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Introduction

On March 19, 1968, a few days after leaving Cuba, I arrived with my family at Newark Airport in New Jersey. Like many other Cubans, my family had decided to leave their country after the radical changes brought about by the Revolution of 1959. My uncle was waiting for us at the airport, and after a short ride on the New Jersey Turnpike, we reached Union City, our final destination. My uncle and his family had lived there since the early 1960s and they had seen this city change from a community mostly of European extraction into the second largest concentration of Cubans in the United States after Miami, Florida.

Although our relatives helped immensely in our transition to a new country, my adjustment was not easy. I had not wanted to leave Cuba. At twenty-one, it was difficult to leave behind not only my familiar environment, other relatives, and friends, but also the youthful dream, based on my religious beliefs, that I could contribute to a harmonious dialogue among believers, revolutionaries, and all those professing disparate ideologies but committed to creating a more equitable society. Instead, I found myself in another land, honoring my family's decision to leave a political system under which they did not want my sister and me to live. I could not remain in Cuba by myself. As my father said many times, "We either leave together, or we all stay here." His undisputed authority as the man of the house in a traditional, small Cuban town was stronger than my desire to stay, even though I was an adult. And, independently of how I feel today about our departure, my father's good intentions did not make the pain of leaving any easier for me at the time. I still shudder when I remember waking up on Saturday mornings in Union City forty-one years ago. The slow pace of the weekend magnified the unfamiliar sounds coming from the street, giving me a sense of unreality, a dreamlike feeling that was not eased by the fact that I knew some English. I can also relive the grief, fear, anticipation, and all the other emotions involved in the experience of migration.

Some Cubans had been in Union City since before the 1959 revolution, but the bulk of the community was formed in the 1960s and 1970s by those escaping the revolutionary government. Cubans who migrated after 1959 initially went to Florida, but the magnitude of the migration became too much for the state to handle, and many were resettled in other states. Union City, known as "the embroidery capital of the world" for the number of needlework factories located there, was a logical destination because of the number of jobs available to the newcomers. Within a short time, the adjacent towns of Union City and West New York in northern Hudson County, which overlook the Manhattan skyline along the New Jersey side of the Hudson River, practically became "Cuban towns," and Union City began to be referred to by many as "the second Cuban capital in exile."[1] This book traces the history of this migration, of which I am a part.

Union City Cubans were predominantly of working-class background. Those who had come before 1959 had been in search of economic opportunities, and the exiles left Cuba when economic conditions worsened after the Revolution in the late 1960s. Small entrepreneurs fled when they lost their businesses due to the Ofensiva Revolucionaria or Revolutionary Offensive, which nationalized what was left of private property. A good number of professionals also came to Union City as political refugees. Most medical doctors were able to validate their credentials. Other professionals, such as lawyers, found it more difficult to do so, and they became teachers or social workers. Although many Cubans were from Havana, the majority came from smaller cities and towns, especially in Las Villas, now Villa Clara, a province in central Cuba. This had been true since the 1950s, when people from Fomento and Placetas in Villa Clara constituted the great majority of

Cubans in Union City. Being from Camagüey in eastern Cuba, we were in a minority. But my family fit the typical profile of Union City Cubans. My father had worked in the railroad industry, and my mother, like many Cuban women, had been a seamstress who worked at home. Although generally of lower socioeconomic status than those who came in the early 1960s, Cuban refugees of the late 1960s and 1970s also shared strong anti-communist feelings. The waves of Cuban migrants up to the 1970s were considered the true political exiles.

Union City has experienced changes. Since the mid-1980s, a significant number of immigrants from elsewhere, mainly from other Latin American countries, have settled there. Additionally, many Cuban refugees from the Mariel exodus in 1980, and *balseros* who left Cuba in the 1990s by boat or homemade rafts, have come to Union City. As the new groups moved in, many of the early exiles began to leave. Some moved to neighboring cities in affluent Bergen County, and others left for Florida, but some remained. At the same time, legal Cuban immigrants have been arriving since a 1994 migratory accord signed by Cuba and the United States, and they are replenishing, if in some minimal way, the diluted Cuban presence in these towns. These new Cubans are encountering a very diverse community, made up of a myriad of nationalities: Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, Colombians, Salvadorans, Ecuadorians, Mexicans, and many more. Despite the diversity of the community, Cubans still hold some economic and political power, and Union City is still considered, at least symbolically, "the northernmost Cuban province."

That many of the early exiles moved out of Union City after two decades is hardly a surprise. We could say that history repeats itself. Traditionally in the United States, we have seen immigrants move away from the area of original concentration after they attain some economic security. Better schools for their children, the peace and quiet of the suburbs, the feeling that their old neighborhoods deteriorate as new immigrants arrive, and the attempt to assimilate into the mainstream of American society and culture have generally explained why immigrants move. In industrial Hudson County, the flight to the suburbs has been the experience for the Germans, Irish, Poles, Italians, Armenians, eastern European Jews, and others who were there before the Cubans came. Sociologists have conceptualized this phenomenon as "queuing" theory, and, especially in urban settings, it has been the predominant model of immigrant settlement.[2] What is different about the Cubans and other Latinos at present is that the immigrants are moving away from the original concentration, as opposed to their European predecessors, who usually became suburbanites in the second generation. Even more striking, as reported by the 2000 census, is that a greater proportion of newcomers are going directly to the suburbs.[3]

Not only in New Jersey, but also throughout the United States, the dynamics of current immigration are different from those that played out at the turn of the century. Contemporary migrants come predominantly from Asia and Latin America, not from Europe, and while the diversity within these populations in the United States is astounding, the immigrants of today are more visible because most are considered nonwhite.

The study of immigration and of the integration of immigrants into their new society is also changing. Traditional assimilation theories have been challenged by new perspectives. For example, some contemporary sociologists claim that immigrant concentration in certain locations may continue to be part of the nation's ethnic map, even for new generations. From a different point of view, many anthropologists and sociologists talk about transnational migrations, in which an immigrant experience is divided between the country of origin and the country of residence.[4] Instead of wanting to become part of their new home completely, new immigrants maintain regular contact with their home nations through visits, remittances, telephone calls, and, more recently for some, electronic communication. For many immigrants, the hope of returning permanently to their countries after they make some money becomes a goal. There is evidence that in the past, too, many longed for their homeland, and some wanted to return. However, going back was far more difficult than it is for today's immigrants.[5] Transportation was not advanced, and trips were very slow, costly, and time consuming. This is not to say that many of those who plan to return at present do so. Despite the benefits of modern technology and travel, most contemporary immigrants stay, raising their children here, just as earlier groups did. But there is an accelerated motion of people and resources around the world today that makes the migration phenomenon far more complex, and the analytical model of transnationalism increasingly accurate.

At the root of this movement are the profound changes brought about by the growing globalization of the economy. One of the negative consequences of this trend is that the polarization between rich and poor nations becomes more acute and the need for poor people in less developed countries to migrate to more developed ones more critical. Moreover, this economic dislocation is not restricted to one class. Although poor, uneducated labor migrants still represent the bulk of immigration in the United States, middle-class professionals and their families have also been joining the flow since the 1970s. In fact, an increasing proportion of recent immigrants are professionals and entrepreneurs.[6] Besides economic factors, people also leave their countries for political, religious, and ideological reasons. In many cases, some or all of these motivations converge. Thus, the traditional categorical distinctions between economic and political migrants may not be as useful in analyzing the very complex, multifaceted, contemporary population movements.

The Cuban Case

Although there were Cubans in the United States before 1959 who came primarily as economic migrants, the majority of those who entered this country after 1959 were afforded the status of *political exile* when they arrived. The long-term conflict between Cuba and the United States since the Revolution of 1959 explains why this group is treated differently. But even when strong economic reasons motivated Cubans to leave the island after 1959, Cubans' self-perceptions and the perceptions of non-Cubans characterize this group as different from other migrants. Politics, specifically anticommunist politics, is the motor that drives the Cuban community in the United States. Many scholars have written about the Cuban migration, particularly the post-1959 exodus.[7] Hence, I will only offer an overview as a necessary context for the subject of this book.

Cubans have emigrated to many parts of the world in different historical periods. However, the greatest share of the diaspora has settled in the United States. Ever since the days of the Spanish exploration and conquest of the New World, there has been a close link between Cuba and the United States, most notably with the Florida peninsula, but also with New York. Cuban immigration began in the nineteenth century. Perhaps the most notable immigrant of this period was Father Félix Varela, a priest who was involved in the movement for Cuban independence from Spain. Father Varela came to New York in 1823 after being expelled from Spain for advocating for greater Cuban autonomy. He died in Saint Augustine, Florida and never went back to Cuba. In 1869, immediately at the beginning of the Ten Years' War of Independence in Cuba, some cigar manufacturers moved their businesses to Key West, after which a flow of Cuban immigrants came to work in the cigar trade. The United States also served as a refuge for Cuban political exiles. The best known of these exiles is Cuban formost patriot José Martí, who lived in New York for fourteen years writing prolifically and striving for the island's independence.

During the first half of the twentieth century, U.S. investments in sugar production strengthened a sector that was already central in the late nineteenth century, but reinforced Cuba's economic dependence on the United States, its principal customer.[8] The volatile nature of the sugar market generated periods of growth and decline, creating opportunities for some, but dislocating many other citizens. During phases of economic depression, the country experienced high levels of unemployment, decreased wages, and heightened political instability. These hardships resulted in increased Cuban emigration to Florida and New York.

By 1950 there were 33,700 Cubans in the United States. However, the massive inflow of Cubans into this country started after the Revolution of 1959. In 1970, the first time the U.S. census separated the Hispanic population into nationalities, the number of Cubans had escalated to 439,000,[9] and it continued to climb in 1980 and 1990. The 2000 census reported 1,240,685 Cubans in the United States, including individuals of Cuban parentage.[10]

This massive Cuban migration was the result of radical changes brought about by the Revolution of 1959. Because of this, the social composition of this group, especially the early post-1959 refugees, was different from that of other Latin American communities in the United States. Post-1959 Cuban refugees were also different from the earlier Cuban immigrants. People leaving Cuba at the time were precisely those who in other poor countries do not need to migrate. The first wave of Cubans who came in the early 1960s represented the sectors of society that were most negatively affected by revolutionary changes: officers and personnel of the former Batista government, the mainly white, upper middle-classes, and professionals.[11] They left during the first couple of stormy years after the Revolution thinking that their return to the island was imminent because Fidel Castro's government would not last long.

Since the early 1960s, the U.S. government has played a major role in the Cuban immigration to this country and in the status of Cubans when they arrive here. In practice, U.S. immigration policy toward Cuban émigrés has been consistent with the country's refugee policy since the end of the Second World War. Refugee status was granted primarily to those immigrants coming from formerly communist countries. Special treatment of Cuban migrants thus began very soon after 1959. Between 1959 and 1962, Cubans who wanted to leave their country could obtain American visas in the American embassy in Havana or the American consulate in Santiago de Cuba. After the break of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1961 and the missile crisis in October, 1962, it was more difficult to emigrate. With the escalation of tensions, the Cuban government suspended commercial flights to the United States in 1962. In the meantime, a "visa waiver" program was implemented by the U.S. State Department with the agreement of the Justice Department that authorized Cubans to enter the United States. These waivers were issued by the Swiss embassy, which agreed to represent U.S. interests in Havana. Once Cubans received the visa waiver from the United States, they had to obtain an exit permit from the Cuban Ministry of The Interior. Then, in the United States, the Cubans were granted "indefinite voluntary departure" or "parole" status.[12] After 1962 it was hard to leave even after obtaining a visa waiver since there were no commercial flights between the two countries and the only way out was through a third country, namely Mexico or Spain.

One of the most disputed chapters of the early migration was Operación Pedro Pan or Operation Peter Pan. This program, which began in December, 1960, brought over 14,000 unaccompanied children to the United States. Designed and managed by the Catholic archdiocese of Miami, the exodus of children from Cuba responded to the great fears of many parents about the fate of their offspring under communism. The nationalization of private schools by the government, coupled with rumors that the authorities were going to remove the *patria potestas,* or parental rights, and send children to the Soviet Union, created panic among many Cuban parents, especially those from urban, middle-class backgrounds.[13] The removal of parental rights never took place, and Cuban authorities have always claimed that these rumors and actions were mere propaganda aimed at discrediting the Revolution.[14] Once in the United States, these children went to camps, orphanages, and foster homes. Most of their parents joined them later, but the trauma of being sent away at a very early age was not easily forgotten. After all these years, most "Peter Pan children" deeply appreciate what they see as their parents' sacrifice to send them to freedom, but others, even when they prefer to live here, profoundly resent a separation that they feel caused them irreparable damage.

During the first months of the Cuban exodus in the early 1960s, help to the refugees was provided by the state of Florida, but the extent of the migration overtaxed state resources and exacerbated frustrations among local residents about this massive human flood in their community. President Eisenhower authorized the funding of the Cuban Refugee Emergency Center to coordinate relief efforts and to administer a program of resettlement to other states. Resettlement of refugees had previously occurred in the United States with Hungarians fleeing the 1956 revolution in their country. But the Cuban Refugee Program (CRP), as it was called when President Kennedy became involved after 1961, became the largest, most expensive, and most ambitious program for handling refugees in U.S. history. Resettlement was handled through four voluntary agencies: The United States Catholic Conference, the Church World Service (Protestant), the United HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid), and the International Rescue Committee (nonsectarian). Whether resettled refugees were going to relatives in other states, to sponsors, or were simply taking jobs at a distance, they were given money for their transportation expenses and received a transitional grant by the CRP to help in their adjustment. In addition, Cubans received food, clothing, medical care, job training, college tuition loans, and other benefits. Perhaps the most important advantage offered to the exiles was the passage and implementation of the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act, which facilitated permanent residency status to Cubans a year and a day after entry into the United States. These benefits, coupled with the group's middle-class work ethic, have been instrumental in the integration of most Cubans into American society. There were obvious humanitarian reasons for accepting the exiles, but the political reason for bolstering the migration was pivotal. The small island of Cuba was key in the geopolitical battles of the cold war. The exodus from Cuba undermined a revolution that sided with the communist enemies.

As years passed, and their expectations of a prompt return to the island seemed less realistic, Cubans began to embrace their new country. They were successful in creating a prosperous economic enclave in Miami, which they consider the Cuban Mecca, but also in other places where they settled. Most wanted to bring relatives from the island to join them, but after the breakdown of diplomatic relations between the two countries, that was difficult if not impossible. As mentioned before, Cubans leaving the island between 1962 and 1965 had to do so through a third country, generally Spain or Mexico. Then, on September 28, 1965, Fidel Castro unexpectedly announced that the port of Camarioca in Matanzas province would be opened for all those who wanted to leave the country. Cubans in Miami rushed down to pick up relatives. To normalize the flow of immigrants, Cuba and the United States signed a memorandum of understanding starting the “Freedom Flights” as they were known here. These flights lasted between 1965 and 1973, and they brought the second vast wave of Cubans to the United States. This group included a higher proportion of blue-collar workers and small business owners than the previous one. Many of the typical Union City refugees came during this period. The second group was not very well received initially by the earlier exiles, mainly due to social-class differences, but gradually they were accepted. Overall, until the early 1980s, these two waves of Cubans were overwhelmingly white, had relatively high levels of education, and were ardently anticommunist. Their mainly middle-class positions or aspirations in Cuban society shaped their values, which brought them closer to mainstream America than to the majority of their Latino counterparts. Despite internal differentiations, these groups set the tone for both Cubans’ self-perceptions, and the perceptions of others about Cubans in the United States. Cubans did not feel that they were a “minority,” and they often became the example for Hispanic and other immigrants because of their hard-work ethic and their adherence to American ideals.

The third wave of Cuban migrants came when Fidel Castro opened the port of Mariel in Cuba in 1980 and permitted families in the United States to come and pick up their relatives. The Mariel exodus was preceded by a series of events that resulted in a major international crisis. These included a number of embassy invasions in Havana (mainly Latin American embassies), hijackings of Cuban planes and vessels, the continuing decline of the Cuban economy, and pressures from disaffected Cubans who wanted to emigrate.[15] The most dramatic event occurred on March 28, 1980, when a bus full of people who wanted to leave the country crashed into the Peruvian embassy in Havana and the occupants requested political asylum. A Cuban guard was killed during the incident. On April 4th, the Cuban government withdrew the guards from the embassy and announced that those seeking asylum would be allowed to leave the country. Within forty-eight hours, more than 10,000 Cubans had taken refuge on the grounds of the Peruvian embassy. After a series of flights from Cuba to Costa Rica, Spain, and Peru, which allowed the evacuation of the Peruvian Embassy, the Cuban government announced that the port of Mariel would be open for all Cubans wanting to leave. Cubans in Florida immediately organized a flotilla, which began ferrying the Cubans from Mariel across the Straits of Florida to Key West. About 125,000 Cubans came through the Mariel boatlift.[16] They were not from upper- or middle-class backgrounds. They were not even similar to the latest wave of the late 1960s and 1970s that brought a large number of working-class people. The refugees of the 1980s were generally younger and predominantly male, and the number of black Cubans in this group was significantly higher than that of previous exile waves: approximately 20 percent, compared with 3 percent.[17] There were also some law breakers and mentally ill people who were placed on refugee boats by government officials. Cuba's unofficial argument was that if the United States had for years encouraged the migration of well-educated, professional sectors of Cuban society, they should receive some poor, sick, and delinquent Cubans too. However, although the media inaccurately and undeservedly focused the attention on the criminals, many of the Mariel refugees were families. Research and personal testimonials demonstrate that many immigrants from this group have been as successful as their predecessors.[18] But for the first time in the Cuban migration, a high percentage of poor, dark-skinned, and less educated people, more representative of the Cuban population on the island, was added to the earlier waves of exiles. At first, Mariel Cubans were seen as heroes escaping to attain freedom, but when the differences between these and the early exiles became more evident, the Mariel migrants were discriminated against, even by their own people.

After Mariel, the U.S. government agreed to authorize 20,000 yearly visas for Cubans who wanted to emigrate. In reality, however, between 1980 and 1993 there was limited immigration from Cuba. The fourth wave of immigrants came in the summer of 1994 when masses of people left the country by boats or homemade rafts. The Cuban government openly allowed those who wanted to leave to do so. This decision came at a time when the country was experiencing the most severe economic crisis in its history. The 1989 collapse of the Soviet Union compounded the effects of the U.S.-imposed embargo. Large Soviet subsidies to the Cuban economy were no longer available. The response of the government to this emergency was to implement a *período especial,* or special period, a government program that enacted severe laws to combat the crisis in the long run, but which imposed further limits on consumption and restricted access to already scarce resources. One of these measures, implemented in 1993, was to legalize the use of the dollar as currency. Since then, life has become easier for those Cubans working in sectors such as tourism, where they are partly paid in dollars, or more importantly, for those who receive remittances from relatives in the United States. Others, who depend only on the devalued Cuban peso, face extreme difficulties. The discontent created by the special period has had social and political repercussions. A street riot, as well as the chaotic departure of thousands of Cubans, marked the summer of 1994. The dramatic events of that year included the death of dozens of people when a tugboat carrying adults and children trying to leave the country was intercepted and sunk by the Cuban coast guard. The United States accepted all boat migrants at first, but a change in U.S. policy directed the balseros, or rafters, to Guantanamo, the U.S. base in Cuba. Cubans in Guantanamo lived in very crowded and harsh conditions for months, but eventually they were allowed to come to the United States. When the balseros were brought from Guantanamo, another agreement resolved that the United States would return to Cuba all escapees found at sea.[19] While refugees picked up at sea were returned to Cuba, those who reached U.S. shores could stay and benefit from the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act. This policy is known as the wet foot–dry foot policy. As expected, these migrants came mostly from the poorest sectors of Cuban society and were those hurt the most by the economic crisis.

The 1994 migration chaos led to lengthy conversations between the United States and Cuba and the migration agreement mentioned above got under way, in which the United States agreed to grant 20,000 visas a year for Cubans who wanted to emigrate. Through a lottery system, Cubans who have presented proper documentation are randomly selected. They are interviewed by the U.S. Interests Section in Havana for approval. After this, they need to get their exit papers from the Cuban Ministry of The Interior. Those who are authorized to leave have to pay their airfare in dollars, which is usually done by their families in the United States.

Current migration from Cuba is different from earlier periods. Even when most migrants are opposed to the government, the majority of those leaving Cuba now cite economics as their primary reason for leaving. They come from all segments of society. They include the poor, but also a high proportion of professionals who were raised and educated in contemporary Cuba, which constitutes another "brain drain" for the island.

For Cuba, the emigration of its citizens to the United States has often provided economic, political, and ideological escape valves for internal pressures, albeit the departure of disaffected individuals has been portrayed as a betrayal of the Revolution. For the United States, the Cuban immigration has always been part of its foreign policy toward Cuba, although it has represented different things at different times. For example, the upper- and middle-classes and professionals left Cuba in the early 1960s because they strongly opposed the new government. That was also true of the migrants of the 1970s. These people were welcomed here as political refugees. Their presence helped the U.S. economy without creating great social upheaval. This selective immigration policy benefited the United States. Conversely, as discontent mounted on the island, the full boats of Cubans coming from Mariel in 1980 became a dilemma for the United States, not only because the migrants were different from the earlier exiles economically, socially, and racially, but also because a simultaneous flow of Haitian and other boat people was reaching Florida, making entry by Cubans more complicated. Shortly after Mariel migrants came, the exclusively Cuban relief system was replaced by the federally funded Refugee Resettlement Program (RRP) and the Cuban/Haitian Entrant Program. Cubans who had entered the United States before October 1, 1978, and had registered with the Cuban Refugee Center in Miami continued to be eligible for assistance under the CRP, but effective December 1, 1980, the program was phased out. The *marielitos*, as the Mariel refugees are sometimes known, received help through both the RRP and the Cuban/Haitian Entrant Program under the category of "entrants."[20]

The Mariel exodus was a factor in the change of refugee policy. The Refugee Act of 1980, signed into law by President Jimmy Carter, was intended to aid all refugees, irrespective of national origin. An obvious reason for this policy change was the strong criticism faced by the U.S. government in the wake of the simultaneous and chaotic influx of boat people from Cuba and Haiti. While Cubans were automatically being granted political asylum because they came from a communist country, Haitians were being denied that status even though they were fleeing very dangerous political conditions in their country.

Neither the marielitos nor the balseros encompassed the same social and political gains for the United States as the earlier exiles. With mounting anti-immigrant feeling in this country, the fact that many dark, poor people from Cuba were trying to illegally enter the country became a problem.[21] These migrants were not welcomed, not even by their own compatriots, who considered them rough, uneducated, and often lazy, attitudes that are changing as many of the recent arrivals become integrated into the new society. Nevertheless, although recent accords between the two countries have diminished the deluge of Cubans coming to the United States, many people continue to reach the Miami shores and some perish at sea. The famous case of Elián González, the six-year-old Cuban boy who survived a shipwreck in November, 1999, is one example.[22]

Though recent Cuban immigrants are no longer viewed as special, as the earlier exiles had been, all still enjoy preferences over other immigrants. Political refugees from other countries—Vietnam, Haiti, eastern Europe before the collapse of communism, El Salvador—have been granted entry into the United States, but Cubans enjoy additional benefits. The most important difference is the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966, referred to earlier, which is designed to facilitate the adjustment of Cubans' legal status after they arrive. Cubans who come legally as visitors, tourists, or in an official capacity and stay when their visas expire are allowed to apply for permanent residence after one year and one day of uninterrupted stay. These benefits are unique to Cubans, to individuals married to Cubans, or to children of Cubans. Critics of these policies claim that some of the forces that generate the Cuban migration are actually a Caribbean, even global, phenomenon. In the western hemisphere, Haitians and Dominicans escape dire conditions in their countries and do not receive the same treatment as Cubans do when they arrive here.[23]

The main reason for Cubans to leave their country now may be economic rather than political, but many recent immigrants have tended to claim political motives upon arriving in the United States. One reason is the pressure that they receive from the dominant, conservative voices of the exile community. A related reason may be that, by adopting the exile status, they obtain social and political advantages in their new country. On the other hand, some recently arrived Cubans have become disappointed with the conditions in the United States because they had an idealized notion of life in this country. Their value systems were shaped in a very different economic, social, and political context. Also, many are critical about exile politics, which they see as undemocratic. They believe that many Cuban-American political leaders engage in the same repressive and intimidating practices as the ones they criticize in Cuba.

As a result of the various moments in the history of Cuba, of the Cuban diaspora, and U.S.-Cuba policy described above, Cubans in the United States today have become a much more diverse population than they were in the 1960s and 1970s. Most exiles establish a difference between themselves and the "new Cubans."[24] They see themselves as socially superior and politically purer in their anti-Castro convictions than more recent refugees. The new Cuban immigrants, however, are more representative of Cuban society. They are professionals, artists, workers, black, and white. They also differ from the exiles in their relationship with Cuba. While the early wave generally shuns any openness to the island, most recent migrants hope for an end to hostilities between the two countries. Above all, they want their counterparts in Cuba to improve their living conditions. Many members of the first wave oppose visiting the island based on an ideological opposition to Fidel Castro's government, now headed by his brother Raúl. They believe that these visits help the communist government survive by bringing dollars into the country. Also, in many cases, they no longer have relatives there. On the other hand, the new Cuban immigrants return to the island very frequently to help their relatives with necessary dollars and goods. In part, their more frequent contact with the island responds to a relaxation in migration policy by the Cuban government. The early refugees were not allowed to return to Cuba until 1979, almost twenty years after the beginning of the mass postrevolutionary migration. Since the summer of 2004, however, it is the U.S. government that has imposed severe restrictions on visits back to Cuba.

The diversity of the Cuban community in the United States today raises a number of questions. How are Cubans from the different waves influencing each other? Will they continue to live in separate worlds? Given its present heterogeneity, will the Cuban community in the United States move to more moderate stands toward Cuba, and more realistic expectations of the United States? How do Cubans compare themselves with other Hispanics? Are Cubans different depending on the region of the country where they have settled? The answers to these questions require study. In some cases only time will tell. With this book, I want to make a contribution toward a greater understanding of these issues, which are both professionally and personally important to me.