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A large, complex network diagram composed of numerous interconnected nodes and lines, rendered in shades of purple and grey. The nodes vary in shape, including circles, squares, and diamonds, and are connected by thin lines, creating a dense web of relationships. The diagram is positioned in the background, partially obscured by the title and the purple banner.

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## **Migration and labor among the regions of the South from the global perspective. An analysis of the flow of Cubans to Angola.**

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### **Abstract.**

This article provides a critical analysis on the relation between migration and labor from the global perspective, by focusing on recent migration labor flows among the regions of the South, conditioned by the reorganization of the global power scheme. Based on this perspective, Cubans migration to Angola is contextualized and characterized as part of labor flows among the regions of the South and motivated by structural conditions in issuing and receiving centers and by the historic relations between both States, which act as transnational connections that have favored intercultural dialogue. In this sense, a group of Cubans settled in Angola were surveyed with the support of the Cuban Embassy to Angola, which allowed observing some variables such as: sex, age, race, date of settlement, qualification and occupation in Cuba, work experience in Angola, among others. The information obtained was verified against other sources from Cuban official institutions and in interviews with experts in the subject. Finally, Cubans settled in Angola who were on vacations in Cuba and some relatives of Cuban emigrants in the Island were interviewed in order to determine the elements that take part in the social representation built in Cuba towards migration to this new destination and how it benefits the reproduction and continuation of the migration process.

### **Key words.**

Labor migration. South-South Flows. Cuban Emigration. Cuba-Africa relations. Angola.

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## Introduction

The economic dimension of international migration throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup>, the systemic mobility of the labour force and its connection to development, have been one of the most discussed issues from the social theory and the empirical studies. There is a predominant positive vision to argue the “mutual benefit” of migration for both sending and receiving countries and their contribution to development, through social and financial remittances flows. “Labour force migration can benefit both the sending and receiving countries as well as migrants themselves in many ways, and can favour the economic growth and development of origin and destination countries” (ILO, 2007: 3). This statement hinders the further analysis of migration (especially labour), from a global perspective, as the result and modifier of global and local factors determining the production conditions within the global networks of unequal power (Feldman-Bianco and Glick Schiller, 2011: 34).

In this line, Mexican economist Márquez Covarrubias (2012: 79) believes that the term development has been theoretically manipulated to present it as a product of migration. “As if an extension or new branch of the new social policy, it is argued that migrants have their own resources, remittances, to enable development processes in their countries and places of origin, which would allow eradicating minimum problems such as poverty and, in a way, triggering local development processes through productive funnelling of remittances”. This conceals inherent contradictions to the dynamics of interrelationships between both processes and poses many questions about how migration affects the different levels of global development, which levels of development foster or slow down the migration process, how migration interacts with the different dimensions of development. If taken into account the concept of development “[...] within the limits of neoliberal capitalism, as a process of economic growth led by private corporations, protected by the State and managed by the free market and formal democracy” (Marquez Covarrubias, 2012: 79), then these questions would become more relevant.

One of the most significant dimensions of development is the capital-labour relationship as an inherent feature of the capitalist system that hides the heterogeneous nature of labour itself (Quijano, 2014: 268). Labour in the capitalist system has also been influenced by the global networks of unequal power, and the institutions of financial and military power involved in it, actors who maintain control over its resources and products. In this process migration is highly relevant considering its relation and interaction with global forms of control on wage labour. In recent decades, with the drive of the neoliberal globalization ideological platform in all areas of social relations, migration-labour interrelation has been reassessed not only because of the new dimensions its dynamics include but also because of the multiple geographical areas it brings together.

This article aims to analyse the historical relationship between migration and labour from a global perspective, focusing on labour migration flows that took place among the regions of the South<sup>1</sup> over the last four decades. Furthermore, this paper deals with the recent

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this paper, we assume the geoeconomic definition of South proposed by Bakewell (2009), Mumpasi Lututala (2014), Ratha and Shaw (2006) referred to the regions the United Nations Organization

migration of Cubans to Angola, a process influenced by multiple factors that, if tackled from different methodological approaches, can be framed in different levels (global, local and individual). However, if we were to echo Glick Schiller's invitation to use the global perspective on migration, the object of study will be better defined, "[...] the movement of people across space in relation with the forces structuring political economics "(Feldman-Bianco and Glick Schiller, 2011: 32). The migration of Cubans to Angola will be analysed from this perspective, with a broader point of view on South-South labour migration flows reassembled in correspondence with the dynamics of the international relations system, the hierarchical distribution of power and the forces acting on it.

A number of questions have guided this research and will be answered throughout this article:

- 1) How to describe labour migrations among the southern regions from a global perspective?
- 2) How is this process characterized according to the literature reviewed?
- 3) What is the relation between the recent migratory flow of Cubans to Angola with the global and local context?
- 4) What are the features of the external migration of Cubans to this African country?
- 5) How do social representations influence the external migration process towards this destination?

Based on these questions the following set of objectives has been established:

General Objective:

- Analyse the relationship between migration and labour from a global perspective.

Specific objectives:

1. Compare the theoretical and methodological approaches of the migration-labour relationship.
2. Explain the dynamics of international migration in relation to labour from a global and historical perspective during the development stage of the capitalist system.
3. Characterize the labour migration flow between the Southern regions in the past four decades.
4. Analyse the migration of Cubans to Angola as an example of South-South labour and economic migration from the global perspective.
  - 4.1. Identify global and local elements that contextualize and condition the recent migration of Cubans to this new destination.
  - 4.2. Characterize the Cuban migration to Angola.

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(UN) considers as underdeveloped or developing, i.e. Central and South America, Africa, Asia(except from Japan) and Oceania (except from Australia and New Zealand)

#### 4.3. Define how social representations influence this migration process.

Given that this is a relatively recent issue in social sciences, literature on labour migration among regions of the South is still poor and fragmented, especially from a holistic theoretical and empirical perspective. Most studies have focused on labour migration to highly industrialized receiving centres and their impact on the economies of less industrialized sending countries. Similarly, there is a prevalence of studies with nationalist methodological approaches, i.e. using the nation-states as units of analysis of this transnational phenomenon.

The Cuban migration process also demands a critical review of the literature in view of the importance of understanding the economic and labour aspects as motivating and shaping element of the Cuban migration process since the 1990s, especially when the destination regions are far from the traditional historic routes and new reception centres emerge in continents that have always had historical, political and economic ties with Cuba, such as Africa and Asia. A case deserving special attention is the recent migration of Cubans to Angola, determined not only by the individual and family strategies to address structural distortions that characterized the Cuban economy, the particular features of the development of the destination country and the historical links and contemporary cooperation relationships between the two States, but also related and contextualized by the interaction with various networks of global power and the world-wide and hegemonic dominant capitalist system.

It is worth stating the conceptual premises guiding this research, mainly regarding two basic categories: migration and labour.

The category of migration gathers not only mobility across borders, but also the act of moving and residing for a short time in a place. From a transnational perspective, migration is understood as a dynamic and historical process of social network connections that structure the spatial mobility and labour, social, political and cultural life of migrants, their families, friends and communities in countries of origin and destination (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2006: 192). Its different subcategories “[...] are the result of state policies adopted in response to political and economic objectives and public attitudes” (Castles, 2000: 18), in the words of Feldman-Bianco (2011: 17) “[...] the social categories are built within the range of power relations and under specific situations and social contexts both regarding emigrants and immigrants.” Therefore, according to the causes, literature classifies them as: international or internal migration; temporary or permanent; cyclical; voluntary or forced; economic or labour<sup>2</sup>.

Labour is here understood with a double definition of its modern conception: on the one hand, the possibility of men to particularly adapt the environment to their needs, interact

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<sup>2</sup> On these two categories, the IOM (2012: 7) points out that “[...] the term *economic migrant* it is sometimes used as an equivalent for the term *labour migrant or migrant worker*. However, both concepts may include different categories. The term “labour migrant” may be restrictively used to refer to the labour movements, while the term “economic migrant” might be used in a narrow sense only including the labour movement, or in broader sense including people entering a State to perform other types of economic activities like investors or business travelers”.

and transform nature; and on the other hand, the social conditions that determine and mediate that relationship. The concept of wage labour is set from this second view, i.e., paid workers are under capitalist control, which owns the product of their work (Hirata and Zariffian, 2007: 33). According to Quijano (2014), from the viewpoint of capitalism, wage labour is individual labour force turned into goods. However, this does not imply that wage labour has been the only form of labour control and exploitation; this mode of production has coexisted and coexists simultaneously with other forms of labour such as slavery, established and developed as assets to produce goods for the world market (Quijano, 2014: 269-272).

Labour relations are nowadays going through a new process of international division, in accordance with Márquez Covarrubias (2012: 244-245), is synthesized in two main directions: the spatial restructuring of labour division (restructuring the neoliberal economic system allows the core capital to massively exploit cheap labour force in both the periphery and the centre) and the overexploitation of labour in all its categories (extension and intensity of working hours and decrease in wages).

Based on these conceptual frameworks, the category of labour migration (labour migrant and migrant workers) is used to refer to people migrating for a limited period of time – ranging from a few months to several years- in order to work for salary and send home remittances, in response to their interests in improving both their personal and family socio-economic life conditions, in view of the lack of possibilities to find a job or have a better wage in their home country.

In this direction, the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2012b: 7-8) states that “[...] there is no universally accepted definition of labour migration. [...] The classification of labour migration is usually based on the duration of activities, as well as distinctions established through regulations by the destination countries on admission and stay requirements. [...] The concept and definition of labour migration often reflects current perspectives of national policies and varies amid countries and over time. A confusing element on the inclusion criteria in the category of migrant worker derives from ambiguous definitions of employment or paid job in the destination country”.

Even international instruments such as the United Nations (UN) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions also use different definitions. According to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families (UN, 1990), a migrant worker is a person who will have, has or has had a paid job in a State where he/she is not a citizen of. A “migrant worker” is defined in the ILO instruments as a person who migrates from one country to another (or has migrated from one country to another) with the purpose of seeking a job other than self-employment and includes any person regularly admitted as a migrant to work (ILO, 1975).

It is worth noting the IOM (2012b: 5-6) distinctions on the categories “labour migration”:

1. Migrant workers by contract: people who work in a country other than their own under contractual arrangements that set limits on the employment period and the migrant’s specific job. Once admitted, migrant workers by contract are not allowed to change jobs and are expected to leave the country once the contract has expired, whether or not the

work has been finished. Although the contract may be renewed sometimes, leaving the country may be mandatory before the contract can be renewed.

2. Migrant settled workers: migrant workers who, after staying a few years in the country of employment, have received permission to reside indefinitely and to work without further limitations in that country. Settled migrant workers are not required to leave the country when unemployed and are usually granted the right to meet with the members of their closest family member provided that certain conditions regarding employment and housing are met.
3. Highly skilled Migrant workers: Migrant workers whose skills ensure them preferential treatment regarding the entrance to a foreign country and therefore are subject to fewer restrictions regarding the period of stay, the change of employment and family reunion.
4. Migrant project -linked workers: migrant workers admitted to a State of employment for a definite period to exclusively work in a specific project in that State under the scheme of migrant worker. The employer is responsible for providing the necessary resources to complete the project. The employer or a representative who may have acted as an intermediary must ensure that the project-linked migrant workers leave the country once the work is completed.
5. Migrant seasonal workers: people employed in another state to work only for a limited period during the year because their work depends on seasonal conditions.
6. Temporary Foreign Workers: Persons admitted in a foreign country to work for a limited period in a particular occupation or a specific job. Temporary migrant workers may change employers and renew their work permits without leaving the country of employment.
7. Business travellers: Foreigners temporarily admitted in a country for performing an economic activity that is remunerated from abroad.
8. Immigrant Investor: Foreigners given permanent residence under the condition that they invest a minimum amount in the country of destination or start a business employing a minimum number of people in the country of destination.

In order to achieve the aforementioned objectives, we used various theoretical methods, such as the logical-historical, the deductive-inductive and the analytical-synthetic for conducting a historical and theoretical study that allowed outlining the given premises on the foregoing approaches from a critical point of view.

Moreover, we used different techniques to gather information from the quantitative and qualitative methods, enabling a rapprochement to the actors in the migration process and the understanding of its development and significance.

Several methods and procedures contributed to this purpose such as: application of a Questionnaire to 10% of the Cubans established in Angola through the Cuban Consulate in this country; conduction of interviews to experts and Cuban researchers on Cuban migration issues and the socio-economic situation in Africa; and conduction of in-depth interviews to twenty people involved in the migration process towards Angola: ten Cuban



immigrants on vacation in the island and to ten family members of Cubans settled in the African country. Further explanations on the selection criteria of the sample and the processing, analysis and triangulation of the information will be provided in chapters on the characterization of the Cuban migration to Angola and the analysis of social representations on the migration process to this destination.

### **A review of theoretical approaches to migration and labour.**

Migration is a deep complex multidimensional social process, which intertwines different levels and scales of analysis in a dynamic and changing context that has had a worldwide interconnected historical development.

Since the 1990s, there has been a noticeable growing increase in the number of migrants in the world, migration destinations have diversified and migration social networks have become more visibility. This has been accompanied by a growing concern of some States about the negative consequences of migration for national security and the constant search for better management of international flows, more adjusted to the interests of governments and institutions. These processes, among others, are part of the “new global socio-economic architecture”, in which is closely related to the nature of the current restructuring of the capital and its relation with migration (Castles and Delgado Wise, 2007: 10).

A quick approach to official data published by IOM shows that in 2010 the total number of international migrants in the world amounted to 214 million people, figure that considerably raised up with respect to the estimated 191 million in 2005 (IOM , 2012a: 53). Geopolitically speaking, the direction of flows are chiefly concentrated in South-North movements, the most important migratory flow represented by 45% of the total number of movements in 2010 and followed by movements among the Southern regions, which accounted for the 35% (IOM, 2014: 57). Although the movement in this direction has not exceeded traditional flows, it is constantly growing to the extent of almost 10 million people from 1990-2010 (IOM, 2014: 59). In addition, the organization recognizes that the data collection in the South is more limited, and the fact that the constant occurrence of informal and spontaneous movements is unlikely to be registered nor reflected in the official figures, which would impact on movement volumes larger than those recorded so far (IOM, 2014: 58).

Labour migrants account for a significant part of these global numbers. According to the ILO, the migrant workers increased to 105 million in 2010; for this organization, people who migrated searching for job opportunities and their families represented 90% of all international migrants (ILO, 2010: 1).

Labour mobility has developed as part of the process of economic integration known as globalization, a phenomenon that “[...]involves the world’s entire population in a common mesh of economic and communication relations, this integration would be a product of high level available technology, which is also in constant innovation “(Quijano, 2014: 263). However, what else can be said about it? According to Castles and Delgado Wise “labour migration has been incorporated in different ways as part of this process. On one hand, the global capital fosters migration and reshapes its patterns, directions and means. Migration

in turn is an important factor when carrying out fundamental social transformations in origin and destination centres. So that migration is an integral part of globalization and social transformation processes, as well as a main force restructuring communities and societies” (Castles and Delgado Wise, 2007: 10).

In this sense, de Haas states that the broad process of social change (under the theoretical disguise of social transformation, development or globalization) conforms migration, which in its own interest affects this process through the social, economic, cultural and political impact on origin and destination societies. This relationship is reciprocal as well as asymmetric because migration is a sub-process of the wider process of change (Haas, 2014: 18-19).

However, before reaching this level of theoretical abstraction and global generalization, we should analyse how knowledge on migration and its relation to labour has been socially constructed, and the paradigms in which theoretical models describing these processes have been based. With this purpose, we have defined three central paradigms<sup>3</sup> that allow grouping theoretical models according to its nature and the methodological approach proposed to do so. Therefore, theoretical and methodological paradigms to study migration are broad.

The first paradigm refers to the “economic functionalism of the capitalist balance”, focused on the labour migration flows to highly industrialized centres and their impact on the economies of sending countries. The theoretical models included in this paradigm conceive the theoretical production of lines of thought as the theory of neoclassical economy and the

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<sup>3</sup> This methodological division has been defined by the author of this paper based on the classifications proposed in Guarnizo (2010) and de Haas (2014: 15) works. Guarnizo identifies “two major theoretical schools”, antagonist to a certain extent because of the use of different scales of analysis, but complementing each other due to their common objective of analyzing the same phenomenon. “On one hand there is the theoretical perspective of balance (associated to functionalism in sociology and the neoliberal theories in economy), which is based on ahistorical interpretations that emphasize on the systemic social balance and the motivations, based on the rational cost-profit calculation, of individuals weighing up the possibility to immigrate. The alternative vision, identified with the historic-structural perspective, connects the contemporary labour migration with the characteristics inherent to the hierarchic production system of the global economy through time” (Guarnizo 2010: 50).

De Haas proposes four common paradigms that allow combining the different theories based on the nature of society and how this should be studied. He states that the theories can be combined to understand the migration processes from a far eclectic analysis. The first paradigm gathers the social theory of functionalism according to which migration is a strategy of profit optimization applied by individuals and families. The models of the neoclassic economy, the new labour migration economy, and the theory of migration systems and most interpretations on the network theory are included in this paradigm. The second one deals with the historic-structural paradigm and groups: the theory of dependence, the theory of world systems, the theory of segmented or dual labour market and the critical theory of globalization. This paradigm explains migration as a result of the unbalances of the economic and power structure among societies where migrants are victims of the structural inequality of the world. The perspective of symbolic interrelation is the third paradigm and comprises theories explaining migrants’ daily experiences, perceptions and identities such as the transnational theory, that of the diasporas and creolization. Finally, he defines a fourth group that gathers the theories of the meso-level focusing on the continuity in migration such as the network theories, the theory of the migration systems and that of cumulative causation. These theories are also included in the previous paradigms (de Haas, 2014: 14-15).

theory of the new economy of labour migration, inspired by the influential push-pull theoretical framework.

The second paradigm deals with the visions of the “structural-historical school”, a far generalizing neo-Marxist approach in which labour migration is contextualized in a system of nations whose political power is unevenly distributed and the increasing expansion of global capitalism leads to the perpetuation of these inequalities and strengthening a layered economic order. In this order, the peripheral countries are in disadvantage within an unequal geopolitical structure that perpetuates its poverty and migration is a structural result of the expansion of markets in the global political hierarchy.

Finally, the last paradigm is related to the “multidimensional approach of social interaction fields” in which different theoretical perspectives (theory of social capital and migratory networks, the migration systems, the theory of cumulative causation and the different traditions of transnational and global migration perspectives) analyse from different levels the migration process in the context of strengthening transnational social relationships that establish the migrant communities in simultaneous geographic areas, how they changed the migration process while they are modified by the context of global restructuring of capitalism and its unequal networks of power.

Despite the proposed classification, it should be noted that it is not methodologically erroneous to use the premises of different theoretical models for the explanation of certain migration process. Current international migration trends show that “[...] a full understanding of international migration processes cannot be based on a single discipline, or in the approach on a single level of analysis. On the contrary, its complex and multifaceted nature requires a sophisticated theory covering a variety of assumptions, levels and perspectives” (Massey et al, 2008: 436). For this purpose, a review of the theoretical models that contributed the most with the study of labour migration between the Southern regions is presented below.

The 1960s and 1970s witnessed a significant boom in the field of scientific production on migration. This fact resulted from the mobility of the labour force and the restructuring of labour markets during the so-called post-industrial period (Durand and Massey, 2003: 13). In order to explain this phenomenon the neoclassical economy theory emerged.

Most of the researchers consulted (Arango, 2000 and 2003; Haas, 2008 and 2014; Durand and Massey, 2003; Guarnizo, 2010; Massey et al, 2008; Portes, 2007) agree that this theory focused its explanation on the causes of migration from macro and micro economic perspectives. The first one conveys the existing differences between labour and wage conditions of the countries. Migration is then conceived in terms of offer and demand: the push factors motivate and explain the origin of migration. In turn, this migration is headed to places with certain pull factors. The migration would have a positive effect, as it would lead to a balance among labour markets. Simultaneously with this movement, there is a flow of capital investment from rich to poor countries. The relative lack of capital in poor countries produces a higher rate of benefits in contrast with international standard, thus attracting investment. Capital movements also include human capital, highly skilled workers who move from rich to the poor countries with the aim of obtaining benefits in

accordance with their skills in an environment where human capital is scarce. The second perspective has to do with the cost-benefit calculation that the migration alternative implies for those individuals who decide to migrate, the migration process starts when this calculation results in the expectation of obtaining positive net income (Massey et.al. 2008: 438-442).

The downside of this theory lays in the fact that it ignores the social context in which individual migration calculations are made. In the absence of these elements, the wage differentials, regardless of their size, are not translated into sustained flows of labour force (Portes, 2007: 23-24). Besides, this approach mechanically reduces migration factors, deals with migrants and societies as homogeneous and static subjects and only analyses labour migration (Arango, 2000: 37).

A variant of the neoclassical economic perspective is the so-called new economy of labour migration, which criticizes some elements of the micro version of the neoclassical model. The fundamental difference with the neoclassical economic perspective lies on the selection of the unit of analysis and on the basis of reasoning that motivates individuals to migrate. For this new theory the unit of analysis is family or family groups, sometimes entire communities, not the socially isolated and rational individual. The decision to emigrate is taken in the family unit, where its members act collectively to increase their aspirations for new incomes and minimize the economic risks. As to the migrants' goal of getting highest possible incomes, this is not achieved in absolute terms, but in comparison with other family groups of reference (Durand and Massey, 2003: 15-17; Guarnizo, 2010: 52).

According to Arango (2000: 38; 2003: 11-13), the new economy of labour migration proposes a set of amendments to the neoclassical theory. First, the importance given to the wage differential is lower; these are not considered as necessarily leading to migration and therefore are not an essential cause for migrating. It also highlights the role of families and family units and the importance of remittances, and pays closer attention to information and to the complex interdependence between migrants and the context in which migration occurs.

The theory of segmented or dual labour markets since the late 1970s was conceived putting aside these approaches based on a micro perspective to analyse the motivations and characteristics of migration. In their interpretation of this theoretical model, Durand and Massey (2003: 17-18) believe that this theory links the motivations of international migration to “[...] the characteristic labour demand of the economic structure of developed nations. Immigration [...] responds to attraction factors exerted by the receiving countries (a chronic and inevitable need of cheap labour force)”. The close relationship between capital and labour has set the foundations of progressive process of the labour market segmentation where the immigrant community has been aimed at most exposed and low-wage jobs. In this line, these authors referred to Alejandro Portes' and Robert Bach's works on ethnic enclaves as a new sector of the labour market in which the elements determining the existence of a segmented labour market reproduce.

However, expanding the analysis to a macro level does not imply this theory is free from limitations acknowledged by Arango (2000: 40; 2003: 15-16). These downsides are

manifested in a biased explanation model towards the receiving centre without considering the sending-receiving relationship, the current flows do not solely respond to pre-existing labour demands or hiring practices, and finally it does not explain differential migration rates among advanced industrial economies with similar economic structures.

The critical counterpart of these theoretical models influenced by the push-pull theoretical framework is the historical-structural school, inspired by the neo-Marxist approach that applies a global scale and a long-term historical perspective to the analysis of the development of social processes. While the origin of historical and structural studies (based on both, the theory of dependency and Wallerstein's theory of the modern capitalist world-system) focused on the characterization of the economic stratification of the world parting from the unequal distribution of political power during the expansion of mercantile or commercial capitalism, it conceived migrations as a consequence of these inequalities. According to this approach, "[...] international migration emerges in response to the disruptions and dislocations that inevitably take place in the process of capitalist development" (Durand and Massey, 2003: 26).

This view on migration had a great influence on the construction of subsequent methodologies which offer a more structural approach to the description of the contemporary reality of migration. For Guarnizo, the contribution of this perspective is important because "[...] it examines a broad range of migration issues, including the forces that determine the process of capital accumulation, the social networks that support labour migration, the economic and political relations in the workplace, and the patterns of incorporation of the migrant workers in the labour market" (Guarnizo, 2010: 52-53). An element added by this theory is the degree of prior cultural and economic penetration, by the receiving society within the sending society, as a condition of migration flows. "According to the structural historical perspective, deliberate penetration-through military coercion, economic supremacy (including the control of investments, the international market and labour recruitment) or the cultural dissemination- of peripheral societies or subordinated by the advanced societies creates internal structural imbalances in the first ones. Such imbalances account for the real causes underlying and supporting labour migration" (Guarnizo, 2010: 53).

Consulted studies agree on the importance of social networks to reproduce and perpetuate the migration processes (Arango, 2000 and 2003; Haas, 2014; Durand and Massey, 2003; Guarnizo, 2010; Massey et al, 2008; Portes, 2007). Migration networks, as "[...] interpersonal relationships connecting migrants with other migrants before them and with non-migrants in the origin and destination countries through ties of kinship, friendship and peasantry" (Durand and Massey, 2003: 31) explain the dynamic and long lasting character of migration.

Based on this paradigm, the theory of cumulative causation, retaken by Douglas Massey in the 1990s, supports the potential of international migration parting from accumulated experiences originated by the historical-structural factors. Each migration act changes the social context in which subsequent migration decisions are taken, especially because it favours additional movements (Durand and Massey, 2003: 34). According to Guarnizo (2010: 53-54) this gradual process of building social networks provides a better

understanding of the labour migration. For this author, the existence and persistence over time of social networks transforms international labour migration in a stable social process, even after the elimination of structural factors that originally cause them.

Another important contribution to the multidimensional paradigm of the social interaction fields has been presented by the American anthropologist Nina Glick Schiller with her critical approach, from a transnational perspective, on international migration and the further significance of understanding this phenomenon from a global perspective.

According to this researcher transnationalism defines the multiplicity of overlapped social relations migrant populations establish across borders. Schiller states that transnational strategies of settlement have been marked by the simultaneous incorporation of migrants through multiple established connections among places of origin and settlement and transnational networks (Feldman-Bianco and Glick Schiller, 2011: 25). In this approach, Glick Schiller argues the valuable of reformulating the concept of society outside the limits of the State-nation. Her proposal of “social field”, as mobile and dynamic dimensions of time and space constitutes a multiplicity of overlapped networks that migrant populations establish across borders, has become a powerful tool for conceptualizing the range of relationships binding those migrants with the ones staying (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2006: 198-199).

Analysing migration and its actors in the social spaces they coexist in and are connected to through multiple networks, not viewing micro and macro levels as a dichotomy, is an essential part of the theoretical and methodological approach proposed by Glick Schiller with the conceptualization of the global perspective on migration (Glick Schiller, 2009: 5-6). In this perspective the world is perceived in connection with multiple networks of unequal power, where certain “globe-spanning institutions of power”<sup>4</sup> of the financial capital, deep-rooted in a few militarily powerful States intervene and penetrate institutions, the economies and the everyday life of the other States. The resulting power imbalance determines the circumstances forcing people to migrate, while shaping the conditions under which they try to settle and develop transnational social fields (Glick Schiller, 2009: 7-10; Feldman-Bianco and Glick Schiller, 2011: 26 and 34).

In this last methodological approach, Márquez Covarrubias (2012) also defined two conceptual categories that favour the understanding of the performance of “globe-spanning institutions of power” in the unequal setting of global power networks. On one hand, he refers to a “transnational power system” as a characteristic of the centralized process of global accumulation. Under this system, “[...] the new imperialism is articulated by a collective agent of capital –collective imperialism– bringing together transnational

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<sup>4</sup> It is important to point out that Glick Schiller reference to the changing performance of the globe-spanning institutions of power is essential in its global perspective on migration. This element differentiates its vision from the macro approach presented by the historic-cultural schools theories. The North American researcher proposes the analysis of interpenetration among globe-spanning institutions of power determining the unequal hierarchy of globe power and migrants experiences within and across the borders. For that she proposes to leave aside with the ruling and traditional methodological nationalism, that even today, divides the object of study in differentiated levels of analysis (Glick Schiller, 2009: 7).

monopolies and oligopolies, the governments of the central Euro-American and Asian countries, the international financial organizations and the regulatory organizations of international trade, the large mass media and the academics mainstream. Transnational power architecture articulates the interests of the capital, the government and its institutions, supported in a supranational government made up of central governments including the United States, European Union and Japan. [...]. In order to support this strategy, a transnational power structure is set, which militarizes the international relations, controls the political-diplomatic mechanisms, imposes structural adjustment policies in the periphery and concentrates the mass media that takes over the population subjectivity” (Marquez Covarrubias, 2012: 11). On the other hand, it defines “transnational elite” as a distinctive feature of unequal development. In this category, “the main actors of the world’s capitalist system are the big transnational corporations, the multinational banks, the imperial States and the international organizations, plus the elites settled in the underdeveloped countries: the national bourgeoisie related to the world market and neoliberal States associated to the project of neoliberal globalization” (Márquez Covarrubias, 2012: 91). This “transnational elite” globally rooted as a system, mediates and shapes the centralized global accumulation process resulting in the unequal development among regions, countries and classes. In turn, this process has deepened the workers migration towards the most dynamic capitalist centres as part of the permanent social crisis in the periphery (commercialization of migrant labour force).

By reviewing Glick Schiller contribution, it is possible to study the sources on which she based her theoretical and methodological perspective on the study of migration, including the contributions of the Peruvian sociologist and political theoretician Anibal Quijano (2014) on the debate on the colonialist feature of power and the social classification, in which one of its edges questions the labour control as the basis articulating the unequal global power relations. Under this assumption, migration is seen as a social process interrelated in multiple levels with labour and its global reorganization, but also as generating conditions in the global labour markets, influenced by the national elites interests originated in the global financial institutions and the imperial powers as actors and modifiers of global economic, political and social conditions.

The different theoretical models referred to so far contribute with a better understanding of the variables and scales that determine and influence the international labour migration, even in the South-South flows. In order to deal with and understand the working dynamics of both the individual and family migration decision, the push-pull factors conditioning the differences between offer and demand in the global labour market, historical-structural factors that contextualize and transform the migratory flow and the significance of transnational social networks in shaping and perpetuating the migration process, offers to researcher a multifaceted subject of study.

However, the overall approach allows analysing migration as a dynamic process, conditioned by structural imbalances of a capitalist system interconnected by multiple networks of unequal power, which involves globe-spanning institutions of power. From this perspective, labour migration among the Southern regions is a part of the history and current contradictions of capitalism, in which policies designed and implemented by the

financially and militarily dominant States and institutions converge. In this line it is necessary to understand the history of the interrelations of the peripheral and colonial South regions with the centre during the stage of expansion and development of the capitalist system; the current neoliberal restructuring of the power system in the age of globalization of the capitalist mode of production and its multiple consequences, including the creation of a global labour market; and the shaping of peripheral flow circle offered by regional integration and interregional cooperation platforms as an alternative political and economic mechanisms against the systemic structural imbalances.

### **Characteristics of international migration and its relation with labour from a global perspective**

Since the origins of the capitalist system<sup>5</sup>, labour force migration has moved along and interacted –positively or negatively– with production processes and development and underdevelopment<sup>6</sup> stages. “With the rise of capitalism, international migration flows became part of the capitalist system. These flows acted in accordance with capitalism needs, mainly related to the accumulation, growth and concentration of capital as part of the cheap (qualified or not) labour force market” (Álvarez Acosta, 2010b: 26).

The expansion of mercantile manufacturing capitalism by means of the imposition of several European colonial models in America, Africa and Asia and the connection of the world from the establishment of the oceanic channels as a “unique transportation network” engaged the world population in a single migration system, which is part of the global pattern of power, which is based on its global, capitalist, euro-centred and modern colonial character.

Since then, the global labour market has been shaped by a unique structure of global control monitored by the capital and a set of a few national states with sufficient financial, technological and military strength to influence and determine historical conditions in other territories. Labour migration has been part of this global structure and has contributed with its transformation and expansion, and it has been subject to the nature of its multiple networks of unequal power.

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<sup>5</sup> This category refers to the whole new structure of global control of labour, under the capital control (Quijano, 2014: 272).

<sup>6</sup> Development/underdevelopment as dimensions of the unequal process of development is widely dealt with by Márquez Covarrubias (2012). In the introduction of the present paper, we made reference to the opinion of this important Mexican economist regarding the limitations still offered by normative definitions of development and how its contextualization has been retaken and related to migration according to the interests of the capital. As to underdevelopment, this researcher defines it “[...] as a historic, structural, and strategic characteristic of peripheral countries that lack strategic control over its economic surplus, natural and human resources. In the structuring of the world capitalist system, peripheral nations are subject to the central nations, namely the triad made up of the United States, the European Union and Japan” (Márquez Covarrubias, 2012: 294). In his opinion, development and underdevelopment are the two faces of the historic, economic, social and political formation process of “[...] exploitation, domination, oppression, and dispossession relations which means taking the economic surplus and natural and human resources from the underdeveloped world to the centre of the world’s capitalist system”; i.e., unequal development (Márquez Covarrubias, 2012: 79).



During the mercantile period (from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries)<sup>7</sup> migration flows were controlled by Europeans, migration was framed within the colonization scheme, which was in accordance with the interests of the metropolitan capital. Millions of Europeans left to America and then to Asia and Africa, as contract workers or colonist. However, the large demand of labour force from the labour market in the colonial world was covered by workers imported from other peripheral regions of the colonial capitalist world. In this sense, we can set the example of 10 million Africans or more who were forced to move to America to work as slaves. “Slavery was perhaps the first transnational system of labour recruitment for the accumulation of capital” (Alvarez Acosta, 2010b: 20; Castles, 2013: 11; Durand and Massey, 2003: 11).

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during the period of development of industrial capitalism, “[...] began the greatest human migrations in history [...]. Between 1846 and 1875, more than nine million people left Europe, most of them headed to the United States. [...] Population and industrialization movements move along, given that modern economic development throughout the world required substantial movements of populations, making this process easier, from the technical viewpoint, and cheaper by new and constantly improved communications, and of course it prepared the world for a much larger population” (Hobsbawm, 1995: 202-203). According to Durand and Massey (2003: 12) “[...] between 1800 and 1925, more than 48 million people left from European industrialized countries in the search for a new life in America and Oceania. In fact, 85 per cent of this migration moved to five destinations: Argentina, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States”.

Furthermore, there were other important destinations of European migration headed, in this case, towards Africa<sup>8</sup>, continent that embraced in some geographical areas the progressive settlement of white colonist from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In this case, colonialism also began to mediate as a migration channel and it gave way to urban settlements and the construction of European-like cities as Casablanca, Algiers, Oran, Asmara, Nova Lisboa (Huambo) or Nairobi in African territories (Sánchez Porro, 2010: 181).

Nevertheless, the international migrant contingent did not exclusively come from Europe. In that period there was also a major flow among peripheral regions of the capitalist system in response to the banning of slave trade. The mobility of hired workers by contract became the main source of labour in plantations, construction and the railway, ports and docks, and domestic service, among other activities. The British colonial authorities recruited workers from the Indian subcontinent for the sugar plantations in the Caribbean; others were employed in plantations, mines and the railway in Malaysia, East and Southern Africa and Fiji. The British also recruited Chinese coolies to Malaysia and other colonies in the Caribbean. Dutch colonial authorities also used Chinese labour force in construction

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<sup>7</sup> Durand and Massey (2003: 11-14) propose the division of international migration in modern history in four large periods: the mercantile period between 1500 and 1800, the industrial period from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and the 1950s, the post-industrial period from 1960 to the late 1980s and finally, the global period from 1990 on.

<sup>8</sup> Africa experienced the process of distribution, conquest and pacification belatedly, from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, if compared with Latin America.

projects in the Netherlands East Indies. Up to a million contract workers were recruited in Japan, primarily to work in Hawaii, United States, Brazil and Peru (Castles, 2013: 12).

Another important group of people from Southwest Asia the Middle East and the North of Africa joined the international flows to Latin America. It is estimated that hundred thousands of Arabs, Turkish and Jews arrived during the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to “build America”; most of them headed to Brazil, Argentina and Mexico as main destinations (Akmir, 2009: 20).

A brief pause is necessary to say that during these two periods, Cuba swallowed all this migration flow. As an immigration country until the 1930s, immigration came from several places. The first settlements from Europe, which merged with the remaining indigenous people and the increasing African presence, were complemented with new influences from North America, Asia, North Africa and the Caribbean. Although most contemporary migration waves had a temporal nature, a considerable part remained in the country and was engaged in the process of acculturation and construction of the Cuban nation. Several Cuban researchers provide insights on this process<sup>9</sup> from historical, anthropological and ethnographical points of view.

Interconnections among peripheral regions, derived from migrations encouraged by the capitalist development in its mercantile and industrial stage, had a profound social and demographic impact on the formation of nations, mainly in Latin America. The impact of the multidimensional character of migration’s cultural, economic and political contributions in receiving nations has been significant. Just to mention simple examples, readers are invited to explore how many entrepreneurs or Latin American politicians from Arabic, Jewish or Asian origins make the headlines and news in the mass media, how many foreign elements are present in the toponymy of urban and rural cartography, or how across border habits, tastes, words and religions have survived till present day.

There were several events that hindered large scale migration dynamics by the end of the 1950s: two world wars, the implementation of restrictive policies in some receiving countries and the economic crisis from 1929. Yet, the second post-war period led to the expansion of international migration flows, both in volume and trajectory. There were a considerable number of workers recruited by governments or employers as temporary workforce (or “guest workers”) attracted to Europe, which was immersed in an economic and social reconstruction (17 Castles, 2013). These South-North population movements were mainly made up of unskilled workers. They had a legal basis and, even though there national controls and laws in force, there were no major restrictions to enter receiving countries until the late 1980s (Alvarez Acosta, 2010b: 23). The oil crisis from the 1970s, together with the industrial boom of several economies in the Middle East and East Asia, among other elements, reset the direction of these flows. Although the European destination continued to be important and attractive, labour migration among the southern regions would gradually become a growing trend.

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<sup>9</sup> Some of the Cuban academics who have studied the migration factor in the formation of the Cuban nation are: anthropologist Fernando Ortiz and historians Juan Pérez de la Riva, María del Carmen Barcia, Jesús Guanche, Rigoberto Menéndez, Graciela Chailloux and Maritza Corrales.

By the 1990s, international migration had already become a global phenomenon (Durand and Massey, 2003: 4). In this context it is important to understand the scope of the progressive consolidation process of globalization trends that began in the 1970s under neoliberal conceptions that advocated liberalization, privatization and deregulation. “Globalization should be seen as the search by the centres of world power for a new pattern of accumulation that allows them to create the bases of a new international economic and political order of the foundations of new exploitation systems that enable the world powers, and its most powerful sectors, to reverse structural problems that affected the system by the end of the 1960s” (Baró Herrera and Chailloux Laffita, 2008: 29).

According to Cuban researchers Baró Herrera and Chailloux Laffita (2008: 30-40) globalization, as a new stage in the imperialist phase of the capitalist MODE OF production, is essentially an economic phenomenon, but it also embraces multiple dimensions –social, political and military, legal and institutional, among others. They affirm that several trends have shown the reconfiguration of a new world order whose main axis is globalization:

- a) Extension and consolidation of capitalist relations from the implementation of neoliberal policies of structural adjustment by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), to underdeveloped countries; and the collapse of the socialist system and the disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) that enabled the transition of these nations, along with China, into a market economy.
- b) Progress of the technical and material basis, through scientific and technical advances that favour the development of productive forces and interdependence among nations.
- c) Changes in the levels of specialization of nations, in the capitalist international division of labour and the positioning of countries and groups of countries in the world economy parting from the control of scientific and technical advances.
- d) Greater interconnection among goods, services and capital markets.
- e) Centralization of the economic power and position in international markets in a small number of very powerful companies: mega corporations. These companies are turning the world into a “world factory” by fragmenting and geographically dispersing production processes.
- f) New levels of centralization of the economic, political and military power in a small number of international actors (countries and international organizations controlled by these powers) that are able to make decisions on the most important global issues thus internationalizing their political views over remaining actors.

Meanwhile, Márquez Covarrubias (2012: 175-184) identifies a group of essential features that in his opinion define globalization in this stage. These include the internationalization of capital, the speculative expansion of financial capital, environmental degradation, restructuring of innovation processes, job insecurity and new migration dynamics. On the latter, he explains it has undergone two key transformations since the 1990s: first, prevailing strong pressures to emigrate in the main sending countries due to the lack of job

opportunities, and second, the increasing vulnerability that affects the new labour migration and subjects it to extreme exploitation.

From a global perspective it is possible to set common points between globalization and the hierarchical system of world power, and how the latter encourages a trend to the reorganization of the global power scheme and how globalization leads this process based on its neoliberal conceptions. In this changing context, migration flows go in line with the interests of the global capitalist system, while they result from and contribute with its expansion.

According to Márquez Covarrubias and Delgado Wise (2011: 17), “[...] the human mobility inherent to the global expansion of capital combines a tangle of internal and international migration flows that respond to the dynamics of capital, especially to the new national and international labour division. Migrations shape a significant form of transfer of financial and human resources in favour of the capital, a dynamic that is associated with accumulation by dispossession and emergence of overexploitation forms of short-term labour and control of scientific and technological labour”.

In this sense, Castles illustrates certain trends in the symbiotic relationship between the new global labour market and migration, brought into context in neoliberal ideas that perceive it as a product in the world capitalist system. These can be summarized as follows:

- The creation of an integrated global market, which have established production sites wherever labour costs are cheaper; thus, workers in less developed countries have become part of the chains of global value controlled by multinational corporations (Castles and Delgado Wise, 2012: 187).
- “Labour market segmentation process” adds several forms of differentiation of the workforce. For Castles (2013: 23-24) these are established not based on economic criteria such as “human capital” (relying on education, training and job skills), but on criteria that contribute with marginalization and vulnerability such as gender, race, ethnicity, origin and legal status.
- The implementation of migration policies that contribute with the strengthening of “labour market segmentation” and at the same time in accordance with this differentiation.
- The increasing trend towards outsourcing, temporary and informal labour as new forms of employment, “informalization of labour market”, motivated by the economic deregulation (Castles, 2013: 24-27).
- Increase of irregular migration.
- Strong dichotomy between market forces demanding freedom for labour movement and political forces that require control and immigration fees, emphasizing on security of and integration in the receiving societies.
- The official stance of the governments from receiving countries and the international organizations that show labour migration as an element leading to development, with the aim of strengthening the ideology that sending countries have the capacity to

overcome their status of underdeveloped nations and not recognize the structural factors that have favoured the formation of an unequal and hierarchical system of power actively moulded by receiving nations and major international financial and trade institutions.

- Increasing tendency of certain categories of workers -especially irregular migrants- to be pushed into insecure and exploitative jobs, “precarious labour conditions” (Castles, 2013: 28).

A new theoretical approach has arisen in this debate, which relates the capitalist development in its globalization stage of neoliberal concepts, to migration parting from the critical review of the concept of “forced migration”. Mexican economist Márquez Covarrubias (2010: 73-76; 2012: 226-234) has been the main advocate of this approach arguing that “[...] forced migration refers to human mobility caused by accumulation dynamics of the global capitalist system, unequal development and the neo-liberalization process that destroy development patterns in the peripheral countries, dismantle valorisation dynamics and detach broad population groups from their means of production and subsistence, generating wide overpopulation that needs to leave their home in order to survive, particularly in central countries interested in exploiting abundant cheap, flexible and disorganized workforce”.

From this approach, migration is understood as a historical and structural process, whose new dynamics are associated with the formation and expansion of capitalist relations in the reconfiguration of the world system of power.

In turn, this research identifies four categories of forced migration: 1) migration due to violence, conflict and disasters, 2) migration due to dispossession, exclusion and unemployment, 3) human trafficking, and 4) migration due to over qualification and lack of job opportunities.

In this process, migration brings about several benefits for receiving countries. Migrants contribute with the process of accumulation and development of destination countries through cheap labour, increase of competitiveness and the restructuring of the capitalist system; strengthening of internal markets through consumption; demographic reproduction which compensates natives’ low population growth; strengthening fiscal funds through taxes and pensions; in addition to contributions to the social, cultural and political life. On the other hand, they deprive sending countries from their workforce. Migrants, mainly in the case of qualified people, represent a transfer of resources, whose socioeconomic expenses account for a significant outlay of public and family resources that are not repaid, for example, through remittances.

Then migration should be seen as a key element in the dynamics of contemporary capitalism, the geographic reorganization of its production relations and the hierarchical restructuring of its global power networks.

### **Labour migration between the regions of the South.**

As it has been previously explained, the 1990s marked a new stage in the historical development of international migratory flows. A global era stepped in. In this era migration gained even more prominence. This new period of diversification of international migration flows' destinations and origins, was based on the reconfiguration of global labour markets and the shortening of the distances because of a re-encouraged globalization by the technological revolution in the fields of communications and transport.

On the other hand, the structural crisis of the capitalist system, which hit particularly hard on the main destinations of international migration flows from December 2007 on, together with years of implementation of restrictive and xenophobic immigration policies by these nations and the socio-economic opportunities offered by the so-called emerging nations of the South, promoted the process of regionalization of international migration flows.

At the beginning of this paper, we made emphasis on the increasing significance of labour mobility among the southern regions. According to Ratha and Shaw (2006), approximately 74 million people (out of 191 million migrants) moved in this direction in 2005. Most of these South-South movements took place among countries with common borders and similar income levels. These researchers are of the opinion that the geographic factor (proximity of destinations) and the existence of family and friends social networks are some of the prevailing motivations. Income differences among countries in the region, weather patterns that determine agricultural production cycles depending on seasons and thus generating lots of temporary jobs, minor trading activities, conflicts and natural disasters and, to a lower extent, agreements based by integration mechanisms that simplify movements of people (Ratha and Shaw, 2006: 13-19). However, Cuban historian and Professor Álvarez Acosta (2010b: 23-24) points out that mobility among the regions of the South was already in place since the 1960s and 1970s, chiefly driven by:

- The negative consequences of the crisis of 1973, triggered by the rise of oil prices in the world market as a result of Yom Kippur's Arab-Israeli War. The decline in oil imports prompted a decrease in the economic activity in general, favouring inflation, unemployment, a drop of investments, and problems in the balance of payments, among others.
- The implementation of neoliberal structural adjustment policies in underdeveloped countries. These policies have represented "[...] a systematic attack on the working and living conditions of the majority of the population, maintenance of the macroeconomic policy guaranteeing profits for large corporations and speculative investment, preservation of a fiscal system securing benefits for the big capital at the expense of public funds and social policy, and the imposition of a cumulative regime by dispossession enabling foreign investments and the national capital to get hold of strategic and profitable sectors. This results in the proliferation of social inequality, poverty, marginalization and migration" (Márquez Covarrubias, 2012: 80).
- The intensification of efforts, mainly from the 1980s, to achieve greater control over migration by the Northern countries, especially from Europe, through the adoption of restrictive migration policies nationally and the establishment of multilateral or

supranational regulation systems (Castles, 2006: 39), initiatives that were in accordance with the xenophobic speech by right-wing governments and mass media convincing the population that immigration is the cause of economic problems.

- The different levels of structural economic development among the regions of the South and the labour opportunities that emerged in some peripheral nations from the implementation of national development strategies. In these regard, it is worth highlighting the successes of industrialization processes in the Persian Gulf and the East of Asia and the demand of labour force they generated.
- The triumph of the nationalist movements in most late decolonization processes in Africa and Asia and their struggle against the remaining structural contradictions of the colonial heritage. In this sense, some of the elements that drove the migration flows within those continents (interregional) and among them (intraregional) are: the ceasing to control over population movements by the metropolis, the outbreak of violent armed conflicts in several parts of these regions, the slow economic growth achieved after the independence and the demographic boom experienced after these years.

Nonetheless, it should not be ignored the many examples of South-South migration that developed during periods of mercantile and industrial capitalism (already mentioned in the previous chapter) which left a profound impact on the cultural and identity formations of future nations.

Besides, it is noteworthy that in the case of South-South migrations, migration projects are cheaper and encourage movements, which are usually shorter (mainly within a region), and linguistic and cultural factors favour immigrants faster integration.

The Asian continent have had a historical trend of South-North flows, however it began to unfold a discrete South-South flows at a regional level given the different levels of development reached by the nations of the area. One of the most illustrative examples of this movement within the continent is precisely the migration of thousands of Egyptians, Palestinians, Lebanese, Syrians, Sudanese and Yemeni citizens towards oil monarchies in the Persian Gulf during the 1960s and especially after the oil “boom” in 1973. The new oil economies of the Gulf, with huge rents suddenly demanded foreign labour force, qualified or not, to fill all jobs generated in the construction and economic fields in general. This was covered with migrant workers from neighbouring Arab countries until the early 1990s with the implementation of the *kafala* system (“guarantee” or “care for”). The implementation of this system brought about a process of hiring native workers to the rest of the Asian region, namely Pakistan, Philippines, Indonesia, and Bangladesh.

In the *kafala* system a foreign workers are given a visa and a temporary permit of residence only if a national citizen takes responsibility for them. The *khafeel*, employer or sponsor, is financially and legally responsible for foreign workers and for that he must sign a contract with the Ministry of Labour. If any worker breaches the contract, he is forced to leave the country immediately, at his own expenses (Mesa Delmonte, 2010: 94-95). Researchers estimate that, with this system, the number of foreign workers in the region amounted to 10.6 million in 2008, an increase of almost 50% if compared with figures from 1999 (Pérez García, 2013a: 132).

However, other considerable migration flows also headed to Japan or to the famous “Asian dragons” (New Industrialized Countries, NICs), which included Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea, later on followed by Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, in that order. Álvarez Acosta (2005: 113) states that “[...] in the beginning of the 1980s, Asians working in countries of the region were estimated at nearly a 1 million. In the mid-1997, this figure had increased to 6.5 million of foreign workers in Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong and Taiwan”.

These figures support the hypothesis of several researchers on the impact of the socio-economic and political development in some regions of Asia which allowed it to become one of the main centres of South-South migration with a distinctive feature, the regionalization of the labour force flows (Álvarez Acosta, 2005).

Meanwhile, most of sub-regions in the African continent were already going through intense intercontinental population movements that followed the historic routes laid down by the configuration of the colonial administration and the strategies of the European capitalist development. Once the independence processes were consolidated and shaped by the unequal economic structure designed under the colonial system and the policy of labour force recruitment, the temporary migration of workers continued to be headed toward areas of intensive economic exploitation, i.e. agricultural plantations for commercial purposes or mining development areas. These flows have had a strong seasonal and circular character in correspondence with the requirements previously established by those economies based on season’s intensive agriculture, the prevalence of irregular movements due to the arbitrary nature of national borders and the rural exodus deepened by disruptions caused by the implementation of neoliberal policies.

Although the African emigration to Europe has had a significant importance, prestigious African political scientist Mbuyi Kabunda Badi (2006) draws attention over a change of direction of migration flows towards an increasingly horizontal rather than vertical trend. “The inter-African migrations include millions of people, far exceeding the internal migration in other continents. Africa records about 40 million of internal migrants, [...] more than the 80 per cent of the total African migration” (Kabunda Badi, 2012: 12).

By the 1970s, Latin America and the Caribbean also experienced a change in their immigration. By that time it was predominantly European (75% of immigrants living in Latin America were mostly Europeans) and by the year 2000 most came from Latin America (interregional migrants accounted for the 60% of migration flows). Most of these flows were and are motivated by the search for wage labour in sectors such as domestic service, agriculture, construction and tourism. This migration combines permanent and temporary features, along with strong gender segregation, in which women work for the most part in the domestic service sector and men in the construction and agriculture sectors (Mazza and Sohnen, 2011: 19-24).

It is important to draw attention to the large number of refugees and internally displaced people accompanying migration flows in these regions, which has also moved predominantly in the South-South direction. Peripheral countries, scenarios for the latest political and military conflicts, have generated refugees par excellence. Environmental



issues, among others, are also perceived as elements that bring about forced migrations. In the case of refugees, Asia and Africa are the most important sending and receiving continents of these flows. In 1985 both regions had welcomed 7,954 413 people, figure that had grown to 11,401 047 by 1989. “In 1990, 87% of the refugees were gathered in the South; therefore, the remaining 13% had settled in the North” (Álvarez Acosta, 2005: 38-42).

In the reconfiguration of South-South migration over the last 30 years of the past century, it is convenient to reflect on the process of construction of a transnational ideological and political platform to foster the so-called “horizontal cooperation” that brought peripheral regions closer. The South-South “[...] Cooperation was born between the 1950s and 1960s, due to the need for security, search and strengthening of independence, economic and social development by developing countries in order to transform the international system. Therefore, cooperation has been marked by the ideology of national liberation against colonialism, by non-alignment and development, giving priority to alliances or coalitions and regional integration for achieving structural changes in North-South relations and the economic development of their countries by eliminating asymmetries with the North and the establishment of self-centred economies” (Kabunda Badi, 2011: 23).

In the struggle against capitalist, hierarchical and hegemonic power, all these regions (most of them achieved their political independence recently and have huge structural disadvantages in the system of worldwide economic relations) it chose a platform of political consensus through cooperation in terms of development that would allow defending their socio-economic interests. This process was accompanied by the formation of broad political and economic groups among peripheral regions such as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) established in 1961 at the Summit in Belgrade and the Group of 77 (G-77) established in 1964 and currently made up of 134 nations. In addition, other regional and sub-regional groups emerged with a focus on promoting economic and commercial development, direct foreign investment flows among countries, regional integration, transfer of technology and knowhow, based on basic principles such as solidarity, complementarity, equality, non-conditionality and respect for sovereignty. The conditions for the emergence of a peripheral circulation circuit were gradually set despite limitations of these processes of regional integration and interregional consensus. By this, we refer to the circulation of goods, capital, technical skills, scientific knowledge, experiences and people.

Although the scheme of South-South cooperation went through a crisis during the 1980s and the 1990s, under the new contemporary conditions of re-expansion of global networks of power, this kind of cooperation demands a revitalization process directed to channel horizontal dialogues at different levels: governments, international and regional organizations, NGOs, enterprises, intellectual networks, social movements and other actors of the civil society (Doria, 2011: 257).

In this sense, I would like to quote Doria (2011: 280) “[...] South-South migration flows are another manifestation of South-South transnational dialogues, in which immigrants build and maintain bonds with their homelands. Besides, the presence of immigrant groups from the South in other States under this denomination influences the relations among states as

well". In this line, Mexican political scientist and Africanist sets the example of the Palestinian community in Brazil and the way this has driven the structure of relations between the Brazilian state and the Palestinian National Authority, as well as a political agenda for the Middle East.

That is, South-South Cooperation is not only accompanied by political and economic exchanges but also by the flow of people based on ancient migratory routes created since the period of formation of mercantile and industrial capitalism. The movement of individuals among peripheral countries also promotes rapprochement and integration from the knowledge of and collaboration with other realities of the so-called "Global South" (Castles, 2013; Quijano, 2014; Houtart, 2014).

In the last few years, various sources have talked about a tendency towards the regionalization of the international migration flows, not only within the South regions but also among them. We have already analysed the determinant factors of this process since the 1970s such as the structural crises that have affected the capitalist system in increasingly shorter periods of time (oil crisis, 1973-1974 and 1979-1982; foreign debt crisis in Latin America, 1980-1984, the crack of 1987, crisis due to the incorporation of the former socialist countries into capitalism, 1991; Asia's financial crisis, 1997; crisis after invasions to Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003); crisis of the mortgage sector, 2007-2010) and the transition from the Keynesian model of economic policy to neoliberalism. The negative consequences of these elements are manifested in a civilization crisis with multiple social dimensions: expansion of hunger in the periphery and the centre, in a context in which technical capacities for the production of food have consolidated; implementation of a formal underemployment regime based on wage devaluation, structural unemployment as a means for regulating labour market and migration as global supply of cheap labour (Márquez Covarrubias, 2012: 47-56).

These elements, together with the recent militarization of borders, greater selectivity of migration flows, the implementation of more restrictive and xenophobic migration policies by the traditional migration destinations and the emergence of opportunities in some economies of the Southern nations, have favoured the increase of South-South and North-South flows.

In this regard, there is evidence of Africans migration flows to Latin America, especially towards Brazil, Argentina, Colombia and Ecuador (Texidó, 2012; Wabgou, 2012). Moreover, about 20 thousand Africans, mainly Nigerians, are estimated to live in China, while hundreds of Chinese are estimated to live in Africa (ACP Observatory on Migration, 2012).

Furthermore, it is convenient to take into account the growing importance of some destinations in the South for many migrants from the North. Since 2008, the international press has published several articles calling the attention on Europeans from different nationalities seeking employment in Australia, Brazil, Argentina, Angola, Mozambique and South Africa. According to Castles (2013: 35) "[...] these migrants were retaking routes already established 50 or even 100 years ago, but the difference lays in the fact that today

many young qualified people move from depressed economies in search for opportunities in emerging economic centres”.

The multiple migration flows that have taken place among southern regions (the so-called “periphery” of the world system) throughout history have left their imprint in the formation of connection channels that have transcended to present-day. The migration process in this geographical scenario, with its undeniable diversity, has been dynamic and continuous despite disruptions, adjustments and revivals provided by the interaction with global networks of power in certain historical periods. Labour plays an important role in this process as the main motivation for the circulation of people who usually have a marked temporary character in the migration experience.

### **Cubans migration to Africa in its historic and global context.**

The bibliography on the issue of Cubans migrations is in accordance with a change of course occurred to the Cuban external migration pattern starting on the 1930s (Aja, 2002a, 2002b, 2006; López-Calleja, 2008; Sorolla 2008, Sorolla, 2013b). Since then, Cuba has been marked by emigration, a common characteristic among Latin American nations (Sorolla, 2013: 201-203). However, variations on the amount, composition and destinations of migration, among other elements, have to do with socioeconomic and political dynamics in the regional and international context and with the particular features of Cuba’s historic development.

As previously stated in this article, the 1990s were characterized by a series of events having a bearing in the increase of international migration and in the diversification of migration sending and receiving countries. The following are some of the aforementioned events:

- a) Consolidation of a globalizing trend, with neoliberal paradigms, of capitalist production relations.
- b) Expansion of the world capitalist market through the introduction of structural adjustment neoliberal policies in peripheral regions and dismantling of the socialist system in Eastern Europe.
- c) Reconfiguration of the world labour market by releasing large labour force contingents.
- d) Commodification of labour force.
- e) Implementation of restrictive and regulatory migration policies that counter the needs of the capitalist labour market.
- f) Deepening of the regional gap with unequal structural development balances.
- g) Marked colonial character of the world power pattern expressed in the hegemonic control of a Euro and North America-centred political and cultural consumption model.
- h) Shortening of geographic spaces as a result of the technological revolution in the fields of communications and transport.

In this context, migration flows from Cuba, Latin America and other parts of the world expanded and diversified. New receiving nations emerged in Western Europe, Latin America and, to a lesser extent, in Africa, Asia and Oceania, without leaving aside the traditional destination by excellence since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (the United States). Nonetheless, it should be noted that this process was also in accordance with the increasing migratory movements among the regions of the South (the periphery of the world system), mostly in the case of migration flows with labour purposes. Thus, the current migration of Cubans to non-traditional destinations in the South is also in agreement with other contemporary crosscurrents of Africans moving to Latin America (chiefly Brazil, Argentina, Colombia and Ecuador) or Asia, Asians moving to Africa, among others, already mentioned in the previous section.

According to statistics published in a Demographic Annual Report by the National Office of Statistics and Information (ONEI, by its acronym in Spanish) of Cuba, until 2013, the balances<sup>10</sup> of the Cuban external migration showed negative figures, basically ranging from -30 thousand to -40 thousand people annually between 1994-2013. This accounts for a significant increase in contrast with 1982-1993, in which the external migration balance (per 1.000 inhabitants) was below -1,0 (ONEI, 2014: 98).

The highest annual figure of external migration since 1980 was recorded in 1994 with -47.844 people. This rise in migration is directly related to periods of temporary crises that have marked migratory relations between Cuba and the United States, the main destination of its migration, and that have gone through cycles of accumulation of tensions that burst in migratory crises in 1965, 1980 and 1994.

Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning the switch Cuban external migration underwent in 2013 with the positive figure of 3.302 people (ONEI, 2014: 98)<sup>11</sup>. This switch corresponded to the coming into force on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013 of Law-Decree No. 302 and Decree No. 305, which modified the Migration Law and its Regulations<sup>12</sup> and enabled

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<sup>10</sup> The Cuban National Statistics and Information Office (ONEI by its acronym in Spanish) has published these reports since 1990 based on data provided by the Immigration Office (DIE, by its acronym in Spanish), current Division of de Identification and Immigration, of the Ministry of the Interior (MININT by its acronym in Spanish), and refers only to definitive immigrants and emigrants.

<sup>11</sup> Some researchers highlight the increasing trend of temporary migration in contrast with definitive or indefinite emigration. Sorolla Fernández (2013b: 217) states that temporary migration rose from 6,3 to 7% between 2000-2010, reaching its highest levels in 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Sorolla Fernández (2008) explains that with the triumph of the Revolution, the Cuban migration policy became restrictive and defensive. In 1959, the revolutionary government introduced an Exit Permit (Law No.2) in order to avoid the exodus of criminals involved in Batista's tyranny. Besides, it established migration categories in accordance with the purpose of the trips: for the State's interests and for personal reasons. Temporary exit permits were limited to the minimum. In 1961, Law 989 was approved; it established the confiscation of emigrants' assets (houses, cars, etc.). Moreover, in October, 1961 a very strict Entry Permit came into force.

In the following years there has been a tendency to make more flexible the implementation of these first measures, according to the prevalence of economic elements –including labour mobility– as travelling motivations and other factors such as family reunification. In 1976, the Cuban State approved Migration Law (1312) and then emerged the Indefinite Exit Permit (PSI by its acronym in Spanish) for Cuban citizens that migrate as a result of their marriage with a foreigner, rather than for political reasons, so their assets were not

Cuban citizens to travel for any reason or to settle abroad. The new migration policy represents “[...] a real historic change in the methods and instruments Cuba has used to handle migration” (Morales, 2012: 1). Its first impact on the annual migration balance was positive. The migration balance dropped that year with the extension of the period of staying abroad from 11 to 24 months for Cuban citizens traveling on a temporal basis, thus changing the historic trend of definitive migration, conditioned by the restrictive and defensive character of the Cuban migratory policy since 1959. However, there is not yet enough evidence to state there has been a change in the external migration trend, though a change of attitude towards emigration is noticeable. This change of attitude is in accordance with the change of emigration itself, which is more interested in the temporality and circularity of migration processes taking into account its growing rapprochement and involvement in the national life (Sorolla Fernández, 2013a).

When reviewing other statistics that better illustrate the Cuban external migration process, a question arises: what is the proportion of the Cuban emigration when compared to the residing population after so many years of negative migration balances? According to Sorolla Fernández (2013b: 202-203), “[...] by the end of 2010 the amount of Cubans living abroad ranged between 1.6 y 1.8 million, including temporal and permanent emigrants, accounting for approximately 13,8% out of the 11.241.161 Cuban residents at that time”.

As to the representation of Cuban immigration in the different geographic regions, Sorolla Fernández (2013b: 210) remarks that in 2009 North America was the main destination with 82.2% of the total stock of international Cuban immigrants, followed by Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean with 9,0% and 4,2% respectively. The African continent received 1,1% of the total Cuban immigrants and Asia and Oceania 3,5% and 0,01% respectively.

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confiscated and they were allowed to visit the country once a year. During the 1980s new migration requirements came up: a Permit of Residence Abroad (PRE by its acronym in Spanish) for Cubans migrating as a result of their marriage with a foreigner and settling in the foreign country; a temporary Permit for Travelling Abroad (PVE by its acronym in Spanish), for men over 60 and women over 55 years of age. In the 1990s, with the 1978 Dialogue through the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Nation and Emigration Conferences held in Havana in 1994, 1995 and 2004, the process of normalization of relations with emigrants continued moving forward. In 1992, migration authorities eliminated an existing requirement that banned Cubans living abroad and had migrated after December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1978 from visiting the island. Consulates were entitled to authorize the entrance of Cuban residents abroad with PRE and PSI, who had migrated before 1959. The minimum age to travel abroad temporarily was reduced to 18 years. The length of temporary visits of Cubans abroad was extended from 6 to 11 months.

The coming into force on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013, of Decree-Law No. 302 and Decree No. 305, modifying the Migration Law and its Regulations from 1976 and 1978 respectively, marked a historic milestone in the strategic conception of migration policy and its procedures. This Decree-Law eliminated the Exit Permit required from Cuban citizens and foreigners living in Cuba (including invitation letters). It abolished the confiscation of emigrants’ assets in favor of the Cuban State. The length of the staying abroad for Cuban citizens travelling temporarily was extended from 11 to 24 months. Minors under 18 years of age were allowed to exit the country temporarily. Requirements for obtaining Residence Abroad and Repatriation were expanded. Cubans who illegally left the island and were under the age of 16 at that moment were allowed to visit the country. The temporary entrance of those citizens who migrated illegally after migratory agreements of 1994 and of health professionals and high-performance sports men and women who deserted their missions after 1990 was normalized.

It must be noted that this process of expansion and diversification of Cuban external migration flows from the early 1990s also combined internal socioeconomic factors related with characteristic elements of the historic development of the country. Even though, since the triumph of the Revolution in 1959, the strategy for social and economic development was focused on overcoming the characteristics of the mono-productive and mono-exporter inheritance from the period of dependence on the United States, by the mid-1980s a set of issues mounted up as “[...] deficient economic planning, generalization of positive stimulus, proliferation of bureaucracy, prices in disagreement with offer and demand, deficiencies in controlling production and, most of all, the inability to produce larger exports” (Pérez Villanueva, 2009: 41). Despite strategic attempts to amend these mistakes and deficiencies, the Cuban socioeconomic context worsened even more by the negative impact of the collapse of the socialist system, the reinsertion of the country in the world capitalist system in unequal exchange conditions and the worsening of the economic blockade imposed by the United States since 1962<sup>13</sup>.

The following figures will suffice to show the scope and accelerated process of economic contraction Cuba underwent during those years: “In 1992, commercial exchange in contrast with 1989 had decreased by 70%. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) dropped by 24% and the use of the industrial capacity installed fell by 30%” (Silva, 2003: 123). According to Togores González (2000: 1), 1993 was the most critical year considering it was only possible to use 10% and 15% of the industrial capacity due to the standstill of investments and the lack of imported raw materials and fuel supplies.

This economic crisis and the decisions taken in order to palliate its effect<sup>14</sup>, were soon reflected in the general deterioration of the Cuban population life conditions and became the main element that brought about issues such as: impoverishment<sup>15</sup> of large labour force sectors, the emergence of a working elite, the rising of life styles not in accordance with work results, the exclusion of important segments of the population from consumption in

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<sup>13</sup> Since the triumph of the Revolution, the United States government has designed policies and implemented actions in order to hinder the Cuban economic, political and social development. In the period from 1996 to 1999, this strategy was hardened by means of the Helms-Burton and the Torricelli Acts to impede Cuban commerce. This was accompanied by other financial, media and biological aggressions with the purpose of generating unrest and promoting a negative opinion on the Cuban government (Arboleya Cervera, 2004: 47-50).

<sup>14</sup> The survival or emergency strategy designed to lessen the negative effects of the economic crisis of 1990-1993 in the population was called Special Period in Time of Peace. Its main objective was to lessen the impact of the crisis in the population. This strategy encompassed different levels of analysis ranging from the adoption of macroeconomic adjustments to the implementation of measures in order to maintain jobs and incomes (Pérez Villanueva, 2009: 45).

<sup>15</sup> Togores González (2000: 17) suitably points out the meaning of the category “poverty” in the Cuban context, only taking into account the lack of monetary resources, namely, the inability to be in possession of enough incomes to buy the basic products defined according to caloric levels established by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). This researcher also states that “[...] the definition of poverty in Cuba is today quite different from that of Latin America or any other developing nation where this word implies people deprived of basic needs in order to meet their minimal human needs, in this case it goes far beyond the lack of private incomes as it includes the lack of basic health, education and other services...”, guaranteed in Cuba by the large range of the revolutionary government social program.

certain markets or at least of the reduction in the access to a very limited group of products and a social re-stratification (Togores González, 2000: 2).

In his reflection on the relation between external migration and development in Cuba, Fresneda Camacho (2014: 126) argues that “[...] the collapse of the so-called real socialism eventually brought about, increasingly harder, the *structural distortions* that characterize the *socialist productive heterogeneity*, which hinders social development and encourages perceiving emigration as a structural, individual and family strategy”.

According to the Cuban historian, the negative external migration balance Cuba has experienced during the last decades should be seen as an organic part of the process of *socialist productive heterogeneity*, a concept that refers to the disparity correlation between social human development, which has reached high levels, mostly in terms of training and instruction of productive forces, and the development of the productive structure itself, historically characterized by a relative low level.

In his works, Fresneda Camacho (2013: 158-161; 2014: 112-120) identifies the multiple *structural distortions* that have characterized the *socialist productive heterogeneity*; some of these are:

- The insufficient economic growth is not in accordance with the ample fiscal expenses used to close up social gaps for the sake of accomplishing acceptable equity standards. According to Fresneda, certain instability can be perceived in the development of the social policy in the sense that it becomes unsustainable in the long term given the insufficient national productivity.
- The endurance of vicious circles affecting the productive structure, with the presence of a labour force highly skilled<sup>16</sup> and not efficiently used in the production of goods. The full employment policy has not succeeded in making the most of the labour force productive potential.
- Scarce incentives to increase productivity. Wages<sup>17</sup> had been disassociated from productivity levels as it continued to be a remnant of a political principle, institutionalized for several decades, which aimed at homogenizing the society through an equitable system that would guarantee relatively equal incomes for the working population. As a result of this policy, the salary of the labour force –with relatively high average skills– has not adapted to productivity differences; on the contrary, it has

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<sup>16</sup> In 2009, 14,5% of Cuban workers had a first or higher degree, 50,6% were technicians or specialists in their different professional fields and 26,9% had at least taken some training in higher level institutions (Vidal Alejandro, Pérez Villanueva y González-Corzo 2010: 5).

<sup>17</sup> According to Vidal Alejandro, Pérez Villanueva y González-Corzo (2010: 6), in 2009 the average monthly salary was 429 Cuban pesos (CUP), which nominally accounted for an increase of 51% in contrast with 2004. However, at the current exchange rate in Cuba, 25 Cuban pesos (CUP) per convertible peso (CUC), this average monthly salary was equal to 17,16 CUC or \$ 18,53 (USD), and this is one of the most serious challenges the Cuban economy is facing nowadays. The economic sectors with the highest monthly nominal salaries in 2009 were: mining (537 pesos), retail trade, restaurants and hotels (534 pesos), construction (531 pesos), public services (530 pesos), and finances, insurance and real state (502 pesos).

deepened the socio-political gap strengthening a “relative limits on consumption” and discouraging the productive process.

- Presence of important human resources because of its educational and training levels but with a deterioration of labour force that is manifested by a “relative limits on consumption” and the scarce mechanisms of social mobility resulting from the low incomes.
- Relative dependency on external sectors in spaces of global interaction, in conditions of unequal exchange, and the way that process has conditioned visible limitations in the economic growth. This dependency is also reflected or transferred to family or domestic consumption through the prices of international goods moving around in the national markets by means of imports.

The external migration flow of Cubans in the past decades was configured and shaped from these structural conditions. “The term *compensation of structural distortions* explains the role of international migration against open economic and/or social gaps that come out of internal and structural heterogeneity and its dialectic relation with the unequal international exchange. In this regard, international migration makes up for such distortions by means of remittances, which serve as family incomes in the individual level and as foreign currencies in the macroeconomic level which provides skilled labour force by exploring alternative movement mechanisms to the Cuban labour market” (Fresneda Camacho, 2014: 120).

In this line, the Cuban historian identifies two migration modalities (Fresneda Camacho, 2013: 162):

- a) The so-called *economic migration*, which deals with the increasing exit of population in active working age looking for social mobility mechanisms out of the national territory, which might be definitive, circular or temporary.
- b) The author refers to the other modality as *export of intensive services*; it deals with the exchange of skilled labour force for foreign currencies. When defining this modality as *labour migration*, Fresneda Camacho (2013: 178) explains that “[...] labour force is inserted in the international labour market by means of *conditions defined by the society of origin*, without being exposed to dehumanized working conditions, or defined by the countries of destination. In this sense, it is about an institutional strategy that is radically in contrast with the programs for temporal workers promoted by the main capitalist powers under the aegis of neoliberal globalization. It is also a *strategy for exporting labour force* that allows making the most of, to a certain extent and with a limited impact on the endogenous economic development, Cuba’s huge potential in terms of skilled human resources”. This strategy “[...] promotes return or temporal migration adjusted through the projections of the Cuban state foreign policy” (Fresneda Camacho, 2013: 177).

The *export of intensive services* offers a double benefit: in a macro level it provides considerable capital for financing the Cuban social project and at the same time it acts as an escape valve for the labour force that cannot be effectively employed in the country; in a micro level it is the only option, for a broad section of the economically active population,



to counteract the “relative limits on consumption” and achieve certain social mobility by means of incomes in accordance with their skills and performance. Nonetheless, it should be taken into consideration that it implies the transfer of human resources trained in Cuba, and that should be made the most of for the national development.

The historic antecedents of this strategy underlie Cuba’s internationalist and solidarity policy, developed since the early 1960s with the implementation of its free civil cooperation program in the fields of health and education, among other sectors, in the context of South-South Cooperation. The first Cuban medical brigade arrived in Africa in 1963 with this initiative, which will be further explained later on in this paper. Ever since, Cuban professional cooperation has expanded to multiple areas of expertise basically throughout the world. During the 1990s, given the economic crisis the country went through, part of this cooperation began to develop through compensation mechanisms by nations receiving such aid and with certain economic power; thus, the internationalist project would continue as well as its presence in least favoured countries. By the mid of 2011, implementing the “Guidelines of the Economic and Social Policy of the Party and the Revolution” would account for the commercialization of professional services to obtain foreign currencies through the guidelines 76-78, 80 and 81, though Cuba would continue to guarantee international cooperation actions consistent with guidelines 108-115<sup>18</sup>. It is estimated that in 2008 there were more than 41 thousand Cubans working in 97 nations and 6 overseas territories, 31 thousand out of which belonged to the health sector and were present in 71 countries (García Álvarez and Anaya Cruz, 2009: 11).

Fresneda Camacho states that acknowledging the *export of intensive services* promoted by means of governmental programs and institutions in the framework of the design of the Cuban foreign policy strengthens the idea of the migration project as a strategy of *compensation of structural distortions*, in the local (national), family and individual levels.

Nevertheless, it is important to clarify some aspects on this “migration modality”: first, Cuban authorities do not recognize the *export of intensive services* as temporary migration of skilled labour force with labour purposes but as cooperation (compensated in this case), promoted and led by the Cuban government through enterprises intended to that end. This presupposes some difficulties when compiling and classifying information on this topic. Second, there are also some conceptual differences when defining this modality. Even though the IOM (2012b: 5) considers it as a form of labour migration, in this case responding to a contract (taking into account the category of migrant workers by contract explained in the Introduction of this article), other institutions like WTO (1995), through its legal framework, do not consider the movement of people rendering services as labour migration. The distinction made by this international institution is based on the fact that those rendering services do not compete for jobs in a labour market and do not maintain an employee-employer relation with the importer of services in the country of destination. In fact, their relation is not defined by an employment contract but by a contract for rendering specific services.

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<sup>18</sup> It should be noted that Guideline 111 calls for compensating cooperation costs as far as possible in agreement with the policy promoted since the early 1990s.

However, even with the significant number of Cubans (chiefly professionals) that have lived and worked temporarily in a different country under this migration modality, it is considered to contribute with the reproduction of the external migration process with economic and labour purposes by means of the accumulation and transmission of migration experiences positively represented from the country of origin.

After reviewing these explanations essential to understand the national context describing the increase of the Cuban external migration and its geographic diversification from the 1990s, we go back to discuss the presence of Cubans in non-traditional migration countries, as in the cases of Angola, South Africa and Mozambique in the African continent, settlements that growing from this decade on. According to López-Calleja (2008: 6-7), “[...] the existence of these new settlements abroad is the result of the determination of living in geographic areas other than the United States (the traditional destination), the presence of family relationships and the tradition in the migration flow towards these places. In addition, there is also the use of *bridge* nations in order to get to other destinations and the obstacles immigrants find in their movement to the United States which have brought about the permanent presence of Cuban emigrants in these settlements”.

From a long term perspective, the presence of Cuban emigrants in Africa, Asia and Oceania has been gradually increased in contrast with previous years when it was barely null. In 2005, the settlement of Cubans in these regions encompassed more than 2.800 people (Aja, 2006: 152), and by 2007 there were records of more than 3.383 people (López-Calleja, 2008: 9). Three years after, these numbers had amounted up to 6.163 individuals, out of which, a total of 4.046 were estimated to live in the African continent, out of which almost 3 thousand lived in Angola (Group Author, 2012: 32). By December 2013, there was a slight decrease of Cubans residing in these regions, which may have coincided with the transfer of many of them to other traditional destinations. By that time, the Division of Consular Affairs and Attention to Cubans Residing Abroad (DACCRES by its acronym in Spanish) of the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs appraised that 5.994 Cubans lived in different nations in Africa, Asia and Oceania; out of which 3.309 had settled in African countries, mainly in Angola, with an estimate of 2 thousand people approximately (group author, 2014: 10).

Despite the fact that this migration process to Africa, specially to Angola as the most representative destination in the continent, may seem new, there are other elements that bring this process into context and not just the particular circumstances Cuba experienced from the 1990s which brought about higher emigration levels and the diversification of destinations, nor the characteristics of the historic context that shaped this process globally and locally (Cuba), but the historic relation of our country with that far region, which dates back to several decades ago into the past century and has served as context and shaped the migration process.

Since the triumph of the Revolution in 1959, Cuba undertook an active foreign policy based on the international solidarity links with underdeveloped nations, in this design Africa had an important place, even more so by 1960 when, coincidentally, the continent achieved its first round of independence. From 1975 on, after the proclamation of Angola's

independence and the participation of the country in civil war between Angola's Popular Liberation Movement (MPLA by its acronym in Spanish) and the political parties supported by extreme forces, solidarity relations between Cuba and Africa went through an unprecedented boost. Cuba not only provided advisors and military staff, but it also boosted civil cooperation programs in fields such as health, education, sports, agriculture, and the construction of roads, airports, houses, factories, among others (González López, 2008: 34).

According to the Cuban historian David González López (2008: 30-31; 2011: 182; González López and Lord Garnes, 2014: 295-296), it is worth mentioning that the Cuban aid to Africa was explained in Fidel Castro's expression: "compensation duty" to refer to the debt "[...] Cubans had with Africa due to the vital role of Africans and their offspring in our independence and revolutionary wars, their contribution to the construction of the Cuban nation and the creation of wealth successive generations of all races have enjoyed in Cuba". With this idea he also outlined the huge demographic and cultural contribution of Africa to the socioeconomic development of American nations, and the Cuban in particular, after almost four centuries of transatlantic slavery by means of which more than 10 million Africans from the West African coast between the Senegal and the Cunene rivers landed alive in America (Rodney, 1981: 102).

Historic relations (transnational connections that have become intercultural bridges for dialogue) between Cuba and the African continent in general, Angola in particular, can be established from a set of multiple interconnected dimensions. The aim is not to approach them all but those deemed essential to bring into context the emergence of the Cuban migration flow towards the African nation and that shaped during the past 50 years as historic coincidences of the Cuban revolutionary process and the first decolonizing wave in Africa; political ideological contacts among political action, the way of thinking and the speech of several African leaders and the Cuban revolutionary leadership marked by an anti-imperialist and progressive line; the Cuban military presence in some particular cases in the history of the African continent by request of a legally established government or a renowned liberation movement (González López, 2011: 196); the large civil cooperation provided in the fields of health, education and sports, among others, to almost all African nations; the setting up of educative policies for the training of African professionals in Cuba and the spreading in the island of cultural and social value and knowledge on the African reality based on policies that allowed the construction of an "African imaginary"<sup>19</sup> in Cuba.

The independence of Ghana in 1957 and of French Guinea the next year, after Sekou Touré's "NO" in the referendum in September, gave way to an irreversible wave of independences throughout the continent in 1960, which was declared "Year of Africa" by

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<sup>19</sup> In this category we assume Baczko's (1999: 37) definition, who argued that its delimitation would allow reaching a higher level of understanding with regards to the conformation and development of a social process or fact. For that, it should be understood that "[...] these representations of social reality, and not just mere reflections of it, created and elaborated from symbolic materials, have a specific reality that lies in its very own existence, in its variable impact on collective mentalities and behaviors, in the multiple functions they play in social life. Thus, every power is surrounded by representations, symbols and emblems that authenticate it and enhance it, which are necessary in order to assure its protection".

the United Nations. The common ideological platform in the whole continent was the decolonizing movement on the basis of African nationalism, conceptualized in the Pan Africanism that would arrive from the West Indies and the US since 1920. The interest this process aroused in the Cuba of 1959 was immediately manifested in the support provided to independence movements in Algeria and Congo; in fact, Ernesto Guevara departed to Congo in the company of a group of Cuban soldiers (González López, 2011: 181) in the following years.

The Cuban revolutionary leadership and many African leaders at the time shared an anti-imperialist position and an international solidarity commitment, which was knitted from the top, from the initiative of the States, common channels of dialogue and rapprochement.

In this regard, there are many examples of the involvement of the Cuban leadership; however, it would suffice a fragment of a speech by Fidel Castro during the closing of the First Afro-Asian-Latin American Peoples' Solidarity Conference (TRICONTINENTAL CONFERENCE) in 1966 in which he assessed as a success the creation of “[...] a tricontinental body, that has reached agreements covering the deepest aspirations of the peoples that fight for its freedom and the creation of an aid committee for liberation movements” (Castro Ruz, 1966). There are several examples from Africa as well, though only two will be referred to here: the first one is Sekou Touré’s (1970: 589) words stating that “[...] the Guinean State actively supports all the initiatives and all activities for the radical extermination of imperialism and its consequences in the peoples’ lives and relations”; the second is Agostinho Neto’s, leader of the MPLA, who affirmed, in 1977, that “[...] the struggle of the Angolan people is a constituent of the general struggle of all the peoples in the world for the elimination of the exploitation system and for the construction of a fairer society, the MPLA will continue to defend and apply inexorably the principle of proletarian internationalism” (Entralgo, 1979: 151).

The will to concentrate on the way of thinking and political actions on governmental levels, was also manifested in high level visits between Cuba and most African nations since 1960 to present day, as well as close diplomatic bonds between Cuba and almost all African countries (53 out of 54 African states). González López (2011: 187) points out that in 2010 Cuba had 30 embassies in African countries and there were 22 African diplomatic representations in Havana.

This ideological and political rapprochement was supported by military cooperation in specific cases in the African continent and only by request of legally established governments or renowned liberation movements by the then Organization of African Unity (OAU), as it had been previously stated. In this line, the cases of Cuban presence in Angola and Ethiopia were the most significant given the scope of the operations, yet there were other significant instances such as the support of the independence war in Guinea-Bissau which was a success.

Particularly in Angola, the beginning of operations by the Cuban Military Mission (MMCA by its acronym in Spanish), in support of the MPLA by Neto’s request and approval, in October, 1975, relied on almost 500 men serving as doctors, officers and pilots (Gleijeses, 2004: 419), and by January, 1976 there were about 7.500 Cubans in the country (Ibid.:

571). Several sources assure that between 1975 and 1991, more than 300 thousand Cubans had served in international missions in Angola in the military front. In the Angolan context and in the rest of the continent, the order was not to militarily interfere in internal affairs of the nation “[...] the Cuban forces remained 15 years in Angola and only confronted UNITA forces when these attacked the Cuban contingents or joined the South African invading forces” (González López, 2011: 198).

The long Cuban military presence in Angola was essential for the establishment of social and cultural links between Cubans and Angolans. In this war context the first unions between Cuban men and Angolan women emerged (Amaro Cano, 2013; George, 2005). In spite of restrictions, many romances flourished between Cuban officers and Angolan women and some of them had children. George (2005: 156) highlights that some Cubans returned from the war with their Angolan wives and children. Cuban historian Leonor Amaro Cano (2013: 42-43) recorded interesting testimonies of two Angolan women in this case: one of them had two daughters with a Cuban man during the war and at the moment of the withdrawal of the troops allowed her daughters to settle in Cuba (they remain in the island today) with their father’s family; the other had a relationship with a pilot and visited Cuba several times and lived in the island for a few years with her daughter, the result of her idyllic romance, until she finally settled in Angola.

From a theoretical point of view, Durand and Massey (2003: 59) argue that “each military base and armed intervention creates a variety of social and political links that favor new migration processes. Young soldiers often get married with native women, who want to join them back to their country at the end of their missions. [...]. Military operations, on a large scale, also involve the hiring of a considerable number of support personnel among the civil local population, which contribute with creating personal relations, political debts and moral obligations that can be appealed to in order to get immigrant visas, once the military forces leave the place [...]. On the other hand, when there is long term military presence, several commercial and service establishments develop on the nearby area of the base, which expands the range of interpersonal relations and social debts. Besides, new linguistic codes and cultural conventions are transferred to the local population. Intense contact with the troops not only increases the proportion of marriages, but also allows better knowledge of the culture, thus creating more expectations on the potential advantages of migrating and provides more reasons to do it”.

Retaking the line of analysis on the dimensions of the historic relation between Cuba and Africa that gave way to the migration of Cubans to Angola, it is necessary to note that the military cooperation in the African continent has always been accompanied by civil cooperation in different areas; health and education have been paradigmatic in this dimension of dialogue among the nations of the South.

In the particular case of Angola, since 1975, the year when the country declared its independence and relations between the two States were established, until 1991 when the Cuban troops were withdrawn, more than 50 thousand civilians took part in Angola in the cooperation program that included doctors, professors, technicians, and construction workers. In 2014, different journalist sources reported there were more than 4 thousand Cubans rendering services in this country, most of them in the fields of health and

education, and the rest were involved in activities related to construction, culture, energy and water, fighting malaria, among others.

Even in the war context, though not directly in war-like conditions, there are testimonies of several Cubans, women and men, who rendered their services in that country and engaged in relationships with Angolans and therefore, settled in that nation. “Although some Cuban women arrived during the war and still remain there because they created a family and settled, most women who chose to live in Angola rather than in Cuba arrived more recently. There is also an explanation for this temporary circumstance: during the country’s recovery stage many women took part in the civil aid of professionals in different fields” (Amaro Cano, 2013: 41).

However, as it had been noted before, in the field of health, the Cuban commendable work in Africa started in 1963 with the arrival of the first medical team in Algeria; it was made up of 55 Cubans ready to offer their services for free (Marimón Torres and Martínez Cruz, 2011). This important service has increased throughout the continent rapidly, even more so after 1975 with Angola’s independence and the beginning of the decolonization movement in Southern Africa<sup>20</sup>, last redoubt of colonialism. In this field, several programs have been expanded to the African continent during the past few years, such as the Comprehensive Healthcare Program (PIS by its acronym in Spanish) and Miracle Operation. According to David González López (2011: 185), who specializes on the Cuba-Africa relations in civil, scientific and technical, and cultural fields, in 2008 there were 1.886 Cubans working in the health sector in 30 African nations (342 of them in Angola). Two years later, in 2010, the Cuban medical staff was rendering services in other five African countries, making up a total of 35, and the number of Cubans had increased to 3 thousand (González López, 2014: 299).

Cooperation in the field of education has also been emblematic. It is worth mentioning the results of the “Yes, I Can” method, implemented in several nations in Western, Eastern and Southern Africa. The bibliography consulted indicates that in 2008 about 73 thousand people had been taught to read and write with this method, while other 7 thousand people were being taught (González López, 2011: 189).

Nonetheless, the provision of these services was joined by governmental actions and initiatives to guarantee the “sustainability” of the cooperation and favour the creation of local capacities to replace the service provided from abroad. Thus began the training of local personnel in the field of health in Cuba and in their countries of origin under the supervision of Cuban doctors, professors and specialists. This experience was expanded to the education sector and consequently, Cuba sent professors there and at the same time it contributed with the training of professors from those countries. An example of that is the creation of a Pedagogical Institute for Zimbabwean students in the Isle of Youth, in Cuba.

Yet, this was not new. The initiative to provide pedagogical training in Cuba had begun in 1978 when the island received the first orphan Namibian children, after the South African attack in Cassinga, to the south of Angola. The creation of high schools in the Isle of Youth

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<sup>20</sup> It is a sub-region of the African continent covering a fifth part of it. It includes South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, Angola, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

for African youngsters from diverse origins, who later on continued their higher studies in different Cuban universities, contributed with the training of “[...] legions of graduates [...] among which today we can find political leaders, ministers, businessmen, specialists and other national and international figures” (González López, 2011: 188). According to this source, 30.719 African students from 42 nations finished their studies in Cuba between 1961 and 2007; out of them, 17.906 went through medium education and 12.8113 through higher education. Nowadays, these programs have not been put to a stop, though they have undergone some changes considering Cuba’s internal economic context in the 1990s. By 2012, the total number of Africans who finished their studies in Cuba amounted to nearly 40 thousand, while other 3 thousand had not yet finished their studies (González López, 2014: 302). Official Cuban sources state that by the end of 2014 more than 1.500 Angolan students were enrolled in Cuban universities, who, after finishing their studies, would join the thousands that had majored in Cuba and live in Angola.

This dialogue channel, many times prolonged with the long presence of Africans that received scientific and technical training in Cuba, has favoured interaction and exchanges among individuals and their cultures. For Cubans today, Africa is no longer as far-off as it used to be in view of the fact that it is within their reach and is expressed in any African young man or woman walking through Havana’s streets.

The experience of teaching African young people, men and women, in Cuba, specially a considerable number of Angolans, also gave way to relationships with Cubans in the island, which led to marriages and children. Another interesting fact is marriages among Cubans and Angolans that studied in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) under programs for specialized training. “There were many marriages precisely in Eastern Europe, far away from Cuba and Angola, and by the 1990s the Cuban women that finished their studies and were already married with Angolans continued with a common and almost absolute tradition in Africa: women follow their husbands” (Amaro Cano, 2013: 41-42).

Another important connection between Cuba and Africa has to do with the attention paid by the revolutionary government to spreading rigorous and deep knowledge on the African reality and African cultural values. Knowledge on the history of the continent and its socioeconomic and political development has been promoted from the media and universities. It has also consolidated from the creation of research centres on African issues in the 1970s and 1980s in order to systematize and spread the reality of the continent from different approaches (Álvarez Acosta, 2008: 301). An editorial policy that contributed with spreading the way of thinking of the main African leaders of that time and contemporary African narrative and the promotion of African art through manifestations like music and the cinema favoured the creation of an “African imaginary” based on knowledge and culture. The continuity of this policy is expressed in the 22<sup>nd</sup> International Book Fair of Havana, held in February, 2013 in which Angola was the Guest of Honour and participated with a sample of hundreds of books in different literary categories.

All the above illustrates the multiple transnational connections established between Cuba and Africa promoted by the governments and represents an invitation to debate on whether the constant over coming of the States’ national spaces in favour of a new transnational and multidimensional cooperation space can boost or not the flow of people in certain contexts.

Generally speaking, the interconnected dialogue between Cuban and Africa has presupposed the overcoming of all kinds of borders in order to make easier and encourage more scientific and technical and economic and commercial exchanges. This has conditioned the mobility of contingents of people between both regions, which, even though its behaviour is closely related to the characteristics of the particular and historic circumstances, allows explaining the current migration flow of Cubans to Angola.

A final idea before ending this section on the characteristics of the global and historic context of the migration of Cubans to Africa, deals with the reasons why Angola specifically aroused as the main receiving nation of Cuban immigrants in this region. Are the historical and structural factors of the Cuban endogenous development and the significant relevance and extent of the Cuba-Angola relations (in the context of the Cuban cooperation policy towards the African continent) the only ones having a bearing in this phenomenon? Are there any others? Which ones?

In order to answer these questions it is necessary to analyse the historical and internal development of Angola, a nation that in spite of the 27 years of civil war and 41 years of permanent conflict is a point of interest for the Cuban immigration and other immigration from the area and other geographical zones, mostly after 2000.

The interest Angola has aroused as a receiving nation of immigrants, from this year on, is based on the beginning of a new stage in its historical development which combines several internal and regional sub-processes. One of these sub-processes started by the early 1990s when the African nation began to experience brief moments of peace that favoured an economic boom after the putting into practice of a structural adjustment project supported by international economic and financial organs. Bicesse's Peace Agreement in May, 1991, the establishment of a United Nations Angola Verification Mission II (UNAVEM II), the holding of the first multiparty elections in September, 1992 with the success of the MPLA, the restart of peace negotiations in 1993 and the signing of Lusaka's Protocol in November, 1994, evidenced the strong will of the party in power and of foreign capitalist interests to end the armed conflict and give way to the reconstruction stage of the country. Despite the convulse atmosphere and the stagnation of the peace process, the relative clam encouraged foreign investors and companies to turn to Luanda (the capital) by the mid-1990s. With this economic strategy the exploitation of diamonds would be resumed, new oil sources would be discovered and new reconstruction and expansion of the national infrastructure projects would be undertaken (Álvarez Acosta, 2013: 182). Another important moment was in 2002, after the death of Jonas Savimbi (leader of National Union for the Total Independence of Angola –UNITA, by its acronym in Spanish–), with the signing of cease fire agreements and the proclamation of the end of the civil war. These events consolidated the accelerated run towards long-lasting peace and political stability of the country by means of multiparty and would allow resuming with renewed impetus the national and socioeconomic reconstruction of the country.

Ever since, Angola has become one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. The IMF estimated that the growth rate of the Gross Domestic Product of the country between 2002 and 2011 was 11,6%, higher than China's, Nigeria's, India's, Russia's, Brazil's and South Africa's (Jover, Lopes Pinto and Marchand, 2012: 8). The bases of this rapid



economic growth lie in the increase of oil production and export, the most important mineral resource of the nation; as well as in the exploitation of other important mineral resources such as diamonds, iron, coal, phosphate, uranium, gold, and nickel, among others. As stated by several public sources, the energy sector accounts for 98% of the nations' exports and has promoted the economic development of other sectors like financial services, construction, manufacture and agriculture. In 2008, Angola became the first importer of oil in Sub-Saharan Africa with almost 2 million barrels on a daily basis (OECE, 2008: 7) and its main destinations in 2012 were China, which imported 40% of Angolan oil; the United States and India, which imported 18,9% and 9,8% respectively (Jover, Lopes Pinto and Marchand, 2012: 10).

However, the social development has not been up to par with the accelerated macroeconomic development; in fact, there are still huge social unbalances and problems to be solved. Despite the governments' efforts to recover the social infrastructure, the damages in this sector were huge with the extension of the conflict until the 21<sup>th</sup> century. Still today there are difficulties for accessing basic services like health and education, more so in rural areas that accommodate 36% of the population. According to some data published by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in 2014 the life expectancy was 52 years of age, child mortality rate was 100 children per 1.000 live births, and the illiteracy rate was 30% (UNICEF, 2015).

It is worth mentioning that out of the total population settled in urban centres, 51% do not rely on safe water sources and 58% do not have minimum health conditions (ICPD, 2012). These figures are the result of a process of overpopulation of the main urban centres, located in general in the coast area, which received many people internally displaced by the war and the destructuralization of rural economies. For instance, as per some data provided by the National Census published in October 2014 by the National Statistics Institute (INE by its acronym in Portuguese) (INE, 2014: 23), Luanda hosted 6,5 million inhabitants, accounting for 27% of the total population of the country. In overcrowding and insalubrity conditions it is common to find diseases such as tuberculosis, pneumonia, malaria, diarrhoea and others, which affect children for the most part.

One of the biggest difficulties the nation is facing nowadays is the wide social gap in terms of the population levels of incomes. Gini's rate increased between 1995 and 2000 from 0,45 to 0,51 (UN, 2002), and in 2012 it was estimated in 0,58 (OID-MAEC, 2012). The following are some elements that have ratified this trend: unequal distribution of national resources, expanded corruption through all direction levels and slow generation of jobs as necessary requirements for reducing poverty, in this sense, an economy chiefly based on the export of energy resources stands as a limitation considering this sector generates few jobs for qualified personnel in general.

Nonetheless, the efforts for national reconstruction demanded a vital resource: plenty of labour force and preferably qualified; something the country lacks. After Alvor's Agreements on January 10, 1975 (which established the transition government that would rule until the proclamation of independence), most of the European community, estimated in 200 thousand individuals (Macqueen, 1997: 186) and controlling the most important economic sectors, migrated to Portugal and other nations in the region such as South Africa

and former Rhodesia as “people returning”, leaving behind all non-working productive facilities and a native unqualified and illiterate labour force (Álvarez Acosta, 2013: 166). On this topic, Gleijeses (2004: 593) explains that “ninety per cent of Portuguese people living in Angola in April, 1974, had left the country by November, 1975 and had taken with them whatever kept running the system of government and the economy.

In the new period of economic boost, experienced from the mid-1990s and most of all at the beginning of the new century, this limitation had to be counteracted by giving priority to the reception of qualified immigrants, not just from Africa but from outside the continent. Ever since, and mostly in more recent years, several sources highlight an increase in the number of foreigners in the country. In this regard, a journal from Lisbon referred to by Baldé (2012: 4), stated that in 2006 they had recorded 156 visas from Portuguese people travelling to Angola; in 2011, it reached the number of 23.787 and in 2012, there were records of more than 100 thousand Portuguese people in that African nation, which represented the triple of Angolans living in Portugal. Factors like structural and economic and unequal distribution of labour markets are reflected in this phenomenon, in which Angola becomes an alternative given that Europe is marked by the crisis and contraction. However, there are also reports of the presence of foreigners from other nations as Brazil. According to statistics by the Migration and Foreigners Service of Angola (SME by its acronym in Portuguese), in 2013 about 10.000 Brazilians were settled in Angola.

Another interesting fact in the migration situation of the country is the growing impact of the expulsions of immigrants in irregular situation by the SME. As reported by news agency Angola Press (ANGOP, 2014), just from September 18 through 24, 2013 SME expelled 1,428 foreigners from Angola through administrative measures and 25 by trial, accounting for an increase of nearly 450 expulsions on a weekly basis. By that same date, SME received 3,474 visa applications and detected more than 200 passports with fraudulent labour visas. The citizens whose passports were confiscated by the SME came from Portugal, Brazil, Mozambique, Nigeria, Lebanon, Mauritania, Egypt, China, Cuba, Ukraine, Turkey, Jordan, Macedonia, Cote d’Ivoire and Malawi.

This way, the direction of the flow of Cubans to Angola is conditioned by several elements that define it and bring it into context. The framework of historical relations between Cuba and that African nation is the basis for analysing the contemporary emigration of Cubans as a new dimension in the constant exchange of information, culture, ideology and goods. International mobility among the regions of the South (and to this area), which also respond to increasingly more restrictive migration policies imposed by the main receiving nations in the developed North, and the recent affluence of migrants coming from the European continent in crisis bear proof of a more global process not exclusive of Cuban external migration; the constant and growing diversification of migration destinations is a global trend rather than a challenge for Cuba. On the other hand, the structural factors also present in temporary socioeconomic limitations that damage Cuba today and the chances of economic growth provided by Angola constitute other elements that, in the Cuban local (nation) and micro (family and individual) plains, have a bearing in the choosing of this remote destination.

### **Main characteristics of the Cuban migration to Angola.**

Characterizing the Cuban migration settled in Angola is a huge challenge given the complexity of gathering information to support the theoretical analysis and describe the dynamics of such migration. The short historic tradition of this country as destination for the Cuban external migration, the non-existence of previous researches, the lack of survey and statistic data available by the Angolan government on its immigration, the difficult access to official sources of information from the Cuban government and from related institutions are some of the factors that slowed down the realization of this paper.

According to the characteristics and particularities that describe the essence of the Cuban external migration process to Angola, it is possible to state that its behaviour is no different from the rest of the Cuban emigration settled in other parts of the world. Emigrants are for the most part white men (without undermining the increasing presence of women in international migration flows), in active working age, with a large number of skilled individuals that have legally entered the African continent. This is a temporary migration of individuals who travel alone with labour and economic objectives. This migration is quite similar to the rest of the Cuban emigration, based on its main characteristics and on the structural conditions of the socioeconomic situation of issuing and receiving nations involved in the process, in a historical and global context with certain peculiarities. Besides, this flow, rather than an isolated event, represents a new dimension or manifestation of multiple transnational connections that have been intertwined between Cuba and Africa for almost half a century.

These hypotheses have been verified by means of a Questionnaire designed by the Centre of Studies on International Migrations (CEMI by its acronym in Spanish) of the University of Havana and answered by Cubans settled abroad<sup>21</sup>. The use of this technique for gathering information and its verification through interviews to experts on migration and African issues allowed determining a multidimensional object of study, from the point of view of its internal dynamics and applicable methodologies and tools to approach it.

Regarding the results achieved with the application of the Questionnaire, it should be noted that was only applied to Cubans registered at the Cuban Consulate in Angola given their need of consular procedures. Its application lasted from February through April, 2015. The sample is made up of 10% of Cubans settled in Angola (considering an approximate population of 2000 Cuban emigrants according to estimations by the Division of Consular Affairs and Attention to Cubans Residing Abroad (DACCRE by its acronym in Spanish), by the end of 2013 and already referred to in this text)<sup>22</sup>. The individuals surveyed are men

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<sup>21</sup> In 2012 a first exploratory study had been conducted on the characteristics of the Cubans settled in Angola with the application of this Questionnaire to 67 Cuban emigrants, all of them living in Luanda, the capital, through the Cuban Consulate to Angola (Pérez García, 2013).

<sup>22</sup> This study did not take into account almost 4 thousand Cuban civilians who were rendering services in Angola, according to Cuban journalist sources by the end of 2014. The obstacles found to consider the rendering of services as labour migration (explained in the previous section) and the differences of this strategy with regards to “settled migrant workers”, required to make a methodological differentiation not to change the expected results. This does not mean, however, that the considerable number of Cubans that have

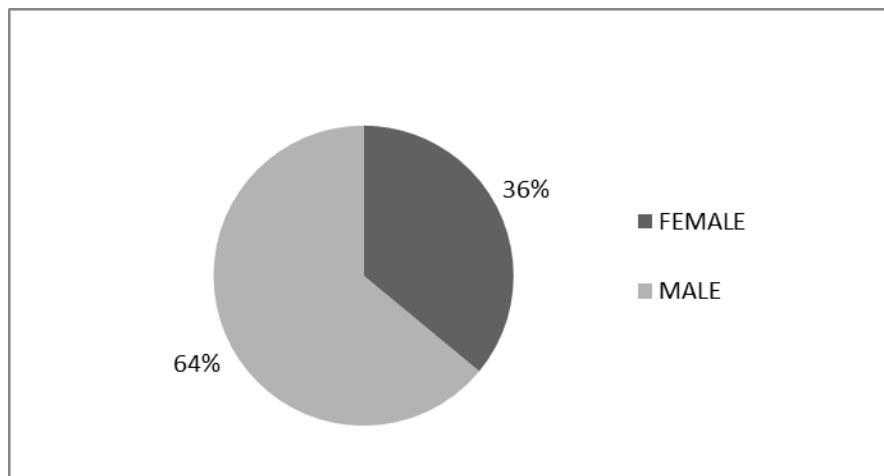
and women that range from 24 to 69 years of age, all of them settled in ten Angolan provinces, the most representative being Luanda with 90% of the individuals. The rest were distributed among Huambo, Bié, Uige, Cabinda, Malange, Bengo, Huila, Kuanza Sul and Benguela.

The data the Questionnaire provided was processed with inferential and descriptive statistic methods with the aid of professional software like SSPS 21.0 and Statistica 18.0. The distribution of frequencies is described with the aim of analysing the behaviour of the individuals surveyed.

This section analyses quantitative evidence that support the previously stated hypotheses; in doing so, the analysis will start from the behaviour of the sample taking into account variables as for example date and means of departure, relation between men and women, colour of the skin, predominant age, education level finished in Cuba before emigrating, work experience and current job in Angola, family or friendship relations in realization of the migration project.

As stated in the hypotheses, the distribution according to sex favours men, which stand for 64% of the total of the sample as portrayed in Graph 1.

**Graph 1**  
**Sample distribution by sex**



Source: Own calculations based on results of the application of the Questionnaire (2015).

Concerning the date of departure, and the sex difference in the behaviour of the sample, men continue to be better represented (67%) after the year 2000, when most of the people surveyed (90%) migrated (Chart 1). Yet, it is necessary to point out that before that year

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lived in Angola as a result of missions called for rendering their services has not favored the emergence of social representations on the African country and the migration project to this destination, through the spreading of their experiences via transnational social chains and national networks. This has a bearing in the reproduction and continuity of the external migration project with labour and economic purposes.

most of the emigration was made up of women (65%). Out of that figure, 64% had formed a family with an Angolan partner; hence, family motives played a significant role.

**Chart 1**

**Sample distribution by year of leaving Cuba and sex**

SEX	YEAR OF LEAVING		TOTAL
	< 2000	2000 <	
MALE	35%	67%	64%
FEMALE	65%	33%	36%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%

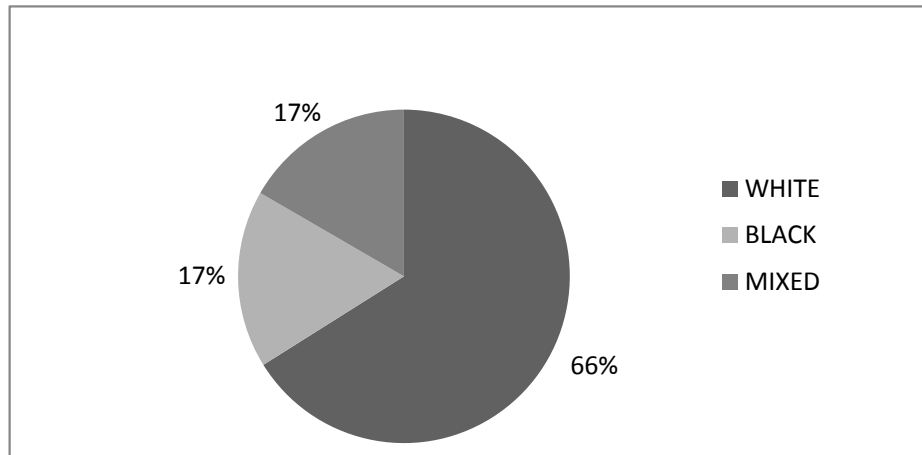
Source: Own calculations based on results of the application of the Questionnaire (2015).

In regards with the means of departure, 99% of the individuals declared they had travelled by plane. About 15% of the people surveyed had lived abroad; the country most mentioned was the former Soviet Union. About 36% of the individuals worked in the health sector and lived in countries Cuba maintains medical cooperation projects such as Venezuela and Jamaica in Latin America and Mozambique, Ghana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia and Namibia in Africa.

In this sample, only a minority (6%) had been given Angolan citizenship, in this group women were represented in 64% of cases. These figures show how hard it is to become an Angolan citizen according to requisites demanded by Law No.1/05 that establishes the citizenship can be obtained by adoption, marriage or naturalization after living in the country for ten years, having assumed the Angolan culture, behaving properly and proving to have the means for maintenance. In the case of women who got the citizenship, 70% declared to have been married or related to Angolan citizens, in addition to having kids born or living in Angola, which favoured the procedures and obtention of this status. It is worth mentioning that all women with citizenship settled in Angola during the civil war of the MPLA against opposing parties financed from abroad and 57% of them moved there between 1993 and 1997, a period that coincides with the worsening of the socioeconomic situation in Cuba, while the rest of them moved there during the first five years of the 1980s.

The most predominant colour of the skin in women and men is white in 66% of case, as it can be observed in Graph 2.

**Graph 2**  
**Sample distribution by color of the skin**



Source: Own calculations based on results of the application of the Questionnaire (2015).

The distribution of the sample according to the colour of the skin and sex is similar in the case of blacks and whites. However, there is a predominance of mixed-race women in contrast with men (Chart 2) and 64% of these women emigrated before 2000.

**Chart 2**  
**Sample distribution by sex and color of the skin**

SEX	COLOR OF THE SKIN		
	WHITE	BLACK	MIXED
MALE	70 %	70 %	34 %
FEMALE	30 %	30 %	66%
TOTAL	100 %	100%	100%

Source: Own calculations based on results of the application of the Questionnaire (2015).

The average age of the sample is 44,7 years, the minimum age is 24 and the maximum age is 69 years, as it had been stated before. Even though there is not a predominant absolute range of age, the distribution of frequencies shows larger numbers between 31 and 60 years, as illustrated in Chart 3. These elements suggest this population is in active working age and has years of work experience.

**Chart 3**  
**Sample distribution of age frequency**

AGE	FREQUENCY	%
20 < x ≤ 30 years	20	11,5
30 < x ≤ 40 years	44	25,0
40 < x ≤ 50 years	52	30,0
50 < x ≤ 60 years	45	26,0
60 < x ≤ 70 years	13	7,5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Own calculations based on results of the application of the Questionnaire (2015).

Therefore, taking into account the correspondence between age and sex, Chart 4 reveals the following characteristics:

- Most individuals over 60 are men.
- About 30% of women range between 51 and 60 years of age and still, in the case of men it ranges between 41 and 50 years.
- In the case of people under 30, women represent the highest number.

**Chart 4**  
**Sample distribution by sex and age**

SEX	AGE					TOTAL
	< 30	31 to 40	41 to 50	51 to 60	> 60	
MALE	8%	23,5%	36%	23,5%	9%	100%
FEMALE	17 %	29 %	21%	30 %	3%	100%

Source: Own calculations based on results of the application of the Questionnaire (2015).

The predominant education level finished in Cuba among emigrants is university education represented in 60 % of cases, out of which 32% took some post-graduate courses (Chart 5). This is the result of a worldwide trend of “[...] selectivity of migration, favouring the admission of immigrants to meet specific needs and prioritizing the attraction and retention of qualified immigration that would boost human capital and international competitiveness” (Sorolla Fernández, 2010: 61), also favoured by the implementation of Angola’s socioeconomic reconstruction strategy, which, as it was noted before, demands qualified labour force.

**Chart 5**

**Educational level reached in Cuba**

EDUCATION IN CUBA	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
SECONDARY	5 %	0%	3%
SKILLED WORKER	5%	2%	4%
PRE UNIVERSITY	12%	11%	12%
TECHNICIAN LEVEL	16%	13%	15%
UNIVERSITY	45%	45%	45%
POSTGRADUATE	17%	29%	21%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%

Source: Own calculations based on results of the application of the Questionnaire (2015).

It is worth highlighting that out of the total individuals surveyed with a university or higher degree, 41% belonged to the health sectors and were specialized in general medicine, infirmary, maxillofacial stomatology and anaesthesiology and many of them had had work experiences in other nations of the South in addition to Cuba. The large national demand of specialists in the health sector dates back to 1975. As it was previously stated, this year Angola achieved its independence and most of the Portuguese population, which worked in this and other fields, left from the country. Moreover, there is the lack of training of Angolans to have a position that demands qualification given the long colonization period that submitted most of the native population into ignorance and marginalization.

There is not a major field of occupation among those surveyed before leaving Cuba. The most popular are: public health, 35%; education, 14%; and tourism, 8%. The average employment period in Cuba is 12 years, which reveals a significant accumulation of experience by the Cuban labour force that migrated to Angola.

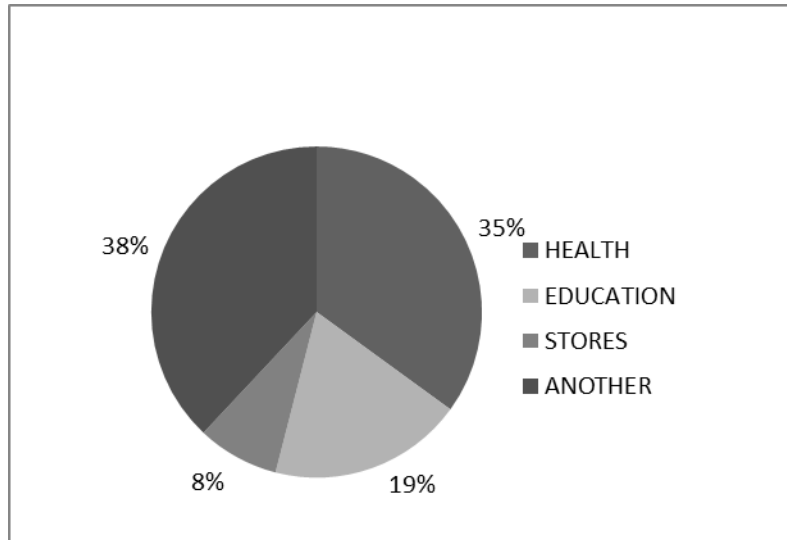
In 85% of cases, individuals declared there is a correspondence between their education level finished in Cuba and their job in Angola.

There is certain predominance of occupations in the tertiary sector of the Angolan economy, being the health sector the most represented, followed by education and trade, among others, as observed in Graph 3. The private sector and self-employment include 73% of the Cubans that declared their current work situation, only 14% stated to be employed by the government. Precisely this sector has shown better dynamics, also boosted by foreign investments, legislated and controlled since 1994, and attracting important investors like Portugal, the United States, South Africa, Brazil and China.



**Graph 3**

**Employment sector of cubans emigrated in Angola**



Source: Own calculations based on results of the application of the Questionnaire (2015).

Most of the individuals surveyed were married (55%) (Chart 6); 78% of the spouses came from Cuba and 20% from Angola, supporting the emigration of some Cubans as a result of their marriages with Angolan citizens; and 40% of the total women that stated the nationality of their husbands wrote down Angolan nationality.

In addition, 85% of the people surveyed declared to have children, most of them born and living in Cuba.

**Chart 6**

**Marital status and sex**

MARITAL STATUS	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
MARRIED	57%	51%	55%
DIVORCED	13,5%	14%	14%
WIDOW	2%	3%	2 %
ENGAGED	19%	10%	16 %
SEPARATED	2%	3%	2 %
SINGLE	7%	19%	11 %
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%

Source: Own calculations based on results of the application of the Questionnaire (2015).

The results of the Questionnaire support the hypothesis on the importance of transnational social chains in the migration project to Angola, basically through friendship bonds. Out of the subjects that answered this question, 67% declared to have friends in the African nation before emigrating and only 34% had relatives. The most common family relationships are: siblings in the case of men and spouses in the case of women. 66% of the women that stated family relationships in Angola wrote down spouses.

When asked about their individual objectives when arriving in that country for the first time, 88% pointed out that they intended to return to Cuba after some time. In this regard, 90% expressed that their family and friends were also counting on their return after a while. Most of the people surveyed had spouses and children in their country of origin. This “promise of reunion” has strengthened the links with the country of origin (Doria, 2011: 280), which can be verified via remittances, a strategy used by 81% of the individuals in the sample, and via travels to Cuba by 61% of the individuals, 68% out of which travelled on an annual basis.

This data was verified in interviews with experts on Cuban external migration, migration dynamics within the African continent and the main contemporary issues of the region. A total of seven experts from different Cuban centres and institutions were interviewed, including professors and researchers from CEMI; the Department of History and the “Amílcar Cabral” Interdisciplinary Group on African Studies, belonging to the University of Havana; the Higher Institute of Foreign Relations “Raúl Roa García” (ISRI by its acronym in Spanish); the Research Centre on International Policies (CIPI by its acronym in Spanish) of the said institute and DACCRE, which belongs to the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

These interviews provided multiple elements in the analytical coordination of the particular characteristics of the Cuban migration process to Angola with other structural processes of the local conditions of the historical development of the migration flow and its relation with the global system of power and within the historical construction process of connections and transnational relations between Cuba and Africa.

According to specialists, many Cubans travelled to Angola from the 1970’s and mostly the 1990’s, a period that coincided with the worsening of the economic crisis in Cuba, the high prestige of Cuban professionals in Angola and wage differences resulting from the structural conditions of each nation. A considerable number of Cubans that travelled back then had married with Angolan citizens that studied in Cuba, so family bonds are also included among the reasons for their migration.

DACCRE officials ratified that more than 50% of the citizens registered in the Cuban consular records in December, 2012 were professionals. They worked mainly for the health sector as doctors or nurses, and in other fields as engineers, architects, mechanics and accountants. These jobs and professions match those sectors of the Angolan economy that had been boosted after the investment process the country experienced since the mid 1990’s and for the most part in the last few years. Investments and the promotion of capacities in primary sector like mining and construction, for instance, have generated jobs that are occupied by qualified personnel coming from other regions and countries. However,

Cubans settled in Angola since the war, are present in important fields of the tertiary sector such as health and education.

Nevertheless, in spite of the results accomplished so far, it is convenient to reveal certain methodological changes from which it is possible to build new approaches on the object of study of this paper. Even though there are no researches of reference on the study of Cuban migration to Africa, especially to Angola, and the analysis from quantitative methodologies by using statistic tools was essential to characterize in more depth the current behaviour of Cubans settled in Angola and validate the importance of debates on this subject, it is now possible to focus on this topic from the perspective of individuals as unit of study. The reorientation of the level of analysis for future scientific exercises would enhance the use of backgrounds as theoretical and methodological tool of qualitative longitudinal research, a perspective based on biography as analytical unit<sup>23</sup>. The combination of these methodological tools would give this study a multidimensional character that might favour the construction (or deconstruction) of social processes constantly changing and moving (like migration) but never set apart from their transnational nature.

### **Social representation on the migration process towards Angola.**

In order to complete the analysis of the elements that bring into context the recent migration of Cubans to Angola in the contemporary historic, political, social and economic conditions, it is necessary to pay attention to individual decision levels to start the migration project. In this sense, the construction of social representations on the migration process to Angola from the country of origin is taken as part of “a specific reality inserted within a context from life experiences of a sociocultural group where the existence of subjective elements –feelings, motivations, expectations– influence their behaviour and decision making” (Montero, 2006: 38).

For the purpose of this article, the concept of social representations was defined according to Mato (2001: 133) as “[...] synthetic formulations of meaning that are describable and differentiable, produced by social actors as forms of interpreting and symbolizing key aspects of their social experience. As units of meaning, social representations “organize” the perception and interpretation of experience. We can think of social representations as “key” words or images in the speech by social actors: such units that convey meaning within these speeches. Thus, they guide and give meaning to social practices these actors develop in relation with them and are modified through such practices”.

As it had been noted in the introduction of this article, the technique of in-depth interview would be applied from a qualitative methodology and a crossed approach to interpret migration experiences of some Cubans settled in Angola with their relatives’ in Cuba and thus determine how the construction of positive or negative social representations influence the migration process. For that purpose, a total of 20 interviews were carried out, ten to

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<sup>23</sup> In this line, a precedent was set with the work by Cuban professor and historian Amaro Cano (2013) on the composition of mixed families in the context of the war based on the life stories of two Angolan and two Cuban women.

relatives of Cuban emigrants settled in Angola and the other ten to Cubans settled in the African country. The individuals were chosen according to the following qualitative selection criteria: sex, education level finished in Cuba, profession, date of migration and occupation in Angola. Field work was carried out in Cuba: the relatives of the Cuban emigrants live in Havana and the immigrants, all settled in Luanda, and were interviewed during their vacations in Cuba.

Taking as methodological reference the works by Gabriela Montero (2006) and Claudia Pedone (2002), on the social representations built by Ecuadorian emigrants in Spain on the migration process, the following aspects involved in the way social representations influence the reproduction and perpetuation (continuity) of the Cubans migration process to Angola were defined:

1. The social representation on the migration project and the country of destination built by Cuban emigrants and their families in the country of origin.
2. The construction of a “triumphalist” and “successful” image around the Cubans that decided to emigrate as a strategy of *compensation of structural distortions*.
3. The importance of social chains that make the exchange of information easier in two interrelated directions: they have a bearing on the construction of social representations on migration and on the reproduction of the migration process from the inclusion of new experiences.

On the first of these aspects Pedone (2002: 57) makes special reference to the significance of representations made from the places of origin as essential factors in the migration decision. In this direction, Montero (2006: 38-39) explains how the cultural dimension of the migration project reassesses its component of “imitation of imposed models” that has an impact on decision to start the migration project. Regarding this dimension, the Ecuadorian researcher states that it comprises several elements such as: “[...] low coverage of cultural elements of underdeveloped nations and broad coverage of dominant cultures for the level of development, well-being and life styles achieved, related to the image of modernity. These facts allow the population to overrate the foreign and build a positive idea of the country of destination in the collective imaginary. This longing for arriving in these nations is called the American or the European dream [...]”.

In the case of the Cuban emigration to Angola, it was verified through the interviews made that there is a predominant positive image of the country of destination. This is manifested by means of economic, labour and personal motivations of emigrants, who were sure these could be achieved in this country. The social representation of Angola built in the country of origin specifically refers to a nation that has changed a lot since the war and now offers a growing economy with lots of opportunities in different spheres, particularly for labour, to improve the life conditions of immigrants and their relatives. This overrating of the country of destination is in contrast with the image of the place of origin, in particular in the socioeconomic dimension, in terms of the difficulties the qualified labour force finds in Cuba to maintain certain relative consumption levels and access social mobility mechanisms with their low incomes. In this line, it is worth highlighting references on the fact that in Angola there are Jobs in accordance with the education levels achieved in Cuba

which provide much better wages in comparison with those paid in the island for the same activity.

“When I got to Angola in 1993, the country had just finished a period of internal war, it was destroyed. There were lots of junk on the streets, there were shortages in stores so everything or almost everything had to be bought in squares and in no hygienic conditions, and there was a high level of delinquency and lots of mutilated people begging. The feeling of insecurity was huge; there were just a few schools. To be honest I felt like going back to Cuba several times, Angola’s reality back then was quite different from today”. Testimony by a Cuban female emigrant in Luanda.

“I arrived during a difficult period for the country (Angola) but in Cuba it was also difficult. I had been working as a doctor for a few years, I had recently finished my major as they say I was still wet behind the ears, and my son had just been born. My salary, like many other people’s salaries, was nothing and there was not much to buy either. Let’s just say the opportunity to work in Angola emerged; it is very hard to go away and leave your family behind knowing you won’t be able to see them in a long time, but we also need to think in providing a better life for them. The situation in Angola was complex at that time but it was noticeable that the country would have a chance once the political situation settled. It is a resourceful country, it has everything. In the past years it has had an amazing economic growth and those of us who were there since the war are collecting our produce as well”. Testimony by a Cuban male emigrant in Luanda.

“I left to Angola because I already had a well-paid job there. If you don’t work you don’t survive there” Testimony by a Cuban male emigrant in Luanda.

In this line, the idea of the migration strategy as an option, an alternative to stand up to the negative consequences of *productive heterogeneity* on the Cuban population, particularly a considerable portion of its qualified labour force, is once again reintroduced. Emigrants, as well as their relatives in Cuba “[...] think of migration as a beneficial opportunity, a positive longing from the economic viewpoint that allows improving their life conditions by fulfilling specific expectations related to the purchase of certain material goods that would favour a better future” (Montero, 2006: 39).

“I have been able to develop professionally and have a better life, here (Angola) there are many opportunities for professionals, as soon as you get a job you can improve your life conditions and help your family. Besides, as a professional you can afford a nice life and have things that were hard, almost impossible to get in Cuba” Testimony by a Cuban male emigrant in Luanda.

“With lots of effort I managed to become a successful businesswoman. I have an import export company in Portugal, in Angola I am a businesswoman in the field of construction and now I just entered the health sector with a Specialized Medical Centre. I was 16 when my father died, I didn’t study much, I wanted to be a surgeon so that’s the reason why today I living my dream of being close to the health sector”. Testimony by a Cuban female emigrant in Luanda.

“I think living abroad is positive, we all have the right to live where we consider we will have a better economic development or opportunities” Testimony by a Cuban male emigrant in Luanda.

“My son left almost ten years ago, and then he took my daughter-in-law and the kids with him. They are doing great there. They both are working and they are well paid. They have visited several places during vacations and they kids are having a nice life. We receive a lot of help from them; they send us money for expenses here and so that we can buy some products that are expensive here. They invited me to go on vacations to be with the kids”. Testimony by a relative of a Cuban emigrant in Havana.

Yet, even though there is a widespread positive opinion among emigrants on the country of destination and on the strategy of the migration project, there is also a downside: longing for the family and the life in Cuba, abundance of diseases so far unknown in the island, a wide gap of inequality and social contrasts that are non-existent in Cuba, violence and corruption.

“I honestly say that regardless of where we live and the reason for which we left Cuba, we still love our homeland, our identity does not disappear just because we have a different nationality now, which is favourable in the professional and economic fields. In everyone’s eyes, we are Cubans forever and by the way, we are very proud of that. Every week we make traditional Cuban food, we listen to Cuban music, we dance even mambo and our eyes get filled with tear just for recalling Cuba. Out of Cuba we can start a family (mine is adorable), be better off economically or materially, but we don’t have our childhood friends, a park of reference to take our children, a brother to hug or a mother to comfort us and many other things you wouldn’t understand perhaps”. Testimony by a Cuban female emigrant in Luanda.

“Cubans are respected and loved there for everything we have done for them, there are plenty of job opportunities because it is a developing nation but the culture is quite different from ours, that is Africa and it has nothing to do with the Caribbean. The country lacks an efficient health system, many of its cities are overpopulated, and this is noticeable in Luanda. People live there in no hygienic conditions or salubrity so contagious diseases are quite frequent. The road system is still chaotic; it is not enough given the amount of vehicles so traffic is always jammed. Social inequality are visible, there is a medium and a high class and a huge population starving”. Testimony by a Cuban male emigrant in Luanda.

Although positive representations of the country of origin and the migration project are also common among emigrants’ relatives, these are countered with the negative elements mentioned above.

“My cousin has been living there since 2003; it was difficult at first because he was away from his family and because of work instability. He says there are good and bad things. They are well paid and products are cheap but they have to avoid going out at night. There is a lot of inequality in the development of the country and dangerous areas”. Testimony by a relative of a Cuban emigrant in Havana.

“Since my brother arrived there he has been able to save some money and live a nice life. But it isn’t easy, there are many diseases we are not used to, it is necessary to be very careful, especially when having little children” Testimony by a relative of a Cuban emigrant in Havana.

This construction process not only involves emigrants’ experiences transferred to their families in the country of origin through telephone calls, emails and visits to Cuba; the opinions and testimonies of the thousands of Cubans that have rendered their services in different historic moments and regions in this country; but also the information in the social networks through the national media that follow up Angola’s economic development and at the same time denounce and analyse the serious social and humanitarian situation of the African continent. However, most of the relatives interviewed in Cuba recommended the migration alternative based on the experiences transferred from their relatives in Angola.

This is closely related to the second aspect involved in the way social representations influence the reproduction and perpetuation (continuity) of the Cubans migration process to Angola: the construction of a “triumphalist” and “successful” image around the Cubans that decided to migrate as a strategy of *compensation of structural distortions*. Based on the elements pointed out by emigrants and their relatives, the “success” and “triumph” in this case have to do with the accomplishment of personal, economic and labour goals that motivated migration and is carried out in a very specific geographic context. That is to say, the migration project involves an undeniable reality, Angola and its peculiarities in terms of sustained socioeconomic national development since the beginning of the 21st century. After a long-lasting conflict, this country emerged with a huge potential based on its natural resources, it demands labour for its reconstruction and also training for its labour force (recently decolonized) and relies on important foreign investments in every economic sector.

Emigrants from six to ten years in Angola have residence or citizenship, they have a job according to their profession or education level which allows them to earn and save some money, and they have travelled to Cuba several times and have been able to offer economic help to their families in the island. All of them agree on wanting to come back to Cuba when they are old. Those that have been in Angola from four to five years are also residents, have a job according to their education levels and are well paid, and they send periodical remittances and have invited their closest relatives to go to Angola though they have not been able to visit Cuba more than once on vacations.

Even though the return to Cuba is constant in all cases, whether after spending some time abroad or after getting old, the opportunity to settle in a society where they can have relatively better life styles than in their country of origin and allows them to help their families, represents an incentive to continue the migration project. In spite of the negative elements they have to deal with as immigrants, the idea of working abroad and return after having saved some money and guaranteed better life conditions in the island (repair or buy a new house, buy a car, set up a business, among others) prevails.

Families also support and transmit the image of “successful” emigrants when making reference to the money they have been able to save in the country of destination and the

important thing is that this money is intended for the family economy. “Social representations and the imaginary built in the country of origin have to do with the success and wellbeing migration can provide, which is noticeable in the acquisition of material assets such as houses, lands, vehicles” (Montero, 2006: 37).

“My daughter has only been there for four years and she has travelled all over Angola, she also visited South Africa on vacations. She lives alone in a small house with all mod-cons and she has a car. Every month she sends some money and she is always telling me to ask for whatever I need that she can send it to me. She already remade my bathroom and my kitchen, now we want to sell this house and buy a better one in a neighbourhood downtown”. Testimony by a relative of a Cuban emigrant in Havana.

We had already given some hints on the importance of social chains and networks<sup>24</sup> in the construction of social representations on the country of destination and the migration project. All the relatives interviewed admitted that the opinion of the friends or relatives settled abroad is the most important element in the construction of their social representations of that country, followed by the information provided by the media. The emigrants interviewed noted that their decision to migrate was influenced by the opinions of friends or relatives that had already settled there, fact, in some cases, knowing they relied on the support of this people made their migration project safer.

“My brother has lived there for a few years, he is an engineer and he works in construction. He is doing fine and he has always told me that there are opportunities for me there. At that moment I had recently finished my major, I finished my social services before I left”. Testimony by a Cuban male emigrant in Luanda.

“My son’s friend got him a job there as an accountant for an Enterprise, he assured him that he had a lot of opportunities there and that he would help him. My son authenticated his documents and went there with a work contract. After two years, when he was stable he started procedures to take my daughter-in-law and the kids with him. All that is very expensive, it took a lot of paperwork and money, but he could afford it. Now he wants to help my niece, she is studying at the university and she wants her to go to work there after she finishes her major”. Testimony by a relative of a Cuban emigrant in Havana.

Even though Angola is not a traditional destination from a historic perspective and the Cubans that emigrated there is not a significant amount in contrast with the total of Cuban

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<sup>24</sup> As for the definition of these categories, we agree with the theoretical and methodological differentiation proposed by Pedone (2002: 58) between social chains and networks that make up the migration process. “The migration chain refers to the transfer of information and material support relatives, friends or compatriots offer to potential migrants to decide to, or eventually, leave. Chains make the exit and arrival process easier, can partially finance the trip, handle documentation or employment and a place to live. They also involve an exchange of information on economic, social and political elements on the society of destination [...]. The chains are part of a bigger structure: migration networks, which are more extended and relatively more supported, develop dynamics of its own, can be even triggered from incentives and disincentives from the society of destination. In light of globalization processes, these links between different actors in the society of origin and the society of destination are creating transnational social spaces”. For the purpose of this article and given the characteristics of its object of study, we assume the category of social chains, restricted to family union and group of friends that can also achieve transnational levels.



emigrants or groups settled in other reception countries, it is possible to affirm that the social representations built in the country of origin play a part and have some influence on individuals decisions to migrate, thus contributing with the reproduction of the migration project. In an interconnected environment, transnational social chains favour the exchange of information, which allows building social representations on the country of destination and at the same time creates a new link in the information circulation chain on migration.

In this line, Montero (2006: 37) states that historic and structural conditions in which migration processes emerge and develop, the decision to migrate is also conditioned by the social representations built on the on the place of destination from the society of origin. “Similarly, family and friends networks in the country of origin and destination expedite and reproduce the migration process by exchanging information to build representations: create an imaginary of the country of destination as the ideal place for achieving their personal and their relative’s aspirations, encourage migration, provide loans for migrating, facilitate a place to live and to work and their insertion in the country of destination. Family and friends networks become some sort of support and solidarity institution for new immigrants”.

Nevertheless, it is worth explaining that individuals do not act separately, nor the social representations on their migration projects are built in isolation. The social, economic and political context individuals interact locally (nationally) and globally determines their trajectory and is conditioned by global actors that constantly modify and reconstruct movement dynamics in the worldwide scenario they develop.

## **Conclusions**

Although Cubans migration to Angola as a particular case of study, does not show deep differences if compared to the rest of the Cuban emigration shaped since the 1990s, in terms of their motivation, composition and behaviour, it is possible to establish certain connections among the characteristics of this migration process and the regional and global trends of international migration. Even from the global analytical perspective, it is easier to identify overlapping elements interacting in the economic, political and social conditions that determine migration towards this destination.

The analysis of the selected case study from a global perspective, as a methodological instrument enabled, on one hand, to divide the object of study in different levels that allow a cross analysis of global, local (national) and even individual conditions that underlie the process immigration. Identifying the interacting elements in each of these levels provided a better insight of the context in immigration project and that are, ultimately, involved in the characteristics of its settlement and in how the transnational connection is established.

In this direction, the reorganization and downsizing of the labour market according to the interests of the big capital, pursuing to make the most of the results of labour and the centralization of the control of resources through neoliberal policies has redirected and reassessed a large portion of global migration flows. These flows have been part of and have contributed with the reorganization and downsizing of the labour market over the past fifty years of globalization. In an intermediate scale (local-national), inter-state cooperation,

solidarity and exchange strategies have configured a flow of information, goods, technologies, knowledge and knowhow in the periphery of the capitalist system that has allowed the geographical and cultural rapprochement of disconnected regions that have depended on the hegemonic power centres for centuries. The performance of state policies, both on migration and economy, has also influenced these migratory processes once they are part of and are set in global fields of power. Thus, movement dynamics of South-South labour flows comprise relationships between “individuals” and “forces structuring the global political economy” under certain historical conditions based on the premise that no individual acts alone or is individually isolated. The multiple global networks of political, cultural and economic power mould and shape migration, regardless of its classification.

Moreover, the implementation of a global approach enabled to study the migration of Cubans to Angola, not in the geographical sense of direction, but from its global social dimension. This approach allowed overcoming methodological limitations in the description of the national realities of sending and receiving migration centres and the common links that contribute with strengthening the migration process. Although these restrictions may be necessary, they would only account for a unidirectional description of a single dimension of migration. The restructuring of this transnational social process (outlining the methodological boundaries between analytical levels) in its interaction with its the global conditions provided a better insight of the current migration of Cubans to Angola as part of the contradictions of the world capitalist system Cuba is inserted in (though with a different political and socio-economic system). This includes the history and realities of Cuba and Africa; the historical and contemporary bonds among these regions; the neoliberal restructuring of underdeveloped economies (in this case the Africans), the restructuring of the global labour market and its feedback in migration processes; and how the social representations of these processes are individually built.

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