there. Others marry their future husband or wife in Germany. Here or there the marriage is preceded in almost all cases of a long bureaucratic procedure. Nevertheless it is often an alternative among Cubans when they want to remain here. When people are in love marrying and coming to Germany means the confirmation, continuity and stability of the couple's relationship<sup>8</sup>. Hence, in this section it is discussed the procedure a couple follows to marry. At the same time it will be analyzed this procedure taking into account the three different periods from 1961 until the present in the relations between Cuba and Germany and more specifically concerning changes in the migration laws in Germany, and how they are applied in the case of marriage among Cubans and Germans. For each of these periods the interviewees reflect with their marriage experiences how the procedure was followed and how this influences their integration experiences in the host society.

History is considered a continuum in time. All past actions have consequences in the present. However, this continuity is usually divided in periods, which have the purpose of concentrating in some facts that are relevant for the study of specific phenomenon. Thus, when considering the objectives of this study I make constant reference to the relations between Cuba and Germany after the Cuban revolution in 1959. We should remember that Germany was tactically divided among the allies. In 1949 the GDR (German Democratic Republic) and FRG (Federal Republic of Germany) were founded. But it was not until 1961 –with the construction of the Berlin wall– that this division became a symbol of the cold war (Fulbrook, 2004: 6-7).

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<sup>8</sup> When considering marriage as a strategy to remain in Germany are also included persons for whom marriage has an instrumental meaning. They have no the intention to remain together as a couple. Nevertheless they have to follow the same procedure like couples, which marry because of love in order to obtain a legal status in Germany.

As it was previously analyzed in chapter 3 the GDR and the FRG –though differentiated by their political systems– implemented a politic of recruitment of workforce. The presence of foreigners brought some challenges to the current migration laws, especially regarding regulation of marriage among Germans and foreigners.

Though in very small numbers, Cubans came to the FRG almost exclusively after being married to a German. Between 1975, when the FRG reestablished diplomatic relations with Cuba, and 1990 when the GDR disappeared as country, there were very few Cubans in the FRG. In chapter 3 it was discussed the difficulties a Cuban had to marry a German from the FRG, not only because the German came from a capitalist country and relations among citizens from capitalist and socialist countries were a problematic issue, but also because in general in Cuba in the 70's and beginning of the 80's the authorities did not have clarity in how to proceed legally in front of such relationships. After the marriage, as Ana recalls it, obtaining a visa to Germany was rather a fluid process. Five years later because of the marriage she obtained the permanent residence permit and three years later she decided to apply for the German citizenship. In other words, coming to the FRG from Cuba was possible after marrying in Cuba.

However, love is a force capable of knocking down any barrier, and if additionally being young is part of the game, there are few walls or regulations that could interfere with the encounter between two people. Relationships between East Germans and Cubans flourished. There was a law, which regulated legal issues concerning residency of foreigners in the GDR (Gesetz über die Gewährung des Aufenthaltes für Ausländer in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik vom 28. Juni 1979). Another law (Familiengesetzbuch der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik von 20. Dezember 1965) regulated the marriage in the GDR. After marrying the law made no differentiations among Germans and foreigners. Hence, difficulties were not placed in the procedure to marriage but in obtaining the authorization from German and Cuban authorities to marry. From the German side the authorization for marriage was usually not granted. „Häufig wurde der Eheschließungswunsch mit der Begründung abgelehnt, daß ein gemeinsamer Aufenthaltsort nicht sichergestellt werden könnte“ (Riedel, 1994: 90).

After marrying in Germany the Cuban partner used to go to Cuba to legalize the marriage and from there the German authorities granted a visa to return to Germany.

However, returning to Cuba was a step given with certain apprehension because of the period the couple had to be separated. Once in Cuba they risked to be the object of additional regulations from the Cuban authorities. Some of these regulations were discussed in chapter 5 about obtaining exit permit from Cuba. Here it was discussed how Isabel married in Germany. She had to stay three years in Cuba before returning to her husband in Germany.

As it was analyzed in the section about Cuban students and workers in the GDR, there were gender differences concerning relationships among Cubans and Germans. Cuban women felt some pressure from the group for being involved in a relationship with a German. Nevertheless some Cuban women managed to have such relationship. An additional regulation was that in case of pregnancy women had to return to Cuba or undergo an abortion. From the total of marriages in this period (there were 414 marriages reported in 1989: Adolphi in: Cala, 2007: 174) it could be concluded that much more Cuban men married German women than Cuban women German men.

According to the analyzed interviews couples decided to marry because they loved each other. They saw it as the coronation of their relationship and the intention to constitute their own family. Additionally the only possibility that Cubans had for staying legally in the GDR was through marriage

Immediately after the collapse of the socialist countries the situation of workers in East Germany was unstable. From one day to the other they lost their jobs (Vogel & Wunderlich, 2009). Between November 1989 and October 1990 it was confusing if foreign students and workers from the already former GDR could prolong their residence permits. Though they all received the instruction to return to Cuba, which the majority of them did it, some who already had a relationship in Germany decided to stay, others without a relationship also did it. In the middle of such insecurities, people decided to act by themselves, taking their own decisions regardless what governments already had decided for them. Relations between Cuba and Germany had to be reorganized, including also the issue of interchange programs. Social insecurities regarding major changes in the GDR made some people consolidate their relationships and marriage became the strategy to remain legally in Germany.

Carlos was one of the former workers in the GDR. Though his contract was renovated in 1989 for two years, by 1990 he received the order to return to Cuba. Germany was going through a transition period and for Cuba it was difficult to foresee which consequences the new transformation could bring. At that time he had

a relationship with one of the secretaries in the factory where he was working. He decided to marry in Germany considering regulations from both countries.

In 89 the GDR was breaking apart, I mean, Flüchtlinge, escaping through Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Cubatecnica decided that Cubans, who had finished their qualification ... had to return to Cuba. Extension of work and residence permit was cancelled because of that. I was one of the first Cubans that had to return. At that time I had already met my wife ... We went here to the consulate and she issued the letter of invitation. I took it with me and all went well, after three months I was already here ready to marry. I was married in Cuba before and had to divorce. That was the reason I could not marry immediately in Germany. I want you to know that many Cubans married here, though they were married in Cuba. But I'm honest and I did have no intention to lie. If I were a lair, as other Cubans are, I could have stayed (C. 82-101).

He returned to Cuba as it was established from Cubatécnica when all contracts for workers were canceled. He was in love but he also decided to respect current regulations for Cuba and Germany. An invitation letter from his future wife allowed him three months later to return to Germany and marry. Few months after the fall of the Berlin Wall it was neither difficult to obtain a visa to come to Germany, nor to obtain an exit permit from the Cuban authorities. Though in Germany there was a confusing social situation concerning what could come next, Carlos decided to divorce and marry respecting the law in both countries. He differentiates himself from 'other Cubans', who taking advantage of the current situation in Germany decided to marry and not return to Cuba to change their status as it was established until that moment. Nevertheless in this transition period the Cuban government had changed some regulations and the marriage could be legalized in Germany.

At the end of 1990 the relations between Cuba and the reunified Germany had to be redefined. Because all the administrative and legislative instances of the GDR disappeared or were absorbed by the FRG, the immediate resonance in Cuba was the closing of the consulate of the GDR. After the reunification the consulate of the reunified Germany is the only institution, which grants different visas to Cubans to come to Germany.

In this phase the number of tourist visas granted to Cubans increased considerably due to the arrival of German tourists<sup>9</sup> in Cuba who usually invite their potential partners and/or friends to visit the country for a period of 90 days. Compared to the first phase, in which the majority of visas were granted because of study and work

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<sup>9</sup> In 1990 it was estimated that around 60 thousand Germans went to Cuba as tourist (Dirección de Inmigración y Extranjería. 1991. Estadística de Frontera. Havana) This number has increased since 2000 when it is estimated that yearly around 100 thousand German tourists visit Cuba (Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas. República de Cuba. Anuario Estadístico de Cuba. Edición 2010. Table 15.3 [http://www.one.cu/aec2009/esp/20080618\\_tabla\\_cuadro.htm](http://www.one.cu/aec2009/esp/20080618_tabla_cuadro.htm) (24.05.2011).

and in less number because of tourism or marriage, in this phase increased the number of application of visas for visit and marry in Germany. The visa for visit has important advantages for both partners. From the Cuban side individuals can obtain the visa without a longer waiting time, as it is the case in the application for a visa to marry in Germany or applying for a residence permit in Germany after getting married in Cuba. For both of these procedures it could take until six months before the Cuban partner arrives in Germany. The visa for getting married in Germany is granted for a three-month period, which can be extended another three months under certain circumstances. In contrast the tourism visa cannot be extended. The visa for marriage gives the opportunity to both partners to know each other better in the environment where they will live as a married couple. Additionally to that the Cuban partner – after being married in Germany – can change the legal status and obtain a residence permit without returning to Cuba, which reduce costs for the couple in plane tickets back and forth between countries. Finally, because the couple at this point has not married yet, they still have the chance to reconsider their decision and in case they change their mind the Cuban partner is still on time to return to Cuba.

Thus, in contrast to the period, in which Cubans came mainly to East Germany as workers or students and in less number could stay because they married a German. Marriage or the promise of it, is one of the reasons that brings Cubans to the reunified Germany and allows them to stay legally here.

One might discuss at length different motivations among Cubans and Germans to marry and come to Germany. Besides love other reasons like being paid for getting married in order to stay legally in Germany, or marrying with someone of the same sex because one person wants to help the other are counted for the marriage. Hence, the partner who comes can fulfill some dreams. Whatever the reason, what is interesting here, is that the migration law in Germany gives narrow opportunity to workers or students to come, which makes automatically marriage the most accessible alternative to come and stay legally.

As it was previously analyzed, approximately ten years after the reunification probably the most extended way to come was with a tourism visa. The application process is relatively short from the German side. This visa is granted for a maximum of 90 days, which cannot be extended. However, because of its less complexity, many Cubans came with such a visa and because they already had a relationship in Germany they decide to marry while their visa was still valid. Such decisions were



sometimes taken in a hurry. However, to collect all the papers for the marriage, with its correspondent legalization and translation into German, can take several weeks or months. One alternative couples used was to go to Denmark and marry there. In this country the procedure is relatively simple. Furthermore, the marriage is recognized in Germany and individuals can change the tourist visa for a residence permit.

When Iris arrived in Germany in 2006 with a tourist visa, she did not know exactly what to expect from her partner. Though they wrote e-mails every day, they saw each other face to face only once during two hours in Havana. Few days after her arrival in Germany they felt comfortable with each other, and because obtaining the liberation letter was difficult for her (See section 'Going through/managing Exit Procedures) meaning that a second travel to Germany would be troublesome if she had to go through the same procedure again, they decided to marry in Denmark, a country where rules to marry are less restrictive compared to Germany.

He said; have you thought if you would like to stay with me? I said: yes, I want to stay with you. And he said; then let us get marry. And we did it ... we looked first if we could marry in Germany, but I have to ask for many papers in Cuba. We decided that we wouldn't risk a thing. If I had to return to Cuba it will be difficult to return after all I had to go through for the liberation letter. We went to Denmark and after 3 or 4 days we were married (I. 78-85).

In Iris' case the marriage in Denmark was recognized in Germany. She could change her tourism visa for a residence permit. However, not all cases are so fortunate.

Though the number of migrants to Germany has not been increased in the last years (Appendix 8), integration of foreigners –especially those coming from non-European countries– has been proved to be a difficult task (Böttiger, 2005: 65). Europe has increasingly applied since the end of the XX century a politic of restriction in the entrance of foreigners. Also in Germany the immigration law changed in 2005<sup>10</sup> introducing three major transformations; (1) different permits a foreigner can obtain, (2) the introduction of the integration language courses for foreigners, (3) regulations to encourage high-qualified immigrants to work in Germany. All these changes should allow that German authorities – when considering the kind of permit or its extension – could evaluate each case more individualized.

In 2005, with the introduction of the new immigration law, politicians eventually recognized that Germany is also a country of immigrants (Meier-Braun, 2002). However, until the present issues like the integration of immigrants in the labor

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<sup>10</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005 entered into force new regulation for the residence permit (Aufenthaltsgesetz) in Germany.

market or learning the language, are still unresolved. Parallel to that new migrants continue to come as part of the migration network (Hernández, 2007), others arrive illegally, or apply for political asylum. In front of all this problematic in 2007 another phase in the migration issue between Cuba and Germany began. Important changes in the paragraph § 28 (2), which regulate marriage between a German and a foreigner shorten to three years the period for the foreign partner to obtain a permanent residence permit and later the citizenship. During my field research it could be stated that among the reasons for the marriage between Cubans and Germans was the attainment of the German citizenship because of the advantages it offers. When individuals disqualified for the citizenship because they did not fulfill language or economic requirements, they make attempts to obtain a permanent residence permit. One troublesome aspect of the immigration the law of 2007 is the modification of a modification in 2007 of § 28, where it is stated that when a foreign partner wants to come to Germany he or she has to prove to be able to communicate in German in a basic level. I would like to point here that making such test is not a guarantee that the person will be better integrated in the German society. Because access to language courses in Cuba is restrictive –and in case of German courses even unavailable– it is more difficult for some individuals to pass the test. Such negative experiences can affect the learning process of the language and integration in the host society could be more difficult to attain.

Since 2007 obtaining a tourist or fiancée visa to come to Germany is more difficult. Recognition of marriages effectuated in Denmark is also subjected to some restrictions. Through the papers needed are still less compared to what is demanded in Germany, once in Germany the foreign part can be sent back to Cuba and from there the application procedure has to be completed before returning again to Germany<sup>11</sup>. Hence, these changes point to a more restrictive politic of entrance and grant of permanent residency permit to foreigners in Germany. Also in the private sphere, where love, tenderness and mutual interest play a central role, it is not possible to ignore the law.

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<sup>11</sup> Conference attended with Mercedes Hervás, lawyer and specialist in family and migration law in Germany. 17.09.2011 in Xochicuicatl e.V. Latin American Women Association. Berlin.

### **Summing-up 'Getting married'**

In this section it was analyzed marriage as a strategy to remain legally in Germany. Getting married with a German is probably the shorter way to obtain a permanent residence permit, and in case individuals want it, they can also apply for the German citizenship, which in case of Cubans bring other advantages like traveling around the world with fewer restrictions, enjoying full rights in the host country but also fulfilling social duties.

The migratory issue between Cuba and Germany, which regulates entrance and exit in both countries, has been going through different periods. Each period reflects changes in the migration law from the Cuban as well as from the German side. The first period is characterized by the differentiated application of migration laws of East and West Germany.

Marrying a Cuban in the FGR, though possible, was rather done in Cuba because of the difficulties for Cubans to travel to a capitalist country. As the interviewees make clear in the section 'Meeting someone', marriage laws in Cuba did not contemplated at that time regulations for a union with a foreigner. Only with the authorization from the minister of justice the marriage could in Cuba take place. On the other hand a visa and residence permit after the marriage used to be granted without delay.

In contrast to the FGR, in the GDR marriage between a German and a Cuban was possible. The difficulty here was placed in the authorization from both countries for the marriage. After the authorization was granted, the Cuban partner had to return to Cuba in order to legalize his documents and then return to Germany. Though Cubans followed this procedure they usually feared difficulties they could face in Cuba before the authorization to travel could be granted.

Another period in the migration issue began in 1990 with the reunification of Germany. Cuban authorities granted the legalization of marriages effectuated or recognized in Germany. For Cubans this was a step forward in migratory issues since they were not compelled to travel to Cuba saving time and economic resources. An increase in the German tourism to Cuba increased also the contact among citizens of both countries. In the 90's and beginning of 2000 many Cubans came to Germany with a tourism visa, some later married a German in Cuba or in Germany. Another possibility for staying legally in Germany was marrying a German in Denmark where the procedure is shorter. Cubans also need fewer papers compared to the procedure in

Germany. These marriages are recognized in Germany. The foreign partner can apply then for a residence permit in Germany.

Marrying in Germany is also a strategy Cubans used when they had difficulties in obtaining an exit permit from Cuba. They had already decided that they would stay abroad and in this way they secure being legal in Germany. However, so long as they do not legalize their marriage in the Cuban consulate they are considered 'migrants' and with it they lose their rights and properties in Cuba. Additionally they have to apply for an entry permit in Cuba, which can be granted or not depending on the decision of Cuban authorities.

In 2007 changes were introduced in the German migration law. Marriage is still the most frequent strategy used by Cubans to come and remain legally in Germany. However, the new law makes the reunification of the couple more difficult because it introduces a test in basic knowledge of the German language that Cubans have to pass in the German consulate in Havana. So long as the person does not pass the test, she has to remain in Cuba. This is regarded as a stressful time for the couple and can also be negatively experienced in relation to the language.

After 2007 changes introduced in the German migration law attempt to implement the integration of migrants in the German society. At the same time there are controls concerning visa requirements outside European borders.

### **Prolongation of studies and/or work offer**

After the German reunification and when there were no more contracts for Cuban students and workers in Germany, still Cubans continued to come to Germany as part of exchange programs, sometimes as students and other times as workers. In section 'Cultural relations between Cuba and Germany' it was described the presence of German foundations like the Heinrich Böll, Friedrich Ebert, and Ludwig, which offered scholarships to Cuban students and workers to continue to develop their research or art projects. The DAAD offices in Havana implemented a wide program for language students but also for other specialties. Before finishing their studies, students have the chance to study a semester in a university in Germany and finish their studies later in Cuba.

The procedure for studies in Germany with the support of the associations above mentioned must be followed through official channels. It means that first the student has to go through a selection period. After obtaining the approval from the university

in Cuba, the German foundation in collaboration with the university in Germany, begin another procedure for a student visa. Usually the German partner covers travel and accommodation expenses.

Students graduated from the university see in a scholarship abroad a possibility of continuing with their research at a master or Ph.D. level. Hence, short after beginning with their professional career, they apply –independent from the institution where they belong– for an advanced student program and scholarship. In section ‘Planning a strategy to leave the country’ it was analyzed how Roberto fought his way to continue with research in Germany. He had met a German professor at a congress in Havana, who offered him a place and scholarship in the laboratory where he worked. A couple of months after his arrival in Germany Roberto decided that he would stay. The decision process, which led to his permanence in Germany, was described in section ‘Deciding to remain in Germany’. After the decision is taken he had to assure his legal permanence in Germany, otherwise he could have neither access to the continuation of his studies, nor to the scholarship.

And there I began to look for alternatives in Germany. While I was in K. one of the things I did was to go to work in a laboratory in another city with one of my professors’ friends. with a friend of my professor. They were looking for people there. I wrote or called there, I think I wrote and they gave me... an interview, or they interviewed me per telephone, and they gave me a Ph.D. position as student, probably because I was recommended. And so I could stay (R. 130-36).

During the time that Roberto had a permit from Cuba to study abroad and a valid visa in Germany, he established a social network associated to his profession, which eventually allowed him to obtain the prolongation of his student visa in Germany. Nonetheless this was also a very stressful process. Though he was accepted in the new laboratory to continue with his research in biology, in order to obtain a student visa, he had to have first in his passport the authorization from the Cuba authorities to stay abroad much longer.

I think those were the worst months in Germany. And of course, the Cubans would not give me the permit. A man in immigration told me that the only solution I had was to have a new passport ... Probably I’m too honest. It did not come to my mind the idea of losing the passport I had and ask for a new one. In the consulate I asked for a permit but they told me that they could not give it. I asked for another passport and that was not possible ... I was lucky that my chiefs helped me with letters they wrote for me but that was useless. I was two months without any kind of permit and started receiving letters from the German immigration saying that my permit had expired and I had to abandon the country. I had prepared all to leave. The last day I sent a fax to the Cuban embassy saying... that I will write a letter to German newspapers and say they did not want to give me a passport. I was angry. Immediately after the fax went through my telephone rang. The consul called me. He did not understand why I was sending a fax saying that I would say something about the Cuban consulate to the German newspapers. I explained to him –ah, that should be a mistake. Of course we

can give you a passport. And he gave me an appointment for the next day. They gave me a new passport (R. 317-43).

When the Cuban consulate denied extending the permit to Roberto, he was in a difficult situation. Only with this extension would he be able to renew his student visa. He is trapped between the regulations of two authorities, the German and the Cuban, each with different requisites. From the German side, though he already had a Ph.D. student position, scholarship, and support from his professors, the authorities still considered that without the Cuban permission they could not grant a visa. The German authorities are informed about Cuban regulations. Not having an authorization form the Cuban government means that individuals cannot return to Cuba when they want it and they must stay in the country where they are. As consequence an immigrant status and derivation of it, it is not only a personal decision. It is also forced from the Cuban authorities when the freedom to take personal decisions is controlled by these regulations.

From the German authorities, before new implementation of the immigration law in 2005, the right for a residence permit was more oriented to the kind of permit granted instead of the reason foreigners have to come to Germany. In 2005 the reduction of the number of residence permits from three to two is more oriented to the reason immigrants have to come and stay in Germany. Among these reasons are counted education, work, family reunification, and humanitarian motivations. Hence, some new possibilities of residence permit are contemplated in the new law, especially concerning high-qualified workforce, as it is Roberto's case.

Roberto's behavior regarding the Cuban consulate was a desperate and last step in his attempt to obtain an authorization from the Cuban authorities. The consul reacted immediately in front of Roberto's threat to denounce the refusal of issuing a new passport. Thus, Roberto obtained a new passport but not an authorization to stay abroad. With it the Cuban government gives a signal that as soon as a Cuban decide to stay abroad for a longer period of time than it was authorized, they lose support from Cuban authorities as well as their rights in Cuba.

After Roberto finished his Ph.D. and before his student visa had expired, he would have had the possibility of staying in the laboratory in a post doc position but then he would have still had the status of a student and his residence permit could be prolonged only as long as he studied. After four years, in which his visa had to be prolonged yearly, he looked for an alternative, which could bring him more stability

and the possibility of a longer residence permit. Hence, he sent job applications to different companies in Germany but also to other European countries. This is possible especially among individuals with a degree in natural sciences given the fact that this is a field of study with high demand regardless of the country and where standards for developing the respective professions are worldwide regulated.

After sending several applications out, he was invited to an interview at a pharmaceutical company in Switzerland and landed the job along with a residence permit. After four years working there, he applied for another job, this time in Germany, and now the company takes care of his papers pertaining to his German citizenship.

A person in human resources will help me. In my company they are interested in the fact that I acquire German citizenship because right now what I do is against some rules. The company has trade relationships with the US. In order to conform to their laws, the employees cannot be Cubans...well, they can be but the employees with Cuban, Iranian and Korean citizenship are not allowed access to the database of the company ... That's why they told me that they would assign me a lawyer (R. 778-84).

Obtaining the German citizenship is one of Roberto's goals. With it he obtains full rights in the country where he studied and has been working in the last years. Being established in Germany is also in interest of the company where Roberto works. Arriving to this point was possible due to the combination of different factors like the possibility he had to finance his studies through a scholarship and regulations regarding prolongation of studies. Later it was possible for him to obtain a residence permit because he had found a job.

In the process, which corresponds to the extension of his student visa until he finds a job, Roberto maintains an active role, which involves hard study but also to be informed about regulations concerning residence permits. The continuation of his studies was also possible after receiving support from different professors and colleagues. In this regard he was part of a social network, which helped him to reach his goals.

### **Summing-up 'Prolongation of studies and/or work offer'**

'Prolongation of studies and/or work offer' is another strategy Cubans use in order to remain legally in Germany. However, having access to studies or employment is a strategy less extended than 'Getting married'. Individuals invest their resources in form of cultural and social capital. Degrees obtained in Cuba and their potential to

achieve superior studies and work performance allows them to extend their permits in Germany.

In this process individuals have an active role while looking for information and exploring different possibilities where they could apply for the prolongation of studies. It is worth to note that Cubans –at least in the period between 1990 and 2010<sup>12</sup>– do not have access to own economic resources, which allow them to pay for studies and accommodation abroad. Hence, they need besides a place in a university also a scholarship, all of which make the process more complex.

The social network where individuals participate even previous to their arrival in Germany helps them in consolidating their status. Contacts with others provide first hand information and even the access to institutions where they continue studies or work. This strategy is in interest of Germany since they look for high qualified migrants mainly in the fields of Mathematics, Informatics, Natural Sciences, and Technology (Markus, 2011: 43).

Though a legal residence in Germany is possible under this strategy, individuals are considered immigrants for the Cuban authorities and they lose their rights in Cuba. Traveling to Cuba is only possible after applying for an entry permit, which could be granted or not.

Remaining legally in Germany –though permits can be extended– is a procedure limited in time. Hence, after individuals have been working for five years in Germany, they eventually apply for the permanent residence permit or German citizenship. One should also take into account that though individuals are part of a high-qualified workforce, they depend on a competitive labor market, which is subjected to the principle of offer and demand. As soon as they lose their job and while being in possession of a temporal residence permit, they are exposed to be expelled from Germany. That is one additional reason in applying permanent residence permit or the German citizenship, which assures more stability and rights in the host country.

‘Prolongation of studies and/or work’ as strategy to remain legally in Germany has been combined among some interviewees with ‘Getting married’. While studying

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<sup>12</sup> The Cuban government has given some steps in its economic system, allowing Cubans to work in the private sector. It is too early to make some prognostics regarding the accumulation of capital and the formation of a Cuban middle class. In case that would be possible, some sector of the future Cuban population will have the possibility of making investment in education abroad. Until today it is too early to reach such conclusion.



and/or working Cuban interviewees meet their couples and marry. In doing so, they reach stability in Germany and give them the possibility to apply for a permanent residence permit or citizenship.

### **Applying for political asylum**

This strategy, which allows Cubans under certain circumstances to stay in Germany, was applied by five of the interviewees (two women and three men). Only in two cases (two men) the political asylum was granted. They all arrived in Germany between 1994 and 2001 after a private invitation was issued. In Cuba they had applied for a tourism visa.

For this strategy it is important to differentiate among those who applied for political asylum because they needed to ‘buy time’ and those who applied for asylum because they had been prosecuted in Cuba due to their political convictions. I have defined ‘buy time’ as an intermediate solution Cubans apply to remain in Germany until they meet a German man or woman, get married, and through the marriage they obtain a residence and work permit. Both alternatives will be discussed in this section.

Applying for political asylum in order to ‘buy time’ is an alternative interviewee’s used when other possibilities to remain legally in Germany or obtain a visa to another country are momentarily closed. Another factor corresponds to the expiration of their tourism visas. They would rather go through the political asylum procedure than risking remaining illegal in Germany where the possibilities to obtain later a residence permit could be drastically reduced.

According to restrictions in the asylum rights (Asylrecht) in Germany since July 1993, and due to the increasing number of refugees coming to Europe, especially to Germany, it was decided that refugees had to apply for asylum in the entrance country (Bade, 1994: 57). Hence, Cubans who enter Germany with a valid visa can only apply for political asylum here.

Doris was invited in 1997 by her Cuban partner to come to Germany. They were not married but had a child together. Before Doris’ partner could issue an invitation, he married a German woman in order to stay legally in Germany. Originally Doris and her partner had the plan of living together with their child as a family here. Four years after Doris’ partner was married in Germany, he invited her. Doris came alone with the expectation that her partner would marry her and she would also be able to stay legally in Germany. Shortly after her arrival she realized that he did not have any

intention of moving in with her and they broke up. In the meantime papers to bring their son to Germany were ready. The father wanted to keep custody and she feared that if she returned to Cuba and the father brought their son, she would not be able to return to Germany because she did not have the economic resources to pay for the exit procedure. Probably she would not be able to see her son again. The solution she found to enable her to remain was to apply for political asylum in order to buy some time.

I was not sure if I would stay or not because of my son. My son was the only problem and the main reason I hadn't decided yet if I would stay. I packed everything and did all I have to do because I thought I would return. I thought; I want to go to Cuba and be with my son. On the other side I said; you've an opportunity like that only once in your life and now it's my opportunity. If I return I'll lose it. Nobody will take me out, I'm not a jinetera. I was with him (the father of her son) and he took me out. He told me that I had to return and I said; I have to change my life one way or the other ... I applied for political asylum. I knew he had all to bring my son and I waited in the asylum (D. 169-83).

She decided first that she would not return to Cuba. Returning to Germany from Cuba was difficult to attain in economic terms. With a normal salary in Cuba she could not save enough and pay for the procedure. In Doris' words, she is not a prostitute, who charges for sexual services in dollars, an alternative Cuban women use to leave the country (Fernández, 1999). She is alone in Germany and informs herself which alternatives she has in order to stay.

Once you're here you ask, what Cubans do? To marry is an alternative and asylum the other one ... then, you've the possibility to be legal, if someone asks you, you're legal, you've 80 Euros per month, a bed. I said; it's better than being on the street (D. 211-17).

Doris did not have relatives in Germany, nor very close friends who could help her look for a job and accommodation. With the information received from other Cubans, who went through this procedure and with support from the social network in which she was inserted, she got to know which advantages the application for political asylum could bring her. A temporary legal status was one of them and the possibility of having a place to live until she could find another solution. In winter 1997 she applied for political asylum south of Germany. From other Cubans she also informed herself about places where she could have more possibilities.

People say; go to the asylum in D. because there Cubans get a passport, it takes a while and you've to wait. Cubans received a passport because of other political matters regarding Cuba. In other cities Cubans had been waiting for 15 years and they did not have passport. That's why I decided to go there. At the beginning there were less Cubans but later many arrived. In the asylum there were then many Cubans. They said that Cubans had not political problems, we had only economic problems. But they did not send us to Cuba because Cuba is a communist country ... we should not return. That's why we could stay there but if the government changed we had to return. Because many Cubans arrived everything was more difficult and only a few could have a passport ...

then you've to look for other alternatives, otherwise you could stay many years there. That's why I went so far (D. 453-68).

Though Germany was reunified each of the different German regions has some autonomy regarding their position in international political affairs. Thus, East Germany until the present has a politics of approach to Cuba while the West still considers that Cuba is governed by a totalitarian system. Hence individuals, who flee the country and look for freedom, should be received as political refugees in other democratic countries. This does not mean that Cubans can automatically receive a residence permit wherever they go. As any other political refugee –except in the US– they have to go through a process in which their political prosecution has to be proved.

When Doris arrived in the asylum other Cubans were waiting for the final decision about their status. Like her, they saw in this procedure an opportunity to gain residence permit in Germany. The German authorities, from their side, reconsidered motivations Cubans had to leave the country. In the late 90's they were seen primarily as economic migrants (Rodríguez, 1997; Martín, 2006). Thus, the procedure for obtaining political asylum was tightened though it is recognized that along a deficient economy and an authoritarian regime in Cuba make people migrate (Hoffmann, 2004).

Labeling Cuban migrants as economic migrants instead of political refugees and tacitly giving Cuba the status of a totalitarian system place Cubans in an undefined situation. They are not entitled to obtain a status as refugees but they are tolerated in Germany. As consequence they are restricted in their actions. While in the process of political asylum, refugees cannot attend German courses, have a legal job or go forward with their projects, all of which create frustration and depression.

Besides all these difficulties Doris continued with the application process for asylum. This was a painful process for her, especially when she was interviewed about reasons she had to apply for asylum.

You had to make an interview with two other persons and say why you wanted to apply for political asylum. I was preparing myself with other Cubans; what do you say? You shouldn't repeat the same and you should know how far you could tell a lie. You had to say that in Cuba you were doing something against politics ... you've to convince that you cannot return. I said something that I did not believe. I went to my room, went into bed and started crying. I hadn't said so many lies in my life, ... I couldn't believe all I said to the German authorities. I could go to jail because all I said. I felt terrible. I guess I began to see Germany different, with sadness, my depression began there. All you've to do if you wanted to stay in this country, and all that because in our country we cannot be free. I started looking for someone to blame ... The situation in Cuba is so difficult

that we go out and makes us take decision though we don't want it. If everything were different, we don't have to go out, if we could work and live from our salary. I felt bad and very depressed ... I was there and I had to go on. I could say that I wanted to return but I did not say it, I stayed. My son was under way (D. 228-56).

In this fragment Doris revealed economic as well as political reasons, while taking her decision to remain in Germany. The political side is expressed in form of limitations, lack of freedom and restrictions, which give little place to the realization of personal projects. In a socialist system social goals rank higher than personal projects. Hence, attaining social projects is possible at the cost of personal freedom. In this sense political decisions in Cuba affect economic development. As consequence covering daily-life needs, as it is the consumption of food or buying new clothes are difficult. However, fighting against the system could mean being in jail for several years. Thus, only few individuals face such risk. Though prosecution in Cuba does not target the totality of the population, some individuals, when they are abroad made-up a story, as Doris did, in order to stay.

When she looks in retrospective she is ashamed of her behavior. She also recognized that she was lying and with it began a period in which she had to fight her depression. She is aware that at any time she can return to Cuba but then again she risked not being near her son.

The other interviewees, who used political asylum as a strategy to remain legally in Germany, were also aware and recognized how they used both systems in order to attain their goals. Hence, 'saying lies' is part of the scenario depicting a situation in Cuba, that though does not correspond entirely to their own experiences while they were in Cuba, is the alternative they choose in order to stay.

Osvaldo, one of the interviewee, came to Germany in 2001 as member of a group in a variety show. After a couple of presentations the show had to be cancelled and the artists had to return to Cuba. He decided to stay in Germany and because he did not have any other support and contact in Germany he applied for political asylum in order to 'buy time'. He remembered the interview for asylum application in this way:

You have to explain... ah, many people had problems because of that. They said that they put a bomb in Cuba or that they are dissidents. People working in the asylum know how it works and they can say; we don't want you in Germany. When people lie they have problems ... I did not lie, I said little lies and they were half true. It is true that the police used to ask me in the middle of the street, when I was going out of the show (O. 1755-64).

When Osvaldo said that in the interview he said 'little lies', he is referring to the construction of a story where he mixed real facts with his own fantasy. The real facts

are related to the surveillance and covered repression system in Cuba. Osvaldo is mulato and before leaving Cuba he was working as a singer in a cabaret. At three or four in the morning when he was going home, the police used to ask for his identification. In every occasion he felt disturbed and felt treated as criminal. He experienced this questioning as an act of repression and racism, which still persists in the Cuban society today. He is mulato and asked himself why the police did not do the same with the 'whites' at that hour on the street. Osvaldo concluded that in Cuba, beside important social transformations, still persists racism and discrimination. He then combined his own experience with other elements and made up a story to 'buy time'.

Osvaldo knew that the asylum would not be granted and he also recognized how Cubans, who are in a similar situation, make use of political asylum as an alternative, which allowed them to prolong their stay in Germany.

They give a kind of asylum but that's a trap, they never really give you asylum and you don't want to get it either but it gives you time. If they give you asylum you get an apartment but you cannot go to Cuba anymore and there are many other conditions. I did not want any asylum but that was a strategy to get some time and marry (O. 1497-1500).

After the political asylum is granted the person cannot return to their home country. Thus, Osvaldo makes here explicit the implicit interplay of forces among Cubans and German authorities. On the one hand the German authorities will not grant political asylum to Cubans when they do not find evidence of the story they tell. The process can take many years. Meanwhile Cubans can stay in Germany. On the other hand some Cubans, as Osvaldo, would rather not have a status as political refugee. His goal is to obtain a residence permit in Germany through marriage. With the residence permit in his passport he can visit relatives and friends in Cuba and return to Germany without going through an exit procedure in Cuba.

The three interviewees, who used this alternative, married in Germany approximately a year and a half after they applied for political asylum. While they were waiting for an answer from the German authorities they used to visit Latin clubs, restaurants, and discos, where they met other Cubans with whom they shared their experiences. In these contact places they gathered information about life in Germany, which helped them to be better oriented. Besides getting to know other Cubans and Latin Americans, a German public attracted to this culture is part of the clientele in discos and clubs. Hence, the possibility to contact other Germans and look for potential

couples is higher than in other places. From these encounters relationships began and resulted in marriage.

Getting married becomes the paramount and for some the only possibility to obtain residence permit. After that Cubans concentrate efforts in an integration process in the German society, this time with more rights and participation.

Nevertheless, there are Cubans who leave the country because they are prosecuted due to their political ideas or had received some warnings. In case they continue with their political activities they could go to jail. That was the case of two of the interviewees. They left the country with a tourist visa and after their arrival applied for political asylum. Both of them already had friends in Germany, who issued a letter of invitation and with it they began the exit procedure.

In this way Ernesto arrived in Germany in 1994. In Cuba he was lawyer. He worked for one of the ministries. At the same time he defended people, who had political charges against them. Parallel to that he was also consultant in a human rights organization in Havana.

I used to give them information about different laws, booklets, and I said; in the constitution they say this but they violate it. That was what we reported ... they (the Cuban security) found out but could not prove it. One day they said; we know this and that... but they didn't know all. They don't look for evidences... one of the things about the Cuban penal code is that they do not need evidences for a sanction, as long as the court is convinced. That's a system inside of the penal code, a principle of the court if they want to convict you. The court is convinced, though it doesn't have evidence and still you can be guilty (E. 369-80).

The objective of this organization was to compare the law with the praxis and result of trials in political affairs. This organization was infiltrated by the government, Ernesto was identified as consultant. The officers in charge of his case could not prove that he had a direct participation in this organization. He was not condemned for his political activities. Nevertheless short after that he lost his job and was under surveillance at home. His situation became difficult. As a lawyer he could not work in any other place. Several times the police took him for inquires. One of his friends, who was living in Germany, visited him and proposed him to issue an invitation to Germany where he could apply for political asylum. Ernesto accepted the proposition.

My alternatives were to go to jail or to leave, and I wanted to leave. I don't want to be a martyr. If there is a war you can make something heroic, but in Cuba, what could you do? They will finish you. I said; as long as I'm alive I can do much more if I'm out of here, because here I can do nothing (E. 851-856).

Ernesto is afraid of going to jail in Cuba. If he were to trail he could be convicted for twenty years in prison or more without the possibility of appeal. Under these circumstances Cubans as Ernesto would rather apply for political asylum in another country than going to jail in Cuba. It was also part of his expectations to continue with his political activities once out of the country.

Immediately after his arrival in Germany, Ernesto applied for political asylum. Three years later, in 1997, the asylum was granted. Ernesto applied after that for the German citizenship.

I love this country. My country (Cuba) doesn't want me. I love Cuba, my life is there, my roots, my dead love ones, and all what I reached in life. But I cannot be there and without freedom I cannot live ... Here is my country, the place which took me, gave me protection, supported me, gave me value. Anywhere in the world I have a paper, which says I'm a German citizen. The laws of this country protect me. I love Germany. Germany had never throw me, did not let me hunger, or be cold, not at all, ... I have to be thankful. I did not come because I was hungry. I came because they did not want me and they wanted to finish me (E. 1631-49).

He is profoundly thankful for the support Germany has given him since his arrival. Because in Cuba he worked as a lawyer, during the time that his application for political asylum was processed, he informed himself about German laws in the areas of immigration and asylum. In these three years he advised other refugees about their rights and the different steps to follow in the process of political asylum. Later he co-founded an organization in Berlin specialized in giving judicial information to new immigrants and is member of the International Association of Human Rights in the German section<sup>13</sup>.

### **Summing-up 'Applying for political asylum'**

Similar to the other two strategies (getting married and prolongation of studies and/or work permit) the application of political asylum is used for some of the interviewees to 'buy time'. With time on their side they can find other alternatives and apply for a residence in Germany. The alternative more extended is to marry. With it they acquire a legal status and rights in the country.

Cubans used to apply for political asylum in regions where they knew their chances for obtaining asylum could be higher. That depends on the political approach each region has regarding Cuba. For instance, while the political party in power during the 90's in south Germany considered that Cuba is governed by a totalitarian regime; the

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<sup>13</sup> Internationale Gesellschaft für Menschenrechte (IGFM). In the Website of this association one can find articles about violation of Human Rights in Cuba. <http://www.igfm.de/Kuba.456.0.html> (27.07.2011).

east embraced the Cuban system and is more active in organizing solidarity campaigns. Thus, when deciding where to go to apply for political asylum Cubans used to travel to South Germany.

Information about how to apply for political asylum and where to go was transmitted among Cubans. Those who went through this process explained to others what they had to expect and how the process is conducted. In this regard a social network was established and new comers could at least in the first phase of their applications obtain from the Cubans more information. However, the interviewees later used other sources of information after realizing that not all Cubans had a deep knowledge of German laws concerning asylum application.

When immigrants arrive and made-up a story of political prosecution –as three of the interviewees did– they are aware about their position and how they abuse the system in order to reach their goal. Among the reasons they give to apply for political asylum are involved having a shelter, health insurance, and an identification as refugee, which is valid for the period the application is running. These conditions give them some sense of security. Though they have restrictions concerning the possibility of taking German courses and a work permit, through help of friends they work without authorization and visit some courses. This corresponds to their expectations of getting to know the new environment. The interviewees gather information about life in Germany as a form of being prepared for the moment when they get a residence permit.

After the German reunification and when Cubans were compelled to return to Cuba a German sociologist noted that „Nicht wenige Kubaner versuchten dann, mit Hilfe eines Asylantrages in Deutschland zu bleiben”. (Berger, 2005: 71). It is not an objective of this research to go into ethical and moral details when analyzing such behavior. From the sociological perspective Cuban immigrants feel they do not have other available alternatives due to restrictions in the Cuban as well as in the German migratory system.

From the Cuban side they are faced with bureaucratic obstacles when applying for the exit procedure. The cost of such procedure is also high and the economic resources they could invest are limited. Hence, paying for the procedure a second time is for some of the interviewees unattainable. Though people under these circumstances can be considered economic migrants, the political situation in which Cuba is immersed introduces political factors in each of these decisions. Hence, an actual classification



of Cuban migrants in economic or political migrants, (Berg, 2007; Duany, 2009) does not respond to the spectrum of motivations Cubans have to migrate, especially when limits between Cuban economy and politics are blurred.

However, as in this strategy was analyzed, there are Cubans who come because they had been prosecuted due to their political ideas and activities. After they feel threatened and before they go to jail they come to Germany and apply for asylum. After the asylum is granted they continue with their political activities and are part of organizations, which fight for changes in Cuba.

### **Germany as a long perspective**

#### **Learning the language**

Mastering the German language is considered one of the indicators of the integration level of immigrants in the German society (Süssmuth, 2006). Before and after the reunification there have been offered for all immigrants, language courses regardless their reason to stay in Germany. In chapter 3 it was discussed how workers and students in the GDR had access to these courses. Especially for Cubans it was compulsory in different periods to take during a year German lessons in Cuba. Over the years this changed depending on the interest Cuba had in the formation of certain professionals in Germany. Hence, some absolved a German course in Germany before beginning with their respective qualifications. In this same period and according to the interviews conducted, Cubans who arrived in the FRG and were married with a German took some courses offered in different public schools. However, absolving these courses was more in relation to the interest and aspirations they had in being incorporated in the work market.

After the reunification Cubans continued arriving married with a German or as students. One of their expectations is to be incorporated into the work market as soon as possible. This influences their motivations for learning the language. In case individuals had a profession in Cuba and decide to work in the same or similar area in Germany, the language becomes a priority. They take courses at the university or in public or private schools and invest at least a year visiting intensive courses. Though Alina got pregnant few months after her second and definitively arrival in Germany, she continued visiting language courses until she felt secure enough in her skills in the new language.

I came in February and we married in April. When I arrived the first thing was to learn the language because the most horrible thing is to be in a place where you don't know what it's going on. You hear things but you don't understand what they are talking about. I felt terrible. I was depressed. You go out and you don't understand a word ... I waited until April and started a course at the university, which was very good. It was worth the wait. End of May I got pregnant. It was very fast ... We moved to B in July. When I came here I continued learning the language until my daughter was born and also later when she started in the Kindergarten. I was a year and a half with her at home. Later when she started in another Kindergarten I went to the university and finished Mittel and Oberstufe (A. 257-296).

For Alina not knowing the language became a deprivation of her communicational skills. She could communicate with her partner in Spanish but she also spent most of the day at home taking care of her child. In this situation she felt isolated and depressed. One alternative she found was to establish some contacts with German mothers outside home in order to improve her skills. Far from isolating herself further she looked for support in her environment. After she could visit a course again her goal was to reach a proficiency of the language that allowed her to begin a job in the area of Biochemistry. In this way she visited German courses until she finished a superior level in a language institute at the university. Alina counted on the support of her husband, not only emotionally but also financially. At this point she did not have a job and he was able to pay courses fee.

In section 'Applying for political asylum' was analyzed how Doris used a strategy of 'buying time' until she could marry a German. That was her possibility to stay in Germany with her son. Though Doris and her husband liked each other, his proposal was motivated for her not yet solved residence permit. In this mixture of motivations for marriage they reached the agreement that they could live in the same building and though he would help to pay the rent she had to support herself and her child.

I told him that I had to marry and he said that he loved me, he understood what I was going through and he said: I want to marry you under these conditions ... I marry you because I can pay less taxes and because I love you but I don't want you to ask for money in case we divorce. I agreed with all (D. 329-333).

Thus Doris accepted these conditions. She gained a residence permit but her husband would not share expenses with her. Additionally it was not possible for her to apply for any kind of social help available in Germany –including the payment of German courses– because her husband was earning enough to support a family.

He paid the rent but I had to take care of the rest. You've to pay language courses and I did not have much money because he did not help me with expenses at home. I had to pay my part and because I was married I did not get any kind of social help. I went to Jugendamt and they told me that I was married, my husband had to take care of us. And so I used to clean in houses and over the weekends I used to work in a disco (D. 370-374).

In order to finance her expenses Doris accepted low paid jobs, most of the time illegally. She reached her goal acquiring a residence permit in Germany but now she has to arrange her economic situation and financially take care of her son who at that point was five-year-old. In terms of the economic arrangements she had with her husband, she was in a vulnerable position. On the one hand she was legally married but on the other hand she had no access to any economic support from the government. Thus she had neither time nor resources to pay for language courses. She realized about the importance of learning the language and asked her husband to help her with it. They communicated in Spanish and for him it was difficult to teach her some vocabulary. She could not count on him to give some steps in the language. Thus she asked a German friend about what she needed to learn German auto didactically.

I realized that if I was here I had to learn. I trained sounds but because I did not know how to pronounce a friend gave me a book and I learned by myself, with mistakes because I pronounced as in English. I realized that I made lots of mistakes, ... I did not know a thing about grammar and I said; I have to go further (D. 353-358).

Doris realized that her strategy could not bring her to learn the language properly. After trying all what she could, she reached the conclusion that a solution would be eventually taking some courses and to learn the language systematically. This moment arrived when a year later her son began the school. In this moment she also felt responsible for his education. Though she speaks Spanish until today with her son, once in the school all issues concerning education had to be managed in German. She wanted to support her son but it was difficult when she needed support herself. Her husband helped her translating some information. However, all related homework and extra-curricular activities was exclusively her responsibility. While her son was in the school she divided her time between taking language courses and working.

For Doris it was a long and difficult process until she achieved a proficiency in the language and was able to take legal jobs. Hence, language could be considered an essential tool to reach other goals like continuation of studies or incorporation into the labor market. However, though language is a key factor in the incorporation of individuals in social spaces, its apprenticeship cannot be isolated from other spaces of social interaction like family, job, availability of resources and time, and social networks.

Also students, who came after the reunification with a scholarship to Germany, and decided later to stay here, took German courses. This facilitates contact with colleagues, broaden their social networks and improve their opportunities to have a job after they finish their study projects. Roberto and Luis, for instance, came to continue studies at a Ph.D. level. They specialized in Biochemistry, a field where English is the research language. Though they were able to communicate in English while they were conducting their research in a laboratory, it was important for them to establish another level of communication with their colleagues. In their spare time they took language courses.

For Roberto it was important the support he had from his professor and other students concerning diverse research techniques. When he was able to communicate in German he had the impression that the students, beyond explaining how to conduct some procedures, felt more relaxed when talking to him. All this information saved him time in doing his own experiments and he could finish his Ph.D. in due time.

For graduated foreign students with a long perspective in Germany, even though they conduct their studies in another language than German, their possibilities to be incorporated into the labor market increased after the German language is mastered. Roberto and Luis could represent high-qualified professionals in natural sciences. Nowadays much of the research and work is conducted in English. However, in order to continue further in the German labor market the language becomes an important tool. In this regard it can be in interest of the German government to broaden the offer in German courses for high-qualified professionals.

Nevertheless mastering the language could be a difficult issue for those who apply for political asylum. In the time they wait for the decision, if the asylum is granted or not, they do not have access to German courses. Some of the Cubans who apply for political asylum in order to 'buy time' begin with German courses outside the shelters that are confined to them, in doing so they break several rules. First of all they go out of the shelter and take illegal jobs to pay the courses. When Osvaldo applied for political asylum he was sure he wanted to stay in Germany.

I talked with the husband of a Cuban friend and I told him that I wanted to be in B because I wanted to learn German. They had a big house. I got all I had from the shelter and I went there. That was a mistake because I should had stayed in the shelter. Once a month I used to go to get some money. With that I used to pay the German school, around 160 or 170 euros per month. Every time I got the money I invest it all in the school and I had little less ... In the evening I used to go out with a girl who had a guitar I had my maraquitas, we used to go to restaurants and with what we received for singing I used it to pay the rest (O. 1483-1492).

Oswaldo gave priority to the language. He also had the possibility to live outside the shelter with friends, assist to a course and earn some money over the weekends. At this regard he had a privileged position though he was breaking the regulations imposed to those who apply for political asylum. According to the law, only after the asylum is granted, individuals have right to take German courses. His inversion in the language brought him closer to Germans he met in restaurants and bars, especially women. From these encounters a relationship flourished and he could marry gaining access to a residence permit. Nevertheless not all Cubans who apply for political exile run the same faith. Because the asylum is a process that could take years, motivation for learning the language can decrease. Individuals are also compelled to find a job and time dedicated to learn the language might decrease.

In 2005, with the introduction in Germany of the migration law (Zuwanderungsgesetz), it was regulated for the first time the organization of language courses in what is called Integration courses. All new migrants who have a long perspective in Germany and migrants who have been living in Germany for more than two years and cannot communicate in German at a basic level, are compelled to take such courses (IntV § 5/ 1,2,3,4: 139). The Federal Service for Migration and Refugees<sup>14</sup> is responsible for the structure and content of such courses. The courses have a duration of 645 hours divided into 600 hours where participants learn the language until B1 level according to the Unified European Reference for the language. The other 45 hours are called Orientation course. Here participants learn about German history, culture and politics and receive some information regarding bureaucratic functioning of social services (IntV § 10, § 11 und § 12: 141-42) (Ausländerrecht, Migration- und Flüchtlingsrecht, 2010).

At the end of the course all participants have to pass a test in the modalities of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. In case they don't pass the test, language school informs the migration authorities. These participants have the right to repeat the course one more time (IntV § 17). If also this time participants do not pass the test or if they do not participate at all, some of the social support can be reduced or suspended or the migration authorities could not prolong the residence permit (TAZ, 8 Sept. 2011).

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<sup>14</sup> BAMF: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge

Implementation of integration courses is an issue of political debate (Hoffmann, 2009b). On the one hand learning the language is considered a priority for migrants with a long perspective in Germany. On the other hand learning the language should constitute an enriching experience and should not be subjected to pressures like reducing social support from the government. On the contrary, migrants, especially mothers, are restricted in their participation to courses because other social supports like finding and financing a kindergarten place are not available.

From the migrant's perspective, as it is showed in this section through the comparison of different migrant stories regarding their struggle to learn the language, they are actively implicated in the learning process, sometimes without governmental support. When this support is not present, the learning process is delayed bringing with it undesirable social consequences like placing migrants in irregular and low paid jobs, or pushing them to take jobs in the black market. They could also lose motivation for learning the language, which creates isolation and a low level of integration in the host society.

### **Summing-up 'Learning the language'**

Here it was analyzed how Cuban migrants, depending on the reason to come to Germany and the way they used to remain legally, go through the process of learning the language. Factors like age of the immigrant, previous education, ways in which they arrived in Germany (invitation letter, studies, marriage, work, and political asylum) expectations in Germany and insertion in the work market influence level of the language acquired.

Absolving studies in Germany is a way to improve the proficiency in the language, especially for students taking bachelor studies or doing an apprenticeship. Students who absolve a Master or Ph.D. with the perspective of staying in Germany acquire also a high proficiency in the language.

A different situation is for individuals working in less qualified jobs or those who are incorporated into support networks. Here they have access to what is called 'niche or ethnic economy sector' (Portes, 1987). This kind of job gives the chance to alternate Spanish and German. A typical example is working in gastronomy with an offer of Latin American products. Knowing both languages in this milieu is an advantage in the interchange among personal and clients. However, proficiency in the language is attained with more difficulties.

Difficulties expressed by the interviewees in learning the language are related to the combination of time dedicated to courses, to the family and working. In case of migrant women factors like not counting with the support of the partner for rearing children, insufficient kindergarten places, and economic deprivations could delay the learning process. Nonetheless with the beginning of school for children, especially women make additional efforts to improve their language level and with it they can better support and orient their children.

In Germany, Cubans do not count with an extended social network, which means that even though they have access to jobs in a niche economy they are compelled at a certain point to learn the German language. In the second generation parents struggle to maintain proficiency in Spanish language as vivid as possible.

Political migrants, as long as they are in the process to apply for political asylum, and those who remain without a valid documentation in Germany, do not count with governmental support to access German courses. Hence, the apprentice of the language could be delayed in several years. Three of the interviewees, who applied for political asylum as a strategy to buy time in Germany, did not wait to acquire documentation in Germany and began with German courses. In order to pay the courses they worked irregularly as domestic, waitress and musician.

Since 2005, when changes in the German migration law entered in force, it is a sort of political ideal that immigrants, immediately after their arrival begin to learn the language. Consequently the integration courses are regulated by the law as an attempt that newcomers without skills in the German language as well as migrants who have been in Germany for several years and have a low level of the language could improve their skills. At the end of such courses migrants should be able to communicate in German in a medium level and should be capable of understanding and producing a text.

Though language is a key factor in the incorporation of individuals in social spaces, as well as in the integration in the host society, its apprenticeship cannot be isolated from other spaces of social interaction like family, job, availability of resources and time, and social networks. Not taking into account these spaces could result in a retardation of the learning process with negative consequences. Additionally learning the language is not a lineal process beginning immediately after the arrival of immigrants in the host society and ending a couple of months later after finishing a language course. It's rather a cumulative process extended over many years.

Proficiency of the language is not attained in a classroom. Though this context provides immigrants with valuable tools to continue developing their skills, results are attained in combination with contact with native speakers. It is in this context where cultural symbols, history, and customs are transmitted and better understood. Without this combination it is difficult to incorporate the language in a space of meanings for individuals.

### **Studying in Germany**

Doing or completing studies in Germany is a warranty until certain degree that the person will find a work later in the field they decided to learn. An economic stability is essential in purchasing other studies but individuals take also into account their age and family situation. For Cubans who arrived in the GDR as students, married later, and stayed, it was not difficult to find a job according to the qualification acquired. Nevertheless as soon as the two Germanys were reunified, professionals in certain areas had to take extra courses in order to recognize their diplomas and maintain their work place. Isabel, for instance, was working in a bank. With the reunification all the socialist financial system was substituted by a capitalist one. She had to learn some new procedures which implied taking some courses at the university.

After reunification I went back to the university, I did a kind of post-graduate studies in order to recognize my previous studies. After the reunification my certificate in Economic lost value ... maybe some enterprises would accept it but not at the bank, where I was working. Because I was young I did not wanted to have limitations on that and I studied one more year (I. 210-218).

Being young and without children were important criteria for Isabel in taking another course. She wanted to continue working in the bank. Though the reunification was an unexpected change in the course of some professions, she did not want to lose the status achieved. Unfortunately not all professionals had the same conditions to continue studies and make their qualification valid in the reunified Germany. With the time they lose their jobs and began working in less qualified jobs.

Studies continued to be one of the reasons to come to Germany after the reunification. As soon as a DAAD representation office was opened in 1990 in Havana, students and professionals as well had the opportunity to apply for one of the scholarships available. There is also the possibility to establish a direct contact with a university in Germany and when the financial support is assured, Cubans can come to continue with their preparation, usually in post graduated courses. If during or after



the studies they decide to remain in Germany, courses taken or new degree achieved can help them in finding a job according to their qualification. Hence, a criterion to be inserted in the German work market depends heavily on studies finished in Germany.

Professionals who come to Germany after finishing their studies in Cuba are frustrated when they realize that their studies are not fully recognized. It is a long process until the German authorities (ZAB: Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen) decide which subjects are recognized. At the same time the new changes in the educational system in Germany<sup>15</sup> affect the recognition of Cuban diplomas at all levels. Usually social science careers are more affected than those in natural science. Gabriela studied English pedagogy during five years at the university in Cuba. She thought first to teach English as she did in a school in Havana. Once in Germany she went to the offices to recognize her studies.

I went to the Senat and I said; I finished my studies in Cuba as English professor. And they said; yes, but you have to take two subjects ... The English part was not completely recognized ... They recognized my studies as Grundstudium and I had to do the English part and the Spanish from the beginning ... I have been studying now during three years, six semesters but it is very difficult for me (G. 200-213).

Gabriela's difficulties to continue with her studies had to do with her financial dependence of her husband. She is not entitled to obtain any of the financial support available in Germany for students like BAfög<sup>16</sup>. At the same time she takes care of her daughter shortening the time she has for learning at home. In spite of all difficulties she expects that after obtaining a German diploma, she would be able to find a job similar to the one she had in Cuba.

Among the interviewees, who took studies in Germany is also Alina. She studied Biochemistry, a profession part of the natural sciences. Though her studies were not fully recognized, she engaged in practices in different laboratories and learned new techniques. In doing so she realized that in order to recognize her studies she would have to go back to the university. Faced with this perspective she looked for other alternatives.

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<sup>15</sup> Since 1999 Germany had undertaken a reform in the educational system known as Bologna Process. In a conference in the city of Bologna, 29 European countries agreed with this declaration. Its objective was to unify the academic degree standards in the high educational level. Transformations in the educational system in Germany should be concluded in 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Das Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz (BAföG) is a loan from the government to German students or foreign students with a long perspective in Germany. The last ones must usually have a permanent resident permit in Germany though the law includes some exemptions. Five years after finishing the studies this loan has to be paid. Since 01.03.2001 the maximum to pay is 10,000€.

I studied Biochemistry in Cuba and here I did some practices in laboratories learning the new techniques. I realized that if I wanted to work here the better would be to learn something that has to do with the pharmaceutical industry because in Germany this industry is more developed. I started a master two years ago. I finished now and I'm looking for a job. I'm sure that I will find something. (A. 329-333).

Alina used the resources she already had and oriented herself into a field where she saw better chances to find a job. Like Gabriela, she also had the financial support from her husband and both of them take care of their daughter. She counted on her husband to do the studies. Hence, she was able to learn at home and finish her master in due time.

The continuation of studies in Germany or the possibility to begin one is possible after immigrants had acquired a medium or superior level of the language. Because this process takes at least a year of intensive learning and due to the fact that these individuals had already studied for years in their host country, beginning a new learning process requires from each personal efforts as well as support from the current family in Germany. When individuals are not immersed into favourable conditions, it is more likely that they do not undertake such enterprise. As consequence the society of origin, as well as the host society, lose the benefits these professionals could bring with them.

### **Summing-up 'Studying in Germany'**

Undertaking studies in Germany is an enterprise some Cuban migrants decide to go through. Difficulties in this area are mainly expressed by Cubans who arrived after the reunification. After finishing studies in their country of origin they feel that their knowledge is devalued. Thus, they evaluate their present situation and look for alternatives with the goal of being reoriented in an area similar to what they already learned in Cuba. Nevertheless they keep open to many possibilities and when their conditions are favourable they can orient themselves into professional areas where they perceive perspectives of professional development. They also take into account which possibilities of studies the host society offers them as well as availability of work places into the host society.

Though the decision of taking studies demands from individuals some efforts, some interviewees could count with the support of the family in Germany. Their expectation is to maintain the social status they had in Cuba with the advantage of access to better economic standards compared to what they left behind. This finding

is compatible with some of the motivations professionals have when deciding for migration (Han, 2005). They struggle for better-paid jobs in an area where their qualification is recognized. The profession is one of the possibilities they have to reach their goals. Nevertheless, in order to achieve these expectations they look for support from social networks where they are inserted. Especially the family provides emotional as well as financial support.

Unfortunately, years after migration, it is not possible for all professional immigrants to achieve their previous status. Factor like age of migration, accessibility to the language and economic situation keep migrants away from their professions. This could lead to states of stress and depression. At this regard the integration process, at least at the personal level, is far from being achieved.

### **Working in Germany**

As it was analyzed until here, some Cuban migrants struggle to attain a professional position similar to the one they left behind. However, the urgency to support economically themselves and the family left behind make them look for any possibility available in the labour market. It is part of their goal to send regular remittances to their relatives. Miriam, who studied pedagogy in Cuba, explains more about her work experience in Germany.

When I was here I also worked cleaning houses. There was a Spanish woman who my sister met. She needed someone for cleaning her house and to iron the shirts, and well, I went. I couldn't speak a word in German (M. 171-174).

Miriam found her first job through her sister, who arrived in Germany a year and a half before. She was introduced in a Spanish household where she did not need any proficiency in the German language. This start point in the host society was possible due to her insertion in a broader social network.

For Cubans, access to the work market is part of a learning process where information transmitted through social networks plays an important role. New rules have to be learned, among them, how to present themselves as workers in a capitalist system; how to behave in a job interview, or how to write an application for a job. Additionally, immigrants with a residence permit in Germany have access to courses offered by the Arbeitsamt where they learn these skills.

Compared to Cuba, where most of job places are provided by the government, in Germany Cubans explore possibilities of being independent workers. Among the

interviewees there are musicians. In order to work in Cuba they have first to be registered in an enterprise where they receive work contracts and indications about where they can play. As soon as they arrive in Germany they form their own groups and play in any place they have the chance to do it. In their new context musicians are aware of their cultural capital. Through the music they represent part of their culture, including stereotypes of characteristic attributes considered 'Cuban'<sup>17</sup>. Nevertheless they appropriate a space of self-identity and realization.

Other Cuban artists like actresses (Köttig, 2009), theatre directors and painters bring to the German public a form of art impregnated of personal experiences and closely linked to the own culture. They give different versions of a country (Cuba) and transmit a reality based on actual events. They represent in their art multiple subjects, which in Cuba are controversial or regarded with certain caution. Among these subjects could be mentioned separation of families because of migration, impact of politics in daily life and isolation of Cuba from economic and political networks.

The stability Cubans achieve in the formal labour market is regarded among the interviewees as a sign of integration. Their jobs are for them a symbol of ascendant social perspective. Even if they work in low paid jobs they constantly compare both scenarios. From their actual perspective they heavily consider their economic gain.

For other interviewees it was important to emphasise the social value of working. They use it as an example to transmit to their children. Doris, for instance, after working for four years illegally in a discotheque, looked for a formal low qualified job when she felt confident enough in the language.

I did not like my job that much but I did not need any Ausbildung. The boss called me. I hadn't had a legal job until then ... I did not like what I did but I stayed there because you have to be an example for your children, that you earn your money and that is not a present (D. 638-642).

She emphasizes her position as a working-woman and distantiates from other migrants who support themselves through access to the different social support services available in Germany. At the moment of the interview Doris was considering to change her job for one where she could have access to a better payment or begin a training to open up her chances in the labour market.

Though for the majority of the interviewees working in Germany represents an improvement in their economic situation, not all of them have achieved an insertion

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<sup>17</sup> Though musicians use stereotypes of music in their own profit, some break with this stereotype and play other genres away from Latin rhythms.

in the formal work market the way they would like to. Economic situation in the host country along with qualification acquired and language skills are important factors when considering the kind of jobs Cubans do. In Germany there is no an extended and solid economic enclave as it was conceptualized for the Cuban community in South Florida (Wilson & Portes, 1980; Portes & Shafer, 2006). That's one of the reasons that new Cuban migrants arriving in Germany cannot count with a social network capable of provide them employment. There is certainly an amount of ethnic entrepreneurs, mainly associated in the service sector, who can employ some of them. The majority of Cubans introduce themselves into the broader labour market and are dispersed in multiple economic areas.

### **Summing-up 'Working in Germany'**

The insertion of Cubans into the German work market occurs in most of the sample analyzed associated to the disposition of places in the market. In order to access these places Cubans must learn the language. Those with a low proficiency of the language are inserted into low qualified jobs, where they do not need high level of these skills. Newcomers begin usually working in places where they do not need specific language skills. The informal market offers them the opportunity to be in touch with other Spanish speakers and through them access to low qualified jobs could be attained. However, after crossing the barrier of the language new opportunities are opened. Those with a residence permit in Germany usually look for better-paid jobs. Especially in the case of professionals they make attempts to look for a job suitable to their qualification. In order to reach their goal they are usually willing to take complementary studies or readjust their expectations in the work market. In the meantime some faced periods of unemployment or difficulties in attaining a work position similar to the one they had before migrating. Interviewees who were in this situation felt devaluated and depressed. They had to deal with the fact that their intellectual resources were underestimated and some took positions under their professional qualification. Nonetheless being active in the labour market –even when they take less qualified jobs– is positively experienced and is considered a social gain and an ascendant economic perspective. At this regard they project an image of success when they compare their economic situation with the one they had in Cuba before their departure. This constant comparison is coherent with their motivations for migration, which is to achieve a better economic level (Portes & DeWind, 2007).

For newcomers being inserted in the formal or informal work market is regarded as the possibility they have to be economically independent. When they have a job, some of the earnings are sent in form of remittances to Cuba covering their expectations and those from their families. Hence the thesis that the Cuban migration is a case of economic migration could be supported. However, one should also consider economic restrictions Cubans have in Cuba, which are supported on political measures. As consequence the Cuban migration could be considered still today a case of economic as well as political migration.

### **From Germany Relationship with Cuba**

#### **Back and Forth between countries**

#### **Maintaining communication with relatives in Cuba**

In comparison to immigrants from other Latin American countries, who maintain a close interchange with relatives through telephone calls, chat and e-mails, Cubans see themselves limited in the access they have to the newest and cheapest communication technologies. One restraint from Cuba is the low interconnectivity level with the rest of the world. Cuba was connected in October 1996 for the first time to the Internet, in February 1997 was recognized under the domain .cu (Hoffmann, 2002). Internet and telephone connection from and to Cuba are rather expensive. A cost for a telephone call per minute is around 80 cents. Some interviewees limited their communication with close relatives only once a month. Roberto communicated to his parents via telephone about his decision to stay in Germany. Afterwards and though he needed support from his parents, it was difficult the communication among them.

I think (for parents) the most painful thing isn't that the offspring lives abroad but the lack of communication ... I could only call them once a month and they knew it. I call them and we also used to write letters (R. 250-56).

Using the web today for chat and e-mails shortens the distance among immigrants and their families, no matter how many kilometers separate them. However Cuban immigrants are limited in the use of these technologies when communicating with Cuba. Though the government argues that due to technological difficulties it is not possible to guarantee Internet access or even an e-mail account with international outcome to anyone who applies for it, it is also to take into account that level of censorship limits access to information to the average of Cubans. Furthermore, in the last years the government had invested resources to defend itself in what is called the 'cybernetic war'. As consequence access to the web from home is authorized in

restrictive cases, whether access from the workplace is reserved to limited professions. All in all the Cuban family from Germany and in Cuba organizes channels of communication as the available alternative to be in touch. Doris describes how her family is in touch.

I try to call (my mother) once a month, but for me it is expensive. When she has birthday I call her once and my sister another time. At least she had news from us. An aunt has a computer with Internet. We send her an e-mail and my aunt forwards it to my sister. My sister works in an enterprise but there she has only access to national e-mail. My sister receives the message and she reads it to the whole family (D. 718-722).

As it is the case in many other social issues in Cuba, there is also an extended ‘illegal’ network connected to the Internet. Acquiring an Internet account in the black market costs around 60 CUC a month<sup>18</sup> with additional telephone costs. Paying one of such accounts is possible if a Cuban living abroad can send money to his family, or if the family in Cuba besides its official work has an extra source of income. Another possibility is the connection in one of the ‘Internet cafes’. An hour connection costs 10 CUC. The official reason for these high fees is the connection Cuba has via satellite instead via fiber optic (Hoffmann, 2002). Because the price is so high and the connection extremely low, connecting from an Internet cafe is probably the less used communication channel. Something similar happens with SMS and phone calls using a cell phone. The blockade to Cuba also affects Cuban connectivity to the world. Some wide used Internet websites like Skype cannot be used from Cuba for chat or conversation; other websites like Yahoo are in the same way affected.

The Cuban government announced that by 2011 Cuba could be connected via fiber optic to Venezuela. This could improve not only connectivity; also Cubans could theoretically have access to Internet accounts once restrictions in transfer of kilobytes were not there. Time arrived and the news about fiber optic was not mentioned in any media. Hence, the weight of the balance is inclined to the argument that beyond technological constraint there is the decision from the Cuban government to control access to the Internet. „Dennoch sind die offiziellen Beteuerungen, die technisch-finanziellen Faktoren allein seien der Grund für die Begrenzung des Internetszugangs, so wenig überzeugend, weil sie der gesamten sonstigen Medienpolitik des Landes widersprechen. Denn nicht nur sind Massenmedien qua Verfassung als staatliches Monopol definiert, auch in der Praxis wird politischer

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<sup>18</sup> Buying and selling access to Internet account can be found in the web under [www.revolico.com](http://www.revolico.com) (07.07.2012)

Pluralismus, wie er im World Wide Web zur Genüge zu finden ist, rigoros unterbunden (Hoffmann, 2002: 58). Furthermore it is a way to protect the country against cyber attacks from contra revolutionary organizations, especially from the U.S., which could threaten the national security.

Regarding all kinds of communication channels used between Cuba and Germany, interviewees were in occasions cautious about the kind of information they wanted to transmit to their family in Cuba. They fear that channels like email are monitored and that through Cuban filters some information could be interpreted as disrespectful or a direct attack against the government. When such information through e-mails is detected, the e-mail account can be closed. A woman traveling on vacations to Cuba wrote the following message to her friends in Germany.

*My dear friends, I say good-bye, in two days I will be departing to the island ... Take care of yourselves and we see us soon. I go to miss you, but time flies .... If you want to tell me something you can write me to my sister's e-mail, which is not internet but a spied intranet controlled by the government. I appreciate some discretion from your side concerning dissident subjects. I would be glad to be in touch with you.*

*Take care  
Hugs<sup>19</sup>*

Sending letters and packages per post and courier services is for Cubans in Germany the less reliable channel of communication and good transfer. The post in Cuba reserves the right to open packages and letters and confiscate objects, which are not allowed to be introduced or when they consider that it is a threat to the national security. Among these objects are all kind of electro domestics, computers and it external devices. Additionally, it takes a month and more until letters and packages arrive to their end destination. Cubans rely then in informal couriers or friends, who travel to Cuba to send letters. Packages are sent rather with Germans due to the limitation Cubans have in weigh of their luggage (Eggert, 2006). While a German can take all she likes, paying the correspondent fee for overweight to the corresponding airline, Cubans are compelled to pay overweight once to the airline and a second time per overweight and single article at the airport in Cuba. Limitations in package weight when traveling to Cuba and confiscation of objects when they are sent per post are factors, which hinder transfer of goods between Cuba and Germany. Furthermore, this is an obstacle in the development of transnational relations between Cuba and its emigration. These aspects should be taken into account when discussing transnational ties of Cuban emigrants with their country of origin, which are quite

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<sup>19</sup> Email sent to me 09.05.2009.



differentiated to the ties immigrants from the Caribic establish to their countries of origin (Basch, Glick & Blanc-Szanton, 1994).

But communication is not only about letters, e-mail and packages. Also traveling to Cuba is the most vivid way of maintaining contact with the family. The travel is prepared with many months in advance where the costs are carefully calculated. Families with children in school age in Germany, which visit relatives in Cuba, face the most difficulties when planning their travel. They usually travel in the vacation period when tickets are more expensive. However, these encounters are highly appreciated from both sides. The work situation in Germany is taken into account when planning a travel. When interviewees had not had a stable paid job the probability of going to Cuba decreased drastically and the alternative of emails and telephone calls is the one that remains for communication.

Without doubts the new communication technologies have greatly influenced the way we communicate. A relatively new phenomenon is the access to communication networks like Facebook. In contrast to the e-mail traffic which is used among families, FB is used as the communicational platform among friends allowing the contact not only among friends between Cuba and Germany but also allowing the connection all around the world. The interchange of communication and experiences of Cubans no matter where they are, and their connections through a virtual scenario should be taking into account when analyzing information flow and influence of migratory experiences among Cubans abroad and in the island.

### **Remittances**

In studies about migration one of the most common goals attended is remittances immigrants send to their families to the sending country. The other expected goal is to work enough in order to make savings with the objective of financing small private enterprises in the sending country. Among studies made in Central American countries another expectation from migrants is to save enough money in order to construct or buy a house where the whole family could live together. (Monreal, 2009; Duany, 2009; Yépez del Castillo & Herrera, 2007; Anson, Aparicio & Nel, 2009). According to Lozano (2005) and Duany (2009) Cuba is not included into the statistics from the FMI. However, the calculated amount of remittances to Cuba in 2003 was of around \$1.200 million (Lozano, 2003: 30; Duany, 2009: 198). An increase in amount of remittances sent to Cuba can be found in Appendix 10.

Cubans in Germany share some of these goals. In words of Monreal (2009) „die gesetzlichen Beschränkungen der Migration (sowohl im Herkunfts- als auch im Zielland) haben nicht verhindert, dass das ‚externe Einkommen‘ – sprich, das Einkommen, das im Falle der Emigration erwartet würde – eine der Variablen ist, die viele Kubaner betrachten, wenn sie Entscheidungen über ihre Zukunft treffen“ (Monreal, 1999: 86). Another important aspect of sending remittances from Germany is that different to the migration to U.S., where traveling to Cuba is subjected to restrictions from the U.S. government, there is not any governmental constrain in traveling between Cuba and Germany. Thus, Cubans in Germany, especially those who arrived after the German reunification, are informed about living conditions of their families in Cuba. „Die erst in den letzten Jahren Ausgewanderten die materielle Situation auf der Insel besser kennen und auch eine größere Sensibilität gegenüber den Schwierigkeiten dort zeigen“ (Monreal, 1999: 90). Hence, the family in Cuba and the Cuban immigrant from Germany manage, agree and reach common decisions about where resources are needed and better invested.

Part of the savings made from Cubans abroad is directly invested in budget needed to improve housing conditions for the family in the country of origin. Remittances are used for renovations, for buying furniture and electrical equipments or for swapping the house for another one more comfortable or in better conditions. These were the goals Miriam had for her family in Cuba.

From here we bought a house for my mother and sister. My sister lived with her sons and husband and my mother was alone. We bought them a big house, which is divided; one part for each of them ... My sister books the operating budget in a supplies-enterprise. She works and earns a decent salary, but it is not enough for certain things. With the money we send they buy the biggest things, for instance a refrigerator and so on (M. 673-753).

Remittances are in certain cases for Cubans with relatives abroad the first source of income allowing the purchase of articles daily used at home or supporting the elders left behind. That is the case of Isabel and Pedro. While Isabel takes care of her aunt and uncle, Pedro does the same with his mother. Though the Cuban government has taken measures in the last years regarding the care of the elderly and had raised their rents, it is still a lot to be done. Pedro says about it:

I don't have many relatives. My mother is 92 year old ... One of my cousins takes care of her. She cleans, cooks and takes care of her. I send each month around 100, 150, which is my cousin's payment for taking care of her (P. 847-910).

Families with relatives abroad rely on remittances to have access to products of daily consume, which are available only in CUC – the hard currency in Cuba since 2000. In the national market, where merchandise is purchased in Cuban pesos, products like oil, soap, salt, shampoo, detergent, butter, cheese, meat and many others are simply not offered. Products like clothes and shoes are too expensive to buy in pesos.<sup>20</sup> Another way in which families in Cuba invest remittances is in replacement of electrodomestical equipments when they are broken or needed. Immigrants send the money and the family can buy them. Among the interviewees remittances are considered not only in terms of the amount the immigrant can send but also in savings. According to Monreal (1999) „Ziel dieses Darlehen ist es, die Zusammenführung der Familie im Zielland der Emigration zu erreichen“ (Monreal, 1999: 90). That was for instance, the case of Doris, previously discussed in this part, when she made savings and brought her sister over. Thus, sending remittances is experienced as a responsibility with the entire family.

After the celebration of the Congress of the Communist Party in Cuba in April 2011, new measures were taken which objective is the improvement of the economic situation in Cuba. New licenses for independent workers were granted. Who has relatives abroad could receive a start capital for small businesses like cafeterias, restaurants and rooms for rent. However, Cuban immigrants are not allowed to make direct investments (Duany, 2009: 194).

Remittances or savings compel Cuban immigrants, once in Germany, to start working as soon as possible as a guarantee not only to support themselves but also to help their families in Cuba. How much money they can send and how frequently depends on the kind of job they have but also on the support they have from their partner in case they have a relationship or if they are married. If the Cuban has an irregular job they send money quite sporadically in amount of 100€ approximately. For sending money Cubans rely most of the time on people traveling to Cuba. Sending money through the bank is also possible but that is a channel used mainly for persons with a stable job or when the family in Cuba has a critical situation. It should not be underestimated that banks keep a percent of the amount raising the price of each money transfer. From Germany there is the possibility to send direct remittances if

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<sup>20</sup> National currency.

the person has an account in Commerzbank. The amount sent to Cuba can be deducted from the taxes. Remittances are classified in this case as help to the family. How much money is sent to Cuba and how regular the money is sent is a matter of discussion in the relationship. Usually Germans are aware of how important remittances are for the family in Cuba. Many of them had had previous contact with the country and are familiar with the double currency and the different markets including the black market and stores where you can find the main products. Iris married her husband in Denmark, which was the fastest way if she wanted to remain legally in Germany. On her wedding night she and her husband were on the highway to return to Germany and they suffered an accident. She had to undertake a long recovering process and could not work. Though she had done professional practices related to Psychology she has not found any suitable job and her husband is the main provider at home. When her family needs some money she has to discuss this issue with her husband.

(I send money) thanks to my husband because I do not earn much. I do some training and they pay me a little. We talk about it. I do not feel comfortable knowing that he takes care of the economic part and I haven't done much during this time. He says that we are a family ... I'm not satisfied with my achievements in Germany. It is clear that I have to work. I studied something I like and I want to do something with it (I. 860-70).

In general I could say that though the process to remain in Germany is gradually taken, and though individuals sometimes inform their families about their decision once they are abroad, the Cuban family behaves as an economic actor. The family as a social entity combines and optimizes individual capacities of its members in order to maximize its benefits (Monreal, 1999). The family as a whole negotiates where resources are needed. Independently of their income Cubans in Germany send money to their families in Cuba depending on their possibilities. The remittances are a warranty for the family to cover its daily needs at home and improve their quality of life. Especially for the elders, this is an important source of income. Without it their lives would be more difficult in economic terms. Finally, remittances are used as an investment, which allows the family to be reunified again.

### **Summary for the German part**

In this part it was analyzed how Cubans decide to remain in Germany and strategies they follow in order to legalize their status and residence permit. Decision to remain in Germany is not in all cases part of a well-planned decision but rather a combination of factors where the immigrant compares living conditions left behind and the possibility of achieving some goals in the host society. Independently from the moment they take this decision, they count with support from relatives and friends either in Germany or in Cuba.

At a first glance it looks like coming to Germany is a decision taken due to economic constrains in Cuba. Though Cuban migrants are certainly motivated to improve their economic situation, regulations applied to them as long as they are abroad address to a political context that surpasses borders. From the Cuban side their main difficulty is the prolongation of the exit permit. When the time allowed for staying abroad is surpassed, they are considered immigrants losing their rights and property in their country of origin. In other words, they lose their voice and vote and are not considered part of the Cuban nation.

Additionally, Cuban socialism as a governance policy and social structure restrain economic development. The Cuban model of socialism and the economic development had been disconnected. As consequence the social representation a Cuban has about not attaining economic development at a social and individual level is not the result of unequal distribution of resources, as it is the case in a capitalist economy, but rather the result of obstacles and constrains as part of the socialist system. The result is that Cuban migrants see themselves as economic as well as political migrants.

Because until now the only way to leave the country is through contact with relatives, friends, being involved in a couple relationships or getting married, the social network created in Cuba is extended and reach Germany. This constitutes later an essential support when Cubans decide to remain in Germany. But also in the host country Cubans count with the support of relatives and friends when they take the decision of staying. The social network in which they are inserted at the moment of their arrival provides valuable information about which steps they can take in order to legalize their situation in Germany. They also provide shelter. Without this support system, arriving in Germany and the initial stay would not be possible. But above all, after taking this decision, individuals do not feel alone. In contrast to the Cubans who

arrived in East Germany as part of the exchange programs between 1961 and 1989 those who arrive today have had previous contact with a German or another Cuban in Germany. That means that the social network abroad, which has been growing since 1989 until today, remains in contact with its country of origin and has a direct influence on the person relocating and facilitating the migratory process of other Cubans to Germany.

Cubans who apply for the prolongation of studies and /or work permit reach –at least temporarily– a legal status in Germany. Usually they had the status of students in Cuba or they are high-qualified professionals. Obtaining a German diploma or having work experience in Germany improves their status in the labor market in Germany. Nonetheless, a residence permit granted in Germany due to studies and/or work has a limited character. Cubans make efforts to obtain the German citizenship, due to the advantages it brings when applying for a workplace or traveling elsewhere. Furthermore, because remaining in Germany is product of a conscious decision. The way to express it, is adopting the German citizenship.

Political asylum was granted in Germany to Cubans, who proved to be politically prosecuted. In other cases this strategy was used in order to buy time before they could find another alternative to apply for a residence permit in Germany. They represent a kind of migrant, who looks for better economic perspectives. Nevertheless, the political situation in which Cuba is immersed introduces political factors in each of these decisions. Hence, an actual classification of Cuban migrants in economic or political migrants, (Berg, 2007; Duany, 2009) does not respond to the spectrum of motivations Cubans have to migrate, especially when limits between Cuban economy and politics are blurred.

Integration in Germany is measured –among different factors– for the proficiency of the language reached by immigrants and their participation in the labor market. For Cubans learning the language was part of a major challenge. However, it was demonstrated that this process cannot be isolated from other spaces of social interaction like family, job, availability of resources and time, and social networks. Not taking into account these spaces could result in a retardation of the learning process with negative consequences. Additionally learning the language is not a lineal process beginning immediately after the arrival of immigrants in the host society and ending a couple of months later after finishing a language course. It's rather a cumulative process extended over many years.

When Cuban migrants arrive in Germany –independent of educational level attained in Cuba– they take at the beginning the first job available, which are usually less qualified jobs. This serves to gain time until they improve proficiency of the language and it is also an immediate response to self-expectations, as well as those of their relatives in Cuba to send remittances and contribute to the improvement of the economy in the family. Thus, „die Emigration wandelt sich so von einer Notmaßnahme in eine dauerhafte Form der Optimierung des Familienseinkommens“ (Monreal, 1999: 89).

Beside difficulties in communicating with relatives in Cuba and restrictions Cubans have when traveling to Cuba; they keep bounded to their country of origin. However, sending remittances and traveling to Cuba cannot be considered the sole factor when analyzing transnational spaces between the two countries. It is required governmental efforts to anchor spaces of interchange with all Cubans, regardless their country of residence. The metaphor of encounters in a ‘nomadic space of the air’ “cannot fully apply to the Cuban experience, at least not until the flow can move in both directions, and in two directions at once; that is, when Cubans on the island are free to travel without government restrictions, and, vice versa, when Cubans beyond its borders may not only fly over the national space but would be free to return if they wish” (Méndez, 2007: 149).

## **Conclusions**



## **Conclusions**

Migration from Cuba to Germany has been a continual process from 1961 until the present. From the 1960's until 1989 Cuba had exchange agreements with the GDR. Thus, Cuban students and workers arrived in the GDR as part of these exchange programs. After finishing their studies and / or work contracts, the majority of them returned to Cuba to contribute with their knowledge to the construction of socialism. After the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 many factories in the GDR closed. Cuba ended the agreements and the majority of students and workers had to return to Cuba. From the 12,497 Cubans, who were in Germany in 1987, by 1991 only 3,362 were registered (Mac Con Uladh, 2005: 52). Some Cubans married with Germans decided to stay; others did it without the authorization of Cuba, either because they saw better possibilities of employment, were attracted to experience the new changes in Germany, or were students who had decided to finish their studies and later look for employment in Germany.

After analyzing the interviews it could be concluded that after 1989 there was a tendency for Cubans who had contacts in Germany from the time of the GDR, or were married with Germans but living in Cuba to return to Germany. They saw in the new political and economic situation in Germany an opportunity for better perspectives. At the same time, the deterioration of the economic situation in Cuba, after losing subsidies from Eastern Europe, made it so that many Cubans saw migration as an alternative form of subsistence in response to the economic crisis. The Cuban government allowed foreign investment, especially in the tourism sector. As a consequence, Germans arrived to Cuba as tourists and contacts between Cubans and Germans flourished, sometimes in the form of couple relationships and other times as part of studies and work contacts. Thus, through this incipient social network created in the absence of exchange programs, Cubans continued arriving in Germany.

After analyzing Cuban migration in Germany before and after the reunification, it can be concluded that the migration flow from Cuba to Germany includes all sectors of Cuban society: students, workers, artists, scientists and the unemployed. The Cuban population in Germany at the moment of their arrival, before and after the reunification, is composed of a relatively young population in their twenties and thirties. They often became part of the productive sector and usually created families in Germany. Another characteristic is the feminization of migration (See Appendix 13). These characteristics correspond to the tendencies of migration flows from

developing to developed countries (Hernández, 2007; Han, 2005; Portes & DeWind, 2007; Massey et al., 1998, 2010; Nyberg Sørensen, 2007).

Cuban migration to Germany can be considered a process of rupture and continuation. It is a rupture because the majority of Cubans leave their families behind. Furthermore language and culture in the receiving country is usually strange to them. Arriving in Germany is also a continuation because they do not abandon their expectations regarding family, studies or work. On the contrary, they try to achieve their goals in the new country.

Before and after migration there are uncertainties as to whether migration will be a definitive alternative, causing them to remain abroad for the rest of their lives. However, returning to Cuba is not exclusively a personal decision but is also contingent upon the kind of permit the person receives at the moment of his or her departure. At present, Cubans living abroad in possession of a PRE have the most advantages. They do not lose their properties in Cuba, are entitled to inherit, and can remain in Cuba a maximum of 12 months<sup>1</sup>. Cubans, who are considered emigrants have no rights in their country of origin. Additionally, any Cuban who would like to have a residence permit in Cuba must apply for a repatriation permit. When considering the kinds of permits Cubans need to have when leaving the country, or when they want to return, it can be concluded that the Cuban migration policy towards its migrants has a restrictive character. Hence, deciding on migration implies deciding on the absence and nonparticipation of social processes in Cuba.

Before, during and after making the decision to migrate, individuals evaluate their living conditions in Cuba. This includes educational levels attained in Cuba and the kinds of jobs they do, their family and couple relationships, housing conditions and if they have a place of their own or if they still live with their parents and / or other relatives. Participants in the study also considered their political position regarding the Cuban government. Combination of these factors contributed to their making the decision to migrate.

Migration is seen by the interviewees as an alternative – among others – to achieve better living conditions. These relate to their work and profession, improvement of their economic standard of living and/or the search for greater freedoms. Cubans who

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<sup>1</sup> [http://anterior.nacionyemigracion.cu/InfConsular/TramitesConsulares\\_PermisoResidencia.html](http://anterior.nacionyemigracion.cu/InfConsular/TramitesConsulares_PermisoResidencia.html)  
(18.11.2012)

wish to migrate take work positions where they have more opportunities to contact foreigners. That is one of the ways they prepare themselves for migration. In this stage it is still open where they will migrate. One type of preparation is deciding on a profession that will later pose less obstacles when applying for an exit permit. For instance, breaking studies of medicine and beginning other studies due to the hurdles physicians have when deciding to migrate, or avoiding taking jobs in the health sector altogether. Another way, though not in all cases, is to learn another language, usually English. Depending on where the foreigner comes from, or where a relative or friend had previously migrated, the destination country is identified. The foreigner issues an invitation letter and from there begins the procedure for obtaining a travel permit.

Professionals face the most difficulties when applying for an exit permit. It has also been a strategy of the Cuban government since the beginning of the revolution to limit the number of professionals who try to migrate. This reasoning is based on the fact that education in Cuba is free at all levels. Hence beginning and finishing the period of social service is the way in which the Cuban government sees a retribution for studies. Cubans who have finished a graduate study must apply for a liberation letter in the ministry that corresponds to their workplace when they decide to emigrate. Obtaining this letter is a long and insecure procedure. Each ministry decides if the applicant of an exit permit will receive the letter or not. In this way the Cuban government slows the brain drain from the country (See graphic for Exit Permit, Chapter 5). However, none of these mechanisms stop a professional after she/he takes the decision to emigrate. Professionals constitute a sector among the migrants with access to economic and social capital. This means that they, or the person who invites them abroad, can afford the high fees when applying for an exit permit (See Appendix 14). Additionally they participate in social networks with connections abroad, which play an important role in the preparation phase before migration takes place, but also after their arrival in the receiving country. Disregarding the barriers they have to cross, professionals manage to go abroad. It is debatable whether it might be better for Cuba to allow professionals and people in general to go where they want and return when they want. Facilitating a circular migration could contribute to better relations between Cuba and its diaspora.

Obstacles in the migration procedure, especially difficulties in obtaining an exit permit, had the consequence that interviewees decided to remain abroad instead of returning to Cuba. In this regard it could be important that the Cuban government

introduces changes to its migration policy, making the application process for an exit permit more flexible. If the government opens its door for Cubans who would like to migrate, it could benefit the country and probably fewer persons would opt for a permanent exit.

The majority of participants in this study considered migration a goal they wanted to achieve. They invested personal and economic resources and played an active role in this process. This makes the process of migration a conscious turning point in their lives, rather than a consequence of fate or an impulsive action.

Once in the destination country the decision to remain in Germany is not immediately taken. Some participants compare the living conditions they left behind and possibilities they have for achieving their goals in the receiving country. Independently from the moment they take this decision, they count on support from their social networks, which includes relatives and friends either in Germany or in Cuba.

Remaining legally in Germany depends on the kind of permit they obtained in Cuba. Tourists can stay a maximum of 90 days, which cannot be extended. In order to remain legally in Germany, participants marry or apply for political asylum. This last alternative is considered a strategy to 'buy time' until they marry. It is worth noting that some Cubans have been politically persecuted in Cuba. Hence, in Germany they obtain political asylum. Another possibility to prolong a residence permit is to prolong studies or work contracts. In the case of studies, students can decide to continue in a Ph.D. or post-doctoral program. Because students will finish their studies, and work permits are subjected to limited contracts, many students and workers marry and thus secure their stay in Germany. Apart from marriage, alternatives to remain legally in Germany are limited.

Before a permanent residence permit is granted, Cubans engage in economic activities that secure their existence, which they see as a responsibility to fulfill for relatives left behind. They usually engage in an economic activity with a lower status compared to the one they had in Cuba before their departure. However, in this first stage of their migration, because they do not feel identified with the receiving society, they instead compare their position in the job market based on the payment they receive (Massey et al, 2010: 72), which is superior to what they earned in Cuba.

Another factor which influences their position in the German labor market is the lack of recognition of their studies versus their professional experience from Cuba. This

implies a downgrading in their qualification and access to work places, which are below their qualification; or they look for employment, for instance, in the sector of services where no qualification is required. Some Cubans arrive in Germany with a scholarship granted from Germany. For them it is possible to extend their visas until they finish their studies. Afterward they apply for jobs in the area of their studies, where they have the possibility of working.

Integration in Germany is measured –among different factors– by the proficiency of the language reached by immigrants and their participation in the labor market (Ausländerrecht, Migration- und Flüchtlingsrecht, 2010). For Cubans, learning the German language is a major part of the challenge of integrating. However, it was demonstrated that this process cannot be isolated from other spaces of social interaction like family, job, availability of resources and time, and social networks. Not taking into account these spaces could result in a retardation of the learning process with negative consequences. Additionally, learning the language is not a straightforward process that begins immediately after the arrival of immigrants in the host society and ending a couple of months after finishing a language course. It is, rather, a cumulative process extended over many years.

The time Cubans dedicate to learning the language is rewarded later when they begin working. Usually having a high proficiency of the language determines the kind of job they do. The more qualified the job, the higher proficiency in the language they need. Nevertheless, Cuban artists and others working in specific sectors like natural sciences find a sort of ‘language niche’ where they can communicate in English.

Attaining proficiency in the language also depends on support from their partner, relatives and social networks in Germany. In general, when Cubans are placed in a favorable environment – meaning that they can learn the language without being pressured by their economic situation – they are later in a better position to take jobs considered of a higher standing in the labor market. In contrast, when Cubans are placed in less favorable environments, where they cannot count on economic support from their partner and relatives, they opt for immediately taking jobs where proficiency in the language is not required. Their alternatives are to continue working in a low qualified sector or moving on into better positions relying on their work experience. However, it is worth noting that compared to larger Cuban communities like the Cuban community in Florida, Cubans in Germany don’t have the possibility to develop their economic activities in an economic enclave (Portes, 1987; Portes &

Shafer, 2006) but instead look for work opportunities in mainstream society, usually competing for the same positions as Germans.

The possibility of achieving upward mobility in the labor market is rather limited. Usually, Cubans who finished their studies in Germany, or when their diplomas are recognized in Germany, have better chances of mobility. This finding is consistent with studies conducted in Germany relating to the difficulties faced by immigrants in their integration in the labor market. The main barriers are associated with difficulties in the proficiency of language and insufficient recognition of their studies completed abroad (Grigoleit & Wolffram, 2012; Englmann & Müller, 2007). In this regard it could be important to revise Germany's recognition of diplomas and certificates, making this process more flexible. Other measures include improving immigrants' access to specialized coaching and counseling, and training German personnel in acquiring intercultural competence when dealing with immigrants, especially in positions where a face-to-face contact with immigrants is required.

Participants in this study faced difficulties when they tried to have their certificates recognized in Germany. Usually they had to take courses at the university or complete an apprenticeship. Hence, the decision to achieve recognized studies is discussed within the German family. Partners provide economic support during the time of studies and take care of children when possible. One alternative adopted by professionals toward the recognition of studies is to take courses in an area in demand in Germany, which at the same time relates to their professions. Persons in their twenties and early thirties are more inclined to take courses at the university. Another alternative is to be involved in what is called an economic and language niche (Portes & Shafer, 2006) where persons work in sectors providing services to Germans and/or foreigners in their mother tongue.

The social network in which Cubans find themselves at the moment of their arrival provides valuable information about which steps they can later take to legalize their situation in Germany. Not least, the social network provides them with immediate shelter. Without this support system, arriving in Germany and the initial stay would be more difficult. But above all, after taking the decision to remain in Germany, individuals do not feel alone. In contrast to the Cubans who arrived in East Germany as part of the exchange programs between 1961 and 1989, those who arrive today have had previous contact with a German or another Cuban who lives in Germany. That means that the social network abroad, which has been growing since 1989 until

today, remains in contact with its country of origin and has a direct influence on migrants facilitating the migratory process of other Cubans to Germany. Thus, there is a tendency for Cuban migrants to continue arriving to Germany as part of the network established through years of exchange and continuous settlement.

For the majority of participants in the study it was important to send remittances to their families in Cuba, mainly to parents and siblings. When children were in Cuba, one of the goals for sending remittances or saving money was to bring the children over. However, the majority of participants migrated in their youth and they constitute their nuclear family in Germany.

Sending remittances to Cuba was seen as a help to the family to improve, foremost, the acquisition of most-needed articles and food. It could be hypothesized that in the future more remittances will be sent to invest in private businesses in Cuba, more specifically as a strategy of self-employment within the family. Besides sending money to their families, Cuban migrants save money in order to visit their country of origin. Their frequency of visits is closely related to their economic situation in Germany. In most cases participants had to save money over several months or years in order to buy a plane ticket and bring presents to family and friends.

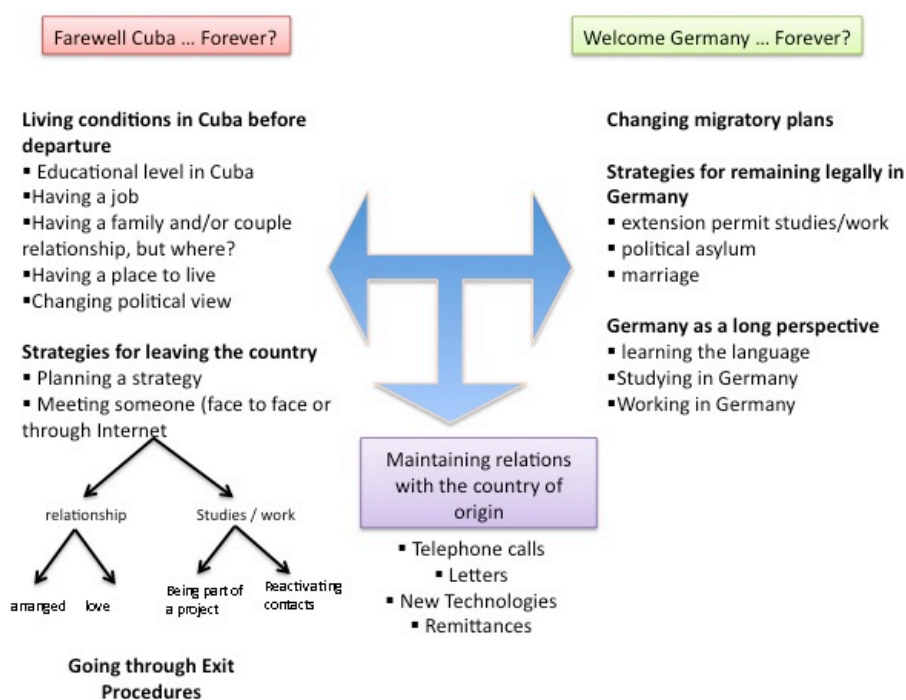
More empirical and statistical studies are required to better predict what specific impact remittances have on development in Cuba.

Cuban migrants have not broken relations with their country of origin. Interchange between Cubans in Germany and their families in Cuba respond on one hand to the economic conditions Cuban migrants face in Germany, which include visits to Cuba and sending remittances, and on the other hand to the interchange through packages, telephone calls and emails. However, Cuban migrants cannot be considered transmigrants in the sense that Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller and Cristina Szanton Blanc (1994) described for Philippine, Haitian, Guadeloupe and St. Lucia migrants in the U.S. Rather, Cuban migrants in Germany establish transnational practices with their country of origin. The distance between Cuba and Germany increases costs when traveling back and forth between continents. Furthermore, communication with relatives in Cuba through telephone calls is expensive; the same is true for sending packages. Thus, Cubans rely more on their social networks especially for sending letters and packages. Additionally it was not possible for all participants in this study to communicate with their families in Cuba through chat and emails due to limitations

Cuba has in access to internet (Hoffmann, 2002). Until the present it is not allowed for Cubans to have an internet connection at home.

Though the Cuban diaspora maintains relations with relatives in Cuba, there is no governmental institution to help channel these relations. Migrants maintain family ties and connections with the country of origin through private efforts. An additional element that limits transnational experiences is the difficulties Cuban migrants face if they decide to return. Taking into account these considerations it could be concluded that, although Cuban migrants develop transnational practices, they cannot be considered transmigrants. Instead they develop strategies in order to be integrated into the host society.

The following graphic summarizes the process Cubans follow to leave the country, the process to be integrated into the German society and how they maintain relation with their country of origin.



On the surface, and considering Cuba as a developing country, Cuban migrants could be classified at first glance as economic migrants. However, the social, economic and political situation in the country, as well as regulations applied to them when they take the decision to migrate, imply a political context that surpasses borders. When Cubans for instance take into consideration what they leave behind, and what they



could gain abroad, they do not exclusively evaluate their situation in terms of economic gain. They also consider advantages in having the freedom to make their own decisions. The Cuban government, which restricts individual action in the private and social sphere, has less influence when Cubans are abroad.

To summarize, Cuban migration to Europe and more specifically to Germany will continue as a response to economic constraints in Cuba and to immobility in the Cuban political sphere. The political situation in which Cuba is immersed introduces political factors when Cubans take the decision to migrate. Hence, considering Cuban migration primarily as a case of economic migration (Rodríguez, 1997; Duany, 2009; Martín, 2006) limits the spectrum of motivations Cubans have to migrate and neglects the fact that borders between Cuba's economy and politics are blurred.

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## **Appendices**

## Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Arbeit will eine Informationslücke bezüglich der Migration kubanischer Staatsbürger nach Deutschland in der Zeit seit 1961 bis heute füllen.

Im Unterschied zur ausführlichen Diskussion kubanischer Migration in den USA liegen kaum Analysen über die Ausreise von Kubanern nach Deutschland vor. Daher wäre die von mir geführte Argumentation ohne die Durchführung eigener Interviews und deren Auswertung nicht möglich gewesen. Insofern enthalten die Kapitel 5 und 6 der Arbeit Informationen speziell zur Migration von Kubanern nach Deutschland, die im Vergleich zum bisherigen Wissensstand zu diesem Thema neu sind, d.h. über diesen hinausgehen. Diese neuen Einsichten gliedern sich in Aussagen bezüglich der Ausreisemodalitäten in Kuba (Kap. 5) sowie hinsichtlich der Einreise- bzw. Integrationsbedingungen in Deutschland (Kap. 6). Letztlich konnte auch die Frage, inwiefern die kubanische Diaspora eine transnationale Gruppe bildet, auf Basis der Interviews empirisch begründet beantwortet werden. Hinsichtlich des historischen Verlaufs der Migration, die den thematischen Kontext der Arbeit darstellt, wurde einerseits nach den Motiven der Ausreise gefragt (Kap. 2 und Kap. 3). Zugleich wurde deutlich, dass auch die unterschiedlichen politischen Verhältnisse Deutschlands in Ost und West bis zur Wiedervereinigung Einfluss auf Besonderheiten der Ausreisemöglichkeiten aus Kuba nahm (Kap. 3).

### I. Ausreise:

- Ein wichtiges Ergebnis meiner Interviews waren die Informationen darüber, dass sich die Ausreisemodalitäten nach einem bestimmten Muster generieren, d.h. in bestimmter Reihenfolge ablaufen:
- Am Anfang steht die Einschätzung der individuellen Lebensbedingungen in Kuba, die über die Migrationsabsicht entscheiden: Was verliert der Einzelne in Kuba, was kann er in Deutschland gewinnen? Kubaner stellen sich diese Fragen. Eine endgültige Entscheidung ist schwer zu treffen, weil die gesamte Situation als riskant und unsicher betrachtet ist.
- Nach der Entscheidung zur Migration müssen Kontakte mit Ausländern oder mit im Ausland lebenden Kubanern geknüpft werden, um von diesen den für die Ausreiseerlaubnis nötigen Einladungsbrief zu erhalten. Dieser ist unabdingbare Voraussetzung sowohl für eine Reise- als auch für eine Ausreiseerlaubnis. Obwohl

die generelle Entscheidung zur Migration bewusst erfolgt, bleibt wegen der Unsicherheit der Auslandskontakte das Auswanderungsland zu diesem Zeitpunkt noch unbestimmt.

- Ob der ausreisewillige Kubaner eine Ausreiseerlaubnis erwerben kann, hängt sehr stark von seiner beruflichen Qualifikation ab. Je höher diese ist, desto schwieriger ist es, eine Ausreiseerlaubnis zu erwirken.

- Der Ausreisewillige muss sich auf die sog. „Exit Procedure“ einlassen, die die formalen Ausreisebedingungen umfasst und teuer, zeitaufwendig und anstrengend ist. Insgesamt ist die prinzipiell restriktive Migrationspolitik Kubas im Betrachtungszeitraum flexibler geworden.

- Die Art der erworbenen Ausreiseerlaubnis (zeitbegrenzt oder dauerhaft) bestimmt über Rechte der Migranten in Kuba: Allein aufgrund einer dauerhaften Ausreiseerlaubnis behalten Kubaner ihre Rechte als Staatsbürger ihres Heimatlandes. Ebenso nimmt die Art der Ausreiseerlaubnis Einfluss auf die in Deutschland verfügbaren Integrationsmöglichkeiten.

- Bezüglich der statistischen Verteilung besteht die Besonderheit, dass seit der Wiedervereinigung die Zahl der weiblichen Migrantinnen diejenige der männlichen Auswanderer übersteigt.

## II. Integration

Hinsichtlich der Integration in Deutschland verweisen die Interviews auf die folgenden Besonderheiten:

- Ihren Neuanfang in Deutschland könnten Migranten ohne die umfassende Unterstützung von Seiten des sozialen Netzwerkes in Deutschland, das seit 1989 angewachsen ist und in einem ständigen Kontakt mit Kuba steht, nicht meistern. Diese Unterstützung umfasst sowohl den finanziellen als auch den persönlichen Bereich.

- Der Weg zur Legalisierung des Aufenthaltes in Deutschland umfasst mehrere Schritte:

Häufig wird zuerst um politisches Asyl nachgesucht, um Zeit zum Erwerb einer Aufenthaltsgenehmigung zu gewinnen. Diese kann beispielsweise im Fall einer Heirat erteilt werden.

- Ist die Entscheidung für einen dauerhaften Aufenthalt in Deutschland gefallen, werden Anstrengungen unternommen, um die deutsche Staatsbürgerschaft zu erreichen. Auch diese Bemühungen werden vom sozialen Netzwerk begleitet.
- Aus Sicht der Befragten erweisen sich Spracherwerb sowie die Anerkennung der beruflichen und akademischen Abschlüsse in Kuba als die Hauptvoraussetzungen einer Integration. Oft werden zwecks Anerkennung der Abschlüsse zusätzliche Kurse an Universitäten notwendig. Die Anerkennung der in Kuba absolvierten Ausbildung ist deshalb von hoher Bedeutsamkeit, da diese über die Eingliederung der Migranten in den deutschen Arbeitsmarkt entscheidet, was neben dem Spracherwerb als das zweite Kriterium für Integration gilt.
- Als ein typisches Verhaltensmuster kubanischer Migranten wurde von den Befragten übereinstimmend ein ausgeprägter Wunsch hervorgehoben, Geld nach Kuba zu überweisen. Diese Beträge sollen Verwandten in Kuba vorwiegend den Lebensunterhalt sichern, aber ebenso eine berufliche Selbstständigkeit ermöglichen und nicht zuletzt dazu dienen, noch in Kuba weilende eigene Kinder nach Deutschland holen zu können. Denn die Befragten waren sich einig darüber, dass bei einem dauerhaften Aufenthalt der Platz der gesamten Familie nur in Deutschland sein kann.
- Ebenso machten die Befragten deutlich, dass der Kontakt mit dem Heimatland allein mittels des Einsatzes privater Ressourcen aufrechterhalten werden kann, da es keine diesbezügliche Unterstützung von Seiten öffentlicher Institutionen gibt - weder in Kuba noch in Deutschland.

### III. Transnationalität

In Bezug auf die Transnationalität Kubanischer Migranten gelten die folgenden Besonderheiten: kubanische Migranten üben zwar transnationale Praktiken aus wie z.B. Reisen nach Kuba, Telefonate, Emails, Teilnahme an kubanischen humanitären Hilfsorganisationen, können aber nicht als transnationale Gruppe gesehen werden. Denn für diejenigen Kubanischen Migranten, die vom kubanischen Staat nur eine zeitlich begrenzte Ausreiseerlaubnis erhalten haben, tatsächlich aber dauerhaft ins Ausland ausgewandert sind, gelten empfindliche Einschränkungen: Sie zahlen als Urlauber dieselben Gebühren wie ausländische Urlauber, haben ihren Besitz verloren, dürfen nicht wählen und nicht erben. Lediglich diejenigen Migranten, die von den kubanischen Institutionen eine Ausreiseerlaubnis mit dauerhafter „Genehmigung zur

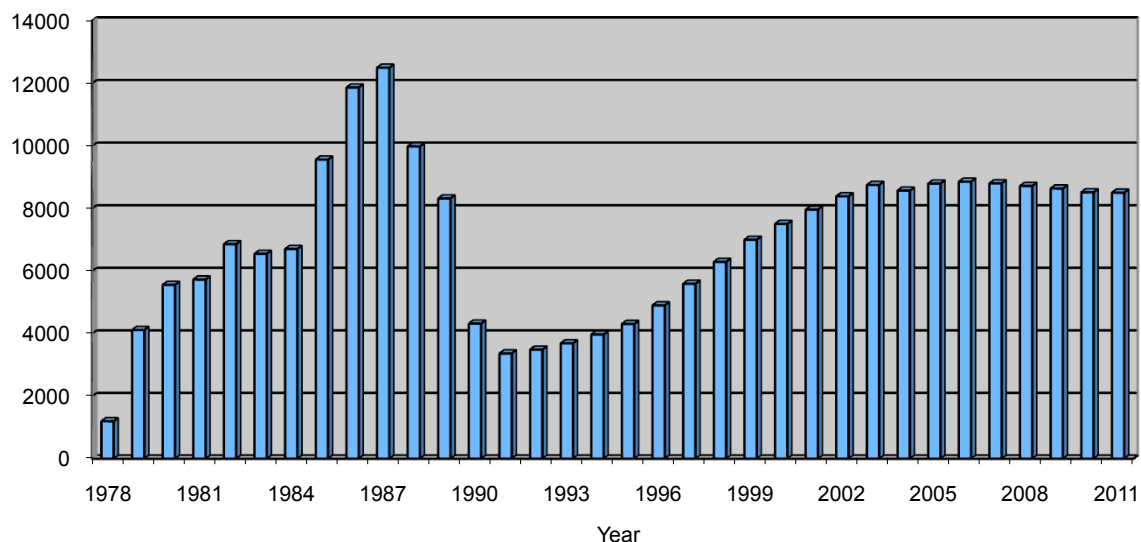
Ansiedelung im Ausland“ erhalten haben, sind diesen Einschränkungen nicht unterworfen.

Als ein abschließendes Fazit der Arbeit kann, auch aufgrund der Befragung, vermutet werden, dass sich die Migration von Kuba nach Deutschland als die Erwiderung auf die ökonomischen Beschränkungen und die politische Unbeweglichkeit in Kuba fortsetzen wird. Die häufig geäußerte Behauptung, die kubanische Migration erfolge allein aus ökonomischen Gründen, greift jedoch zu kurz. Die politische Situation Kubas bildet stets das unmittelbare Umfeld der Migration.



## Appendix 1 Number of Cubans in Germany from 1978 until 2011

Cubans in Germany



1978-1,196	1989-8,317	2000-7,501
1979-4,112	1990-4,317 <sup>1</sup>	2001-7,958
1980-5,553	1991-3,362	2002-8,383
1981-5,725	1992-3,486	2003-8,746 <sup>2</sup>
1982-6,846	1993-3,688	2004-8,566 <sup>3</sup>
1983-6,546	1994-3,969	2005-8,792 <sup>4</sup>
1984-6,700	1995-4,305	2006-8,851 <sup>5</sup>
1985-9,557	1996-4,900	2007-8,798 <sup>6</sup>
1986-11,858	1997-5,590	2008-8,713 <sup>7</sup>
1987-12,492	1998-6,289	2009-8,633 <sup>8</sup>
1988-9,977	1999-6,996	2010-8,512 <sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> pp.52 In: Mac Con Uladh, Damian (2005) Alltagserfahrungen ausländischer Vertragsarbeiter in der DDR pp.51-68. In: Weiss, Karin and Dennis, Mike. Erfolg in der Nische? Die Vietnamesen in der DDR und in Ostdeutschland. Lit Verlag. Münster.

<sup>2</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt. Ausländische Bevölkerung nach Staatsangehörigkeit 2002. Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt. Ausländische Bevölkerung nach Staatsangehörigkeit 2002. Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt. Ausländische Bevölkerung. Ergebnisse des Ausländerzentralregisters. Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt. Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit. Ausländische Bevölkerung Ergebnisse des Ausländerzentralregisters. Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt. Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit. Ausländische Bevölkerung Ergebnisse des Ausländerzentralregisters. Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt. Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit. Ausländische Bevölkerung Ergebnisse des Ausländerzentralregisters. Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt. Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit. Ausländische Bevölkerung Ergebnisse des Ausländerzentralregisters. Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt. Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit. Ausländische Bevölkerung Ergebnisse des Ausländerzentralregisters. Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden 2011.

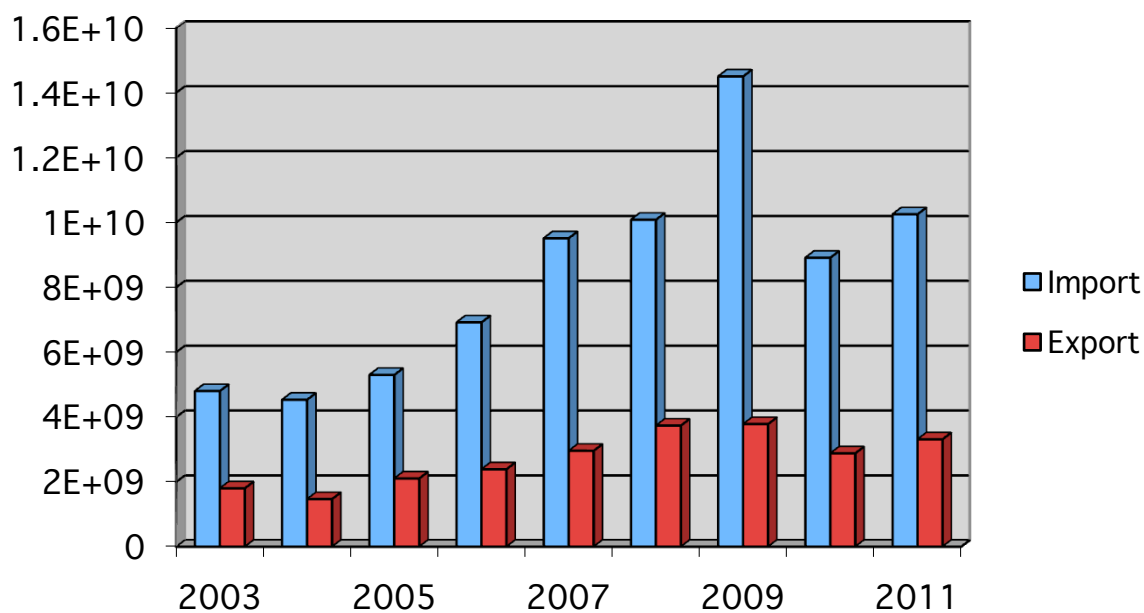
## Appendix 2

### Imports – Exports from Cuba between 2003 and 2011

#### Imports to Cuba

#### Exports from Cuba

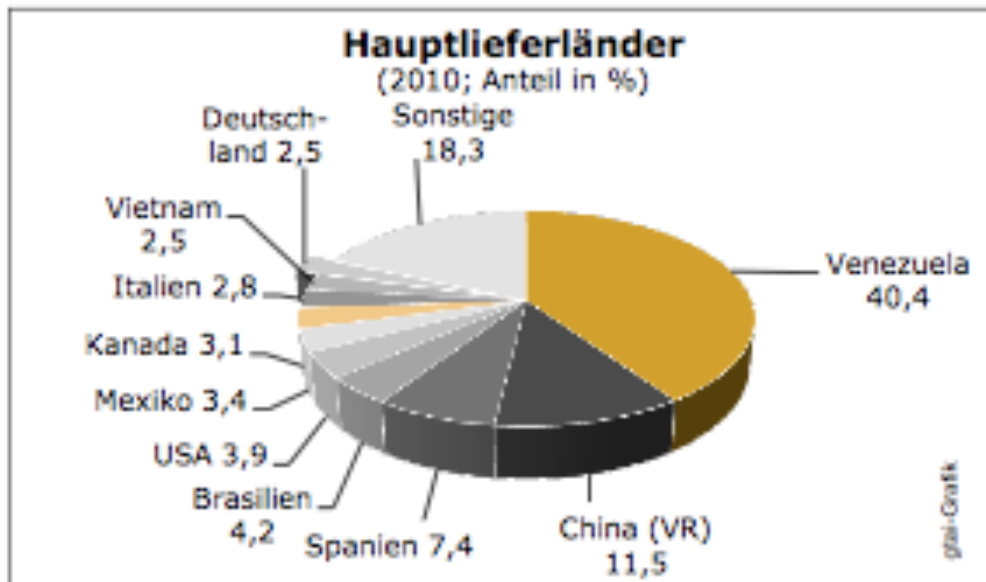
2003	\$4,800,000,000	2003	\$1,800,000,000
2004	\$4,531,000,000	2004	\$1,467,000,000
2005	\$5,296,000,000	2005	\$2,104,000,000
2006	\$6,916,000,000	2006	\$2,388,000,000
2007	\$9,510,000,000	2007	\$2,956,000,000
2008	\$10,080,000,000	2008	\$3,734,000,000
2009	\$14,500,000,000	2009	\$3,780,000,000
2010	\$8,910,000,000	2010	\$2,879,000,000
2011	\$10,250,000,000	2011	\$3,311,000,000



Source: <http://www.indexmundi.com/es/cuba/importaciones.html> (28.05.2011)

Source: <http://www.indexmundi.com/es/cuba/exportaciones.html> (28.05.2011)

**Appendix 3**  
**Main import countries to Cuba (participation in %)**



Source: **Wirtschaftsdaten kompakt: Kuba** Stand: Februar 2012  
<http://www.gtai.de/GTAI/Navigation/DE/trade.did=446374.html> (29.09.2012)

**Appendix 4**  
**Imports to Cuba per country**

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>Europe</b>						
Spain	645,563	715,217	875,981	997,432	1,244,071	738,363
Italy	280,648	289,712	395,832	368,493	467,212	299,071
Netherlands	236,400	269,988	343,870	365,840	487,414	279,235
France	107,036	116,937	84,116	78,407	140,172	83,806
Germany	74,866	122,639	204,295	175,259	2,268,864	169,117
<b>Asia</b>						
China	301,185	448,431	930,283	1,065,719	942,081	746,824
Vietnam	143,020	233,260	151,117	230,223	456,789	248,830
Japan	105,688	103,107	52,522	28,231	23,850	33,558
<b>America</b>						
Venezuela	970,645	1,537,904	1,725,876	1,726,972	4,108,210	2,644,971
U.S.A	437,239	474,909	488,123	573,087	822,982	596,127
Canada	380,125	465,176	497,578	603,012	799,678	371,148
Panama	278,249	312,840	338,915	384,105	805,986	393,086
Mexico	258,632	291,374	252,598	215,489	394,251	348,044
Brasil	129,756	253,116	355,380	312,101	500,634	310,272

Source: Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas. República de Cuba. Anuario Estadístico de Cuba. Edición 2010. Table 8.7 [http://www.one.cu/aec2009/esp/20080618\\_tabla\\_cuadro.htm](http://www.one.cu/aec2009/esp/20080618_tabla_cuadro.htm) (24.05.2011)

**Appendix 5**  
**Exports from Cuba**

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>Europe</b>						
Netherlands	647,062	598,865	788,045	435,514	288,599	236,853
Spain	174,210	160,573	156,908	172,533	194,802	154,664
Rusia	120,825	52,517	136,716	70,570	55,961	87,683
France	36,940	48,878	51,495	68,461	45,897	45,472
Germany	21,092	17,458	21,413	24,259	27,041	29,440
<b>Asia</b>						
China	80,150	104,848	243,971	928,320	677,107	516,504
Japan	25,931	12,772	8,379	12,467	9,289	5,691
<b>America</b>						
Canada	486,794	437,941	545,381	862,966	756,622	434,396
Venezuela	367,036	401,540	408,787	450,397	413,781	533,148

Source: Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas. República de Cuba. Anuario Estadístico de Cuba. Edición 2010. Table 8.5 [http://www.one.cu/aec2009/esp/20080618\\_tabla\\_cuadro.htm](http://www.one.cu/aec2009/esp/20080618_tabla_cuadro.htm) (24.05.2011)

**Appendix 6**  
**Number of tourists per country and year in Cuba**

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>Canada</b>	563,371	602,377	604,263	660,384	818,246	914,884
<b>Italy</b>	178,570	169,317	144,249	134,289	126,042	118,347
<b>Spain</b>	146,236	194,103	185,531	133,149	121,166	129,224
<b>England</b>	161,189	199,399	211,075	208,122	193,932	172,318
<b>Germany</b>	143,644	124,527	114,292	103,054	100,964	93,437
<b>France</b>	119,868	107,518	103,469	92,304	90,731	83,478

Source: Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas. República de Cuba. Anuario Estadístico de Cuba. Edición 2010. Table 15.3 [http://www.one.cu/aec2009/esp/20080618\\_tabla\\_cuadro.htm](http://www.one.cu/aec2009/esp/20080618_tabla_cuadro.htm) (24.05.2011)

**Appendix 7**  
**Number of Cubans in some European countries**

	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
<b>Denmark</b>	214	227	232	256	278	286
<b>Germany</b>	7,958	8,383	8,746	8,566	8,792	9,404
<b>Spain</b>	25,118	31,498	36,244	40,727	45,334	46,622
<b>France</b>		880		2,041		
<b>Italy</b>		8,809	10,149	11,363	12,927	14,073
<b>Latvia</b>	28	26	25	25	25	25
<b>Hungary</b>	213	170	178	243	229	216
<b>Netherlands</b>	473	512	546	571	602	623
<b>Finland</b>	131	131	132	133	155	171
<b>Sweden</b>	889	883	859	879	829	754

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b>Denmark</b>	302	334	334	352	352	356
<b>Germany</b>	9,348	9,177	9,102	8,979	8,995	8,949
<b>Spain</b>	50,722	54,643	54,103	56,166	54,034	54,939
<b>France</b>						
<b>Italy</b>	14,581	15,883	16,878	17,947	19,065	17,387
<b>Latvia</b>	27	25	25	25	20	19
<b>Hungary</b>	221	253	252	261	177	189
<b>Netherlands</b>	599	574	571	561	532	468
<b>Finland</b>	187	204	225	241	250	259
<b>Sweden</b>	776	812	860	860	834	814

Source: Eurostat 2014.

Last update: 10.04.14

<http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do> (12.08.2014)

## Appendix 8

### Transcriptions rules

- [ Überlappende Sprache: Der exakte Punkt, an dem der eine zu sprechen beginnt, während der andere noch redet oder an dem beide gleichzeitig zu sprechen beginnen, was zu überlappender Sprache führt.
- (0.2) *Pausen*: innerhalb und zwischen Sprechwechseln, in Sekunden angegeben.
- <Aw::>: *Gedehnte Töne*: Lautdehnungen durch Doppelpunkte im Verhältnis zur Länge der Dehnung.
- Wort: Unterstreichung markiert Betonungen oder Hervorhebungen.
- <Fische->: Ein Bindestrich zeigt an, dass ein Wort oder ein Satz abgebrochen wird.
- <.hhh>: Hörbares Einatmen wird als <.hhh> transkribiert (die Zahl der <.h>s ist proportional zur Länge des Einatmens).
- WORT: Erhöhung der Lautstärke wird durch Großbuchstaben angezeigt.
- (Worte...): Klammern grenzen unsichere Transkriptionen einschließlich des „besten Tipps“ des Transkribierenden ab.
- Zahlen Ausgeschrieben; Jahreszahlen in Ziffern.
- (Worte) Klammern grenzen Übersetzungen aus fremden Sprachen ab ODER liefern ergänzende Informationen.
- ( ) Unverständliche Äußerungen, die Länge der Klammer entspricht etwa der Dauer der unverständlichen Äußerung.

#### Sources:

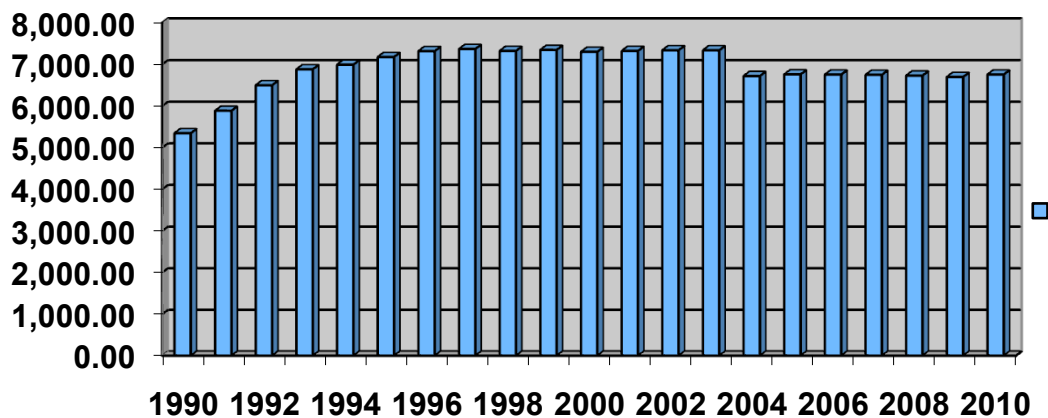
Flick, Uwe (2011) Qualitative Sozialforschung (4 Edn) Eine Einführung. rowohlt's enzyklopädie. pp. 381-382

Reddy, Prasad (2005) Educator Activists: Bridging Transnational Advocacy and Community Mobilisation - Learning from Movement Organisers in the South. [http://www.diss.fu-berlin.de/diss/receive/FUDISS\\_thesis\\_00000001752?lang=en](http://www.diss.fu-berlin.de/diss/receive/FUDISS_thesis_00000001752?lang=en) (23.03.2010)



## Appendix 9

### Development of foreign population in Germany from 1990 to 2010 (in 1,000)



'90-5.342,50  
'91-5.882,30  
'92-6.495,80  
'93-6.878,10  
'94-6.990,50  
'95-7.173,90  
'96-7.314  
'97-7.365,80  
'98-7.319,60  
'99-7.343,60  
'00-7.296,80  
'01-7.318,60  
'02-7.335,60  
'03-7.334,80  
'04-6.717,10  
'05-6.755,80  
'06-6.751  
'07-6.744,90  
'08-6.727,60  
'09-6.694,80  
'10- 6.753,60

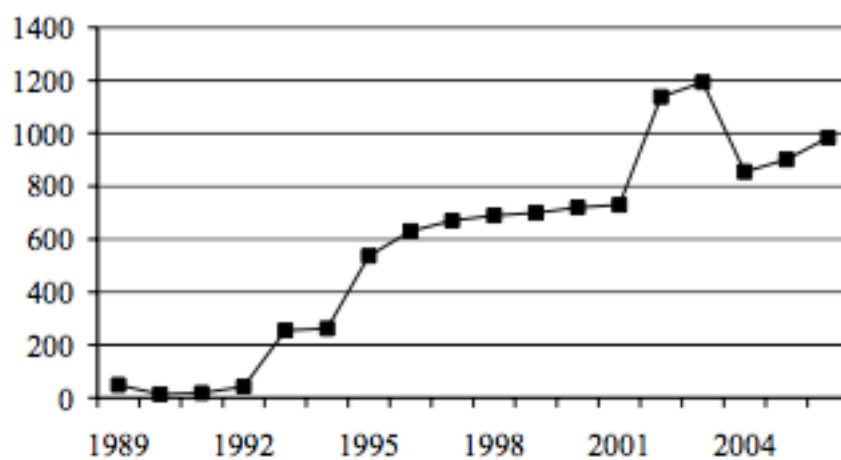
Source: <http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/5062/umfrage/entwicklung-der-auslaendischen-bevoelkerung-in-deutschland/> (23.07.2011)

Deutschland; Ausländerzentralregister Quelle: Statistisches Bundesamt

© Statista 2011

## Appendix 10

### Remittances to Cuba between 1989 and 2004

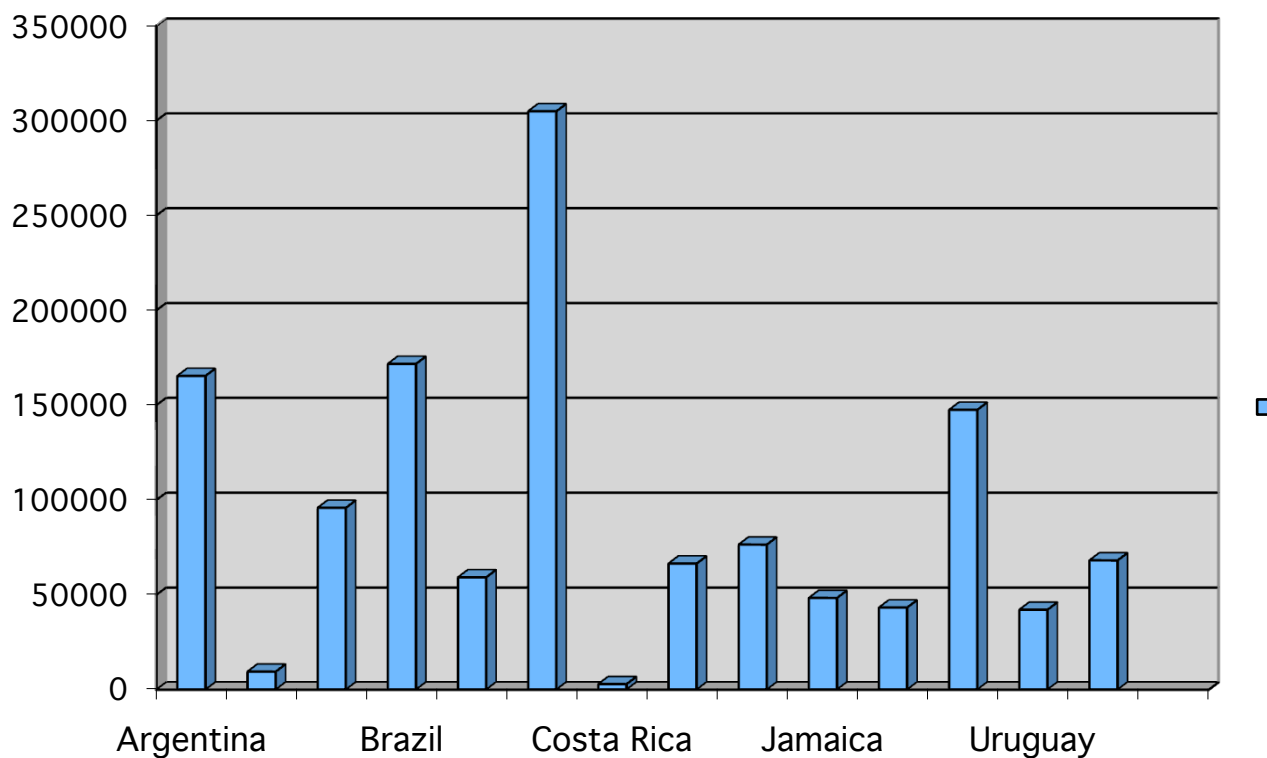


FUENTES: Comisión Económica para América Latina (1997); Pérez-López y Díaz-Briquets (2005); Inter-American Development Bank (2004); International Fund for Agricultural Development (2008); Spadoni (2004).

Source: Duany, 2009: 1999

## Appendix 11

### Latin American population in Europe, 2005

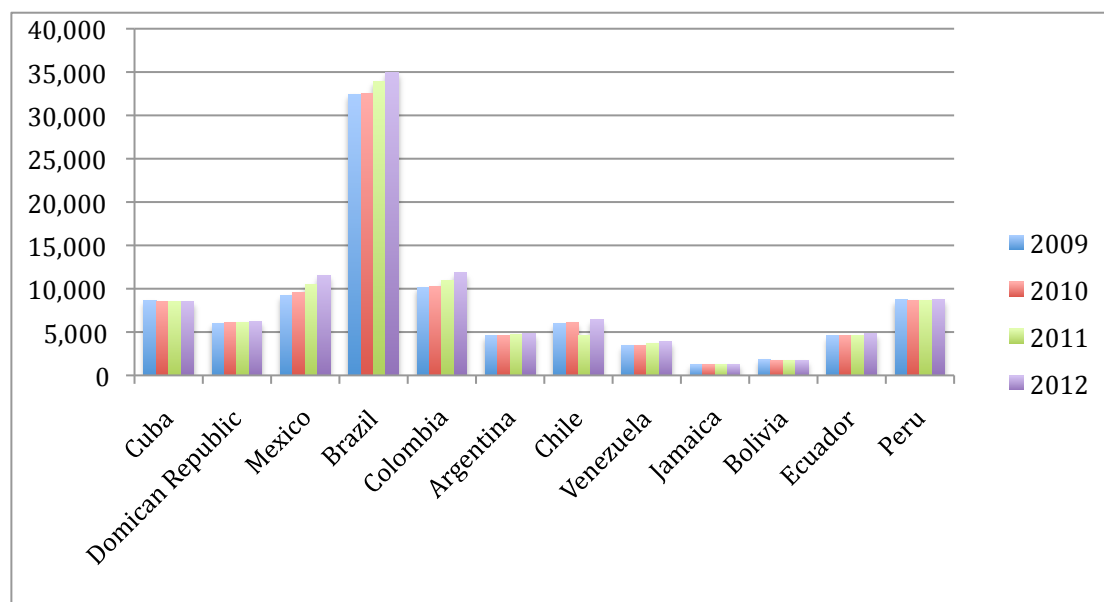


Argentina	165,385
Barbados	9,450
Bolivia	95,835
Brazil	171,732
Chile	59,191
Colombia	304,888
Costa Rica	2,879
Cuba	66,442
Dominican Republic	76,437
Jamaica	48,306
Mexico	43,261
Peru	14,7496
Uruguay	42,089
Venezuela	68,134
Ecuador	510,995

Source: Poulain, 2007 pp. 255

## Appendix 12

**Number of born Latin Americans in Germany in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012**  
**In the graphic are represented Cuba, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, Chile and Venezuela.**



	2009 <sup>10</sup>	2010 <sup>11</sup>	2011 <sup>12</sup>	2012 <sup>13</sup>
<b>Cuba</b>	8,633	8,512	8,500	8,522
<b>Dominican Republic</b>	5,988	6,060	6,148	6,270
<b>Mexico</b>	9,213	9,583	10,543	11,522
<b>Brazil</b>	32,445	32,537	33,865	34,945
<b>Colombia</b>	10,182	10,294	10,999	11,814
<b>Argentina</b>	4,608	4,574	4,715	4,826
<b>Chile</b>	5,960	6,079	4,634	6,404
<b>Venezuela</b>	3,436	3,501	3,658	3,861
<b>Jamaica</b>	1,223	1,235	1,246	1,261
<b>Bolivia</b>	1,823	1,720	1,675	1,739
<b>Ecuador</b>	4,592	4,589	4,634	4,825
<b>Peru</b>	8,716	8,644	8,620	8,759

<sup>10</sup>

[https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/AuslaendBevoelkerung2010200097004.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/AuslaendBevoelkerung2010200097004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile) (01.04.2012)

<sup>11</sup>

[https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/AuslaendBevoelkerung2010200107004.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/AuslaendBevoelkerung2010200107004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile) (01.04.2012)

<sup>12</sup>

[https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/AuslaendBevoelkerung2010200117004.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/AuslaendBevoelkerung2010200117004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile) (01.04.2012)

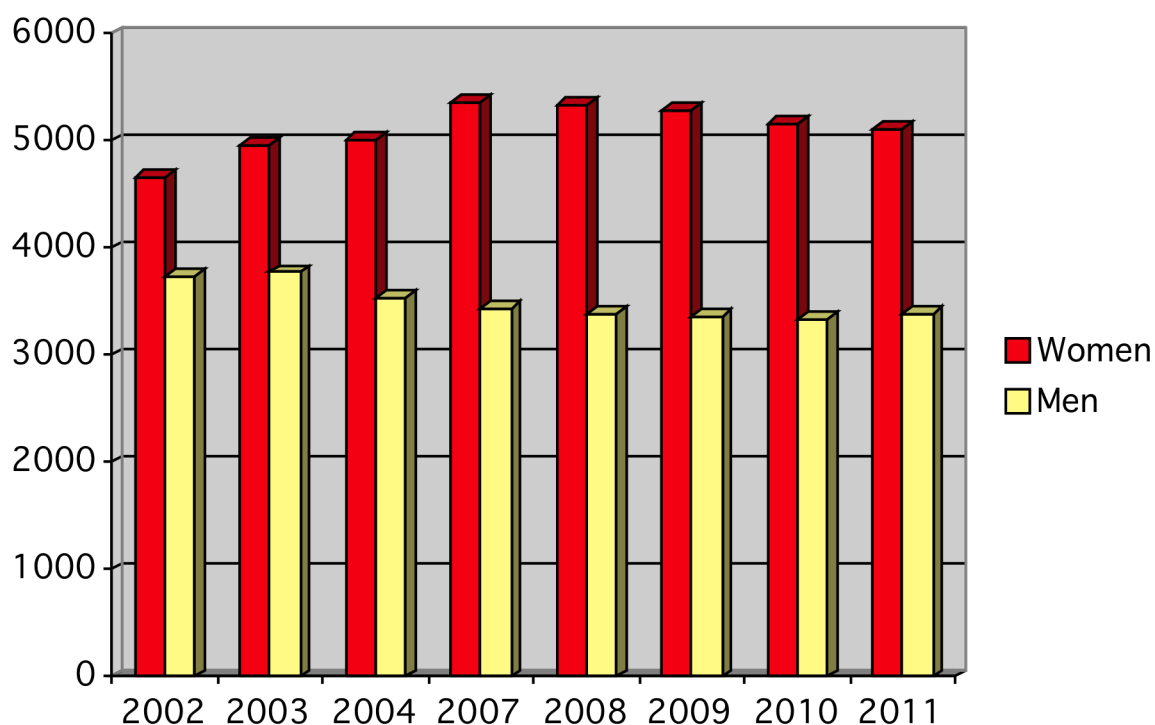
<sup>13</sup>

[https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/AuslaendBevoelkerung2010200127004.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/AuslaendBevoelkerung2010200127004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile) (11.11.2013)

## Appendix 13

### Distribution of Cuban women and men in Germany between 2002 and 2011

	Women	Men
2002	4,654	3,729
2003	4,971	3,775
2004	5,021	3,545
2007	5,368	3,430
2008	5,336	3,377
2009	5,276	3,357
2010	5,167	3,345
2011	5,122	3,378



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt. DESTATIS. <https://www.destatis.de/DE/Startseite.html>

## **Appendix 14**

### **How much a Cuban has to invest when applying for Exit Permit**

María de los Angeles is a 64-year-old woman who lives in Havana, she is professional and works in a laboratory controlling the quality of certain medications. Her daughter Susana is 36-year-old and since four years is married with Hans, a German. They live in Berlin. Susana is pregnant and wants to invite her mother to help her after the baby is born. María de los Angeles began in Havana the procedures in order to come to Germany.

From the other side of the Atlantic Hans went to the Police offices, there he had to present a certificate of employment, an earnings certificate of the last three months and a health insurance for María de los Angeles which covered the three months of her staying in Germany. He made the health insurance in a travel agency and paid for it 120€. In the police Hans received a paper called ‘Verpflichtungserklärung’, which must be presented in the German consulate in Havana. Later he went to the Cuban consulate in Berlin and applied for the invitation letter. This procedure was charged with 200,00€ for that service. An employee told him in the consulate that the invitation letter was valid for a year. If the invited person could not come to Germany during that time, a second invitation letter must be issued in order to continue with the procedure. There he received also an identification number corresponding to the invitation formular. María de los Angeles received via e-mail the identification number. She decided to personally pick-up the invitation letter in the corresponding office of ‘Consultoría Jurídica. She could have waited at home to receive the letter per post but she did not trusted in the post office services. In her experience when she waited for a letter from her daughter it could take three or four months before she received it. Picking up personally the invitation letter in Consultoria Jurídica is charged with 15€.

In the meantime María de los Angeles asked for a liberation letter because she’s professional and needs the minister authorization. She explained to her chief that her daughter would become soon a baby and she wanted to be there. Hence she could help Susana during the first months with the baby. That was in May 2007 and in November she got the authorization.

Because the Verpflichtungserklärung is valid only for six months, Hans had to go again to the police office and apply for a new one. He sent the paper via DHL, which

is the faster postal service in Cuba. He paid for it 60€ and María de los Angeles received the paper three days later.

Then she made a passport. It was the first time that she traveled. With her ID and two photos she went to the migration offices and after paying 55,00€ and waiting ten days she received her passport.

With the Verpflichtungserklärung, which was sent via DHL, the invitation letter, and the health insurance, which she received via email, she went to the German Consulate in Havana to pick up two application forms for the visa. Once at home she filled in the visa applications and called by telephone to the consulate in order to ask for an interview. After that she went to a travel office to ask for a pre-reservation plain ticket. There she had to pay 1,00€.

The day of the interview in the German Consulate she presented the passport, two application forms, two photos, original and copy of the German invitation letter 'Verpflichtungserklärung', health insurance, and the liberation letter of her ministry, she also paid 55€ corresponding to the visa fee. After 10 waiting days she received a positive answer from the consulate and she went to pick up her passport with a tourist visa, which allows her to stay in Germany during 90 days. In order to pick up the passport she had to go first to Consultoría Jurídica and pay a fee of 120€, corresponding to 40€ for each month she stays abroad.

With the passport in her hands she goes next to the Migration offices. There she receives another application form and pays in the metropolitan bank 150€ as fee for leaving the country. Two days later she goes again to the Migration offices with two photos, the passport, the invitation letter sent by the Cuban Consulate in Germany, the check for a value of 150€ and the liberation letter of the ministry. After a week she receives the permit for leaving the country. The last step is buying a ticket to Germany. She waits until her daughter calls and she gives her the good news that she has all the papers required by the authorities. Susana goes to a travel agency in Berlin and buys a two ways ticket Havana-Berlin for the price of 870€. In the airport María de los Angeles had to pay an additional fee of 25€ as airport taxes. It is December and María de los Angeles is finally with her daughter in Berlin.

When she arrives Hans and Susana had paid an amount of 1720€ divided in:

Passport – 55€  
Invitation letter (for Cuba, valid for one year) – 200€  
Picking up invitation letter in Consultoría Jurídica, Cuba – 15€  
2 Verpflichtungserklärung (for Germany) – 25€ (valid for 6 months) = 50€  
Health insurance – 120€  
Liberation letter (only for professionals) it is exempted of payment  
Sending to Cuba via DHL Verpflichtungserklärung – 60€  
Visa fee – 55€  
Exit permit / Tarjeta Blanca – 150€  
Plain ticket – 870€  
Tuition fee for staying abroad – 120€ (40,00€ per month)  
Airport tax – 25€



## Appendix 15 Sample

Name	Age	Years in Germany	Marital status	Children	Studies	Employment
1. Roberto	34	11 years in Germany	In a relationship	-	B. Sc. Biochemistry (Cuba) Ph.D. Biochemistry (Germany)	Chief Laboratory
2. Luis	29	1 year in Germany	In a relationship	1	B. Sc. Biochemistry (Cuba)	Ph.D. student Biochemistry (Germany)
3. Isabel	45	29 years in Germany	Divorced	1	B. Sc. Accounting (Germany)	Bank
4. Pablo	58	19 years in Germany 3 years as student in GDR (1968-1971) since 1994 back and forth	Divorced	2	BA. Theater (Germany)	Theater director
5. Miriam	39	8 years in Germany	Married	-	B. Pedagogy (Cuba) M. Sc. Pedagogy (Distance studies. Spain)	Language teacher and waitress
6. Yadira	32	10 years in Germany	Married	1	High school (Cuba) Training as secretary (Germany)	Waitress
7. Esther	38	12 years in Germany	In a relationship	-	B. Pedagogy (Cuba)	Nursery school teacher
8. Sergio	49	21 years in Germany 5 years as student (1982-1987 GDR) Since 1992 in Germany	Married	2	B. Sc. Physic (GDR) Ph.D. Biology (Germany)	Project Manager
9. Pedro	56	31 years in Germany 5 years as student (1978-1983 GDR). Since 1986 in Germany	In a relationship	1	BA. Music (GDR)	Musician
10. Judith	23	4 years in Germany	In a relationship	-	Student	Student

11. Tania	28	3 years in Germany	Separated / Single	-	BA Music (Cuba)	Musician
12. Rosa	30	12 years in Germany	In a relationship	-	Student	Student / Waitress
13. José	45	12 years in Germany	Single	-	BE. Electronic (Soviet Union)	Waiter
14. Osvaldo	41	6 years in Germany	Married	2	Musician	Musician
15. Ernesto	64	16 years in Germany	Divorced	2	B. Pedagogy and Law (Cuba)	Unemployed
16. Ana	53	28 years in Germany	Divorced	1	B. Pedagogy (Cuba)	Language professor university
17. Patricia	21	9 months in Germany	Single	-	High school	Services
18. David	49	23 years in Germany 4 years as worker (1985-1989 GDR) since 1990 in Germany	Married	2	Technician (GDR)	Services
19. Leonel	37	11 years in Germany	In a relationship	3	BA Music (Cuba)	Musician
20. Ailín	39	9 years in Germany	Separated	-	Musician. Autodidact (Cuba)	Musician
21. Alberto	48	23 years in Germany 5 years as worker (1985-1990 GDR) Since 1991 in Germany	Married	3	Technician (GDR)	Unemployed
22. Alina	34	7 years in Germany	Married	1	B. Sc. Biochemistry (Cuba) M. Sc. Pharmacy (Germany)	Student
23. Ania	49	28 years in Germany	Married	2	B. Translator	Language teacher. Primary school
24. Gabriela	32	8 years in Germany	Married	1	B. Pedagogy (Cuba)	Student
25. Yamilé	43	8 years in Germany	Separated	2	Technician (Cuba)	Unemployed
26. Doris	37	13 years in Germany	Divorced	1	B. Pedagogy	Social services
27. Marco	19	5 months in Germany	Married	-	High School (Cuba)	Student

28. Blanca	39	7 years in Germany	Married	2	LLB. Law (Cuba)	Aerobics trainer
29. Manuel	36	3 months in Germany	In a relationship	-	BF&TV (Cuba)	Unemployed
30. Diego	68	21 years in Germany 5 years as student (1968-1973 GDR) Since 1995 in Germany	Married	1	B. Economy (GDR)	Retired
31. Mirta	29	4 years in Germany	Separated	-	B. Pedagogy (Cuba)	Unemployed
32. Iris	28	4 years in Germany	Married	1	BSc. Psychology (Cuba)	Unemployed
33. María	42	9 years in Germany. Left Cuba in 1990.	Married	-	Ph.D. Philology (Germany)	Philology Prof. University
34. Liliana	30	3 years in Germany 2 back and forth	Married	-	B. Communication and Media (Cuba)	Ph. D. Student Journalist Freelance
35. Silvia	33	5 years in Germany	Married	1	Actress (Cuba)	Unemployed

## **Appendix 16**

### **Cuban organizations in Germany**

#### **DeCub**

Organization based in Bonn, Germany.  
<http://www.decub.de/>

#### **Cuba Sí**

Organization based in Berlin, Germany  
<http://cuba-si.org/>

#### **Cuban consulate in Germany**

Stavangerstrasse 20  
10439, Berlin  
Germany  
**Phone**+49-30-91611813  
**Fax**+49-30-9164553  
**Email:** embacuba-berlin@botschaft-kuba.de

Kennedyallee 22-24  
Bad Godesberg  
53175, Bonn  
Germany  
**Phone**+49-22-83090  
**Fax**+49-22-8309244  
**Email:** ofidip-bonn@botschaft-kuba.de

#### **About living in Germany**

<http://berlinenespanol.net/>

#### **Counseling in Spanish**

<http://www.mamisenmovimiento.de/>  
<http://www.susi-frauen-zentrum.com/>  
<http://www.profamilia.de/>

#### **Other places of interest**

##### **Disco Havanna Berlin**

<http://www.havanna-berlin.de/>

##### **Restaurant La Bodeguita del Medio**

<http://www.labodeguitadelmedio-berlin.de/>

#### **Learn Spanish in Germany**

##### **Cervantes Institute**

<http://berlin.cervantes.es/de/default.shtm>

##### **Volkshochschule**

<http://www.berlin.de/vhs/kurse/sprachen/spanisch.html>

## Appendix 17

Declaration according to § 7 (4) of the regulations for the doctoral procedure:

I declare that I wrote this doctoral thesis independently and used solely the sources and means of aid indicated in the doctoral thesis.

I declare that this doctoral thesis has not been accepted or rejected in an earlier doctoral procedure. I agree to provide the board of examiners with the work I submitted in earlier doctoral procedures upon request.

---

(Signature)

---

(Date)

## Appendix 18

The new migration law 1312 from October 2012 is 31 pages long and can be found under the web address

[http://www.cubadebate.cu/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/ley-migratoria\\_cuba\\_2012.pdf](http://www.cubadebate.cu/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/ley-migratoria_cuba_2012.pdf) (20.10.2012)

only the first 8 pages are reproduced here

# GACETA OFICIAL DE LA REPÚBLICA DE CUBA MINISTERIO DE JUSTICIA

**EDICIÓN ORDINARIA LA HABANA, MARTES 16 DE OCTUBRE DE 2012**

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**Número 44 – Precio \$0.80**

**Página 1357**

## CONSEJO DE ESTADO

**RAÚL CASTRO RUZ**, Presidente del Consejo de Estado de la República de Cuba.

HAGO SABER: Que el Consejo de Estado ha considerado lo siguiente:

POR CUANTO: El tiempo transcurrido desde la entrada en vigor de la Ley No. 1312 “Ley de Migración”, de 20 de septiembre de 1976, así como la experiencia adquirida en su aplicación, aconsejan perfeccionar estas regulaciones, con el objetivo de garantizar que los movimientos migratorios continúen realizándose de forma legal, ordenada y segura.

POR CUANTO: El Gobierno de los Estados Unidos de América, que mantiene un genocida e ilegal bloqueo económico, comercial y financiero contra nuestro país; ha utilizado históricamente su política migratoria hacia Cuba con fines de hostilidad, subversión y desestabilización, y contra los intereses legítimos de nuestro pueblo y de la propia emigración cubana; y ha alentado, mediante la Ley de Ajuste Cubano y la Política de Pies Secos-Pies Mojados, la emigración ilegal e insegura que ha provocado pérdidas de vidas humanas; la comisión de actos delictivos violentos, la obstaculización de la cooperación médica internacional y el robo de cerebros con objetivos políticos. Ello obliga a establecer, a la par de las medidas de flexibilización, determinadas regulaciones que limiten los efectos del citado accionar, así como disponer las normas dirigidas a preservar la fuerza de trabajo calificada del país.

POR CUANTO: Las recientes medidas aprobadas por el Gobierno, relativas a la posibilidad de transmitir sus bienes, por quienes emigran definitivamente del país, y la necesidad de establecer nuevos conceptos que se atemperen al escenario actual, aconsejan derogar la Ley No. 989 de 5 de diciembre de 1961, que dispone la nacionalización mediante confiscación a favor del Estado cubano de los bienes, derechos y acciones de los que se ausentan definitivamente del territorio nacional, en virtud de que sus regulaciones se encuentran incorporadas a la legislación especial correspondiente.

POR TANTO: El Consejo de Estado, en ejercicio de las atribuciones que le están conferidas en el inciso c) del artículo 90 de la Constitución de la República, resuelve dictar el siguiente:

**DECRETO-LEY No. 302**

**MODIFICATIVO DE LA LEY No. 1312, “LEY DE MIGRACIÓN” DE 20 DE SEPTIEMBRE DE 1976**

ARTÍCULO 1.- Se modifican los artículos 1, 2, 3, 9, 13, 14 y 15 de la Ley No.1312 “Ley de Migración”, de 20 de septiembre de 1976, los que quedan redactados de la manera siguiente:

“**Artículo 1:** Los ciudadanos cubanos, para salir o entrar al territorio nacional, deben poseer expedido a su nombre un pasaporte de la República de Cuba, de alguno de los tipos

siguientes:

a) Diplomático. b) De Servicio. c) Oficial. d) Corriente. e) De Marino.

**Artículo 2:** Los extranjeros o personas sin ciudadanía, para entrar o salir del territorio nacional, deben poseer un pasaporte vigente o documento equivalente expedido a su nombre y el carné de identidad o tarjeta de menor como residente temporal, permanente o de inmobiliaria, o una visa de entrada, salvo que se trate de ciudadanos de un país que, en virtud de un convenio suscrito por Cuba, estén exentos de cumplir este requisito, ateniéndose a los términos del expresado convenio.

**Artículo 3:** A los efectos de la entrada al territorio nacional, los extranjeros y personas sin ciudadanía se clasifican en:

- a) Visitantes: Turistas, transeúntes, pasajeros en trasbordo o de tránsito y tripulantes.
- b) Diplomáticos: Agentes diplomáticos o consulares y sus familiares, así como los funcionarios de Naciones Unidas y otros organismos internacionales y sus familiares, acreditados en Cuba y en funciones oficiales o en tránsito, así como los representantes o funcionarios de gobiernos extranjeros en misión oficial en Cuba.
- c) Invitados: Dirigentes de Estados, gobiernos y partidos que se encuentren de visita en Cuba y los miembros de las delegaciones que los acompañan, parlamentarios y otras personalidades invitadas por el Estado o Gobierno cubanos o el Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba; y extranjeros invitados por los órganos, organismos y entidades estatales y las organizaciones sociales y de masa cubanas.
- ch) Residentes temporales: Técnicos, científicos y demás personas contratadas para trabajar en Cuba, estudiantes o becarios, clérigos y ministros religiosos, artistas, deportistas, periodistas, refugiados y asilados políticos; representantes y empleados de empresas, firmas o agencias extranjeras acreditadas en Cuba y agentes de negocios extranjeros.
- d) Residentes permanentes: Los admitidos para establecer su domicilio en Cuba.
- e) Residentes de inmobiliarias: Personas naturales extranjeras propietarias o arrendatarias de viviendas en complejos inmobiliarios en el territorio nacional, y sus familiares extranjeros residentes en esos inmuebles.

El Reglamento de esta Ley define cada uno de los términos de esta clasificación, y los plazos y condiciones bajo los que serán admitidos en el país los extranjeros y personas sin ciudadanía en ellos comprendidos.

**Artículo 9.1:** Se expide Pasaporte Corriente a los ciudadanos cubanos residentes en el territorio nacional que requieren viajar al extranjero por asuntos particulares, a los autorizados a residir en el exterior y a los emigrados.

Se expide Pasaporte Corriente, además, a solicitud de los órganos, organismos, entidades nacionales y las organizaciones políticas, sociales y de masa que lo requieren por razones del servicio o para el cumplimiento de los fines de su labor.

**2.** Se considera que un ciudadano cubano ha emigrado, cuando viaja al exterior por asuntos particulares y permanece de forma ininterrumpida por un término superior a los 24 meses sin la autorización correspondiente, así como cuando se domicilia en el exterior sin cumplir las regulaciones migratorias vigentes.

El Reglamento de esta Ley define los supuestos para autorizar la permanencia en el exterior por un término superior al establecido en el párrafo anterior.

**Artículo 13:** Los órganos, organismos, entidades nacionales y las organizaciones políticas, sociales y de masa que lo requieren por razones del servicio o para el cumplimiento de los fines de su labor, formulan las solicitudes de visas a favor de ciudadanos extranjeros y las solicitudes de pasaporte Diplomático, de Servicio, Oficial, de Marino y Corriente, para ciudadanos cubanos.

**Artículo 14:** Los propios interesados formulan las solicitudes de visas y de Pasaporte Corriente por asuntos particulares.

El Reglamento de esta Ley determina las formas y requisitos de dichas solicitudes.

**Artículo 15:** El Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores o el Ministerio del Interior, según corresponda, resuelven las solicitudes de visas y pasaportes, de acuerdo con lo que establece el Reglamento de esta Ley”.

ARTÍCULO 2.- Se adicionan tres artículos a la Ley No. 1312 “Ley de Migración”, de 20 de septiembre de 1976, que serán el 23, 24 y 25, los que quedan redactados de la manera siguiente:

**“Artículo 23:** Los ciudadanos cubanos residentes en el territorio nacional no pueden obtener pasaporte corriente mientras se encuentren comprendidos en alguno de los supuestos siguientes:

- a) Estar sujeto a proceso penal, siempre que haya sido dispuesto por las autoridades correspondientes.
- b) Tener pendiente el cumplimiento de una sanción penal o medida de seguridad, excepto en los casos que se autorice de forma expresa por el tribunal.
- c) Encontrarse sujeto al cumplimiento de las disposiciones sobre la prestación del Servicio Militar.
- d) Cuando razones de Defensa y Seguridad Nacional así lo aconsejen.
- e) Tener obligaciones con el Estado cubano o responsabilidad civil, siempre que hayan sido dispuestas expresamente por las autoridades correspondientes.
- f) Carecer de la autorización establecida, en virtud de las normas dirigidas a preservar la fuerza de trabajo calificada para el desarrollo económico, social y científico-técnico del país, así como para la seguridad y protección de la información oficial.
- g) Los menores de edad o incapaces que no cuenten con la autorización de los padres o representantes legales, formalizada ante Notario Público.
- h) Cuando por otras razones de interés público, lo determinen las autoridades facultadas.
- i) Incumpla los requisitos exigidos en la Ley de Migración, su Reglamento y en las disposiciones complementarias relacionadas con la solicitud, emisión y otorgamiento de pasaportes.

**Artículo 24.1:** A los efectos de la entrada al territorio nacional, resulta inadmisibile toda persona que se encuentre comprendida en alguno de los supuestos siguientes:

- a) Tener antecedentes de actividades terroristas, tráfico de personas, narcotráfico, lavado de dinero, tráfico de armas u otras perseguibles internacionalmente.
- b) Estar vinculado con hechos contra la humanidad, la dignidad humana, la salud colectiva o perseguibles en virtud de tratados internacionales de los que Cuba es parte.
- c) Organizar, estimular, realizar o participar en acciones hostiles contra los fundamentos políticos, económicos y sociales del Estado cubano.
- d) Cuando razones de Defensa y Seguridad Nacional así lo aconsejen.
- e) Tener prohibida su entrada al país, por estar declarado indeseable o expulsado. f) Incumplir las regulaciones de la Ley de Migración, su Reglamento y las disposiciones complementarias para la entrada al país.

**2.** La autoridad migratoria puede poner a disposición de las autoridades competentes a las personas comprendidas en el Apartado 1 de este artículo, cuando el hecho es perseguible en el territorio nacional conforme a la Ley y los tratados internacionales de los que Cuba es parte.

**3.** La autoridad migratoria puede autorizar la entrada al país de las personas comprendidas en los incisos e) y f) del Apartado 1 de este artículo, cuando razones humanitarias o de interés estatal así lo aconsejen.

**Artículo 25:** Toda persona que se encuentre en el territorio nacional, no puede salir del país mientras se encuentre comprendida en alguno de los supuestos siguientes:

- a) Estar sujeto a proceso penal, siempre que haya sido dispuesto por las autoridades correspondientes.
- b) Tener pendiente el cumplimiento de una sanción penal o medida de seguridad, excepto en los casos que se autorice de forma expresa por el tribunal.
- c) Encontrarse sujeto al cumplimiento de las disposiciones sobre la prestación del Servicio Militar.
- d) Cuando razones de Defensa y Seguridad Nacional así lo aconsejen.
- e) Tengan obligaciones con el Estado cubano o responsabilidad civil, siempre que hayan sido dispuestas expresamente por las autoridades correspondientes.



- f) Carecer de la autorización establecida, en virtud de las normas dirigidas a preservar la fuerza de trabajo calificada para el desarrollo económico, social y científico técnico del país, así como para la seguridad y protección de la información oficial.
- g) Los menores de edad o incapaces, a quienes les sea revocada la autorización de los padres o representantes legales, formalizada ante Notario Público.
- h) Cuando por otras razones de interés público, lo determinen las autoridades facultadas.
- i) Incumpla los requisitos exigidos en la Ley de Migración, su Reglamento y en las disposiciones complementarias para salir del país”.

#### **DISPOSICIÓN ESPECIAL**

ÚNICA: Los ciudadanos cubanos que a la entrada en vigor del presente Decreto-Ley residen en el exterior en calidad de emigrados o con permiso de residencia en el exterior, mantienen su condición migratoria.

#### **DISPOSICIONES TRANSITORIAS**

PRIMERA: Las solicitudes de visas y pasaportes presentadas con anterioridad a la entrada en vigor del presente Decreto-Ley, que no hayan sido resueltas, se tramitan de acuerdo con los términos y disposiciones establecidas en este.

SEGUNDA: Los ciudadanos cubanos residentes en el territorio nacional titulares de Pasaporte Corriente, expedidos con anterioridad a la entrada en vigor del presente Decreto-Ley, que conserven su vigencia, solicitan su actualización, sin gravamen alguno, conforme a las disposiciones que al respecto se establezcan.

TERCERA: Los titulares de Pasaporte Corriente con permiso de salida vigente, pueden salir del país sin necesidad de otro trámite, siempre que no estén comprendidos en algunos de los supuestos del artículo 25 de la Ley de Migración, modificada por el presente Decreto-Ley.

#### **DISPOSICIONES FINALES**

PRIMERA: El Consejo de Ministros dispone las modificaciones que a partir de lo establecido en el presente Decreto-Ley, corresponde realizar al Decreto No. 26 “Reglamento de la Ley de Migración” de 19 de julio de 1978, y las normas dirigidas a preservar la fuerza de trabajo calificada para el desarrollo económico, social y científico técnico del país.

SEGUNDA: Se faculta a los ministros del Interior y de Relaciones Exteriores para dictar, en el marco de su competencia, las regulaciones necesarias para la aplicación de lo que por este Decreto-Ley se dispone.

TERCERA: Se dispone la reproducción de la Ley No. 1312 “Ley de Migración”, de 20 de septiembre de 1976, en la Gaceta Oficial de la República, ajustándola a las modificaciones y adiciones que por el presente se establecen.

CUARTA: Se deroga la Ley No. 989 de fecha 5 de diciembre de 1961, que dispone la nacionalización mediante confiscación a favor del Estado cubano, de los bienes, derechos y acciones de los que se ausenten con carácter definitivo del país, y cuantas otras disposiciones legales se oponen a lo dispuesto en el presente Decreto-Ley.

QUINTA: El presente Decreto-Ley entrará en vigor a partir del 14 de enero de 2013.

PUBLÍQUESE en la Gaceta Oficial de la República.

DADO en el Palacio de la Revolución, en La Habana a los 11 días del mes de octubre de 2012.

**Raúl Castro Ruz**

Presidente del Consejo de Estado

**CONSEJO DE MINISTROS**

#### **DECRETO No. 305**

PORCUANTO: El Decreto-Ley número 302, de 11 de octubre de 2012, modificativo de la Ley No. 1312 “Ley de Migración”, de 20 de septiembre de 1976”, en su Disposición Final Primera, define que el Consejo de Ministros dispone las modificaciones que a partir de lo establecido en esa norma, corresponde realizar al Decreto número 26 “Reglamento de la Ley de Migración”, de 19 de julio de 1978.

POR TANTO: El Consejo de Ministros en el ejercicio de las atribuciones que le están conferidas en el Artículo 98, inciso k) de la Constitución de la República de Cuba, decreta lo siguiente:

## **MODIFICATIVO DEL DECRETO NÚMERO 26 “REGLAMENTO DE LA LEY DE MIGRACIÓN” DE 19 DE JULIO DE 1978**

ARTÍCULO 1.- Se modifican los artículos 4 y 8 de la Sección I “Generalidades”; los artículos 21, 23, 24 y 26 de la Sección IV “De los Pasaportes Corrientes”; el artículo 37 de la Sección VI “De los Certificados de Identidad y Viaje”; los artículos 40 y 42 de la Sección VII “Disposiciones Comunes”, del Capítulo I “De los Pasaportes”; los artículos 44 y 45 de la Sección I “Generalidades”; los artículos 47, 48, 49 y 50 de la Sección II “De los permisos de entrada de los ciudadanos cubanos”; el artículo 81 de la Sección VI “De los Residentes Temporales”; los artículos 92, 93, 94 y 119 de la Sección VIII “Del visado de Pasaportes Extranjeros y Documentos de Viaje”, del Capítulo II “De las Entradas al Territorio Nacional”; todos del Decreto número 26 de 19 de julio de 1978, “Reglamento de la Ley de Migración”, que en lo adelante quedan redactados de la manera siguiente:

**“Artículo 4:** Corresponde al Ministerio del Interior el otorgamiento, la expedición y el control de los pasaportes Oficial, Corriente y de Marino, y de los certificados de Identidad y Viaje.

El Ministro del Interior designa a los funcionarios que autorizan, mediante su firma, la expedición de los pasaportes oficiales, corrientes y de marinos, así como la prórroga o renovación de los mismos, y la expedición de los certificados de Identidad y Viaje.

**Artículo 8.1:** Se expide Pasaporte Corriente a los ciudadanos cubanos residentes en el territorio nacional que requieren viajar al extranjero por asuntos particulares, a los autorizados a residir en el exterior y a los emigrados.

Se expide Pasaporte Corriente además, a solicitud de los órganos, organismos, entidades nacionales y las organizaciones políticas, sociales y de masa que lo requieren por razones del servicio o para el cumplimiento de los fines de su labor.

**2.** Las solicitudes de Pasaporte Corriente que se realizan por ciudadanos cubanos residentes en el territorio nacional se presentan ante las oficinas de trámite del Ministerio del Interior.

**3.** Las solicitudes de Pasaporte Corriente de los ciudadanos cubanos residentes en el exterior se formalizan ante las representaciones diplomáticas o consulares cubanas u otras oficinas cubanas expresamente autorizadas al efecto.

**4.** Las solicitudes de Pasaporte Corriente que requieran por razones del servicio o para el cumplimiento de los fines de su labor los órganos, organismos, entidades nacionales y las organizaciones políticas, sociales y de masa, se presentan ante la Dirección de Inmigración y Extranjería, a través de sus órganos de relaciones internacionales o de aquellos que en cada caso se designan.

**Artículo 21:** Los ciudadanos cubanos residentes en el territorio nacional, al realizar una solicitud de Pasaporte Corriente, deben cumplir los requisitos siguientes:

- a) Presentar el Carné de Identidad o Tarjeta de Menor.
- b) Entregar la autorización formalizada ante Notario Público de los padres o los representantes legales que correspondan, de los menores de 18 años de edad o incapaces. La autoridad actuante capta los datos que se requieren para la plena identificación del solicitante y verifica que no esté comprendido en alguno de los supuestos previstos en el artículo 23 de la Ley de Migración, en cuyo caso iniciará el trámite de expedición.

**Artículo 23:** Los ciudadanos cubanos que residen en el exterior, al realizar una solicitud de Pasaporte Corriente, deben cumplir los requisitos siguientes:

- a) Formular la solicitud en el modelo oficial.
- b) Presentar el pasaporte anterior, Certificación de Nacimiento, Carta de Ciudadanía o una certificación de este último documento expedida por la autoridad competente, según corresponda.
- c) Aportar la autorización formalizada ante Notario Público de los padres o los representantes legales que correspondan, de los menores de 18 años de edad o incapaces.
- d) Entregar dos (2) fotos 4 x 4 cm. e) Entregar la constancia de pago del arancel consular.

La autoridad actuante capta los datos que se requieren para la plena identificación del solicitante e inicia el trámite de expedición.

**Artículo 24:** El Pasaporte Corriente es válido por dos años, prorrogables por igual término

hasta un total de seis años. Las prórrogas se solicitan ante las oficinas de trámite del Ministerio del Interior o ante las representaciones diplomáticas, consulares u otras oficinas cubanas expresamente autorizadas.

**Artículo 26:** Las oficinas de trámite del Ministerio del Interior otorgan el Pasaporte Corriente al solicitante, representante legal o funcionario debidamente acreditado, según corresponda, previa entrega de la constancia de pago del impuesto correspondiente.

Cuando el interesado reside en el exterior la entrega del pasaporte se realiza a través de la representación diplomática o consular u otra oficina cubana autorizada.

**Artículo 37:** La Dirección de Inmigración y Extranjería entrega el Certificado de Identidad y Viaje personalmente a los interesados o sus representantes legales, según corresponda.

**Artículo 40:** Los titulares de Pasaporte Corriente pueden solicitar a la Dirección de Inmigración y Extranjería, a las oficinas de trámite del Ministerio del Interior o a la representación diplomática o consular u otra oficina cubana autorizada, según corresponda, lo siguiente:

- a) Extender la permanencia en el exterior por un tiempo superior a 24 meses, cuando por causas justificadas se ven imposibilitados de regresar al país en ese término.
- b) Residencia en el Exterior, cuando requieren residir fuera del país de forma indefinida por mantener una unión matrimonial, formalizada o no, con ciudadanos extranjeros o por otras situaciones familiares y humanitarias excepcionales.

La residencia en el exterior también se puede otorgar a los padres y a los hijos menores de edad de quienes poseen esta categoría de viaje.

**Artículo 42:** Los titulares de Pasaporte Diplomático que lo reciben conforme al inciso q) del artículo 5 de este Reglamento, así como los titulares de Pasaporte de Servicio, Oficial, de Marino y Corriente recibido por razones del servicio, entregan estos documentos a la oficina correspondiente del organismo responsabilizado con su salida del país, dentro del término de 72 horas, a partir de la fecha de regreso al territorio nacional.

**Artículo 44:** Para entrar al territorio nacional los ciudadanos cubanos deben poseer pasaporte cubano vigente, expedido a su nombre o documento equivalente. En el caso de los emigrados deben presentar su pasaporte debidamente habilitado.

**Artículo 45:** Para entrar al territorio nacional los extranjeros o personas sin ciudadanía deben portar un pasaporte vigente expedido a su nombre o documento equivalente y la visa de entrada, salvo que se trate de ciudadanos de un país que en virtud de un convenio suscrito por Cuba, están exentos de cumplir este requisito, atendiendo a los términos del expresado convenio.

En el caso de los residentes permanente, temporal, o de inmobiliaria, deben portar un pasaporte vigente expedido a su nombre o documento equivalente y el Carné de Identidad o la Tarjeta de Menor del extranjero.

**Artículo 47.1:** Los ciudadanos cubanos emigrados pueden permanecer hasta 90 días en sus visitas a Cuba.

**2.** Los ciudadanos cubanos con residencia en el exterior pueden permanecer hasta 180 días en sus visitas a Cuba.

**3.** En ambos casos, la autoridad migratoria puede prorrogar el término cuando corresponda.

**Artículo 48.1:** Los ciudadanos cubanos emigrados que pretenden establecer su residencia en el territorio nacional lo solicitan ante las representaciones diplomáticas o consulares, o ante la oficina de trámite del Ministerio del Interior que corresponda, cuando se encuentran en Cuba.

**2.** El Ministerio del Interior establece los procedimientos para la tramitación de las solicitudes a que se refiere el apartado anterior.

**Artículo 49:** Las representaciones y oficinas cubanas en el exterior remiten las solicitudes recibidas a la Dirección de Inmigración y Extranjería del Ministerio del Interior, a través del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores.

**Artículo 50:** La Dirección de Inmigración y Extranjería dispone de un término que no exceda de 90 días para dar respuesta a las solicitudes a que se refiere el artículo 48 del presente Reglamento y notificar al interesado.

**Artículo 81:** El Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores informa a la Dirección de Inmigración y

Extranjería cuando el Consejo de Ministros, en el ejercicio de sus facultades constitucionales, otorga asilo político a un extranjero o persona sin ciudadanía o cuando estos deben admitirse en el territorio nacional como refugiados, a los efectos de que se extienda el correspondiente visado o se apruebe la Residencia Temporal.

Asimismo, el Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores comunica a la Dirección de Inmigración y Extranjería, a los efectos procedentes, el cese de las causas que motivaron la concesión de asilo político o la admisión como refugiados de extranjeros o personas sin ciudadanía.

**Artículo 92:** Se clasifican como residentes de inmobiliarias las personas naturales extranjeras propietarias o arrendatarias de viviendas en complejos inmobiliarios en el territorio nacional y sus familiares extranjeros residentes en esos inmuebles.

**Artículo 93:** Los extranjeros clasificados como residentes de inmobiliarias, podrán ser admitidos en Cuba por un año, prorrogable sucesivamente por igual término.

**Artículo 94.1:** El visado de pasaporte o documento equivalente es válido para un solo viaje y durante el tiempo de vigencia autorizado, siempre que se utilice para entrar al país dentro de un período de tres meses a partir de la fecha de expedición, prorrogable por igual período. El tiempo que se autorice en el visado para permanecer en el territorio nacional, no podrá exceder el término previsto para cada visa, ni el de validez del pasaporte o documento de viaje equivalente.

2. Las visas, según las categorías de los extranjeros que las solicitan, se clasifican en: a) Visitante. b) Diplomático. c) Oficial. d) Residente Temporal. e) Residente Permanente. f) Residente de Inmobiliaria.

Los ministros del Interior y de Relaciones Exteriores quedan facultados para establecer las subclasificaciones de las visas cuyo otorgamiento se les encomienda por el presente Reglamento.

**Artículo 119:** Los funcionarios designados por el Ministro de Turismo formularán la solicitud de admisión de extranjeros o personas sin ciudadanía que sean propietarios o arrendatarios de vivienda en complejos inmobiliarios, así como a sus familiares extranjeros que lo requieran para su estancia en Cuba.

El Ministerio de Turismo comunicará a la Dirección de Inmigración y Extranjería, a los efectos procedentes, el cese de las causas que motivaron el otorgamiento a un extranjero o persona sin ciudadanía, de la visa de Residente de Inmobiliaria y que determinó su admisión en Cuba bajo esa clasificación”.

ARTÍCULO 2.- Se modifica la denominación de la Sección II “De los permisos de entrada de los ciudadanos cubanos” y de la Sección VIII “Del visado de pasaportes extranjeros y documentos de viaje”, ambas del Capítulo II “De las entradas al territorio nacional”, por Sección II “De la entrada de ciudadanos cubanos” y Sección VIII “De los residentes de inmobiliarias”.

ARTÍCULO 3.- Se incorpora la Sección IX “Del visado”, al Capítulo II “De las entradas al territorio nacional”, integrada por los artículos del 94 al 122.

#### **DISPOSICIONES FINALES**

PRIMERA : Se derogan los artículos 22 y 25 de la Sección IV “De los Pasaportes Corrientes”, del Capítulo I “De los Pasaportes”; los artículos 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57 y 58 de la Sección II “De los Permisos de Entrada de los Ciudadanos Cubanos”, del Capítulo II “De las Entradas al Territorio Nacional”; los artículos 123, 124 y 125 de la Sección I “Generalidades”; los artículos 126, 127, 128, 129 y 130 de la Sección II “De la salida del país por asuntos oficiales”; los artículos 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136 y 137 de la Sección III “De la salida del país por asuntos particulares”; los artículos 138, 139, 140 y 141 de la Sección IV “Disposiciones Comunes”; los artículos 150 y 151 del Capítulo V “Disposiciones Comunes”; así como las Disposiciones Transitorias Primera y Segunda y la Disposición Final Primera, todos del Reglamento de la Ley de Migración.

SEGUNDA: Los ministros del Interior y de Relaciones Exteriores quedan facultados para adoptar, en el marco de su competencia, las disposiciones legales requeridas a los efectos de la implementación de lo que por este Decreto se establece.

TERCERA: Se dispone la reproducción del Decreto número 26 “Reglamento de la Ley de

Migración”, de 19 de julio de 1978, en la Gaceta Oficial de la República, ajustándolo a las modificaciones y adiciones que por el presente se establecen.

CUARTA: El presente Decreto entrará en vigor a partir del 14 de enero de 2013.

PUBLÍQUESE en la Gaceta Oficial de la República.

DADO en el Palacio de la Revolución, en la ciudad de La Habana, a los 11 días del mes de octubre de 2012.

**Raúl Castro Ruz**

Presidente del Consejo de Ministros

#### **DECRETO No. 306**

POR CUANTO: **El Decreto-Ley número 302 de 11 de octubre de 2012**, modificativo de la Ley número 1312 de 20 de septiembre de 1976, “Ley de Migración”, establece que el Consejo de Ministros dispone las normas dirigidas a preservar la fuerza de trabajo calificada para el desarrollo económico, social y científico-técnico del país.

POR TANTO: El Consejo de Ministros en el ejercicio de las atribuciones que le están conferidas en el artículo 98, inciso k) de la Constitución de la República de Cuba, decreta lo siguiente:

#### **SOBRE EL TRATAMIENTO HACIA LOS CUADROS, PROFESIONALES Y ATLETAS QUE REQUIEREN AUTORIZACIÓN PARA VIAJAR AL EXTERIOR**

ARTÍCULO 1.- Son sujetos del tratamiento regulado en este Decreto los comprendidos en las categorías siguientes:

- a) Cuadros categorizados como directivos superiores y directivos en los aparatos centrales de los órganos, organismos, entidades nacionales, consejos de la Administración y organizaciones superiores de dirección empresarial, así como los directivos y ejecutivos que se desempeñan en actividades vitales para el desarrollo económico, social y científico-técnico del país y en cargos con facultades decisorias sobre los recursos financieros y materiales;
- b) graduados de la educación superior que realizan actividades vitales para el desarrollo económico, social y científico-técnico del país en los programas estratégicos, proyectos de investigación y servicios de salud;
- c) técnicos de nivel medio especializados que realizan actividades vitales para mantener los servicios de salud y la actividad científico-técnica;
- d) atletas de alto rendimiento, técnicos y entrenadores vitales para el movimiento deportivo cubano.

ARTÍCULO 2.- El tratamiento a los sujetos que se refieren en el artículo anterior es el siguiente:

- a) Los comprendidos en los incisos a), b) y d) pueden ser autorizados, previo análisis de cada caso, a viajar al exterior por asuntos particulares. Cuando la solicitud es para residir en el exterior, son autorizados en un plazo que no exceda de cinco años naturales, desde la fecha en que se solicita. Durante este plazo se realiza el entrenamiento del relevo en la actividad vital de que se trate, en los casos que corresponda.
- b) Los comprendidos en el inciso c) reciben similar tratamiento a lo establecido en el numeral anterior. Cuando la solicitud es para residir en el exterior, se autorizan en un plazo que no exceda de los tres años naturales, desde la fecha en que se solicita.

Para los sujetos comprendidos en el Artículo 1, la desvinculación del trabajo no exonera del cumplimiento de los plazos establecidos para que se autorice la solicitud de residir en el exterior.

Cuando el jefe facultado considere que existen razones humanitarias, autoriza la salida al exterior de los sujetos de este Decreto, incluidos en las regulaciones anteriores, sin atenerse a los términos establecidos. En el caso de los cuadros se cumple el procedimiento específico dictado a esos efectos, de forma expedita.

ARTÍCULO 3.- La autorización para viajar al exterior por asuntos particulares de los sujetos comprendidos en las categorías establecidas en el Artículo 1, es facultad de los jefes de los órganos, organismos, entidades nacionales, consejos de la Administración y organizaciones superiores de dirección empresarial autorizadas, en lo adelante jefes facultados.

Los cuadros pueden ser autorizados previo análisis en la Comisión de Cuadros y para las otras

categorías el jefe facultado podrá oír el parecer de los órganos consultivos de la entidad que corresponda.

ARTÍCULO 4.- Los jefes facultados fundamentan y proponen al Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, los cargos y funciones de los sujetos comprendidos en el Artículo 1, que están sujetos a las regulaciones del presente Decreto. En el caso de los cuadros, los jefes facultados realizan este proceso de conjunto con la Dirección de Cuadros del Estado y del Gobierno.

El Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social realiza el proceso de análisis y consultas que se requieran y presenta la propuesta a la aprobación del Consejo de Ministros.

Cuando sea necesario adicionar o eliminar un cargo, los jefes facultados fundamentan y proponen al Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social las modificaciones necesarias, en el mes de noviembre de cada año.

ARTÍCULO 5.- El Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social organiza y controla el sistema automatizado que incluye a los cuadros y profesionales que, conforme a lo aprobado por el Consejo de Ministros, requieren de autorización para viajar al exterior por asuntos particulares. En el caso de los cuadros tiene acceso a dicho sistema, la Dirección de Cuadros del Estado y del Gobierno.

A tales fines, los jefes facultados son los responsables de tributar y actualizar la información contenida en dicho sistema.

ARTÍCULO 6.- La estructura del sistema al que se hace referencia en el Artículo 5 se define por el Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, a partir de los datos de identidad permanente de las personas.

ARTÍCULO 7.- Los graduados de los cursos diurnos sujetos al cumplimiento del servicio social, pueden ser autorizados a viajar por asuntos particulares. El tiempo que permanezcan en el exterior no se considera a los efectos del cumplimiento del servicio social.

Cuando la solicitud es para residir en el exterior, se aplican las medidas establecidas en la legislación para los que incumplen el servicio social.

Los graduados comprendidos en las categorías establecidas en el Artículo 1, se rigen por lo dispuesto en este Decreto.

ARTÍCULO 8.- Los jefes facultados informan a los trabajadores que son sujetos de las regulaciones de este Decreto, su contenido y las disposiciones complementarias.

#### **DISPOSICIONES FINALES**

PRIMERA: Dentro de los 40 días naturales posteriores a la fecha de la publicación del presente Decreto, el jefe facultado, con respecto a las entidades subordinadas, presenta al Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social la fundamentación de los cargos y funciones que proponen integren el sistema automatizado de los cuadros y profesionales que requieren autorización para viajar al exterior por asuntos particulares, conforme a los procedimientos administrativos establecidos.

El Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, en el término de 60 días naturales posteriores a la fecha de la publicación del presente Decreto, presenta la propuesta al Consejo de Ministros.

SEGUNDA: Se faculta al Ministro de Trabajo y Seguridad Social para emitir las regulaciones necesarias para el mejor cumplimiento de lo que con respecto a los profesionales este Decreto establece.

Los jefes facultados regulan los procedimientos internos en sus respectivos sistemas, de acuerdo con lo regulado por el Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social y a las normas específicas dictadas para los cuadros.

TERCERA: Los órganos, organismos, entidades nacionales, organizaciones superiores de dirección empresarial autorizadas y consejos de la Administración, controlan y evalúan anualmente el comportamiento del flujo migratorio y la fluctuación de los cuadros y trabajadores que requieren autorización para viajar al exterior por asuntos particulares, así como su impacto en el desarrollo del sector, rama o actividad y en la estabilidad de los recursos humanos, cuyos resultados se entregan al Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, que es el encargado de informar al Gobierno sobre las tendencias que se manifiesten.

CUARTA: En los ministerios de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias y del Interior, así

como en las organizaciones políticas, sociales y de masa, se aplica lo que esas instituciones dispongan.

QUINTA: Las disposiciones contenidas en el presente Decreto y su legislación complementaria son de aplicación a los funcionarios, en lo que no se opongan a las regulaciones específicas establecidas para ellos.

SEXTA: Se derogan las disposiciones legales de igual o inferior rango que se opongan a lo dispuesto en el presente Decreto, que comenzará a regir a partir de la fecha de su publicación en la Gaceta Oficial de la República.

DADO en el Palacio de la Revolución, en la ciudad de La Habana, a los 11 días del mes de octubre de 2012.

**Raúl Castro Ruz**

Presidente del Consejo de Ministros

## Appendix 19

### Curriculum Vitae Lena Pérez Naranjo

STUDIES	1992-1997	Psychology. Havana University. Cuba
	1997	Bachelor in Psychology
	1999-2000	International Master in Social Work. Gothenburg. Sweden
	2000	Master in Social Work
PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE	1997-1999	Psychotherapist in Hospital Freyre Andrade. Havana
	2001-2002	Psychopedagogue in Art School. Havana
	2002-2004	Counseling Center. Health Ministry. Havana
	2005-2009	Counseling in the Association El Patio. Berlin.
	2009-2012	Counseling with families and adults in different municipalities in Berlin.