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Cubans: Anomaly or Pioneers? An Analysis of their Assimilation and Political Incorporation into the American Political Mainstream and the Measurement of their Political Influence in the United States

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Cubans: Anomaly or Pioneers?

An Analysis of their Assimilation and Political Incorporation into
the American Political Mainstream and the Measurement of their
Political Influence in the United States

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A Senior Honors Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
Requirements of the Honors Degree Program

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ABSTRACT

My thesis studies how Cuban American immigrants achieved political influence in the United States and whether other Hispanic immigrant groups can attain similar successes. The study found a correlation between assimilation and political incorporation. I evaluated Cuban American assimilation via three proxy variables: education, language spoken in the home, and intermarriage. I concluded that Cuban Americans are an anomaly among Hispanic immigrants. The underlying reason is the way in which they were treated by the United States government, and how much government support they received. This observation was followed by a comparison with Mexican Americans who were not granted government assistance upon arrival in the U.S. and have yet to achieve as much political influence, as well as with Nicaraguan Americans who received belated assistance. Identifying the variable that allowed for increased assimilation and political incorporation presents the government with an opportunity. If the U.S. wants to accelerate immigrant political participation, they must bestow legal immigrants with benefits such as professional revalidation programs, and access to American resident programs. The overall social welfare function is maximized by incorporating these immigrants swiftly into the economic and political mainstream. The payoff for American society is a more productive workforce that is more self-reliant and forms the impetus for increased job creation and business formation. The Cuban experience in Miami reveals that their political and economic assimilation allowed them to transform Miami culturally, socially, politically and perfect it as the gateway to Latin America, adding an additional rubric of trade for the country.

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Thank you to all – you inspire me!

“Culture, which makes talent shine,
is not completely ours either,
nor can we place it solely at our disposal.
Rather, it belongs mainly to our country,
which gave it to us, and to humanity,
from which we receive it as a birthright.”
- Jose Marti

INTRODUCTION

Hispanics are challenging the simple black and white definitions of what it means to be an American. As Hispanics continue to immigrate to the United States, the U.S. Census Bureau projected that, by 2050, there will be over 100 million Hispanics or that 24.4 percent of the total population will be of Hispanic origin.¹ The U.S. receives the greatest amount of its immigrants from Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean islands, owing to the proximity and poor economies of these countries. Attracted by political freedoms and economic opportunities, Hispanics generally emigrate to already established Hispanic enclaves in California, Texas, New York, and Florida to seek employment opportunities.

While continual immigration will allow for the United States Hispanic population to increase, this thesis is more concerned with those already in the United States. I studied the relationship between Cuban-American families settling in the U.S., their assimilation process from the original immigrant through successive generations, and the subsequent effect of assimilation on their rate of political incorporation. Political incorporation, defined by participation in the electoral process through various means

¹ *U.S. Census Bureau*, available at: <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/usinterimproj/natprojtab01a.pdf>

such as voting, donating to Political Action Committees (PACs), attending town meetings, lobbying for policy changes, for example, is dependent on how integrated a specific group is in the host society. Hispanic immigrants, as a monolithic entity, are often politically disenfranchised because of feelings of exclusion, the lack of connection to current policy, low economic security and language barriers. Interestingly, this generalization does not apply to Cuban Americans, who are characterized as a politically motivated group. Cubans have experienced greater political assimilation, and thus they are more likely to engage in the political system. This makes them different from other Hispanic groups who do not experience much assimilation and therefore are not very politically active.² I hypothesize that, if the government assists in the assimilation process by providing specific benefits encouraging integration, they can, theoretically, increase mobilization and political incorporation among these groups.

Currently, Hispanics represent merely 14 percent of the total U.S. population and yet several political campaigns have already made costly efforts to mobilize and engage Hispanics. As the population of Hispanics increases, American politicians must act accordingly. President George W. Bush, in the election of 2004, with much effort, garnered 44 percent of the Hispanic vote, an increase of nine percentage points from the previous election.³ Meanwhile, the Democratic Party was criticized for not allocating enough time and resources into courting their vote. Maria Cardona, senior vice president of the New Democrat Network that spent about \$6 million in Latino-targeted advertising for Kerry, stated: "The bottom line is Hispanics are increasingly one of the most

² Alejandro Portes and Rafael Mozo, "The Political Adaptation Process of Cubans and Other Ethnic Minorities in the United States: A Preliminary Analysis," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 19, No. 1, (Spring, 1985), p. 61.

³ "Election Results," America Votes 2004, CNN, 15 Apr. 2007, <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/states/US/P/00/epolls.0.html>.

important swing vote groups in American politics today."⁴ As Hispanic immigrants inhabit particular states with high concentrations of other Hispanics, political campaigns will devote more resources to acquiring their vote, which is necessary to win swing states such as Florida.

There was a time when Republicans ignored minority voters because they historically tended to vote Democrat. However, like certain swing states, the Hispanic vote may be unpredictable. The increase in the Hispanic population, and its propensity to support Catholicism, has the potential to increase the base support for conservative issues on family values and religion that resonate well with Hispanics. At the same time, Republican Hispanic support may weaken as a result of harsh immigration policies. Democrats, fighting to obtain some solidarity in the South, have an opportunity to regain some clout amongst a struggling minority group on social issues.

What will the future Hispanic demographic look like in the United States? How well will immigrant children adopt American culture, and how does their assimilation relate to political involvement and influence over elections? These are questions that the nation should be considering rather than debating about how long to make the barricade between the Mexican and American border.

While I am interested in Hispanic assimilation and political incorporation overall, Hispanics are by no means a monolithic voting group. To research each Hispanic group by country of origin would necessitate greater than one year's time and thus extends past my limitations. The characterization of Florida as a swing state, my partial Cuban heritage and residency in the state prompted me to concentrate my study on Cubans in

⁴ "Outreach Effort Lures Hispanics to Bush," *ABC 7*, 15 June 2007.
<http://www.wjla.com/news/stories/1104/185300.html>.

Florida. Their experience is a valid example of the larger phenomenon of Hispanics because, as Cubans assimilate, I theorize that second and third-generation Cubans vote more in line with mainstream non-Hispanic whites, focusing on socioeconomic issues as opposed to more conservative issues such as position against Cuba. The unique Cuban experience and history, as detailed in subsequent chapters, is a large part of what enabled them to achieve the highest assimilation and political incorporation rates among all Hispanics. This claim warrants some explanation and background information.

Following the mass exodus of Cubans to America in 1959 in response to Fidel Castro's rise to power, Cubans now represent a large voting bloc in Florida, particularly in Miami, where three of every five Cubans in the U.S. reside.⁵ As they settle, assimilate, and engage in political activity, Cubans are distinct in many ways from the rest of the Hispanic population, most notably in their tendency to vote Republican. There have been four distinct waves of migration: 1959-1962, when 200,000 Cubans migrated generally from the upper classes; 1965-1973, when the U.S. conducted "freedom flights" and 260,500 applicants were permitted to leave the country in airlifts sponsored by the U.S.; 1980-1981, which is characterized as the Mariel boatlift period and 125,000 Cubans, including those from lower socio-economic classes, left; and finally 1982-1994, when Cuba announced it would not restrain Cubans from leaving the country by raft or sea vessel and, consequently, over 40,000 *balseros* successfully confronted the 90-mile distance between Cuba and the U.S.⁶

More than one million Cubans have both "emigrated" (with supposed intentions of returning to their homeland) and immigrated to the United States, settling

⁵Lisandro Perez, "Growing Up Cuban in Miami," in Ruben Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes, *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), p. 91.

⁶Lisandro Perez, "Growing up Cuban in Miami," p. 93-94.

predominately in Miami.⁷ They dominate the political scene in South Florida and have more recently become a leading demographic in political elections in the twenty-first century. Hispanics account for 12 percent of Florida's electorate, and Cubans make up 31.1 percent of all Hispanics in Florida.⁸

The guiding assumptions in my study of this case is that as Cuban Americans assimilate and become politically incorporated, certain characteristics that used to distinguish them as conservative, such as religion and policy against Cuba, evolve and Cubans vote more in line with non-Hispanic whites than any other Hispanic nationality. While I presume that there is some convergence among Hispanics and Cubans as they both assimilate, Cubans have made greater efforts at integrating into the political scene than other Hispanics. Cubans may see political elections not through the eyes of a Hispanic immigrant, but with mainstream America instead. Is the Cuban diaspora an anomaly whose experience is likely to be emulated by Hispanics in general?

My thesis will first address Cuban assimilation. While many variables exist to measure assimilation, this thesis is intended to be a political rather than a sociological analysis of Cuban assimilation. Therefore, I will use census data to gather information and study trends of Cuban behavior based on three major indications of assimilation: level of education, language spoken in the home, and intermarriage. Consistent studies of immigrants have proven that status background has had a significant positive effect on the rate of assimilation. Wealthier groups with longer periods of residence in the host country are more likely to identify as American rather than Cuban. Education and

⁷ *U.S. Census of Population, 2000*, American Fact Finder, 18 April 2007, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000US&-ds_name=ACS_2005_EST_G00_-mt_name=ACS_2005_EST_G2000_B03001

⁸ Adam C. Smith, "Parties Court the Ultimate Swing Vote: Florida Hispanics," *St. Petersburg Times*, 3 May 2004, http://www.sptimes.com/2004/05/03/news_pf/State/Parties_court_the_ult.shtml.

language are two of the most important variables in measuring assimilation because the greater level of each, the greater the ease of mobility into the receiving society.

Similarly, intermarriage outside of one's ethnic group is a significant variable in testing assimilation as it demonstrates adaptation and acculturation. Hispanics are more likely to marry non-Hispanic whites than are Asians and African Americans.⁹ The relevant chapter will include tables displaying the data on Cubans as well as non-Hispanic whites for comparison.

Although assimilation may demonstrate the extent to which Cubans have adopted Americanized lifestyles, it does not measure mobilization and engagement in political activity. Therefore, the subsequent chapter will analyze political incorporation by measuring the trends of Cuban naturalization, voter turnout rate, and the availability of PACs specifically for Cubans and their financial contribution levels. Studying political incorporation is essential for the thesis because it will assist me in determining the range of influence this voting bloc may have on elections. There may be millions of Hispanics in the United States, but if they are not mobilized and truly engaged in political elections then the likelihood of their influencing policy is minimal and polls are likely to overlook them. An established enclave is central to facilitating incorporation into the host society and labor market, providing a series of networks and connections via culture and language.

The final chapter will amass the previously mentioned data and use it to make assumptions about the extent of Cuban political influence. Furthermore, it will evaluate whether Samuel Huntington's belief that Hispanic immigration is eroding traditional

⁹ Sharon Lee and Barry Edmonston, "Hispanic Intermarriage and Identity: Trends and Implications for the Latino and U.S. Populations," Department of Sociology, Portland State University, pp. 1-28.

American values is correct.¹⁰ Are Cubans compared to Mexicans (the largest Hispanic group in the U.S.) and Nicaraguans (the only other Latin American country to send refugees following a communist revolution) truly an anomaly or can their high rates of political incorporation be mimicked by other Hispanics?

I find it difficult to believe that among all Latin Americans, only Cuban Americans possess traits making them more inclined to participate in politics. Instead, I recognize that upon settling in Miami, they received unprecedented benefits from the American government, slowly encouraging assimilation and developed a greater awareness for using politics as a tool for policy change. Thus, high Cuban-American political influence is a product of the conditions associated with their arrival, not an experience repeated by other Hispanics.

By discussing the emergence of a potential new influential voting bloc and the subsequent influence of Hispanic voters, we can examine the need for future policy changes as well. In the next 50 years, the United States' ethnic make-up will undoubtedly transition. This paper is significant because it uses a case study to anticipate such transformations, suggests needed policy changes, and evaluates the opportunity for Democrats and Republicans to sway Hispanic voters to their side.

I am going to study the Cuban case, focusing on the period 1970-2000, by examining the evolving views of Cuban immigrants via extensive research on U.S. census data, literature on Hispanic assimilation, and scholarly journals on Hispanic incorporation. Although there is a history of Cuban migration to the U.S., long before Castro rose to power, Cubans began to immigrate in large numbers in 1959, and the United States did not take note of this massive exodus until the 1970 census. Previously,

¹⁰ Samuel Huntington, *Who Are We?* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), p. 221.

Hispanics were rarely polled and, when they were, they were treated as a monolithic group. Thus census data from 1970 onward will be used to measure both assimilation and political incorporation.

The initial wave of Cuban immigrants came disproportionately from elite sectors that were highly skilled, educated, and represented a middle-class similar to that of the host society. Furthermore, they escaped Cuba for political reasons and continue to maintain anti-Castro sentiments today. More recently, however, successive waves of Cubans migrated for socio-economic concerns, creating a population of Cubans that were less skilled and of a lower class. (Note the Mariel boatlift and *Balseros*.) However, despite the decline in human capital of those migrating more recently, Cubans maintained an economic edge over other immigrants. Today, Cubans are older, more educated and wealthier than other Hispanic groups.¹¹ In fact, they seem to be more in line with mainstream white-Americans than their fellow Hispanics. This trend is fascinating and prompted me to study this topic and whether other Hispanics could achieve similar successes.

¹¹ "Cubans in the United States," *Pew Hispanic Center*, August 25, 2006

“Those who seek refuge here in America will find it.”
- President Lyndon Johnson, October 3, 1965

CHAPTER ONE: Exiles and Assimilation

They came in four distinct waves, leaving behind their home island for a new beginning in the United States. After Fidel Castro consolidated power on January 1, 1959, masses of Cubans fled their country and found refuge in many different countries. The Diaspora saw Cubans flee to Spain, Mexico, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Honduras, Panama, and other Spanish-speaking countries, as well as the United States. This paper focuses on Cubans who settled in the United States, either through direct in-migration (fleeing from Cuba to the U.S.) or indirect in-migration (fleeing from Cuba to another country and then immigrating to the U.S).

Those who were able to immigrate to the U.S. found that they were in the hands of presidential administrations that sympathized with their plight and showered them, however belatedly, with multiple and unprecedented benefits. The advantages that were granted Cubans have never again been given to any other immigrant population, and constituted a remarkable reversal in American historical immigration policy, making the Cuban immigration a sui-generis event in the American political landscape. The benefits included the ability to quickly revalidate professional degrees obtained in Cuba, thereby vastly accelerating upward mobility for Cuban émigrés, fast-tracking the road to citizenship and permitting this class of people almost immediate access to American

resident benefits, like Medicare, Medicaid, Food Stamps, unemployment compensation, and so forth.¹² These benefits stabilized the economic lives of refugees, and the ability to recertify professional titles, becoming professional members of the host country, allowed Cubans to leave behind the negative status connotation “refugee” holds in record time.

One must realize the context within which these benefits were granted, however. And to do so one must fall back to the mindset of the day, to wit, the Cold War mentality and the zero-sum game played between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. during the 1960s. At this critical juncture, the Russian Bear and the American Eagle came very close to heating up the Cold War into a nuclear confrontation on two occasions, both times retreating from the very edge of plunging the world into an apocalyptic and complete end. The immigrants were then pawns in a worldwide chess game that was fraught with peril, and the cost of the assimilation was not the issue at that time. Instead, Cubans were viewed as political refugees and given benefits that no other immigrant group received, eventually altering their mode of assimilation. Thus, the Diaspora caused by Castro and indirectly by his Russian patrons was well received because the political climate was different than today, and the U.S. was less sensitive to the financial costs than to the political benefits of embarrassing Castro.

Note that the politicians of the day were completely oblivious to the effect of opening the border to so many immigrants. The U.S. government attempted to disperse the Cubans, and thus not have any one community be so severely affected.¹³ They sought to minimize the impact of Cuban immigrants and thought that diffusion was the answer to

¹² Alex Stepick and Carol Dutton Stepick, “Power and Identity: Miami Cubans,” in Marcelo Suarez-Orozco and Mariela Paez, *Latinos: Remaking America* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 76-77.

¹³ Jose Llanes, *Cuban Americans: Masters of Survival* (Cambridge: Abt Books, 1982), pp. 33, 37.

the assimilation of this ethnic group. Areas such as San Antonio in Texas, Union City in New Jersey, and the greater Washington D.C. area were chosen, as were places in Ohio and Michigan, as well as California and Arizona.¹⁴ But once inside the U.S., the city of choice for most Cubans was Miami. The majority of first-wave Cubans either settled in or found their way to Miami, where several organizations such as Centro Hispano Católico and the Cuban Refugee Emergency Center, as well as funds from the Eisenhower Administration and several other volunteer agencies were available to welcome them.¹⁵

The efforts made by presidential administrations in the 1960s and 1970s have never again been matched for any other immigrant group, including other Latinos, which I propose is one factor that contributed to the unique Cuban assimilation experience. The term *Latino* lacks the specificity of other immigrant names such as “Italian American” and “Irish American.” Latino encompasses all of those people from Latin America, born in Mexico to Cuba and Chile. How much do Mayan Guatemalans have in common with Miami Cubans?

With these concerns in mind, I limited the scope of my research, as explained in the introduction, to Cubans rather than all Hispanics. While I will distinguish between the four waves of Cuban immigration, it is not possible to measure the assimilation of each cohort. Instead, my assimilation data, compiled from the U.S. Census Bureau, will measure ability to speak English from 1980-2000 and highest educational attainment from 1970-2000 without distinguishing among these different waves. There are, however,

¹⁴ “Beginning of the Exodus,” *Cuban Information Archives*, 13 Dec. 2006, available at: http://www.cuban-exile.com/doc_001-025/doc0001.html.

¹⁵ Robert Levine and Moises Asis, *Cuban Miami* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000), pp.27-29.

distinct differences between the characteristics of each cohort in the amount of education they received prior to immigration and their socioeconomic status, among other factors. Distinctions between the waves will be made prior to discussing data results in order to help explain certain outcomes.

Due to limitations within the Census Bureau's decennial census methodologies and experimental designs, I cannot extend my research back to 1960 as Cubans were not yet measured as a distinct subgroup. The 1960 decennial census was designed before the initial wave of immigrants descended on the U.S. and their impact was deemed worthy of measurement. Furthermore, I look at assimilation with a third variable by comparing inter-marriage rates among Hispanics from 1970-2000.

There is no single accepted definition of how to measure assimilation, and thus several scholars have chosen different indicators to conduct research. Assimilation as a concept is difficult enough to define and quantify, but the work is made even more difficult by attempting to approximate assimilation by proxy variables. One of the reasons that research is difficult is that the selected data sets were originally designed to measure other factors and thus create statistical anomalies when applied to my topic. I thus recognize the possibility of imperfections with the collected data; however, my general findings are supported by scholars such as Alejandro Portes and Lisandro Perez. This thesis is intended to be a political analysis and not a sociological study of whether Cuban people, indeed, assimilated. It was a combination of their unique assimilation and political incorporation that yielded greater political influence in the U.S. Therefore, this chapter first seeks to explain the historical context in which the immigrants came with a brief description of each cohort. Certain factors, established prior to their journey to the

U.S., affected the rate at which assimilation was possible and the tendency to be politically active. This information is then used to illuminate and detail their patterns of assimilation in Miami post 1959, addressing education, language and intermarriage trends.

Historical Setting

Following the mass exodus of Cubans to America in 1959 as a response to Fidel Castro's rise to power, the population of Cubans in the U.S., but particularly in Miami, grew exponentially to the point where Cubans now represent a large voting bloc in Florida. As they settle, assimilate, and engage in political activity, Cubans are distinct in many ways from the rest of the Hispanic population. I presume that there is some convergence with the status quo as they assimilate and that second and third-generation Cuban Americans are more representative of non-Hispanic whites. For this reason, the research I conducted for Cubans in Miami is compared with non-Hispanic whites. I suspect a similar process also occurs with Hispanics at large.

To understand how the high levels of assimilation affected each Cuban cohort differently, it is integral to first recognize the variations between the waves. The first-wave of Cuban immigrants (1959-1962), who were primarily Western European Caucasians, the descendants of Spaniards of upper status and educational attainment, first immigrated to the United States as temporary exiles with the hopes of soon returning to their native Cuba.¹⁶ These people had an educational attainment, social standing, and racial /ethnic composition roughly equivalent to the Cubans who had preceded them and

¹⁶ Alex Stepick and Carol Dutton Stepick, "Power and Identity: Miami Cubans," in Marcelo Suarez-Orozo and Mariela Paez, *Latinos: Remaking America* (Los Angeles: California University Press, 2002), p. 77.

become exiled in the U.S. for brief periods, for example during the Machado presidency in the 1940s and the Prío-Socarráz presidency of 1952.

The first-wavers were also a politically motivated group, and so gave ample precedence to the established practice of immigrating to the U.S. for brief periods in order to ride out a politically unfavorable result caused by a ballot box or a dictator. Indeed, the foremost Cuban patriot, Jose Martí himself, was an exile to the U.S. and used his stay in the U.S. to solicit funds from the small contingents of Cubans in places like Tampa and New York City in order to overthrow the Spanish colonial power that had a stranglehold on the island at around the turn of the 19th Century.¹⁷

It was then not unthinkable for these first-wavers to believe they had to take up temporary residence in the U.S. to ride out the most recent political maelstrom that had beset Cuba. These people were used to being the political, religious, business and social leaders of the island, and, as such, fully expected to return to the island nation to re-assume their place as the power elite.¹⁸ The difference between the first-wave of Cubans and subsequent immigrants is critical. The first-wave came as émigrés with the intention of returning to their homeland. For this reason, the first-wave's *willingness* to assimilate was lower than others who made America their home rather than temporary stay.

In the United States, the first-wave became a viable economic class that brought entrepreneurial skills vital to creating their own enclaves. At the same time, it was more difficult for the first-wave not to assimilate partially due to the need to work, the limited number of Cubans in the area and being surrounded by white Americans. This first-wave

¹⁷ Carlos Ripoll, "Jose Martí," Florida International University, available at: <http://www.fiu.edu/~fcf/jmarti.html>

¹⁸ Robert Levine and Moises Asís, *Cuban Miami* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000), pp. 27-36.

preferred a hard-line treatment toward Castro, favored a U.S. trade embargo of Cuba, and any method of ousting the Castro regime.¹⁹ Paradoxically, it was the first-wave that created a dual identity as Cuban Americans and exiles, not fitting into either category completely. This group as well as others that came in subsequent waves, despite attempts to maintain their culture, unconsciously Americanized and thus assimilated at least partially. Social tension continued to exist between Cubans who thought they assimilated well and Americans who believed that naturalization and the ability to speak English were the sole indicators of assimilation.²⁰

With the threat of communism looming in many countries within close proximity to the U.S., President Johnson continued President Kennedy's open-door policy, welcoming second-wave refugees of communism (1965-1973). This policy included the well known "Freedom Flights" which flew exiled families from Cuba to Miami.²¹ The majority of these refugees were relatives of previous exiles living in Miami. The second wave began diluting the small middle-class and transferred many productive citizens from Cuba to Miami.

While the first two waves consisted of upper and middle-class immigrants, the third wave (1980-1981) was not as well received by the U.S. public. Considered undesirable because of their *alleged* origins (i.e. mental patients, criminals, and homosexuals), the majority of these immigrants were single black men.²² The third wave era is commonly referred to as the Mariel boat lift, and those who escaped called

¹⁹ Guillermo Grenier, "Anti-Castro Political Ideology Among Cuban-Americans in the Miami Area: Cohort and Generational Differences," *Latino Research*, Vol. 2, No. 1, November 2004, p. 4.

²⁰ Maria Cristina Garcia, *Havana USA* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 20-21.

²¹ Alejandro Portes and Rafael Mozo, "The Political Adaptation Process of Cubans and Other Ethnic Minorities in the United States: A Preliminary Analysis," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 19, No. 1, (Spring, 1985), pp. 36-37.

²² Silvia Pedraza, *Cuba's Refugees: Manifold Migrations, in Origins and Destinies: Immigration, Race and Ethnicity in America* (Belmont: Wadsworth Press, 1996), pp. 264-284.

Marielitos. While they did have limited economic and political opportunities in Cuba, over 71 percent of third wave immigrants were actually blue collar workers with the concomitant skills possessed by mechanics, carpenters, factory operators, etc. Furthermore, the Immigration and Naturalization Services recorded that of the 124,789 immigrants, only 19 percent admitted to serving jail time in Cuba.²³ Thus the misconception of the third wave's origins may have precluded their ability to assimilate. The majority are not necessarily criminals, blacks, or mental patients as was assumed, but were hard working immigrants who assimilated in a different way: by paying taxes, getting jobs, buying cars, and becoming part of the Miami work environment. Nonetheless, many light-skinned Cubans condemn the black Cubans as members of a criminal class, creating a divide between Cuban immigrants.²⁴

One essential difference between the third wave and previous immigrants is that the *Marielitos* were mostly children of communism. Born after the revolution, growing up surrounded by limited freedoms, they never knew of the civil liberties that existed before and never served as members of the previous governments. They came sympathetic for their relatives remaining in Cuba and hoped to ease the strict embargo. They operated under a different work ethic, living in a communist system and were thus resented by first and second-wave Cubans and occupied vastly different areas of Miami. Moreover, these refugees came for economic freedoms as opposed to political asylum and their assimilation process was thus vastly different from the previous waves. They

²³ Pedraza, *Cuba's Refugees*, pp. 264-284.

²⁴ John Trumpbour and Elaine Bernard, "Unions and Latinos: Mutual Transformation," in Marcelo Suarez-Orozco and Mariela Paez, *Latinos: Remaking America* (Los Angeles: California University Press, 2002), p. 141

were less educated, spoke little if any English, and tried to break into an American economic system that earlier Cuban immigrants had already saturated.²⁵

After the fall of the U.S.S.R., Cuba lost its best source of financing and their economy thus began to decline. The peso was devalued, free services such as health care and education began to disappear and the public became even more desperate. The fourth-wave era (1982-1994) was commonly referred to as *balseros*, literally, rafters.²⁶ Lower-class families entrusted their lives to the 90-mile trek to freedom and attempted to raft the Gulfstream to the U.S. Due to the poor economic conditions in Cuba, many set to the streets in riots. The Cuban government, as a means to control the rioters, allowed *balseros* to leave freely. They were also characterized as the poor, uneducated and faithful revolutionary proletariats. They came with the intention of becoming Americans as opposed to previous exiles that came as émigrés.

As the number of refugees increased, President Bill Clinton signed a migration agreement allowing 20,000 visas to be issued per year.²⁷ Later, as a measure to curb the influx of immigrants, Clinton enacted the wet foot/dry foot policy which allows for any Cuban refugee who makes it on shore to stay in the U.S. and all those caught at sea to be returned to Cuba. As thousands of people set out to test their fate, U.S. citizens were bombarded with images on their local news stations of families, caught by the Coast Guard, in 1950s Chevys transformed into rafts, or emaciated men in tires swimming to shore, and images of some who made it 50 feet from shore before being intercepted by

²⁵ Susan Eckstein, "Cuban Emigrés and the American Dream," *Political Science and Politics*, June 2006, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 302.

²⁶ Lisandro Perez, "Growing Up Cuban in Miami," in Ruben Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes, *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), p 94.

²⁷ Perez, "Growing up Cuban in Miami," p. 94.

police. It was not uncommon to see Miami Cubans on the beach shouting encouragement for refugees to make it to shore.

By 1990, over one million Cubans had immigrated to the U.S. since the 1959 revolution and the number continues to increase.²⁸ With each successive wave, there were fewer opportunities for work as the Miami-area labor market had already become saturated. In addition, the great majority of those entering after 1980 became carpenters, waiters, bus boys, and so on, as most educated exiles had entered in the first two waves. They were mostly semi-skilled or unskilled laborers, particularly as they were used to using outdated technology. Each wave brought different aspects of their culture. The first were primarily Roman Catholic entrepreneurs, the second more middle-class, the third blue-collar workers and the fourth lower-income economic refugees.²⁹ Each wave carried over their socioeconomic status from Cuba and transferred it to the U.S. Furthermore, the Cuban community created *la Cubanidad*, an effort to maintain their culture and establish enclaves.³⁰ As the exiles established themselves in Miami, they created a dual identity as Cubans and as Americans -- but did not truly fit into either category, at times, being rejected by both groups.

In measuring assimilation, the distinction between cohorts is necessary to understand how Cuban Americans translated their positive reception in the U.S. into increased assimilation and eventually political influence in Washington. As will be shown in the following sections, there is a correlation between immigrant assimilation

²⁸ Pedraza, *Cuba's Refugees*, pp. 264-284.

²⁹ Jason Berry, "Cuban Exiles in Exploring the Culture of Little Havana: A Learning Community Project," (University of Miami, 2005) available at: http://www.education.miami.edu/ep/LittleHavana/Monuments/Virgin1/The_Virgin_Mary/Bay_of_Pigs/Exiles/exiles.html

³⁰ Maria Cristina García, *Havana USA* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), p. 83-85.

and the extent of their involvement in the American political system. Cubans are the demographic majority in Miami and exercise political and economic clout but the power is not shared evenly among all Cuban Americans. Despite political diversity among Cuban Americans, the degree to which cohorts can exercise political influence depends on how much they have assimilated. Thus, I turn to assimilation rates among Cuban Americans in Miami.

Highest Level of Educational Attainment

In measuring immigrant assimilation, scholars often look to education as a gauge of adaptation, and I make the assumption that the higher the level of education attained, the more assimilated the individual becomes. By the same token, scholars assume that increased levels of education are directly correlated to higher income levels. I will show that assimilation, inclusion and civic engagement are related to socioeconomic indicators such as income and education.

The most educated and the least educated people in the U.S. are immigrants.³¹ Immigrants enter as state-sponsored refugees, seeking political asylum and economic opportunities, through legal immigration channels or as illegal aliens. Professionals tend to have a more seamless adaptation into American society as they naturalize faster than do undocumented refugees for example.³² There is a correlation between higher levels of education attained and professional occupations, economic wealth, and integration. In the

³¹ Ruben Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes, *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America*, Los Angeles: University of California Press 2001, p. 6.

³² Ruben Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes, *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America*, Los Angeles: University of California Press 2001, p. 6-7.

short run, education forecasts productivity and in the long-run it forecasts the assimilation of the immigrant's children into the American economy and society.³³

Those who emigrated in the first-wave, fleeing Castro's regime, were part of the elite, the wealthy and educated upper-class. In order to determine and track education levels among Cuban Americans, I use data from the U.S. Census Bureau, General Social and Economic Characteristics. Comparing Cuban Americans with non-Hispanic whites in Florida, I compiled information from 1970-2000 regarding highest level of education achieved. The absolute total numbers of graduates was given from the U.S. Census Bureau. To compute the percentages of high school and college graduates, however, I divided the absolute number of high school and college graduates respectively by the total number. My assumption is that education levels increased over time and contributed to their overall integration into American jobs and culture.

Table 1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current General Social and Economic Characteristics, Florida, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000

Education Attainment Characteristics Among Cubans in Florida							
Years of School Completed							
				1970	1980	1990	2000
Total				151,913	316,212	557,261	842,235
High School: 1 to 3 years				15,091	29,464	91,841	87,386
4 years				35,740	53,980	110,454	148,321
College:	1 to 3 years			13,716	43,083	122,263	305,616
4 years or more				15,063	45,353	73,595	124,744
Percent High school Graduates				42.50%	53.00%	54.97%	68.71%
Percent Bachelors Degree or Higher				9.92%	14.34%	13.90%	14.81%

³³ T. Paul Schultz, "Immigrant Quality and Assimilation," *U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform*, May 1995, p. 8.

Table 2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current General Social and Economic Characteristics, Florida, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000

Education Characteristics Among Non-Hispanic Whites in Florida						
Years of School Completed						
			1970	1980	1990	2000
Total			5,167,094	5,042,362	6,337,604	12,457,536
High School: 1 to 3 years			368,528	776,408	824,129	1,608,595
4 years			1,514,482	1,870,284	1,986,869	3,574,182
College: 1 to 3 years (may include associates degree)			620,853	892,256	1,869,384	3,029,333
4 years or more (bachelor's degree or higher)			445,924	802,025	1,253,140	1,440,484
Percent High school Graduates			49.96%	70.70%	60.85%	64.57%
Percent Bachelors Degree or Higher			8.63%	15.91%	19.77%	11.56%

Table 1 and Table 2 highlight the highest level of education achieved by Cubans and non-Hispanic whites in Florida. While the data show an increase in high school and college graduates overall, there is a decline in 1990. This decrease is due largely to the increase in *balseros* during the 1980-1990 periods. Recall that *balseros* were from the lower economic and educational brackets of Cuban society. Referring to Table 3, it is evident that those entering the United States between 1980 and 1990 had the lowest rate of education (13 percent) than any other Cuban wave (24 percent for those entering before 1980), reducing the entire average.

Despite this dip, the percent of high school graduates among Cubans increased dramatically from 42.5 percent in 1970 to 68.71 percent in 2000. The percent of college graduates increased from 9.92 percent in 1970 to 14.81 percent in 2000. These percentages increased faster and at a greater percentage than did Non-Hispanic whites, which increased from 8.63 percent in 1970 to 11.56 percent in 2000 for college graduates. This is a significant finding and can be attributed to two explanations. First,

the largest source of population growth within the Hispanic population has been through immigration. As the amount of Cubans grew from a few thousand pre-1959 to over one million in 1990, Miami experienced a white flight in which many of the educated middle-class moved northward, thus reducing the number of educated Anglo families in Miami. Second, Alejandro Portes and other scholars note the serious educational push supported by Cuban Americans was outmatched only by Asian immigrants. They realize the importance of education as a tool for success and have established themselves in Miami, transforming it into a gate-way to the Americas.³⁴

In 2000, Cubans were the oldest, wealthiest and most educated Latinos in the United States. The median age of Cubans is 41.3 years, while the next eldest are Central and South Americans, who average 29.9 years of age. Furthermore, 24.8 percent of Cubans had a bachelor's degree in 1998 compared with 18.0 percent of Central and South Americans.³⁵ As is evident in Table 3, one in four Cubans 25 and older is a college graduate, more than double the rate of other Hispanics. Cuban Americans are more educated than other Latinos, and native-born Cubans show higher rates of college graduation than non-Hispanic whites.

³⁴ Lisandro Perez, "Growing Up Cuban in Miami," in Ruben Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes, *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 115-122.

³⁵ Marcelo Suarez-Orozco and Mariela Paez, *Latinos, Remaking America* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), p. 27.

Table 3

Cuban Educational Attainment, 2004 (25 years and older)							
				9th Grade Or Less	9th-12th Grade	High School Graduate	College Graduate
Cuban Foreign Born				18%	12%	48%	22%
	Entered before 1980			18%	10%	48%	24%
	Entered between 1980 and 1990			25%	15%	47%	13%
	Entered after 1990			11%	14%	49%	26%
Cuban Native Born				2%	5%	54%	39%
All Cubans				15%	11%	49%	25%
Hispanics				24%	17%	47%	12%
Non-Hispanic Whites				3%	8%	59%	30%
Other Non-Hispanics				6%	12%	55%	26%
Total				6%	10%	57%	27%

Data in table 3 was compiled by the Pew Hispanic Center. They used census data from 2004 to analyze only those Cubans 25 and older in the U.S. Cubans are the most educated and wealthiest Hispanic ethnic group. The high school graduate levels are within 10 percent of non-Hispanic whites nationally, but are greater than non-Hispanic whites in Florida. The native-born Cuban college graduate percentages, however, are greater than non-Hispanic white percentages both nationally and in Florida. Foreign-born Cubans show lower levels of high school and college graduation rates than non-Hispanic whites. It follows then that children of Cuban immigrants have higher levels of educational attainment than their parents, other Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites.

Cubans are far more likely to identify as “white” than other Hispanics. According to the 2004 census data, 86 percent of Cubans identified themselves as “white” first.³⁶ This is significant because those who identify primarily as “white” have higher levels of education and income. Thus, perceived level of whiteness is a measure of inclusion.

³⁶ “Cubans in the United States,” *Pew Hispanic Center*, August 25, 2006.

Furthermore, the first-wave refugees' "educational and occupational characteristics, combined with middle-class work ethic were not too dissimilar to that of the dominant sectors of the host society," making their assimilation process less difficult than subsequent waves.³⁷

The data has thus demonstrated that Cuban-American education levels have increased since 1970. Those with the highest education levels are native-born Cubans. The lower socioeconomic wave that entered in 1980 was the least educated and had the most difficulty integrating into mainstream America. As will be shown throughout the thesis, the more educated cohorts assimilated greater than uneducated immigrants.

Language Spoken in the Home

Using language as a measurement of assimilation is a fundamental way of demonstrating social change. Complete linguistic assimilation implies that a person transitions from speaking their original language to another language, and is no longer fluent in the original language. While losing one's mother tongue is not likely to be experienced by an individual, I would argue that partial language assimilation (i.e. bilingualism) is still a sufficient measurement of increased adaptation. Learning the language of the host culture exposes immigrants to cultural innuendos and demonstrates the willingness to adopt the language. Maintaining the mother tongue does not inhibit immigrants from further adaptation (especially as some do so for educational purposes) so long as they also learn the host country's language. Furthermore, the primary language spoken in the home is a good indicator of bilingualism. Very few people have

³⁷ Ruben Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes, *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press 2001), p. 95.

the capability to become fluent in another language outside of the home, i.e. in school or as an adult. For this reason, I used data tracking language spoken in the home from 1980-2000. The data collected shows the ability of Cubans to speak English and reports the amount that continues to speak another language at home.

In many instances Cuban Americans undergo involuntary linguistic assimilation. While attempting to maintain their native language at home, children are exposed to and forced to speak English at school. Eventually, children become so fluent in their second language it replaces their native language and becomes their predominant one. This process continues until Spanish is no longer spoken. I assumed before completing the research that within the 20-year period, the percent of those who speak Spanish in the home would reduce significantly. However, this proved untrue among Cubans and there are a few explanations for this finding. Evident in Table 4, in 1980, 95.26 percent of Cubans spoke a language other than English in the home, whereas in 2000, 91.87 percent of Cubans spoke another language. Although there was a decline, it was very minimal in comparison to other variables in the table. This find is significant because it demonstrates a culture of bilingualism growing in Miami, a merging of American and Cuban customs, instead of a complete abandonment of ones cultural roots.

This minimal decline is explained by three factors. First, the vast and concentrated enclave of Cubans in Miami reduces the need for involuntary linguistic assimilation. Older linguistic assimilation theories based on 19th and 20th century European immigrants allowed for a three-generation shift in which the original language was no longer

spoken.³⁸ In a more simplistic version, the original immigrants preferred to speak their mother tongue, speaking as little English as possible to get by. Their children (the second generation) preferred to speak English on the streets, in schools and even sometimes while responding to their parents. As such, the second generation preferred speaking English in the home to their children and thus the original language is lost. While this pattern characterizes European immigrants it does not successfully capture the Spanish-language history because the Cuban enclave in Miami allows for the survival of the Spanish language.

Second, there is less pressure in the contemporary era, especially in South Florida, to speak English in the streets and even in schools. While children are taught in English, many of the teachers are bilingual, reducing the pressure to speak English. Furthermore, the language of the streets is Spanglish (a fusion of English and Spanish). Despite the debates over “English-only” moves by politicians to block bilingual education, the high immigration levels into South Florida and the number of Spanish-speaking persons made it possible to live and work without ever learning the language. Although it is easy to get by in Miami, for example, without speaking English, older linguistic assimilation theories should not be overlooked. The maintenance of Spanish is due to the close proximity to Cuba as well as the members of Spanish-speaking residents.

Thirdly, Miami is the hub for Latin America, requiring many businessmen to maintain their native language and pass the language on to their children, not for ignorant purposes but for the realization that a second language is useful and necessary in the business sector. The presence of a Spanish-speaking enclave promotes bilingualism as

³⁸Richard Alba, “Language Assimilation Today: Bilingualism Persists More than in the Past, But English Still Dominates,” *Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research*, University at Albany, December 2004.

opposed to encouraging Spanish-only speaking and explains the delay in Spanish-to-English language shifts.

This explanation is further supported by the increase of Cuban Americans who speak English. Referring to Table 4 it is evident that the number of Cubans in Florida who do not speak English “very well” has declined over the past twenty years. Despite the increase in the Cuban population, especially with the influx of lower socioeconomic Cubans in 1980-1990, who predominantly speak Spanish, the number has continued to decline from 60.45 percent to 35.20 percent. This data proves that while Cuban Americans maintain speaking Spanish in the home, they are also speaking more English, creating generations of bilingual Cubans. Moreover, Cubans in Miami learn English at faster rates than other Hispanic subgroups. Only 11 percent of second-generation Mexican children, for example, speak English at home, whereas 27 percent of second-generation Cuban children are speaking English at home and in school.³⁹

³⁹ Alba, “Language Assimilation Today”

Table 4

Cubans' Ability to Speak English						
				1980	1990	2000
				US	Florida	Florida
Persons 5 years and over				752843	642368	809536
Speak a language other than English				717142	604744	743,713
Percent who speak another language				95.26%	94.14%	91.87%
	5 to 17 years			24832	76640	89,771
	18 to 64 years			539678	413658	493713
	65 to 74 years			89991	66919	160,229
	75 years and over			62641	47527	
Do not speak English "very well"				455057	344409	284,975
Percent of those who do not speak English "very well"				60.45%	53.62%	35.20%
	5 to 17 years			8899	18226	8787
	18 to 64 years			310261	224187	168022
	65 to 74 years			78434	58770	108166
	75 years and over			57463	43226	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current General Social and Economic Characteristics, Florida, 1980, 1990, 2000

The ability to speak a language is telling for social and political reasons as well. According to a study by the Pew Hispanic Center, the primary language spoken contributes to differences in attitudes among people. For example, 93 percent of Spanish-only speaking subjects agreed that it is better for children to leave the home once they have married and not prior to that accomplishment. Compare that to English-only speaking Hispanics and the percent drops to lower than 71 percent.⁴⁰ This is an incredible factor that shows how recent immigrants and those who continue to speak Spanish-only are socially conservative. This provides tremendous opportunity for the Republican Party to appeal to Spanish-speaking Hispanics based on social values. However, despite this advantage, Table 5 below elucidates how quickly their native language can be lost over

⁴⁰ "Assimilation and Language," *Pew Hispanic Center*, March 2004, p. 3, available at: <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/upload/Assimilation-and-Language-2002-National-Survey-of-Latinos-Survey-Brief.pdf>.

successive generations. While only 4 percent of first-generation immigrants are English dominant, 78 percent of third-generation Hispanics is English dominant. Those that remain bilingual also decrease over time, eventually losing the native language completely.

Table 5

	Generation in the United States		
	1st Generation	2nd Generation	3rd Generation and Higher
English Dominant	4%	46%	78%
Bilingual	24	47	22
Spanish Dominant	72	7	–

**Source: Pew Hispanic Center, Assimilation and Language
Primary Language among Latinos, by Generation in the United States**

The data in Table 5 included all Hispanics as opposed to Cubans alone. While the third generation demonstrates higher levels of English monolinguals, it is useful to note that bilingualism in the third generation is higher among Hispanics than it was for European immigrants and Asians. There were some German immigrants in the Midwest, pre-WWI, who established German enclaves and maintained their mother tongue through the foundation of charter schools.⁴¹ A similar phenomenon occurred in Miami when first and second-wave Cubans established private schools that reinforced their parents' values and promoted bilingualism.⁴²

In sum, the dense social networks established by the Cuban enclave reinforced the group's cultural identity (*la Cubanidad*) but also encouraged increasing human capital.

⁴¹ Richard Alba, "Language Assimilation Today: Bilingualism Persists More than in the Past, But English Still Dominates," *Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research*, University of Albany, December 2004.

⁴² Lisandro, Perez, "Growing Up Cuban in Miami," in Ruben Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes, *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 96-108.

Bilingualism is much more common today in Miami than before, and children of immigrants are highly likely to speak English very well. Cubans learned to integrate themselves into mainstream America enough to capitalize on professional, political and intellectual opportunities. Proportionally, more Cubans are learning English and becoming English dominant than are losing their bilingualism. Thus, while three generation shift theories are applicable for some Cubans, in Miami, they may be a counterexample.

Intermarriage

Intermarriage trends are a frequent used indicator of assimilation. The ability and willingness to marry outside of one's ethnic and/or religious group is seen in classical assimilation theory as a final stage of adaptation. There are constraints in the form of socioeconomic status, continuous flow of immigration, and language barriers that deter Hispanics from marrying non-Hispanics. Other difficulties arise in determining who has intermarried, or which ethnic background the offspring of intermarried couples choose to identify by. Often, in the case with partial Hispanic backgrounds, identification as Hispanic is greater.⁴³ However there are still obstacles with this research. Intermarriage is not an indicator used by the U.S. Census Bureau in surveys, which limited the amount of independent research I could personally conduct. Thus the following analysis comes from research conducted by sociological professionals using public-use micro-data to compile information.

⁴³ Sharon Lee and Barry Edmonston, "Hispanic Intermarriage and Identity: Trends and Implications for the Latino and U.S. Populations," Department of Sociology, Portland State University, p. 16.

Research concludes that if Hispanics marry outside of their ethnic group, they tend to marry non-Hispanic whites.⁴⁴ Their assimilation is dependent on several conditions such as level of inequality, exposure to non-Hispanics, and sex-ratio imbalances.⁴⁵ Imbalanced sex ratios do increase the tendency for one to marry outside their ethnic group. Cuban-American men outnumber females slightly, although there are significant differences when disaggregated by age groups. Between 25 and 49 years of age, men outnumber women significantly (116 men to 100 women), due largely to selective emigration that sent more men in the third and fourth waves. Women outnumber men after age 59 because they have longer life expectancies.⁴⁶

Robert K. Merton's exchange thesis claims that intermarriage exists only when social and economic resources outweigh the racial disadvantages. In other words, only the more educated and financially stable minorities with significant cultural and economic resources will marry non-Hispanic whites.⁴⁷ Research conducted by Jerry Jacobs and Teresa Labov confronted this claim and studied sixteen different ethnic groups, including Cuban Americans.

Their research is consistent with claims that more educated, wealthy Cuban women marry non-Hispanic whites than do Cuban men. However, this is a more recent trend within the last 20 years. Non-Hispanic whites have the lowest rate of intermarriage which is attributed simply to their numbers. The overwhelming majority in the country, their low rate of intermarriage is also due partly to their preference for endogamy. One

⁴⁴ Jerry Jacobs and Teresa Labov, "Gender Differentials in Intermarriage among Sixteen Race and Ethnic Groups," *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 17, No. 4. (Dec., 2002), pp. 621-646.

⁴⁵ Brian Brown, "Barriers to Marital Assimilation: Hispanic Intermarriage in U.S. Cities," *Population Association of America*, 2003.

⁴⁶ Sergio Díaz-Briquets and Jorge Pérez-López, "The Role of the Cuban-American Community in the Cuban Transition," *Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies*, University of Miami, 2003.

⁴⁷ Jacobs and Labov, "Gender Differentials," pp. 621-646.

aspect is consistent: spouses tend to marry those within their educational bracket whether they are marrying within or outside their ethnic group. And because we have already established that increased education achievement levels is an indicator of greater assimilation and that it also exposes minorities to a greater level of non-Hispanic whites, we may also conclude that the two are linked in increasing intermarriage and further adaptation. Other researchers found this conclusion to be valid: native-born Hispanics, especially those with higher socioeconomic status (measurement by education and occupation) tend to marry non-Hispanics more so than the lower educated.⁴⁸

College educations also promote tolerance and at the very least expose students to other ethnic backgrounds. College also facilitates the meeting between students who may have been raised in racially segregated neighborhoods. Access to college, however, is unequal, and Hispanics of Western European extractions tend to have more access to college than do Hispanics of black or Indian origin. Lower educated Hispanics, such as Mexicans who come to the U.S. to work in agricultural fields, are typically of Indian heritage and come from rural backgrounds, where education is harder to provide and therefore more scarce.

Additionally, intermarriage is important because it creates a multiple-origin population that mitigates endogamous norms and further merges the population. Cubans are unique in that they show high rates of intermarriage with non-Hispanics whereas other Hispanic people such as Puerto Ricans and Dominicans (similar Caribbean islands) show high rates of intermarriage with each other and very low rates of intermarriage

⁴⁸ Lee and Edmonston, "Hispanic Intermarriage," p. 6.

outside of their ethnic group.⁴⁹ It is worth mentioning that a large percent of Puerto Ricans and Dominicans exhibit racial characteristics associated with blacks.

In the thirty-year time frame from 1970-2000, census data demonstrate that Hispanic intermarriage rates increased by 50 percent among Cubans and by only 20 percent among Mexicans. Hispanic men and women in 1970 were equally likely to be intermarried while, in 2000, women were more likely to have non-Hispanic white spouses.⁵⁰

As mentioned earlier, education shows a positive relationship with intermarriage. From 1970 onward, the proportion of intermarriage increased with education. According to the research conducted by Lee and Edmonston, 5 percent of Hispanics with less than a high school degree were intermarried compared with 15-17 percent of high school graduates and 28 percent of men and 35 percent of women with a college degree. Not only do intermarriage rates increase with education, but women are more likely to intermarry with increased education than men. Again, there may be an unuttered consequence – women that are educated may have traveled further to obtain that education, and the exposure to a more liberal, and diverse environment with a different proportion of men to women may explain most of this disparity, dovetailing with Merton's assumptions.

There is a strong tendency for intermarried couples to be younger, more educated and native-born. This research demonstrates the increase in intermarriage as one indicator of assimilation among Cubans, and for the “upwardly mobile, with socioeconomic

⁴⁹ Lee and Edmonston, “Hispanic Intermarriage,” p. 6.

⁵⁰ Lee and Edmonston, “Hispanic Intermarriage,” p. 5.

success came intermarriage and the further dilution of ethnicity.”⁵¹ Table 6 highlights the percent increase from 1970-2000; note the slight increase of female intermarriage over male.

Table 6

Inter-Marriage Trend Among Cubans				
	1970	1980	1990	2000
Males	8.00%	8.20%	11.30%	11.80%
Females	7.80%	8.20%	12.00%	12.80%
Source: Sharon Lee and Barry Edmonston				
Hispanic Intermarriage and Identity: Trends and Implications for the Latino and US Populations, March 2005.				

The study of Hispanic intermarriage is important because it addresses potential racial challenges that confront Cubans. There has been fairly stable intermarriage rates among Hispanics overall, but first-generation immigrants intermarry less than second and third-generation native-born Cubans.⁵² Thus Cubans already on the path to assimilation have a greater propensity to intermarry. It is also true that intermarriage among first-generation Cubans fast tracks them to mainstream American adaptation. Cuban Americans see themselves predominately as “white” and so intermarriage between a Cuban and Anglo is not as controversial as black and white relations.

⁵¹ Rumbaut and Portes, *Ethnicities*, p. 95.

⁵² Lee and Edmonston, “Hispanic Intermarriage,” p. 12-38.

This section examined the rate of Cuban intermarriage, motivated by the assumption that greater levels of intermarriage show a movement toward assimilation. Not only does it demonstrate acceptance by the host culture, but by Cuban Americans as well. Further, the increase of Hispanic intermarriage and the tendency for their children to report as Hispanic may alter the Cuban identity for the future. The roots of *la Comunidad* has the potential to wither away if Cubans move from their Spanish-speaking ethnic enclave and intermarry with non-Hispanics.

Conclusion

Cuban-American assimilation has proven incomparable among other Hispanic subgroups. High Cuban-American assimilation is not merely due to higher economic conditions but to a unique history, unmatched by any other immigrant group. They were skilled, mobilized, and supported by the U.S. government, which allowed for a thriving enclave in Miami to develop. Clearly, Cuban Americans had benefits over other immigrants that propelled them to alter the financial, social, cultural and political makeup of Miami. Their historical reason for migration was embedded in an international conflict between capitalism and communism. Their successful adaptation was a byproduct of the availability of specialized resources sponsored by the U.S. government, reinforced by the presence of an ethnic enclave. In Miami, there are Cubans and there are Cubans; meaning each wave differed sharply between the resources available to them at the time of arrival.

The first and second-wave immigrants came with higher levels of education that gave them better opportunities to integrate into the labor market. The extensive enclave created by immigrants in Miami made a wide range of services and employment

opportunities available for third and fourth-wavers as well. Furthermore, 94 percent of Cubans speak English well or very well and Cubans have the highest rate of Hispanic intermarriage.

Cubans may live in enclaves that preserve bilingualism, their conservative religious views and strict foreign policy, but it does not mean that they are incapable of sharing the American Dream. In fact, they adapted to the American mainstream quicker than any other Hispanic immigrant group as is evident by their education, language and intermarriage trends. Their unique assimilation trend and mobilization contributed to greater political incorporation and influence in American politics that has been seen in the past thirty years. First-generation cohorts, partake in American organizations fundamental to civil society at disproportionately greater rates than do the archetypal fourth-wave laborers.

Thus, as assimilation rates for first and second-wave cohorts (and their children) are greater, so is the level of their political incorporation. My next chapter studies the degree to which this incorporation takes place in the political arena, and what were the predominant vehicles used by the Cuban-American community to become politically integrated. To a certain extent, the natural extension of this political integration is also studied, namely, what is the effect of political concentration of power. The concentration of power is viewed from both the Cuban-American perspective and that of the American government. The former is studied in order to see what choices have been made by Cuban Americans and what these choices signify, and the latter is analyzed in order to attempt to derive some recommendations for obtaining greater inclusion by Hispanics in general in the American political arena. The assumption underlying the analysis is that

with assimilation comes a higher degree of participation in the political process. This seemingly innocuous premise is tested and vetted in chapters two and three.

“Here in Miami, Cuba both lives and is reborn everyday,
just like the sun, in its exiled children.”
- Rene Silva, quoted in *The Exile*, 1993

CHAPTER TWO: Enclaves, Support and Political Incorporation

I have established that Cubans, more so than other Latinos and at a faster rate than non-Hispanic Whites, are well educated, maintain their native tongue as well as learn English, and demonstrate increasing tendencies to intermarry. This is only one component of being a political viable and important voting bloc. In addition to their assimilation, Cubans are more politically incorporated than other Hispanics. Scholars have yet to agree upon a firm definition of political incorporation but recognize the value of certain factors. The mechanisms of participation, the availability of civic institutions, citizenship, mass mobilization, influence over policy agenda, and representation through elected officials, are all staples of the undefined concept.⁵³

In this chapter, I will show that Cuban American political incorporation, measured by their unusually high rate of naturalization, voter registration and voter-turnout, is a byproduct of at least three factors: 1) the presence of a true ethnic enclave that facilitates in the economic adjustment process; 2) many Cubans left the island as political refugees as opposed to economic refugees and were already politically motivated and mobilized around a cause; and 3) they came to the United States with rapid access to residency, and thus eventual citizenship. To prove this via measurement, I

⁵³ Janelle Wong, “Thinking About Immigrant Political Incorporation,” *Maxwell School of Syracuse University Campbell Public Affairs Institute*, December 6, 2002, available at: <http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/moynihan/programs/iwgp/pdfs/Wong.pdf>

compile research on naturalization rates, voter turnout and the availability of PACS as well as the monetary amounts donated over time. My aim is to connect their higher rates of assimilation and incorporation to greater political influence.

Cubans have been stereotypically defined by their right-wing political preferences and staunch anti-Castro sentiments. While this may be valid for first-wave exiles, aging to fifty and above, it is not necessarily the case among all Cubans, especially second-generation American-born Cubans. Sixty percent of the country's 1.24 million Cubans reside in Miami-Dade and Broward counties.⁵⁴ Among the Cubans in the United States, 37 percent were born in the U.S. Among the foreign born, 30 percent entered before 1980, 12 percent entered between 1980 and 1990, and 21 percent entered after 1990.⁵⁵ A large amount of the foreign-born entered before 1980 and appeared to originally resist surrendering their citizenship because of motivations to return to their home island. As the U.S.-Cuban embargo stretched to over fifty years, however, Cuban refugees established homes, families, businesses and new lives in South Florida. The hope of returning to their vivacious island wearing white linen *guayaberas* with bongos beating in the background dwindled. This ethnic group is particularly interesting because of their unusually high political incorporation in comparison with other ethnic groups and their subsequent electoral behavior.

In this chapter, I will show a correlation between the increase in Cuban-American naturalization rates and their political influence. By the 1980s not only did Miami have several Cuban mayors but there were ten Cuban-American state legislatures and by the

⁵⁴ Guillermo Grenier, "Anti-Castro Political Ideology among Cuban-Americans in the Miami Area: Cohort and Generational Differences," *Latino Research*, Vol. 2 No 1, November 2004, p. 1.

⁵⁵ "Cubans in the United States," *Pew Hispanic Center*, August 25, 2006, p. 3.

1990s, with the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) at its side, significant policy changes were brewing in Washington, D.C.

Naturalization and Voter Turnout

The Latino population is too important and more recently, politically influential, for scholars alone to study. The role of Cuban intellectuals, public officials and entrepreneurs has grown in the last forty years, increasing the group's political clout. Much of this influence stemmed from their high rate of naturalization.

Nationally, over 40 percent of the Hispanic population was foreign-born in 1994, yet only 18 percent of those are naturalized.⁵⁶ While 15 percent of Mexicans are naturalized, 20 percent of Dominicans and El Salvadorians are also naturalized, Cubans are an anomaly – over 50 percent of foreign-born Cubans in the United States are naturalized, allowing them to flex more political might than other Latino subgroups. This high rate of naturalization is a reflection of the special benefits given to Cubans upon entrance to the U.S. They were granted almost immediate access to citizenship and because Cuban Americans reside in concentrated area, their political impact is magnified. This also makes Cuban Americans more attractive to election candidates looking for the most potential votes with the least effort. Other Hispanic subgroups require more than simple get-out-the-vote type campaigns but also movements to naturalize these populations.

Allow me to preface my argument by stating that I make the assumption that increased assimilation is a sufficient condition for increased political influence. For

⁵⁶ Susana Baker Gonzalez, "Su Voto Es Su Voz: Latino Political Empowerment and the Immigration Challenge," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 29, No. 3, (Sept., 1996), pp. 465-468.

example, scholars have argued that low voter turnout amongst the Latin population is present due to language barriers, low levels of education and attempts to exclude Latinos from society. California, Texas and Florida each respectively rank the highest for foreign-born populations yet Florida operates much differently. The immense Cuban enclaves made political incorporation possible and transformed Florida culturally, socially, and economically. Cubans are empowered in the U.S. and particularly South Florida to become citizens, to vote, and to donate to PACS. Furthermore, many Cuban immigrants may realize the civil liberties that were withheld in Cuba and set to utilize those newly found freedoms in the United States. The rate at which Cubans become citizens is important because it serves as a barometer of their willingness to integrate in the host country and measures their potential political power.

All U.S. government administrations since the Kennedy era made large efforts to distribute Cuban refugees across the country, but despite their efforts, Cubans largely settled in Miami, Florida.⁵⁷ In 1970, 40 percent of Cuban Americans lived in Miami, in 1980 that figure jumped to 52 percent and by 2000 the figure was well over 60 percent, constituting the largest voting bloc in Miami.⁵⁸ Research by Alejandro Portes indicates that Cuban naturalization exceeds that of all other immigrant groups except Asia and is one factor explaining their political influence. In the 1970s, Cuban naturalizations more than doubled that of the rest of Latin America and Western Europe. Furthermore, immigrants typically follow a seven year transition period before changing nationalities. Latin Americans, with the exception of Cubans, peak later than other immigrant groups.

⁵⁷ Jose Llanes, *Cuban Americans: Masters of Survival* (Cambridge: Abt Books, 1982), pp. 33, 37.

⁵⁸ Alejandro Portes and Rafael Mozo, "The Political Adaptation Process of Cubans and Other Ethnic Minorities in the United States: A Preliminary Analysis," *International Migration Review*, Vol.19, No. 1, Spring 1985, pp. 35-63.

Cubans are consistent with other cohorts because of their reason for departure, advanced educational background, and distance from country of origin.⁵⁹ While it is typical for those emigrating from countries closer in proximity to withhold their citizenship longer, Cubans emigrated for political purposes, offsetting the proximity factor.

The realization by Cubans of their meek chances of return and better opportunities in the United States, led to higher rates of naturalization. Couple this with the fact that during the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, they were practically assured en-masse acceptance. Further add to this the almost immediate granting of legal status of 137,500 refugees from the Mariel Boatlift influx in 1980, ironically, about a month after the 1980 Census took place. The émigrés had nowhere to go and nowhere to return to. This factor, I believe, speeds up naturalization. At the same time, naturalization is more difficult when immigrants have options and choices in life other than seeking refuge in a new country.

Portes found that nationalities sending more immigrants experienced higher rates of naturalization; those who emigrated for political purposes became citizens at a rate 13 percent higher than immigrants who came for economic reasons.⁶⁰ Educational background also contributes to Cubans' higher rate of naturalization since, for example, each additional percent of college graduates in 1970 rendered a 1.5 percent increase in naturalization ten years later.

South Florida has the greatest proportion of foreign-born in the state and by 1995 three out of five Miamians were naturalized, suggesting that many first and second-wave

⁵⁹ Portes and Mozo, "The Political Adaptation," pp. 35-63.

⁶⁰ Portes and Mozo, "The Political Adaptation," pp. 35-63.

Cuban immigrants became citizens.⁶¹ A study complete by Lisa Montoya, a professor at the University of Texas at Austin, found after considering several variables that only two were significant in mobilizing the Cuban sector: organizational participation and solving neighborhood problems. The established enclave in South Florida provided associational links and skills that actually promoted participation. Elderly Cubans had yet to become citizens in the 1990s for two reasons: their lack of proficiency in English and their age that limits group connectedness and thus reduces political involvement.⁶²

Table 7: Naturalization Rate Among Cuban Americans in Miami-Dade

Miami-Dade County	1980	1990	2000
Cuban Naturalization Rate	48 percent	47.2 percent	50+ percent

Naturalization varies by income, education, and age of entry among other factors. While important, is not as good of a gauge of adaptation to the American political system as registration and voter turnout in elections. Hispanics as a whole have been criticized for low naturalization, registration and voting rates, “Mexican naturalization was either the lowest or among the lowest of all immigrants groups.”⁶³ And a New York Times/CBS poll found that “in 2003, 23 percent of Hispanic immigrants were citizens, compared to 69 percent of non-Hispanic immigrants.”⁶⁴ One suggestion for their lack of naturalization

⁶¹ Leon Bouvier, William Leonard and John Martin, “Shaping Florida: The Effects of Immigration, 1970-2020,” *Center for Immigration Studies*, Center Report, December 1995.

⁶² Lisa Montoya, “Gender and Citizenship in Latino Political Participation,” *Latinos; Remaking America* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 410-427.

⁶³ Portes and Mozo, “The Political Adaptation,” p. 40.

⁶⁴ Samuel Huntington, *Who are We?* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), p. 238.

is that many live in the country illegally. Cuban Americans, however, do not fit this pattern.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Census Bureau does not disaggregate Spanish-origin registration and turnout rate based on national origin. To navigate around this setback, I follow an approach used by Alejandro Portes, who analyzes Miami-Dade County Hispanics. Census Bureau data reports that Latinos registration and voting is less than the non-Hispanic average. They do not, however, account for citizenship which is a significant factor in Miami considering the number of Latinos ineligible for citizenship. Portes thus adjusts the electoral data to include only U.S. citizens of voting age and finds that Latinos in Miami actually vote in greater proportion than do whites and blacks.⁶⁵ Recognizing that Cuban Americans represent 70 percent of Spanish-origin residents in Miami and over 90 percent of the naturalized Hispanics in Miami, it can be inferred that Cuban Americans in Miami demonstrate higher than the national average electoral participation.

Hispanics in Miami show more political involvement than Hispanics nationwide. Highlighting Spanish-origin electorate concentrates, the census data demonstrates that electoral participation in these regions is significantly higher than national averages. More so than other Latinos, Cubans share a strong preference with the Anglo community that activism can be used to accomplish specific goals. They are issue oriented and support candidates who profess strong anti-Castro sentiments. Keep in mind, however, that the children of exiled Cubans are American citizens by birth. I have belabored the point that the dynamics of an ethnic enclave made it easier for Cuban immigrants to

⁶⁵ Portes and Mozo, "The Political Adaptation," pp. 35-63.

become incorporated into the labor market and hence society. But what about their children?

Second-generation Cuban Americans differ from one another according to when their parents arrived on the island, creating distinct differences among their offspring. Portes suggests that Cuban parents used social resources to facilitate their agenda of ensuring upward social mobility for their children and avoiding downward assimilation. Take for example the establishment of bilingual private schools, taught mostly by first-generation immigrants that reinforced the values of their parents. This type of education allows anti-Castro sentiments to prosper and generates greater support for candidates who espouse harsh anticommunist beliefs.

What is of vast importance is that Hispanics are growing in numbers and reshaping American politics. It is therefore more important than ever to study how they engage in national politics and what issues mobilize the group.

Political Action Committees and Campaign Donations

While there are only three Cuban-American PACs known, between 1989 and 2000 they donated \$753,524, 58 percent of which went to Democrats and 42 percent to Republicans.⁶⁶ Second only behind the Jewish lobby, the Cuban-American PAC, the Cuban American Coalition Inc., and the Free Cuba PAC can boast the power to spread their influence between parties, guide large vote populations to support specific candidates and policies, and use their power to mobilize key constituents that are geographically concentrated in areas that impact the outcome of elections. The extent of

⁶⁶ "The Cuban Connection," *Open Secrets*, 23 Feb. 2007. available at: opensecrets.org/pubs/cubareport/summary.asp.

these powers will be detailed with an emphasis on the passage of the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act and the 1996 Helms-Burton Act.

Before exposing how Cuban Americans guide legislation it is important to reveal the extent to which Cubans are financially incorporated. Earlier in the chapter it was made clear that the majority of Cubans are naturalized, registered and mobilized, but to what degree are they involved in the American campaign finance maelstrom?

Cubans rank a very distant second in terms of campaign donations among all ethnic interest groups with \$754,000 compared to the donation leader pro-Israel PACs that donated \$16.8 million in the last decade.⁶⁷ While Cubans are obviously limited in financial power compared to pro-Israeli PACs, they have still created a large network of influence and power related to pressing pro-embargo issues in Congress. Much of the financial support comes from wealthy first and second-wave families as opposed to more recent immigrants who immigrated for economic purposes. Thus the focus of the PACs has been to weaken Castro's regime by strengthening the embargo.

The amount donated to the two main parties is significant because, although assumed to be a strong Republican voting bloc, the majority of donations were given to Democratic candidates. Interestingly, Cuban Americans vote in favor of Republican candidates more often than Democrats. This division can be attributed to the top two Cuban donors who contributed 26 percent of all Democratic donations. Nearly half of all money from Hispanics is generated by Cubans who represent 43 percent of the Hispanic population in Florida. Of these donors, in 1979-2000, 56-60 percent of all contributions were to Democratic candidates or parties. Their donations reached a peak in the 1990s

⁶⁷ "The Cuban Connection."

when Cuban-American foreign policy legislation was at its post-Bay of Pigs high mark.⁶⁸ This breakdown is highlighted in Figure 1.

Differences between congressional and presidential elections do alter the balance between which party generates the largest contributions. Among congressional candidates, 56 percent of contributions went to Democratic candidates (\$1.8 million) and 44 percent to Republicans (\$1.4 million). Conversely, in presidential elections, 69 percent was given to Republican candidates (\$436,866) and only 31 percent to Democratic candidates (\$196,800), derived from individuals rather than PACs.⁶⁹

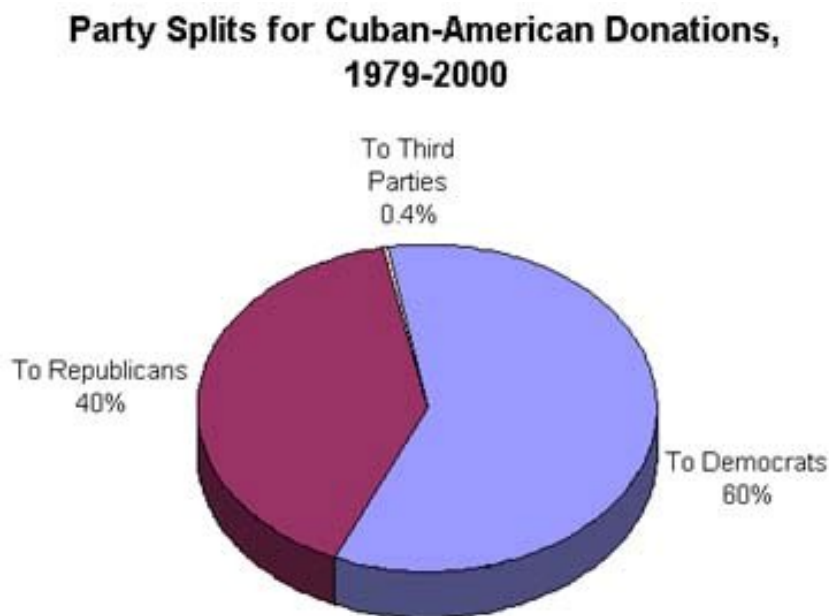


Figure 1: To Democrats \$4,317,148
To Republicans \$2,904,391
To Third Parties \$25,750

⁶⁸ "The Cuban Connection."

⁶⁹ "The Cuban Connection."

Hoping to exert more influence collectively rather than individually, the Free Cuba PAC generated approximately \$1.7 million between its inception and in 2000. The organization supported candidates nation-wide who were anti-Castro, pro-embargo and attempted to defeat anti-embargo candidates. The foundation became so influential that by 1997 the Center for Public Integrity named it the most effective lobby in America.⁷⁰ The more than 170 directors of the PAC each donated between \$1,000 and \$6,500 annually and about 55,000 members contributed \$100 per year.⁷¹

While they were not the only organization, few others could buy as much political influence as CANF between 1989 and 2000. Thus 99 percent of Cuban-American contributions went to the Free Cuba PAC.⁷² After the death of the infamous CANF leader, Jorge Mas Canosa, and the succession of his son with vastly different ideas, the Foundation's conservative supporters disappeared. In 2001 a faction split off and formed the Cuba Liberty Council, maintaining ties to the Bush family and the original conservative base. CANF still exists and remains anti-Castro but has changed its strategy in dealing with Cuban foreign policy. Instead, the foundation began to support new immigrant concerns.

By 2004 another PAC out shadowed the organization and collected over \$500,000 in one year, the U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC. This organization also targeted pro-embargo candidates and funded 75 congressional candidates successfully. Their influence generated foreign policy changes such as the 2005 decision to reverse the congressional move to permit freedom of travel. The organization was issue oriented and thus non

⁷⁰ *The Miami Herald*, 23 March 2002.

⁷¹ Juan Tamayo, "CANF Affirms Power Despite Struggles," *The Miami Herald*, 28 March 2002.

⁷² Susan Eckstein, "Cuban Émigrés and the American Dream," *Political Science and Politics*, Issue: June 2006. Vol. 4/ No. 2, pp. 300-301.

partisan, supporting all those who favored tightening the embargo, including more Democrats than Republicans. It is important to note that the largest political donors contributed directly to candidates and political parties as opposed to funding their agendas indirectly through PACS, building their personal capital (one donor received an ambassadorship).⁷³

While the different waves of immigrants are divided based on date of arrival, economic class, and U.S. versus foreign born, the great majority agree on their sentiments toward Castro. The political positions taken by the Free Cuba PAC and the U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC are explainable by exposing the donors. First and second-waves of Cuban immigrants came from the upper echelon of Cuban societies; they were given a wealth of resources provided by Washington to ease their integration into American society. Thus, they were given aid, training, and job placement so that the government could use them in their Cold War battles. The more recent arrivals were not offered the same benefits and thus struggled to enter a saturated market. Furthermore, first and second-wave Cubans favor more harsh policies toward Cuba, while more recent immigrants moved to the U.S. for economic reasons and are concerned with helping family they may have left behind. It was the wealthy upper and middle-class Cubans that donated to PACs, thus guiding the tough pro-embargo preferences.

Those who dominate the political field in South Florida are émigrés of the first and second-waves or children of this cohort. Nationally only 26 percent of fourth-wave immigrants were naturalized compared to 92 percent of first-wave immigrants.⁷⁴ This data follows a pattern more generally. Fourth-wave immigrants are less educated and

⁷³ "The Cuban Connection."

⁷⁴ Susan Eckstein, "Cuban Émigrés and the American Dream," *Political Science and Politics*, Issue: June 2006. Vol. 4/ No. 2, p. 303.

poorer than the older immigrants, representing a class that is typically disenfranchised and show low voter-participation rates. Political incorporation locally is not as critical for these immigrants because of their continual ties to Cuba, and their politically alienated feelings, which divides them from first-wave immigrants. They share a dislike for the Castro regime but are conflicted with foreign policy ideas because of their ties to family. Thus the first wave's economic and hence political hegemony results in the skewed views and policies for Cubans nationwide.

In fact, research conducted by Guillermo Grenier and Florida International University concluded that the Cuban community is not as monolithically conservative as they appear.⁷⁵ While most are anti-Castro, the degree to which they are varies across cohorts. First-wave immigrants consider the embargo as one of the most important policies to deprive the island of U.S. dollars, while recent immigrants have found allies in Congress attempting to loosen the embargo, since it contributes to the poor economic condition of the country and ultimately hurts the people as opposed to Castro.

Influence on Foreign Policy

A few acts in the 1990s demonstrate the powerful political influence of Cuban PACs despite the fact that Cuban Americans only represent 1 percent of the entire U.S. population. Politicians obviously favor those who support them financially and at the voting booths. The Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act of 1996 were passed due to the large financial influence of CANF. Behind these two pieces of

⁷⁵ Guillermo Grenier, "Anti-Castro Political Ideology Among Cuban-Americans in the Miami Area: Cohort and Generational Differences," *Latino Research*. Vol. 2, No. 1, November 2004, p. 1.

legislation there was an emotional cohesion among supporters and a single-issue focus; they wanted to secure foreign policy to weaken the Castro regime via further sanctions.

Historically, the U.S./Cuba embargo was enacted for political reasons. Castro nationalized American properties, he aligned with the Soviet Union, and general fears of the spread of communism guided support for the embargo. Immediately, other Latin American countries followed suit and enacted their own sanctions against Cuba. By 1975, however, most countries began to revisit their sanctions and reestablish trade with the country.⁷⁶ In the case of the Cuban Democracy Act, Cubans Americans financially supported the author of the act, Robert Torricelli (D-NJ), who raised \$399,000 from Florida Cubans. Clearly aware of the voting power of Cuban Americans (Union City, New Jersey has the second largest population of Cubans in the country) his legislative initiatives are evidence of this understanding. Similarly, Bob Graham (D-FL) the co-sponsor of the act, received \$139,000 in his Senate campaigns and is the sixth largest recipient of Cuban-American contributions.⁷⁷ The act sought to “promote a peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba through the application of appropriate pressures on the Cuban Government and support for the Cuban people.”⁷⁸ Thus, the act forbade U.S. companies from doing business in Cuba, outlawed family remittances to Cuba and banned citizens from traveling to the country.

Although President Bush 41 was originally opposed to the bill, presidential candidate Bill Clinton’s visit to Little Havana to voice support for the bill quickly changed the president’s mind. Instead, President Bush signed the bill after learning of

⁷⁶ Paul Woodruff, “Ethnic Interest Group Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Cuba,” available at: <http://faculty.mckendree.edu/scholars/winter2005/woodruff.htm>

⁷⁷ “The Cuban Connection”

⁷⁸ “The Cuban Connection”

Jorge Mas Canosa's (President of CANF) meetings with Clinton and their preparation to make a deal.⁷⁹

Cuban influence in national politics can be seen again a few years later with the Helms-Burton Act, when Cuban Americans fought head to head with business interests. After two Brothers-to-the-Rescue aircrafts were shot down by the Cuban military, Cuban Americans were again mobilized around tightening restrictions against Cuba. This Act caught international attention as the bill allowed U.S. citizens to sue foreign investors developing and using American property seized by Castro's government. It also mandated that investors be denied entry visas to the U.S. The international community became embroiled in a debate as to whether the Act violated their sovereignty and trading rights, as well as GATT and WTO rules.

The controversial components of the bill are typically referred to as Title III. Despite objections from businesses and the international community, this bill represents an enormous feat for CANF, which lobbied and pressured Washington into passing the bill.⁸⁰ Since its inception Presidents Clinton and Bush 43 have suspended Title III annually to appease the international community. Interestingly, the authors of the bill, while staunch conservatives, received no monetary support from Cuban Americans until after 1990. Burton received \$61,000 and Helms \$86,000.⁸¹ Furthermore, since 1996, after the bill's passage, neither congressman has received campaign contributions from Cuban PACs.

The legislation is evidence of CANF's bipartisan support. It was written by two Republicans, supported by Democrats and Republicans alike, and signed by a Democratic

⁷⁹ "The Cuban Connection."

⁸⁰ "The Cuban Connection."

⁸¹ "The Cuban Connection."

president, all of them were supported financially by the Cuban-American community.

The top recipients of Cuban American funds are Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL, \$289,000), Robert Menendez (D-NJ, \$240,000) and Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL, \$204,000).

Conclusion

Cuban-American political involvement thus shows a positive trend with increases in naturalization, voter turnout and the political activity of PACS. This activism is due in part to their established enclave. As Cuban refugees were given immediate access to resident benefits and citizenship they were drawn into the political process. Other Hispanic immigrants are not granted such benefits and are thus ostracized from the process from the onset. More recent Cuban immigrants in Miami look to the earlier waves as examples of civic leadership and are more inclined to participate. Many immigrant communities feel disenfranchised from the politics. However, as Cuban

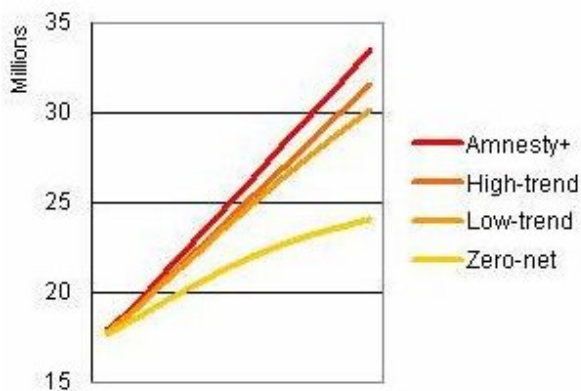
Democracy Act and Helms-Burton Act

demonstrated, Cubans have influence over areas of their concern, mainly foreign policy directed at Cuba.

Furthermore, as an entire community becomes politically active, as Cuban American votes increase, and as Cuban Americans become elected representatives, their activism and voices become larger. The Cuban community in

Figure 2: From Federation for American Immigration and Reform

**Florida Population Projection
2005- 2050**



the last thirty years has proven to be a viable voting bloc. Presidential and congressional candidates unfamiliar with the Cuban Diaspora must consider and increasingly study their voting behavior, especially taking into account the intense competition for Florida in the past few elections. This should include a concern for all Hispanics as well as they become more assimilated and eventually political enfranchised.

Depending on immigration policies, the adoption of a guest workers program and the increase in legal immigration versus policies for immigration stability, the Federation for American Immigration Reform estimated that by 2050 the population of Florida will range between 24 and over 33 million people, as shown in Figure 2. Assuming no change in policy, the population will increase from 17 million to approximately 31.5 million, a 76 percent increase.⁸² In South Florida, a greater proportion of new residents will be of Hispanic origin. This is incredibly significant for candidates considering running for political office. If the population of Florida continues to follow the trend from 1990-2000, the U.S. Census Bureau shows a 36 percent increase in 2025, representing the fourth fastest rate in the country.

As the Hispanic community grows, perhaps the Cubans can serve as role models for other Latinos, demonstrating the importance civic participation. Cuban-American incorporation is not due merely to higher economic conditions but to a unique history, unparalleled by any other immigrant group. They were skilled, mobilized and developed a community in Miami that fostered and facilitated a thriving enclave of successful Cubans. Their political roots in their home country prompted a journey of political incorporation in the U.S., and the support from the U.S. government encouraged

⁸² Florida: Census Bureau Data. *Federation for American Immigration and Reform*, available at: http://www.fairus.org/site/PageServer?pagename=research_researchd184

participation in the American system. Cubans are citizens, they are registered and they vote at higher rates than any other Hispanic group and any other voting bloc in Miami. The extent of Cuban-American's political influence will be discussed further in the following chapter, including a comparison to other Hispanic groups, but it is imperative to note that Cuban political incorporation is unmatched among other Hispanic immigrants and greater due to high assimilation rates.

“The vote is a trust more delicate than any other,
for it involves not just the interests of the voter,
but his life, honor and future as well.”
- Jose Marti

CHAPTER THREE: Anomaly or Pioneers?

In his recent book, *Who Are We?*, Samuel Huntington, a noted political scientist who teaches at Harvard, claims that increased Hispanic immigration to the United States is eroding traditional American values.⁸³ He assumes --questionably-- that the maintenance of immigrants' cultural values inhibits their ability to share the American Dream. As demonstrated in previous chapters, Cubans are assimilating and taking ownership of the American Dream that many aim to protect. Cuban Americans may live in enclaves of Spanish-speaking residents and generally maintain their Catholic beliefs, but they also contribute enormously to the financial, social, cultural, and more importantly for the argument in this thesis, political aspects of society. As was shown in the last chapter, Cuban Americans, unlike other Hispanic groups, became a part of the political process through registering in large numbers, high turnout in elections, influencing foreign policy and mobilizing fellow Latinos in Miami. The question remains, can their experience be shared by other Hispanic immigrant groups, or are Cubans unique?

⁸³Samuel Huntington, *Who Are We?* (New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2004), p. 221.

By 2000, Cuban-American owned businesses in the U.S. generated more revenue than the entire GDP of the Cuban island.⁸⁴ Cuban Americans not only do well economically but have integrated themselves into core organizations Americans consider fundamental to democracy, such as Municipios de Cuba en el Exilio, The Liga Contra el Cancer, Kiwanis Clubs, Cuban American Chambers of Commerce, and Rotary International. Not only are their electoral participation rates high, but Cuban Americans have begun to gain high positions in politics. Nationally, 53 percent of Cuban Americans have U.S. citizenship compared to 29 percent of Mexican Latinos.⁸⁵ Of the 53 percent of Cubans who are naturalized citizens, a survey conducted by Florida International University in 2004 found that 90 percent are registered voters.⁸⁶

Aside from the electorate, Cuban Americans dominate the political realm in Miami-Dade County, holding more than one third of the top appointed positions. This trend began in the 1980s, and by 2004 there were three Cuban-American congressmen and one U.S. senator. Reagan was the first president to capitalize the Cuban vote when he supported the formation of the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) in 1981. Gaining political influence and the ability to reach large masses of Cubans, the organization formed a lobby organization, the Cuban American Foundation, and a PAC, the Free Cuba PAC.

If the 2000 election was valuable at all, it demonstrated the importance of Florida politics and how critical the Cuban-American vote is in presidential elections. President Bush 43 was overwhelmingly supported by Cuban Americans, 85 percent of whom voted

⁸⁴ Susan Eckstein, "Cuban Émigrés and the American Dream," *Political Science and Politics*, June 2006, Vol. 4/ No. 2, p. 297.

⁸⁵ Eckstein, "Cuban Emigres," p. 299.

⁸⁶ Eckstein, "Cuban Emigres," p. 299.

for him, while the media criticized Al Gore for his weak effort to court Hispanics in South Florida. Whether it was a reward for their support, a move to gain more Cuban support in future elections, or a genuine effort to include Cuban Americans in the political arena, thus furthering their assimilation into American politics and culture, Bush appointed several Cuban Americans to high-ranking positions in his administration, including the National Security Council, State Department and Department of Housing and Urban Development. Can other Hispanics follow suit?

This chapter will compare the Cuban-American experience with that of two other Hispanic groups, Mexican Americans and Nicaraguan Americans. I chose Mexicans because, as the largest Hispanic ethnic group, they suffer from political disorganization, infighting and cause much of the current immigration debates. I discuss whether this group has the potential to experience social advancement and political inclusion or whether they will be an ostracized racial minority group. The Nicaraguan case was chosen because, like the Cuban Americans, they experienced a communist-led revolution that sent thousands of exiles to the U.S. By comparing Nicaraguans, whose immigration conditions were similar to Cuban Americans, I can examine the possibility of convergence among Hispanic groups. If the Nicaraguan experience paralleled that of Cuban Americans, then perhaps Cubans are not an anomaly after all. The conclusion summarizes the significant findings and explains the effects of immigrant assimilation on political incorporation.

Case Study: Cubans and Mexican Americans

Immigrants are undergoing a segmented assimilation process that differs for each ethnic group. While the Cuban Diaspora can not be matched exactly, some Hispanic subgroups will experience fast integration into the American mainstream by virtue of their environment -- if they migrate to areas of the U.S. with lower populations of Hispanics and little network support, assimilation will be more rapid. If, however, they move to urban centers with high concentrations of Hispanics in already established enclaves, assimilation will take a different form. German immigrants, for instance, were able to sustain their culture in the Midwest pre-WWI, while Italians in the northeast experienced a two-generation transition to becoming Americanized.⁸⁷

As Alejandro Portes and Ruben Rumbaut note, the rate of assimilation depends on four factors: 1) the history of the immigrant group including its human capital and reason for departure; 2) the cultural and economic barriers confronted by immigrants in the host country; 3) the family and community resources available upon arrival; and 4) the differential pace of acculturation based on language skills.⁸⁸

The “Golden Enclave” or first-wave Cuban immigrants were the original pioneers. They created social capital or a springboard, if you will, for their offspring and the following waves of Cubans, preventing the possibility of downward assimilation. The establishment of a network of private schools allowed for American-born Cuban children

⁸⁷ Richard Alba, “Language Assimilation Today: Bilingualism Persists More than in the Past, But English Still Dominates,” *Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research*, University of Albany, December 2004.

⁸⁸ Ruben Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes, *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America* (Los Angeles: University of California Press 2001), pp. 301-315.

to maintain their bilingualism, protecting them against outside discrimination and reinforcing the values of their parents.⁸⁹

Compare the Cuban experience to the largest Hispanic immigrant group in the nation, Mexicans, and a different conclusion can be drawn. Mexicans have greater difficulties assimilating because of three reasons: 1) they take up residence near the Mexican border; 2) many immigrants continue a back and forth migration pattern; and 3) their immigrant status and language barriers ensure that a large number of them do not integrate economically and professionally, suggesting that they work in marginal jobs in the agricultural sector and are unable to assimilate to mainstream America. In *Who Are We?*, Huntington based his projection of “a culturally bifurcated Anglo-Hispanic society with two national languages” on the experiences of Mexican Americans.⁹⁰

European immigrants were dispersed throughout the country and, while the U.S. tried to do so with Cubans, Hispanics have remained largely in concentrated enclaves: Cubans in Miami, Mexicans in Southern California and Texas, and Dominicans and Puerto Ricans in New York. Furthermore, the Hispanic fertility rates (3.0) are higher than those of blacks (2.1) and non-Hispanic Whites (1.8).⁹¹ Cuban fertility rates are closer to non-Hispanics whites than Hispanics. As concluded earlier, assimilation is slowed when immigrants live in highly concentrated enclaves as Mexicans do. The U.S., however, has not dealt with the massive immigration streams it is now experiencing since European immigration in 1880-1920.

⁸⁹ Lisandro, Perez, “Growing Up Cuban in Miami,” in Ruben Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes, *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 96-108.

⁹⁰ Samuel Huntington, *Who Are We?* (New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2004), pp. 221-256.

⁹¹ Huntington, *Who Are We?*, pp. 221-256

The problem the U.S. now faces with Hispanic immigration is threefold. First, migration is contagious -- “a migration flow, once begun, induces its own flow.”⁹² Migration is easier for subsequent groups because friends and family are informed about the process, are exposed to more resources and often have more job opportunities in the host country. Second, it is politically difficult to cease continuous flows of migration after the immigrant group has organized politically. For example, Cuban Americans quickly became politically incorporated by naturalizing, registering to vote and creating PACs. Doing so allowed them to mobilize and lobby in Washington to achieve specific foreign policy goals. And third, enclaves make it harder for immigrant groups to assimilate because, within them, group members do not need to learn the host language to compete for jobs or survive. Immigrants create a network of support that allows them to maintain cultural pride, much as Mexican Americans currently experience.

Unlike previous Europeans immigrants, Mexican Americans, like Cuban Americans, take pride in maintaining their Spanish language as well as learning English. “There appears to be a cultural difference among Asian and Hispanic parents with respect to having their children maintain their native language.”⁹³ Mexican-American education levels, however, pale in comparison with those of Cuban Americans. Forty-one percent of fourth-generation Mexican Americans still lack a high school degree and the “proportion of Hispanic high-school graduates who had ever enrolled in college was much lower in 1990 than in 1973.”⁹⁴ Mexican Americans are thus an example of downward assimilation, in which subsequent generations have lower education, income

⁹² Myron Weiner, *The Global Migration Crisis: Challenge to States and Human Rights* (New York: Harper Collins, 2005).

⁹³ Peter Skerry, “*Mexican Americans: The Ambivalent Minority*” (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 286, 289.

⁹⁴ Huntington, *Who Are We?*, pp. 221-256.

and social levels than their parents. This is an extreme example of the poverty trap experienced by all new immigrants. How quickly they can escape this trap historically varies between immigrants across history.

Mexican Americans (66.9 percent) are also disproportionately more likely to work in low socioeconomic jobs such as busboys and laborers than Cubans (25.8 percent of those in public school and 7.7 percent of those in private school) and other Hispanic immigrants.⁹⁵ Can they experience economic upward mobility as Cuban Americans have? Scholars have noted that immigrant groups experiencing economic success in the U.S. have similar successes in their birth country. Few Mexican-Americans immigrants to the U.S., however, were economically successful in their home country. Furthermore, fourth-generation Mexican Americans have made little improvements over second-generation Mexicans. Thus their stagnancy in education and social status leads one to believe that they will not experience the same assimilation pattern as Cuban Americans and will remain in low socioeconomic status. This is not to say that no Mexican American will achieve upward mobility and greater educational and social status; as a group, however, they may not.

Be reminded that Mexican naturalization rates, 29 percent, were also the lowest among all immigrant groups. While identity was not a variable calculated in previous chapters, due mainly to the difficulty in measuring such an arbitrary element, Huntington discusses the extent to which Mexican Americans identify with the United States. Cuban Americans overwhelmingly describe themselves as “White” and “American,” whereas

⁹⁵ Patricia Fernandez Kelly and Richard Schauffler, “Divided Fates: Immigrant Children and the New Assimilation,” in Alejandro Portes, *The New Second Generation* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1996), p. 48.

Mexicans primarily identify as “Mexican.”⁹⁶ Moreover, he noted that over a three-generation model, Mexicans are less likely to identify with core American values than foreign-born and less likely to agree that everyone should learn English! This is an incredible discovery. Despite living in the U.S., Mexicans, unlike Cuban Americans, have much more difficulty in adopting the American Dream as their own, especially as some experience downward assimilation. Subsequent Mexican-American generations reject American culture and society that has often ignored them and instead embrace an immigrant mentality that is difficult to overcome.

This rejection of American values may relate to a dark history when the U.S. conquered parts of Mexico, dating back to the secession of territories later known as Texas, and the acquisition of California, New Mexico, and Arizona. There may also be a color-line preventing their assimilation. Mexicans are of Indian origin and are born with a darker skin color, making them visually different from Anglos. First and second-wave Cubans, on the other hand, are light skinned and can blend much easier with Americans.

The highly concentrated Cuban population in Miami transformed the once retiree-filled city into a bustling economic center. And these Cubans are different from Mexicans because Cubans had the skill sets to develop an enclave in which they could thrive by dominating the political realm, banking, economics, entertainment, etc. They Americanized easily because they were educated, wealthy, spoke both English and Spanish, and intermarried with non-Hispanic Whites. Mexicans in the southwest, on the other hand, were of lower socioeconomic status and created a more traditional immigrant community. Their children are likely to continue similar lifestyles and some will experience downward assimilation. Cuba is a small island and Cuban exiles were united

⁹⁶ Huntington, *Who Are We?*, p. 242.

around foreign policy concerns, while Mexicans have differing opinions about Mexican politics and come from vastly different areas of their more massive country.

Moreover, in Miami, Spanish speakers occupy a range of employment levels, from high ranking bank presidents, politicians and restaurant owners to laborers and busboys. The point is that Cubans have support coming from both grassroots levels and from top influential positions. They have built a support network and community that sustains *la Cubanidad*. In areas of the southwest, however, Mexicans have lived a different experience. They overwhelmingly work in the agricultural sector and their assimilation has been slower by comparison. Thus Cubans are an anomaly compared to Mexicans.

Mexicans are the largest Hispanic group in the United States, representing 66.9 percent of all Hispanics, and have found strength in numbers – they united over a cultural clash they experienced with Americans and have embraced their ancestry.⁹⁷ This is a result of failed assimilation and an effort by lower classes to connect around a common cause. This experience is somewhat similar to that of some American blacks, who willingly choose not to speak English correctly or to integrate into a society in a perceived denigrating way, encouraging such things as, *Ebonics*. Similar problems parallel the Mexican and black experience, such as high teenage pregnancy rates, illiteracy, under-absorption into the labor market, and high dropout rates from high school.

Until Mexicans are brought into the American culture, they will continue to shout “Viva la Raza” and encourage ethnic pride. They were not showered with gifts like the

⁹⁷ “The Hispanic Population in the United States: March 2002,” *U.S. Census Bureau*, available at: <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/p20-545.pdf>.

Cubans but faced hostile American cities that did not want to see their numbers grow. With threats of building a wall between our two countries, increasing border patrol, punishing companies that hire illegal immigrants, and conversations centering around how to reduce their biggest strength (their numbers), Mexicans are not likely to embrace the American culture and become an important electorate. Their low naturalization rates combined with low socioeconomic characteristics limit the group's political influence. Similar to Anglos, Latino "voting is more common among the educationally and economically advantaged."⁹⁸ Without the ability to assimilate, to become productive members of American society, ethnic groups turn inwardly and begin to develop different sets of values. These values often time preclude successive generations from assimilating. The decision to look inwardly for support and the concomitant development of opposing value systems often damages their economic, educational and societal absorption rates, thus causing undue harm and unneeded human suffering. This pattern would have to change for Mexican Americans to become an influential electorate.

Case Study: Cubans and Nicaraguan Americans

The only other country in Latin American to have experienced a communist revolution that subsequently caused an influx of immigrants to the U.S. was Nicaragua in the late 1970s early 1980s. (The other revolutionary experiences, in Chile and Guatemala, never evolved to the point of causing a Diaspora to the U.S. or other adjacent countries.) Ruled by the Sandinista government, many upper-class and educated Nicaraguans fled their homes as the government began to extend its influence over the national economy,

⁹⁸ Louis Desipio and Rodolfo de la Garza, "Forever Seen as New," in Marcelo Suarez-Orozco and Mariela Paez, *Latinos: Remaking America* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), p. 407.

health and education, in addition to nationalizing private property and befriending the Soviet bloc (as Cuba had done a decade earlier). When domestic tensions boiled to the point of civil-war, many refugees fled political persecution by immigrating to neighboring countries and the U.S., expecting to obtain the same benefits Cubans received.⁹⁹ By 1980, about 70,000 Nicaraguans lived in Miami.¹⁰⁰ By 2000, 280,000 Nicaraguans live in the U.S.¹⁰¹

Because of their common reason for departure, many similarities existed between Cuban and Nicaraguan exiles. Both groups left a country that had had an American-backed dictator who was deposed in a revolution. They also came in distinct waves. The first wave shared a dislike for the new government in Nicaragua as their jobs and lives were threatened by the transition. In the 1980s, the second wave brought white-collar professionals to Miami. And the last wave in 1989 consisted of blue-collar workers like the Cubans who came in the Mariel boatlift.¹⁰²

Emigrants tend to be disproportionately of working age, are more likely to have a secondary or university-level education, and are more likely to have been employed in a white-collar occupation before leaving Managua. In addition, migration tended to come from higher income households.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Patricia Fernandez-Kelly and Sara Curran, "Nicaraguans: Voices Lost, Voices Found," in Ruben Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes, *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), p. 127.

¹⁰⁰ Anthony Maingot, "Immigration from the Caribbean," *Miami Now!* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), p. 35.

¹⁰¹ Fernandez-Kelly and Curran, "Nicaraguans: Voices Lost, Voices Found," p. 127.

¹⁰² Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick, *City on the Edge: The Transformation of Miami* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 151-155.

¹⁰³ Sergio Diaz-Briquets and Jorge Perez-Lopez, "Refugee Remittances: Conceptual Issues and the Cuban and Nicaraguan Experiences," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 31, No. 2. (Summer, 1997), pp. 411-437.

Furthermore, at the time of Nicaraguan emigration, the U.S. was engaged in a practice of supporting all non-communist regimes in Latin America, and upon entrance to the U.S., Nicaraguans were given some benefits to adjust to American living. About 10 percent of Nicaraguan applicants were granted political asylum and offered refugee assistance, resettlement aid, welfare or government loans. This figure is significantly lower than the percent of Cubans who received support (almost 100 percent) but higher than the support levels for other Central Americans and Haitians (about 3 percent).¹⁰⁴ Nicaraguans that were not granted asylum were given temporary work permits.

Initially, like most immigrants, Nicaraguans experienced downward mobility and, in the 1980s, it was estimated that 70 percent worked below their skill level.¹⁰⁵ While it may not be comparable to the amount received by Cubans, they nonetheless received assistance in their transition to living and working in the United States.

Some Nicaraguan-American exiles were treated well as they aided in the efforts against the Sandinista regime. The U.S. government secretly funded anti-Sandinista guerillas or “Contras” and used Nicaraguan exiles living in Miami to aide the Marines, CIA, and the National Security Council in bringing down the communist-inspired regime.¹⁰⁶

Upon their arrival in Miami, political ideology connected the new immigrants with the Cuban enclave and eased their merging with established Hispanics. The U.S. government, however, did not welcome them as they had the Cubans. Nicaraguans were considered illegal and not granted permanent residence, nor was their journey from

¹⁰⁴ Portes and Stepick, *City on the Edge*, p. 157.

¹⁰⁵ Christopher Marquis, “Nicaraguan Exile Community Forges New Life in South Florida,” *Miami Herald*, 16 July 1989: 1A.

¹⁰⁶ Portes and Stepick, *City on the Edge*, p. 156.

Managua to Miami paid for by the U.S. government, as it was for Cubans. Instead they came on tourist visas or illegally entered the U.S. and only subsequently obtained permanent residence. Miami residents were not as receptive to Latin American immigration after the Mariel boatlift in the early 1980s. Miamians' original attitude of generosity for communist exiles hardened and Nicaraguans were treated as illegals as opposed to exiles.¹⁰⁷

The third wave of Nicaraguans closely paralleled the Mariel exile experience. Nicaraguan workers occupied the poorer regions of Little Havana in Miami, where Mariel Cubans had previously lived. The Miami labor market had already been saturated by Cubans. Thus, Nicaraguans rented apartments in Little Havana and dodged threats of deportation. Their children's assimilation process was hindered as Nicaraguans had little resources available. However, their in common anti-communist roots bonded Nicaraguans with Cubans, and many Nicaraguans found employment in Cuban shops, markets, labor industries and factories over other Central American and Haitian immigrants. They also helped economically well-off Cubans fill the labor shortage that Miami experienced in the mid-1980s.¹⁰⁸

The Cubans were treated differently in some important respects. They were given the legal right to maintain residence in the U.S.¹⁰⁹ Nicaraguans, however, were encouraged to return to fight the Sandinistas. President Reagan among others was afraid there "could be a tidal wave of refugees – and this time they'll be feet people and not boat

¹⁰⁷ Fernandez-Kelly and Curran, "Nicaraguans: Voices Lost, Voices Found," p. 127.

¹⁰⁸ Guillermo Grenier, "The Cuban-American Labor Movement in Dade County," in *Miami Now!*, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press 1992), pp. 133-159.

¹⁰⁹ Alex Stepick and Carol Dutton Stepick, "Power and Identity: Miami Cubans," in Marcelo Suarez-Orozco and Mariela Paez, *Latinos: Remaking America* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 76-77.

people – swarming into our country seeking a safe haven from Communist repression.”¹¹⁰

The U.S. government wanted them to battle from Honduras rather than the coffee shops in Little Havana, as was the case with Cubans who arrived many years before.

Interestingly, it was the Cubans that came to the Nicaraguan’s rescue when the U.S. government refused to grant residency to fleeing Nicaraguans. Split between Anglo Americans in Miami who argued for greater control of the borders and sympathetic Latin groups, the U.S. government heard from a variety of competing interests. CANF expressed very vocal support for the Nicaraguan exodus in Washington, Cuban-American businesses fundraised to support the Contra rebels, and after the INS granted citizenship to over 9,000 Cuban immigrants who subsequently registered Republican in 1984 before the presidential election, Washington turned the tide. They stopped deporting illegal Nicaraguans, and Attorney General Meese said: “No Nicaraguan who has a well-founded fear of persecution will be deported.”¹¹¹ The approval rate for asylum requests subsequently increased from 10 percent to 50 percent.¹¹²

Between 1979 and 1988 several Nicaraguans fled the communist regime to Texas and Miami through Guatemala and Mexico. By the summer of 1988, it was estimated that 300 such refugees were entering Miami-Dade County per week.¹¹³ For ten years, immigrants had entered the U.S. without much notice from the INS, partially because of the U.S. support of the contras in Nicaragua and partially because of Cuban lobbyists in their favor. As the civil-war came to a close in the late 1980s, the INS reported larger numbers of Nicaraguans entering through Texas. The Nicaraguan exodus posed a

¹¹⁰ Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York: Harper Collins, 2002), p. 381.

¹¹¹ “At Last, Work Permits,” Editorial, *Miami Herald*, 10 July 1987: 24A.

¹¹² R.A. Zaldivar, “Vague Laws Spurs Refugee Movements,” *Miami Herald*, 15 January 1989.

¹¹³ Portes and Stepick, *City on the Edge*, p. 150.

problem for the federal government's bankroll and strained the cost of public services. Unwilling to grant thousands of unskilled people special benefits as the Cubans had received, many were granted asylum but were denied benefits. As the immediate costs in health and education were felt by Miami residents, Anglo Florida politicians urged the federal government to regain control of its borders and stop supporting refugees illegally emigrating to the U.S.

The Cuban-American community organized drives and rallies, and used its political influence to change policy toward their fellow anti-communists. When the federal government rejected their arrival, tried to deport them and refused special benefits, Nicaraguan refugees were still granted access to local community resources. Yet, Nicaraguans did not receive an essential benefit to upward mobility – access to education. They were denied student loans and federal aid to attend state universities, undermining their assimilation into American society.

Some families were able to obtain legal residence in the U.S., which caused an assimilation divide between the legal and illegal Nicaraguans.¹¹⁴ Like many immigrants, Nicaraguans faced the challenge of prospering financially and achieving acceptance in the host society. Their illegal status, combined with their English-speaking limitations, exaggerated their feelings as outsiders. Professionals worked below their skill level, and fearful of deportation, remained in the shadows. They received very little support from federal institutions and thus remained vulnerable.

Cubans were received positively by the Miami residents and were granted benefits by the U.S. government that eased their transition and allowed Cubans to develop a moral community, *la Cubanidad*. The opposite occurred for Nicaraguan

¹¹⁴ Fernandez-Kelly and Curran, "Nicaraguans: Voices Lost, Voices Found," p. 129.

political exiles. They could not consolidate forces and thrive in a city that rejected their arrival. Cubans were granted immediate resident access, given allowances for education and the opportunity to advance socioeconomically. Educational attainment was not a practical goal when Nicaraguan illegal status prevented them from attending college. Eventually the rejection from American society led Nicaraguan immigrants and their children to identify as Nicaraguan minorities, which developed into a negative connotation.¹¹⁵ Cuban Americans, on the other hand, tend to identify as American and had an easier time transitioning into American society.

As the Contra war came to a close in the late 1980s, the U.S. no longer needed support and thus began to encourage Miami Nicaraguans to return to their native country to experience a free election. The Cubans could not leave Miami – aside from establishing roots in the city, Cuba was still under Castro's rule. Nicaraguans have smaller emigrant communities in the U.S. than do their Central American neighbors; but their escape was rooted in political turmoil while others came for economic reasons (as Mexicans do). It seemed as though the Nicaraguan experience would closely parallel the Cuban one, especially considering their business success in Miami in the late 1980s, but the time period was too compressed. The upper-class immigrants did not have the opportunity to settle and assimilate before the subsequent waves of Nicaraguans came in search of similar jobs. As opposed to relying on previous waves of Nicaraguan immigrants, they were dependent on the U.S. government and Cuban community.

Furthermore, the federal government did not embrace their arrival as they had done for Cuban refugees, making it more difficult for Nicaraguans to establish their roots.

¹¹⁵ Fernandez-Kelly and Curran, "Nicaraguans: Voices Lost, Voices Found," p. 152.

In fact, the government never anticipated Nicaraguans permanently settling in Miami – it was seen as a temporary move until the Sandinista regime was ousted. Nicaraguans themselves were conflicted between developing strong political ties in the U.S. and returning to their home country.¹¹⁶ For many, they had only spent a few years in Miami and may have left family members behind. This dilemma deferred them from establishing the political influence Cubans exerted. Currently, the Nicaraguan community is quite small, representing 5-10 percent of Central Americans living in Miami.¹¹⁷

Several conclusions can be drawn from comparing the Nicaraguan and Cuban immigration experiences. If the U.S. prefers to discourage further political refugee exoduses from Latin American then it behooves the U.S. to do whatever possible to remedy the conditions that caused the out-migration to take place. If the U.S. prefers to prevent Latin American immigrants from becoming a factor in the American political and economic arena, then it is clear that they should not bestow benefits on the incoming refugee group, preventing their assimilation. Political refugees tend to have above-average income and education giving them the skill sets to rapidly assimilate into the U.S.

Nicaraguans could have paralleled the Cuban experience but were prevented from doing so when the U.S. rejected their naturalization requests. They could not become a force in American politics without first assimilating. It is clear from the evidence, however, that if the Sandinistas had not lost power and the U.S. openly received

¹¹⁶ Sergio Diaz-Briquets and Jorge Perez-Lopez, "Refugee Remittances: Conceptual Issues and the Cuban and Nicaraguan Experiences," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 31, No. 2. (Summer, 1997), pp. 411-437.

¹¹⁷ "Miami: Nicaraguans," http://www.umich.edu/~ac213/student_projects05/miami/nicaraguans.html.

Nicaraguan exiles, Nicaraguans could have mirrored the Cuban success story and rapidly assimilated into the U.S.

With Mexican Americans and Nicaraguan Americans in mind, I turn to the final discussion of the nuanced political behavior of Cuban Americans and what to expect in the next twenty-years from this Hispanic anomaly.

Cuban Political Preferences

Despite differences in party affiliation, the majority of Cuban-American politicians support the embargo against Cuba, appealing to a large mass of voters hoping the ban will suffice to topple the regime. The Cuban electorate, however, may not be as conservative as thought, based on an analysis relying on this singular variable. A recent poll conducted by Florida International University scholars, found that 56 percent of Cuban Americans support the embargo, down from 66 percent two years ago.¹¹⁸ The past few years have shown an ideological transition among Cuban Americans from supporting a hard-line stance to more lenient policies toward Cuba. The reduction in conservative pro-embargo support does not indicate a decline in interest for Cuban policy, as 61 percent of Cuban Americans say that candidates' stance on Cuba is very important in their decision.¹¹⁹

The tendency to support the Republican Party stems from its perceived harsher stance against Castro. As already mentioned, Cuban Americans have an influential role in Florida politics and differ from other Hispanics who tend to vote Democrat. Their activism in politics derives from their hopes of influencing foreign policy toward Cuba.

¹¹⁸ Vanessa Bauza, "Poll: Cuban-Americans Back Change," *Orlando Sentinel*, April 3, 2007.

¹¹⁹ Guillermo Grenier, "Anti-Castro Political Ideology Among Cuban-Americans in the Miami Area: Cohort and Generational Differences," *Latino Research*. Vol. 2, No. 1, November 2004, p. 5.

The voter turnout of Cuban Republicans (who are disproportionately first and second-wave Cuban immigrants) is higher than that of more recent Cuban immigrants. As discussed in the previous chapter, first and second-wave immigrants have greater political influence than do the anti-embargo Cuban fourth-wavers -- for three reasons. First, they have greater financial stability and can thus contribute generous donations to political campaigns and/or PACs. Second, because they emigrated earlier, they are more established in the U.S. And third, they are more likely to be naturalized citizens and registered voters. Though first and second-wave Cubans dictate much of the policy decisions made for Cubans as a group, the table below illustrates the decline in fervency since the 1970s in the support for the Republican Party.

Table 8

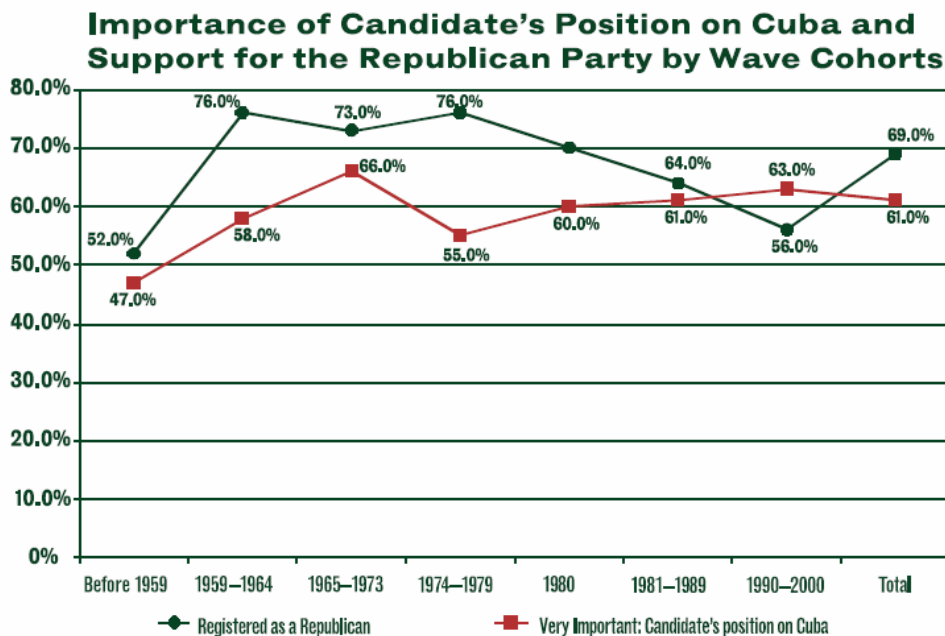


Table from Guillermo Grenier, "Anti-Castro Political Ideology Among Cuban Americans in the Miami Area: Cohort and Generational Differences," *Latino Research*. Vol. 2, No. 1, November 2004.

Thus, the next few decades should show a dramatic transition in partisanship among Cubans. As the more recent immigrants continue to assimilate and perhaps gain political clout as well, their Republican affiliation will diminish. This hypothesis is further supported by data collected by Guillermo Grenier and the Florida International University's Cuban Research Institute.

According to the above table, the hardliner stance on Cuba diminished with successive generations and place of birth. This is significant for future policies, because as the population of U.S.-born Cuban Americans increases, they are less likely to support the Republican Party and less likely to focus on Cuban foreign policy as the predominant issue. Furthermore, U.S. born Cubans are more likely to speak English, read English newspapers, are more educated and more likely to intermarry because they are integrated in American society.¹²⁰ This reduces the extent of which exiles pass their strong ideology to their children, especially as their children are exposed to other ideas through English-language media. As they become more assimilated, traditional Cuban foreign policy concerns will become less important to them.

While Cuban Americans continue to favor the Republican Party because of its anti-Castro ideology, and while exiles have successfully passed such sentiments to their offspring, Cuban-Americans have also become politically diverse in the past forty years. This is due to generational differences as well as the cohort differences. Furthermore, while policies tightening the embargo and restricting travel support interests of the wealthy and incorporated cohorts, the policies neglect to address more recent émigrés and

¹²⁰ Alex Stepick and Carol Dutton Stepick, "Power and Identity: Miami Cubans," in Marcelo Suarez-Orozo and Mariela Paez, *Latinos: Remaking America* (Los Angeles: California University Press, 2002), p. 73.

the 20,000 immigrants allowed to migrate annually. Guided by family ties and socioeconomic issues, third and fourth-wave cohorts support the Democratic Party and favor policies that help the people remaining in Cuba.¹²¹

The recent immigrants, however, lack political might for several reasons, including their ignorance of the political process. Unaware of the extent of civil liberties in the U.S. and burdened by the political process in Cuba, many have turned their heads away from American politics. They grew up in a communist system that did not allow for electoral competition. They have no experience with political action committees, nor do they understand the importance of registering to vote. Recent émigrés that do recognize the importance of politics feel they lack financial influence. Contemporary politics, however, has seen the rise of this cohort as President Bush's restrictions on travel to Cuba and the demise of Castro's health has mobilized this dormant immigrant wave.

Table 9

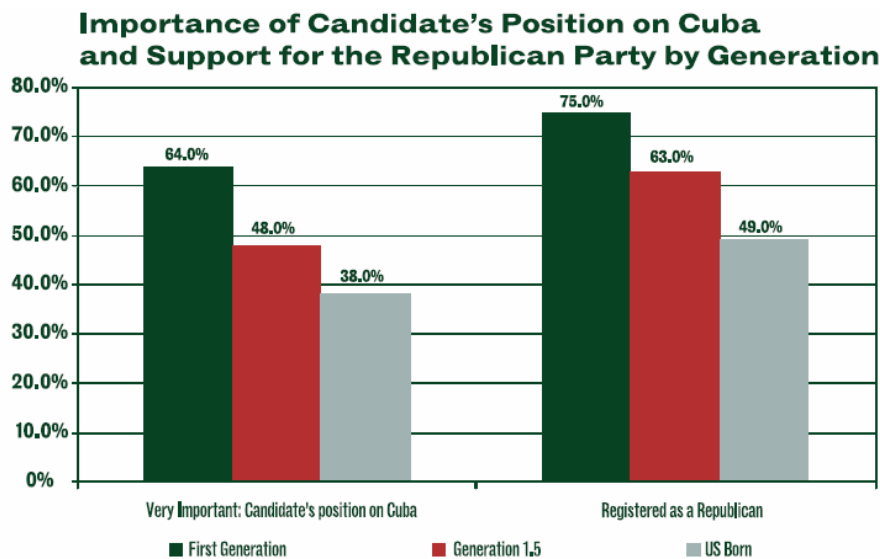


Table from Guillermo Grenier, "Anti-Castro Political Ideology Among Cuban Americans in the Miami Area: Cohort and Generational Differences," *Latino Research*. Vol. 2, No. 1, November 2004.

¹²¹ Guillermo Grenier, "Anti-Castro Political Ideology Among Cuban-Americans in the Miami Area: Cohort and Generational Differences," *Latino Research*. Vol. 2, No. 1, November 2004, p. 7.

The Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act of 1996 were both examples of the power of CANF to influence public policy through monetary contributions and mobilizing Cuban Americans in Miami. More recent debates led by humanitarian organizations, however, have called for ending the embargo because of its damage to the people on the island. As the fear of communism recedes among Americans, as staunchly conservative Cuban Americans either pass away or weaken their stance, as CANF's influence dwindles, and as Castro's health continues to decline, we may well see a movement among Cuban Americans partnered with businesses to reopen trade. Moreover, second-generation Cuban Americans and younger Cuban immigrants never experienced Castro's revolution and thus have more moderate and flexible stances on the embargo. While "the power established by the older Miami Cubans, however, exhibits an inertia that will probably mask the community's evolution for some time to come,"¹²² I predict that by 2020, hardliners will have passed away, allowing for changed foreign policy views toward Cuba.

Younger Cubans are not the only ones with more moderate stances. More recently, the agribusiness lobby, Chamber of Commerce and American Farm Bureau Federation pressed to reopen trade with Cuba. They have already secured the interest of farm-state representatives and made headway with lessening some of the agricultural restrictions. The Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 addressed some of the agribusiness concerns. The legislation liberalizes export regulations on agricultural and medical commodities. In 2004, Cuba imported \$380

¹²² Alex Stepick and Carol Dutton Stepick, "Power and Identity: Miami Cubans," in Marcelo Suarez-Orozo and Mariela Paez, *Latinos: Remaking America* (Los Angeles: California University Press, 2002), p. 87.

million worth of agricultural exports from the U.S., accounting for 44 percent of total imports to Cuba.¹²³

Representatives of U.S. industry alongside recent émigrés and moderate Cuban-American voters support relaxing the embargo. The growing moderate Cuban-American community will overtake the isolationist perspective of the pro-embargo voters. Younger generations still lack the financial resources to make their voices heard among public officials; however, the data presented points to a real change taking place in South Florida politics. The “Golden Enclave” reign is coming to an end and politicians will need to look for support among other Cuban-American constituents. The unraveling of the hard-line stance stigma will take years to overcome, but politicians should start to capitalize on these changes in the near future, especially as the Cuban-American vote is central to candidates’ ability to win Florida.

Conclusion

After evaluating the Cuban-American Diaspora and the case studies of Mexican Americans who emigrate for economic reasons and Nicaraguan Americans who came seeking political asylum, it is obvious that Cubans are an anomaly. In addition to being skilled immigrants, part of the secret to their success in the U.S. was the amount of government support received to ease their transition. The Cubans were not treated merely as Spanish-speaking immigrants or left on the fringe of society as other immigrants were in the past but, instead, were integrated into the Miami community. This integration on the part of the Cubans and the benefits they were awarded allowed for increased upward

¹²³ *Foreign Agricultural Service*, available at: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/itp/cuba/cuba-faq.html#export>

mobility and assimilation, leading to successes in business, politics, the arts, and academia that other immigrant groups have not enjoyed.

Perhaps the secret to advanced assimilation and integration into the American mainstream is receiving multiple forms of support from the American government. Assume that Cuban Americans were anomalies simply because they were the only immigrant group to receive such benefits. Both Mexicans and Nicaraguans created exile communities, but neither group achieved much success on the whole. Without programs to revalidate degrees, or grant them access to citizenship, Hispanic immigrants were historically left by the wayside. These immigrants typically reside in poorer communities where education and financial success are not necessarily group norms.

Cubans, on the other hand, are credited for the economic transformation of Miami. It is important to discredit the theory that Cubans were successful solely because of their commitment to education or other unique traits. It is not uncommon for Miami Cubans to attribute their successes to hard work, stating “We Cubans made Miami.”¹²⁴ Cubans arrived in Miami with extended social networks, high educational attainment and wealth, and a non-African racial status, much like other wealthy immigrant groups. Rather, the difference between other immigrants and Cubans was the way in which they were received, enabling them to become the nation’s success story.

While granting benefits such as access to education and health services, loans, fast tracks to citizenship, and revalidating degrees seems like a strain on the economy, the argument must be made that these short-term costs are less than those experienced by a neglected minority in the long-term. This was proven conclusively when the state of

¹²⁴ Alex Stepick and Carol Dutton Stepick, “Power and Identity: Miami Cubans,” in Marcelo Suarez-Orozo and Mariela Paez, *Latinos: Remaking America* (Los Angeles: California University Press, 2002), p. 87.

Florida sued the federal government in an attempt to collect what state officials saw as funds spent only because federal policies of accepting immigrants were affecting them adversely.¹²⁵ The federal government did agree that the first five years had a negative effect on state and municipal coffers but said the long-term effect was positive and beneficial, even for those arriving with little or no English and little or no work experience or education relevant to the American job market.

Marielito Cubans overcame many obstacles and some put to rest claims that communism teaches the workforce to develop bad work habits, and that the populace in general is basically dependent on government transfer payments.¹²⁶ They did not have much education before arriving in the U.S., but obtained it once here. Most did not speak English, have professional titles or any sui-generic talent, and most did not have significant managerial or other experience that they could rely on to work in the U.S. These Cubans parallel their Mexican cousins' skill sets more closely than did the first wave of Nicaraguans or Cubans who immigrated to the U.S. They succeeded, however, because of the safety net put in place by the U.S. federal government, the Church groups and other private charities, and the affluent and not-so-affluent Cubans already in Miami.

Many Mexican immigrants are fearful of being deported and are thus not naturalized. Mexican Americans will not be a force in the American political because they have yet to surpass linguistic barriers, are not given the opportunity to naturalize, and, as was evidenced previously, are experiencing downward assimilation. Mexican-Americans are thus marginalized.

¹²⁵ "Immigration Impact: Florida," Federation for American Immigration Reform, available at: http://www.fairus.org/site/PageServer?pagename=research_researcha956.

¹²⁶ Portes and Stepick, *City on the Edge*, p. 36.

Nicaraguans could have been a politically viable voting bloc as Cubans but were not received positively. The Nicaraguan case study evidenced that the lack of federal government aid was a large part of why their assimilation process never advanced. The difference between Cuban Americans and Nicaraguan Americans was the way in which they were received. Alike in reasons for departure and socioeconomic status, the benefits bestowed on Cubans allowed for them to assimilate to American society.

Comparatively, recent Venezuelan immigrants may experience a plight like that of Cubans and Nicaraguans. Escaping political persecution and the decline of their democratic regime, the first Venezuelans to leave were wealthy upper-classes. While they do not receive the same incentives to become incorporated into the American system, a Venezuelan case study would be interesting to follow.

In contrast to the grim situation Mexican Americans face, there are several reasons to be hopeful for improvements in Hispanic political incorporation. The case studies discussed in this thesis point to divergence among Hispanic groups. However, identifying the variable that enabled political incorporation for Cuban Americans provides hope for the future.

This thesis supports, I believe, that all legal immigrants should be provided assimilating benefits, such as professional title revalidation. How much better a society would we be today if we had extended the same level of courtesy to professionals from Russia, Italy, Poland, Germany, and other nations? By rapidly assimilating immigrants we prevent a huge drain in our society. One drain is that imposed on hospital of last resort by undocumented and uninsured immigrants. Another is obviously the millions of

dollars it takes to produce doctors, engineers and other professionals when quick revalidation and certifications can save society time and money.

The key findings suggest that in order for immigrants to successfully integrate into the American mainstream political, they must first embark upon their assimilation process. The extent of Hispanic immigrant involvement in civic and political life is dependent on economic and educational assimilation. While I recognize that pathways to political incorporation may also be motivated by concerns in their country of origin, we should expect that immigrants who assimilate socially and economically also assimilate politically and learn to adopt views that can be applied within the American liberal-conservative spectrum.

In contrast, immigrants who do not learn English and are not educated will not assimilate, especially in terms of socioeconomic status. As a consequence they may remain marginal to American political life. Recently there have been movements to integrate Latinos politically through the impact of particular policies, on the mobilization efforts of advocacy groups, or attention given by election candidates. It is obvious that well educated, high-skilled immigrants and their children are more economically and politically successful than are low-skilled, more recent immigrants. The same holds true for American citizens; high socioeconomic status Americans participate in politics more than do Americans of lower socioeconomic status. It is possible for political dynamics to work differently for Hispanic immigrants; they do not have to be wealthy but merely accepted as members of the host country to participate in politics.

The Cuban experience is an anomaly but it is one from which we can draw many successful lessons. The first is that immigrants need to feel as though they are a part of

the system, not that they can never penetrate the layers of obstacles precluding them from becoming part of the norm. The onus is on the federal government to prevent illegal immigration, but to foster assimilation among those whom it legally allows in. Cubans, and to a smaller extent Nicaraguans, have proven that the assimilation curve can be expedited and American society served best by offering immigrants a hand up.

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MIAMI: PHOTOGRAPHS THROUGH TIME



Photograph 1: The Freedom Tower in Miami was used by the federal government to provide medical services to Cuban refugees arriving in the 1960s and early 1970s.

www.latinamericanstudies.org/refugee-center.htm



Photograph 2: Once inside the Freedom Tower, Cuban refugees were documented, provided clothing and medical assistance.

www.latinamericanstudies.org/refugee-center.htm



Photograph 3: The U.S. government sponsored flights from Cuba to Miami transporting first-wave Cubans escaping political persecution immediately after the revolution.



Photograph 4: This political cartoon illustrates the perceptions of Mariel Boatlift refugees as criminals. Translated as follows: “Who denies the freedom of others, does not deserve the same.”

www.nocastro.com/gallery/index.htm



Photograph 5: During the Mariel Boatlift, Cuban citizens were permitted to leave the island in personal vessels from Mariel Harbor in Cuba to the U.S.

www.cubaencuentro.com

<http://scholarship.rollins.edu/rurj/vol2/iss1/3>



Photograph 6: *Balseros* often transformed 1950 automobiles into rafts to venture through the 90-mile distance between Cuba and South Florida.

www.latinamericanstudies.org/refugee-center.htm



Photograph 7: Fourth-wave Cubans typically referred to as *Balseros* are sometimes intercepted at sea by local authorities and sent back to Cuba.

www.latinamericanstudies.org/refugee-center.htm



Photograph 8: *Balseros* suffering from heat exhaustion and malnutrition call for help.

www.latinamericanstudies.org/refugee-center.htm



Photograph 9: President Bush welcomed to Miami by employees at the famous Versailles restaurant on Calle Ocho. The 1950s styled restaurant is a popular meeting center for TV crews and Cubans when updates on Cuban policy or Castro's health airs.

Blogs.abcnews.com



Photograph 10: Senator Mel Martinez (R-FL) is congratulated by the exile community after his victory over Betty Castor in 2004, becoming the first Cuban-American Senator.

canf.org/.../2004-nov-05-martinez-arrives.htm



Photograph 11: Almost fifty years after the Cuban Revolution and first-wave exiles continue to gather to play dominoes on Calle Ocho.

www.amergeog.org



Photograph 12: Cuban Americans often engage in political protest displaying both the Cuban and American flags.

www.latinamericanstudies.org/refugee-center.htm



Photograph 12: Brickell Avenue in 1959 before the Cuban exodus to Miami

Skyscrapercity.com



Photograph 14: Brickell Avenue in 2000

Skyscrapercity.com

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