

Diasporic generation among Cubans in Spain



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Cubans in Spain



- Approximately 100,000
- History of mobility between Cuba and Spain – colonialism, Spanish migration to Cuba
- Heterogeneous group:
 - Different pre-migration experiences
 - Not a ‘community’
 - Not residentially clustered – no enclave
 - Diversity of migration trajectory, citizenship and legal statuses
 - Different perceptions of self: exiles or migrants
 - No shared organizational nexus; no mutual recognition
- Changes over time in homeland and country of settlement

Diaspora



- Historically used about Jewish, Greek & Armenian experiences
- Usage has spread since 1990s
- Policy interest and capture
- Increasingly used by émigré groups themselves
- Diaspora as:
 - Dispersal
 - Consciousness of an 'elsewhere'
 - Degree of exclusion, discrimination or 'not belonging' in country of settlement

Diasporic generations



- Generation: key concept in assimilationist and transnationalist studies of migration
- Diasporic generations (cf. Mannheim)
 - Historically grounded
 - Predicated on pre-migration experiences and migratory trajectories – *not* on age
 - Takes account of changes in both homeland and country of settlement

The exiles



- Arrived in Spain between 1959 and ca. 1980
- Middle-class from Havana
- Catholic
- Anti-communist and nationalist
- Revolution ‘made life impossible’
- Descendants of Spanish migrants to Cuba
- ‘White’
- Strong sense of community and connections to Miami exiles
- Mostly reject visits to Cuba

The children of the revolution



- Arrived in Spain from mid-1970s onwards
- Frustrated with revolution and career prospects
- University educated / intelligentsia
- From Havana
- 'White'
- Defected while abroad
- Critical of both government and exile nationalism
- Some travel to Cuba

The migrants



- Arrived in Spain from 1990s onwards
- Want ‘a better life’; not politically motivated
- Diverse in class background
- From Havana *and* the provinces
- More non-white
- No prior migration experiences
- Anti-political / homeland as affective networks
- Aspire to visit Cuba (not always possible)

- New generation: beneficiaries of the ‘grandchildren’s law’ (2007-11)?

Comparing Cubans in Spain and Miami



- Numbers matter
- Residential clustering and ethnic enclave vs. dispersal
- US: policy on Cuba nationally important; not so in Spain
- Language and culture: shared in Spain, not in US

- Cuban diaspora: not monolithic
- Need for historically grounded, contextual understanding of diasporic diversity
- Comparative usefulness of diasporic generation as concept
- Diasporic generation likely to be significant for future homeland engagement