

Cubans in the United States

By LISANDRO PÉREZ

ABSTRACT: Although the bulk of the Cuban-origin population immigrated within the past 25 years, the Cuban presence in this country has a long history. In the nineteenth century, important Cuban communities existed in Tampa, Key West, and New York. The post-1959 Cuban immigrants have concentrated in the Miami area. In comparison with other major U.S. Hispanic groups, the sociodemographic profile of the Cubans is fairly unique: a large proportion of middle-aged and elderly persons, a female majority, low fertility, and relatively high socioeconomic status. The latter has been explained by a combination of factors: (1) the socioeconomic selectivity of postrevolutionary Cuban emigration; (2) high rates of female labor force participation; and (3) the presence of a strong ethnic enclave. While strong forces have favored retention of Cuban cultural traits, there are intergenerational differences in the degree of acculturation to U.S. society.

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IT is estimated that close to 1 million residents of the United States are of Cuban origin. The last reliable count, taken by the U.S. Bureau of the Census in 1980, found a total of 803,226 persons who identified themselves as being of Cuban "origin or descent."¹ Shortly after the census, from April to September of 1980, some 125,000 Cubans arrived through the Mariel boatlift.

A sizable Cuban presence in this country is a relatively recent phenomenon, a product of the revolution that transformed Cuban society after 1959. Prior to that year, not more than 70,000 Cuban-born persons lived in the United States. The Cuban community here is therefore largely composed of immigrants: close to 700,000 persons currently living in the United States were born in Cuba, a figure equivalent to nearly three-fourths of the Cuban-origin population.

Nevertheless, the volume of Cuban immigration during the last couple of decades should not lead to the perception that the history of the Cuban presence in the United States starts in 1959. That history, in fact, precedes the establishment of the Cuban nation.

THE CUBAN PRESENCE IN THE UNITED STATES PRIOR TO 1959

Cuban immigration has always been linked to major political events and economic conditions on the island. Long before the U.S. intervention that in 1899 ended Spanish rule on the island, the powerful northern neighbor exercised considerable influence in Cuba's polit-

ical and economic affairs, an inevitable corollary of a geographic reality. As that influence grew during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the United States increasingly became the principal destination of Cuba's emigrants, many of whom were prominent figures in Cuba's intellectual, political, and financial circles.²

As can be observed in Table 1, the flow from Cuba was relatively small prior to 1885. In the five-year period after that date, however, the level of immigration more than tripled. It was in 1886 that the first cigar factories opened near Tampa. After a decline from 1891 to 1895, Cuban immigration reached new highs between 1896 and 1910, the period corresponding to the Spanish-Cuban-American war, the first U.S. administration of Cuba, the first Cuban government, and the second U.S. administration of the island. It was a period characterized, successively, by strife and turmoil, direct U.S. influence, and political and economic instability and uncertainties. It was also during this period that the cigar making industry of Tampa was at its height, attracting a consider-

2. The best sources on the establishment and sociopolitical life of nineteenth-century Cuban communities in the United States are: Jose Rivero Muñiz, "Los cubanos de Tampa" [The Cubans of Tampa], *Revista bimestre cubana*, 74:5-140 (Jan.-June 1958); L. Glenn Westfall, "Don Vicente Martínez Ybor, the Man and His Empire: Development of the Clear Havana Industry in Cuba and Florida in the Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., University of Florida, 1977); Durward Long, "The Historical Beginnings of Ybor City and Modern Tampa," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 45(1):31-44 (July 1966); Louis A. Perez, Jr., "Cubans in Tampa: From Exiles to Immigrants, 1892-1901," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 57(2):129-40 (Oct. 1978); Gerald E. Poyo, "Cuban Emigré Communities in the United States and the Independence of their Homeland, 1852-1895" (Ph.D. diss., University of Florida, 1983).

1. U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *1980 Census of Population, General Population Characteristics: United States Summary* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1983), p. 21.

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF CUBANS ADMITTED INTO THE UNITED STATES
AS IMMIGRANTS, 1871-1958

Fiscal Year Ending 30 June	Number of Cuban Immigrants	Annual Average
All years, 1871-1958	221,505	2,517
1871-75	4,607	921
1876-80	3,614	723
1881-85	5,501	1,100
1886-90	16,027	3,205
1891-95	9,994	1,999
1896-1900	15,559	3,112
1901-05	19,059	3,812
1906-10	21,100	4,220
1911-15	17,109	3,422
1916-20	10,728	2,146
1921-25	5,892	1,178
1926-30	9,716	1,943
1931-35	1,979	396
1936-40	2,143	429
1941-45	4,644	929
1946-50	10,807	2,161
1951-55	22,759	4,552
1956-58	40,267	13,422

SOURCES: Compiled and computed from data in U.S., Bureau of Statistics, *Immigration into the United States, Showing Number, Nationality, Sex, Age, Occupation, Destination, etc., from 1820 to 1903* (Washington, DC: Department of the Treasury, n.d.), p. 4351; U.S., Congress, Senate, *Reports of the Immigration Commission: Statistical Review of Immigration 1820-1910*, 61st Cong., 3d sess., document no. 756 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1911), pp. 90-91; Commissioner-General of Immigration, *Annual Report* (Washington, DC: Government Office, annual eds. for each fiscal year from 1908 to 1932); U.S., Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, "Annual Report," mimeographed, annual eds. for each fiscal year from 1942 to 1958. From 1871 to 1950, the figures are for admitted immigrant aliens of "Cuban race or people." From 1951 to 1958 they refer to Cuban-born immigrant aliens.

able number of cigar workers from the island.

Cuban immigration remained fairly high in the years from 1911 to 1915, but decreased noticeably during the following quinquennium. After 1918 and until the end of World War II, annual immigration from Cuba would not reach 3000 again. This period corresponds to the decline of the Tampa cigar industry, the relatively high prosperity in Cuba during the 1920s, the Great Depression, which was the period of lowest immigration, and World War II. The postwar period saw a resurgence of Cuban immigration, a trend that intensified in the

mid- to late 1950s as many Cubans apparently fled the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista.

In summary, the Cuban presence in the United States has a long history. The postrevolutionary exodus, while differing in many ways from previous Cuban migrations to the United States, was nevertheless traveling a well-worn path, following what Poyo has called the "Cuban émigré tradition of moving north."³

3. Gerald E. Poyo, "Cuban Communities in the United States: Toward an Overview of the 19th Century Experience," in *Cubans in the United States*, ed. M. Uriarte-Gaston and J. Cañas Mar-

REVOLUTION AND EMIGRATION

The nature and scope of the changes instituted by the revolutionary government that rose to power in 1959 alienated a sizable proportion of the Cuban population, creating the conditions for an exodus that has spanned more than two decades. The emigration process has traditionally been viewed as a class phenomenon, involving a successive peeling-off, starting at the top, of the layers of the prerevolutionary class structure.

While the socioeconomic selectivity of Cuban emigration has frequently been overstated, it is undoubtedly true that during the early 1960s Cuba's upper socioeconomic sectors, those most likely to be alienated by Cuba's swift transformation into a socialist state, were over-represented in the exodus. It has been estimated that among Cubans arriving in this country from 1960 to 1962, up to 37 percent of household heads were proprietors, managers, or professionals. In the 1953 Cuban census, less than 10 percent of the labor force was classified in those categories. Among the 1960-62 Cuban immigrants, 12.5 percent had completed four or more years of college, a level attained by scarcely 1 percent of the Cuban population as a whole in 1953.⁴

By the early 1970s, the exodus of the upper sector was essentially complete, and the migration flow included progressively greater representation from somewhat lower socioeconomic levels of Cuban

society.⁵ To some extent, the Mariel entrants of 1980 represented a visible culmination of that trend, although recent research has proved erroneous the initial perception that those entrants were disproportionately drawn from Cuba's lowest socioeconomic sectors.⁶

TRENDS IN CUBAN
IMMIGRATION SINCE 1959

Table 2 contains the annual figures on Cuban immigration from 1959 to 1983. The data show a somewhat cyclical pattern that primarily reflects the availability of the means to leave Cuba. Until the missile crisis of October 1962—and despite the severing of diplomatic relations in January 1961—there was regular commercial air traffic between the United States and Cuba. During that period, some 200,000 persons left Cuba. The U.S. government facilitated their entry by granting them refugee status, allowing them to enter without the restrictions imposed on most other nationality groups. This favored treatment continued until after the termination of the 1980 boatlift.

The missile crisis ended all contact between the two countries, slowing down considerably the pace of Cuban immigration in 1964 and 1965. Persons leaving Cuba during those years were doing so clandestinely, often in small boats, or

5. Alejandro Portes, Juan M. Clark, and Robert L. Bach, "The New Wave: A Statistical Profile of Recent Cuban Exiles to the U.S.," *Cuban Studies/Estudios Cubanos*, 7(1):16 (Jan. 1977).

6. Robert L. Bach, "The New Cuban Immigrants: Their Background and Prospects," *Monthly Labor Review*, 103(10):40 (Oct. 1980); Alejandro Portes, Juan M. Clark, and Robert D. Manning, "After Mariel: A Survey of the Resettlement Experiences of 1980 Cuban Refugees in Miami," *Cuban Studies/Estudios Cubanos*, 15(2):47 (Summer 1985).

tínez (Boston: Center for the Study of the Cuban Community, 1984), pp. 44-45.

4. Richard R. Fagen, Richard A. Brody, and Thomas J. O'Leary, *Cubans in Exile: Disaffection and the Revolution* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), p. 19.

through third countries, usually Spain or Mexico. In the fall of 1965, in a move that responded to internal pressures for emigration and that was to be repeated 15 years later, the Cuban government opened a port and allowed persons from the United States to go to Cuba to pick up those relatives who wanted to leave the country. Some 5000 Cubans left from the port of Camarioca before the United States and Cuba halted the boatlift and agreed to an orderly airlift.

The airlift, also called the freedom flights, started in December 1965 and lasted until 1973. The twice-daily flights brought 260,500 persons during those years. The termination of the airlift brought another period, during the mid-to late 1970s, of relatively low migration from Cuba, as can be seen in Table 2. By 1980, however, the pressures for emigration once again caused the Cuban government to open a port for unrestricted emigration. The port was Mariel, giving the name to the boatlift that lasted for six months and that brought, in a manner uncontrolled by the United States, more than 125,000 Cubans.

The end of the boatlift and the onset of restrictions on Cuban immigration have brought about the current lull in the exodus. We are now, therefore, in the remission phase of the historical cycle, but pressures for emigration still exist. Fidel Castro, in December 1980, said that "Mariel has not been resolved, it has simply been suspended."⁷

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CUBAN-ORIGIN POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES

The 1980 U.S. census produced an unprecedented data set on the population that identified itself as being of

"Cuban origin or descent." Although it does not include the Mariel entrants, who arrived after the date of the enumeration, that data set nevertheless represents the first fairly comprehensive picture of the characteristics of U.S. Cubans.⁸

Residence and geographic distribution

The Cuban-origin population of the United States surpasses the total U.S. population, as well as every other major Hispanic group, in the proportion that resides in metropolitan areas. Slightly more than 97 percent of all U.S. Cubans live in standard metropolitan statistical areas.

Not only are they likely to live in metropolitan areas, but they have also tended to concentrate in only a few U.S. urban areas. The Miami-Ft. Lauderdale region of southeast Florida accounts for slightly more than 52 percent of the entire Cuban-origin population of the United States. Two other fairly large concentrations of Cubans are found in Greater New York and Greater Los Angeles. Altogether, those three metropolitan centers contain more than three-fourths of the Cuban-origin population.

Over the past decade, the trend has been toward a greater concentration of Cubans in the South Florida area. This contrasts with the situation among Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, who from 1970 to 1980 exhibited a tendency to disperse

8. Unless otherwise noted, all of the data from the 1980 U.S. census used in this section were compiled from the following sources: U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *1980 Census of Population, General Population Characteristics, United States Summary* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1983); idem, *1980 Census of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics, United States Summary* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1983).

7. Fidel Castro, "Informe central al Segundo Congreso" [Report to the Second Congress], *Bohemia*, 72(52):66 (26 Dec. 1980).

TABLE 2
CUBANS ARRIVING IN THE UNITED STATES, 1959-83

Year	Number
1959 (1 January-30 June)	26,527
Year ending 30 June	
1960	60,224
1961	49,961
1962	78,611
1963	42,929
1964	15,616
1965	16,447
1966	46,688
1967	52,147
1968	55,945
1969	52,625
1970	49,545
1971	50,001
1972	23,977
1973	12,579
1974	13,670
1975	8,488
1976	4,515
Year ending 30 September	
1977	4,548
1978	4,108
1979	2,644
1980	122,061
1981	4,966
1982	2,805
1983	3,446
Total, 1 January 1959- 30 September 1983	805,073

SOURCES: U.S., Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, "Cubans Arrived in the United States, by Class of Admission: January 1, 1959-September 30, 1980," mimeographed, Oct. 1980; idem, personal communication, 11 Mar. 1981; idem, "Annual Report," issues corresponding to the years 1981, 1982, and 1983.

from their traditional areas of concentration within the United States.

The concentration in Florida was noted as early as 1972 by Prohías and Casal when they cited evidence that, despite the initial dispersion brought about by the Cuban Refugee Resettlement Program, a "trickle-back" to Miami was taking place.⁹ With the purpose of easing the pressure of Cuban immigration on Miami, the program

scattered some 300,000 Cubans throughout the United States in the period from 1961 to 1978. The bulk of the resettlements took place during the early years of the airlift in the 1960s.¹⁰ The 1980 data show that the communities that received large numbers of resettled Cubans are precisely the communities that have recently been losing a large number of Cubans to Florida.

Age and sex composition

The Cuban-origin population of the United States exhibits two demographic

9. Rafael J. Prohías and Lourdes Casal, "The Cuban Minority in the U.S.: Preliminary Report on Need Identification and Program Evaluation," mimeographed (Boca Raton: Florida Atlantic University, 1973), p. 110.

10. Cuban Refugee Program, "Fact Sheet,"

characteristics not usually found in groups of recent immigrants: (1) a high proportion of elderly persons; and (2) a numerical predominance of females.

Table 3 shows the somewhat distinctive nature of the age and sex composition of the Cuban-origin population. In comparison with the total U.S., Mexican, and Puerto Rican populations, the Cubans exhibit the highest proportions of both the elderly and middle-aged and the lowest proportion of children.

Typical of relatively old populations, the sex ratio—the number of males per 100 females—for the Cubans is the lowest of all the sex ratios for populations in Table 3. The elderly, however, are not totally responsible for the low sex ratio. As can also be observed in the table, Cubans between 25 and 39 years of age exhibit an inordinately low sex ratio.

These age and sex characteristics are understandable only in the context of the conditions of Cuban emigration. Except for the periods of open emigration during the boatlifts, the Cuban government has largely prohibited the emigration of males of military age. This restriction had a special impact on the profile of the airlift arrivals. It caused the underrepresentation and low sex ratio of the cohort that in 1980 was 25 to 39 years of age. In contrast, persons over 30 years old were overrepresented in the immigration of the 1960s and 1970s, resulting in the current abundance of persons over 40 years of age. The elderly in particular were probably the age group most alienated by the sweeping changes introduced by the Cuban revolution. Because this age group was a largely dependent population, the Cuban government favored its depar-

ture, especially during the airlift.

The low proportion of children is the result of very low levels of fertility, as is evident in the last row of Table 3. This low level of reproduction is consistent with the value placed by Cuban immigrants on upward social mobility.

Household characteristics

The most salient household characteristic of the Cuban population of the United States is the importance of the three-generation family. A relatively large proportion of the many elderly immigrants live with their children, as is apparent from the figures in Table 4. In comparison with the other populations, a much larger proportion of the Cuban elderly was classified as "other relatives" of the household head. Furthermore, older Cubans are least likely to establish households on their own or to be inmates of institutions, including nursing homes.

Educational characteristics

Cubans tend to exhibit a certain polarization in their educational characteristics, with relatively high proportions at each end of the range of educational attainment. The percentage that have completed four or more years of college is the same as the corresponding figure for the total U.S. population and well above other Hispanic groups. On the other hand, the percentage of all adult Cubans with only eight years or less of schooling is well above the U.S. figure and comparable to the levels of the Mexican and Puerto Rican populations. The traditional socioeconomic selectivity of Cuban emigration, combined with the high proportion of young Cubans that have attended universities in this country, has produced a fairly high proportion of college graduates. A

TABLE 3
SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CUBAN,
MEXICAN, PUERTO RICAN, AND TOTAL U.S. POPULATIONS, 1980

Characteristics	Cuban	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Total U.S.
Median age (years)	37.7	21.9	22.3	30.0
Percentage under 15 years of age	16.1	34.5	33.7	22.6
Percentage 40-59 years of age	30.0	14.4	15.6	20.4
Percentage 65 years of age and over	12.1	4.2	4.9	11.3
Sex ratio*	90.8	103.4	95.2	94.5
Sex ratio* of the population 25-39 years of age	82.3	106.4	89.3	97.8
Number of children ever born to every 1000 women 35-44 years of age	2,033	3,646	3,202	2,639 [†]

SOURCES: Compiled and computed from data in U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *1980 Census of Population, General Population Characteristics, United States Summary* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1983), p. 51; and *idem*, *1980 Census of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics, United States Summary* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1983), p. 163.

*Number of males per 100 females.

†The figure for the total white metropolitan population of the United States was 2465.

TABLE 4
HOUSEHOLD RELATIONSHIP OF PERSONS 65 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER IN THE
CUBAN, MEXICAN, PUERTO RICAN, AND TOTAL U.S. POPULATIONS, 1980 (Percentage)

Persons 65 and Over Classified as:	Cuban	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Total U.S.
Householders*	48.4	60.4	59.1	63.1
"Other relatives" of the householder [†]	30.7	16.7	20.2	8.9
Residents of group quarters, including inmates of institutions	1.3	3.5	2.8	5.9

SOURCES: Compiled and computed from data in Bureau of the Census, *1980 Census of Population, General Population Characteristics*, p. 51.

*Term first used in the 1980 census as the egalitarian replacement for the previously used "head of household."

†Other relatives, besides spouse, of the householder.

population with a sizable number of older persons—especially if they are migrants from a developing country—can also be expected to have many persons who did not attend school beyond the elementary grades.

ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT

There is a widespread perception that Cubans are one of the most economically successful U.S. immigrant groups. While it has been greatly exaggerated,

the Cuban success story has some basis in fact. In Table 5, the median family income of Cubans is compared with the income of all U.S. and Spanish-origin families. The figure for Cubans is closer to that of all U.S. families than it is to the family income of all Hispanic families. This same relative standing is found with the other measures of income listed in the table.

Largely because of its theoretical implications for the study of immigrant adjustment, there has been considerable research into the determinants of the Cubans' relative economic success. The issue has been explored at three analytical levels: individual, family, and community.

The literature on the economic adjustment of Cubans has traditionally favored individual-level explanations. Based on human-capital theory or on status-attainment models, this perspective emphasizes the socioeconomic selectivity of Cuban emigration. The migration flow from the island, because it originated with a process of socialist transformation, has been disproportionately composed of individuals who possess a complex of skills, aspirations, and experiences that has given them a relative advantage over most other U.S. immigrant groups in the process of economic adjustment.¹¹

11. For examples of this approach, see George J. Borjas, "The Earnings of Male Hispanic Immigrants in the United States," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 35(3):343-53 (Apr. 1982); Morris J. Newman, "A Profile of Hispanics in the U.S. Work Force," *Monthly Labor Review*, 101(12):3-14 (Dec. 1978); Alejandro Portes, "Dilemmas of a Golden Exile: Integration of Cuban Refugee Families in Milwaukee," *American Sociological Review*, 34:505-18 (Aug. 1969); Eleanor Meyer Rogg, *The Assimilation of Cuban Exiles: The Role of Community and Class* (New York: Aberdeen Press, 1974).

Support for a family-level approach to the study of economic adjustment can be found in the data presented in Table 6. They show that the relatively high family income of Cubans is not primarily the result of high individual income, but of a comparatively large number of workers per family. When figures on personal income are examined (first row of the table), the income of Cubans is much closer to that of the Spanish-origin population than to that of the total U.S. population. The relative success of Cubans is also not apparent among families with only one worker. The key lies in the high proportion of Cuban families with two or more workers. Women apparently play a crucial role in raising family income: their labor force participation rate, as shown in Table 6, is even higher than the rate for the adult female population of the United States.

A community-level approach to the study of Cuban economic adjustment has been developed in recent years by Alejandro Portes and his associates.¹² Survey data comparing Mexican and Cuban immigrants showed that differences between the two groups could only be explained by the presence of a true ethnic enclave among Cubans. In contrast to Mexican immigrants, who

12. Alejandro Portes and Robert L. Bach, "Immigrant Earnings: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the United States," *International Migration Review*, 14:315-41; Alejandro Portes and Robert L. Bach, *Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Kenneth L. Wilson and Alejandro Portes, "Immigrant Enclaves: An Analysis of the Labor Market Experiences of Cubans in Miami," *American Journal of Sociology*, 86:295-319 (Sept. 1980); Kenneth L. Wilson and W. Allen Martin, "Ethnic Enclaves: A Comparison of the Cuban and Black Economies in Miami," *American Journal of Sociology*, 88:135-60 (July 1982).

TABLE 5
INCOME CHARACTERISTICS OF CUBAN, SPANISH-ORIGIN,
AND U.S. FAMILIES, 1979

	Cuban	Spanish- origin	U.S.
Median family income	\$18,245	\$14,712	\$19,917
Percentage of all families below the poverty level	11.7	21.3	9.6
Percentage of all families above 125 percent of the poverty level	83.8	71.7	86.6
Percentage of all families with annual incomes of \$50,000 and above	5.2	2.3	5.6

SOURCE: Compiled and computed from data in Bureau of the Census, *1980 Census of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics*, pp. 167-68.

TABLE 6
INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT-RELATED CHARACTERISTICS OF
INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES IN THE CUBAN, SPANISH-ORIGIN, AND
TOTAL U.S. POPULATIONS, 1980

Characteristic	Cuban	Spanish- origin	Total U.S.
Median income of males 15 years of age and above employed full-time year-round	\$14,168	\$12,970	\$17,363
Median income of families with only one worker	\$12,629	\$11,153	\$16,181
Percentage of all families with two workers	42.5	38.5	41.7
Percentage of all families with three or more workers	18.6	13.9	12.5
Percentage of all females 16 years of age and above in the labor force	55.4	49.3	49.9

SOURCE: Compiled and computed from data in Bureau of the Census, *1980 Census of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics*, p. 167.

must join the open labor market in peripheral sectors of the economy throughout the country, recent Cuban immigrants enter the U. S. market primarily through the large number of enterprises in South Florida that are owned and operated by other Cubans who arrived earlier. The enclave insulates the immigrant from the usual processes of the segmented labor market, providing informal networks of support that facilitate the learning of new skills

and the overall process of economic adjustment.

The three analytical levels in the study of Cuban economic adjustment are clearly complementary and together they provide a comprehensive framework for an understanding of the relative success of that adjustment. Much research remains to be done on the interrelationships between the three, especially in clarifying the importance of the socioeconomic selectivity of the

emigration in creating the enclave, as well as the role of the enclave in facilitating female labor force participation.

ACCULTURATION AND ASSIMILATION

There is every indication that among U.S. Cubans there is a high degree of retention of the culture of their home country. Rogg and Cooney, for example, found that while some acculturation has taken place, the bulk of their respondents could still be categorized as "mostly Cuban" on a scale of cultural assimilation.¹³ They also found that a majority were "below average" in their ability to speak English, a finding supported by a later survey that found that most Cubans use only Spanish at home and in many of their daily activities.¹⁴

The retention of Cuban cultural patterns is not surprising. The overwhelming majority of U.S. Cubans are immigrants, with an overrepresentation of the middle-aged and elderly. The creation of an institutionally complete enclave in South Florida has also no doubt served to retard the processes of acculturation and assimilation. Another factor, especially important in the early stages of the exodus, is the perception many Cubans have of themselves as reluctant migrants, compelled to leave their country, but with the expectation of returning and consequently with little desire or motivation to assimilate into this society. It is also important to keep

in mind that there have been periodic waves of massive arrivals from Cuba, the largest and most recent being the Mariel boatlift. The new arrivals are fresh from the culture of origin and undoubtedly serve to renew and reinforce that culture in the immigrant community.

Despite these strong forces favoring cultural retention, it is unlikely that the Cuban community in the United States will escape the usual intergenerational shift toward greater acculturation and assimilation. English is probably the principal language among Cubans who have lived all or most of their lives in the United States. There is also evidence that among younger Cubans the incidence of exogamy is relatively high.¹⁵

CONCLUSION

Based on what has been presented, the following are the trends that are likely to have far-reaching implications for the future development of the Cuban community in the United States. In the next two to three decades the large cohort that is now middle-aged will swell the ranks of the elderly. If history is any guide, there is a strong likelihood that there will be a renewal of Cuban immigration on a large scale. Although ethnic enclaves eventually disappear, the Cuban enclave in Miami has not yet peaked, and the continuing concentration of Cubans there ensures its vi-

13. Eleanor Meyer Rogg and Rosemary Santana Cooney, *Adaptation and Adjustment of Cubans: West New York, New Jersey* (New York: Fordham University Hispanic Research Center, 1980), p. 49.

14. Ibid.; Guarione M. Díaz, ed., "Evaluation and Identification of Policy Issues in the Cuban Community," mimeographed (Miami, FL: Cuban National Planning Council, 1980), pp. 48-50.

15. Joseph P. Fitzpatrick and Douglas T. Gurak, *Hispanic Inter-marriage in New York City: 1975* (New York: Fordham University Hispanic Research Center, 1979), p. 25; Thomas D. Boswell and James R. Curtis, *The Cuban-American Experience: Culture, Images and Perspectives* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Allanheld, 1983), p. 183. High rates of exogamy may also be partly attributed to the extraordinarily low sex ratio in the cohort that in the 1970s was in the prime marriage ages.

ability during the foreseeable future. Finally, the enclave will play an even greater role than in the past in the

economic adjustment and the rate of acculturation among new arrivals.