The Cuban Exodus: Growing Complexity & Diversity

Jorge Duany
Cuban Research Institute
Florida International University
Main Objectives

1. Trace historical development of Cuban exodus
2. Describe socioeconomic profile of each migrant stage
3. Examine similarities & differences among "vintages"
4. Analyze diverse views about U.S. policy toward Cuba
Cuban Migration to the U.S., by Decade (Thousands)
Five Main Migrant Waves

Golden Exiles (1959–62)
- 248,070 persons

Freedom Flights (1965–73)
- 260,561 persons

Mariel Exodus (1980)
- 124,779 persons

Balsero Crisis (1994)
- 30,879 persons

Post-Soviet Exodus (1995–)
- 549,013 persons
The “Golden Exiles,”
1959–1962

Professional, technical, & managerial
Clerical & sales
Skilled, semi-skilled, & unskilled
Service
Farm

Cuban refugees
Cuban population
Transforming Miami
Operation Pedro Pan, 1960–62
The “Freedom Flights,”
1965–1973
## Comparing the First & Second Waves of Cuban Refugees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1959–62</th>
<th>1965–73</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median age at arrival</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (%)</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>57.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (%)</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>96.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Havana (%)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduates</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional &amp; managerial (%)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“El Refugio,” 1967
Resettled Cuban Refugees, 1961–72

- New York
- New Jersey
- California
- Illinois
- Florida
- Louisiana
- Massachusetts
- Texas
- Connecticut
- Pennsylvania
- Elsewhere
A Marielito in a Refugee Camp
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1973</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median age at arrival (years)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single (%)</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or mulatto (%)</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Havana (%)</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>41.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean number of relatives at arrival</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average years of education in Cuba</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No knowledge of English (%)</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional &amp; managerial in Cuba (%)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current median earnings per month ($)</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>765</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cuban Migration to the U.S. since 1989 (Thousands)
The Balsero Crisis, 1994
A Balsero in Miami
Occupation of Cuban Immigrants & Cuban Population, 2012 (%)

- Professional, technical, & managerial
- Sales & office
- Skilled, semi-skilled, & unskilled
- Service

Cuban immigrants vs. Cuban population
Support for U.S. Embargo of Cuba, by Year of Arrival

1959–64
1965–73
1974–80
1981–94
1995–2014

Favor
Oppose

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%
Support for Unrestricted Travel to Cuba, by Year of Arrival

- 1959–64: 75% Favor, 25% Oppose
- 1965–73: 50% Favor, 50% Oppose
- 1974–80: 25% Favor, 75% Oppose
- 1981–94: 0% Favor, 100% Oppose
- 1995–2014: 75% Favor, 25% Oppose

Legend: Favor in teal, Oppose in purple
Support for Diplomatic Relations between U.S. & Cuba, by Year of Arrival

- 1959–64
- 1965–73
- 1974–80
- 1981–94
- 1995–2014

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

Favor Oppose
The “Intransigents”
A Growing Generation Gap
Conclusions

Five stages of Cuba exodus since 1959

Different “vintages” over time

Diverse reactions to U.S. Cuba policy

Impact of U.S.-Cuba relations?