ACADEMIC ARTICLES

(POST)-SOVIET DIASPORA IN CUBA

Jenny Cruz Cabrera, María Regina Cano Orúe and Dmitri Prieto Samsónov
AC&SE Group (Cuban Chapter), Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO)

Abstract

The Cuban (post)-Soviet diaspora is the human collective comprising the persons coming from the territories of the (former) Soviet Union, who immigrated to Cuba and nowadays live in this Archipelago – as well as their descendants. This migration occurred during the period of close ties between Cuba and the USSR, that is, 1960–91. Compared with the other overseas ethnic communities now living in Cuba, the (post)-Soviet diaspora is the largest one, surpassed only by the Spanish immigration, which – however – is not usually perceived by Cubans as a diaspora, because Spain is a major contributor to the 'mainstream' Cuban culture. So, the (post)-Soviet diaspora may legitimately be considered as the largest 'clearly foreign' human contribution to the Cuban population in recent times. The most important character of this collectivity is that its first generation (i.e., the immigrants from the [post]Soviet countries) is overwhelmingly female, constituted by women from the USSR who in the period between ca. 1961 and ca. 1991 married to Cuban students affiliated to Soviet government's scholarship programmes. This 'romantic' stance makes this diaspora very unusual when compared with the standard causes making people migrate. The numeric strength of the (post)-Soviet diaspora contrasts with its very low visibility in the Cuban cultural, media and academic discourse, especially comparing with that of the relatively minor – in the numeric sense – diasporic constituents of the Cuban population: the Chinese, Arab, Jewish, etc. We analyse the main demographic, gender, ethnographic, historical, cultural and political aspects of the (post)-Soviet diaspora in Cuba.

Keywords: Cuba, USSR, migration, gender, diaspora, post-Soviet studies, visibility, ethnicity, empowerment, citizenship

Introduction

The transdisciplinary field of post-Soviet studies emerged in 1992 as a sort of 'adaptive gesture' intended to assimilate the former USSR and the areas previously exposed to its geopolitical influence to a post-colonial status.[1] Geopolitically speaking, before 1990 such areas obviously included Cuba.[2]

While political and economic relations between Cuba and the USSR (as well as between Cuba and Russia: before 1917 and after 1991) have inspired numerous publications (although not normally branded – at least in the Cuban Archipelago – as part of the post-Soviet studies field), the number of media projects[3] and research papers –especially in Cuba[4] – about the Soviet and post-Soviet[5] cultural impact on the Cuban society is much smaller. For most Cubans who stayed in the country after the 1990s debacle, the geographically distant Soviet influence on Cuba had been lived as something nigh and visible in many spheres of professional activities, academia and everyday life, including literature, cinema, drama, sciences, visual arts, TV and the domestic market. Also, the post-Soviet condition in Cuba is emphatically linked to the (later re-interpreted as commonplace) experiences of Cubans who travelled or temporarily lived in the USSR (and other countries under its geopolitical influence) during the 30-year period of political closeness. Cuban geography itself – both at macro (polity/country/nation/Archipelago) and micro (neighbourhoods, workplaces, landscapes) levels – provided settings in which Cubans shared social-space proximities with some 'Soviet' or 'Russian' ('Ukrainian', etc.) person(s) – or their children – who years ago came to live here. Nonetheless, the persistence in Cuba of a large diaspora of Soviet origin is still one of the less publicised aspects of the Cuban post-Soviet condition. This appears rather surprising, as the (post)-Soviet diaspora has stable family, kinship, friendship and professional links with Cubans, particularly those (ca. half a million) who studied in the USSR in 1961–91, many of whom keep key roles in the country's technical, military, entrepreneurial, intellectual, administrative and professional milieus.

Our current aim is systematizing the basic facts about the (post)-Soviet diaspora in Cuba, as part of a broader area of post-Soviet studies, nowadays emerging in Cuba. Firstly, we want to make public the very existence of the diaspora as a relevant element of the Cuban reality: despite its numeric strength, the (post)-Soviet diaspora is barely mentioned in Cuban and foreign research, reference and media materials devoted to the ethnic composition of the present-day Cuban people. Although analysing the very causes of this 'invisibility issue' per se merits a separate paper, we start with some considerations on this topic. Next, we establish terminological conventions, provide some basic – statistical and socio-historical – information gathered in our research, and discuss some relevant fieldwork findings, centred in the diaspora's subjectivities. Our main goal is elucidating the core demographic, gender, ethnographic, historical, cultural and political aspects of the (post)-Soviet diaspora in Cuba. Our methodology is based upon in-depth interviews, life histories, participant observation and analysis of the census data.

An Invisible Diaspora?

As a set of ethnicities relatively recent in entering the Cuban 'Ajiaco',[6] (post)-Soviet cultural and demographic components 'enjoy' a sort of 'dual' hermeneutics of [in]visibility in the current Cuban imaginary: on one hand, provided that the 35+ generations perceived the close Cuban-Soviet ties as commonsensical, the diaspora tends to be (sort of) 'naturalized' as a predictable part of the (post)-Soviet Cuban landscape[7] (and for being so normal it is assumed not requiring any special attention, both from socio-political institutions, and the intellectual/cultural/media actors); on the other hand – and paradoxically, in a sense – it is still felt as somewhat 'alien', so it is not normally mentioned in the standard set of the 'ethnic roots of the Cuban nationality' (i.e., the initial African-Hispanic background plus –later – Chinese, Filipino, Yucateco, Arab, Jewish contributions[8]). Unlike other Cuban ethnic communities, such as Arabic,[9] Hebrew[10] or Chinese,[11] the (post)-Soviet diaspora still does not have any associative structure officially recognised by the Cuban institutions, which could supply means for self-organisation and socialisation. However, some socialisation occurs in the milieu of the two Orthodox churches in Cuba (canonically belonging to the Moscow and the Constantinople Patriarchies), but this obviously applies mostly to Orthodox believers, or those interested in the spiritualities, traditions and histories of the Eastern Slavic peoples.

Many Cuban memories relating to the USSR-connected experiences had been relegated to the realm of nostalgia. The post-Soviet social amnesia is normally felt, for example, in the very common avoidance to mention – even in ordinary conversations – the traumatic everyday life experiences during the 'special period' – the Cuban structural crisis following the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) and USSR debacle in 1989–91 – when the entire Cuban society had to modify the previously normalised (naturalised) shared habits and notions. Before 1989, almost all the Cubans – mostly via an all-encompassing rationing system – enjoyed regular access to COMECON goods, which contributed to establishing a suitable level of comfort. Although some of such imports (e.g., electric devises, TVs, radios, etc.) normally were ranked quite below[12] their Western analogues, most food products and drinks are still remembered as some of the unsurpassed pieces contributing to the peculiar pre-1989

Cuba's popular lifestyle. However, such 'Golden Era' remembrances tend to be felt as deeply traumatic in front of the 'special period' shortages and the current economically precarious and deeply unequal Cuban situation (for some relevant memories and a thoughtful analysis, see Sánchez Gómez 2003). Conversely, among those involved in the intellectual sphere (social research, arts,[13] literature, media, etc.) the period when the Cuban establishments and Communist Party were at their closest stance vis-*à*-vis their Soviet colleagues (i.e., 1971–86) is widely known as '*quincenio gris*' (from *Quince* = fifteen; literally, the 'grey fifteen years'), because of the ideological censorship and control widely implanted in Cuba during those years. Standard Soviet-style 'Marxism-Leninism' was then taught as a sort of official pansophical and panoptical ideology in all the university degree programmes as well as in high schools and technical education units. The voices of some great Cuban writers and thinkers were driven to silence. The Cuban students normally mocked on university disciplines such as 'Scientific communism', by calling them 'Science-Fiction' (right the way some of their Soviet counterparts did). The particular social-control and discourse-construction devises used in Cuba during that era are now beginning to be investigated (see Fornet 2013). In 1986–89, things started to change, and it is undisputable that Cuban society is ideologically much freer today than it used to be before the perestroika. Obviously, for most of the people who were somehow involved in intellectual activities during the '*quincenio gris*' remembering the events of that era implies experiencing a sort of transient re-victimization. No doubt, many of them tend to – consciously or unconsciously – associate all things Soviet with repression, authoritarianism and censorship. Of course, this is a powerful handicap for the politico-epistemological status of Soviet culture in present-day Cuba,[14] and by extension it also applies to the (post)-Soviet diaspora and the Cuban post-Soviet condition itself, generally speaking. Such an amnesia is a powerful factor for the post-Soviet studies – and particularly the research of the (post)-Soviet diaspora in Cuba – to be considered as a (still) very marginal area in the social sciences and the cultural discourse.[15]

Another powerful factor is the almost absolute absence of a systematic critical comprehension of the long-term, deeply grounded historical and socio-political causes of the Soviet system's collapse, which still operates in Cuba as a sufficient condition for many scholars to avoid publicly discussing USSR-related topics. A first large exception from this trend had been the '*Las otras herencias de Octubre*' seminar ('The other legacies of October [Revolution]'), carried out at the UNEAC (National Union of Writers and Artists) headquarters in 2005 and organised by the Cátedra Haydée Santamaría autonomous collective, where a pioneering piece of research on the Soviet women 'romantic migration' to Cuba was presented by sociologist Roneld Reyes. The seminar was also attended by key Cuban intellectuals, activists and researches, including some veterans of the Cuban pre-1959 Trotskyite organisation. This event contributed to critically apprehend many controversial facts related to the USSR experience and 'really existing socialism', including basic critiques of the Cuban socialist model and its relation with the Soviet-Stalinist praxis.[16]

So, perhaps the invisibility of the (post)-Soviet diaspora in Cuba organically pools the 1971–86 naturalisation of all things Soviet – when it was perceived as something commonplace, 'normal' and thus unimportant, being part of a (un) willingly accepted geopolitical routine – and the subsequently generalised perception of the Soviet experience as a failure: a sentiment driving the Cuban scholars, intellectuals and laypeople to plainly ignore the whole Soviet theme, in order to somehow circumvent the widespread feelings of political and existential frustration in relation to it.

And – we hypothesize – another background reason to avoid noticing the (post)-Soviet diaspora in Cuba is related to gender. Cuba was visited in 1961–91 by thousands of Soviet cooperators (predominantly male, in most cases coming with their spouses),[17] involved in development programmes in almost all the spheres of social life. Normally, these families stayed in Cuba for several years, according to specific mission assignments. However, such cooperators are not genealogically related to the (post)-Soviet diaspora in Cuba. We do not have notices of Soviet cooperators remaining in Cuba long after the USSR collapse (the last civilian ones left in 1995–96; some military personnel stayed till the closing of the Lourdes intelligence base by Putin, in 2001) or marrying Cuban partners. Instead, the first generation of the Cuban (post)-Soviet diaspora essentially consists of women who arrived in Cuba married to Cuban men, who for some reason stayed for a time in the USSR (mostly, Cuban undergrad students[18]). Till recently, international migrations have been widely characterised as predominantly male.[19] But this is not the case of the diaspora we are investigating, which in its first generation almost exclusively consists of women from the (post)-Soviet countries who migrated to Cuba accompanying their husbands (marriage is compulsory to get permanent residency). For this reason, Cuban sociologist Roneld Reyes (2004) defined 'romantic migration' as a subtype of international migration causes, taking as leading case the (post)-Soviet diaspora in Cuba. One author's (Dmitri Prieto Samsónov) experience as delegate at the Continental Conference of Young Russian Compatriots (May 2014) pointed to the existence of similar diasporic phenomena (Soviet women migrating overseas with their husbands) in other Latin American countries (i.e., Costa Rica, Perú, Ecuador, etc.); however, the (post)-Soviet diaspora in Cuba numerically exceeds the other Latin American ones by one or two powers of ten (according to the estimates discussed at the event).

Hence, Cuban *machista* habits could sensitively constrain the young Soviet women's agencies; but they arrived in Cuba when gender equality was promoted as an important issue in the context of the 'revolutionary transformation of society'. So, after learning Spanish it became easy for many of them not only getting involved in normal everyday life, but also achieving important positions in Cuban industry, educational, scientific, cultural and even administrative and media spheres. However, the post-1959 period of the Cuban history was also one when top-down organisation of social agency became a rule; it was very difficult (or at some stages even impossible) generating any autonomous grassroots, community, club-like or NGO-style entities. So, the only spaces for exerting social agency and personal self-realization open to Soviet women were those of the Cuban ones: the official entities of the State and the para-state structures; and the family space. It was a strength (i.e., meaning social inclusion) but also a weakness: the cultural behaviour and in some cases even the imaginary of the diaspora had to be normalised to be put in accord with the contextual rules and styles (and *machismo* was a strong factor here). The same happened to many young Cubans (who had to adapt their dreams to the *Raison d'Etat*), but for the Soviet women it meant giving up important segments of their cultural identity (or deciding to reduce them to private spaces). Having any special organisation or club was seen as a utopia not only by Cubans, but also by the Soviet embassy and other authorities.

Actually, many Soviet women living in Cuba achieved professional excellence and success; this fact corroborates both their good preparation, provided by the Soviet educational system, and the inclusiveness of the Cuban institutional sphere (both in the gender and acceptance of foreigners dimensions). But this also meant for the diaspora's first generation a requirement to accept the ruling ideological, cultural and identity standards. So, it is about inserting themselves in certain Cuban spaces, and even becoming 'quasi-Cubans'. Film researcher Zoya Barash,[20] cardiologist Catalina Sin,[21] and translator Veronika Spasskaia are/were renowned in their specific fields. The cases of Olga Inerarity and Natalia Balashova are more complex, as they attempted becoming promoters of (post)-Soviet cultures in Cuba, making such a task much more difficult than 'normal' professional exercise (not linked to promoting 'Soviet' identities). Of course, such 'identitary normalization' is strongly linked to the general difficulties with autonomous cultural spaces' construction in Cuba. In addition, the USSR/Russian Embassy had not shown interest in creating stable relations with the diaspora until Putin became president of the Federation of Russia, when a large meeting with the resident Russian citizens was convoked at the Embassy building; nowadays such meetings are carried out every December. Diplomatic missions of other post-Soviet states also do have programmes of liaison with their residents in Cuba. But even this is not a strong enough stimulus for the diaspora as a whole to definitively become visible in most important Cuban media.

In previous articles, Dmitri Prieto Samsónov and Polina Martínez Shvietsova (2008, 2012) analysed how the second generation of the diaspora got 'normalized' too, since its relevant members became culturally visible as 'just Cuban' intellectuals. Cases of important (post)-Soviet writers and artists, such as Andrés Mir, Anna Lidia Vega Serova, and Ernesto González Litvinov (all of them with at least two books published in Cuba, and also significant work: as visual artists – Vega Serova and González Litvinov – and cultural promoter, designer and web journalist – Mir) were studied through interviews and text analysis. Among the findings was the fact that during their formative period as creative persons, carried out in Cuban cultural institutions, they systematically had to adapt their discourse to the Cuban audience and cultural instructors, so abandoning elements referring to the languages, authors, realities and cultural legacies of the ex-USSR peoples. And they had to halt some specific cultural projects, not understood by the Cuban institutions. However, it was still easy finding out how experiences, cultural references, and even in some cases the syntax and phraseology of their oeuvre contain some (post)-Soviet elements.[22] In any case, losing the 'Soviet' identity signs in the artistic and literary production of the post-(Soviet) diaspora's second-generation authors is a quite visible trend, which makes such authors 'invisible' as members of a specific ethno-cultural collective and normalises them as 'just Cuban' creators. This invisibility and the pioneering status of our research are the two reasons for us to proceed to define immediately some basic terminological conventions.

Why '(Post)-Soviet Diaspora'?

It was difficult finding an appropriate lexical term for the social fact we investigate. Firstly, we prefer using 'diaspora' in our work instead of other equivalents like 'community' or 'migrants', because this term is widely accepted among the studied people; they actually prefer it (although the Russian word '*zemliachestvo*', meaning 'group of persons with shared territorial origin', is also used, but in lesser extent; it is also harder to pronounce in Spanish and in English). The terms 'emigrant' and 'migrant' have a negative connotation among people coming from the USSR, meaning basically 'political émigré [exiles]',[23] and those currently denoted in post-Soviet states as *Gastarbeiter* (labour migrant), respectively. And we strongly prefer 'diaspora' vis-à-vis 'community' because its very etymological meaning expresses quite well the tangible dispersion of (post)-Soviet persons living in Cuba. Overall community ties are not strong, social cohesion is loose, and their level of organisation cannot be compared with that, for example, of the Arab Union or the Spanish societies (also because of the lack of stable socialisation places). Secondly, ‘Russian diaspora’ is not proper, as not all diaspora people are ethnically Russian, nor citizens of the Russian Federation, neither all of them came from what is now Russia (formerly, the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic – RSFSR). ‘Russian-speaking diaspora’ is also inadequate: for many, Russian is not the mother tongue; some even are not Russian speakers at all (probable case of most of the diaspora’s second and third generations’ members); nor ‘Slavic’ (the USSR encompassed only the Eastern Slavic area – Russia, Ukraine and Belarus – while also including large territories with Turkic, Caucasian, Iranian, Baltic-language populations, to name just a few). Furthermore, the term ‘Soviet’ is polysemic (i.e., it refers to the political system based on workers’ councils, to an extinct country known as the Soviet Union, or to a chronologically defined historical period). In this sense, almost all of the immigrants from the USSR came to Cuba in the Soviet era. However, nowadays ‘Soviet diaspora’ would be an anachronistic expression; as no such country exists anymore. As we live in the post-Soviet era, we decided to attach a prefix ‘post’ to the word ‘Soviet’, also using parentheses as a deconstructive gesture: (post)-Soviet. That could mean – and it is just one of the meanings – that a process occurring in the Soviet era generated a long-standing effect, which is still there precisely due to the fact it used to be related to the USSR as a whole, and that fact is still in force for this diaspora not to disintegrate. However, the present provides this fact a different ontological status: so, it is necessary to add ‘post’ to indicate such additional meaning. While this prefix is put between parenthesis – ‘(post)’ – so as to signal that the diaspora did not emerge in the post-Soviet era, but instead arrived in Cuba during the Soviet period. And only after that (1991), it was carried into the present-day geopolitical and chronological situation.

Thirdly, we question whether there is only one or several (post)-Soviet diasporas. Is ethnicity, citizenship or loyalty to one of the post-Soviet sovereign countries enough for the sense of a shared, common ‘Soviet’ multiethnic identity to become extinct, and replaced by a ‘post-Soviet’ one (i.e., Russian, Ukrainian, Kazakh, etc.)? Or instead, a feeling of unity remains among those who came to Cuba from the USSR (and their offspring)? Fieldwork results clearly indicate that no cleavages over ‘national’ identities, interpreted neither in ethno-cultural-linguistic nor political-citizenship-loyalty[24] terms, are observable among most diaspora members, up to date. Yes, some people tend to characterise their fellow diaspora persons in conventional, stereotypical ethnicity terms, but we could not detect this as cause to any sensitive breakage on grounds of origin. The solidarity based upon a shared living experience in Cuba seems to prevail. This is still real

– notwithstanding the Ukraine–Russia conflict – and for it we prefer assuming the (post)-Soviet diaspora as a single reality. So, the 'USSR' somehow currently persists in Cuba as a shared motherland for many people.

The self-identification of the persons of the diaspora ranges from considerations like 'I am a citizen of the USSR and I am not going to claim any other citizenship [i.e., of post-Soviet states, or of Cuba]', actually making ethnicity and political nationality irrelevant – such cases are very rare – to assertions of being 'Ukrainian', 'Russian', etc., thus making explicit use of ethno-political self-identifications. Some of our informants discern quite well 'ethnic' and 'political' nationalities: 'I have a mixed ancestry as my mum was Russian and dad was Ukrainian; I am citizen of Russia permanently living in Cuba'; or: 'I am Ukrainian according to ethnicity, but I am a citizen of Russia; I am Soviet, actually, and as a Soviet person I came to Cuba …'. Most Cubans call '*rusas*' all the women of the first generation. However, the ethnicities of many of them are also widely known among their neighbours: 'the Latvian who lives in Camaguey … the Soviet-Korean from Vedado'. Some cultural projects and community networks in 2000–2010 tried to set up 'transversal' identification, like Havana's 'Rodnikí', a project coordinated by Natalia Balashova, with the explicit goal of promoting the 'Russian-speaking' community (which usually also included inviting Cubans with Soviet University degrees, who normally have good command of Russian), or the social network of 'oriental women living in Havana', a collective including persons from Kazakhstan, Georgia, a Soviet-Korean, and some women from Moslem and Far-Eastern countries which have not been part of the Soviet Union (however, former Soviet citizens were the core group of this network). As most of the first generation was born in the republics of Russia and Ukraine, the Slavic component is majoritarian; regarding persons with Central/Eastern Asia phenotype – those of Turkic, Siberian, Soviet-Korean ancestry – Cubans normally discern them as coming from 'the Asian part of the Soviet Union/Russia'.

Life histories unravel complex processes of building-up meanings of belonging by members of the diaspora's first two generations. Experiences of Soviet and Cuban 'really existing socialism(s)' versions and 1986–90s changes marked decisively their often hurt subjectivities, being relevant aspects such as: linguistic practices (acquisition/loss of languages; their qualification as a mother/father tongues), dynamicity of the ethno-cultural identity (it is worth noting that expressions of political power played a critical role here), politicisation (usually masked) of gender relations, and formal citizenship (acquisition of post-Soviet passport at the relevant embassies in Cuba; experience of holding a dual Cuban-(post)-Soviet citizenship, which – according to Cuban law – is formally unconstitutional, but actually tolerated and even in some ways promoted a condition). As related scientific papers, audiovisual/media/social networks productions, films, books (most of the extant ones usually come from outside Cuba) as well as cultural/socialisation spaces are scarce, this brings about another problem: the Cuban (post)-Soviet diaspora hardly become visible for the media, academia or society in general, and this does not help it to reflect on its problems. As its first generation goes older, and many of its members have already died (and their invaluable memories were in almost all the cases irremediably lost), we estimate that developing our subject and making it visible will potentially help the diaspora to reach stronger collective empowerment, to solve its current specific problems. There is some urgency in pursuing our research, that is to say that many older people associated with our field of study are in clear danger, threatened by disease and even death.

A Comparative Look at the Socio-Demographic Aspects of the (Post)-Soviet Diaspora in Cuba: A Quantitative Approach

Hence, our project is aimed to help the (post)-Soviet diaspora to become increasingly visible in the Cuban public sphere, and to acquire public recognition as a relevant fact, which may also be useful for generating its own explicit sociabilities and officially recognised associations. For this purpose, we intended demographically and ethnographically characterising the diaspora. We drive some conclusions regarding the number of (post)-Soviet immigrants living in Cuba, and their descendants, by using the census data, and some historical processes involved in the genesis of the diaspora, so to propose broader comparative perspectives regarding some other countries of the Americas where similar phenomena exist.

Cuban linguistic anthropologist Sergio Valdés Bernal (1988: 239) was among the first in paying attention to the increase of migrants from the socialist East to Cuba during the post-1959 period. According to the statistics he quotes, in 1963–65, 52.7 per cent of the 'socialist' migrants came from the USSR, 18.5 per cent from Czechoslovakia, 8.4 per cent from East Germany, 6.6 per cent from Bulgaria, and the remaining 13.8 per cent from Poland, Romania, P.R. China and North Korea. Valdés Bernal emphasises that most of such migrants were technicians and advisers, so he did not focus on those women from 'socialist' countries who commenced to settle in Cuba. Another linguist, Isabella Wieser (2006) presented in Vienna a PhD thesis about Russian speakers in Cuba. Wieser carried out in Havana a thorough socio-linguistic survey of how different Russian-speaking groups use this and other languages in diverse situations. She also compared Russian-Spanish bilingualism in Russia and Cuba, her study being among the first in evidencing the quantitative strength of the Cuban Russian-speaking community.

Since no previous studies on the numeric aspects of the (post)-Soviet diaspora have been published, it was critical for us to encounter a way of gathering the basic quantitative data.

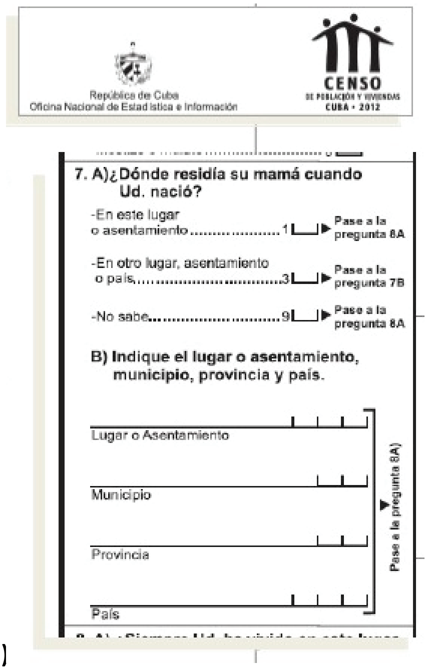
The first imaginable sources useful in such an effort are the consular missions of the post-Soviet states (first of all, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus) in Cuba. But the classified nature of consular archives impedes gathering the data. In addition, many persons of the diaspora's second generation (Cuban sons and daughters of (post)-Soviet female immigrants) actually do not appear in the consulates' databases. In any case, the Russian consular and diplomatic officers normally speak of 'thousands', 'approximately 4000', and other similar figures. We desired having more precise data; we recognise that it is still a pendant assignment in our work. In Cuba, due to material shortages and official restrictions, it is difficult to conduct sociological surveys based on representative samples. Some indirect methods, like quantifying the putative diaspora persons by adding up the Slavic and Turkic family names and patronymics appearing in the Cuban phone books, can also be used.

However, fortunately the 2012 Cuban census asked the Cuban inhabitants a question about their birthplace, and the numbers of those answering other countries than Cuba were for the first time in many years published in the census report. In the previous census (2002) report, only aggregate figures of all non-Cuban naturals appeared per province. So, to make an initial approach to the demography of the (post)-Soviet diaspora in Cuba, we used the report of the recent (2012) Cuban Census of Population and Housing (ONEI 2014), which brought out that a total of 3,386 women and 2,627 men living in Cuba at the moment of the census had been born overseas. Of those, 1,444 Cuban residents were born in Spain (Figure 1). The second group (by countries) of the census of overseas naturals living in Cuba came from the Russian Federation (794). Russia, as the birthplace of some Cuban residents, is followed by Italy (316), the US (305), Ukraine (274), Venezuela (237), Mexico (201) and Haiti (200). Taken together, the Russian- and Ukrainian-born Cuban residents exceed the number of 1,000.

The 2012 census did not include questions about citizenship, ethnicity or religion. The only diaspora(s)-related fact reflected by the census is the birthplace, by countries (Figure 1). So, the figures by place of origin we provide, therefore, must include both people with Cuban citizenship and those who do not hold it.[25] These data are also irrespective of whether both, one, or none parents of the person born overseas were originally from Cuba, or Cuban citizens. This means that the numbers the census provide must be interpreted as aggregate figures. In addition, there is some evidence that those who carried out the survey had a trend towards sub-reporting the persons who were not born at the places

a)

Overseas-born Cuban residents (2012 Census)	
Spanish State	**1444**
Federation of Russia	**794**
Italy	**316**
USA	**305**
Ukraine	**274**
Venezuela	**237**
Mexico	**201**
Haiti	**200**
Germany	**188**
Nicaragua	**136**
China	**113**
Chile	**109**
France	**103**
Jamaica	**100**
Colombia	**81**
Argentina	**74**



República de Cuba
Oficina Nacional de Estadística e Información

CENSO
DE POBLACIÓN Y VIVIENDAS
CUBA • 2012

7. A)¿Dónde residía su mamá cuando Ud. nació?

-En este lugar o asentamiento ....1 ☐ ▶ Pase a la pregunta 8A

-En otro lugar, asentamiento o país.......................3 ☐ ▶ Pase a la pregunta 7B

-No sabe.......................9 ☐ ▶ Pase a la pregunta 8A

B) Indique el lugar o asentamiento, municipio, provincia y país.

Lugar o Asentamiento

Municipio

Provincia

País

▶ Pase a la pregunta 8A)

7. A) Where did your mum live when you were born?

- In this place or settlement - 1
- In other place, settlement or country – 3
- Does not know – 9

B) Indicate the place or settlement, municipality, province and country.

- Place or settlement
- Municipality
- Province
- Country

b)

Figure 1 Major overseas diasporas in Cuba: (a) Numbers of overseas-born Cuban residents, according to the 2012 census report, corresponding to the first 16 countries; (b) the way the census requested the information about overseas-born Cuban residents (extract of the survey form of the census: question number 7)

they lived when counted down. This means that the actual figures could be bigger. But in any case, we should take into account that the numbers provided by the census sum up the real immigrants and the descendants of Cuban couples who were staying or travelling overseas when their daughter/son was born. There are also a large number of descendants of the census immigrants. The number of such descendants born in Cuba does not appear in the census results, since it was not asked in the census about parents' birthplace.

As for the origin of people born overseas considered members of the diaspora in the study, the chart (Figure 2) shows a comparison between the countries of the former USSR as a birthplace of people living in Cuba. It is clear that slightly more than two-thirds of those people were born in the Russian Federation, whereas approximately one-fourth come from the Ukraine. However – again – we should reiterate the point that there may be inexactitudes in this proportion, in this case to the widespread inability of many Cubans (in this case, of those who conducted the census fieldwork) to discern the Republics of the former Soviet Union. As we see, 10 of 15 former Soviet republics are represented in the census as countries of origin of Cuban residents.

As already mentioned, there are reasons to consider that in the enumeration process the presence of people born outside their current residence place has been underestimated, which suggests that there are also people born in the other five republics living in the country (namely, we know about at least one citizen of Georgia, born there, now living in Havana). In any case, the quantitative analysis we provide actually does resist simple 'sanity checks', as the resulting data are quite consistent with the ethnographic observational findings, in particular with regard to the widespread presence of (post)-Soviet women and their descendants in Havana's neighbourhoods like Alamar and Playa, and in cities and towns outside the Cuban capital. In further research actions, we would like to contrast more thoroughly the census results and those obtained by ethnographical approaches (such as studying in depth the diaspora's social networks). We also are waiting for the possibility of crossing the place-of-birth data appearing in the census with other variables, such as skin colour, place of residence, age, etc.

Gender and Geopolitics in the Socio-Demography of Overseas Diasporas in Cuba

Figure 3 illustrates the gender ratio among the largest contingents of the Cuban residents born overseas, by country. The (post)-Soviet diaspora's predominantly female character is clearly visible, in contrast with more balanced gender ratios among other countries' immigrants. In the cases of Russian- and

	Total	♂	♀	% ♀/(♂+♀)
EX SOVIET UNION (including Baltic States)	1128	313	815	72,3%
Federation of Russia	794	224	570	71,8%
Ukraine	274	72	202	73,7%
Belarus	20	5	15	75,0%
Kazakhstan	10	3	7	70,0%
Uzbekistan	7	1	6	85,7%
Azerbaijan	6	3	3	50,0%
Kirgizstan	5	2	3	60,0%
Latvia	5	1	4	80,0%
Lituania	3	0	3	100,0%
Estonia	2	1	1	50,0%
Armenia	2	1	1	50,0%

Figure 2 Numerical composition of the (post)-Soviet diaspora in Cuba, by countries and genders (includes percentage of women), as reported by the 2012 census

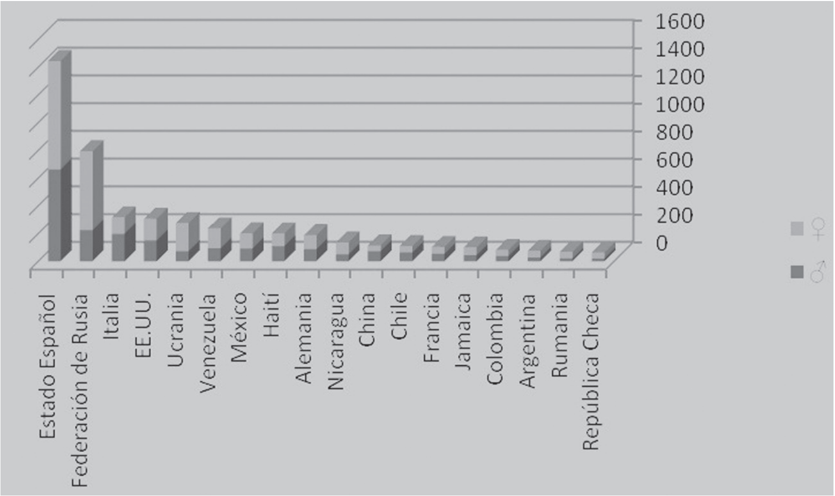


Figure 3 Gender composition of the major immigrant contributions to the resident Cuban population, per countries (2012 Census)

Ukrainian-born, more than two-thirds of the census totals are female. These numbers must basically sum the diaspora women who were born in these two Republics, plus the girls born there to the Cuban-(post)-Soviet couples, plus the girls born there to Cuban parents. Even considering the presumably balanced gender proportion (approximately 50% girls vs. 50% boys) in the two latter cases (which diminishes the female component in the totals per birth country), the overall numbers clearly attest the quantitative importance of the feminine immigration from the Soviet territories. Subsequently, we ranged the birthplace countries by the proportion of female immigrants and obtained the diagram appearing on Figure 4 (former Soviet republics are marked with stars, while the countries of the former COMECON are marked with triangles), showing similar gender-proportion patterns for Bulgaria, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia, ranging from 66.7 to 76.9 per cent (all: more than 2/3 female). Intriguingly – and we do not know why – immigrants from some Hispano-American countries (including Puerto Rico) share this gender pattern! We must always take into account that the statistics we quote express not only the number of foreign 'natives' who came to live in Cuba, but also sum up Cubans born overseas, including those born to mixed couples. Many second-generation persons of the diaspora share this condition (some of them were born in the USSR; others, nevertheless, were born in Cuba, and thus do not contribute to the statistics of 'overseas-born residents').

Normalised Cuban conventional wisdom establishes that young Soviet women married Cuban students, soldiers and practicants during their stay in the USSR because of their 'more attractive' masculinity patterns when compared with Soviet natives; most of our (post)-Soviet interviewees living in Cuba refer to romantic experiences of falling in love with their partners, but also many testimonies emerge of being 'seduced' by the symbolic meanings of identifier by which Cuba was known in the Soviet Union: 'The Island of Liberty'. Revolutionary rhetoric and aesthetics, clearly typical of Cuba's 1960–70 events, but sensed as increasingly distant (chronologically) in the Soviet case, supplied many young Soviet people with inspirations and dreams during the 1960s–80s, when a gradual disappearance of revolutionary romanticism and commitment became a commonplace in the youth-mobilising political discourse of the Soviet bureaucracy, the Komsomol and official media. Young Cubans, then, had huge chances in the USSR to be perceived as 'real revolutionaries', that is, belonging to a species almost extinct in that country. The conventional wisdom somehow makes this point sexed, that is, more applicable to 'revolutionarily romantic' Cuban male students than to their female counterparts.[26]

However, it seems that the largely female composition of Cuba's (post)-Soviet diaspora's first generation also relates to political-patriarchal (in some sense also

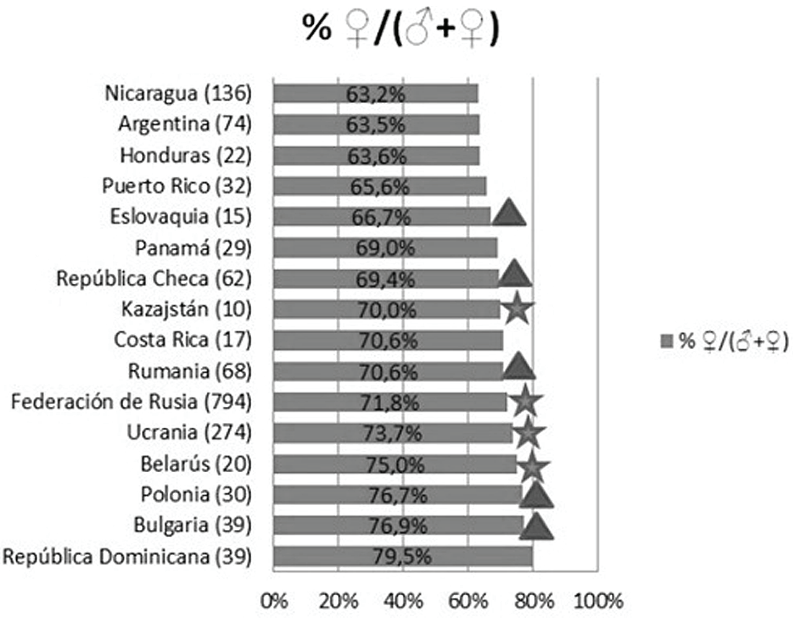


Figure 4 Percent of women among overseas-born Cuban residents, per countries (2012 census)

Notes: Only the 'most feminized' diasporas are shown (excluding those with total residents below 10). The stars indicate the former Soviet republics; the triangles, other former COMECON members.

matriarchal, according to some Cuban informants) constraints on the behaviour of the female Cuban students in the USSR, who had less opportunities to get engaged with Soviet friends than their male counterparts. This point is not trivial: a strong 'conventional wisdom' stereotype exists, alleging Cuban female students simply 'did not like' Soviet men. This obviously may be true in many cases; however, we interviewed at least three Cuban women who studied in the USSR in the 1960s–80s, who told us some much more complex versions. In one case, the relations of a Cuban female student with her Soviet boyfriend were heavily criticised from a patriarchal and pro-government standpoint by her (Cuban) Young Communist League (UJC) committee. In another case, a Cuban woman who married a Soviet colleague returned to Cuba with the hope of him following in her steps, but they could not convince the Soviet officials to grant him permission to leave the USSR. In a third case, we heard a story about Cuban teenage girls being pressed by their mothers (not by the fathers!) in order to avoid 'being seduced' by the expectations of opportunities and potential fiancés in the USSR. We can presume that in all such cases in order to underpin the points of the

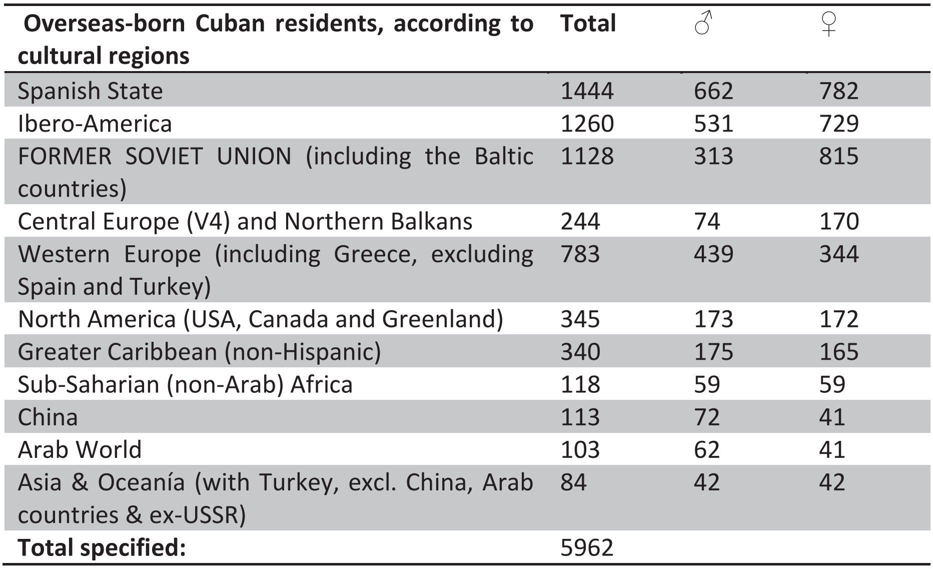
Cuban antagonists a very careful (as the very act of criticising the Soviets had its constraints, for obvious reasons) and elaborate exercise of cultural construction of the Soviet 'other' took place, mobilising both facts and myths regarding political, cultural and gender (i.e., masculinities; anatomies; sexualities; gallantry) issues: customs, hygiene, tastes, race/ethnicity, health, family routines, aesthetics, gastronomy, addictions, etc.

We also have some testimonies about romantic friendships between young Soviet soldiers serving in Cuba and Cuban women, which confirm our questioning of some commonplaces. On the other hand, it is also an important point to mention that mainstream (overwhelmingly State-owned) mass media both in Cuba and in the USSR did not used to refer to 'success stories' (nor – of course – 'unsuccessful' stories) regarding mixed couples. It seems that there was a shared (Cuba–USSR) intention of silencing the very topic of the possibility of a citizen of a socialist country migrating overseas invited by a foreign spouse (even to another socialist country: despite the proclaimed socialist solidarity and internationalist commitment, the perception of loyalty towards the homeland, interpreted in an essentialist blood-and-soil style usually trumped any politically shaped discourses both in the contexts of everyday life, and in face-to-face discussions in politically moulded milieus; many (post)-Soviet women living in Cuba mentioned in their interviews some examples of mistreatments by the USSR embassy officials in Cuba, during the Soviet era; sometimes, even racist/sexist phrasings took place). However, on the Soviet side, in a slightly contradictory stance, the large presence of foreigners from Third World 'brotherly countries' since 1957 (when the International Festival of Youth and Students – organised by the Democratic Federation of Youth – took place in Moscow, and also many romantic episodes occurred between Soviet and foreign youngsters) onwards led to the generalisation and the normalisation of the belief that international migration itself acquired a mainstream phenomenon status in the 1960s–90s.[27]

The Soviet women married to Cubans left their country in a quest of the unknown – usually in one direction – being pigeonholed into a cultural pattern shared by most of the cultures of Cuba and the USSR, stating that 'Woman follows man.'[28] On the other hand, the political commitment of most of the Cuban partners to their homeland (via formal membership in politicised organisations, normally much more active and vigilant than their Soviet counterparts) gave any attempt of subsequent migration out of Cuba (back to the USSR, or elsewhere) a dubious status of near-treason and almost-impossible enterprise (excluding the relatively infrequent cases of couples travelling overseas on Cuban government missions). Such pattern of mobility with no way back generated in many Soviet women living in Cuba a feeling of a subjective need of no longer keeping identification with their homelands; this attitude provoked psychological traumas after the socialist system's collapse.

It is also interesting to compare the immigration by major geopolitical and historical-civilisational regions of the planet (Figure 5). The 2012 census report sums 1,372 Cuban residents born in former USSR countries (1,128) and other European territories (244 persons from the Visegrád Four (V4) and the North of the Balkan peninsula) of the former COMECON, a number comparable with 1,444 coming from Spain and 1,260 from Ibero-America (Latin-America excluding Haiti). These territories are followed numerically by Western-European countries (excluding ex-socialist countries, Spain and Turkey, and including Greece) with 783 immigrants, and North America with 345 individuals, as well as 340 coming from non-Hispanic Greater Caribbean (including the large Haitian diaspora). The number of people born in China and the Arab countries (113 and 103, respectively) who live in Cuba is much lower than that of the (post)-Soviet diaspora. This fact heavily contrasts with the relative visibility of the Chinese and Arab communities' contributions to the Cuban culture and ethnicity (as 'ethnic components of the Cuban nation') and high institutionalisation level (multiple Chinese associations; Havana Chinatown; the Arab Union of Cuba) versus the almost nil visibility and institutionalisation of (post)-Soviet communities as such. However, the lower number of Cuban residents born in Chinese and Arab territories is consistent with the fact that the Chinese and Arab migration to Cuba took place a long time ago (nineteenth century and first decades of twentieth century, and mid-twentieth century, respectively),[29] so most of such immigrants had already died. Both immigrant communities enjoyed an atmosphere with more proclivities towards self-organisation in ethnic and cultural associations as part of the Cuban civil society. This experience of a public sphere favouring self-organisation and autonomy contrasts with that of the Soviet migrants, whose countries – as well as Cuba – at the very moment of the migration exemplified vertical, top-down styles of political culture, which in many ways marked their socialisation patterns, incorporating also a certain scepticism towards any formal organisations, which we could register in some interviews with the diaspora. In addition, in the last 50 years it has been difficult to formally register new cultural associations, as the Cuban Ministry of Justice procedures to do so are intricate and politically-driven.

Nevertheless, the situation of the institutional vacuum started to change; since 2000 (when President Putin took office) there has been a modification in Russia's diplomatic officials' attitudes towards the (post)-Soviet diaspora in Cuba. Despite in the 1990s the Russian consular authorities implemented the legislation (passed by the State Duma) providing very inclusive conditions for most ex-Soviet citizens to become citizens of the Federation of Russia (this legal



Overseas-born Cuban residents, according to cultural regions	**Total**	♂	♀
Spanish State	1444	662	782
Ibero-America	1260	531	729
FORMER SOVIET UNION (including the Baltic countries)	1128	313	815
Central Europe (V4) and Northern Balkans	244	74	170
Western Europe (including Greece, excluding Spain and Turkey)	783	439	344
North America (USA, Canada and Greenland)	345	173	172
Greater Caribbean (non-Hispanic)	340	175	165
Sub-Saharian (non-Arab) Africa	118	59	59
China	113	72	41
Arab World	103	62	41
Asia & Oceanía (with Turkey, excl. China, Arab countries & ex-USSR)	84	42	42
Total specified:	5962		

Figure 5 Overseas-born Cuban residents, according to cultural regions (2012 census)

framework has changed several times ever since, and now the Russian citizenship is much more difficult to acquire), they had traditionally been sceptical towards any self-organising effort of the diaspora. Putin's political stance includes considering the 'Russian compatriots' (a somewhat loose term, including the citizens of the Federation, people born in other republics of the ex-USSR, and diasporised persons having or feeling cultural or political ties with Russia) a human contingent and a networking resource, valuable in devising and implementing strategies of support favouring the Russian government. To promote this stance, Russian embassies around the world started to stimulate the institutionalisation of the diasporas. In 2006, the First Conference of the Russian Compatriots in Cuba took place under the patronage of the Russian embassy; a standing Coordinating Council of the Compatriots was set up. It enjoys recognition vis-à-vis the Russian authorities, but lacks official status in the Cuban legal context. The embassies of some other post-Soviet countries have also been stimulating in some way the citizens and their descendants to cluster around, in accord to their original homeland and/or ethnicity. However, as the Soviet people was a multiethnic collectivity, and 'natives' of a given 'Soviet' ethnicity could be found in the USSR living or working in places under Soviet sovereignty quite distant from this ethnicity's 'original' homeland, for many persons who migrated to Cuba from the USSR it is difficult to define a unique post-Soviet state as their 'unique' homeland. In many cases, living experiences of these persons during their childhood and youth (i.e., during primary and secondary socialisation, according to Berger and Luckmann's 1997 *Social Construction of Reality*) involved distant places of the USSR, which now belong to distinct post-Soviet states. Their memories – recorded in our interviews – show how ethnicity, identity, language acquisition/practices, and the sense of belonging appear as (both collective and personal) social–practical experiences, endowed with very intense and profound sense of dynamism. This dynamism is not reducible to geopolitical or juridical-citizenship constraints. Present-day geopolitical conflicts between regimes of some former Soviet territories – first of all, notoriously, between the Russian and the Ukrainian governments – jeopardise the network ties between the people forming the (post)-Soviet diaspora in Cuba. We could detect some breakages already taking place, basically when persons have differing opinions about the political attitudes of the governments of the States they feel they belong to. However, it is important to point out that such discordances tend to appear when some actions of government agencies are in place rather than being originated in the diaspora's milieu itself. For example, once one diplomatic mission of a post-Soviet state did now allow a citizen of another post-Soviet state to take part in an annual meeting occurring on a territory under the diplomatic prerogative of the first. Normally, all (post)-Soviet citizens had been customarily allowed to participate in such meetings after producing a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) passport. But things changed during the conflict in Eastern Ukraine.

Back to the numbers, compiled data suggest that the (post)-Soviet diaspora is the largest overseas contribution (by countries) to the ethno-demographic composition of the Cuban people, after that of Spanish State. Compared with other overseas ethnic communities in Cuba, the (post)-Soviet diaspora is the largest one, surpassed only by the Spanish immigration, which – however – is not usually perceived by Cubans as a diaspora, because Spanish cultural meanings are a major 'ingredient' of the 'mainstream' Cuban culture (standardly assigned a major Afro-Hispanic background and some lesser ethnic contributions). So, the (post)-Soviet diaspora may legitimately be considered as the largest clearly 'foreign' human contribution to the Cuban population in recent times.

The disintegration of the USSR in 1991 created a sui generis situation, when most ex-Soviet citizens permanently living in Cuba (i.e., excluding those on cooperation missions, who massively left in 1991–96, after their contracts were closed) intending to keep the foreign citizenship needed to re-enrol in the corresponding consulates as citizens of Union's successors sovereign states. This generated a number of possible cases of statelessness, of which there are 13 recorded. Because this process took place at the same time Cuba was experiencing the deepest structural crisis in a century (the 'Special Period'), many Soviet women living far from Havana could not reach in time the consulates in the Capital, in order to formally proceed to acquire their 'new' citizenship. The issue's complexity is increased by the absence in Cuba of consular services of some of the former Soviet republics, not having embassies here. Different post-Soviet states have very dissimilar legal framework regarding acquisition of citizenship, dual citizenship, etc. As almost 100 per cent of the (post)-Soviet diaspora's second generation hold the Cuban citizenship, and provided the Cuban citizenship is very hard legally to renounce to, it is correspondingly very difficult for them to acquire the citizenship of those republics whose law explicitly prohibits the dual citizenship (e.g., Ukraine). As we mentioned, for the diaspora first-generation's persons Cuban naturalisation does not provide any relevant advantages, and instead actually meant losing some privileges resident foreigners in Cuba have. So, normally no effort to acquire Cuban citizenship was done. In addition, Soviet citizens usually tend to be proud of their nationality, and this attitude seems to stay in the post-Soviet case. Also, having the citizenship, for example, of the Russian Federation helps obtaining visas when visiting foreign countries, and opens the borders of those who have visaless travel agreements with Russia.

From Geopolitics to Subjectivities

Ethnographic fieldwork was performed in the Cuban provinces of Havana, Holguín and Ciego de Ávila, using life histories as main methodological approach. At the initial stage of our research, we interviewed 1 Cuban (a Soviet man's widow) and 10 post-(Soviet) women, aged between 45 and 65 years. In addition, interviews of four second-generation persons (3 male, 1 female) were included in the project. In most cases, the construction of identities, and particularly that of the ethnicities, appears as a complex phenomenon. It is difficult to find a case with a univocal self-perception of ethnicity. We record the ethnicity construction as submerged in a field of relational dynamics, marked by conflicts. A key element underpinning this point is the language usage. In the life histories of persons born in Ukraine and Belarus, we could appreciate how an initial bilingual situation evolved towards the use of Russian as the main language, due to its efficacy as an inter-ethnic communication vehicle, and semi-official status in most of the Soviet institutions. Also, some inter-ethnic conflict experiences were narrated and traumatic experiences (see *supra*) regarding the acquisition of 'new' citizenship after 1991. One of our interviewees claims not having citizenship of any country. Acquiring fluency in Spanish after arriving in Cuba had been a very diverse experience, varying from case to case, and ranging from a formal learning – including the use of standard textbooks, dictionaries and grammars – to just starting using it by sharing everyday settings with Cuban speakers. In one – very interesting – case, a Haitian immigrant woman became an informal Spanish language teacher for a Soviet immigrant (they lived in a rural place, far away from any formal educational institution and from any setting traditionally considered as 'cultured'). This interviewee still has some elements in her way of constructing spoken Spanish sentences, which strongly resemble Haitian Creole, such as fusioning the (defined) articles and the roots of the substantives. In any case, it is quite difficult encircling the (post)-Soviet women's (and their children's) ethnicities in something like a box in a survey form (resembling the 'nationality' [meaning 'ethnicity'] – 'box number five' in Soviet official bureaucratic forms, appearing after the names and birthdate of the person). Ethnicity unravels itself as a sort of particular – even intimate – thread in personal life history, integrated with the use of languages and with the sewing of affinity networks, a critically important element during the most traumatic moments in their recent individual and collective historical trajectories. What may appear as the most catastrophic events, which are perceived as destructive vis-à-vis the very notion of personal ethnicity and of inter-ethnic 'normality', are the violent and armed conflicts taking place in the former Soviet territories. In the context of such conflicts, the very intervention of (post)-Soviet states is sometimes seen with suspicion.

For some of the interviewees, traumatic experiences became epiphanic, at critical points of their personal histories. At least in three cases, the presence of religious or spiritual actors (ministers) was remarkable for the acquisition of new spiritual affiliations. We observed a spectrum of such affiliation, including Orthodox Christianity, Evangelical Christianity, Islam, new religious movements from Russia, Hindu practices, Jehovah witnessing, etc.[30] It is also interesting to notice how the geopolitics of conflicts is complemented here with the geopolitics of transnationalisation, as in some of such (critical) cases a traumatic situation generated by a state of conflict (in the context of the breakup of the USSR) is confronted by a religious/spiritual experience with the participation of somebody coming from outside of the (post)-Soviet geopolitical space, that is, as part of the (then) new globalisation processes and fluxes.

The stability of the relations of the diaspora with families and friends in the former Soviet Union is variable: in some cases, such relations disappeared after 1991 (and happily were re-established by means of the Internet); in others they were kept alive, but not being able to travel has been a critical constraint for those who lack the resources for doing so: a source of sadness and disappointment with the historical misfortune of the USSR and with the personal fate.

Others even could invite their kin to visit them in Cuba. So, the mobility of the diaspora also affects its subjectivity. This is a highly transnatiolanized collective,[31] as since the 1990s many of its members have returned to the ex-Soviet states, or re-emigrated to other countries such as Canada, the US, Spain or even Thailand. While the 'return' trend is more visible among the first generation, the second generation has chosen their destination more openly. Former Soviet citizens of German (there used to be a huge Russian-German community since the epoch of Catherine the Great) or Jewish descent travelled from Cuba to Germany and Israel, respectively. But another critical factor has been the absence of mobility. The advent of Internet, email, virtual social networks and cheaper phone calls provided a new opportunity of staying or re-entering in touch with their relatives for those who – due to the expensiveness of air travel, loss of citizenship or troubling situations in their Eurasian homelands – had previously considered themselves isolated from their kinsfolks and friends who stayed in the former Soviet territories. Due to the still very limited Internet connectivity[32] in Cuba, those diaspora persons who nowadays live overseas probably are 'closer' themselves in the virtual domain (and thus have a thicker networking) than their counterparts in Cuba. So, transnationalisation is a cultural trend now: cultural meanings from overseas interact freer than ever before with the treasured Eurasian traditions and the Cuban cultural acquisitions of the diaspora. Mobility increased, both in physical and imaginary sense: the last book by Ernesto González Litvinov (currently an *habanero*) is a biographical novel about Nostradamus, recently published in Spain. However, these new opportunities are patently asymmetrical: Cuba's countryside is not like Havana, so the diaspora there has less connectivity and mobility choices than in the capital.

The (post)-Soviet diaspora has developed a nation-wide social network, which also includes many Cubans who studied in the USSR, because there exist stable family, kinship, friendship and professional contacts with them. So, it is interesting to point out that most of the few social spaces with Cuban-style *Ostalgie* as their very *raison d'etre* have developed into meeting places for both collectives: diaspora and USSR graduates. Shared cultural practices are quite visible in such places, including cooking recipes, toasts, readings, musical choices and audiovisual screenings. Furthermore, some of these cultural traits are communicated also to the new Cuban partners[33] of the first-generation diaspora women. The new opportunities for private business in Cuba allowed the opening of several 'Soviet' restaurants in Havana and other places, like 'Tovarisch' and 'NaZdarovie'. The latter offers a programme of discounts for 'Soviet women living in Cuba' and Cubans graduated in the USSR, and attempts generating a cultural stage for all who share interest in the Soviet past and the present of the post-Soviet countries. Obviously, such spaces also provide opportunities for keeping alive the languages of the diaspora. Almost all the staff of the NaZdarovie restaurant speaks Russian. The Kalinka choir has in its repertoire Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian songs; same languages are used at the *peñas* conducted by the Russian-Ukrainian vocalist Olga Inerarity.

Regarding the cultural insertion of the post-(Soviet) diaspora in the Cuban milieu, we feel an increasing need of transcending a set of stereotypes, which normally are nostalgic, sexist or even racist/xenophobic. Many people (including some empowered cultural agents) reduce the complexity of the explanations of the social facts we are studying to the following list of narratives:

1. A nostalgic stance, somewhat similar to the east-European *Ostalgie*, focused on the Cuban memories of a period felt as a 'golden age', and some particular elements of that period, related to the USSR, such as the 'Russian cartoons', Soviet cinema and particularly the war movies, as well as the technological devices, foods and drinks imported from the USSR and the socialist area. Cuban documentaries on Soviet topics, such as Colina's (2011) 'Bolos en Cuba' and Pérez and González's (2006) 'Todas iban a ser reinas' show such nostalgia, called 'Ostalgie: Cuban style' by researchers Loss and Prieto (2012: 5);
2. A 'commonsense' stance, which vulgarises the ideological sphere, invoking the old apologetic patterns of a discourse that somehow got to survive the 1991 geopolitical catastrophe, and coagulates extemporaneously some personal living experiences' narratives with the quasi-religious exaltation of some real or fictitious cultural elements of what the USSR used to be, and what today is denoted as the 'post-Soviet geopolitical space', or (more amorphously) the 'Eurasian sphere' or even 'the Russian world'; some analysts even in the State-owned Cuban media fail to make any distinction between the ideology and political practice of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU)-governed USSR, and those of the Putinist Russia; this stance, however, is difficult to defend, first because Putin's 'United Russia' party explicitly defines itself as conservative, pro-market and right-wing; second because many Cubans who had the experience of living in the USSR realise quite well the faults of the late-Soviet social model. On the Cuban TV, in the humoristic show 'Vivir del cuento' a character named Facundo – an exemplary 'revolutionary' *barrio* activist – parodies such stance;
3. Some dominant stereotypes (usually ethnocentric and essentialist) of femininity and masculinity, establishing 'biological' criteria (frankly racist or sexist) to explain the mostly feminine composition of the first generation of the diaspora, and ignoring key socio-political realities;
4. Some excluding stereotypes, generating phobias based on origin, culture, language, towards some or all the ethnic groups represented in the diaspora;
5. The ignorance (normally innocent), which causes, for instance, the absence of a due recognition of the diversity of cultures co-existing in the

> geopolitical space formerly occupied by the USSR; nowadays, this ignorance jeopardises the inter-ethnic communities, generating sensitive risks of ruptures and divisions.

This research is meant as an alternative to such stereotypes and aims supplementing the numbers and fragmentary views of a large diaspora with hearing some true voices. Our findings basically confirm the conclusions of a previous paper:

> The very metaphor of the *ajiaco* as an idea that pertains to the form of the 'nation-state' is worth questioning, given that it has not been possible for our community to be absorbed institutionally ... Both within and beyond the diaspora, there is a tension between those who value the trajectory toward the creation of an institutionalized community and a common cultural space through nostalgic folklorism (this is the case with many people from the first generation) and those who value a highly personalist sense of cultural identity, mediated by institutional normalization (as is the case with many members of the second generation, among them the artistic creators). This tension is complemented outside the community by yet another tension – that between the disdain expressed for everything *bolo*,[34] which sometimes borders on racism – and the uncritical, idealized, and highly ideological acceptance of the Soviet past. (Prieto Samsónov and Martínez Shvietsova 2012: 155)

Concluding Remarks

The core ethical dilemma that this research confronts is enabling to discern whether we are building a conceptual device that actually does nothing to help the studied human collectivity (since many of its members are not interested themselves in acquiring visibility or self-organising, because so far they have gone unnoticed by the States), or it could really be useful for something more than registering the historical memory (e.g., for improving the life conditions of the less empowered persons of the diaspora). Indeed, sometimes during the fieldwork we found reticent attitudes, marked by statist visions, among the diplomatic personnel interviewed about 'their' diasporas in Cuba. It is a commonplace that the geopolitical anxieties may overshadow the human dimension of caring for real people. We can also ask the question of whether – regarding the persons who become sources of our knowledge – ethnographic research involves an act of domination or, instead, that of dialogue. Answers depend on the ability of those who investigate: a good anthropological interview can empower the person with whom we dialogue, but those who do the research can also influence or induce changes of opinion. One can encourage openness, violate intimacies, or generate self-consciousness when making the interviewee remember a painful past. And there is also the classical problem of social research: to avoid inducing false expectations. However, in the current context of transnationalisation to which neither Cuba nor the post-Soviet space are alien, this research can become a real factor to restore citizenship to people who lost it, or to enable the acquisition of dual citizenship for those who were denied it in one way or another. And also it can become a humble vehicle in suggesting to people some historical and ethnographic clues to facilitate them the enjoyment of certain rights.

In any case, the current (in)visibility of our diaspora is conditioned by two main sets of dynamics: those driving it to be blindly considered as a 'normal' part of the post-Soviet Cuban cultural landscape (i.e., not worth any special attention), and those silencing it and interpreting it as something essentially alien or outdated, which tends to be rejected.

Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to the Scientific Council of the Cuban Institute of Cultural Research 'Juan Marinello' – and especially to Dr Fernando Martinez Heredia, Dr Elena Socarrás, Dr Rodrigo Espina, Dr Niurka Núñez – for putting our research proposal under his scrutiny, their suggestions and the final approval. We are sincerely grateful to Dr Ovidio D'Angelo Hernandez (psychologist, CIPS, Havana) for his support, this being extended in his person to the Cuban Society of Psychology; to the same extent, we also thank Dr Juana Maria Jimenez Hernandez (physical anthropologist, Calixto García Medical School, Havana). We thank the Cuban Chapter of the International AC&SE Workgroup (Anticapitalismos & Sociabilidades Emergentes) of the Latin American Council for Social Sciences (CLACSO) for providing us the institutional framework for this research, which addresses 'hybrid' processes of sociability and institutional spaces, emerging from two of the most significant anti-capitalist intentions of the twentieth century: the Soviet and the Cuban revolutions. We equally thank the Project and Restaurant *NaZdarovie* (and all its initiators and workers), a gastronomic and socio-cultural location in Havana, which provides some workplaces to the diaspora people, and makes the diaspora visible as a social fact of the present-day Cuban reality. We also include in these thanks the Organising Committees of the events Antropología 2014 (Cuban Institute of Anthropology, Havana), ANTHROPOS 2015 (University of Havana), LASA 2015 Congress (Latin American Studies Association, San Juan, Puerto Rico), 'Les Sciences sociales face au changement à Cuba' 2015 (l'Institut de recherché interdisciplinaire sur les enjeux sociaux IRIS, Paris), ACLA 2015 Congress (American Comparative Literature Association, Harvard University, Boston), THATCamp 2016 (Nueva Gerona, Isle of Youth), HOMINIS 2016 (Cuban Psychological Society,

Havana) and CEISAL 2016 (Salamanca) for making our work visible at these events, as well as to those who participated in the discussions, for their comments, criticisms and suggestions. And we are truly grateful to Blandine Destremeau, Gregory Biniowsky, Jackie Loss, Maria Isabel Alonso, Nils Graber, to all the researchers of the Cuban post-Soviet condition, to Insight Cuba, and – last but not least – to the Norwegian Embassy in Havana for granting us Internet access during the ACLA meeting. We would like to thank the IJCS anonymous referees.

Notes

1. Such interpretation of the post-Soviet geopolitical space was allegedly introduced by Algis Prazauskas in his article 'CIS as a Post-Colonial Space', published in the Russian periodical 'Nezavisimaia Gazeta' on 7 February 1992 (see http://www.ualberta.ca/~khineiko/NG_92_93/1141438.htm). The very idea of a 'post-Soviet space' has been strongly criticised by academics and politicians who support eliminating all the 'legacies' of the Soviet period, like the former British foreign secretary David Miliband, who pointed out that this very idea is obsolete, as all the former Soviet republics are now independent and sovereign states (http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/russian/international/newsid_7558000/7558484.stm). Regarding the putative post-colonial status of the former COMECON countries beyond the USSR borders '(as well as the Baltic countries …), the Soviet period is felt and described rather in terms of occupation. As for the specialists of the post-Soviet area, they would not label this situation as "colonial" and even "pseudo-colonial". The issue of colonialism and post-colonialism is raised in the case of former USSR republics, especially Central Asia and, to a lesser extent, the Caucasus. And even so, there is no widely accepted consensus on the existence of a clear (post)-colonial situation as in the case of the European colonial empires. Indeed, the relationship between the centre (Moscow) and the other Soviet republic (or some of them) is analysed in terms of a colonial (and therefore post-colonial) situation only as far as some precise areas are concerned (e.g., public policies in health and education; migration patterns of [ethnic] Russians from the Southern republics settling down in Russia or local populations in theses regions searching for economic opportunities in Russia after 1991)' (anonymous referee, personal communication).
2. However, present-day post-Soviet studies in Cuba are not susceptible to academic legitimisation as a part of post-colonial studies, since Cuba has never been 'colonized' by the USSR. The alliance between the regimes of these two countries was not implemented in the same way as – for instance – occurred in the cases of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary or Eastern Germany. Cuba had never experienced events like the Soviet armed interventions in Berlin, Budapest (1956) or Prague (1968). Instead, for the academics with awareness regarding the epistemologies of post-coloniality, the Cuban post-colonial status is normally linked to the persistence of 'the colonial rule still alive insight the Republic' (José Martí 2005), being the adjective 'colonial' a reference to pre-liberation hierarchical/racist/sexist/class/territorial/

epistemological practices kept alive after the independence of the (post-colonial) State. Though at a commonsense level (*sensu* Gramsci) both for the Cuban laypeople and most scholars, the word 'coloniality' has still mainly a chronological meaning and may refer to the Spanish rule before 1898, or to the neocolonial status vis-à-vis the US government and economic powers before 1959. So, in the Cuban case the post-Soviet studies do not explicitly appear with epistemological links to post-colonial studies (assuming that both kinds of 'studies' deal with local effects of some relations of geopolitical dependence), being perceived as an 'independent' (and – surprisingly – minor) branch of social knowledge; yet this is just the current situation, and some new, interesting, gap-bridging contributions to socio-cultural research in this area could be already there, just around the corner, simply awaiting the right opportunity to emerge.

3. There are several documentary films on Cuba's post-Soviet condition and the diaspora this article is devoted to. Enrique Colina's (2011) 'Los Bolos en Cuba' communicates a controversial feeling of nostalgia and – without entering any thorough analysis – at least calls attention to the topic. Colina's work exemplifies a widespread approach to the post-Soviet condition in Cuba: assuming it as a historical curiosity (i.e., transient introduction of alien elements in Cuban way of life), which is no longer there, but anyway has somehow modified the way of being Cuban, as well as the current (hence post-Soviet) folk notion of what 'Cuba' means. More ethnographic are the documentaries by Houzangbe (2004) and Pérez and González (2006). The latter is devoted to the stories of several women of the diaspora, living in the Camaguey province. See also Loss 2009.
4. A notable exception in Cuba are Fowler Calzada (2001); Sánchez Gómez (2003); Barash *et al.* (2010); the most important collective monography regarding the post-Soviet studies on Cuba is Loss and Prieto (2012). Some aspects of Cuban post-Soviet condition are discussed over the Internet at http://munequitosrusos.blogspot.com/ and https://sovietcuba.com/ as well as in several facebook groups. The recent intellectual reception of contemporary Russian and (post)-Soviet thought is worth mentioning particularly in the two-volume anthology compiled by Desiderio Navarro (2010).
5. We will use the form (post)-Soviet as the abbreviation of the phrase 'Soviet and/or post-Soviet'.
6. Ajiaco is a traditional Cuban food, prepared with many diverse ingredients; the 'Ajiaco' metaphor was suggested by the Cuban ethnologist Fernando Ortiz (1997) to explain his theoretical view of the process of 'transculturation', in which various ethnic components contributed to the emergence of an allegedly single Cuban nation. For a deconstruction of the Ajiaco metaphor regarding the (post)-Soviet diaspora in Cuba, see Prieto Samsónov and Martínez Shvietsova (2012). For a more orthodox comprehensive view on the ethnic components of the Cuban people, see Guanche (2009).
7. In 1961–91, it became 'normal' for Soviet persons to visit Cuba or come to engage in development projects on the Island. So, they came to be perceived as part of the landscape. This changed in 1991, but for many Cubans it became somehow difficult to discern the Soviet diaspora (which stayed) from the Soviet personnel (which left).

The diaspora, then, inherited this 'normality' – sort of 'just part of the background' – status.

8. Some Latin American 'leftist' diasporas in Cuba (also linked to twentieth-century politics: the post-1973 [ITT/Augusto Pinochet's coup d'Etat] Chilean immigration, Tupamaro and Montonero revolutionaries coming from Uruguay and Argentina, Venezuelans, Colombians, Salvadorans, etc.) are also rarely mentioned in scholarly publications on Cuban ethnicities and the mass media.
9. *La Unión Árabe de Cuba* (The Arab Union of Cuba), with headquarters located on Havana downtown's Prado street, is the official organisation of the Cuban community of Arabic descent, well known among lay Cubans for its restaurants, courses and cultural programme. A monument paying homage to Arab immigrants also exists in Havana; the fact that such immigrants exist(ed) is frequently mentioned in Cuban media, sometimes in relation with the Cuban government's official position on the Israel-Palestinian conflict.
10. Numerous Ashkenazi and Sephardite communities lived in Cuba till recently; in the 1990s, many Jews migrated from Cuba to Israel. The Jewish diaspora owns large cultural centres in Havana and other Cuban cities. A Hebrew Cemetery exists in Guanabacoa. The *Patronato Hebreo* building is also home to the Bertolt Brecht theatre. Both the Arabic and the Hebrew communities in Cuba (existing since the beginnings of the twentieth century) have been honoured by several visits of top government and party officers to some of their most important cultural and religious festivals. Their activities are often reviewed by the Cuban official media.
11. Central Havana's Chinatown (*Barrio Chino*) is a well known cultural and touristic landmark of the Cuban capital; there are several Chinese societies and some other cultural institutions (e.g., a WuShu school) ran by people of Chinese descent; some collectively own restaurants and cafeterias. The Chinese diaspora and the Chinese contribution to the Cuban culture are also regularly mentioned in the Cuban media, song lyrics, visual arts, etc. There is a monument homaging the Chinese who fought in the 1868–98 Wars.
12. These opinions rapidly changed in the 1990s, when surviving Soviet (and COMECON) electric equipment (home fans, irons, fridges, washing machines) proved to be much more robust than Chinese and even some Western analogues. Programmed obsolescence was completely alien a notion in the context of the Eastern bloc industrial experience. Although normally 'uglier' than Western-style consumer goods, some Soviet gadgets still enjoy a well-acquired prestige condition in Cuban families and are kept with care (see Sánchez Gómez 2003).
13. For a comprehensive review on Cuban art in the 1970s, see Montero Méndez (2006).
14. The reception in Cuba of Soviet mass-culture products, such as cartoons and film, is per se a relevant topic, and some research is available on this theme (see Barash 2011; Jácome 2012). Nowadays, the NaZdarovie 'Soviet' restaurant in Havana makes use of the Soviet nostalgia in Cuba, and due to its owners' efforts, it also became an important meeting place for both the diaspora people and Cubans graduated from Soviet educational institutions. The place proudly displays a Soviet red hammer-and-sickled flag at its Malecón balcony and a permanent Soviet posters exhibition inside.

15. An important exception is the set of contributions by Desiderio Navarro, a Cuban scholar and translator who heads the *Centro Teórico-Cultural Criterios*, an autonomous institution which publishes a journal with translations of foreign research papers and essays, of which many penned by (post)-Soviet authors. Desiderio Navarro's contribution to Cuban knowledge of (post)-Soviet realities and socio-cultural studies is remarkable, as many relevant contributions by scientists such as Yuri Lotman and his school, Boris Kagarlitsky, Boris Groys, etc., as well as the Soviet avant-garde, became well known in the Cuban intellectual milieu thanks to *Criterios*. Navarro shares with autonomous collectives such as Cátedra Haydée Santamaría the interest in reception of Soviet thought focused on critically analysing the most controversial aspects of 'really existing socialism' and its official ideology.
16. Since 2007, the debate about the fate of the Soviet and other sub-types of bureaucratic socialism has increased in Cuba, although still remaining insufficient. The latest Cuban book on the topic is a compilation of interviews by Ruiz Julién (2015). In parallel, some books have been published on Asian Communist parties (CP)-driven social models (China and Vietnam's 'market-Leninism').
17. Soviet cooperators lived in separate neighbourhoods and had separate recreational and shopping spaces.
18. There were both male and female Cubans studying in the USSR and other countries of the Eastern bloc. Interestingly, the 'standard' situation was that of Cuban male students returning to Cuba married to Soviet females; the same pattern can be seen in the cases of Cubans married to Polish, Czech, Bulgarian, etc. women. The-other-way-around cases (Cuban female students + Soviet men) actually do exist, but they are very difficult to find, being a clear minority when compared with the 'standard' cases.
19. For the feminisation of international migration, see Morales Gamboa (coord.) (2014: 262).
20. See http://sovietcuba.com/2014/11/09/zoia-barash-in-memoriam/. Also: De la Hoz (2014).
21. See http://mundo.sputniknews.com/entrevistas/20160831/1063154235/historias-delavida.html.
22. 'In the workshops' González Litvinov was criticised because of 'the deplorable influences upon his syntax and the strange contractions in his poetry' (Prieto Samsónov and Martínez Shvietsova 2012: 138). 'As in the cases of González Litvinov', [... Andrés] Mir 'needed to adapt and normalize his cultural project, and, as a result, many informative and preinformative elements of the cultural practices of the former Soviet Union were relegated to private spaces, and in the public sphere it was necessary to generate a qualitatively new praxis, one that was tailored to the environment, even when experiences from the USSR were being reinserted. Had there existed a valid space for the expression of (post) Soviet identities, and not simply the standardized spaces of the public sphere in Cuba, the results of his trajectory of creation and assertions of identity would probably have been different' (Prieto Samsónov and Martínez Shvietsova 2012: 143). 'As revealed by the interviews with the creators, in order to succeed in the Cuban literary and artistic milieu, hybridity (including the hybrid interpretations of artistic productions) is largely relinquished ... The role of

Cuban cultural institutions cannot be underestimated in this process' 'Even when it is ethically questioned, the institutionalised cultural field imposes a sort of homogenisation trend, which basically operates through the suppression of the significations related to hybridity from the explicit (public) creative discourse of the artist' (Prieto Samsónov and Martínez Shvietsova 2012: 143, 156).

23. Dmitri Prieto Samsónov remembers quite well how his Russian mother emphatically told him after arrival in Cuba: 'we are no emigrants'.
24. With regard to the former Soviet federated republics and other ethno-territorial entities, and the present-day post-Soviet states.
25. Cuban Constitution explicitly prohibits dual citizenship, but for processual reasons this provision is inapplicable in most cases, so cases of dual citizenship actually exist in the country and are tolerated by Cuban authorities. There are many such cases among the second generation of the diaspora (persons holding, for instance, Russian and Cuban passports). But we could not detect any member of the first generation who had acquired Cuban citizenship. In fact, resident foreigners enjoy in Cuba almost all the rights Cubans have (with the exception of franchise), and they also used to have additional privileges (like the right of freely buying a car, a cell phone, or a home Internet account) Cubans did not have, but since 2006 most of these rights were made also accessible to Cuban citizens (with the notable exception of home Internet right). After 1991, most of the Soviet citizens living in Cuba acquired the passports and consular inscriptions of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and other post-Soviet states, but some of the members of the diaspora (13 at least) could not perform the due paperwork in time (mostly those living in countryside, far from Havana where the consulates are located) and are now subject to the presumption of stateless condition.
26. Photographic images of young Cuban women wearing military-styled uniforms and bearing assault rifles became part of the visual discourse of the 1960s, and strongly contributed to shape the feminist and revolutionary romantic imaginaries in those years. This fact looks paradoxical regarding the residual Cuban-Soviet stereotype we mention here, that of revolutionary=male. We must keep investigating the adequacies, genealogies and hermeneutics of such stereotypes.
27. Alexey Yurchak (2009) mentions in his classical ethnography of the last Soviet generation the fact that some forms of transnationalisation (like learning foreign languages) were actually promoted by the Soviet establishment.
28. A powerful factor in the development of this stereotype was the legal norm – existing both in Cuba and the USSR – that established military service obligations for the men (and not for women). This point also provides a possible clue to explain the overwhelmingly female character of the first generation of the (post)-Soviet diaspora in Cuba: in the case of Soviet men marrying female Cuban students, the couples would compulsorily stay in the USSR, and so a 'reverse' overwhelmingly female Cuban diaspora could exist in the countries of the post-Soviet geopolitical area. We do not have notices neither against nor in favour of this supposition, but we can suggest from the preliminary assessment of out interviews that in any case such a diaspora is not that numerous as the one we are studying. So, the gender question seems to remain.
29. In addition, an important part of the Chinese migration to Cuba originated in California and not in China itself (involving California-born persons of Chinese descent).

30. It is remarkable that Zoia Barash, one of the most important and visible representatives of the (post)-Soviet diaspora, has now her grave at the Jewish cemetery in Guanabacoa.
31. See Prieto Samsonov and Martínez Shvietsova (2008, 2012) for an analysis of the (post)-Soviet diaspora as a transient phenomenon due to international migration.
32. However, having a personal Internet and email account at home is probably the last surviving privilege available to foreign residents in Cuba vis-à-vis Cuban citizens.
33. Many (probably, most of) couples of Soviet women married to Cubans divorced after several years in Cuba.
34. *Bolo*: a pejorative term some Cubans used to refer to the Soviets. Most agree that it evokes the way Cubans saw them – as clumsy – just like bowling pins. Others suggest it is an abbreviation 'Bolshevik', or for 'Volodia' (a nickname for Vladimir, allegedly one of the most common Russian names).

Bibliography

Barash, Zoia (2011) *El cine soviético del principio al fin*. La Habana, Cuba: ICAIC.

Barash, Zoia, Julio Cid, Prieto Samsónov, *et al.* (2010) 'Huellas culturales rusas y de Europa del Este en Cuba', in Rafael Hernández (eds) *Último Jueves. Los debates de Temas*. Volumen 4. La Habana, Cuba: ICAIC.

Berger, Peter L. and Thomas Luckmann (1997) *Construcción Social de la Realidad*. Buenos Aires, Argentina: Amorrortu.

Colina, Enrique (2011) *Los Bolos en Cuba*. Documentary film, Havana: RFO, Histoire Canal Overseas Productions, Beau Comme les Antilles, Beau Comme une Image.

De la Hoz, Pedro (2014) 'Zoia Barash, la dama cubana del cine soviético'. *La Jiribilla*, 703. Available at http://www.epoca2.lajiribilla.cu/articulo/9031/zoia-barash-la-dama-cubana-del-cine-sovietico. (Accessed 25 November 2016.)

Fornet, Jorge (2013) *El 71. Anatomía de una crisis*. La Habana, Cuba: Letras Cubanas.

Fowler Calzada, Víctor (2001) 'Lo que se perdió', in *Dédalo*. No. 1. La Habana, Cuba: Asociación Hermanos Saíz.

Gamboa, Morales (2014) *Escenarios sociopolíticos de las migraciones en Costa Rica y Colombia*. San José, Costa Rica: FLACSO.

Guanche, Jesús (2009) *Componentes étnicos del pueblo cubano*. La Habana, Cuba: Ciencias Sociales.

Houzangbe, Penda (2004) *Kuba Maia Liubov*. Documentary film. San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba: Escuela Internacional de Cine y Televisión (EICTV).

Jácome, Aurora (2012) 'The muñequitos rusos generation', in Jacqueline Loss and José Manuel Prieto (eds) *Caviar With Rum: Cuba-USSR and the Post-Soviet Experience*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 27–35.

Loss, Jacqueline (2009) 'La Ostrov Svobody: Todas queremos ser reinas', in Araceli Tinajero (ed.) *Cultura y Letras Cubanas en el Siglo XXI*. México: Iberoamericana.

Loss, Jacqueline and José Manuel Prieto, eds (2012) *Caviar With Rum: Cuba-USSR and the Post-Soviet Experience*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Martí, José (2005) *Nuestra América*. Caracas, South America: Biblioteca Ayacucho.

Montero Méndez, Hortensia (2006) *Los 70: Puente para las rupturas*. La Habana, Cuba: Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo de la Cultura Cubana Juan Marinello.

Navarro, Desiderio (2010) *El pensamiento cultural ruso en Criterios*. La Habana, Cuba: Criterios.

Oficina Nacional de Estadística e Información de Cuba (ONEI) (2014) *Censo de Población y Vivienda 2012*, CD-ROM. La Habana, Cuba: ONEI.

Ortiz, Fernando (1997) *Los factores humanos de la cubanidad*. La Habana, Cuba: Ciencias Sociales.

Pérez, Gustavo and Oneida González (2006) *Todas iban a ser reinas*. Documentary film. Camaguey, Cuba: Televisión Camagüey Producciones.

Prazauskas, Algis (7 February, 1992) 'СНГ как постколониальное пространство'. *Независимая газета*. Available at https://sites.ualberta.ca/~khineiko/NG_92_93/1141438.htm. (Accessed 26 November 2016.)

Prieto Samsónov, Dmitri and Polina Martínez Shvietsova (2008) 'Acercamiento a la diáspora post-soviética en Cuba', in *Cahiers des Ameriques Latines*. Vol. 57–58. Paris, France: IHEAL, 113–23.

Prieto Samsónov, Dmitri and Polina Martínez Shvietsova (2012) '… So, Borscht Doesn't Mix Into the Ajiaco? An Essay of Self-Ethnography on the Young Post-Soviet Diaspora in Cuba', in Jacqueline Loss and José Manuel Prieto (eds) *Caviar with Rum: Cuba-USSR and the Post-Soviet Experience*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Reyes, Roneld (2004) 'La comunidad ruso-parlante en Cuba: una inmigración romántica', Oral presentation at the event: Las Otras Herencias de Octubre, Cátedra Haydée Santamaría, sede nacional de la UNEAC, La Habana, Cuba.

Ruiz Julién, Richard (2015) *Kilómetro 0. La desintegración de la URSS*. La Habana, Cuba: José Martí.

Sánchez Gómez, José Miguel (Yoss) (2003) 'Lo que dejaron los rusos', in *Revista Temas*. La Habana, Cuba: ICAIC.

Valdés Bernal, Sergio (1988) 'La inmigración en Cuba: estudio lingüístico-histórico', in *Anales del Caribe*. Vol. 7–8/1987–88. La Habana, Cuba: Casa de las Américas, 220–39.

Wieser, Isabella (2006) *Die russischsprachige Gemeinschaft in Kuba. Eine soziolinguistische Untersuchung am Beispiel Havanna*. Thesis, University of Vienna, Wien, Austria.

Yurchak, Alexei (2009) *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.