THE GROWTH OF CUBAN LABOR AND BUSINESS IN SOUTH FLORIDA
AND THE EFFECTS OF MODERN GLOBALIZATION

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THE EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON CUBAN LABOR AND BUSINESS IN SOUTH FLORIDA

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ABSTRACT

Hispanic labor and businesses have been key contributors to the US’s economic growth over the last 50 years. While there are several Hispanic groups that make up the diverse Hispanic labor force in the US, few groups have been able to create an enclave as strong and influential as that of the Cubans and Cuban-Americans, the majority Hispanic group in South Florida.

Hispanic workers have struggled with challenges such as learning the new language and culture and finding employment while trying to incorporate themselves into American society. However, the history of Cuban immigrants has been remarkable for the stark contrast it presents in comparison with many minority Hispanic groups and their paths to assimilation.

The Cuban diaspora in South Florida comprises a wide range of backgrounds and embodies great strengths in tackling growing challenges to business, labor, and international relations in the US. The differences in
education, class, entrepreneurship, and political environment have molded the evolution of this diaspora and its workers.

As the impact of globalization cuts into the US sphere of influence, Miami’s majority Cuban and Cuban American population also faces growing external pressures. With the greater presence of South American immigrants and the rise of China in global markets, many fear that Miami’s prominence as an international hub may be in jeopardy. However, Miami’s position as a global city, buttressed by robust small businesses and strong entrepreneurial spirit will certainly combine to drive the labor market and trade for South Florida and the US.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my wonderful and understanding wife who has supported me throughout the years and impressed upon me the importance of self-improvement.

I would also like to dedicate this thesis to my mother who always taught me to be proud of where I was born and my father who always taught me to be proud of where I was from.
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INTRODUCTION

The Western Hemisphere has long enjoyed strong labor linkages among its member-states in the region. Historically, Latin American workers from various countries have moved around, primarily to the north, to seek out employment opportunities. This phenomenon has proven to be a great boon to the US economy, particularly in the manufacturing and agricultural industries, due to the availability of relatively cheap labor. It was also vital to labor-exporting countries due in large part to the economic impact of remittances. In Florida, these migrations and inflow of workers over the past 50 years has been primarily from neighboring Cuba. Since the 1950s, the relationship between Cuba and the US has been eventful. The Cubans have set up the US’s largest non-Mexican Hispanic diaspora in southern Florida. Cubans have been active in manufacturing and textiles, and in addition built a large number of small businesses, including those in the import/export arena, helping grow Miami’s position as a major port city and economic hub. However, with globalization, Latin America has been able to explore new business relationships with ease beyond those of
geographic proximity, putting into jeopardy the importance of South Florida’s position. This fact has had a powerful effect on regional relations, economics, immigration and labor. Furthermore, the social implications for migrant or immigrant labor in the US are also changing due to American corporations’ increased involvement in the international labor market outside of the Americas.

This thesis will attempt to synthesize the findings of research on the evolution of Cuban labor in Florida, Latin America’s approach to globalization, and South Florida’s position as a regional trade center. These findings will help assess the future of Cuban labor in the US and the region. I will begin by looking at the evolution of Hispanic labor in the US writ large. First, I will discuss the evolution of the Cuban diaspora and the political climate that led to their growth in the US and Southern Florida. Next, I will explore the development of the Cuban labor market, focusing on the “enclave” phenomenon as it applies to Cubans and Hispanics in the US at large. I will then turn to the globalization phenomenon and how it impacts both professional and blue-collar Cuban labor and relations in the region, specifically focusing on the Americas and Asian countries’ impact on US
manufacturing, goods and trade. Finally, I will compare this information to compose a picture of the overall effect of globalization on Cuban workers in South Florida. With this analysis I hope to illustrate the growth and/or decline in Cuban and immigrant labor and businesses in Florida and indicate the prospects for Florida’s Cuban trade and labor force, and globalization’s effect on the US and Latin American relationship.
CHAPTER ONE

HISPANIC WORKERS AND LABOR IN THE US

Americans believe the path to success lies in the strength of their professional and social networks and their family history. This has been the established pattern of life in the US. For generations, families have worked hard to advance their family’s name and ensure a bright future their posterity. Such is the typical economic struggle of a vast majority of Americans. However, there is another group, set a rung or two lower on the social ladder, which is still trying to make their place in America, the group known as “immigrants”. Immigrants have come to the US from many countries, arguably all of them. However, in the last 50 years, the group that has made the greatest impact on the composition, future, and direction of the American population is the Hispanic and Latino communities. South American, Central American and Caribbean nations are among the countries that fall under the classification of Latinos. Hispanic workers flee from countries with enormous rates of poverty and high levels of unemployment. Many of these individuals believe that the path that will lead to the greatest good for their family, and give them the best chance at the “pursuit of
happiness”, lies within the borders of the US. However, when these laborers arrive, they are not necessarily greeted with open arms. Instead, these workers encounter a multitude of challenges. They must continuously fight to secure a living and provide for their sons and daughters. Soon after their arrival, they find themselves in the murky waters of the US labor market.

Many studies have explored the arrival of immigrant labor in the history of the US. They follow the struggles of many of these foreign-born groups to their eventual incorporation into the American labor force. Their findings have revealed that without these immigrants, labor markets may have stagnated and slowed the evolution of present-day America. Since the nineteenth century immigrants from Europe, Asia, and Africa have arrived on US shores and continue to do so to this day. Each subsequent generation of immigrants has added a founding block to the US labor construct.

When studying any kind of immigrant group, one must look at the social environment that brings them to the country or helps them secure employment. Many of these new arrivals enter the States and quickly attach themselves to immigrant communities. In South Florida, the Cuban
community is among the largest of these groups. This diaspora is comprised of a social construct that gives immigrants the opportunity to create relationships and improve their social capital. According to Granberry and Marcelli, social capital "emphasizes how the existence of collective social resources (e.g., trust) stimulates interpersonal reciprocity that is useful for achieving desired individual ends. His principal message is that individuals will benefit socioeconomically if they participate in specific groups."¹ Through these relationships and networks, Hispanic immigrants are able to identify connections and become aware of opportunities that can lead to gainful employment, as well as create a social safety net for their families.

However, a key obstacle to the worker’s path to assimilation into the US labor force is often tied to their immigrant status. Unlike European immigrants of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, a large part of Hispanic workers, including Cubans, arrive in the US undocumented. This very significant factor contributes to

¹ Phillip Granberry and Enrico Marcelli, "'In the Hood and on the Job': Social Capital Accumulation among Legal and Unauthorized Mexican Immigrants," Sociological Perspectives 50, no. 4 (December 1, 2007): 581.
the fear and concern that immigrants have working within the country and will be explored further in this study.

Despite many of these challenges, Hispanics will remain a significant force and will likely help drive the US economy for years to come. The Hispanic population is currently the largest minority, surpassing African Americans since the middle of the 2000’s. These numbers are also reflected in the labor markets.

From 1976 to 1988, while the national labor force grew by 26% and the black labor force by 38%, the Asian American and Hispanic labor forces jumped by 103% and 110%, respectively and by the year 2000, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that Asians will account for 4% and Hispanics for 10% of the total labor force.

The path of the Hispanic worker in the United States is and will continue to be a tumultuous one. The influence that Hispanic workers have in the US continues to grow. The quantity of naturalization applications has increased every year for the past decade. Hispanic immigrants continue to influence economic and political decisions. Researcher Ruth Milkman provided a good synopsis of this in her contribution to the NACLA Report on the Americas:

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The nation’s political landscape is now permanently transformed, as the role of the growing Latino vote in last November's elections showed. And the underlying dynamics of this shift will only intensify in the years to come, as new immigrants continue to arrive and as birth rates among the foreign-born outpace those of the native-born.4

Hispanics come to the US to pursue opportunities in an open market. This is a place where anyone with the desire and will to succeed, can. However, this is also a place where the mere fact of their birth abroad has serious, primarily negative, repercussions within the borders of their North American neighbor. While many American laborers struggle with these same challenges, (i.e. securing employment) Hispanics also struggle for equal rights and the constant threat of discrimination. These hurdles became a way of life for Hispanics trying to navigate the complicated US labor market.

Xenophobia and American Perceptions

The time has come to address, in an appropriate fashion, the popular beliefs that the founding principles of American democracy and freedom are somehow being undermined by the entirety of the world’s population. The reality simply does not support such claims. The

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uninformed and the uneducated commonly point to the evils of immigration and the influx of foreigners. However, as Longworth states in his book, *Caught in the Middle: America’s Heartland in the Age of Globalism*, the overwhelming concern is more what immigrants represent than the immigrants themselves. In many cases, even government representatives find a scapegoat to help gain popular support and avoid the realities of policies and economic development approaches that are no longer working. These “witch hunts” that so often pepper the headlines of small town newspapers are nothing more than an escape from the realities of a labor and trade system that has continued to evolve. It is a “lack of economic diversification that has finally reached its maturity.”

In 1994, Governor Pete Wilson of California gained reelection by attributing the state's persistent high unemployment to illegal immigration from abroad. However, the real culprit was the post-cold war decline in defense spending, which had hit California's aerospace in duties particularly hard. As a campaign strategy in 2004, blaming

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"foreigners" was preferred to addressing the growing trade deficit.⁶

In this case, the representative preyed on the uninformed electorate and used it to gain popular support. But, the truth is that the US has been settled in the American way of doing business and has not wanted to adapt to the economic realities of the global economy. “The international economy is not the major factor increasing state unemployment....Additional social factors (education levels, percent minority, percent urban, and decline in mining and agricultural employment) must be taken into account to explain why high employment persists in particular states or regions.”⁷

Many US workers feared the increase in immigrant and Hispanic labor in the American labor pool. The rate at which Hispanics are entering the country and the continuous struggle to secure decent employment drives the American worker to find a scapegoat to explain the difficulties. In the last four decades, blue-collar


⁷ Ibid., 110.
laborers have feared that it was these Latino workers who continue to take “American jobs.”

However, the beliefs and wishes expressed by employers who make many of these choices tell a different story. The employers like the tenacity and determination of Hispanic immigrants:

Portrayals of immigrants as selfishly acquisitive and bent on stealing precious jobs away from native-born "Americans" are the flip-side of the classic discourse that lauds immigrants for their self-motivation, entrepreneurialism, and hard work, looking to immigrants to revalidate the ideal of upward class mobility popularly known as "the American dream."  

It would seem the distinction primarily lies in the decision-making of the employer. While companies are primarily concerned with their bottom line, some employers argue that it isn’t even necessarily the low wages that drive the search for Hispanic or immigrant labor.

For employers, citizenship status makes a difference in their control over labor and hence in compliance with the intensification of the labor process. One employer felt that immigrants tend to comply and do so in a "rather happy manner...." When a Latino employer was asked why he felt immigrants made up such a large segment of their labor force, he responded, "my bottom gut answer is that they'll accept any condition

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to work, to make money, to feed their families." Another employer reported that without immigrants, "we would probably have to hire more individuals to do the same amount of work. Generally you'll find that immigrants would do one and a half times the work.\(^9\)

**Conclusion**

It would seem that the American labor system has become complacent with the quality of life and pace of production in the country. When a new arrival challenges it, be it through technology, globalization, or labor, the status quo rebuffs the idea. The use of this labor and Hispanics has led to a monumental shift in American industry and the manner in which goods or services are provided.

With tightknit immigrant communities, family-assistance programs, and the need for a capable labor force, Hispanics continue to flourish as a group in US labor markets. They provide a capable labor force, are anxious to integrate themselves into the US economy and willing to gain influence and opportunities through hard work and dedication, without particular regard to entitlements. Despite all these prejudices, Hispanics have,

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and continue to be, a large cog in the American wheel of progress.
CHAPTER TWO

THE CUBA/US POLITICAL CLIMATE (1950-PRESENT): A BRIEF HISTORY

In order to understand the complex US-Cuba relationship and the nature of Cuban labor and immigrant communities that exist in South Florida, it is necessary to understand the unusual circumstances that led to the large influx of workers and immigrants from this small island nation.

The Arrival of Castro and the Embargo

Cuba has long had a history of rebellion and dictators. In 1952, after having served as president from 1940-1942 and living in the US for eight years, Colonel Fulgenico Batista was about to once again run for president of Cuba. Facing certain defeat, Batista organized a coup before the election that installed him in the country’s highest position. His administration was quickly recognized by the US. This relationship led to some of the most prosperous years in Cuba's history. American industry was welcomed with open arms and the US had a military strongman to protect its commercial interest in the region. Batista followed the US lead as opposed to fight it. The arrival of Batista was a feather
in the cap of the US’s Latin American foreign policy initiatives. A local, military strongman with US interests in mind. “In the eyes of most American policymakers and businessmen, the Cuban situation had been favorably resolved. By the 1950's, movies and tourism had replaced the old image of "our Cuban colony" with a new vision of "the enchanted island."¹

In early 1959, Castro, at this point a battle hardened revolutionary, cemented his position in Cuba along with Che Guevara as the answer to Cuba's poor and forsaken. He would rise to take de-facto control of Cuba after a bloody coup on January 1, 1959. A shaken Batista fled the country to seek refuge and left the capital city to Castro's revolutionary forces. This period would become the watershed moment for politics in the Western hemisphere for decades to come.

The US was quick to recognize Castro's regime and would attempt to establish a quick relationship, despite the cries of rebellion. The efforts would be for naught. The effect of the revolution on US interests in the region cannot be emphasized enough. The Batista regime for all

its faults was willing to be a staunch US supporter in the region and a guardian of US interests in the Caribbean, sandwiched between the US and South America. With Castro came a significant amount of distrust and disdain. He represented the opposite of the Batista regime for US diplomacy. This sudden shift, after years of US control and the nurturing of a patron-client relationship would break any and all influence in a country that was nearly a part of the US. With Castro’s arrival came reform, a change of the status quo, something the US was not ready for. US citizens and companies began to immediately leave the island. The US broke diplomatic relations in January 1961, after the Castro government began a policy of government appropriations and limits on land ownership by non-Cuban citizens. The US would impose an economic embargo only a year later.

The US trade embargo on Cuba is one of the most far reaching and enduring foreign policy decisions that has affected the region to date. As Scanlan notes in his essay, "The boycott of Cuba was probably the most intensive campaign of commercial isolation ever waged by one nation,"
and its allies, against another." These efforts would take the US on to the world stage to enforce this regional policy. The US believed that in order for the trade embargo to succeed and for Cuba to be punished, it would need not only the US and the Western Hemisphere to embargo the Cubans, but the world as a whole. "In February 1962, the State Department's Walt W. Rostow and Richard Goodwin visited Europe "to seek a crackdown by the NATO allies on trade with Cuba." The US was particularly bothered by the continued support of Cuba buy its northern neighbor, Canada, as well as Spain, Japan, Britain and France.

Among the many issues the US would deal with in the region, of particular difficulty was the growing relationship between Cuba and their Marxist ideological equal, the Soviet Union. This growing relationship would skew the influence that the US enjoyed and become a stark

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ideo logical affront to the position of the Monroe Doctrine. This, according to Perez Jr, would become an unacceptable intrusion into the US's sphere of influence. "Castro took over in Cuba, slowly strengthening his dependence on Moscow and thus confronting America with a patent violation of a revered item of our national credo (the Monroe Doctrine)."4 Castro's rise would also serve to demarcate the failures of US policy in the region and its inability to control local leaders and governments to instill its ultimate desires. "The US reaction also reflected a sense of failure and betrayal, as well as an awareness of the threat to our self-image and Caribbean hegemony that the success of Castro's Revolution represented."5

Cuban exiles would begin leaving to Miami and the US in the early years of the 1960s. The hope of an early US intervention, as had historically been the case, would not emerge. "From the very beginning, those settling in Florida were united by a common goal: to return to their

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home-land as quickly as possible." The thought of a permanent Castro regime to rule Cuba was not real in the minds of the more-US aligned members of Cuba’s previous capitalist-oriented society.

**Ford and Carter: Restructuring the Approach**

The heated negotiations of the previous 40 years would see a significant paradigm shift in the 1970's. During these years, the US and the world looked to establish a new political landscape with Cuba and a "reset" in relations. Author LeoGrande states in his essay "Cuban Policy Recycled" as follows:

> The policy of hostility had failed to destabilize the Cuban regime and had not noticeably deterred Cuba's export of revolution. At the same time, the advent of detente made Cuban communism seem less malevolent and Cuba's ostracism less rational. One by one, Latin American states began to abandon the sanctions, and Cuba responded by moderating its revolutionary zeal in favor of normal state-to-state relations. The carrot, it appeared, was a better policy lever than the stick. Within the OAS and even within the United States itself, pressures began building to normalize relations with Cuba.

Some of the sanctions in place during the previous years, a result of the trade embargo, were loosened. The

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6 Scanlan and Loescher, “Foreign Policy, 1959-80,” 120.

US approached the OAS to relax some of the international sanctions and consider resuming relations with Cuba. The US went so far as to drop the demand that Cuba cut ties to the Soviets.

The Carter administration was also eager to normalize relations:

The United States halted reconnaissance overflights and lifted the ban on travel to Cuba. The Cubans in turn released 4,000 political prisoners, including a number of US citizens. Havana also began a dialogue with leaders of the Cuban exile community, concluding agreements to allow exile visits to Cuba and to permit the reunification of families. These efforts led to the establishment of diplomatic interests sections in both capitals, a move one step short of diplomatic recognition.8

However, while strides were made by both presidents, the efforts would eventually fall apart as a result of Cuba's military campaigns, as Soviet allies, in Africa in the late 70s. Because of a succession of military conflicts in Africa, with Cuban and Soviet involvement, US-Cuba relations again became strained. The new deployment of Soviet troops and weaponry within Cuban borders would only further push the nation’s diplomatic efforts further apart.

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The Mariel Boat Lift and the Reagan Administration

In 1980, during the last year and a half of the Carter administration, Castro released a barrage of asylum seekers on the shores of Miami and the US causing a serious immigration problem and rift between the two countries. After a group of angry Cuban citizens broke through the gates of the Peruvian embassy in Havana, Castro announced to the people of Cuba that anyone who desired to leave the island could leave. "No fewer than 125,000 people showed up at the Mariel embarkation port, some of them mental patients and ordinary prisoners freed by Castro".9 This started a heavy diplomatic exchange between Washington and Havana and during this social uprising within Cuba's borders, Castro once again sought to instill his "rectification" campaign. A campaign "aimed at warding off the twin demons of "capitalism" and the "bourgeoisie." He closed down small farmers' markets that he authorized in 1980, claiming that peasants were getting too rich selling piglets, chickens, and garlic directly to private customers.10 These events and approaches cemented,

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in the minds of US policymakers, the evil of Cuban socialism and the threat that America would face if these efforts were not addressed.

**Present Day: The Need for Policy Evolution on Cuba**

With the arrival of Hugo Chavez on the world stage as a head of state in Venezuela in 1999, Cuba has seen a reflection of its previous self. The US, under President George W. Bush and the Obama administration, saw American public support toward Cuba grow. American interests, eager to find new markets during a recession, fighting a struggling economy, could benefit from normalization of relations. American citizens anxious to visit the island, serves as a testament that US perception on Cuba has changed. Two-thirds of Americans favor ending the Cuban embargo.\(^{11}\) Owners of large U.S-based hotel chains, casinos and business investors are clamoring at the opportunity to develop industries in Cuba.\(^ {12}\) Chavez has become the

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bogeyman in the region and is attempting to find support from a Cuba finally in transition. The US is beginning to turn towards a path of diplomatic exchange with Cuba. The Obama administration has made significant strides in softening the current blockade. President Obama has eased restrictions on family travel, remittances and student and educator exchanges.\textsuperscript{13} These initiatives represent a distinct shift in American overtures to Cuba and the US needs to ensure that propaganda efforts in Latin America do not dissuade Cuba from continuing toward normalization.

\textit{Conclusion}

The US has enjoyed a challenging and colorful past with Cuba and its allies. The arrival of the revolution sought to tear the country from the clutches of American control and influence. The challenges of the mid and late century stand in contrast to the current state of affairs. "The security imperatives that originally justified sanctions, based on the proposition that Cuba was an instrument of Soviet designs, to be contained on every occasion and countered at every opportunity, are no longer

The US has failed in its previous attempts to bend Cuba to its will. The US should seek to normalize relations and guide the country in the direction of international incorporation, lest it lose it permanently to rising socialist and radical faction in the hemisphere. The world has called for Cuban incorporation and the US stands as the primary gatekeeper. The US government should step aside and move forward into the 21st century with a benevolent relationship that will benefit the Americas as a whole for decades to come.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE COMPOSITION OF IMMIGRANT CUBAN LABOR

A remarkable strength and exuberance of feeling go with the Cuban blood. His language alone, his tongue, is all inadequate to express his feelings. He talks with arms, hands, face and shoulders, with all his body. All passion is excessive, swelling, boundless. Perhaps it is the climate; one cannot say. Yet the self-contained American is at once the envy and the despair of Cubans. They are, and they know it without being able to amend it, over emotional and over-excitable.

The Cuban spirit has always been a remarkable characteristic of the population of one of the Caribbean's most powerful and colorful Caribbean nations. Throughout history, the island's complex and fiery people have steadily moved about the globe seeking to establish a new direction for their tiny diasporas. In Spain, South America and other Caribbean countries, Cubans have seen their population increase significantly during 1960-2012, the span of this thesis. However, it is their input and contribution to the US that likely remains the most contentious and noteworthy.

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As early as the mid-1950s, a significant number of skilled workers and highly trained professional Cubans would leave the island nation and look to establish a better living abroad. Cuba has always been lauded for an exceptional education system, free of charge for Cuban citizens. However, much of the intellectual capital left the nation and abandoned Cuba’s large poor urban population and inadequate infrastructure. Of course, the Cuban nationals who left the country would have little attachment to the socialist ideals, platform and leaders, a mindset essential for life in Havana. Even from the very beginning, with the first “Golden Exiles”, Fagen and Brody’s point out that “professional and semi-professional persons (were) over-represented in the refugee community by a factor of more than five, while persons engaged in agriculture and fishing are under-represented by a factor of about 16.”\(^2\) These same immigrants were the product of years of a socialist education system and would leave the nation in dire need of greater numbers of highly-educated and specialized professionals. “Crash programs have been started in Cuba to replenish and expand the depleted ranks

of the managers, professionals, and technicians. But judging from recent reports in the Cuban press, there are still critical shortages of persons who combine the necessary skills with the required political loyalties."  

Currently, the composition of Cubans in the US is relatively diverse, but, that was not always the case. "(Until the 1980's) The Cuban-origin population of the United States exhibit(ed) two demographic characteristics not usually found in groups of recent immigrants: a high proportion of elderly persons; and a numerical predominance of females." These earlier immigrants were higher on the social ladder with material resources and higher education. Families with pensioners tired of the promises of Cuban socialism and eager to reconnect with loved ones abroad would leave for Spain and their northern neighbor. Women, who readily worked in Cuba, would look to better their predicament in an open economy. Once all that

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3 Fagen and Brody, “Cubans in Exile,” 400.

could leave left the island in the sixties and seventies, little of Cuban high society remained.

However, in the eighties when Castro reopened the island, the composition of the emigrants had changed.

Mariel exiles were from the lower classes in Cuba and more than 20 percent nonwhite. The influx of nonwhite, lower class émigrés complicates the stereotypical picture of the successful Cuban exile. From the start, Mariel exiles maneuver along distinguishable paths of adaptation, with race playing a defining role in these trajectories.\(^5\)

But even within this segmented Mariel group, the composition of the exiles was diverse. The first wave consisted primarily of white emigrants who were considered part of family reunification efforts. However, the later arrivals, eager to try their hand at an American success story, would be composed primarily of single and black or mulatto males. “Ninety percent of the early Mariel arrivals were white, compared to an estimated 50 percent for the later samples. The larger proportion of blacks and mulattos in the Flotilla population added a new dimension to the Cuban exile community in the United States.”\(^6\) This

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\(^6\) Ibid., 458.
would become a new phenomenon within the US and the Southern Florida demographic, particularly.

Race and ethnicity would continue to become a factor as Cubans began to move out of Florida to the rest of the US. Cubans looked primarily to large urban areas to further assimilate into the American way of life. For example, in Margaret Boone’s study, "The Social Structure of a Low-Density Cultural Group: Cubans in Washington, D.C.", the author found that, “Although Cuban immigrants in Washington have been able to re-work many social status markers in adjusting to American society, they have been unable to transpose their Hispanic classification of social types based on skin color.”⁷ One of the manners in which several Cubans would look to change their caste and class is by marrying “native” white Americans. Rieff notes,

Certainly, many (Cubans) are intermarrying with non-Cubans in Miami, and while the upper echelons of the South Florida business and professional establishments remain overwhelmingly Anglo, the incoming cohorts of doctors, lawyers, brokers, and entrepreneurs are heavily Cuban in origin.⁸

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Along with the racial composition, the education of the later groups demonstrated interesting distinctions, particularly with regard to class and education level.

"The percentage of immigrants that completed four or more years of college is the same as the corresponding figure for the total US 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 US figure and comparable to the levels of the Mexican and Puerto Rican populations." 9

Historically, unlike most other immigrant groups with a long history of arrival on the American soil, the story of Cubans in the US is a relatively new one. While Cubans in the US were a "relatively insignificant (immigrant) group in pre-Castro days (it) has grown to become the second largest foreign-born minority in the country and the third-largest Hispanic group." 10 And as of the 2000 census, there were over 1.25 million Cubans in the US. These figures have increased significantly since then.

But, despite the diversity of the educational, race and employment make-up of the earlier arrivals, one thing

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that remained exceptionally constant was the area in which they began to settle, i.e., South Florida.

**The Geographic Concentration of Cuban Labor Force**

In the US, Cubans now enjoy an important minority position. However, much of the interest in the Cuban communities revolves around their concentrations in Miami-Dade County in Florida. This is not unlike a similar construct with Mexican migrant laborers in Texas and California. However, according to scholar Lisandro Perez, more than half of the Cuban population resides outside of the county (Miami-Dade).  

11 Cubans have done an excellent job of moving out from the home base of Miami to explore opportunities elsewhere. In "The Magnetism of Miami: Segmented Paths in Cuban Migration," the authors best describe the geographical spread of the Cuban population by coining the term "ethnic archipelago". In the case of Cubans, this term can best be described as "a network of urban clusters anchored by Miami."  

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around the US maintain contact and relationships with Miami while still striving to make inroads and progress in other parts of the US. However, one fact is certain, unlike other minority groups; Cubans that move about the country do not necessarily stay within a state, coast or even travel in a general direction. For example, a significant Cuban population exists in the relatively isolated Chicago region. As a matter of fact, “The Cuban-origin population of the United States surpasses the total US population, as well as every other major Hispanic group, in the proportion that resides in metropolitan areas. Slightly more than 97 percent of all US Cubans live in standard metropolitan statistical areas.”¹³ This is in stark contrast to Mexican migrant laborers who tend to flock to smaller agricultural/industrial centers that are often located in smaller manufacturing towns. The Cuban phenomenon can be, in part, attributed to the efforts of the US government following the waves of immigrant and refugees that came to America. The US tried to disperse the large quantity of Cubans that arrived on Miami beaches, to help alleviate the strain of the immigration onslaught on the areas’ services. A bit of the phenomenon can also

be attributed to the skill and labor markets, which are normally concentrated in these city centers. In so far as it pertains to ethnic groups, Cubans are not alone in seeking to settle in large cities.

Professional immigrants arrive in the United States already possessing English proficiency and higher levels of education to assume professional positions. This type of selective migration is often discussed in reference to immigrants from countries such as India, Taiwan or the Philippines.\textsuperscript{14}

However, the fact remains that the single largest concentrations of Cubans and Cuban workers is within South Florida. Researcher David Card spoke about this when he referenced the 1985 Current Population Survey in his piece for the “Industrial and Labor Relations Review.” In it he found that the Mariel immigrants grew Miami’s labor force by 7% and the growth in “lower-skill” occupations was even less as these later immigrants had few skills. However, of note was the relative non-effect that this large influx had on wages or unemployment of unskilled workers, even Cuban laborers.\textsuperscript{15}


With the Mariel boatlift, about 60,000 refugees arrived on Miami’s shores in a 6 month period. Among the most interesting points of the period, is the relatively minimal impact that the influx had on the labor market and employment situation in South Florida. David Card suggests that in studying the Mariel immigration issue, one can begin to identify a long-term pattern that sets Miami apart from other large US cities.

Two factors (may) have been especially important in facilitating the absorption of the Mariel immigrants...Miami’s industry structure and the relatively high concentration of Hispanics in Miami... (this) may have had smaller effects than could be expected for other immigrants in other cities.\textsuperscript{16}

There are several studies that point to the reasons for eventual relocation to Miami after either a government transfer or a self-directed move. It seems the draw of the established Cuban community in the area continues to drive US-based Cubans back to Florida.

Miami does indeed command a large share of the interregional migration in the Cuban archipelago. Miami posted an in-migration of 35,776 Cubans from elsewhere in the United States between 1985 and 1990 and an out-migration of 21,231, mostly to elsewhere in Florida.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{16} Card, "The Impact of the Mariel Boatlift," 246.

\textsuperscript{17} McHugh, Miyares, and Skop, "The Magnetism of Miami," 511.
Some have hypothesized that a great deal of the success of Cubans in the US, and immigrant assimilation as a whole within the US, is due in great deal to “legal status and “immigrant enclaves”. Exploring these two issues, we will be able to better understand growth of this influential minority group.

The Question of Legal Status

When we discuss Cuban labor and assimilation we must discuss the issue of immigration and political status. Unlike other minorities we are discussing in this study, Cubans were able to take advantage of liberal visa quotas, residency status as well as government benefits. In the history of Cuban immigration, “emigration rates (had) varied with U.S. law, Castro's tolerance and encouragement of emigration, and ordinary Cuban informal covert efforts to leave.”\(^{18}\) However, this process saw significant transformation from the beginning, in the 1960, to the heights of the exodus in the 1980s. “The first-wavers

benefited from immediate unconditional refugee status and from public programs easing their adjustment.”

Coming in the heat of the Cold War, Cubans benefited from privileges not offered most other émigrés. For one, under the 1952 McCarren-Walter Act, islanders, defined as victims of Communism, were exempt from national immigration quotas in effect at the time. Second, Cubans benefited from some $957 million worth of official federal, state, and local level programs initiated to help their adaptation....Third, the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act eased émigré qualifications for permanent residency status (and citizenship, in turn), and for benefits typically available only to U.S. citizens (such as Medicare).

These circumstances greatly eased the political and legal challenges that traditional immigrants struggle with, before they contend with the challenges of actually securing employment. Further, the composition of the earliest émigrés boded well for the labor pool and economy of the US.

The approximately 672,000 émigrés who arrived before 1980 came to include, in rough chronological order, officials of the Batista government, the upper class, businessmen and professionals, small shop owners, and others of the middle class... With the exception of laborers, the emigration entailed a class exodus.

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20 Ibid., 804.

21 Ibid.
However, during the height of the Mariel and the mass exodus in the 1980’s the immigration and political environment toward Cuban shifted significantly. A great deal of this uncertainty was directly related to the US’s tenuous political relationship with the region.

Émigrés since 1980 (and especially since the 1990s), in contrast, were less welcome in the United States but more welcome in Cuba. Washington by then had cut off programs for arriving islanders, while Cuban Authorities permitted émigré visits within five to ten years after their island departure.22

This transition negatively affected the environment of the Cuban population and their success in Miami.

While the legal status of Cubans was a great advantage to assimilation it does not completely explain the Cuban labor picture or the success of Cubans in the US. The main source of support and help to this group may lie specifically in the congenial and protective environment provided by their support group in the US. Portes and Stepick state:

...places of settlement in the United States can also condition the probability of escaping unemployment. In synthesis, results showed that it is not how much education Cuban and Haitian refugees brought or how much English they learned, but where they settled, whether they were male and married, and how much support they

extracted from their kin networks which determined their chances for entry into some form of regular employment.\textsuperscript{23}

These groups or “enclaves” tell the greater story of Cuban success in the US. Several authors have studied the question of enclaves in the US and the work of Alejandro Portes, one of the pioneers in exploring the concept of the "enclaves" and their impact on minority communities, serves as a strong foundation on the topic.

The Cuban Enclave

The “enclave” is a phenomenon that is relatively unique to immigrants in the US. Many of these groups arrive isolated from family and cultures and find they need to quickly become a part of a system that will provide them safety and personal relationships. Portes states:

An enclave is distinguished by geographic concentration rather than population size. Enclaves provide opportunities for economic advancement and include immigrant enterprises that promote diversification. Being a function of occupational heterogeneity, enclaves are organized along ethnic lines, with subsequent

waves of immigrants in that group providing previously established immigrant entrepreneurs with first choice of their labor.\textsuperscript{24}

These groups and businesses would then provide a "step-up" to newer immigrants as those immigrants that have become more successful would move on. The owners of these businesses would provide fair employment opportunities for the newcomers. This enclave idea is as follows:

\ldots(it) suggests that wages in the ethnic enclave economy are comparable to those in the open labor market. The hypothesis claims that unlike other immigrants who may begin at the lowest levels in the open market, Cuban refugees have the enclave as a viable alternative, providing them with economic benefits comparable to those in the open market.\textsuperscript{25}

In places such as Miami it is possible to live exclusively within the enclave. These concepts are often explored when discussing other social groups such as the Chinese and Mexicans. Davis supports the thought explaining "that in larger differentiated enclaves, immigrants could exist without extensive interactions


\textsuperscript{25} Davis, "Beyond Miami," 450.
outside their ethnic group.”

Because of the challenges facing newer immigrants trying to incorporate themselves into the greater labor market, many turn to the enclaves and self-employment to make a living.

In supporting the strengths of the labor market within the Cuban enclave, it is useful to look at the larger labor market forces. Scholars often discuss the concept of a dualistic labor market. In Heike Albert’s study “Changes in Ethnic Solidarity in Cuban Miami”, the author opines that in any market there exist two separate labor markets, and in many cases the rise of a third. First is the primary labor market, comprised of large companies and multinational firms that provide good paying jobs, security and benefits. The secondary labor market, according to Albert, is characterized by low paying jobs with little opportunity for growth and even less job stability.

As it relates to Cuban immigrants, many Cubans have been able to successfully incorporate themselves into the primary labor markets, particularly the earlier professional immigrants whose skills were relatively easy

26 Davis, “Beyond Miami,” 452.

to transfer to the local job market. However, the challenges for Cubans and immigrants as a whole, relate to this particular market incorporation, as the majority of Hispanic immigrants work in these secondary markets. However, in the curious case of Cubans in Miami, there exists the following:

...a third way for immigrants to be inserted into the labor market: the ethnic-enclave economy. The ethnic-enclave economy is believed to be superior to the secondary labor market because it offers returns on human capital, opportunities for advancement, and benefits similar to those in the primary labor market—while allowing immigrants to retain their ethnic traits, including the use of their mother tongue in the workplace (Portes and Bach 1985).28,29

Many of the early arrivals from Cuba in the fifties have been able to assimilate in the larger labor market in the US. And many of these immigrants were the anchors for what was to become the enclave community or “ethnic economy”30 in South Florida. However, for a large portion of the early arrivals assimilation was important, only


after securing contracts, contacts and employment in the area was the enclave community able to flourish. But, what drove the economy of Florida in the mid-twentieth century? What industries facilitated Cuban immigrant labor during the early periods? In exploring the period, we find manufacturing, textiles and tourism at the top of the list.


When the early Cuban immigrants arrived in Southern Florida, the area was known for its manufacturing and textile industries and the construction industries that helped keep pace with the growth of Miami. As early as the mid-1940s, Miami became a mecca for clothing production and textiles, specifically sportswear. During that time, South Florida was “the nation's third largest producer (of sportswear) behind New York City and the state of California.” And the primary labor force for this industry was minority women, primarily Jewish and Cuban.

The growth of tourism during this time was a boon to local businesses and industries, and riding the coattails

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32 Ibid.
of the leisure and sportswear industries, over the next 20 years, South Florida, and Miami in particular, became the third largest producer of sportswear in the United States. "Jewish garment manufacturers from the Northeast relocated to the area to provide the facilities and know-how. Women from Central America, and especially Cuba, became an inexhaustible source of labor." 

But in studying the enclave phenomenon in South Florida, we find that it wasn’t just the primary and secondary labor markets that supported the earlier immigrants. Cubans were quick to identify opportunities and often sought to employ other immigrants, thanks to contacts in the enclave communities. And the growth of labor opportunities that Miami needed to leverage heavily favored the Cuban diaspora. As a consequence of the growing support minority businesses also expanded. Cuban-owned enterprises in the Miami area increased from 919 in 1967 to about 8,000 in 1976. While most of them are small scale, some employed hundreds of workers. Enclave firms tend to concentrate on textiles, leather, furniture, cigar making, construction, and finance. An estimated 40 percent

33 Clemente, “Made in Miami,” 127.

34 Ibid, 142.
of the construction companies are Cuban owned, and emigrees control roughly 20 percent of the local commercial banks (Time 1978; Clark 1977). There are also some investments in agriculture, especially sugar cane plantations and sugar mills.\textsuperscript{35}

Thanks to the enclaves, Cubans were able to find fair and better paying employment outside of the primary and secondary labor markets. This is in stark contrast to other Hispanic minority groups that had to contend with the challenge of securing wage employment in the US. Mexican laborers as a group have been at the mercy of the secondary labor market and have had only limited opportunities in the primary and enclave markets. They had to take far different approaches to secure fair treatment than many Cubans arriving in Miami. The evolution of Hispanics in labor unions to help protect worker rights was a measure that few Cubans adopted, or needed to adopt, thanks to the flourishing local enclave. In exploring the differences between the two groups we are able to see how enclaves, regional populations and overall labor market conditions enabled many Cubans to avoid the issues of the

\textsuperscript{35} Wilson and Portes, “Immigrant Enclaves,” 303.
secondary labor market. However, when we look at the challenges Mexicans migrants have had with labor assimilation, we find just as many differences as similarities.

Cuban/Mexican Labor Study: “Unions” and Contrasts

With the earliest arrivals of Cubans to the US shores, the golden exiles came with a wealth of education and degrees; however, as the Mariel exodus began to appear on Miami shores, the overall impact of low wage labor increased as did the overall job market. When discussing the Mariel exodus, many parallels can be drawn with Mexican migrant labor patterns in the US in the early 80s. Many of the jobs that employed these immigrants, whether legally or illegally were found in mid-to large-industries and focused on the production of goods and construction in a primary and secondary labor market.\footnote{Clemente, “Made in Miami,” 127.} The Cuban and Mexican workers seemed to take two separate approaches in expanding their representation.
Mexican Worker Organization and Unions

The need and desire for Mexicans to secure meaningful employment and to be able to provide for their children and families have led them to explore membership in US labor unions. The American worker began to seek the protection of the labor unions in the late 1800’s when the lack of jobs led to abuses by large industries and corporations. If these large bargaining groups could represent the Mexican workers they could provide them a voice and better working conditions than individual negotiation with employers. Studies have shown that unions as an aggregate do an excellent job of securing fair wages for minority groups and employees.

To the extent that union membership continues to provide a firm economic foundation for otherwise disadvantaged groups, these findings portend economic gains over time and across generations for Hispanic immigrants and their offspring who have jobs in labor market positions still amenable to unions.37

But the transition was not an easy one. Migrant workers, particularly Mexican migrant workers, had sought protection from the moment of their arrival in the US.

However, one of the main barriers to organization was the very type of work that migrant laborers performed.

The question for unions has been not only how to overcome the overwhelming power of the state and the employer to shape farm workers’ lives, but also how to produce a more cohesive movement within the context of the seasonal nature of food production and the traditions of workers. One of those traditions has been mobility, an essential aspect of the grape-growing process in California and a notorious obstacle to attempts to control the hiring process by national labor unions.  

While a great many unions were in existence over the last few decades, the major influx of Hispanic laborers did not occur until the 1970’s. During this time, the number of migrant workers began to flourish in the agricultural industry and had no representation. These unions, eager to grow their membership began to explore the addition of migrant Hispanic laborers to their ranks. The move was met with some resistance. The start of these challenges began in the 1970’s with a strong anti-union effort.

...(it) rekindled long-standing tensions between organized labor and the nation's fastest growing minority group. In Los Angeles, unionists were "openly hostile" to Mexican workers pouring into the local labor market during the 1970s and 1980s. Worries about the destabilizing impact of

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ethnic divisions surely motivated some of the hostility.\textsuperscript{39}

Despite these misgivings, in the 1970s, the unions in these industries saw their membership swell with the Mexican and other Hispanic workers. However, with the sharp decline in the power of unions in later years saw Mexican laborers, like Cubans, turned to social networks and outside groups to secure fair employment. “In the absence of unions, in the mid-1990s South Omaha meatpacking workers turned to their local priest and to a community-based organization affiliated with the Catholic Church, OTOC, for assistance in improving their jobs.”\textsuperscript{40}

While a vast majority of the immigrants from Mexico and Central and South America were male, sending remittances home to support their families back home, Mexican women, like Cuban women, made a strong impact in supporting families; in the case of Mexican women they were incorporated into US unions.

\textsuperscript{39} Rosenfeld and Kleykamp, “Hispanics and Organized Labor,” 919.

While the number of female workers in construction and agriculture is not as significant as the number of males, in manufacturing and hospitality, the keystone of South Florida’s industries, their numbers are more significant than their male counterparts and to this day make up the majority.

In industries such as hospitality, women have always found a welcoming workplace. These businesses relay heavily on interpersonal relations, have always leaned towards employing women. Many employers stated that some of these fields required a “women’s touch” and Latinas were identified as some of the most attractive candidates. But while the “women’s touch” explains the predilection for female employees, the preference of Latina women can be explained in less flattering terms. Margaret Zamudio explores the following in her research:

...the underlying assumption is that women are "natural" caretakers. In the hotel industry, a similar principle applies and employers look for employees with hospitality skills. As one employer put it, they have "the natural inclination to want to please, help, and serve others. Something that you can't train someone to be." The notion that immigrant Latina/os are more inclined to serve than to be served, and the expectation that they act accordingly, sets
the context of oppression that these workers experience.\textsuperscript{41}

These abuses also lead women to turn to the labor unions, many times creating communities of their own, without male participation. In the infancy of Hispanic representations in US labor unions, women were instrumental in organizing worker’s strikes.

This, at first glance, was the experience of the Chicana garment workers who from 1972 to 1974 participated in a strike at the Farah Manufacturing Company in El Paso, Texas. When 4,000 workers walked out on strike in 1972, demanding to be represented by the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers' Union, they were confronting the city's largest industrial employer and pitting themselves against El Paso's famously antiunion local patriarch.\textsuperscript{42}

The labor unions were a strong calling for Mexican and Hispanic immigrant labor in the US. Women and men alike sought to maintain a fair wage and looked for organization and union to provide protections in the absence of more developed enclave business communities. Cubans, however, had a different path.

\textsuperscript{41} Zamudio, “Alienation and Resistance,” 62.

Cubans and National Unions

Looking at the impact that unionization had on labor in the 1970-1980s, particularly with Mexicans, it is noteworthy that one observes only a minor level of growth for Cubans in unions in the US. Cubans have a national identity that was forged under a Socialist doctrine and the idea of workers as a representative of the people. Cuba’s unions, and the CTC, Cuba’s unified national federation have existed since 1939.43 This unionization helped shape the country’s productivity during particularly trying times.

It is hardly surprising that Cuban unions support a revolutionary process that has created one of the healthiest and best-educated working classes in the world, in a developing country blockaded by a hostile superpower.44

These groups are also not subjected to the restrictions and control that one would associate with the controlling dictatorship on the island.

Cuban law does not regulate the internal affairs of unions (a rarity in the modern state), nor, contrary to a popular myth, does it outlaw

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44 Ibid.
strikes. Organisationally, the CTC and the unions are legally autonomous and financially independent; their activities and paid posts self-financed by members subscriptions. Politically, the unions support the Revolution, accept the Constitution, and therefore accept the leadership role of Communist Party. 45

So why then do Cubans choose not to embrace this popular and seemingly effective model in the US? It would appear that given the success of Mexican and the larger Hispanic community gaining access to the American unions, Cubans could do the same. However, this has not happened: once again we find that much of this is due to the particular strength of Cuban-owned small business in the South Floridian community and the labor market that was positioned to accommodate such growth. While there are smaller segments of the Cuban population that have embraced unions, particularly in the manufacturing industries, a great majority found meaningful and fair employment within the exile and enclave community of Miami.

The New Shores of Entrepreneurship

There is a belief in minority circles, that among all the Hispanic minority groups, the Cubans enjoy the most success. Much of this belief is founded on the exceptional

pedigree of Cuba’s first waves of immigrants that arrived in the US in the 1960s and 1970s. Educated and professional immigrants looking to escape the oppression at home, their success was almost assured as their education, social standing and connections in Cuba would provide the keys to success in any country that would have them. When they arrived in the US, they attained a high degree of success that was in many ways equal to the native population. Perez states:

> The median family income of Cubans is compared with the income of all US and Spanish-origin families. The figure for Cubans is closer to that of all US families than it is to the family income of all Hispanic families.46

> These higher incomes are a rarity among most immigrant groups in the US, especially in the first decades of transmigration. A well-established Cuban support system and in particular generous family support ensured that many of the first generation immigrants enjoyed this higher earning potential:

> Whereas less than 2 percent of Mexican and Puerto Rican households had an annual income of $50,000 or more in 1980, the corresponding Cuban figure was 5.2 percent, about the same as for

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the total US population – 5.6 percent (US Bureau of the Census, 1983). 47

These income numbers continued to grow and, by 1989, median household income of the Cuban population in Miami stood at $35,091, just below the figure for the US population ($36,520) and fully $7,000 above the average for the US Hispanic population. 48

A large part of this success can be explained by further studying the composition of the immigrant households. Unlike the overall US household statistics, the majority of Cuban households that enter this survey enjoy the benefit of having multiple earners. As is the case with Mexican and Central American immigrants, women are a key component of the Cuban immigrant workforce. The predominance of the female immigrants early in the exodus to the US and a Cuban culture than encourages women to work contributes to the higher figures. "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.”

There is one important factor that contributes heavily to the ease with which Cubans have been able to melt into the US labor machine. The lack of a significant capture industry, a large predominant national industry that exists in their home countries that is developed in the “receiving” country, like sugarcane in Cuba, has allowed Cubans to explore a wider range of opportunities. These niches which prove necessary to other minority groups are not as large a concern for these Caribbean nationals.

By default, non-entrepreneurial groups make up large shares of employees in private and public sector employment. “For African Americans in both sectors, between a third and half of the active labor force is captured in these sectors, more in the public than in the private. Puerto Ricans have a similar pattern, though with somewhat smaller percentages in each sector. In contrast,

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wage employment niches are of little importance for Koreans, Chinese and Cubans.”  

While many other minority groups would be content to join the array of US industries offering wage employment, Cubans seek to build their own opportunities often with help from family circles. While the sugar and tobacco and agriculture industries are well developed in Cuba and exist in South Florida, many moved to the US to pursue other interests. Self-employment and new business, something the socialist country controlled very tightly, would have been high on the list of potential outlets.

The revival of large-scale immigration has highlighted another feature of the twentieth century metropolis: the immigrant proclivity toward small-scale business enterprise as an alternative source of livelihood. Select immigrant minorities have secured strong positions as business owners or self-employed workers in certain economic sectors. This is true of the Cubans in Miami.

This fact is often one of the more significant entry points for Cubans into the general economy and labor market. But, it is also the case for other immigrant groups struggling to join the larger primary labor market.

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Studies show that the probability of opening a business is higher for ethnic than for dominant economy employees and that the rewards of ethnic entrepreneurship are considerable...establishing the true reason for disparity.\textsuperscript{52}

Considering many immigrants arrive with little education, the enclave may prove to be the only ensuring opportunities for a decent living wage. Many agree with the proposition that plenty of work is available for newly arrived immigrants within the Cuban-controlled job market.

Most stay in Miami, where (in 1980) approximately ten percent of businesses, including several relatively large ones, are in the hands of members of this minority. The existence of this economic "enclave" can attenuate some of the sharp differences in the open labor market.\textsuperscript{53}

Scholarly works on the subject agree that Miami and its small business community is a major index for labor growth and opportunity in Miami.

From 1996 to 2007, business establishments increased to 410,000, with businesses with two to nine employees increasing employment by 296,000, while sole proprietors — one employee/owner — increased by 60,000, he said. Over that same period, there was a net gain of 185,000 business

\textsuperscript{52} Logan, Alba, and Stults, "Enclaves and Entrepreneurs," 358.

establishments in Miami-Dade, and 66% of that gain was firms with two to nine employees.  

According to the US Census, in 2007 the number of Hispanic owned businesses in Miami stood at 60% across all industries. This is in contrast to 22% for the whole of the United States.  

However, one of the overarching questions is whether or not the advantages of arriving into an enclave truly beat the opportunities available to immigrants within the primary and secondary markets. In a paper published by Wilson and Portes, the authors continue to examine the outcome with mixed results. According to the authors, newly arrived émigrés in Miami have an option of economic incorporation not available to other immigrant minorities. It remains to be seen, however, whether their participation in the enclave economy possesses empirically distinct characteristics or whether competitive immigrant-
owned enterprises merely reproduce those labor processes associated with the broader peripheral economy.\textsuperscript{56}

The primary findings of this study which was conducted in 1980 was further studied by Davis who came up with an interesting conclusion. Using data from the 1990 census, Davis attempts to compare enclave wages to the wage of Cubans in other metropolitan areas. To summarize the conclusions of the report in a sentence, Davis states, "The findings are that income is higher for Cubans in the general labor market."\textsuperscript{57} So it would seem that the enclave, while excellent at helping with the initial assimilation, cannot effectively supplant or replace the primary labor market in any region.

The existence of the enclave is something that is not available to many other minority groups, which are more dispersed or have a lesser relationship with small business or entrepreneurial efforts in their region. Scholars have found that when it relates to culture and minority assimilation, the greater the drivers for the establishment of small business, the greater the ability and flexibility of workers to incorporate into the

\textsuperscript{56} Wilson and Portes, “Immigrant Enclaves,” 304.

\textsuperscript{57} Davis, “Beyond Miami,” 450.
national identity. And while it may not supplant the primary business market at first, enclaves and entrepreneurship provide many more opportunities for success. And in this regard, Cubans have arrived in the US with success and opportunity on their mind.

**Miami’s Business and Job Market (1990s to Present)**

Overall Miami continues to flourish and has become one of the strongest contributors to the US economy, continuing the upward trend that we have witnessed over the last 40 years.

During the decade of 1970s, total employment grew by 40 percent, but the pace of employment growth...decelerated significantly during the 1980s when it grew by just 18 percent. The pace of total employment growth accelerated in the 1990s. Between the recession of 1991 to the local business cycle peak in 2001, employment grew by 241,000 jobs compared with a job gain of 163,000 from 1980 to 1990.58

This extraordinary growth has led to Miami’s position as one of the top 50 economies of the world. Indeed, according to a report presented at the 2012 United States Conference of Mayors, Miami is one of the top 12 economies in the US and in the top 50 for the world, besting the

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total GDP of entire nations such as Israel, Portugal and Chile.  

As has been the case historically, Miami is driven by a few primary sectors of employment. According to a recent 2012 Department of Labor report on Miami Area employment, the area’s primary industries are, in increasing order of importance: leisure, business services, health, and trade.

Hospitality and leisure have always been part of Miami’s attractions, thanks to the city’s weather, coastal location and accessibility to South America. The growth of the hospitality industry, one that has historically employed minorities and women in particular, continues to accelerate since the end of the US’s “Great Recession”. Hospitality and leisure constitute about 12% of Miami’s non-farm payrolls. And, according to South Florida’s Small Business Administration, "there has been an increase

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61 Ibid.
in employment in hospitality and leisure compared to last November (2011-2012) — about 2.4%...for the industry as a whole." \(^{62}\)

Business services represent a large array of enterprises from office to janitorial services and a vast majority of this growth continues to be directly attributed to small business in Miami and the heavy Cuban population that, in 2005, makes up approximately 30% of the population of Miami and over 60 percent of the Hispanic population in the area, the majority of the region’s Hispanic population. \(^{63}\) “Small business is the vast preponderance of Florida's employers, 98.9% of them, according to Francisco A. Marrero, director of the US Small Business Administration's South Florida District Office since 2001.” \(^{64}\)

Due to the aging demographic of the state of Florida, seniors and by extension health care play an important part in the economy of the greater Miami area. The population of persons over the age of 65 was about 17% in

\(^{62}\) Tannenbaum, “Small Business Dominates Miami-Dade.”


\(^{64}\) Tannenbaum, “Small Business Dominates Miami-Dade”
2011, about 20% above the national average. The reputation of Cuban medicine and doctors has served this industry well.

However the largest share of Miami’s employment comes from trade, transportation, and shipping in Florida.

(In 2005), our estimates indicate that the international merchandise trade activity in Miami-Dade has a significant impact on the local economy. We conservatively estimate that approximately 10 percent of the local economy may be attributed to the activities related to the transportation or manufacture of international goods for export or import. The total economic impacts, moreover, are spread over a broad spectrum of industries, and, therefore, affect broad segments of the workforce.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, this number is likely to be much higher closer to about 15-20% in 2011. Trade and its international connection is the current lifeblood of the region and by extension of the Hispanic population in Miami. The growth here has continued over the last few decades and is the connection that Miami has to the world’s markets. However as the world has become increasingly globalized and the Asian

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65 United States Census, “State and County Quick Facts 2012”
66 Cruz, “The Case of Miami,” 54.
economies come to assume greater importance, what effects will this trend have on the Miami “global city”? Will globalization lessen the need for Miami as a gateway to US markets? The following chapter will explore these questions and the direction of change.

Conclusion

When discussing the plight of political refugees or immigrants arriving on the shores of America, the Cuban population serves as a beacon of hope. A thoroughly developed US-based support structure, an excellent educational system in their native country and a proclivity for self-employment have helped ease the transition of the majority of the Cuban exile population. Looking forward, Miami and the larger metropolises are likely to also see their numbers of Cuban immigrants increase. However, gone are the days of small business owners, entrepreneurs, doctors, lawyers and accountants easily folding into the American economy. Gone are the open arms of political refugees’ status. The new reality finds a growing number of Asian professionals also turning to the US to assure their future. The growth of Caribbean and South America trade relations with Asian countries
means a new variable has appeared in the region. What does the future hold for these enclaves? How can Hispanic ensure their numbers grow or remain constant in the local labor pools? Is the threat of globalization a positive or negative for Hispanics? Do these changes affect Mexican and Cuban minorities equally? Is this the beginning of a new era?
CHAPTER FOUR

GLOBALIZATION BASKS ON MIAMI’S SHORES

Miami’s Role as a Bridge to World Markets

...this is the first time the city’s unique role as a gateway city, a hinge between the two Americas, Anglo- and Latin, has been illustrated empirically as part of a global space of flows. While Miami attends to Central (and South) America and connects the region to a wider world, in its own small way Central America attends to Miami and helps create a major regional world city out of what otherwise is a small to medium-sized world city.¹

Miami’s geographic location and the composition of its populace have ensured its position as a “gateway” city. Despite the early advantages in textiles, and other processing and manufacturing and production that continue to this day, its Miami’s position as a “world city”² that dominates much of the economic and labor picture of South Florida. International tourism and trade account for more than a quarter of Miami’s revenue and, by extension, jobs. According to Robert David Cruz’s study of Miami’s international trade, Miami’s growth in the arena cannot be ignored. “International trade has long been recognized as a major regional economic engine, affecting both long-term


² Ibid.
economic trends and cyclical fluctuations. Substantial growth in international trade was experienced during the 1970s and 1980s, and continued into the boom years of the 1990s.”³

A large portion of all trade between the Americas and the US moves through Miami on a daily basis. The core of this trade is focused on the Port of Miami and Miami International Airport (MIA), both ranking among the busiest in the nation.

The city and its neighboring ports move more containerized cargo to Latin America that any other US port, Miami's airport is second only to New York City's Kennedy in foreign passengers and cargo. In addition, the region now has a growing number of manufacturing firms aimed at the export market in the Caribbean and Latin America as these areas become major buyers of US goods. Miami's Free Trade Zone is one of the largest in the country.⁴

This growth began as early as the 1970s and has continued ever since, and there has been a triple digit growth in almost every trade category up to 2001.

International air cargo volumes grew by 160 percent between 1970 and 1980, while ocean cargo increased by 215 percent over that same period. International air cargo grew by 70 percent during the decade of the 1980s, while ocean

³ Cruz, “The Case of Miami,” 48.
cargo grew by 44 percent over that same period. International cargo handled through the Port of Miami and through MIA rose sharply after 1990....Between 1990 and 2000 the Port’s cargo volume increased by 117 percent, while the volume of international cargo at MIA increased by 107 percent over that 10-year period.  

In a study conducted in 2005, author Robert Cruz suggested that the direct impact of international trade on the Miami labor force was as much as 10 percent (103,000 jobs) of the total employment in the county and the trade inflows made a significant impact to Miami-Dade County. Economists use forecasting systems, like IMPLAN, to help estimate the indirect and induced spending of an industry to understand what the industry’s impact is on a local economy.

(Computer model simulations) suggest that (international trade accounts for) approximately 103,000 local jobs and ... generated $4.0 billion of compensation to workers (or approximately $39,000 per job). Nearly 60 percent of the total employment impact is generated through indirect and induced economic impacts. Approximately one fourth of the total employment impact is found in private services primarily because of induced economic impacts.”  

Large corporations have also invested heavily in Miami. The international financial sector has also seen

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5 Cruz, “The Case of Miami,” 48.
6 Ibid., 52.
Miami as an excellent location to establish a US presence, making South Florida one of the largest financial centers in the world. “Miami now has the fourth largest concentration of foreign bank offices in the United States, right behind New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago, and ahead of San Francisco, Boston, or Atlanta.”

These banks and financial institutions come from across the world. From Asia, to the Caribbean, Europe and Latin America, Miami is a good investment for the financial services industry.

By 1992, Miami had sixty-five foreign bank offices, a small number compared with 464 in New York and 133 in Los Angeles, but it is not far from Chicago's 80, making it the fourth largest US city in number of foreign bank offices. This is not insignificant if we consider that the ten top cities accounted for over 90% of all foreign bank offices in the United States.

Industries like these have enabled Miami to grow at a rate that would otherwise be impossible for a city of this size. With it came the establishment of big business and the corporate structures that support it. Small business, the pillar of the Cuban labor force and economy in South Florida, would see many opportunities to provide goods and

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8 Ibid., 474
complementary services to big business. However, with the arrival of big business, still a relatively unusual appearance in 1970-1990s Miami, came new challenges to the Hispanic grasp on the labor picture in the region.

There is clear evidence of a "glass ceiling" for Cubans in the non-Cuban corporate sector. The influx of new national and foreign firms has reconstituted the "white" elite and thereby probably further reinforced the glass ceiling....economic globalization has brought with it a corporate elite of firms that operate on a vast, worldwide scale. They represent a concentration of economic power that no local elite can compete with.⁹

These challenges are simply a result of Miami’s emergence as a global city and a product of its success. But this development does demonstrate a changing of the guard and a need for Miami’s Cubans to adapt to a new world order, globalization.

In Miami’s early years, the city’s growth was dictated seemingly exclusively by small business and while many of the figures presented in this chapter relate to the overall South Florida job market, small business and Cuban labor still retain a majority share. Any impact to Miami’s overall industry growth from cyclic upswing and downturn, be it in hospitality, medicine or trade, has

repercussions on the Cuban and Hispanic labor that supports these smaller businesses and industry-support companies that are the lifeblood of Miami.

While many factors help explain the evolution of the area to what it has become today, one of the primary distinctions that Miami currently enjoys as it relates to globalization and international markets can be attributed to its geographic location and the relative growth of South America on the world stage. And, for example, “although the new international corporate sector has made Miami a center for firms from all over the world, these operations are still largely confined to Latin America and the Caribbean.”

Effects of South and Central American Immigration on Cuban Dominated Industries

Over the last two decades, Miami has seen an ever growing number of Hispanics arriving in South Florida. Compared to earlier days, these immigrants are coming from more prosperous countries with a strong determination to start new business ventures as well and the capital to grow these enterprises. Countries such as Brazil, Colombia

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and Venezuela are seeing their numbers in Miami grow at breakneck speed. “Colombians, Venezuelans and Peruvians more than doubled their numbers in Florida over the last decade, making South Americans the state’s third-largest Hispanic group, according to the latest 2010 census numbers.”

Cubans continue to enjoy a majority status; however, after Puerto Ricans who are also US citizens, South Americans as a group now outnumber Mexicans in South Florida. And while Cubans still have the most political influence in Miami-Dade County, they have seen the lowest numbers in terms of growth over the past decade.

According to the most recent census data, in Florida overall, the Colombian community grew phenomenally in size from about 136,000 in 2000 to more than 300,000; Venezuelans rose from 40,000 to more than 100,000, with roughly 85 percent of all Venezuelans in the US living in Florida and Peruvians similarly increased to more than 100,000.

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12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.
Miami-based businesses reap the benefits of these growing numbers and transplants lead to stronger ties between Miami and the countries that sent them. Colombia serves as a strong example of this. “In 2009, Colombia was Miami’s no. 2 trading partner with about $5.6 billion in goods moving between the country and the Miami Customs District, which stretches from Martin County to the Florida Keys.”

These figures continue to grow as do the trade volumes, leading South Florida to captures more than 25% of all Colombian trade and ensuring the growth rate of trade remains constant, dropping only a fraction of one percent between 2008 and 2009. The bulk of U.S exports to Colombia are electronics, primarily computer, TV, cellular and aircraft parts. Brazil is South Florida’s primary Latin American trade partner and number three is Venezuela.

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16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.
And it’s not just South America; Central Americans are raising their profile. Immigrants from Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama are a very large component of the growing immigrant community in the US. Their number in South Florida in 2009 totaled over 248,000 and accounted for 8.6 percent of the overall Central American population in the US, a very strong presence.  

These transplants are looking to expand into industries that have recently been held exclusively by Cubans, and specifically, into international trade, one that accounts for the lion’s share of employment and small business in Miami.

The issue, as it relates to Cubans, is not just about Cubans’ losing control of a particular industry. If Cubans aren’t able to broaden their labor networks and work with other minorities or countries, they may find that by leveraging the Cuban enclave too strongly, they may miss out greater relationships with other Latin American markets, missing out on qualified work candidates with

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diverse degrees, backgrounds and experiences. New arrivals enjoy a depth of education and financial backing that was only ever available to the earliest “Golden Exiles”. If contemporary Cubans are able to consolidate and create joint international enterprises, the reach of the Hispanic diaspora and Cuban immigrants can expand significantly through these partnerships.

Thanks to the internet and the wealth of information available to international transplants and business, immigrants now come prepared. This virtual tool that provides for the increase in education and opportunity is a boon for the regional economy and a growth industry prospect for the Cuban and the expanding Hispanic enclaves in Miami. “Miami has become the capital of the internet and telecoms business aimed at Latin America. This is partly because it is a good base for any sort of Pan-American business. But it is also partly a function of the number of young well-educated Latin Americans flocking to South Florida.” 21

As we found with the early arrival of Cubans, Miami now finds itself in a Hispanic renaissance where a more

diverse minority group is joining the Cuban ranks and jockeying for position as a leading entrepreneurial force. These numbers serve to boost the impact of Hispanic businesses in Miami, and if the Cuban enclave can adapt to its new composition, unite to push South Florida far into the 21st century.

**Impact of Asian Companies and Outsourcing on the US and Miami’s Import Economy**

The impact of outsourcing and the growth of Asia’s industrial capacity cannot be understated. The rise of China’s industrial machine is a very tempting outlet for many corporations both in the US and abroad. As Bongiorni points out in 'A Year Without "Made in China"', The US is absolutely dependent on the labor and the prices that outsourcing provides the American consumer. The US has trouble competing with the Asian market in controlling production costs. The US has turned to cheap labor historically, and with the appearance of China and their very low wages, US production costs have become uncompetitive. By switching to outsourcing as its main

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approach to international competition, the US manufacturers have slowed their investments in technological improvements to their production processes. These transitions have been hard on local economies where much of this industrial growth has been based. The US has had a long history of relocating their production domestically to take advantage of individual state government’s concessions—credits, tax holidays and favorable tax rates and so forth. Offshoring to foreign locations was just more of the same, only on a much larger scale.

South Florida and immigrant labor has been, to some extent, offered the advantage of lower wage levels. In the early 1970s many industries, such as textiles and apparel, grew or transferred to the region to take advantage of this cheap labor. When even cheaper wages were available for production overseas, these industries once again moved, offshore this time, exposing the troubling footlooseness of American capital that had been in place for decades.

However, one of the principal issues that must be explored when speaking about lower wages for manufacturing is, naturally, the effect that the decreased labor costs will have on consumer products and their prices. Lower
wages mean lower costs overall for the consumers of the products a company produces. This impact is often times significantly larger as the industry’s wares are sold to the entire US market and many times exported to other countries. The factory's location and jobs affect, in theory, only a limited geographical area, its workers and a small portion of the potential consumers. This benefit to American consumers as a whole is seen to outweigh the negative immediate loss of jobs. The nation’s workers are also the consumers. They demand the lowest prices for their goods and often have little affiliation with the area from which these goods came. The wages that the American firms pay to ensure lower consumer prices will always drive US commercial and labor policies.

Similar commercial philosophy and the demand for lower consumer prices is growing in Latin America; the evolution of globalization in the region has been of particular importance to Central and South American countries in this respect. Prior to the advent of the internet, the primary access that South and Central America had to global markets went directly through Miami and by consequence, the US However, with globalization, the growth of Asian markets and the expansion of the
Chinese economy, Latin America has more options for trade than has been historically the case.

Links between China and Latin America really took off from the late 1990s but only began to attract significant global attention with the visit of the Chinese president, Hu Jintao, to several Latin American countries and to the summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Forum, held in Chile in 2004. 23

As we can see in the graph below, the growth has increased at an exponential rate, despite a relatively constant rate of trade during nineties.

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These statistics could be a cause for alarm for US foreign trade relationships and for Miami’s role in particular. However, upon closer inspection, we see that the bulk of this trade is not particularly bi-directional or even flowing directly to consumers in the forms of larger quantities of Chinese, finished products. According to a 2010 study in the Journal of Latin American Studies, these Latin American inflows that have occurred over the last decade have remained relatively constant and being driven by the same categories of goods as the overall trade between Asia and Latin America, “the acquisition of raw materials and access to the Latin American market for Chinese exports.”  

There have been arguments in Latin America that the growth of Chinese imports would have a positive impact on the region, “increasing the competitiveness of local manufacturers through of cheaper inputs and low-cost machinery and equipment.” 26 On this question, however, the jury is out: “there have in fact been no studies to show

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26 Ibid., 818.
what impact this has had on Latin American competitiveness.” 27

Conclusion

It would seem that although this trade growth has been well documented, there seems to be little, besides hyperbole, that indicates a diminished position for Miami or the Hispanic small business based on China’s increased global presence alone. And despite the continued growth of the China trade, the trade relationship between Latin America and the US, among others, will be the most important one for Latin America for the foreseeable future. “For Latin America as a whole, trade with the United States is four times as important as trade with China, while trade with the EU is more than 50 per cent greater than that with China.” 28


28 Ibid., 830.
CHAPTER FIVE

OUTLOOK AND PRESCRIPTIONS

Prescriptions for Cuban Labor and Enclaves

Cubans were quick to arrive and grow their enclave to create more opportunities for their own as well as secure a good quality of life in the search of the American dream. In order to survive the changes in the US economy and the impact of global markets, Cubans in Miami must look to diversify both their businesses and the composition of their labor force. Education would help underemployed Cubans significantly as would the incorporation of the enclave into the larger primary labor market, which have served Cubans outside the “archipelago” so well over the last three decades.¹

The question of racial/national composition of the enclave also needs to be addressed. While it was necessary to create opportunities for the rising numbers of Cubans refugees during the era of the “Golden Exiles” in the seventies, the racial composition in Miami has changed and Cubans have a strong enclave that can arguably use a heavy dose of diversification itself.

The Cuban and Hispanic dominance of Miami left Anglos (as well as blacks) as outside minorities that could often be ignored. Unable to communicate with government bureaucrats and store clerks, the Anglos came to realize as one of them put it, “My God, this is what it’s like to be a minority.”

There is a precedent for this. This stranglehold by the majority-minority Cubans in Miami led to a “native” exodus from 1983 through 1993 when about 140,000 Anglos left. And now we see the growth of immigrants from other Latin American nations arriving at Miami’s shores that also have the economic means and entrepreneurial spirit the US saw in Cubans of the 1960s.

As Cubans look to the future they should embrace the overall incorporation of the Cuban diaspora into the larger Hispanic regional economic market. With the rising numbers of Hispanics in the South Florida and the US as a whole, the expansion of the enclave into a regional primary labor market can serve as a catalyst for growth and fulfill all the promise that Miami offers.

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3 Ibid.
Prescriptions for Miami’s Export Economy

Of course, Miami as a city is at the mercy of US foreign policy, specifically as it relates to the Cuban issue. Cuban immigration policy remains a contentious issue at the moment. Throughout the world, more and more nations continue to call on the US to lift their sanctions on Cuba. And while the shift in US’s stance may not directly benefit the US-based Cuban labor force, it may introduce new markets and new revenue streams for those that can access it. This is a market that Miami Cubans will have a significant advantage accessing.

There has been a significant push worldwide for these changes and the calls are getting louder. Europe has begun to implement new strategies as they relate to Cuba and international sanctions. And, in June 2009, Europe voted to end diplomatic sanctions against the island nation after they made significant reforms that gave Cubans on the island greater freedoms.⁴

But this international shift has, apparently, not given the US a cause to change its position. “A

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spokesperson from the US State Department has criticized Europe's lifting of the sanctions, saying that the reforms are cosmetic and the Raul Castro administration should not be legitimised."  

And it’s not just that US policy will hurt US and South Florida as it relates to immigration, but it will miss out on trade opportunities in Latin America as well. Europe’s transitions and moves in the region have inspired increased communication, trade, and regional incorporation. Recently, several Latin American countries have been attempting a new trade bloc in the spirit of the EU model of integration, with little mention of the US, its most significant trade partner or US FTAA.

During the third summit of heads of state, held in Brasilia in May (2008), several Latin American nations signed a treaty to form the Union of South American Nations. The union is modeled on the EU, and combines two existing trade bodies - Mercosur and the Andean Community...The leaders hope to model their union on the basis of the EU, with a shared currency, passport, and parliament, coming into effect by 2019.

As for the industries in Miami, despite the growth of offshoring, and the internet and the bridges it can

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create, there is an advantage that Miami is well positioned to take advantage of building a communications hub.

There is considerable study that indicates that the centers for these communication hubs, despite the internet’s virtualization of location, are nonetheless important and still tend to focus in a particular real geographic region.

Information technologies, often thought of as neutralizing geography, actually contribute to spatial concentration. Yes, they make possible the geographic dispersal and simultaneous integration of many activities. But the most advanced users have settled in the most advanced telecommunications centers. Miami is becoming one such center for the region, which will further concentrate command functions there.  

Miami should continue to embrace its regional partners and the relationships it has developed over the years. It should pursue increased involvement with trade blocs and regional partners and leverage the county’s free trade areas. Miami should look for any opportunity to enhance its position as a port, not only for Latin America, but for the entirety of the Southern US. Miami enjoys a position in the universal consciousness as a regional global city. With the evolution of the labor,

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force and enclave, Miami could cement a position as a world-wide, international global city.

Miami is well positioned for change and growth and will likely enjoy a prosperous future. The most recent media coverage about globalization and the demise of Miami’s regional importance are, to quote Mark Twain, “greatly exaggerated.”

Conclusion

While many Americans continue to enjoy the entitlements of their position as “native” Americans, living off the generosity of the state, Hispanic immigrants come to our nation with an exemplary work ethic and the drive to succeed. The US must continue to embrace an “open door” policy on immigration and support the training and protection of our new arrivals. The primary labor industry must protect Hispanics from unfair abuses and maintain fair wages. The Hispanic work ethic will likely help draw higher productivity from native workers, and stem possible offshoring of jobs if the US industries begin to reinvest in their production process and become more competitive internationally. With the increase in Hispanic representation, both male and female, in the US
labor pools and small business, productivity can increase and the US may be able to bring back industrial production that have historically been moved to distant countries.

Cubans and South Florida are connected by relationships of culture, as well as ethnic and commercial ties. In exploring these themes, we find two primary questions: “How can Cuban Americans in the US continue to evolve in the changing world of globalization?” and “How does Miami, the headquarters of Cuban American economic activities in the US secure a bright future despite the appearance of “virtual ports” across the region?”

As for the first question, the Cuban population is and will exert an ever-increasing influence in the US. Their purpose is aligned with the great “American Dream” of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Together, Cubans and native Americans can continue to make America an example for the world to follow, a place where the word “united” serves as more than just a labor slogan.

The Cuban and the larger American labor force have also now been faced with the reality that world markets are not theirs alone. The competition from other countries in the region has forced Cuban American industries to take proactive measure to step to the same beat. “Even as
consumption and therefore wealth increase because of international trade, specific workers and firms are faced with an often costly and wrenching need to adjust to the new circumstances."^9 This reality involves the adaptation of cities like Miami and South Florida as a whole, to the ever increasing impact of foreign competition. For that reason, education will provide the boost Cuban minorities need to further incorporate into the primary labor market and claim membership in the overall US labor pool.

The enclave economy can only take Miami so far. If eventually these enclave workers and secondary market laborers achieve a comfortable livelihood, they will need to seek education to rise to the challenge of globalization and claim new markets and approaches. This is paramount to minority success in America.

As it relates to the second, Miami also needs to revamp its approach to minority employment and regional representation. Cubans must embrace not just fellow Cubans but all Hispanics whose numbers and ethnic variety continue to increase and diversify Miami. Not doing so is damaging to Cuban small business in the long run. A joint

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minority approach would help groups with weak representation or smaller immigrant enclaves in Florida and help identify opportunities for growth for South Florida as a whole.

Furthermore, there are great dangers associated with a retreat to protectionism and Cuban nationalism over and above the economic costs that would be incurred. South Florida’s local political dynamic might also be affected negatively if Cuban Americans turn inward. This could affect the entire region of South Florida, causing fractures with the larger American population and negatively affect Cuban Americans’ interactions with the different ethnic groups represented. Also, with the growth of big business and “native” whites in Miami, protectionism or an exclusionary position could affect the entire country in negative ways.

A powerful xenophobia might be created, an attitude of hostility to things foreign that could result in scapegoating at home (particularly of the large and growing immigrant population) and, if allowed to go unchecked, even result in dangerous military adventures overseas.¹⁰

In summary, Miami and South Florida have always been a home and an entryway for Cubans and their struggle to

¹⁰ Mandle, “Democracy,” 40.
achieve the American dream. This dream has begun to change into a global dream for Hispanics in South Florida. The Cubans alone will not claim the prize. Globalization and the challenges and opportunities that it brings along are not going away. Through an increase in educational efforts for new émigrés, incorporation of broader minority groups into the enclave economy and labor force, and incentivization of development and entrepreneurship, South Florida can help the US maintain a dominant position in globalization efforts and simultaneously be counted as a champion for its ever-growing and diverse minority population.
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