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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Deciding on the Future: Race, Emigration and the New Economy in Cuba

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Abstract
Cuban emigration in the post-Soviet period has largely been attributed to economic motivations, but without significant racial analysis. Moreover, little is known about how black Cubans on the island think about emigration. It is therefore imperative to re-examine how blacks, once cited as the Cuban Revolution's loyalists, make decisions today about remaining in Cuba and/or pursuing economic security outside of its borders. Using original survey data of black Cubans on the island, I find that economic motivations are prominent among black Cubans, but that these motivations can be multifaceted. In a study of black Cubans and emigration, the issue of increasing racial inequality and racial exclusion has significant influence on economic opportunity, which in turn influences the desire to leave Cuba to achieve economic and professional success. The results have implications for the ways in which we analyse migration throughout the Latin American region, where race has not been factored into why people migrate.

Keywords: Afro-Cubans; emigration; Cuban migration; race; racial inequality; black Cubans

Introduction

As early as March of 1959, during a time when state-sponsored racism and segregation, colonialism and black exclusion were prevalent throughout the world, Fidel Castro declared combating anti-black racial discrimination would be one of the Cuban Revolution's primary goals. He won loyalty from many black Cubans who had reason to hope the Revolution would represent a new era for Cuba that would champion racial equality. The rhetoric was bolstered by commitments made by the new government, which included desegregation during the Revolution's first few years and new access to education and social mobility. It has been argued that, as strong supporters of the Revolution, black Cubans did not want to emigrate,[1] and the racial make-up of Cubans living abroad supports

[1]For example, historian María Cristina García argues that because racial equality and racial segregation were immediately identified as one of the goals of the Revolution, blacks were optimistic about their future if they remained in Cuba. They were also among the economically marginalised in Cuba and served to gain access that they did not possess prior. See María Cristina García, *Havana USA: Cuban Exiles and Cuban Americans in South Florida, 1959–1994* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006). Nonetheless,

this thesis.[2] Today, Cuban economic insecurity has increased without the Soviet presence and 60 years after this initial period, we know very little about black attitudes regarding emigration in Cuba and whether they locate hope for the future within Cuba's borders or elsewhere.

Considerations of race are essential to the study of Cuban migration. Through an analysis of black Cubans, I argue that the relationship between race and loyalty must be challenged in light of economic reforms and insecurity. I also emphasise economic insecurity as a primary reason for the desire to migrate among black Cubans, which is tied to black people's lack of access to new economic opportunities and their perceptions of how (and where) to achieve success and mobility. In Latin America and the Caribbean, migration to both the United States and other regions in the world receives considerable scholarly attention. When considering economic migration in particular, the role of racism and racial inequality has largely been overlooked in the literature. If black communities are more likely to suffer from economic insecurity, there can also be a heightened likelihood that they consider migration as a solution. In Cuba, the new economic structure and dual currency have led to higher levels of racial exclusion and experiences of anti-black discrimination.[3] This necessitates a broader discussion regarding how racially and/or ethnically marginalised communities view decisions about migration through the lens of race and opportunity, while still living in their home country.

The debate regarding Cuban emigration since 1959 has often left race out of the analysis because (i) most Cuban émigrés have historically been white, and (ii) black Cubans have often been characterised as supporters of the Revolution.[4] Post-Soviet emigration to the United States is made up of a higher percentage of blacks than previous waves of arrivals,[5] and this increase requires new arguments about black Cubans' opinions and motivations regarding emigration. Although future emigration to the United States will be far more difficult after the repeal of the Wet Foot/Dry Foot Policy, Cubans continue to pursue legal channels to emigrate

the Revolution also publicised much of the racism and brutality of the Jim Crow period in Cuba, which also affected some black Cubans' decisions to stay.

[2]The majority of Cubans living abroad are in the United States and according to the 2010 US Census, 85 per cent of Cubans self-identify as white.

[3]Danielle Pilar Clealand, *The Power of Race in Cuba: Racial Ideology and Black Consciousness during the Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Mark Sawyer, *Racial Politics in Post-Revolutionary Cuba* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[4]For an analysis of racial differences among recently arrived immigrants in the United States, see Benigno Aguirre and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, 'Does Race Matter among Cuban Immigrants? An Analysis of the Racial Characteristics of Recent Cuban Immigrants', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 34: 2 (2002), pp. 311–24.

[5]For literature on Cubans who have emigrated, see Holly Ackerman, 'The Balsero Phenomenon, 1991–1994', *Cuban Studies*, 26 (1997), pp. 169–200; Alan A. Aja, *Miami's Forgotten Cubans: Race, Racialization, and the Miami Afro-Cuban Experience* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2016); Alison C. Newby and Julie A. Dowling, 'Black and Hispanic: The Racial Identification of Afro-Cuban Immigrants in the Southwest', *Sociological Perspectives*, 50: 3 (2007), pp. 343–66.

to the country and have historically pursued migration to other regions as well, such as Europe, Canada and Latin America.[6]

An examination of black Cuban public opinion on the island (rather than post-migration data) provides a necessary addition to the literature. This article assesses attitudes regarding both migration and economic security in order to understand not only why black Cubans may want to migrate, but also why some may not have the resources to do so or why others choose to stay in Cuba. This allows for an analysis of how the particular realities of black Cubans shape their attitudes.[7] Benigno Aguirre and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, for example, suggest that, although black migrants are less likely to have familial networks outside of Cuba, there are various possibilities as to why black Cubans show less demand for emigration, and these cannot be assessed from a sample of recently arrived immigrants.[8] Through a pre-emigration analysis, this article examines public opinion among a larger sample that may reveal issues of resources, familial ties and political ideology, among others. Using original survey data of black Cubans, I examine how prevalent the option to emigrate is among black Cubans and what variables are connected to the desire to migrate or stay on the island.

With this data I begin to answer three questions: (i) what is black public opinion regarding emigration among those who currently reside in Havana and does this differ across demographics, (ii) what are the considerations that lead to the desire to emigrate or remain in Cuba and (iii) what does economic insecurity look like for black Cubans and how is this tied to their decisions about leaving the island? I use the word 'begin' because public opinion in Cuba is difficult to measure as the government does not conduct such surveys or make racial data available. This article and survey data, then, give a picture of black Cubans' opinions on emigration and their perception of their futures in Cuba. The first section will give a brief background of the economic reforms both during and after the Special Period and the second section will discuss motivations for emigration within this context. I then provide a discussion of how race and racism factor into the experiences and opportunities for black Cubans in Cuba's new economy.

Post-Soviet Economic Reforms and Racial Inequality

The new economic context, in which Cubans have found themselves since the fall of the Soviet Union, is a significant factor in the decision-making process regarding migration. Beginning in the early 1990s, Cuba experienced transformational changes that included economic sacrifice, the introduction of capitalist measures and incentives, and significant decreases in the social safety net that previously covered citizens' basic needs. The period was transformative largely because the

[6]Mette Louise Berg, *Diasporic Generations: Memory, Politics and Nation among Cubans in Spain* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2011); Catherine Krull and Jean Stubbs, '"Not Miami": The Cuban Diasporas in Toronto and Montreal, Canada', in Luis René Fernández Tabío, Cynthia Wright and Lana Wylie (eds.), *Other Diplomacies, Other Ties: Cuba and Canada in the Shadow of the US* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), pp. 267–303.

[7]Although blacks have been included in survey and interview data, the ways in which race directly affects immigrants' decisions and experiences are not directly examined within emigration scholarship.

[8]Aguirre and Bonilla-Silva, 'Does Race Matter among Cuban Immigrants?'

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reforms would alter and, in some cases, reverse many of the accomplishments of the Revolution. Among those accomplishments were the levels of economic and racial equality.[9] Today, although the Special Period has officially ended, economic insecurity remains, primarily due to the legacy of the crisis (which includes losing a major ally to finance industry and development) and the dual currency.[10] State workers are paid in Cuban pesos, but need Cuban convertible pesos (CUC)[11] to purchase many of their necessities, non-essential goods and various forms of entertainment and dining.

Cubans with formal access to hard currency still may not have sufficient income to cope with the inflated prices in the stores. Others who manage to acquire hard currency by other means – through the underground/informal economy – often do not earn enough to be able to cover all of their needs. Moreover, access to mobile phones and the Internet require hard currency as well. Susan Eckstein argues that problems such as these have eroded state legitimacy.[12] By making the possession of CUC a necessity, Cubans have to devise ways to get them any way they can: legally or illegally. For many, while they engage in these outside activities and strategies, emigration becomes a long-term goal in order to avoid enduring economic insecurity.

In 2011, Raúl Castro implemented several market-led reforms that would give Cubans broader opportunities to be self-employed and buy and sell property. This led to an increase in small businesses: 500,000 Cubans were reported as self-employed in 2015, as compared to 144,000 in 2009.[13] New kinds of businesses have been approved since 2011: Cubans can now open barber shops and beauty salons, art galleries, repair shops, private restaurants, and pursue other previously prohibited endeavours. They can also lease state property for food stands or stores, hire workers and hold licences for trades such as contracting. The explosion of small businesses in Cuba has certainly enabled many to be inventive and entrepreneurial in ways that they had not been in the past. However, there are start-up costs involved in starting a small business. Although microcredits have been introduced, these remain difficult to acquire: they are only available through state-run banks and do not qualify for all types of entrepreneurship.[14]

[9]Sarah Blue, 'The Erosion of Racial Equality in the Context of Cuba's Dual Economy', *Latin American Politics and Society*, 49: 3 (2007), pp. 35–68. Sawyer, *Racial Politics*.

[10]Mayra Espina Prieto and Viviana Togores González, 'Structural Change and Routes of Social Mobility in Today's Cuba: Patterns, Profiles and Subjectivities', in Jorge Domínguez, Omar Everleny Pérez, Mayra Espina Prieto and Lorena Barberia (eds.), *Cuban Economic and Social Development: Policy Reforms and Challenges in the 21st Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), pp. 261–90; Carmelo Mesa-Lago and Jorge Pérez-López, *Cuba under Raúl Castro: Assessing the Reforms* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2013).

[11]In 2004, US dollars were taken out of circulation and replaced with CUC.

[12]Susan Eckstein, 'Immigration, Remittances, and Transnational Social Capital Formation: A Cuban Case Study', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 33: 9 (2010), pp. 1648–67.

[13]These numbers are likely under-reported, as those with or without state jobs may be self-employed on the side with unregistered jobs or without licenses (Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas, Cuba).

[14]Much of the microcredit is in fact for homeowners to make repairs on their homes. See Carmelo Mesa-Lago, *Institutional Changes of Cuba's Economic Social Reforms: State and Market Roles, Progress, Hurdles, Comparisons, Monitoring and Effects* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2014).

The ability to take advantage of the new reforms, or to achieve economic stability, can be tied to race. Access to remittances,[15] housing conducive to renting and opening restaurants,[16] jobs in the emerging sector and other direct ways to earn hard currency – in order to take advantage of the new market-driven economy in Cuba – is far more available to white Cubans. Since the 1990s the lucrative tourism industry has discriminated against black Cubans in various ways, leading to an unmistakable absence of black employees in the sector. Although limited access to CUC affects families of all races, whites are more likely to have jobs that handle CUC and can not only earn more money or salaries/bonuses that pay in this currency, but also create illegal arrangements to make extra money through their places of employment. These activities are ubiquitous in Cuba and remain far less detectable to the general public and the police than more overt ways to earn hard currency illegally.[17] Today there is potential to achieve economic stability in Cuba, but that reality is reserved for those who have jobs in the emergent (dollarised) sector,[18] private businesses, special connections or family abroad.[19]

Economic growth has slowed significantly since the mid-2000s,[20] and more are relying on self-employment to make ends meet, as this is the primary way to secure a higher standard of living. Remittances are increasingly used to fund business investments and real-estate purchases.[21] In her study of race and economic access in Cuba, Sarah Blue finds that black Cubans' uneven access to the dollarised economy means that blacks have lost considerable ground since the early reforms of the Revolution, while white privilege affords access into the new economy. Thus, as blacks have disparate access to CUC, both personally and through employment, the dual currency and reforms in Cuba continue to racialise inequality.

These more recent economic reforms implemented by Raúl Castro have thus far received less attention than the Special Period in creating inequalities, but will have significant consequences when considering racial disparities and racial access. In 2005, between 81 and 84 per cent of Afro-Cubans held state-sector jobs, most were not represented in the higher positions that command higher salaries, and a small number of blacks were employed outside of the state.[22] Moreover, planned

[15]While there is no record of families who send money to Cuba, the self-reported racial make-up of Cuban Americans in the US Census (4.6 per cent identified as black) suggests that the majority of those who receive remittances in Cuba are white (2010 US Census; Clealand, *The Power of Race in Cuba*).

[16]Housing patterns, still racially segregated in many areas of Havana, do not allow for Afro-Cubans to benefit from the option of renting rooms to tourists or opening up private restaurants, as do many white Cubans living in more attractive, central neighbourhoods.

[17]Clealand, *The Power of Race in Cuba*.

[18]The literature has identified the emergent sector as the dollarised sector that includes tourism, other joint ventures and employment in foreign companies. See Rodrigo Espina Prieto and Pablo Rodríguez Ruiz, 'Raza y desigualdad en la Cuba actual', *Temas*, 45 (Jan.–March 2006), pp. 44–54.

[19]Others who have occupations that allow for travel abroad, such as musicians, academics, etc., can also earn hard currency at much higher rates.

[20]See Gustavo López, *Hispanics of Cuban Origin in the United States, 2013* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2015).

[21]Paolo Spadoni, *Cuba's Socialist Economy Today: Navigating Challenges and Change* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2014).

[22]Mesa-Lago and Pérez-López, *Cuba under Raúl Castro*.

reductions in the amount of rations families receive, as well as the distribution of social services and social assistance, will affect blacks to a larger extent than whites, as they are more likely to rely on these transfers. Finally, the new economy in Cuba will likely continue to change toward market-driven incentives, rather than return to previous models.[23] As of 2019, the government has not indicated any policy that would address the fact that blacks are overwhelmingly left out of these emerging opportunities.

Motivations for Emigration

In 1994, at the height of Cuba's economic crisis, the first large public protest in Cuba occurred along Havana's sea wall, or *malecón*. The protest, although contained and short-lived, served as tangible evidence that the economic crisis had created frustration that seeped beyond people's homes and private conversations and into the streets. Fidel Castro was able to stave off more protests by allowing those who wanted to leave Cuba to construct their own rafts and head for the United States. Nonetheless, the dissatisfaction among Cubans was out in the open and further evidenced by the tens of thousands who left as *balseros* (rafters) that year. This post-Soviet migration, which has continued since 1994, has largely been characterised as economic migration caused by the economic devastation after the fall of the Soviet Union. In January 2017, the Obama administration eliminated the Wet Foot/Dry Foot Policy, which had allowed Cubans who set foot on US soil to remain in the United States and apply for permanent residency.[24] This decision suggests that the Obama administration recognised that post-Soviet emigration from Cuba is largely unexceptional as compared to economic emigration from other Latin American and Caribbean countries.[25] While there are some Cubans who face political persecution as dissidents on the island, most argue that Cubans are leaving for better economic opportunities.[26]

In Cuba, public opinion about emigration has changed markedly since the start of the Special Period, which contributes to the perception of emigration as an economic alternative. Contrary to earlier decades of the Revolution, those who leave Cuba for another country are no longer stigmatised or referred to as traitors. As Antonio Aja argues, leaving Cuba during the 1990s signified an exit from the economic crisis and, rather than the previous rejection that exiles received, emigration was perceived as an act that could benefit the families who stayed behind and could

[23]Archibald Ritter and Ted A. Henken, *Entrepreneurial Cuba: The Changing Policy Landscape* (Boulder, CO: First Forum Press, 2015).

[24]President Bill Clinton implemented the Wet Foot/Dry Foot Policy in 1995 to limit the number of Cuban immigrants who were eligible for political asylum. Prior to this policy, the US Coast Guard brought Cubans found at sea to the United States.

[25]Susan Eckstein, *The Immigrant Divide: How Cuban Americans Changed the US and Their Homeland* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

[26]Antonio Aja, 'La emigración de Cuba en los años noventa', *Cuban Studies*, 30 (winter 2000), pp. 1–25; Jorge Duany, 'Revisiting the Cuban Exception: A Comparative Perspective on Transnational Migration from the Hispanic Caribbean to the United States', in Damián Fernández (ed.), *Cuba Transnational* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2005), pp. 1–23; Eckstein, *The Immigrant Divide*; Guillermo Grenier and Lisandro Pérez, *The Legacy of Exile: Cubans in the United States* (Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 2003).

even be seen as a privilege.[27] For many, the economic crisis began to take precedence over political loyalties. This continues to be the case: leaving Cuba no longer means abandoning the Revolution, but rather surviving during a critical time. Moreover, Blue highlights that, in addition to Cubans who leave permanently, there are those who participate in temporary migration as part of professional or medical missions.[28] She finds that most of these migrants return, using the opportunity to achieve economic freedom and security. These opportunities are particularly needed in the wake of new measures to allow small businesses and point to migration as an economic strategy, irrespective of political leanings, as evidenced by a desire to stay in Cuba after taking advantage of economic opportunities abroad.

By sending money to Cuba and often making familial visits to the island, newer émigrés participate in Cuban affairs in ways that exiles from earlier waves do not.[29] This suggests more nuanced political relationships, but also reinforces the contention that emigration is for economic reasons. More recent émigrés' political positions in relation to Cuba also differ markedly,[30] which challenges the idea that recent migrants share the same staunch anti-communist ideology of earlier waves. According to the 2016 Cuba Poll, the year a person left Cuba is a strong predictor of their political attitudes in the United States. Those who left Cuba after 1995 were far more likely to affiliate with the Democratic Party and favour the restoration of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States. The poll also finds a significant correlation between the year of departure from Cuba and the likelihood of investment in private enterprise there. According to a 1996 survey by the Centro de Estudios de Administración Pública (Centre for Public Administration Studies, CEAP) of the University of Havana, when respondents were asked if they would return to Cuba, 40 per cent answered affirmatively – if a better economic situation came about in Cuba or if they did not experience success with their life projects abroad.[31] There is clearly a difference among newer émigrés in both their reasons and considerations pertaining to emigration as well as their perceptions of Cuba.[32]

Among black Cubans, this point can be significant if we consider differences in political attitudes with regard to race.[33] Monika Gosin finds that some black Cubans in Miami feel alienated from white Cubans because of their differing

[27]Antonio Aja, 'La emigración de Cuba'.

[28]Sarah Blue, 'Internationalism's Remittances: The Impact of Temporary Migration on Cuban Society', *International Journal of Cuban Studies*, 5: 1 (2013), pp. 41–60.

[29]Alejandro Portes and Aaron Puhrmann, 'A Bifurcated Enclave: The Economic Evolution of the Cuban and Cuban American Population of Metropolitan Miami', *Cuban Studies*, 43 (winter 2015), pp. 40–63. Eckstein, 'Immigration, Remittances, and Transnational Social Capital Formation'.

[30]Guillermo Grenier and Hugh Gladwin, *FIU Cuba Poll: How Cuban Americans in Miami View U.S. Policies Toward Cuba* (Miami, FL: Florida International University Press, 2016).

[31]Aja, 'La emigración de Cuba'.

[32]The vast majority of émigrés of the early wave held deep hostility toward the Castro government and Cubans of this wave wielded (and continue to wield) enough power in the US political realm to push the continuance of the US embargo against Cuba as long as the government remained communist.

[33]The *FIU Cuba Poll* accounts for race, but the sample of non-whites is too small to draw conclusions about race and political attitudes.

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political leanings and their less visceral feelings about Fidel Castro.[34] She argues that there are clear differences in both their contact with Cuba and their politics overall. We cannot assume that the decision to emigrate is tied to one's political stance on the Revolution, nor can we assume that those who wish to stay are revolutionary loyalists. Finally, considerations of racism outside of Cuba could serve as a factor in the decision to emigrate and the destination. While some have the perception that racism in the United States, for example, is worse than in Cuba, others find that life in the United States for a black person is more welcoming due to established black cultural outlets and businesses.[35] For this reason, it is essential to survey not only those who have left Cuba, but also those who remain, to further unpack how politics and economics figure into people's attitudes about emigration.

Race and Emigration

The debate regarding economic and political motivations does not take into account how racial considerations may also affect decisions about emigration. Despite the policies implemented in the early years of the Revolution to diminish racial inequality, employment discrimination serves as an obstacle toward black advancement, and the disparities regarding the receipt of remittances create significant gaps.[36] In Havana, blacks continue to live in marginal neighbourhoods as well. Racial exclusion can compound the insecurity among blacks to the extent that economic motivations must be considered in the context of racism.

The initial phase of the Revolution was ushered in with messages of equality, democracy and social justice. The government openly discussed racial issues and, unlike any other head of state, Fidel Castro acknowledged and rebuked racial discrimination not only with rhetoric, but also with polices of desegregation (beaches, parks, social clubs and professional organisations were integrated).[37] In a country where 30 per cent of secondary school students attended exclusively white private schools prior to the Revolution, nationalising schools was a significant move to equalise access and change the educational experience.[38] As both new recipients of political commitments and previously marginalised citizens,[39] black Cubans

[34]Monika Gosin, '"A Bitter Diversion": Afro-Cuban Immigrants, Race, and Everyday-Life Resistance', *Latino Studies*, 15: 4 (2017), pp. 4–28.

[35]Clealand, *The Power of Race in Cuba*.

[36]*Ibid*.; Blue, *The Erosion of Racial Equality*.

[37]Alejandro de la Fuente, *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Devyn Spence Benson, 'Owning the Revolution: Race, Revolution, and Politics form Havana to Miami, 1959–1963', *Transnational American Studies*, 4: 2 (2012), available at https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5sb9d392#main (last access 27 Nov 2019).

[38]Lourdes Casal, '*Revolution and Race: Blacks in Contemporary Cuba* (Washington, DC: Latin American Program, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Smithsonian Institution, 1979).

[39]Overall, blacks suffered more from illiteracy, lack of educational access, lack of political access, and economic exclusion when compared to whites, coupled with informal segregation that kept whites in power. For data on racial inequality during the Republican period, see Casal, *Revolution and Race*; Alejandro de la Fuente and Laurence Glasco, 'Are Blacks "Getting out of Control"? Racial Attitudes, Revolution and Political Transition in Cuba', in Miguel Angel Centeno and Mauricio Font (eds.), *Toward a New Cuba? Legacies of a Revolution* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner, 1997); Tomás Fernández Robaina, *El negro en*

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were characterised as a significant part of the Revolution's foundation of support.[40] The policies of desegregation seem to have had a profound effect: interviewees in the early years of the Revolution expressed excitement and pride primarily regarding integration and the end of limits to blacks' social lives. Research also demonstrated a more favourable attitude toward the Revolution among blacks when compared to whites.[41] Data on public opinion during this time is scarce; however, the notion that blacks were strong supporters of the Revolution has become conventional wisdom. Indeed, the vast majority of those who left Cuba during the early (and largest) wave of migration were white and, as Lourdes Casal argues, at least one of the contributing factors to this was the improved life chances that many black Cubans experienced.[42]

This conventional wisdom has not been updated in decades. Furthermore, beyond desegregation, little effort was dedicated to black advancement and representation directly, and the effects of that became clear as the economic crisis revealed racialised inequality. As Mark Sawyer argues, Fidel Castro saw blacks as clients of, rather than participants in, the Revolution.[43] Access to jobs in the education and healthcare fields helped to solve the crisis of brain drain that the early wave of migration brought on, but racial inequality continued to exist in many areas, namely housing, employment, government and media representation. The issue of racism was silenced for decades in the public sphere and it remains unclear whether blacks continued to support the Revolution,[44] particularly into the economic crisis and among newer generations.

There has been some discussion beyond black Cubans as revolutionary loyalists to explain the low percentage of black emigrants to the United States. Alejandro de la Fuente and Laurence Glasco suggest that perceptions of racism in the United States can produce hesitation among blacks to emigrate.[45] Aguirre and Bonilla-Silva suggest that blacks are less likely to emigrate because of a lack of familiar networks, which, coupled with a lack of resources, could contribute to the tendency for black Cubans to primarily use legal rather than illegal channels, such as the visa lottery, to leave the island.[46] Nonetheless, more data is required to answer questions about black motivations and limitations and to include race in the emigration literature.

Cuba, 1902–1958: Apuntes para la historia de la lucha contra la discriminación racial (Havana: Editorial de ciencias sociales, 1990); de la Fuente, *A Nation for All*.

[40]Casal, *Revolution and Race*.

[41]Maurice Zeitlin, *Revolutionary Politics and the Cuban Working Class* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967).

[42]Casal, *Revolution and Race*.

[43]Sawyer, *Racial Politics*.

[44]There is evidence that there was private acknowledgement of racism among black Cubans during the first decades of the Revolution, but this conversation was prohibited at a more public level. Pedro Pérez Sarduy and Jean Stubbs (eds.), *AfroCuba: An Anthology of Cuban Writing on Race, Politics and Culture* (Melbourne: Ocean Press, 1993); *Afro-Cuban Voices: On Race and Identity in Contemporary Cuba* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000); Clealand, *The Power of Race in Cuba*.

[45]De la Fuente and Glasco, 'Are Blacks "Getting out of Control"?'

[46]Aguirre and Bonilla-Silva, 'Does Race Matter among Cuban Immigrants?'

Methodology

Survey collection and structured interviews were conducted between 2008 and 2010 in Havana,[47] and unstructured interviews were conducted in 2017. Unstructured interviews included follow-up conversations with those interviewed from 2008 to 2010 in order to capture the ways in which new and expanded economic reforms have changed the realities for black Cubans since the original fieldwork was conducted. The surveys were conducted among only black Cubans and the 45 interviews were conducted with Cubans of all races. I conducted the surveys with assistance from Cuban colleagues and a native Cuban always approached respondents initially so that the responses would not be affected by my US nationality.[48] The survey collection totalled 409 respondents ranging in age from 16 to 78, and in educational levels from school-leavers to post-graduates. The survey was a convenience sample but with dispersion in that data was collected in neighbourhoods, workplaces and the university. The neighbourhoods were chosen for their diversity in both racial make-up and socio-economic conditions. This was done to ensure diversity in the sample and, based on these methods, no sub-population should have a sampling probability of zero. Nonetheless, using the University of Havana as one of the survey sites created a sample of people younger than the city population. The surveys were conducted in person and survey respondents were chosen randomly. Under Cuba's restrictive political environment that does not allow for large-scale survey collection, this sample represents the best methods available and has succeeded in capturing the opinions of a large variety of black Cubans.[49]

Results and Discussion

Respondents were given a written survey, which first asked general information, including gender, age, occupation and level of schooling. This part of the survey also asked whether respondents wished to emigrate, with a response choice of yes or no.[50] If they answered yes, they were asked to explain their reason in

[47]One of the survey collection sites was a symposium where most of the respondents lived in other provinces and the survey does not represent only those residing in Havana.

[48]Nonetheless, I am Afro-Caribbean and am read as a *mulata* in Cuba, rather than a US national.

[49]The respondents were all black Cubans identified by a dual process. First, they were identified by my colleague and me by phenotype and according to the Cuban racial schema and then, after we approached them, they self-identified. My colleague and I discussed each respondent before approaching him or her to ensure that we were in agreement about whether the person would be considered black by Cuban racial standards. These racial standards consider those of mixed race, or *mulatos*, in a separate racial category from blacks. Research in other Latin American countries has found that often racial self-identification does not match with interviewer identification, primarily due to non-whites identifying as lighter than they may be identified by others (see Edward E. Telles, *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004)). My finding in Cuba is that there is a high level of agreement between self-identification and interviewer identification in that those considered black in Cuba self-identify as such. In my implementation of the survey we only received four denials to complete the survey because someone who we identified as black identified as *mulato*. Moreover, Mark Sawyer found in his study of racial identification in Cuba (see Sawyer, *Racial Politics*) that there was significant agreement between both interviewer and self-identification among not only blacks, but all races.

[50]It should be noted that the main focus of this survey was racial identity and attitudes regarding racism, and the question on emigration was in this context. Although it is difficult to assess how honest

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more detail, but many respondents gave reasons for not wanting to emigrate as well. For those who answered yes, I separated the responses into four categories: economic, political, familial and curiosity, which are discussed in the next section.[51] Results show that 49.1 per cent of the sample said that they wanted to emigrate, with 50.9 per cent saying that they wished to remain in Cuba. The results provide an update to the literature on black Cubans and their political attitudes during the early decades of the Revolution. They also give us a window into the prevalence of the desire to emigrate among black Cubans, for which there is little to no data. The data complicates the notion that black communities constitute a group loyal to the Revolution that wishes to stay, and also suggests that the likelihood of wanting to emigrate can be quite high.

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics of pertinent variables: gender, level of education, occupation, experience of discrimination, the opportunity to advance at one's place of employment, living conditions, housing type and home ownership. Significance test results are shown in Table 2, with bivariate results using logistic regression and two models using multiple logistic regression: Model 1 is a regression of the entire sample and Model 2 includes the question about living conditions, but with a smaller sample size. The living conditions variable is not included in Model 1 because of significantly lower response rates – only 44 per cent of the sample answered the question about living conditions. I do not include home ownership and the opportunity to advance at one's place of employment in Model 2 because they have smaller sample sizes as well. The same can be said for housing type, and chi^2 tests on all of these variables were insignificant. The living conditions variable, however, does indeed show clear differences: those who said that they lived in poor conditions were far more likely to want to emigrate, thus the inclusion of Model 2. The question is based on individual perspective and, based on different points of comparison, someone who reported normal living conditions could live in similar conditions to someone who reported poor living conditions. Nonetheless, those who reported poor living conditions were clearly dissatisfied with their standard of living and that translated into the desire to migrate.

The first column in Table 2 shows the bivariate results for each variable: age, gender, education level, occupation, and experience of discrimination. For both the bivariate results and the multiple logistic regression, age was divided into six cohorts, with dummy variables for each cohort (16–22, 23–30, 31–39, 40–49, 50–55 and over 56). The youngest cohort represents a smaller range of years to account for the student population in the sample. Occupation was also divided into categories, with dummy variables for those with employment associated with a professional or academic degree, tradespeople, non-professionals and university students. For the education variable, those with a secondary school qualification

respondents were about such sensitive topics, I received many detailed responses regarding discrimination, personal experiences and attitudes about emigration that would not lead me to believe that there was a fear to candidly respond to these questions. On the contrary, many respondents talked with me at length about the survey after its completion.

[51]This final category was included because many respondents expressed the desire to see other countries.

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Table 1. Distribution of Desire to Emigrate

	Desire to emigrate (%)	
	Yes	No
	49.1	50.9
Gender		
Male	52.8	48.5
Female	43.6	52.9
Age		
16–22	44.4	55.6
23–30	58.5	41.5
31–39	62.7	37.3
40–49	40.9	59.1
50–55	21.0	78.9
56+	16.7	83.3
Discrimination		
Yes	55.2	44.8
No	44.7	55.3
Employment advancement		
Yes	50.3	49.7
No	52.2	47.8
Home ownership		
Yes	45.8	54.2
No	48.6	51.4
Living conditions		
Good	22.7	77.3
Normal	54.4	45.6
Poor	75.6	24.4
Housing type		
House	54.2	45.8
Apartment building	46.1	53.9
Tenement (*solar*)	48.6	51.4
Education		
Secondary school	55.0	45.0
College training/university	44.0	56.0
Occupation		
Professional	37.2	62.8

(*Continued*)

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Table 1. (*Continued.*)

	Desire to emigrate (%)	
	Yes	No
Tradesperson	61.5	38.5
Non-professional	57.8	42.2
Student	47.9	52.1

Source: Author's elaboration from original survey data.

were placed in one category and those with college training, a university degree or higher were placed in the other.

Age was found to be statistically significant: younger cohorts were more likely than older cohorts to want to emigrate. More specifically, respondents aged 31 to 39 were most likely to want to emigrate and those aged 23 to 30 were only slightly less likely than the cohort in their 30s. Both cohorts were more than twice as likely to want to emigrate as those over 56 (see Model 1), controlling for other variables. Those aged 16 to 22 were also more likely to want to emigrate than the oldest cohort with statistically significant results, although this is shown to be less so than the middle cohorts. Overall, it seems that those who have completed their studies and are young enough to start over in a new country are the most likely to look toward emigration. These findings for age are expected on account of both older generations' political attitudes as well as their hesitance to start a new life in another country, particularly without family abroad.

Conventional wisdom suggests that black Cubans who were alive during the start of the Revolution are among those who strongly supported it early on. Scholarship has suggested that the older generation that was personally connected to the solidification of the Revolution, either through direct participation in the early campaigns or through personal and professional advancement, is more likely to support it today. Silvia Pedraza, for example, argues that the age of the Cuban Revolution means that there are generational differences when considering public opinion and the desire to emigrate. Those who 'made the revolution and felt affirmed by it' and those who only 'inherited its problems' have marked differences in opinion.[52] This could be even more significant for black Cubans as they saw substantial changes in levels of access and inclusion at the start of the Revolution. Those aged 31 to 39 in 2010 were born in the 1970s and experienced the Special Period during their teens and twenties – a time when they were likely to be looking for jobs or planning for their futures. It is particularly striking that the majority of this group (52.6 per cent) had professional occupations (professionals were more likely to want to stay), yet they remain the most significant group to want to emigrate. If we consider the two younger cohorts, both of these groups grew up after the Special Period began and were, at the time of the survey, entering the beginnings of their careers and adulthood. While it is not unusual for younger people

[52]Silvia Pedraza, *Political Disaffection in Cuba's Revolution and Exodus* (New York: Cambridge University Press), p. 209

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Table 2. Predictors of the Desire to Emigrate

	Bivariate relationship	Model 1 (n = 373)	Model 2 (with living conditions; n = 164)
Female	.175 (.202)	−.101 (.237)	−.217 (.392)
Discrimination	.420[a] (.207)	.190 (.234)	.751[a] (.382)
Education	−.443[a] (.201)	−.262 (.262)	−.393 (.435)
Age			−.028 (.021)
Age Cohorts			
16–22	1.08[a] (.500)	1.41[a] (.709)	
23–30	1.64[c] (.493)	2.12[b] (.686)	
31–39	1.82[c] (.525)	2.28[c] (.711)	
40–49	.932 (.553)	1.40[a] (.725)	
50–55	−.022 (.461)	.457 (.876)	
Occupation			
Professional	−.930[b] (.296)	−.902[a] (.354)	−1.20[a] (.573)
Non-professional	−.090 (.318)	−.321 (.415)	−.383 (.644)
Student	−.491 (.294)	−.425 (.441)	−1.18 (.573)
Normal conditions			1.70[c] (.467)
Poor conditions			2.36[c] (.569)
Constant		−1.21 (.662)	.189 (.839)

Notes: [a] = ≤.05; [b] = ≤.01; [c] = ≤.001.
Models 1 and 2 represent multiple logistic regression results on determinants of the desire to emigrate (yes = 1/no = 0) and standard errors are shown in parentheses. Education is measured where 0 = secondary school qualification or less and 1 = college training or university degree. Discrimination is measured as 0 = no experience of racial discrimination and 1 = experience of racial discrimination. Gender is measured as 0 = male and 1 = female. Those who reported 'good' living conditions are omitted as the base category and the two other options, normal and poor, are shown. Tradesperson is omitted as the base category to which other occupations are being compared. Model 1 uses age cohorts to clearly show the age group differences and Model 2 uses age as a continuous variable to retain accuracy on a smaller sample size.
Source: Author's elaboration from original survey data.

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to be more likely to be willing to migrate, part of this story must include the different points in the Revolution when these cohorts came into adulthood and were faced with taking care of themselves financially and raising a family.[53] The diminishing financial returns from higher education, coupled with the financial insecurity that came after the fall of the Soviet Union and continues today, form a crucial part of how Cubans imagine their future. Moreover, these changes have been more pronounced since 2010, when the survey was taken. The non-state sector has grown considerably and small businesses and self-employment have less limitations. However, for those who cannot take advantage of this sector, inequality of access may be more visible.

Level of education and occupation did not have as much of an effect on whether respondents wanted to emigrate. Education was not statistically significant in Model 1 or Model 2, as those with and without a university degree were equally as likely to want to emigrate. Education is shown to be only slightly significant in the bivariate results. Professionals were slightly less likely to want to leave Cuba; however, there is some nuance here. Those who cited professional advancement as the reason for wanting to emigrate all had university degrees. Conversely, those with professional careers may be less likely to want to start again in another country and more likely to have job satisfaction, which may be more important than financial security. Traditional notions of financial security do not apply in Cuba. A university degree does not guarantee economic advancement, but, rather, family abroad, employment in certain sectors or lucrative self-employment grant higher standards of living. Indeed, those who choose higher education and professional careers, such as doctors, professors, engineers and lawyers, do not do so for the financial gain. Rather, the desire to contribute through these careers and achieve job satisfaction are far more important. These details are discussed further in my analysis of the open-ended question below, which elaborates on where those in different professions stand in terms of their financial satisfaction and their careers.

Model 2 shows results for a multiple logistic regression with a smaller sample size ($n = 164$) to indicate the significance of the perception of living conditions with regard to migration. The model uses age as a continuous variable in order to maintain accuracy with a smaller sample – respondents in each cohort did not answer the question regarding living conditions uniformly and thus some of the cohorts are proportionally smaller than the larger sample. Nonetheless, it is essential to include this model because of the significant effect that poor and even normal living conditions have on the desire to migrate. Those who reported poor living conditions were over two times (2.36) more likely to want to emigrate, and those who reported normal living conditions were nearly two times more likely (1.70) to want to emigrate when compared to those who reported good living conditions. In this model, although age is no longer significant because of the uneven response to the question, the p-value comes close to significance at 0.15.

I also tested to see if an experience of discrimination affected the desire to emigrate, since half of the survey sample reported such an experience. Presumably, if black Cubans feel that they occupy a marginal position, racism could be a

[53]Susan Eckstein and Catherine Krull, 'From Building Barriers to Bridges: Cuban Ties Across Straits', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 20: 2 (2009), pp. 322–40.

motivating factor in decisions regarding emigration. Results do not show any significance in Model 1; but, for the bivariate results and Model 2, those who reported an experience of discrimination were more likely to want to emigrate. Within the larger sample (Model 1), although discrimination was not significant, there was a slight tendency for those who experienced racial discrimination to also want to emigrate. The next section will discuss black Cubans' reasons for wanting or not wanting to emigrate. Open-ended questions allowed me to examine what kinds of considerations factor into the decisions about migration among all of these demographics, including those that are significant. In this way, I added detail to the models and, for those who experienced discrimination, I saw how they connected race to opportunity in Cuba.

Reasons for Emigration

Although the Special Period has officially ended, the economy continues to struggle and the presence of the dual currency is connected to higher levels of inequality, poverty and uncertainty.[54] Moreover, when the survey was conducted (2008–10), Cuba was seeing slowed economic growth relative to 2005–7, due in part to the global economic recession.[55] I link current discontent with the Revolution in large part to lack of economic opportunity, which is borne out in the survey results and much of the recent scholarship. Various authors have found that today living abroad is a legitimate way of taking care of one's family, whether permanently or temporarily. If a family living abroad is able to send just US$100 per month to Cuba, for example, the receiving family can experience a real change in their standard of living. In addition, a number of recent émigrés are now choosing to return to Cuba and repatriate or spend equal time in both countries, taking advantage of new business opportunities. In the last four years, the number of Cuban émigrés who have applied to repatriate has increased.[56] There is new hope that, with connections, investments and money earned abroad, one can live well in Cuba, live abroad and support a family, or live in both places and benefit from financial markets in the United States and close ties with one's family and home country. Indeed, Catherine Krull and Jean Stubbs argue that Cubans are no longer responding to emigration as a process where they must leave everything behind, because today they can retain citizenship rights and travel overseas.[57] Similarly, Mette Louise Berg finds that migrants to Spain expressed the desire to be able to travel back and forth to Cuba.[58] This is a significant change from the ways in which emigrants of earlier decades rejected any possibility of returning and suggests certain levels of

[54]Velia Cecilia Bobes, 'Reformas en Cuba: ¿Actualización del socialismo o reconfiguración social?', *Cuban Studies*, 44: 1 (2016), pp. 165–88.

[55]In 2008 there were also three hurricanes, Gustav, Ike and Paloma, which hit Cuba. Although none passed directly over Havana where the surveys were taken, the storms affected the economy significantly.

[56]Oscar Reinaldo Figueredo and Dianet Doimeadios Guerrero, 'En la Mesa Redonda: Cuba apuesta por una migración legal, ordenada y segura hacia los Estados Unidos', *Cubadebate*, 13 Jan. 2017, available at www.cubadebate.cu/noticias/2017/01/13/en-la-mesa-redonda-cuba-apuesta-por-una-migracion-legal-ordenada-y-segura-hacia-los-estados-unidos-video/#.XdWhsy2ZNBw (last access 27 Nov. 2019).

[57]Krull and Stubbs, '"Not Miami"'.

[58]Berg, *Diasporic Generations*.

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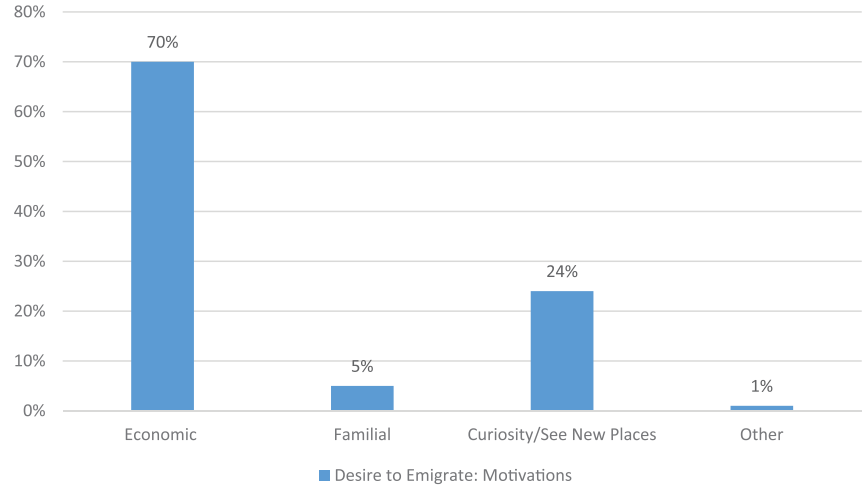

Figure 1. Distribution of Motivations to Emigrate
Source: Author's elaboration from original survey data (n = 152).

tolerance for Cuba's political system, or the desire to stay regardless of political beliefs.[59]

Once respondents answered whether they wanted to emigrate, they were given a space to answer why. With this open-ended question, we now have data that gives richer information on the reasons for Cubans wanting to stay or leave. Of those who answered yes to the desire to emigrate, 70 per cent wanted to leave for economic reasons, 24 per cent said that they were curious to see other places and 5 per cent cited family unification (see Figure 1). Among those who did not want to emigrate, most expressed that they liked their country and felt good living in Cuba. This half of the sample is an essential part of this story as well. Those who have chosen to stay, despite economic difficulties, constitute an important set of communities that further complicates the relationship between economics and emigration. The existence of people who experience economic insecurity but do not want to leave Cuba underscores the fact that economic frustration or marginalisation does not always lead to favourable attitudes toward emigration.

Economics and Living Standards

Economic motivations vastly outnumbered other motivations among the portion of the sample that wanted to emigrate. Their answers included: to earn a higher salary, to take care of their family, to solve their economic problems, to improve their standard of living, to give their children what they didn't have, and to have more money. A 25-year-old optometrist wrote that he wanted to leave, 'because I make 354 pesos per month and that isn't enough to live'.[60] This salary, equal to

[59]Blue, 'Internationalism's Remittances'.

[60]All quotes in this section on economics and living standards are anonymous survey responses from written surveys conducted by Danielle Clealand and Cuban colleagues, Havana, 2008–10.

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approximately US$14, is a direct example of the economic insecurity that people face due to low salaries and rising prices, even with high levels of education. Respondents discussed the problem of relying on others economically to survive: '[…] here it is very hard to depend on myself, I'd like to live in another country'. A 34-year-old man wrote: '[…] leaving here is the only way to solve my economic problems'.

The issue of housing is also one of concern, as respondents do not often have the option to live in their own home. The government has recognised the housing shortage as a critical issue and the many housing units that are in poor condition also worsen the problem. A 57-year-old woman with a university education said she wanted to emigrate, stating: 'because I will never have a decent house to live in here'. Another said: 'I do not want to live with my parents, I want to live alone.' It is particularly striking that someone would view emigration as the only way to acquire an independent living space. Recent reforms have opened up the opportunity to purchase homes in Cuba; however, this option is only open to those who have access to significant amounts of hard currency – a reality for very few on the island. The other way to acquire a new living space is to trade with someone else; however, one has to have one's own home to do so. If the house being traded is worth more than the one being acquired, the person must pay the difference, which can be thousands of dollars, depending on the disparity.

In addition to just earning more money, others felt that they were not able to reach the professional heights they could achieve in other countries. Respondents wrote: 'I want to leave to widen and solidify my career'; and 'I think that in another country I could advance intellectually and professionally'. Respondents who wrote about professional limitations also discussed issues of salary. A recent university graduate wrote: 'I want to see a salary, standard of living and social life that is consistent with my position and place in our society.' Although professionals were less likely to want to emigrate, there was a clear sense, among those who did wish to do so, that they were not able to achieve the levels of success they wanted in Cuba. All of the people who shared that they wanted to have more professional opportunities were already professionals in Cuba with a university education.

When the Revolution began, there were openings that allowed black Cubans to receive a quality education and gain access to many professions that had been previously closed for most of them. Today, such opportunities continue to exist, but those who ascend in society in this way do not receive the material benefits that Cuban society increasingly requires. The principal paths toward financial gain are virtually closed for black people in Cuba and there is little hope among them of achieving a decent standard of living. When asked about racism in Cuba, a 26-year-old welder said that it exists 'from the television to the hierarchy'. As a response to whether he wanted to emigrate, he said: 'if this keeps up as I think it will, yes'.

Race, Economy and Migration

Data reflecting the ways in which race and racism affect black people's feelings about leaving Cuba is a crucial component of an analysis of emigration. A female respondent, for example, wrote that she experiences discrimination from white

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friends and acquaintances who call her a white or blonde black person (*una negra rubia*) because of her higher level of education; for them, good qualities correspond to a white person. She expressed a desire to leave Cuba to live in a country where black culture is the norm. For many others, the lack of professional or employment opportunities was linked to the issues of racism in the country. This was particularly true among those who cited employment discrimination and a lack of economic opportunities for black people. One person responded that, because of racism, he was not able to get the job he needed and wanted to leave because he was 'tired of this country'.[61] A 23-year-old woman said that the majority of the best jobs, primarily in the tourism industry and in embassies, were 'reserved for the lighter race'. She expressed the desire to leave to 'see if things change for me'. A male respondent wrote that, although racism in Cuba is not at the level that it is in the United States, a black man who stands out in his profession is not accepted. He wrote that he wanted to leave in order to broaden and solidify his success in his field. A 51-year-old woman wrote that the best jobs are reserved for whites and black people cannot advance. She wrote that her standard of living was awful and she wanted to leave to be with her son. Although few in the sample pointed to familial unification, this could be due to the low numbers of blacks and *mulatos* who have emigrated thus far when compared to whites. Nonetheless, pointing to one's standard of living and the need to be with family suggests that reasons for wanting to leave Cuba can often be multifaceted.

Although few directly connected experiences of racism to their desire to emigrate, many did connect their economic troubles to issues of race and opportunity. Those with enough access to CUC who live comfortably in Cuba and do not need to leave to achieve economic security are overwhelmingly white. Moreover, black professionals not earning enough to make ends meet expressed frustration with the lack of correspondence to salaries, economic well-being and professional status. Respondents wrote about lucrative jobs reserved for white people with lower levels of education, or those in the tourism industry making far more than a professional with a graduate degree. The discrepancies between salary and profession create resentment among many. One respondent shared, for example: 'I want to live in a normal country with real guarantees; because of administrative policies the best jobs are for white people.'

Motivations to Stay

Public opinion in Cuba is difficult to assess because we do not have the data to determine in a nuanced way how people feel about the government and their lives within the Revolution. The ideological position of respondents can differ widely, irrespective of their opinions regarding emigration. While there are those who are disengaged from politics, there are others who are critical of the Revolution but, based on their answers on the survey, do not want to leave. At the same time, economic concerns and the absence of civil liberties produce criticism, even from supporters of Cuban socialism. The results show that black Cuban

[61] All quotes in this section on race, economy and migration are anonymous survey responses from written surveys conducted by Danielle Clealand and Cuban colleagues, Havana, 2008–10.

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attitudes are varied; political ideology occupies many grey areas in Cuba and there is frustration even among proclaimed revolutionaries. There are a number of anti-racist activists, for example, who are quite critical of the levels of racism and lack of attention by the government, but still support the Revolution and would not leave. In addition, various respondents shared stories of racial discrimination, racial profiling and exclusion from jobs based on race, but still shared comments such as 'I still have many things to do from here'[62] and 'I want to stay in my country'. Survey results show that few are immune to economic struggle and frustration and those struggles do not automatically lead people to want to emigrate. The half of the sample that wrote that they did not wish to emigrate still talked about these concerns. One respondent wrote: 'I hope that I can one day live economically well in this country.' Another person wrote: 'I want to stay because I have almost everything I need in my country, I only need more money.' A male university student said: 'I live well here if I work hard although life isn't very easy.' These responses demonstrate that economic considerations are not always at the forefront of people's decisions about their future.

Although much of my focus here is on issues related to the economy and dissatisfaction, this does not discount the respondents who expressed satisfaction with their lives in Cuba. There were many respondents who said that they 'feel good in Cuba' or expressed sentiments such as 'I love my country', 'I'm not interested in leaving' and 'I was born here and think I should die in the country that I love'. Another respondent said: 'my personal history is here'. Various people expressed pro-government stances, citing their conviction and commitment to the Revolution. One respondent said: 'I feel identified with the Revolution and its goals', while another said: 'I feel comfortable with the work philosophy in Cuba. I would like to travel to another country, but not to stay.' There are still those who consider themselves to be a part of the Revolution. For example, an interviewee shared: 'I could leave, but I want to see how my revolution plays out. There is still work to be done here.'

Respondents also cited more practical reasons for staying, such as age, lack of family outside of Cuba, lack of resources or a need to stay with their family on the island. One respondent wrote of needing to fight racial injustice from Cuba. Others were unsure whether they wanted to make such a significant commitment, and one professional, a 40-year-old woman, wrote that she was afraid of the risk. There were several people who said they did not have the resources to leave Cuba or they did not see a way to leave legally. This coincides with the research done by Aguirre and Bonilla-Silva that shows black Cubans are less likely to emigrate illegally. I would add to this that many black Cubans are unable to invest in the resources necessary to emigrate illegally, which makes the survey research done on the island essential to understanding public opinion among those who may never emigrate.

[62]All quotes in this section on motivations to stay are anonymous survey responses from written surveys conducted by Danielle Clealand and Cuban colleagues, Havana, 2008–10.

Conclusion

In the summer of 2017, I was in Havana with a Cuban in his 40s (who is *mulato*) and his daughter. We were at a newly opened, privately run recreation area for children, operated by self-employed Cubans who had invested in various large inflatable and riding toys to enjoy with prices in Cuban pesos. The cost for each minute of use was quite high for people with state salaries but, nonetheless, they had a thriving business. My companion turned to me and said: 'This is amazing. If I could get the money to invest in one of these inflatable houses, it would solve all of my problems.' He was shocked at the potential to make so much money and also angry that he had no means of capitalising on such an opportunity. I should note that this person has a desire to emigrate, but displayed through his comment that if he were economically secure, he would not leave. Although the start-up costs for these small businesses are relatively minor, small business loans are not often available. Those who wish to benefit from the freedoms of creating a business must do so with help from family abroad or access to the formal CUC economy.

The results presented here expand our knowledge of black public opinion in Cuba with regard to migration and economic insecurity. Moreover, rather than assess why black people have migrated, this article examines attitudes toward migration before this decision is made. This is a crucial addition to the literature, not only because of the lack of public opinion data in Cuba but also because many black Cubans do not migrate. The data show that this may not be because they do not want to, but because they do not have the resources to do so. With half of the sample expressing interest in migration, the paradigm regarding black loyalty to the Revolution is challenged. Moreover, results also shed light on those who do not wish to migrate, suggesting that often political loyalties should not be automatically tied to those who wish to stay in Cuba, as family ties, age, profession, living conditions, and/or satisfaction with one's country can figure more prominently in people's decisions. Analysing the open-ended question shows that economic insecurity is the primary reason for the desire to leave Cuba. The optimism that was palpable for many black people at the start of the Revolution has changed considerably due to the economic crisis and the geopolitical changes since the end of the Cold War.

Age is the strongest predictor of the desire to emigrate among blacks, with younger cohorts, and particularly the group aged 31 to 39, most likely to express the desire to leave. Although professionals are less likely to want to leave Cuba, even those professionals among the cohort aged 31 to 39 express the desire to emigrate. This group, as well as those in their 20s, grew up during the Special Period and likely finds that opportunity differs greatly compared to when the older generations were this age. The results also show that those who report poor living conditions are more likely to want to emigrate when compared to those who report good living conditions. Thus, standard of living and stage of life have much to do with decisions about migration among black Cubans.

Race, a variable thought to affect loyalty to the Revolution decades ago, seems to be less significant today and I argue that this is largely because (i) the economic crisis affects black Cubans more acutely and (ii) black people's perceptions of the

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kinds of success and mobility they can achieve have changed in the new economy. This is clear through not only the responses of those who want to leave, but also the mention of economic concerns among those who feel they would be happier staying in Cuba. Further empirical research would be useful to determine white experiences of the new Cuban economy and how this affects their desire to emigrate. Observations from the field suggest that those who are living well in Cuba are overwhelmingly white, which should produce interesting research about whether those who are economically stable are more likely to stay on the island.

Nonetheless, there is still a sizeable number of black Cubans (slightly over half of the sample) who do not want to leave and have chosen to stay in Cuba, irrespective of economic status. Examining the political attitudes among these groups as well is crucial to understanding how Cubans make political and economic decisions, including and beyond those regarding emigration. There is a great deal of frustration with the economic policies regarding salaries and the dual currency; however, many do not translate this into political identities and do not see leaving their country as a viable or desirable option. With all of this in mind, we cannot make the argument that half of the sample are against the government because they want to emigrate and half of the sample support the government through their decision to stay. There is much more nuance here and political apathy exists on both sides. Moreover, if economics can trump political affiliations, there could be black Cubans who feel affirmed by the Revolution, but cannot afford to live within it. Indeed, the introduction of semi-capitalist reforms has complicated the notion of political loyalties in Cuba.

Despite the primacy of economic insecurity, the government has not fully responded to these concerns, nor has it directly addressed how new reforms have affected racial inequality. This is particularly jarring when one considers that many black Cubans do not enjoy economic security. The economic climate has changed and policies must find ways to identify where blacks and *mulato*s are particularly at risk and address racism and racial inequality directly. Blacks are more likely to rely on rations and state employment, and less likely to be able to invest in small businesses, have family abroad or have jobs in the emergent sector. Black Cubans, who were once offered unprecedented levels of social mobility at the start of the Revolution, now find themselves facing economic anxiety, irrespective of their levels of education. Most are being left out of the emerging middle class in Cuba, and racism continues to play a factor in employment opportunities and access to CUC.[63] Although engaging in honest dialogue, followed by comprehensive racial policy, will not solve all of black Cubans' economic problems, it could serve to increase job opportunities and access to hard currency, which is crucial for survival on the island and could change the perception that economic security lies beyond Cuba's borders. Cuba is not unique in its denial of the racial effects of economic downturns and reforms: throughout Latin America and the Caribbean the effects of racism are largely ignored, particularly in the policy realm. This article calls for more attention to race when theorising migration in Cuba, as well as in the entire Latin American region, in order to understand how the economic

[63]Clealand, *The Power of Race in Cuba*.

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marginalisation of black communities influences decisions about migrating in search of opportunity.

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Appendix

Table A.1. Mean Distributions of Sample

	Mean	Standard deviation
Male	.51	.50
Age (years)	31.20	12.50
Secondary school diploma	.52	.50
Occupation		
Professional	.30	1.27
Tradesperson	.06	.24
Student	.28	.45
Non-professional	.21	.41
Housing type		
House	.34	.48
Building	.45	.50
Tenement (*solar*)	.21	.41

Spanish abstract

La emigración cubana del periodo post-soviético ha sido en buena medida atribuida a motivaciones económicas, pero no ha contado con un análisis racial significativo. Aún más, se sabe poco sobre lo que los cubanos negros en la isla piensan acerca de la emigración. Resulta imperativo reexaminar cómo los negros, en un tiempo citados como leales a la revolución cubana, toman decisiones hoy sobre permanecer en Cuba y/o buscar una seguridad económica fuera de sus fronteras. Utilizando datos de una encuesta original a negros cubanos en la isla, encuentro que las motivaciones económicas son prominentes en estos cubanos, pero que estas pueden ser multifacéticas. En un estudio sobre negros cubanos y emigración, la creciente desigualdad y exclusión racial tiene una influencia significativa sobre las oportunidades económicas, la que a su vez influye en los deseos de dejar Cuba para lograr éxito económico y profesional. Los resultados tienen implicaciones importantes para el análisis de la migración a lo largo de Latinoamérica, donde la raza no ha sido tomada en cuenta en por qué la gente migra.

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Spanish keywords: Afro-cubanos; emigración; migración cubana; raza; desigualdad racial; negros cubanos

Portuguese abstract

A emigração cubana após o período soviético foi em grande parte atribuída à motivações econômicas, mas sem nenhuma análise racial significativa. Além disso, pouco se sabe sobre a opinião dos cubanos negros da ilha no que diz respeito à emigração. E isso é fundamental na reavaliação de como os negros de Cuba - antes citados como a demografia mais leal da revolução - decidem hoje entre permanecer em Cuba e/ou uma segurança econômica fora do país. Com base em dados originais de pesquisa feita com negros cubanos, determinei que motivações econômicas são proeminente entre os mesmos, mas tais motivações podem ser multifacetadas. Em um estudo sobre negros cubanos e emigração, a crescente desigualdade e exclusão racial tem grande influência em oportunidades econômicas, que por sua vez influencia o desejo de deixar Cuba em busca de sucesso profissional e econômico. Os resultados têm implicações na maneira como analisamos migração dentro de todas as regiões da América Latina, onde raça não foi um fator considerado entre os motivos pelos quais as pessoas migram.

Portuguese keywords: Afro-cubanos; emigração; migração cubana; raça; desigualdade racial; negros cubanos

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