

# CUBAN GLOBAL EMIGRATION AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY: OVERALL ESTIMATE AND SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EMIGRANT POPULATION

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Partial results from the 2000 global census round, recently compiled by the University of Sussex's Development Research Centre on Migration, plus examination of recent official Cuban statistics on emigration, are used in this paper to provide an approximate estimate of the Cuban-origin population residing abroad. These statistics are complemented with selected demographic and socioeconomic data from the country with the highest concentration of Cuban emigrants, namely the United States, as well as from selected journalistic accounts of recent migration flows to the United States and other countries. The intent is to provide a snapshot of the size of the Cuban-born population residing abroad and some of its principal characteristics at the beginning of the century. To the extent possible, the narrative also explores the determinants of the migration flows, the reception and adaptation of Cuban migrants in destination countries, and the relationships maintained by the migrants with the homeland.

## MULTI-COUNTRY COMPILATION OF IMMIGRATION STATISTICS

Assembling internationally comparable data on the foreign-born population enumerated in national censuses or population registers is a monumental task given the sheer magnitude of the endeavor (see, for a review of issues, Parsons, Skeldon, Walmsley, and Winters 2005). Although international standards in

many countries are not rigorously applied when defining who is an international migrant, the matter is relatively straightforward as long as immigrants indicate to registrars or census enumerators, or note in the appropriate forms, the countries in which they were born. Country of birth, however, should not be equated with immigrant status. Foreign-born children of a country's nationals are regarded as natives according to the standard *jus sanguinis* international convention, although technically the act of crossing a national border is the essential defining criteria of immigrant status. Likewise, in some countries, a native-born person may be regarded as a non-citizen if the parents are foreign-born. Noting nationality (essentially the same as citizenship) at the time of the enumeration or registration is also a relatively simple procedure, although it may mask the occasional immigrant who has entered a new destination country following adoption of a new citizenship elsewhere.

The Development Research Centre on Migration of the University of Sussex has assembled data on immigrants by place of birth and/or nationality for 226 countries. In 50 of these countries, individuals of Cuban birth and/or nationality were enumerated, as shown in Table 1.

While useful as a relatively comprehensive enumeration of the Cuban born-population residing abroad,

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**Table 1. Cubans Enumerated in Foreign Censuses; By Place of Birth and/or Nationality, 2000 Round of Population Censuses**

Country	Census Year	By Place of Birth	By Nationality	Country	Census Year	By Place of Birth	By Nationality
Australia	2001	410		Netherlands Ant.	2001	2,048	
New Zealand	2001	21		Belgium	2001	646	
Japan	2000		78	Denmark	2001	241	
Macau	1991/01		1	Finland	2001/02	149	
Philippines	2000		102	France	1999	1,697	
Canada	2001	5,410		Germany	2001		7,958
United States	2000	885,970		United Kingdom	2001	1,083	
Mexico	2000	6,647		Greece	2001	210	
Colombia	1993	617		Ireland	2001	128	
Peru	1993	410		Italy	2001	29	
Venezuela	1990	10,157		Netherlands	2001	727	
Ecuador	1990	302		Portugal	2001	399	
Brazil	1991/00	492		Spain	2001	50,765	19,734
Chile	2002	3,290		Sweden	2001	1,686	889
Uruguay	1996	352		Switzerland	2000	1,168	
Belize	2000	137		Norway	2001	400	
Costa Rica	2002		3,456	Czech Republic	2001	500	
El Salvador	1990	46		Hungary	2001	329	
Guatemala	1994	192		Poland	2001	184	
Honduras	2001	435		Slovakia	2001	66	
Nicaragua	1995	711		Estonia	2001		16
Panama	2000	1,226		Lithuania	2001	20	
Dominican Rep.	2002	2,255		Cyprus	2002		19
Haiti	1971	1,150		Turkey	2001	43	
Jamaica	1960	4,266		Mauritania	1998		3

**Source:** Global Migrant Origin Database, Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalization & Poverty, University of Sussex, United Kingdom [http://www.migrationdrc.org/research/typesofmigration/global\\_migrant\\_Origin\\_Database](http://www.migrationdrc.org/research/typesofmigration/global_migrant_Origin_Database).

it must be noted that some of the data is of only very limited value for some countries, mainly because they were collected many years ago. This is particularly so for many Latin American countries—with the exception of Mexico, Chile, Belize, Costa Rica, Honduras, Panama, and the Dominican Republic—where the latest census statistics date from the early- to mid-1990s. Of exceptionally limited value are the 1960 and 1971 census statistics for Jamaica and Haiti, respectively. In fact, the statistics for these two countries in all likelihood reflect the return to home countries along with their families of former Haitian and Jamaican migrant laborers during the middle decades of the Twentieth Century, including their Cuban-born offspring. This return migration got underway in the 1930s with the approval in Cuba of legislation restricting the employment of foreign-born workers and may have gained momentum, particularly to Jamaica, following the 1959 Cuban revolution.

Far more dependable is the information provided by developed countries' censuses, which cluster around the years 2000–01. Note, in addition, that in a few countries (notably Costa Rica, Germany, and Italy), all or most Cuban emigrants are identified by nationality, rather than place of birth.

Finally, and this is an important point, the international census data does not take into account the native-born children of Cuban-born parents in countries of enumeration. In the United States, for example, the native-born children of foreign-born Cuban parents accounted for almost 32% of the total Cuban-American population enumerated in the 2000 census.

In assessing the dependability of the global estimate, it must also be kept in mind that census tallies or official population registers usually are unable to accurately capture the presence of unauthorized or undocumented migrants in host countries. This is a

serious shortcoming in deriving comprehensive estimates of the Cuban-origin population residing abroad. Anecdotal evidence from many countries suggests that many Cubans manage, often for extended periods of time, to remain surreptitiously in some countries. So has been the case in many European and Latin American countries reached by Cubans under short-term visas or where they have remained after presumably arriving while in transit to other destinations. In many developing countries, furthermore, it is not unusual for Cuban professionals engaged in internationalist missions to defect and seek regularization of status or, if this option is not available, to attempt to transit to more hospitable countries, or join the undocumented population. It is difficult to establish with any certainty how accurately or timely these defections are recorded. Some of the available evidence regarding these questions is examined below.

With those caveats in mind, and as a first approximation, it is useful to examine the compilation of census data on immigration. As can be noted in Table 1, in 2000 the United States hosted by far the largest number of Cuban emigrants, although the number shown in the table (885,970) exceeds the actual number of foreign-born Cuban-Americans enumerated in the 2000 U.S. Census (853,227). Spain was next with an estimated 50,765 Cuban emigrants in 2001. Among those countries with recent census data, Italy (8,119) followed, and then Germany (7,958), Mexico (6,647), Canada (5,410), Chile (3,290), the Dominican Republic (2,255), Netherland Antilles (2,046), France (1,697), Sweden (1,686), Panama (1,226), Switzerland (1,168), and the United Kingdom (1,083). The relatively large number of Cubans recorded in the Netherland Antilles comes as somewhat of a surprise; their presence may reflect a secondary migration from Holland to the Caribbean. The important position occupied by Venezuela as host to Cuban-born immigrants in 1990 probably continues today, although the Cuban presence in the country is most likely to be presently dominated by temporary workers serving internationalist missions, rather than, as in the past, permanent settlers. In fact, there is evidence indicating that many long-term Cuban-born residents of

Venezuela—together with many Venezuelan nationals—have emigrated to other countries, notably to the United States, in response to President Chávez's policies.

### **CUBAN-BORN PERSONS CURRENTLY RESIDING ABROAD**

To derive as realistically as possible an estimate of the number of Cubans enumerated in foreign censuses, we have excluded all census figures collected before the year 2000, with the exception of France (1999 census). The logic behind this action is that some of the older estimates, particularly for Haiti and Jamaica, as noted earlier, do not reflect contemporary emigration, but rather the return to home countries of migrant laborers and their descendants. Other older estimates, mostly from Latin American countries (e.g., Colombia, Peru, El Salvador), were also excluded as in all likelihood they grossly under-represent more recent Cuban inflows, as suggested by the generally much higher counts obtained from other Latin American countries with post-2000 censuses (e.g., Mexico, Chile, Costa Rica).

This procedure yields a lower level estimate of 955,787 Cuban-born individuals residing in other countries at the beginning of the century. Of these, 89.3% resided in the United States, and the balance, 10.7%, or 102,560, in other countries. Close to half of the latter (49.5%) resided in Spain. Broadly speaking, it seems safe to conclude that in the early 2000s, well over one million Cuban-born emigrants were residing in other countries. U.S. and other census figures shown in Table 1, plus official emigration data released by the Cuban statistical authorities of 306,394 departures between 1993 and 2003, validate this estimate (Díaz-Briquets 2006, 7). In conjunction, they show an accelerating emigration trend since 1994, with no indication that it will slow down anytime soon. Were we to add to the 2000 estimate the 250,000–400,000 who have died abroad since 1959, the total number of emigrants from Cuba since Fidel Castro assumed power would approximate 1.5 million.

### **A RISING EMIGRATION TREND**

That this is clearly a lower level estimate is suggested by fragmentary information available for several

countries and by the common knowledge that in recent years, increasing numbers of Cubans have sought to enter and remain in other countries. For example:

- According to statistics from Spain's Instituto Nacional de Estadística, as of January 1, 2005, 75,914 persons of Cuban birth—30,211 of them with Spanish nationality—resided in the country, a number considerably higher than indicated by the 2001 Spanish census. Of those, 4,233 had submitted requests to regularize their status by May 2005, following an earlier regularization program conducted in February 2001 (Suárez 2005).
- A journalistic account from Asunción, Paraguay, claimed that in 2005, between 60 and 70 Cubans were arriving in the country each month. While they were reported to be entering legally, there was concern that most were remaining in Paraguay without official authorization, although technically they were eligible to apply for refugee status, with 11 of them designated as such by August 2005 ("Embajada de la Habana" 2005).
- Honduras also reports increasing inflows of Cuban-born migrants with the intent of eventually migrating overland to the United States. Between 2004 and 2006, at least 600 Cubans entered the country, with 120 arriving between January 1 and early May 2006 (Cuevas 2006).
- In the mid-1990s, before Hugo Chávez assumed the Venezuelan presidency, and while Cuba was immersed in a deep economic crisis, the Foreign Ministry in Caracas estimated that in three years close to 100,000 Cubans had reached Venezuela, many through the illegal purchase of tourist entry visas from corrupt consular officials (Alfonso and Corzo 1997).
- The United States has not escaped the trend of increased Cuban irregular migration. Aside from the Cuban migrants regularly admitted under the 1994 U.S.-Cuba Migration Accord that guarantees 20,000 immigrant visas to Cubans annually, there is ample evidence of numerous efforts to gain access to the country through increasingly desperate surreptitious means. At least

60 Cuban migrants were brought into the Virgin Islands—more than 1,200 miles from Havana—by smugglers in 2002 (Graham 2002). By the end of 2005, the U.S. Coast Guard had intercepted 2,683 Cubans at sea, close to double the number intercepted in 2004. In addition, in Fiscal Year 2004–05, 6,744 Cubans gained entry into the United States by crossing the U.S.-Mexican border and availing themselves of the provisions of the 1965 Cuban Adjustment Act. A further 2,350 migrants were smuggled by boat into South Florida (Goodnough 2005), thus qualifying for eventual permanent residency under the "wet foot/dry foot" policy.

- The Dominican Republic has long served as a way station for Cubans seeking to reach Puerto Rico by crossing the Mona Strait and thus gaining United States admittance under the Cuban Adjustment Act (Jiménez 1997). In 2004, the Cayman Islands received 400 Cuban boat people (Cancio Isla 2005). The ultimate destination of these arrivals was the United States.

To cope with the rising trend of undocumented entries, many Caribbean and Central American countries, following the repatriation precedent established under the wet foot/dry foot policy of the United States, began to implement measures to return Cubans entering irregularly, or began implementing measures to limit the entry of Cuban nationals who previously had been admitted under laxer criteria. Countries such as Costa Rica and Spain, for example, have investigated a suspiciously high number of marital unions between their nationals and aspiring Cuban migrants. Considerable amounts of money are said to be paid by would be Cuban migrants or their relatives abroad to foreign grooms and brides willing to enter into temporary marriages of convenience (Tamayo 1998; "Redacción EER" 2006). As early as 1998, to cite another example, Costa Rica amended a law intended to facilitate family reunifications with the express intent of limiting further Cuban entries. Guatemala repatriated to Havana seven Cuban migrants who had entered the country with false U.S. passports, while Panama did the same with 13 Cuban migrants who had arrived in the country with

falsified documents (Garvin 1998). By 2006, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica had signed agreements with Cuba to prevent the transit of undocumented migrants, and Honduras was considering a similar arrangement (Associated Press 2006).

A report from Mexico indicates that irregular Cuban emigration from Cuba to Mexico has become a major source of bilateral conflict, Mexico fearing it could become a major transit country for Cuban migrants seeking entry into the United States (“México teme” 2002). By 2005, the Mexican government was seeking to negotiate an accord with Havana to regularize the migratory flow (“México buscará” 2005), following complaints that of a growing number of undocumented musicians working in the country, most were of Cuban origin (“México emprende campaña” 2004). Mexico made good on its word when in 2006 it repatriated to Cuba 57 boat people who had arrived at its shores (“Repatrió México” 2006).

### THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONALIST ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN PERMANENT EMIGRATION

A contributing factor to the rising number of Cuban nationals entering and remaining in other countries is the internationalist assistance programs, in particular those offering physicians and other health workers sponsored by Havana in many countries.

There are many individual motivations behind the service of Cuban physicians and health workers abroad; they range from idealistic notions of providing health care to the needy, to the expectation of gaining access to material rewards not available in Cuba. For some, the internationalist route often serves as an emigration venue absent other options.

For Havana, the motivations are obvious. The temporary export of health workers showcases to the world, particularly to developing nations, the achievements of the Revolution and earns Cuba political allies abroad. The internationalist workers also help bolster the humanitarian credentials of repressive or populist regimes allied with Havana, such as Mugabe’s Zimbabwe or Chávez’s Venezuela (Kitchens 2005).

Also not inconsequential is the hard currency revenue that internationalist health care workers and other professionals bring to Cuba, as many of these services are paid for (as in Venezuela, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Trinidad and Tobago). As is well known, a significant share of the salaries of the internationalist workers find their way into Cuba’s state coffers. But even though the internationalist workers receive only a small portion of what they earn, the actual monetary returns are so significant—given Cuba’s economy of scarcity—that potential internationalist workers are said to often pay bribes to government officials to be assigned to choice destinations, as South Africa was at a time in the past (Gutiérrez 2005).

Internationalist programs have expanded so much in recent years that reports keep surfacing suggesting that Cuba’s health facilities are experiencing physician shortages, particularly of primary health care specialists (Cancio Isla 2006a). According to Germán Sánchez, Cuba’s Ambassador to Venezuela, in late 2005 Cuba had 26,000 health workers providing assistance in more than 40 countries, with the bulk of them—about 20,000—working in Venezuela (“Más de 26,000” 2005). In addition, Venezuela was hosting some 5,000 Cuban “sports trainers” (“Unos 35,000 profesionales” 2005). By mid-2006, the number of Cuban health care workers overseas had grown to 29,223 serving in 68 countries (“Castro acusa” 2006).

With Evo Morales winning the Bolivian Presidency and establishing close political ties with Presidents Fidel Castro of Cuba and Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, 718 Cuban doctors were serving in Bolivia by April 2006 (“Unos 700 médicos” 2006), just as a contingent of Cuban doctors was returning from Pakistan where they had assisted with relief services following a devastating earthquake in 2005 (“Regresan médicos” 2006). Oil-rich Trinidad and Tobago has also hosted Cuban health personnel. The government announced in 2003 that it had recruited 75 Cuban doctors and 26 nurses to work in the country, at a time when a salary dispute that crippled three major health institutions was underway between junior Trinitarian doctors and regional health authori-

ties. The announcement led the Medical Professionals Association of Trinidad and Tobago to describe the presence of Cuban doctors as “scab labor” (Homer 2003).

The latter, together with allegations that Cuban doctors are inadequately trained, is a charge frequently heard when Cuba internationalist physicians arrive in a country. This was the case in South Africa in 1996, for example, when the national medical federation claimed that Cuban doctors were not sufficiently experienced or had valid medical titles (“Médicos cubanos” 1996). In Venezuela in 2003, to cite another example, a lower level court ruled in favor of a petition by the Federación Médica Venezolana to declare that recently arrived Cuban doctors “were not physicians and were practicing medicine illegally.” The court ordered that the Cuban doctors be replaced by unemployed Venezuelan doctors (EFE 2003; Kitchens 2005). The Chávez government challenged the decision, which in any case was ignored, although Venezuelan doctors continued their protests well into 2005, charging that Caracas was willing to bring Cuban physicians just as it was refusing to pay higher salaries to local doctors (Toothaker 2005). A Brazilian court forced 96 primary care Cuban physicians working in the State of Tocantins to return to Cuba in 2005 alleging failure to establish their professional credentials, as Brazilian law requires foreign physicians to revalidate their titles to practice medicine in the country (“Decisión judicial” 2005). Even more recently, in 2006, a Uruguayan medical society filed a legal challenge against three Cuban ophthalmologists assessing patients in Montevideo for eventual eye surgery in Havana claiming they were practicing medicine without approved licenses (Garces 2006; “Misiones médicas” 2006). Allegations of medical malpractice against eye doctors doing cataract surgery on Jamaican patients in Cuba were lodged by Dr. Alberto Lue, Chief of Ophthalmology at Kingston’s Public Hospital, claiming that the “number of post-operation complications is alarming” (“Piden se evalúe” 2006).

### DEFLECTIONS BY INTERNATIONALIST WORKERS

Although the number of internationalist physicians and other workers who have defected is not known, the number probably is not inconsequential. The constant defection of Cuban physicians abroad, together with other factors, may explain why the Castro government has systematically attempted to interfere with the permanent emigration of health care workers. This interference is occurring despite the fact that Cuba has one of the most favorable population-to-physician ratios in the world. This issue has been a constant irritant in the Washington-Havana relationship since the signature of the 1994 U.S.-Cuba Migration Accord, as many Cuban health care workers granted U.S. immigration visas have been denied exit permits by the Cuban government. In 1999 alone, as many as 1,000 physicians requested permanent emigration permits (Cancio Isla 1999a).

Restrictions were formalized by Havana in 1999 with the issuance by the Ministry of Public Health of Resolution 54, a resolution never made public. According to Resolution 54, before being allowed to depart the country, specialized physicians and dentists requesting permanent emigration permits must wait a minimum of five years following relocation to rural areas and favorable performance ratings by the medical authorities. The waiting period for general practitioners was set at three years. Physicians and dentists marrying foreigners are subject to similar restrictions and forbidden to engage in temporary travel abroad unless done at the behest of the Ministry of Public Health (Cancio Isla 1999b). More than 100 physicians with approved U.S. permanent entry visas were being prevented from emigrating in early 2006 (Cancio Isla 2006b).

Pressure against the emigration of physicians was intensified in 2001 when Felipe Pérez Roque, the country’s Foreign Minister, confirmed that Havana would not authorize some 1,000 Cuban doctors residing in Chile to visit the island as a means to confront “actions planned abroad to encourage illegal emigration to politicize emigration as a weapon used against Cuba.” His reasoning was that there are those interested in inducing the emigration of physicians to

harm the provision of health care services in the country (Agence France Presse 2001). In 2003, Fidel Castro responded to U.S. accusations of Havana's actions to prevent the emigration of health and other professionals by stating, in a speech at the VI Congress of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, that "as far as he knew, at no time had we signed an accord to protect the stealing of brains." Castro charged that the United States systematically robs Latin America of its most educated citizens, a trend Cuba would buckle ("Castro defiende" 2003).

It is also alleged that Havana prevents the defection of its internationalist workers by assigning State security operatives to contingents of such workers, forbidding their travel overseas accompanied by family members, and withholding from them passports and other travel documents ("Médicos cubanos" 2003). Some accounts surfacing from Venezuela suggest the contrary, as they allege Cuban internationalist workers were issued Venezuelan passports and official identity cards. The documents were utilized, it is said, by some 1,000 defectors to seek safe haven in the United States and several European countries ("Más de mil" 2004). The claim has also been made that a support network operates in Venezuela to assist defecting Cuban physicians seek asylum elsewhere (Ocando, 2004), with three Cuban physicians—at least one of whom was serving an internationalist mission—requesting political asylum in Colombia in 2005 ("Tres médicos cubanos" 2005).

### **COUNTRIES OF RECENT CUBAN EMIGRATION**

While the evidence is fragmentary and not yet recorded in national censuses, it appears that in recent years sizable Cuban expatriate colonies have been established in a number of African and European countries, with some additional smaller enclaves found elsewhere.

#### **Africa**

These include several countries in which Cuba had a significant presence during the Cold War years or in which important internationalist programs were established, such as Mozambique and South Africa. In Mozambique, there is a Cuban colony that at one

point numbered several hundred, mostly physicians, teachers, and other professionals, although lately it has shrunk as many former residents used the country as a platform to reach Spain and the United States. In 2003, according to a press report, 66 teachers and 58 doctors remained in Mozambique, most of them residing in Maputo (Alfonso 2003). Many are defectors who staid as permanent residents after marrying Mozambicans or because they wed Mozambicans while the latter were students in Cuba. Others include defectors with temporary work permits and professionals currently fulfilling internationalist missions.

According to a Cuban defector teaching at the Eduardo Mondlane local university, those opposed to the Havana regime—some 150 strong—have little contact with Cuban officials. This is not so with other Cuban Maputo residents, whose relationship with the Cuban Embassy is a function of their motivation to stay and how long they have been in the country, most recent defectors having the least contact. Long-term permanent residents are said to visit the Embassy frequently, and travel to Cuba regularly. Most Mozambique Cuban residents are believed to send remittances to Cuba, at least occasionally (Hansing 2006).

While evidence is very scarce regarding the Cuban resident population in Angola, it is assumed to be significant—in all likelihood exceeding the size of the Cuban resident population in Mozambique—given the presence in the country of tens of thousands of Cuban troops and internationalist workers for well over a decade. To those must be added the thousands of Angolans who studied in Cuba, and may have established ties with Cuban families. In 2002, a number of Cuban doctors in Luanda with experience fighting dengue epidemics, offered to assist the government of El Salvador contain an outbreak of the disease in the Central American nation. The petition, according to Francisco Flores, the Salvadoran President, was under consideration, as it was understood that the humanitarian offer was clearly associated with migration considerations ("Médicos cubanos ofrecen" 2002). If permission to enter El Salvador was eventually granted, it can be assumed

that the Cuban doctors' ultimate intention was to reach the United States.

Cuban doctors are also reported to be in Zimbabwe replenishing the ranks of national professionals who have emigrated due to low salaries and poor working conditions. In 2003, the government was ferrying 117 Cuban doctors back to Cuba as it was planning to bring 74 new ones ("Govt flies Cuban" 2003). A well-known incident, widely reported in the international press, highlights that Cuban professionals have also defected from Zimbabwe. The 2005 incident involved a physician and a dentist who managed to escape custody by Cuban officials at the Johannesburg International Airport while being transferred from Harare to Havana (Kitchens 2005). The defectors had arrived in Zimbabwe in 2000 as part of a team of 100 health workers; they were detained by Zimbabwean authorities as they were seeking to defect with the assistance of foreign diplomats. It stands to reason that the environment in Zimbabwe is not conducive to the permanent stay of internationalist doctors, mainly because of the dire economic conditions engulfing the country and the risk of deportation to Cuba due to the close political ties between the repressive Harare and Havana regimes.

Another sizable colony of Cuban-origin residents is found in South Africa where internationalist programs, at first comprised primarily of doctors but later augmented by other professionals, began in 1994. By 2002, 450 Cuban doctors were serving in South Africa (Ismail 2002). Contrary to the situation in other countries, the post-apartheid Pretoria government insisted—on human rights grounds, including the need for families to be together—that cooperating physicians, mainly assigned to rural areas and provincial hospitals, bring along their families, including minor children up to age 15. Cuban physicians, arriving with three-year contracts subject to renewal, were provided with housing and salaries comparable to those offered to public health sector South African physicians. The internationalist doctors, however, had to transfer to the Cuban government half their salaries, an eventual source of annoyance to the Cuban doctors, as they were unable to

attain the living standards of their South African counterparts (Kitchens 2005).

As it turned out, a South African constitutional provision, presumably unknown to the Cuban authorities, granted the right to foreign legal residents to apply for citizenship upon completing five years of residency in the country. In 2003–04, about 100 Cuban physicians took advantage of this provision and claimed South African citizenship. In response, and under Cuban pressure, the South African government informed the Cuban doctors they could no longer work in the public health hospitals. The Cuban doctors successfully appealed the ruling in South African courts ("SA/Cuba Contract" 2003; "Cuban Doctors Told" 2003; "Cuban Doctors Lodge" 2003), by arguing that their human rights were being violated ("Protesters at Grey's" 2003). A spokesperson from the national health department responded, in turn, that "the Cuban doctor programme was never intended as a route to permanent migration and we would not like to think that anyone would see it in that light" (Ismail 2002). The end result was the eventual phase-out of the physician internationalist program in South Africa, although a few internationalist Cuban doctors still remain in the country completing existing contracts. As in Mozambique, some of the permanent resident doctors had married South African students in Cuba.

Also as in Mozambique, many former Cuban internationalist physicians in South Africa managed to emigrate to the United States and Spain, among other destinations (Hansing 2006). The flow has included defections in Spain, as in 2002, when 16 Cuban doctors took advantage of a stopover in Madrid and sought political asylum. Journalistic accounts also refer to defections of Cuban doctors to neighboring African countries, as well as to Spanish-speaking countries elsewhere (Ismail 2002).

### Israel

In the late 1990s, Israel also became host to a colony of Cuban expatriates drawn from the last few Cuban residents of Jewish extraction—numbering between 11,000 and 14,000 in 1959—that did leave Cuba in the early years of the Revolution (Levine 1993:236). In 1998, through the mediation of Canada, Havana

authorized the secret departure of 400 Cuban Jews to Israel, where they joined an estimated 1,300 early settlers (Agencia EFE 1999). This group was the last of several who had flown to Israel through Paris, following a Havana-Tel Aviv 1994 agreement, subject to Cuba's proviso that the flights have a low profile. Following the latest departures, some 1,300 Cuban Jews still remained in Cuba (Songtag 1999). Of those, 200 were slated to travel to Israel, but there was concern that the unveiling of the secret migration program could derail their departure (Reuters 1999). The size of the current Cuban colony in Israel is unclear, as it was anticipated that many of the Tel Aviv arrivals would eventually seek to migrate to the United States.

#### Former Soviet Union and Other Destinations

The number of Cubans in countries of the former Soviet Union is a mystery, but it is assumed that several thousand Cuban students either remained in some of the New Independent States or resettled in Western Europe. The so-called "Red Worms" (*gusanos rojos*) provided the nucleus for what became the relatively numerous Cuban diasporas in Sweden and Germany, although other former Cuban students in the Soviet Union settled in Spain. The Cuban colony in Germany is also likely to include former guest workers invited to the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) during the 1980s who managed to remain in a unified Germany following the collapse of the Berlin Wall—perhaps through ties of marriage—despite Havana's decision to recall the guest workers as Communism was collapsing (Ireland 1997; Díaz-Briquets and Pérez-Lopéz 1990).

Among the Cubans who sought refuge in the Peruvian Embassy in Havana just prior to the Mariel sealift and were granted asylum in Peru, some still remain in Lima. The Cuban colony in Australia reached that continental nation via Spain in the 1960s and early 1970s, as part of a nationally-sponsored immigration program. The Cuban arrivals, the vast majority residents of Sidney and Melbourne, were provided by the Australian government with air travel, assistance in finding employment, and basic social services to ease their adaptation (Santiago 1998). A few Cubans have also found their way to Japan, primarily

through marriages to Japanese tourists, as the island has become an increasingly popular and exotic international destination. Some Cubans may have also made their way to Japan with work visas. In any case, while they are few in numbers, the small Cuban colony is facing the same cultural adaptation difficulties as other Latin American immigrants in Japan, although, as Cubans living elsewhere, they are doing better economically and thus in a position to assist their relatives in Cuba (Cancio Isla 1999c).

#### AN EVOLVING DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE

While statistics on the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the Cuban émigré population are relatively scarce, other than for the United States, the available evidence suggests that the most recent emigrants tend to be drawn from the most productive age groups (prime working ages). On average, the post-1990 emigrants are characterized by a bimodal educational distribution, with 35% having attended university, but with 43% having less than a high school education. At the upper end of the educational continuum, they appear to be better educated than Cuba's population. These conclusions are buttressed by available U.S. census statistics, but are also supported by evidence reviewed above indicating that much of the post-1990 emigration to countries other than the United States has been dominated by university students or professionals.

**Table 2. Cohort Composition of the Cuban-American Population by Nativity and Period of Arrival in the United States, 1990 and 2000 U.S. Censuses**

	1990 Census		2000 Census	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All persons Cohort	1,053,197	100.0	1,248,064	100.0
Native (born in the United States)	298,481	28.3	394,837	31.6
Arrived before 1980	559,450	53.1	444,850	35.6
Arrived after 1980	195,266	18.5	408,377	32.7

Table 2, for example, shows the numerical dominance the post-1980 arrivals are beginning to achieve

**Table 3. Educational Attainment and Ability to Speak English of the Cuban-American Population by Nativity and Period of Arrival for Designated Ages, 2000 Census**

	All Persons	Native	Total	Foreign Born		
				Period of Entry		
				Before 1980	1980 to 1990	1991 to 2000
<b>Educational Attainment</b>						
Persons over 25 years of age	934,458	149,656	784,802	444,614	178,984	161,204
Percent with:						
Less than High School	36.7%	14.4%	40.9%	36.2%	50.2%	43.4%
High School Graduate	20.2%	18.6%	20.5%	19.3%	21.4%	22.6%
Some College, No Degree and Persons with an Associate Degree	21.9%	32.6%	19.9%	23.0%	17.4%	14.0%
Bachelor's Degree	11.6%	21.6%	9.7%	11.1%	6.6%	9.3%
Master's, Professional, and Doctorate Degrees	9.7%	12.8%	9.1%	10.3%	4.4%	10.7%
Total Educational Attainment	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Ability to Speak English</b>						
Persons 5 Years of Age and Over	1,188,675	338,972	849,703	444,850	193,555	211,298
Percent of Persons That Do Not Speak English "Very Well"	45.8%	9.0%	60.5%	50.4%	65.3%	77.3%

**Source:** Special tabulation of the 2000 U.S. Census prepared by Dan Pérez-López.

in the age composition of the Cuban-American population. With continued emigration from Cuba, and the higher mortality of earlier immigrant groups as they age, by 2006 the post-1980 arrivals are likely to have already become the more numerous segment of the Cuban-American population. In 2000, the sex composition of the Cuban-American population (including natives and foreign born) was nearly equal, whereas in Spain, contrary to expectations given what is known about the large number of defections, the sex ratio favored females. This might be a function of the frequency of marriages among younger Cuban women and older Spanish men. This interpretation can only be offered cautiously as the sex ratio for the Cuban emigrant population in Spain is in line with or actually higher than for other Latin American immigrant communities in the country. These communities also tend to be relatively young, and dominated by immigrants in prime working ages, as is likely to be the case with the Cuban-origin population in Spain (Instituto Nacional de Estadística undated).

The most conclusive evidence of the bimodal educational distribution of the most recent Cuban emigrants, and of the relative weight of the well-educat-

ed, is provided by U.S. census data showing the Cuban-American population by nativity, period of arrival, educational attainment, and ability to speak English (Table 3). Among post-1990 arrivals, the percent holding university degrees is almost as high as for the pre-1980 arrivals, a group that included most of Cuba's pre-revolutionary elite. Educational standards are only higher among Cuban-origin natives of the United States.

The educational advantage of the better educated post-1990 arrivals in the United States, however, is not reflected in the occupational distribution data, in part due to the relative significance of the poorly educated, but also because socioeconomic mobility is largely mediated by years of residence in the country and, crucially, by English acquisition, a highly time-sensitive variable (see Table 4). As can be seen in Table 3, ability to speak English is monotonically related to length of residence in the United States. The same disadvantage can be observed regarding occupational distribution as the most recent arrivals, despite partial clustering at higher levels of average educational achievement, are concentrated in less skilled occupational categories, a pattern reflected, in turn, in lower annual average incomes (not shown).

**Table 4. Labor Force Status and Percent Distribution by Occupation of the Cuban-American Population by Nativity and Period of Arrival for Designated Ages, 2000 Census**

	All Persons	Native	Total	Foreign Born		
				Period of Entry		
				Before 1980	1980 to 1990	1991 to 2000
<b>Labor Force Status</b>						
Persons 16 years and over	1,044,159	222,965	821,194	444,560	191,768	184,866
Number in Labor Force	584,140	154,630	429,510	218,744	106,427	104,339
Percent in Labor Force	55.9%	69.4%	52.3%	49.2%	55.5%	56.4%
Occupation						
Employed Persons 16 and over	542,341	144,599	397,742	208,612	97,943	91,187
Percent in:						
Management, Professional and Related Occupations	32.0%	39.6%	29.2%	39.3%	21.1%	15.1%
Service, Sales and Office Occupations	43.6%	45.8%	42.9%	42.6%	44.0%	42.3%
Farming, Fishing and Forestry Occupations	.5%	.4%	.6%	.4%	.9%	.5%
Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance Occupations	9.6%	6.6%	10.7%	6.8%	14.7%	15.1%
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving Occupations	14.3%	7.7%	16.7%	10.9%	19.4%	27.0%
Total Percent	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Special tabulation of the 2000 U.S. Census prepared by Dan Pérez-López.

## CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The evidence examined in this paper suggests that Cuba is experiencing current emigration rates rivaling in their magnitude and consistency those observed in earlier periods (other than 1980) since 1959. The Havana regime has benefited to an extent from the outflow of so many Cubans—many young and well-educated—as it has helped relieve social tensions caused by, among other factors, poorly remunerated employment, scarcity of consumer goods, housing shortages, and political discontent. The re-

gime has also gained from the inflow of remittances—continuously expanding in their geographical origins—sent by emigrants to relatives and friends. The non-inconsequential cost, of course, is that Cuba is foregoing a large number of skilled professionals at their peak productive years who, under proper circumstances, could otherwise contribute to the country's development. This cost will become more apparent as Cuba's economy continues to be hobbled by an inefficient development model.

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