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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

(Re) Framing the Nation: The Afro-Cuban Challenge to Black and Latino Struggles for American Identity

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
Requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Ethnic Studies

by

Monika Gosin

Committee in charge:

Professor Ana Celia Zentella, Chair
Professor Charles Briggs
Professor Raúl Fernández
Professor Daniel Hallin
Professor Sara Johnson
Professor Jane Rhodes

2009

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The dissertation of Monika Gosin is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2009

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

(Re) Framing the Nation: The Afro-Cuban Challenge to Black and Latino Struggles for American Identity

by

Monika Gosin

Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnic Studies

University of California, San Diego, 2009

Professor Ana Celia Zentella, Chair

This dissertation interrogates the complexity of late 20th and early 21st century racial projects, focusing on conflict and convergence among African Americans, Cuban exiles, and Afro-Cubans in the United States. A textual analysis of the African American *Miami Times* and the Spanish language *El Herald/El Nuevo Herald* during the 1980 Mariel exodus and 1994 Balsero crisis, reveals the concerns of Miami African Americans

and Cubans related to issues of race, immigration, and national belonging. The dissertation argues that the racializing discourses found in the *Miami Times*, which painted Cuban immigrants as an economic threat, and discourses in the *Herald*, which affirmed the presumed inferiority of blackness and superiority of whiteness, reproduce the centrality of ideologies of exclusivity and white supremacy in the construction of the U.S. nation. These discourses rely on three principle racializing frames: the black/white frame, the morality framing of good and bad citizens, and the native/foreigner dichotomy. Despite often antagonistic attitudes between African Americans, exile Cubans, and newer Cuban immigrants, however, the findings expose a shared underlying critique of the continued disenfranchisement of people of color. The analysis of newspaper text is supplemented by an analysis of talk, i.e., in-depth interviews conducted with black Cubans from Miami and Los Angeles, in order to understand their negotiations of the U.S. racial structure. The experiences that Afro-Cubans recount contradict the tenets of exclusivity upon which definitions of "authentic" U.S. citizenship rests, and their positioning as blacks *and* as Cubans challenges the notion that African American and Cuban American communities are bounded, racially distinct groups. The dissertation makes the case that we must root out and expose white supremacy in all its covert manifestations, in order to understand interethnic conflict more broadly, and Black/Latino conflict specifically. Though the study focuses on Miami and Los Angeles, it has national implications, as it concerns the ways in which the power of whiteness prevails even as the nation's population shifts from majority white to "majority minority."

INTRODUCTION

In the oft cited *New York Times* story "Best of Friends, Worlds Apart," journalist Mirta Ojito makes a dramatic statement about race in the United States. The article begins with a striking summation: "Joel Ruiz is Black. Achmed Valdés is White. In America they discovered it matters."[1] The two men highlighted in the article had been best friends from childhood in Cuba and had left Cuba for the United States at about the same time in 1994, but their Miami experiences were very different. Both men experienced initial economic struggles upon arrival, but overall Valdés felt happy and at home in Miami, where, as a white Cuban, he was part of the majority group. His relatives helped him settle in and gave him advice on how to be "American." As part of their lessons, he was taught to be wary of African Americans and avoid their neighborhoods. Ruiz, on the other hand, did not share his former friend's happy experience. He reported several encounters with people who prejudged him because he was black. A particularly frightening incident happened one night when police ordered him and his friends to exit their car at gunpoint. A white Cuban officer, who had earlier seen Ruiz and his uncle at Miami's famous Versailles Cuban restaurant, and was possibly angry that they were accompanied by white Cuban female companions, made it clear that Ruiz was stopped because he was black. Ruiz soon learned that he could not walk around as freely as he did in Cuba; in the United States he had to be vigilantly aware of his blackness and conduct himself in a manner to quell racists' fears. Although still clinging to his Cuban identity, he found comfort among other blacks who had similar experiences, especially African Americans, with whom he lived, worked, and socialized.

[1] Ojito, Mirta, June 5, 2000. Best of friends worlds apart, *New York Times* [online].

In Cuba, the two friends had shared the same social groups and resided in the same area. In Miami, however, race determined where they lived, with whom they socialized, and their prospects for mobility. Separated by race and racism, Ruiz and Valdés eventually grew apart because they could not fully relate to one another's U.S. experience.

This story of how differential racial experiences divided two friends who had shared so much growing up in Cuba offers a powerful illustration of the continued rigidity of race and of the black/white binary in the United States' post–civil rights climate. Before their arrival in the United States, their experiences had been shaped by discourses privileging national identity over racial identity, so that, while racism exists in Cuba, it lacks the rigidity of U.S. racism. For Ruiz, as a black Cuban, negotiating race and identity meant not only facing the exaltation of whiteness and denigration of blackness by Anglos and some white Cubans, but facing the even more complex Miami racial context: while Afro-Cubans may not find full acceptance among white Cuban Americans, they also do not always completely fit in with African Americans, because a Spanish accent and Cuban national identity makes them outsiders. Furthermore, Afro-Cubans are directly affected by the history of interethnic tensions between African Americans and Cubans in Miami that have existed since the gradual Cuban ascent in Florida, following their arrival en masse after the 1959 Cuban Revolution. The Cuban revolution and its socialist government added a political dimension that was not attached to immigrants from other Latin American nations. The mutual suspicion between African Americans and Cubans in a contest over power and resources is heightened by distinct ideological perspectives on the U.S. nation, i.e. the Cuban exile image of the United States as a benevolent nation, offering a place of refuge, versus the more critical

African American perspective, due to their historical disenfranchisement by whites (García, 1996; Guinier &Torres, 2002). Afro-Cubans must somehow find a way to negotiate a middle ground between black and white, native and foreigner, "communist" and 'capitalist," as well as among other dichotomies that frame contests, such as those between African Americans and Latino groups, over national identity and belonging.

Afro-Cubans' experiences of race in the United States and the conflicts among Cuban Americans and African Americans in Miami reflect the growing complexity of race and race relations in the increasingly diverse climate of the late 20th and 21st centuries. Whereas the predominant public discourse about race before the late 20th century concerned race relations between whites and blacks, the spectacular growth of immigrant populations from non-European countries after 1965 modified U.S. racial ideologies and racial politics in significant ways, bringing in questions of "diversity," "multiculturalism," and "colorblindness." Demographic changes also ushered in a focus on immigration in public and media discourse that reflects intense anti-immigrant sentiment and heightened nativist concerns over national identity, border security, and economic resources (Santa Ana, 2002; Chavez, 2001). The shift in national attention to immigration is seen by some as a harmful distraction from issues facing the African American community, which, despite the gains of its middle class, continues to have a significant proportion that is disenfranchised (Schulman, 2004, Yancy, 2003). The fear that African Americans could be losing ground is heightened by the fact that Latinos surpassed African Americans as the largest minority group in 2003, which was widely touted in the media throughout the nation. This demographic shift had occurred much earlier in Miami: by 1970 the Latino population reached 23.6% compared to 14.7%

Black.[2] The conflict between Blacks and Latinos in Miami is particularly intense and is unique compared to other regions of the country, but as Grenier & Stepick observe, a study of the Miami context has important implications because national trends indicate that Black[3] and Latino relations in other cities may follow a similar pattern (2001, p. 156).

W.E.B. DuBois predicted that the problem of the twentieth century would be the problem of the color-line, "the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea" (1982, p. 54). DuBois was referring to the conflict between whites, the most powerful group in the U.S., and non-whites. But as we entered the 21st century, the Census Bureau began predicting that whites would eventually become the nation's numerical minority. Today four states, Hawaii, New Mexico, California, and Texas, are already majority-minority[4], and the Census Bureau's projection that the United States would be majority-minority by 2050 has been moved up to 2042.[5] As the proportion of Anglos decreases, it is more likely that new immigrants

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[2] Demographic Profile Miami-Dade County, Florida 1960-2000. (September 2003). *Planning Research Section*, Department of Planning and Zoning, Stephen P. Clark Center, p. 9.

[3] "Black" with a capital "B" will be used interchangeably with "African American" in the dissertation while "black" with a lowercase "b" will be used as a descriptor of African heritage or of black color and could be applied to Cubans or other groups of African descent. While using only "African American" could be simpler, I include the use of "Black" as well because it was used most often in the *Miami Times* to describe the group that today is more commonly called "African Americans" in formal language. "Black" is also the common term in the community.

[4] Texas becomes nation's newest "majority-minority" state, Census Bureau announces, (August 11, 2005), *US Census Bureau News*, Washington DC: US Department of Commerce. The 2005 bulletin notes the minority populations in Arizona, New York, Georgia, Mississippi, and Maryland at 40%; More than 300 counties now "majority-minority, (August 7, 2007), *US Census Bureau News*, Washington DC: US Department of Commerce. "Majority-minority" is a term that has been used in the media to describe the phenomenon of the combined numbers of historically underrepresented minority groups such as African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, and Asians surpassing the number of whites, previously the majority group, in a given area of the United States.

[5] U.S. Census Bureau, 2000: Annual Projections of the Resident Population by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: Lowest, Middle, Highest, and Zero International Migration Series, 1999 to 2100. (NP-D1-A), Washington D.C.

will first encounter traditionally underrepresented minority groups in their new neighborhoods and jobs, and contests over power and resources will take place among them, as well as between immigrants and the majority Anglo population (Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, & Waters, 2000).

Given the emergence of this dramatically different climate, future studies will need to place more emphasis on relationships between immigrants and native minorities, in order to answer questions relevant to the future of the nation (Omi, 2000).[6] These include: What will be at stake for minority groups still aiming for their slice of the American pie at a time when other minorities, rather than Anglos, are viewed as their main competitors? How will new immigrants be received by native minority groups? How will we as researchers and activists fight white supremacy as it is manifested in different forms, and perhaps perpetuated by people of color? In the case of Black/Latino conflict, what can people who are inherently destined to encounter the intersections between black and Latino identities, (in this case Afro-Cubans) tell us about the contemporary processes of racial identity formation and subsequent manifestations of interethnic conflict? What might the experiences and perspective of these individuals provide in the way of potential solutions for alleviating this conflict? These are the questions at stake in my dissertation, which foregrounds minority voices and concerns about immigration through an analysis of the Miami African American and Cuban exile communities' reactions to the two most recent immigration waves from Cuba, the 1980

[6] The term "native minority" refers to traditionally underrepresented minorities, such as Native Americans, and African Americans, Latinos, and Asians, who may perceive themselves as fully American because of their length of stay in the United States. I make a distinction between this group and the immigrants who arrived in the United States since 1980. See a similar use of this term in Portes & Stepick (1993) and Aparicio, (2006).

Mariel exodus and 1994 Balsero crisis. The dissertation also presents an analysis of interviews with black Cubans from Miami and Los Angeles to understand their negotiations of the U.S. racial structure, for insight into how their experiences speak to current issues of race and racialization.

The dissertation argues that, to understand conflict between native minority and more recent immigrant groups generally and Black/Latino conflict specifically, we must root out and expose white supremacy in its covert manifestations, including how it may be perpetuated by people of color. We must further interrogate the zero-sum game waged by some non-white groups, including some composed of newer immigrants, which dictates that particular groups can win only at the expense of others. Above all, we must recognize the ways this zero-sum game is built on the premise of white supremacy that makes whiteness fundamentally necessary for making claim to the nation. Although this dissertation does not discount agency and resistance to the dominant ideological framing of what it means to become "American," a major goal of this work is to investigate how the forces driving some interethnic conflict also find their roots in what remains of the ideology of American identity as whiteness, with an aim towards finding ways to change it. While a description of the nation as "white" may accurately portray the predominant power relations, it dismisses the ways non-white groups also make claim to the United States. My project argues for a broader exploration of immigrant incorporation processes, centering on the concerns of ethnic minorities who also make claim to being "American;" thus I have chosen to amplify the voices of the African American and established Cuban communities rather than mainstream views of the Mariel and Balsero crises.

My study brings Afro-Cubans into the discussion concerning African American and Cuban exile conflict, following the work of scholars who argue that a focus on the experiences of Afro-Latinos is crucial. Suzanne Oboler and Anani Dzidzienyo explain, "Indeed it is our contention that any discussion on Black-Latino relations and alliances must also invariably problematize the position of Latinas/os who are visibly black—that is, of Afro-Latinas/os—in terms, for example, of their potential impact on contemporary debates on race relations, particularly as these contribute to the changing articulation of the U.S. polity" (Oboler & Dzidzienyo , 2005, p. 18). They argue, along with Roberto Márquez (2000), that Afro-Latinos have a potential role as mediators in conflict between African Americans and U.S. Latinos, and their growing presence could help overcome divide and conquer tactics in U.S. racial politics (Oboler & Dzidzienyo, 2005, p. 18). But the experiences of Afro-Latino immigrants in general and Afro-Cuban immigrants in particular have been largely neglected. In part, this can be attributed to the fact that cultural, national, regional, social, and racial differences within the Latino community are treated as virtually non-existent (Oboler & Dzidzienyo, 2005). Focusing on Afro-Cubans in relation to interethnic conflict between African Americans and Cuban Americans highlights and incorporates these neglected dimensions of Latino experiences in the U.S.

The Mariel and Balsero crises represent two immigration waves that highlight the polarization between the African American and Cuban American communities in Miami. The Mariel exodus in 1980 brought over 125,000 Cuban refugees to the United States by boatlift, and during the Balsero crisis in 1994, 37,000 Cubans came to the U.S., primarily on flimsy rafts, or *balsas*; together these exoduses brought more blacks to the U.S. from Cuba than ever before. The newcomers from Mariel, often referred to derogatorily as

"Marielitos," were vilified in public discourse and in the Cuban and U.S. press as a threat to U.S. economy, culture, and security, while the Balsero crisis was the first time Cubans were constructed as "aliens" attempting to enter the U.S. illegally (Pedraza, 1996). The images of these newcomers contrasted sharply with those of pre-1980 Cuban exiles, who had been upheld as model citizens because of their quick upward mobility and political, economic, social, and racial congruence with the U.S. dominant elite, without recognizing that such congruence facilitated their success. The disparagement of the Mariels[7] in U.S. media caused established Miami Cubans to fear their reputation would be tarnished, and the treatment of the refugees in both waves by the U.S. government disturbed their longstanding confidence in America as a place of refuge (Portes & Stepick, 1993). For African Americans, the fact that Cubans were being allowed to come to the U.S. while Haitian immigrants also seeking shelter at the time were denied entry, was viewed as the perpetuation of white racism, and caused them to rally to the Haitian cause. The growing animosity between Cubans and African Americans and the perception of the new Cubans as threat heightened both groups' anxiety over the newcomers. This anxiety was especially apparent in the popular press at the time.

This dissertation focuses on the most popular newspapers in Miami's African American and Cuban American communities, the Spanish-language *El Herald/El Nuevo Herald* and the African American *Miami Times*, for insight into their communities' concerns about mass immigration, race, politics, and definitions of national belonging. An investigation of media and media processes are not the subject or main concern of the

[7] The term "Mariels," and the diminutive "Marielitos," refers to the port, Mariel, from which the third wave of refugees departed.

research per se, but rather the media is used as a tool or site for understanding the concerns of the communities I investigate, as evident in the discourses that circulated in the media. Media scholars remind us that "Opinions expressed in newspapers are the ones considered worth being heard; the ones that impose reception" (Iadema, Feez & White, 1994, quoted in Achugar, 2008, p. 11). Although ethnic newspapers cannot be considered an unmediated representation of the opinions of their communities, the newspapers function as part of the historical record and allow a view into officialized discourses emanating from these communities.

The media analysis begins in the context of the 1980s with an examination of how Cuban immigrants were depicted discursively in African American and Spanish language press during the Mariel exodus, and then moves to an examination of the same media for Cuban exile and African American reactions to the 1994 Balsero crisis, in the context of the larger demographic shifts occurring at the time. More specifically, the media analysis asks: What were the major themes in the newspapers that framed how the Mariels and Balseros were received, and what were the implications of this framing? What can we learn through the discussion in the newspapers regarding African American and Cuban American concerns about their own standing in the nation? How might these concerns have helped to shape the ways they chose to include or exclude other groups? In addition, I ask, did the larger number of blacks among the new arrivals enter significantly into the discourse and, if so, how? The greater visibility of black Cubans among the Mariels and Balseros had the potential to allow members of the African American and Cuban American communities to revise their view of the conflict between them and begin to see the common concerns shared by their communities; was that potential

realized? The answers to these questions demonstrate how the newspapers both deployed and resisted the nativist and racializing discourses that have been integral to the establishment of (white) American national identity, contributing to the possible reformulation of ideas about what qualifies as "belonging," or being accepted as part of the nation.

Central to my work are theories about the ways race is produced as ideology through discourse and how the meanings attached to race become "common sense." For instance, according to Omi and Winant's idea of racial formation, that is, "the sociohistorical *process* by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed" (1994, p. 55, *emphasis added*); race is a matter of both social structure and representation. Racialization "therefore refers to a process of categorization, a representational process of defining an Other" (Miles 1989, p. 75).[8] Omi and Winant argue that processes of racialization are not fixed but rather shift as they are historically situated. This project seeks to demonstrate how preexisting racial ideologies and processes are rearticulated in the present--and by non-whites-- and to illuminate subtle ways people are persuaded that dominant ideologies are natural or legitimate (Fairclough, 1989).

Journalistic discourse lends itself especially well to such an investigation, as framing techniques, which do the work for the processes of racialization, are intrinsic to the discipline. According to media scholar Piers Robinson, "The verb 'to frame' (or 'framing') refers to the process of selecting and highlighting some aspects of a perceived reality, and enhancing the salience of an interpretation and evaluation of that reality"

[8] Quoted in Oboler & Dzidzienyo (2005, p. 29).

(2002, p. 26). The power of news frames, he states, is that the news is presumed to be objective, therefore the frames gain credibility among the public. These frames rely on the common sense ideals of the public, which are necessary to carry out the economic and organizational aims of the media outlets to sell their product. In a similar fashion, racialization processes produce value judgments about various groups, framing them as superior or inferior, insider or outsider, according to common sense ideals about race (Kim, 2000; Feagin, 2007). The media has been a powerful institution for manufacturing and reflecting the dominant consensus on race that exists in the public; as Jane Rhodes argues, "…a racist society also requires a racist media to disseminate these values and beliefs to a mass audience" (1995, p. 34). The news media in particular is important as it is a common information source that private citizens utilize in conversations with one another to make sense of the world (Jacobs, 2000). Because of the media's integral role in disseminating common sense ideas about race, analysis of newspapers and the discourses communicated in them allows researchers to gain insight into how dominance is reproduced over time, and for what purpose.

To further expand the discussion about the complexities of racializing frames and expose their limitations, the dissertation shifts forward into the present, and switches focus to an unofficialized discourse. By gathering data through in-depth interviews with a sample of Afro-Cubans from Miami, Florida and Los Angeles, California, I explore how black Cubans in the United States see themselves fitting into the U.S. racial structure. How do they believe Anglos, African Americans, and other Latinos position them in the U.S. racial hierarchy? How do they determine their own place in society and in relation to the predominant racial structure, and to other minority groups? How do

their present experiences relate to my findings from the newspapers, which reveal the perspective of previous generations? Embodying multiple categories prominent in modern racialization projects, i.e. black, immigrant/refugee, and Latino, the Afro-Cubans interviewed demonstrate that the black/white binary image of race in the United States is still salient but must inevitably intersect with the new multicultural and multiracial reality. Looking specifically at the representations and experiences of Afro-Cubans, this project seeks to expand our understanding of what is necessary to fully capture the complexity of the demographic, racial, and linguistic changes that are occurring in U.S. society as a whole, and what this inevitable transition means for the future of race relations as whites become the demographic minority, but "whiteness" as a power structure prevails.

Unique to more recent Afro-Cuban experience in particular is the larger scale critique of the limits of the nation they present. For example, having been raised in Castro's Cuba, they bring a more politicized view of race and imperialism, they have a particular vocabulary for an analysis of power, and they have experienced a tradition of civic culture and engagement that makes them different from many other types of immigrants. Their experiences highlight the U.S. differential stance towards refugees from communist regimes, e.g., the acceptance of pre-1980 Cubans but not Haitians; and the dramatic shift in the U.S. stance towards the Mariel and Balsero migrants, who were treated as economic immigrants and subjected to more restrictive policies, compared with the pre-1980 immigration waves from Cuba who were welcomed as political refugees. These differences attest to the limitations of U.S. benevolence and point to the role of race and the U.S. stance on political regimes in determining how a group is viewed and

whether it is accepted. Recent Cuban immigrants may recognize the limits of the socialist system but also be aware of the lopsided demonization of these systems, noting how capitalist systems can also lead to policies that are racist and inhumane. Recent Afro-Cuban immigrants have been part of a political system that was/is seen as the avowed enemy of the U.S., and upon arrival in the U.S. they encounter policies and frames that link American identity to the repudiation of any ideology and lifestyle that is not capitalist. Their specific challenge is to acknowledge the problems in the system they fled without reaffirming the logics that maintain white superiority in their new land, and which pit African Americans, Latinos, and other groups against one another.

The next sections of this introduction present a literature review which elaborates on the intervention I seek to make in a discussion of the racializing frames that help us understand how non-white groups making claim to the nation may advance ideals foundational to the white power structure, and the implications of this for interethnic relations. I then discuss how Afro-Cubans fit into the picture by describing the context of Cuban immigration to Miami and the making of the exile community, after which I move to a discussion of how a focus on Afro-Cubans challenges the way race is constructed and offers prospects for new perspectives and resistance. Finally, I discuss the analytical approach and methods employed in more detail, and conclude with a description of the dissertation chapters.

Making Claim to the Nation

Struggles over national identity in the U.S. have, from the founding of the nation, been fundamentally concerned with protecting whites' exclusive claims to citizenship, a

designation that excluded all others from the rights to property ownership and other resources. Claims to citizenship have depended on the construction of "white" versus "other" and posited whiteness as the norm or referent for identity as "American" (Rodríguez, 2000; Harris, 1993; Horsman, 1981). This belief about the nation structured early immigration research, so that the integration of immigrants into the nation was achieved by assimilation, acculturation, and adaptation into the dominant culture (Park, 1950; Gordon, 1964). The idea of "straight-line assimilation," which refers to how white immigrants became Americans by the third generation, in an uninterrupted progression, by adopting the values, culture, language, dress and customs of the white majority, led non-white immigrants to expect that they too could achieve cultural and structural assimilation if they made the same adaptations (Pedraza, 2000). While recent scholarship has thoroughly critiqued theories of straight-line assimilation as outdated (Portes & Rumbaut, 1990), the vocabulary and ideologies of this assimilation model are still readily apparent even in current studies on immigration, i.e., "becoming American" is still measured according to the extent to which new immigrant groups attain a semblance of social mobility that approximates being on a par with whites economically, residentially, socially, or ideologically. Such scholarship reinforces the idea that "white" is the normative American identity to which immigrants aspire. This view does not consider the fact that groups regarded as "immigrants," and who may not always fit the model of achieving resemblance to whites, still may consider themselves fully American or make claim to an U.S. American identity (even when choosing transnational identities).[9]

[9] Scholars who focus on immigration and transnationalism have made important inroads in the critiques of the idea of bounded nations but this research has limited applications for understanding US interethnic conflict (See Lowe & Lloyd, 1997 for discussion of studies in this area).

To fully take to task the white claim of exclusivity to the nation, we must problematize the tacit legitimization of defining the nation as white by focusing on how minority groups redefine "American." Several scholars have moved us beyond the assumption that immigration is a one-way process by highlighting the ways immigrants transform society, claim rights, and define citizenship (Pedraza, 2000, Flores, 1997, Ong, 2003). For example, William Flores highlights the agency of excluded groups that (re)define themselves in the face of hegemonic power. He argues that excluded groups work to assert "cultural citizenship," a self-definition which "… includes how excluded groups interpret their histories, define themselves, forge their own symbols and political rhetoric and claim rights…[as they] retain past cultural forms while creating completely new ones" (Flores, 1997, p. 263). Renato Rosaldo's notion of cultural citizenship elaborates on Flores' definition and offers the possibility that disenfranchised groups can find ways to incorporate themselves into society with legal, political, and economic gains as well as gains in the less tangible "matters of human dignity, wellbeing, and respect" (Rosaldo, 1997, quoted in Ong, 2003, p. 6). Aiwha Ong counters Rosaldo's view, however, with the reminder that it is important to also "identify the various domains in which these preexisting racial, ethnic, gender, and cultural forms are problematized, and become absorbed and recast by social technologies of government that define the modern subject" (Ong, 2003, p. 6). Her work applies the Foucauldian concept of govermentality which demonstrates how policies, programs, codes and practices of the government work to instill in citizen-subjects values including self-reliance, freedom, and individuality, towards the aim of policing themselves into worthy citizens (Ong, 2003, p. 6).

In my investigation of how minority groups grapple with their own standing in the U.S. as they encounter the new presence of an immigrant group viewed as a threat, I discuss both the ongoing process of struggle against arbitrary exclusions based on ethnicity and race described by Rosaldo, and, as Ong emphasizes, the technologies of government that simultaneously reinscribe these racial hierarchies. But, in the face of interethnic conflict, it is important to note that discourses circulating in minority populations can also reinscribe these racial hierarchies**,** which I get at in my media analysis.

Studies of interethnic relations between two or more minority groups that take note of the diversity of the U.S., the realities of demographic change, and the growth of global capital, are relevant to the research presented here. Of particular importance are studies that note how various groups shape the experiences of the others (Pedraza, 2000), including through conflict and coalitions (i.e. Kim, 2000; Vaca 2004; Chang & Diaz-Veizades, 1999; Morales and Pastor, 2000; Portes, 1990). Though Black/Latino conflict in particular receives much attention in the press, the scholarly research in this area has been limited (Bentacur, 2005).[10] Edward T. Chang and Jeannette Diaz-Veizades (1999) found that a major part of the conflict among Latinos and Blacks in Los Angeles stems from the Latino quest for equal representation and the African American feeling of being displaced by Latinos in a contest over resources. Their study confirms the fact that the issues at stake in Black/Latino conflict vary, depending on the specific geographical context and the fact that different Latino groups may have different concerns. In my

[10] See Bentacur's (2005) review of the range of scholarship on Black/Latino relations for a more comprehensive list of the existing studies based in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Miami, and other cities. Also see more recent work by Paula McClain and colleagues based in the Southern US (2007).

study, the Afro-Cuban experiences point to the permeability of racial/ethnic boundaries and overlapping concerns and identities. Revealing these overlaps as well as the gaps is a necessary move towards the dismantling of conflict. It is important to think beyond the idea of African Americans and Latinos as bounded, separate communities in order to create bridges between them.

To understand interethnic conflict, Ethnic Studies scholars argue that we must account for the powerful forces behind immigration and ethnic/racial conflict, to avoid the fallacy of viewing this conflict as merely a natural result of placing distinct groups in geographical context with one another, as Robert Park's ideas assume (Omi & Winant, 1994). The view of interethnic conflict as merely the result of "cultural differences" or "misunderstandings" obscures the workings of white supremacy and the role of capitalist expansion. As minority groups struggle for power/dominance, this struggle can also be framed within what Claire Jean Kim terms "racial power," the fact that the racial status quo tends to reproduce itself in ways that maintain white dominance (2000, p. 2). This notion of power draws from Foucault and "conceives of racial power not as something that an individual or group exercises directly and intentionally over another individual or group but rather as a systemic property, permeating, circulating throughout, and continuously constituting society" (Kim, 2000, p. 9). White supremacy is maintained as racial power works to position groups within a dominant racial order.

Kim's concept of "racial order" is central in this analysis. Racial order argues that racial categories are reproduced relationally to other groups in a distinct (but dynamic and continuous) order, in a field structured by at least two axes: superior/inferior and insider/foreigner. Blacks and whites are major anchors, with whites on top and

blacks as bottom; incoming immigrants are positioned in relation to these anchors. Immigrants, such as Asian immigrants in Kim's study, "are racially 'triangulated' both as inferior to whites and superior to blacks (in between black and white), and as permanently foreign and inassimilable (apart from black and white)" (p. 16). The positioning of Asians above blacks allows the United States to blame African Americans for their own disenfranchisement and absolves the nation from fully attending to their needs. In effect, the problems of African Americans are erased by the focus on the successes of model immigrants. Regardless of whether immigrant groups are positioned as unassimilable outsiders or as superior to Blacks, whites remain neutral or normative in the racial order. Kim argues that the ways in which minority groups (such as African Americans and Koreans in her study) are positioned in the racial order creates unavoidable tensions among these groups. This realization is extremely important, but I intend to go further and show exactly how marginalized groups may attempt to place *themselves* in positions of power.

My discussion also borrows from Leslie Hout Picca and Joe Feagin's (2007) discussions of white racial frames. Drawing on earlier work by Feagin, Picca and Feagin define the dominant white racial frame "…as a *generic meaning system* created historically by whites that can be held by whites and people of color… Through important social institutions, whites, especially those in the elite, have collectively worked hard to get all members of the society to buy into this framing as part of the system-justification process [*emphasis theirs*]" (Picca & Feagin, 2007, p. viii). This frame structures the ways white oppressors view society and work to legitimate their dominant position. While Picca and Feagin acknowledge that non-whites may also adopt

these frames, their work does not demonstrate how this occurs, as they focus more specifically on white efforts to maintain power. Similarly, Kim's work demonstrates how whites position non-whites as inferior or as outsiders, but only discusses how non-white groups resist racializing frames.

In this study of institutional and individual discourses related to the Afro-Cuban presence in the United States, I demonstrate and discuss how minority groups reinscribe dominant racial orders to reposition themselves in society. Building on the work of Kim (2000) and Picca & Feagin (2007), I argue that as minority groups draw on the language and ideas of gaining power as it is defined in the U.S. (such as constructing themselves as superior or more of an insider than other groups), they can inadvertently reproduce the ideas of dominance they wish to challenge. This is because, according to the dominant racial order, drawing on power in these particular ways is necessary for inclusion in the nation (De Genova, 2005). This necessity is a testament to the tenacity of the racial structure of power in maintaining white dominance.

The heart of struggles over power among marginalized groups in the U.S. can be seen in W.E.B. DuBois' classic discussion of African American "double-consciousness" -- the feeling of striving to maintain both sides of who one is, maintaining one's racial or ethnic identity while at the same time desiring full inclusion in the nation. As DuBois explains, "he [the African American subject] simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face" (1982, p. 45-46). Thus, African Americans struggle against exclusion to gain the basic rights of citizenship and dignity. But as Leith Mullings (1997, p. 121) and George Lipsitz (1998) have

argued, resisting one set of oppressions might create another. Critical race scholars Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres ask, "Once you enlist power, do you forfeit your ability to resist it (2002, p. 122)?" In their view, "The structure of power itself, more than the ideology or personal inclinations of each newly powerful individual, defines how power is exercised in the long term. Insiders do not permanently forfeit the ability to resist zero-sum power, but they are less inclined to develop such capacity over time…One of the reasons insiders are less able to ward off the conventions of power is that part of their energy is devoted to maintaining the source of their individual power" (2002, p. 122-123). Guinier and Torres link this continued quest for power to "the racial bribe"—" a strategy that invites specific racial or ethnic groups to advance within the existing black-white racial hierarchy by becoming 'white'" (2002, p. 225). They argue that these groups are in fact never fully included but are given enough concessions to feel as though they are (such as legal rights, the prominent promotion of minority leaders, etc). Whiteness is painted as achievable, but their own ideas or ideals, if too different from the mainstream, remain excluded. This brand of inclusion, which Guinier and Torres label the "insider access strategy," deems existing forms of hierarchy acceptable and only in need of "tweaking" to include more diverse participants (2002, p. 125). Other scholars contribute similar concepts of "conditional whiteness" (Mirabal, 2003). My study examines discourses circulating in ethnic press about the Mariel exodus and the Balsero crisis to demonstrate how whiteness continues to be at stake among groups in the struggle for power, specifically whether Cubans and African Americans in Miami accept or reject "the racial bribe."

My research focuses on three overarching discursive, or racializing frames, identified in scholarship as predominant, and which are most relevant to the findings in my research: 1) the black/white binary, the seemingly antiquated primary frame that still exists today and that most overtly reinscribes race; 2) the frame of racialized morality that remaps biological race onto moral characteristics and depicts belonging as rooted in the idea of who is most deserving; and 3) the native/foreigner dichotomy, in which groups claim to be more entitled to citizenship on the grounds that their group has a longer history of time or investment in being included in the United States. In particular, a longer history of oppression, in their view, makes them worthier of inclusion. These frames can be distinct at times, but are more often overlapping and interconnected in their work of maintaining dominance.

Black/white frame.[11] One dominant racializing frame noted by several African American writers and scholars is that of black being opposite to American—reaffirming the supremacy of whiteness by eschewing blackness (i.e. Morrison, 1992; Ellison, 1972).[12] Historian David Roediger points out how blackness was used as the pole against which whiteness was defined, as lower-class whites and Irish immigrants were able to elevate themselves by distinguishing their status as free laborers against black slaves (1991). Bonnie Urciuoli argues that despite the various forms of non- belonging constructed in the United States (slaves, unwanted native inhabitants, expendable immigrant labor from various countries, and inhabitants of conquered lands) the polarity

[11] This black/white frame which defines "American" as opposite of "black," is linked to but different from the black/white racial paradigm or binary which defines the US nation as primarily a nation of black and white people, both "American" in this view, although Blacks are second class Americans. This binary gives little attention to the presence of other minority groups.

[12] See De Genova, (2005) for discussion of other African American authors who discuss this theme.

of white and non-white remains consistent (2003). Thus, new immigrants soon learn that it is better to be anything other than black and that they must define themselves not only vis-à-vis whiteness as the normative U.S. identity but also in relation to U.S. blackness (Noguera, 2003).

Some scholars claim that a strategy used to avoid stigma in the U.S. by black immigrants, who have more at stake because of their phenotype, is to play up their foreignness so as not to be associated with U.S. Blacks. Mary C. Waters (1999) and Philip Kasinitz (1992) argue that for the West Indian immigrants they study, becoming American often means becoming "African American." This identity is often imposed by other "Americans," white and black. However, West Indian immigrants have also been differentiated from African Americans because they have been able to achieve a level of success which has been attributed to an immigrant mentality: they work hard to accomplish the American dream and have less investment in the racial struggles of the United States (Waters, 1999). Thus, some West Indian immigrants also call on their greater success to contrast themselves to African Americans. Few studies on black immigrants focus on black Latinos, but they also indicate that Latinos of African descent, such as Dominicans and Puerto Ricans, disidentify with blackness and African Americans, and highlight their Spanish speaking ability as a primary strategy in this process (Landale & Oropesa, 2002; Bailey, 2000, 2001). These authors found that members of the second generation were more likely to adopt an African American identity than their parents, but in general blackness is viewed as undesirable. In the case of black immigrants, being viewed as "foreign" can be seen as more favorable than being "American," when "American" for them can only mean being "black."

For immigrants who do not fit in as black or white, the poles of white and black are still salient. In his study of how Mexican migrants have come to be defined as iconic "illegal aliens," Nicholas De Genova contends the migrants negotiate their own identities in relation to a dominant whiteness and a subjugated blackness (2005, p. 8). Also, Asian scholars have described how Asians are also defined in between whiteness and blackness in ways that reinforce that polarization. For example, historian Gary Okihiro traces the history of the racialization of Asians and reveals how whites positioned these non-white immigrants:

> Whites considered Asians "as blacks" or, at least, as replacements for blacks in the post-Civil War South, but whites imported Chinese precisely because they were not blacks and were thus perpetual aliens, who could never vote. Similarly, whites upheld Asians as "near whites" or "whiter than whites" in the model minority stereotype, and yet Asians experienced and continue to face white racism "like blacks"…Further, in both instances, Asians were used to "discipline" African Americans (and other minorities) according to the model minority stereotype (1994, p. 62).

Okihiro argues that the conception of Asians as a "model minority" is defined in opposition to African Americans, and predicated on immigrant groups demonstrating the ability to compare favorably against African Americans in terms of social mobility, crime statistics, health, and so on. Historian Robert Lee adds that immigrants become model citizens or "model minorities" when they contribute more than they take and are not a burden to society (Lee, 1999). The message that immigrants who become model citizens must assimilate away from blackness toward whiteness encourages immigrant groups to disparage blacks and blackness. Thus, the black/white binary continues even as the population becomes increasingly diverse.

Morality frame. The model minority theme described above incorporates the idea of morality—those most deserving of citizenship in the nation are those who conform to "proper", i.e., Anglo, middle class, moral standards (Gans, 1999; Ong, 2003; Gray, 1995; Urciouli, 1996). These standards include being hard-working, self-reliant, law-abiding, and freedom loving (Ong, 2003). Race takes on a moral character that is a remapping of race from biology onto discourses of citizenship, although biological race remains fundamental. As Bonnie Urciouli contends, several other markers besides skin color (such as foreign language or accents) can be interpreted as signs of poverty, poor education, low intelligence, laziness—qualities associated with "race" (1996).

A version of the morality frame has been discussed by several scholars, but Leland Saito's concept of the "good immigrant" is particularly instructive for my analysis of Cuban American reactions to Mariel and Balsero immigrants (discussed in chapters 1 and 3). In Saito's study, the image of the good immigrant reflects "the process through which long-term residents of the city, rapidly becoming a numeric minority, attempted to cling to political and social control of the city and influence over the new immigrants' pattern of adaptation by invoking a mythical image of how 'good immigrants' were supposed to act" (Saito, 2001, p. 332). Saito investigated how long-term residents (white, Latino, native-born Japanese and Chinese Americans) in Los Angeles California, adjusted to new immigrants from China arriving in the late 80s – early 90s. Nisei (second-generation Japanese) shared concerns similar to those of other long-term residents but, as Asians, they also shared experiences with the incoming Chinese immigrants. The good immigrant depiction was a way for Nisei to affirm their own acceptance in U.S. society and to maintain a sense of power as the "arbiters of what was

'correct' in their community" (p. 341). They expected newcomers to blend in and adapt to the United States and its ways by being passive and subservient. Saito argues that the Nisei did not see the racism of this position, but rather viewed it as the natural way to become U.S. American. Saito argues, as I do with respect to the politics of race in Miami, that they did not recognize how their ideas stemmed from the racism of the United States, which is based on the Eurocentric idea of what is proper and which continues to position whites as the norm. The morality frame is discussed in the dissertation as it relates to how Cuban Americans made claim to the nation in their reception of Mariel immigrants, similar to the second-generation reception of Chinese immigrants, and to how African Americans positioned themselves as more deserving of citizenship than Cuban immigrants.

Native/foreigner frame (new nativism). The theme of morality and who is most deserving also undergirds the immigrant/ foreigner frame, encouraging a nativist stance against new immigrants. The term "nativism" or "nativist" has most often been used to describe the anti-immigrant sentiment of the mid-nineteenth century, or the turn of the century anti-Chinese attitudes (Bosniak, 1997). The traditional usage of the term usually pertains to whites' reaction to non-whites. Law professor Linda S. Bosniak notes that the meaning of the word nativist, which saw a resurgence in the late 1990s, is contested and not as straightforward as people may think. For the purposes of my work I will employ the narrower definition of nativism used by most analysts, which Bosniak defines as the "negative sentiments of various kinds towards foreigners—[an] antiforeigner feeling" (Bosniak, 1997, p. 281). In my work I contend that nativist sentiments can also be held

by non-white groups who make claim to being American.[13] Perceiving immigrant groups that have already arrived or aspiring immigrants as threat, various ethnicities may exhibit animosity, bias, and/or an exclusionary impulse (Bosniak, 1997, p. 281). This impulse is central to the native/foreigner frame, which draws on Kim's (2000) notion of the insider/foreigner axis within the racial order, wherein immigrant groups are positioned as permanently inassimilable foreigners in contrast to native insiders.[14]

Studies of African American sentiments towards immigrants and immigration expose nativist sentiments linked to particular socio-historical contexts (Fuchs, 1990, Hellwig, 1981/1987, Jaynes, 2000). The studies also reveal that historically, Blacks have had no singular idea or monolithic view about immigration. Due to their position in the United States as both racial minorities and as Americans, Blacks have historically sought to align themselves with other marginalized groups with whom they empathized and with whom they sought solidarity, while at the same time establishing themselves in the U.S. nation (Brock & Castañeda Fuertes, 1998). Perhaps for this reason, studies of African American attitudes towards immigration are contradictory: while many Blacks tend to oppose immigration when it infringes on their job prospects, they generally support the rights of immigrants (Fuchs, 1990, Hellwig, 1981/1987, Jaynes, 2000). The analyses put forth in studies by Thornton and Mizuno (1999) and Pastor and Marcelli (2004) demonstrate how sophisticated critiques of white racism, whereby members in Black communities attribute interracial conflict to the larger systematic processes intended to

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[13] See Guinier and Torres' use of nativism to describe black attitudes towards Mexicans in Los Angeles (p. 241).

[14] I use the term "native" instead of Kim's term, "insider," to foreground the link to the idea of nativism. Also see Nicholas De Genova (2006) for an integral discussion of nativism and constructions of immigrant foreignness.

maintain the power of whites, provide impetus for coalition building. However, when economic conditions create intense job competition, the dilemma pits African Americans' commitment to justice for Blacks against the commitment inspired by the Civil Rights Movement to the ideal of justice for all—including immigrants, especially those of color.

Some white nativists have used the case of African Americans, whom they define as "indigenous minorities,"[15] to advance their arguments against immigration (Beck, 1996; Steinburg, 2005). African Americans are at times positioned by whites as "more American" than immigrants because they speak the dominant language, and have adopted many of the customs of the dominant culture by virtue of their longer history in the United States. In this way, they are conceived of as having greater claim to American citizenship than newer immigrant groups (Kim, 2000). Some scholars have argued that new immigrants hurt African Americans by taking their jobs or lowering their wages.[16] While the questions and debates raised are important, they often pit African Americans against immigrants, an opportunistic approach which works in favor of maintaining the status quo. For example, the United States can use concessions given Blacks after the Civil Rights Movement as proof that they have made efforts to create a more equitable society for U.S. citizens, but must now draw the line somewhere in regards to "new" Americans. The construction by white nativists of immigrants as outsiders is adopted by African Americans and other non-white groups such as second generation immigrants, or even recent newcomers, who make claim to the nation. In my focus on the Cuban

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[15] American Studies scholar Arlene Dávila provides an example of another use of the term "indigenous minority" noting that advertisers view African Americans as the only "indigenous" minority in the United States and therefore part of mainstream culture, or, the "general market" (2001).

[16] See Schulman, Steven. "Introduction." P. ix.-xiii. In Steven Schulman ed. *The Impact of Immigration on African Americans.* New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2004, for a more detailed discussion of such arguments.

American reception of stigmatized immigrants from their country of origin who arrived years after the establishment of the Miami Cuban enclave, I point out how groups not normally viewed as "Americans," also invoke this frame,[17] and how they may simultaneously rely on the black/white and morality frames in their claim for citizenship.

The Miami Cuban Exiles and Afro-Cubans in the United States

An examination of power relations in Miami reveals the impact of the changing demographics on groups making claim to the nation for specific purposes. According to Alex Stepick and his colleagues (2003), most previous studies concerned with interethnic conflict and power discuss cases in which Anglos hold and maintain power. However, Miami presents a case wherein a "minority" group has not only achieved major power in terms of their economic and political clout but, Stepick and colleagues argue, they exercise assimilative power, meaning, in Miami, acculturation goes in reverse (p. 146). Reverse acculturation occurs "…when established residents self-consciously adopt some traits of the newcomer culture, in particular, learning Spanish" (p. 31). Stepick and colleagues argue that only in Miami has this reverse acculturation been so thorough, a testament that immigrants can overcome relations of dominance. In their work, they challenge traditional assimilation models emphasizing, as I do, the importance of economic and political relations between immigrants, white and African Americans, and on how becoming American also means being accepted by other Americans who compete over what being American means. Thus Stepick et al.'s study of Miami's complex

[17] See Saito 2001; Garcia Bedolla, 2005; and Gutiérrez, 1995 for discussions about intergenerational and interminority conflict among Asian and Latino groups.

intergroup relations makes an intervention relevant to my analysis of power relations. But I believe the conclusions of their research do not go far enough—it is not enough to celebrate how Cubans were able to attain dominance without also considering the continued disenfranchisement of African Americans and other blacks in Miami.[18]

Stepick et al. conclude that black immigrants in Miami will follow the model of downward assimilation, i.e. the strength of U.S. racism against blacks will negatively affect black immigrants because whites will associate them with African Americans (Portes & Zhou, 1993). They maintain that black immigrants in Miami will assimilate into the African American community while white Hispanics and white Americans will come closer together. The way the stigma attached to blackness is taken for granted and the fully negative evaluation of what becoming African American means is problematic because it simply replicates the ideological stance of the traditional assimilation model. Whiteness is placed firmly at the top of the social hierarchy and blackness at the bottom. Further, black Cubans are completely absent in Stepick et al.'s analysis; I believe bringing them into the picture complicates their conclusions, which discuss Cuban Americans as racially homogenous and treat the Black and Cuban communities in Miami as bounded. Their analysis does not reveal the overlaps that exist in the context of Miami, nor does it address the larger questions about the nexus of race, immigration, and Latinidad that are being asked throughout the United States.

Focusing on the particular racial and political positioning of Afro-Cubans provides added depth to studies about the intersections of blackness, Latinidad, and immigration. As Afro-Latinos, Afro-Cubans differ from English-speaking black

[18] "black" here refers to African Americans and English and French speaking Afro-Caribbeans.

immigrants because of their compounded identification with a stigmatized Latino identity. Nevertheless, they are not in the same position as other black Latinos because they are the only group whose earlier immigration waves from their country were "whitened," becoming economically and politically powerful locally and nationally, and models of "anti-communism." Like white Cubans, they are caught up within the politics of U.S./Cuba relations, albeit with unique concerns, having experienced the Cuban revolution in a different way and for a longer period of time. These differences create a divide between the two groups based on race, class, and ideology that has not been fully investigated. Decades ago, Cuban scholars Lourdes Casal and Andrés Hernandez asserted that "there is a pressing need to examine areas of Afro-Cubans' incorporation into U.S. society, such as their social mobility, occupational adjustment, acceptance by white Cubans, self-identity, and attitudes toward other groups" (1980, p. 38). And Nancy Mirabal points out, "The recent migrations of Afro-Cubans… reconfigured a language of race, sexuality, culture, and gender that was not always understood or employed in community making among Cuban exiles" (Mirabal, 2005, p. 203). Afro-Cubans are a less visible segment of the Cuban American community but their experiences are distinctive due to their unique racialization both in Cuba and in the United States. To ignore their voices is both to neglect a significant aspect of what "Cuban" means, and to reinstate the white norm. Though the number of black Cubans in the U.S. is relatively small, blacks and mulattoes make up the majority of the population in Cuba, and because the U.S. exile community and the U.S. government are heavily invested in what happens in Cuba, they cannot lose sight of how the changing welfare of blacks in Cuba may affect Cuban politics. In addition, with the looming end of the Castro regime, given Fidel

Castro's poor health and the recent transfer of power to his brother Raúl, and in view of continued migrations of Afro-Cubans to the U.S., the concerns of Afro-Cubans in the U.S. may increasingly come to the fore. In a study of race, the ideas of post-revolutionary migrants are particularly interesting to engage because they come to the U.S. with different tools with which to talk about race, power, and imperialism, shaped by living in Castro's Cuba.

Cuban Migration

A short description of the history of Cuban immigration is in order to understand how black Cubans have been racialized as separate from white Cubans in the United States. Cuban immigration to Miami is commonly summarized as occurring within four major waves, starting with immigration immediately after Castro's takeover in 1959. The first wave included the landed elites, some of whom had supported the previous Batista regime and whose lives and livelihoods were threatened within the new regime (Pedraza-Bailey, 1985).[19] Scholar Lisandro Pérez estimates that between 1959 and 1962, 200,000 families with children under 18 years old arrived from Cuba (2001). The second wave consisted mainly of the relatives of those who had arrived in the previous wave. The second wave of Cuban immigration began in the fall of 1965 and lasted until 1973; approximately 5,000 people were retrieved by boatlift and 260,000 were brought to the United States by plane (Grenier & Stepick, 1992). A higher percentage of the second wave represented the "petit bourgeoisie" (Pedraza-Bailey, 1985). During this second

[19] Before Castro took over, the United States had established economic and political ties with Cuba through its industries (sugar mills, manufacturers, business forms, etc.). The elite executives and owners were bound to this US investment in Cuban industry and therefore were more apt to believe the United States would eventually be able to intervene in the Cuban situation and restore order.

wave, the United States instituted the Cuban Adjustment Act (1966), which stated that all newly arrived Cubans could become naturalized citizens (Pedraza, 1996). Given the context of the Cold War, the thousands of Cubans who left Cuba during the first two waves were welcomed into the United States as political exiles, enemies of communism, and they received unparalleled government assistance to adjust to life in the United States (Stepick et al., 2003; Grenier & Stepick, 1992). Since then, the Miami Cuban contingent has grown to be enormously powerful-- socially and economically. They are also politically dominant in Miami and wield tremendous influence (Grenier & Pérez, 2003). Much scholarship has concentrated on the Miami Cubans of these first two waves and their astonishing upward mobility, noting how in contrast to other immigrant groups, the Cuban average income is higher and poverty rates and dependence on public assistance, such as welfare programs, is lower (Grenier & Pérez, 2003). Although hard work is certainly a factor in their success, they have been constructed as a model minority without noting the fact that generous U.S. immigration, education, housing, and economic policies helped them enormously. The U.S. treatment of Cuban immigrants has been unique; for decades after Cubans began to come to the United States in 1959, the United States maintained an open-door policy for Cuban immigrants, but not for other immigrant groups.

The Mariel exodus marks the third and one of the most controversial waves of Cuban immigration, when 125,000 or more Cubans were brought to the United States in boats from the port of Mariel in 1980. The Mariels were younger and poorer than those who had arrived in previous waves and, according to varied estimates, between 15 and 40% were black (García, 1996, p. 60). In response to dissent in Cuba when hundreds of

Cubans sought asylum at the Peruvian embassy, Fidel Castro announced on April 20, 1980 that those desiring to leave could do so through the port of Mariel. As a strategy for making demands on the U.S. government, Castro released some people considered undesirable (homosexuals, criminals, and the mentally ill) into the population of those leaving. Although these "undesirables" were but a small proportion of the people leaving Cuba, the Castro government played up the characterization of the Mariels as deviants in the media, and the popular U.S. press also legitimated Castro's depiction of the Mariels in reports that fanned domestic fears of crime and deviance (Pedraza-Bailey, 1985). Subsequent studies of the Mariel population have shown that the media construction of them as a threat was so powerful that Mariel immigrants suffered the social consequences of this stigma in the United States (Pérez, 2001). Several scholars make passing mention of the fact that blackness added another layer to the stigmatization of the Mariels, but no studies to date have specifically covered this issue (Aguirre, 1984; Bach, Bach, & Triplett, 1981/2; Hufker & Cavender, 1990, p. 333; Portes & Stepick, 1985; Soruco, 1996, p. 10; Boswell & Curtis, 1984, 1983). My dissertation investigates the stigma attached to blackness by providing insight into the particularities of Afro-Cuban experiences in Miami and Los Angeles.

The most recent Cuban group, the Balseros, who came on flimsy rafts, or *balsas*, arrived during Cuba's Special Period, after the fall of the Soviet Union caused an extended period of political unrest and economic scarcity. There were fewer blacks and *mulatos* (8.3%) among them than in the Mariel exodus, but they still included more than double the amount of blacks than among the pre-1980 Cubans (3.1%) (Ackerman & Clark, 1995). In response to the tremendous numbers of arrivals during the Mariel crisis,

the Clinton government had instituted the still current "Wet foot, Dry foot" policy, which prohibits Cubans entry into the United States if they are found by the Coast Guard at sea (Soderlund 2003; Grenier and Pérez, 2003). Such a dramatic shift by the U.S. proved that the Cuban American community's claim to the nation was more tenuous than the previous open-door policy had suggested.

The story of Cuban American immigration to the United States and the differential acceptance of the four waves illuminate the role political ideology and U.S. immigration policy play in shaping race, ethnicity, and citizenship. Furthermore, as Nancy Raquel Mirabal argues, "… the last two waves emphasized what has been missing and understudied in the field of Cuban-United States Studies: race. The racial character of both the Mariel boatlift and the *Balseros* (rafters) no doubt contributed to the changes in migration policy as well as to the unease among many in the "white," older, and more established Cuban community in Miami" (Mirabal, 2003). The chapters in this dissertation will demonstrate the ways the Mariels and Balseros were differentiated racially from the exile Cubans, in the media and in the personal experiences of Afro Cubans. Mirabal argues that when we say "race" among Cubans we usually think only of blackness, but "the theoretical gaze needs to be redirected so that we can look at how 'whiteness,' or better yet the perception of 'whiteness,' has also been used to facilitate and sustain a privileged exile" (2003, p. 372). This dissertation seeks to do just that.

At stake in this discussion of Afro-Cubans is how the bipolar black/white racial paradigm is functioning in the increasingly diverse U.S. nation. Speaking of the new Asian and Latino immigration, De Genova asks, "What are the wider processes of racialization that mediate constructions of both nationally specific and more broadly

inclusive Latino and Asian identities—in relation to one another as well as in relation to the hegemonic polarity of whiteness and blackness? What are the implicit or explicit ways that whiteness and blackness might figure in the formulation of their identities?" (De Genova, 2006, p. 15). Michael Omi warns against decentering the Black experience, as it is fundamental to ideas of race in our society. But he says the challenge is to "frame an appropriate language and analysis to help us understand the shifting dynamic of race that all groups are implicated in" (Omi 2000, p. 251). Because the African American experience is so fundamental to U.S. ideas of race, I would argue all groups *are* implicated in it. As the case of Afro-Cubans forcefully illustrates, their experiences also go beyond the black-white paradigm within the multicultural reality. For groups who are both immigrant and black, like black Cubans who are also Latinos, these intersections are particularly salient. An investigation of their racialized experiences offers a fitting way to grapple with these new understandings of race, and the questions posed by De Genova and Omi.

Michael Omi argues scholars need to more fully investigate the specific processes by which racial categories and racializations emerge, by focusing on how immigrant groups negotiate the existing racial order and how they fashion their own self identities. My work tackles this challenge, by looking at discourses that reflected and shaped the ways black Cubans were racialized in particular historical moments, and by interviewing black Cubans about how they understand the racial order of the U.S. and where they fit in. Race and identity function as constructions of "text and talk" (West-Durán, 2004; van Dijk, 1993, Whetherell & Potter, 1992), and my analysis gets at the frames that act as norms about how one *should* think about certain groups. We also remember that

identities and ideologies are not static, and that some are more salient at different times. Thus, to truly dissect both text and talk, my methods investigate official and unofficial discourses.

Methodology

Newspaper Analysis

I examine official text in the news coverage published in the six months following both the Mariel exodus and the Balsero Crisis, using material from *El Herald/Nuevo Herald*, the most widely read Spanish-language paper in Miami, and from the most popular African American newspaper (with a 80 year history), the *Miami Times*. Although the papers may reflect the priorities of their editors and writers, they also give some insight into the concerns of the communities they serve. I examined news stories, editorials, op-editorials, and letters to the editor to discover the predominant themes used to frame immigration issues in general and the new arrivals in particular. I concentrated especially on the items about black Cubans to determine how much attention black Cubans received, and how they were portrayed in the papers.

In the early and mid-1980s *El Herald* had a problematic relationship with the Cuban American community, although it was the most highly circulated Spanish-language paper, because it was owned by the *Miami Herald* and for the most part was a translation of that paper (Portes & Stepick, 1993). My analysis of Mariel in *El Herald* allows us to see how the paper framed the Cuban community while it was owned by the English paper. By the late 1980s, however, *El Herald* had become independent and more accepted within the community, allowing for a clearer view of the community's concerns about the Balsero crisis in 1994. The *Miami Times*, "the South's largest Black weekly

circulation, serving Miami-Dade County since 1923,"[20] provides insight into the African American officialized discourse about these two immigration waves from Cuba and their impact on the African American community.

As Omi argues, to more effectively understand processes of racialization, there is a need "to look at the cultural representations and discursive practices that shape racial meanings" (2000, p. 260). Race is constructed through discourses of text and talk, i.e. through discourses circulating in the mass media and in face-to-face interaction (West-Durán, 2004; van Dijk, 1993, Whetherell & Potter, 1992). Media scholars Entman and Rojecki define discourse: "By discourse we simply mean how people understand, think, and talk about something, be it an issue or a category of people" (2000, p. 6). Following Marx, Gramsci, and the Frankfort school, Andrew Rojecki argues "that our tendency to take things as a given and not be self-reflective on them privileges a set of power relations, a rationalization of privileged class interest" (Rojecki, 1999, p. 17). Such apathy can be exploited by privileged groups who may manipulate discourse to support their constructions of consensus through language and texts (Van Dijk, 1987, 1993; Hall, 1997).

Several media studies explain how the media perpetuates racial ideologies and stereotypes through discourse and images.[21] The news in the United States and elsewhere effectively reinforces the idea of black inferiority in general and, through constant reporting on crimes committed by blacks, contributes to "common sense" ideas that black men are inherently dangerous and deviant (hooks, 1992; Campbell, 1995; Collins, 2000;

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[20] http://www.miamitimesonline.com/News/Archives/4-2-2003/business-A.html

[21] See, for example, Dates and Barlow (1990); Modleski (1986); Van Dijk (1987); Bogle (2001); Jewell (1993); Jordan (1977); and Pieterse (1992).

Gitlin, 1980). Stuart Hall argues that, "The media define [for] the majority of the population *what* significant events are taking place, but also, they offer powerful interpretations of *how* to understand these events" (1978, p. 57). His seminal study of news reporting on a rash of muggings in Britain in 1973 demonstrates how the reports constructed a "moral panic," which served to warn of the possible disintegration of the social order and reinforced the need for social control (p. 29). Then the police, courts, and other institutions worked together with the media to reinforce the perceived social order by disciplining black bodies. As the state and courts endorsed the need to take a harsh stance against offenders, the newspapers reproduced the ideologies of the state by constructing a panic that served to warn the public they should respond to black men with fear. Stuart Hall's work and that of others establish the news media as an important site for the study of how events such as the Mariel and Balsero immigrations were deemed crises by the government and the general public, and then given a *racial* significance.

Media scholars note that racist aspects of the media are not necessarily the deliberate fault of racist journalists and employees. However, the conventions of news production lend themselves to the reproduction of the dominant narrative (Hall, 1978, p. 57; Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Schudson, 2000). Entman and Rojecki highlight five forces that determine media content that produces race-based differentiation: the mainstream culture; the creative needs, limitations, and professional norms of media personnel and organizations; the changing economic needs of media industries (such as the pressure to entertain audiences with simple dramatic conflict); the manipulation of media content by political elites; and the changing national and international economic structure (2000, p. 72). What is important, as Hufker and Cavendar explain, is that "The

media do not exist in isolation. They reflect and validate the existing social order and disparage those who are perceived as a threat" (1990, p. 333).

Studies of news reporting on U.S. foreign conflicts provide further illustrations of the complexity of media discourse. Rojecki argues that in times of crisis, more latitude is given by media to government officials than at other times, allowing the government to define and limit debates (1999, p. 10). This was truer during the Cold War, when there was a more obvious consensus between the government and the public about foreign policy, but also during the Vietnam War, when segments of the population were highly critical of government positions. Dan Hallin's 1986 study of media coverage of the Vietnam war shows that despite the common belief that the media was wholly oppositional to the war effort because of the unprecedented freedom the press had in covering the war, ultimately, "the behavior of the media…is intimately related to the unity and clarity of the government itself, as well as to the degree of consensus in the society at large" (p. 213). Furthermore, as Hallin explains, when political consensus exists, journalists generally maintain the dominant political perspective, and the views of authorities are taken to be representative of the ideals of the nation as a whole. However, when the political elites are in conflict, the media are less affirming of the views of elites and can even become adversarial towards the political establishment. Although the media sometimes are highly critical of the government, the adversarial stance taken still fits within the bounds of sanctioned discourses and tends to privilege the voices of elites (Hallin, p.10).

My study investigates ethnic news media, which was created in part to challenge the dominant elite voices prominent in mainstream media and to provide alternative

readings of society. Ronald Jacobs (2000) highlights the importance of "multiple public spheres" to address the needs of the public.[22] The African American press has functioned as an alternative public sphere to secure a space for self-representation (Jacobs, 2000; Rhodes, 1995). In it, African Americans engaged the majority public spheres in conversation and critique. Latino media, which has a younger history than the African American press, functions in a similar fashion, but América Rodriguez brings to our attention the Latino media's challenge to produce a U.S. Latino identity while addressing their audiences' simultaneous connection to other countries in Latin America (Rodriguez, 1999). For example Miami's ethnic media provides an alternate perspective and voice on Cuban immigration and other local issues, but also remains committed to close coverage of news from Cuba.

Ultimately, Black and Latino media are by definition contradictory because they are a site of strategic contestation. They cannot be completely resistant (Hall, 1997, p. 128). They must at some level invoke a certain amount of essentialism, among other contradictions. As ethnic media generally have the same imperatives and conventions of mainstream media, it can also replicate the dominant narrative on race, in contradictory fashion. Ronald Jacobs contends, "Mass media serve simultaneously as forces of inclusion and exclusion, universalism and particularism, globalization and localization, integration and fragmentation, freedom and constraint" (2000, p. 3–4). Following Jacob's reasoning, this study unearths the complex and contradictory discourses about race and belonging which circulated in Miami's African American and Spanish-language newspapers, by means of a textual analysis.

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[22] See also Nancy Fraser (1992).

As Shah and Thornton, quoting Stuart Hall (1975, p. 15) explain, "Textual analysis is the close examination 'of language and rhetoric, of style and presentation,' supported by and linked to the social, political, and cultural context in which these texts are produced" (2004, p. 22). Following the methodological approach used in Shah and Thornton's analysis of newspaper coverage of interethnic conflict in major U.S. cities, I read articles in Miami's ethnic media closely to enumerate themes that not only were most frequent but given the greatest weight (Shah & Thornton, 2004; Hall 1975; Gitlin, 1980). Because my goal is to understand pressing social problems in order to work toward promoting change, my study embraces the objectives of critical discourse analysis (CDA), although it does not employ its linguistic methodology. According to Tuen van Dijk, CDA focuses on "the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance" (1993), particularly the relations between "text, talk, social cognition, power, society, and culture" (p. 253), with the explicit purpose of challenging power elites, and the collusion of subjugated groups.

Interviews

Because race is constructed through discourses of talk as well as text, it is important to go beyond the mass media and look at personal interviews, which is why I include an analysis based on interview research (West-Durán, 2004; van Dijk, 1993; Whetherell & Potter, 1992). As Silvia Pedraza argues, although a structural approach is important for explaining how larger macroeconomic processes shape immigration, researchers should not lose sight of the individual people most affected. She maintains that, "The theoretical and empirical challenge now facing immigration research lies in its

capacity to capture both individuals and structure" (Pedraza, 2000, p. 719). I interviewed Afro-Cubans living in the U.S. to gain a deeper understanding of how they negotiate their racial positioning in the U.S., and to connect their views to the structural issues affecting the construction of race in the U.S.

Thirty Cubans in two cities, 15 in Miami and 15 in Los Angeles, were interviewed for my study and asked how they think Anglos, African Americans, and other Latinos position them in the U.S. racial hierarchy, and how they locate themselves. Although this project largely centers on Miami, I include Los Angeles for a broader perspective on the changes that are occurring across the country. Both cities are good sites for my analysis of the contemporary effects of demographic change. Currently, the city of Los Angeles has the largest minority population of any city in the United States (nearly 50%), whereas among U.S. counties, Miami-Dade has the highest proportion of minorities, at 82%.[23] Because Latino identity in Los Angeles is most often defined as Mexican, my interviews with Cubans living there expose the process of negotiating Latinidad in an area where Cubans are but a small percentage of the Latino population. By comparing the experiences and views of Afro-Cubans living in the Miami Cuban ethnic enclave with those of Cubans in Los Angeles, an area far from Cuba or any Cuban enclave, I also provide insight regarding the impact of geographical location on the Afro-Cuban experience.

The process of conducting fieldwork in Miami and Los Angeles taught me much about the themes I wanted to theorize in my research. I relied on snowball sampling to

[23] More than 300 counties now "majority-minority" (August 7, 2007), *US Census Bureau News*, Washington DC: US Department of Commerce.

find the people I interviewed because randomly encountering Afro-Cubans proved a difficult undertaking in Los Angeles, and even in Miami. Navigating Miami's complex ethnic and racial climate with its predominant mix of Cubans, Afro-Caribbeans, Latin Americans, and African Americans posed a special challenge. Within this mix, how would I identify a black Cuban? There is no one neighborhood where black Cubans reside in a separate community, and the racial separation between black and white Cubans is "artificial" in any case. In addition, many people who appear black and have a Spanish accent are from other countries, such as the Dominican Republic. Furthermore, lighter skinned or "white" Cubans may self-identify as black or mulatto. Given all of these complications, how would I approach possible consultants without reifying all that I attempt to critique—without imposing the U.S. black/white binary and making assumptions based on skin color and accent?

In Los Angeles, finding black Cubans is like finding a needle in a haystack, given the small number of Cubans in the first place. I met the majority of my interviewees at the Cuban Festival in Echo Park and at a LA nightclub in a neighborhood with many Brazilians and other Latinos. The club caters to a Cuban crowd twice a week when it plays Cuban salsa and other rhythms; the vast majority of the patrons on those nights are black Cubans, but the crowd is otherwise diverse. Why the club does not attract more white Cubans is not clear. The fact that black Cubans created specific Afro-Cuban spaces such as the nightclub attests perhaps to the larger proportion of blacks among more recent Cuban immigrants. The success of the club's Cuban nights and the sense of community it provides reveal that even in a space where they are few, black Cubans find ways to build their own community.

As an African American woman undertaking research with Cubans of African descent, I found that some of the respondents related to me because of my appearance. I am often asked about my ethnicity, and some interviewees remarked on our similar experience of being constantly questioned. Many of the interviewees treated me as somewhat of an insider, or were at least very gracious toward me, although people who declined to be interviewed may have viewed me with some suspicion. I am aware that although there are similarities between myself and the people I interviewed, there are also vast differences. I am also aware of my privilege in the United States, in comparison to Afro-Cubans, because of my U.S. American identity and because English is my first language. Taking on the touchy issue of race in Cuban communities as a non-Cuban, I felt humbled and uncomfortable sometimes, even though the people I interviewed were very forthcoming. But as a black scholar dedicated to interrogating the continued stigma attached to blackness, and as someone who can relate to many of the day-to-day experiences recounted by the people I interviewed, I proceeded with this study hoping to engage in conversations that would help me learn from the experiences and insights of black Cubans living in the United States.

Chapter Breakdown

Chapter 1 begins in 1980, the beginning of a crucial period for race in U.S. society referred to as the "browning of America" because of increasing numbers of refugees and non-white immigrants. This serves as the necessary context for my analysis of the Spanish-language newspaper *El Herald's* coverage of Mariel. The chapter argues that news articles and editorials in *El Herald*, as in its parent paper, the mainstream

English-language *Miami Herald*, distinguished the "proper" (white) from the "improper" (black or non-white) Cuban citizens by further "blackening" the Mariel newcomers, using tropes traditionally employed in the United States to establish African American blacks as non-citizens, including discourses about laziness, dependency, and criminality. My analysis illustrates the continued influential power of racializing discourses, and of the black/white frame in particular, for constructing good and bad citizens, even when an overt biological notion of race is largely absent from the description of the newcomers.

Chapter 2 focuses on the African American *Miami Times*' coverage of Mariel. African American press coverage of Mariel reveals Miami Blacks' anger and frustration as they perceived that the U.S. immigration policy paralleled domestic white versus black power inequities. According to the reports in the *Miami Times*, Cuban refugees, who were constructed in the paper as white, received preferential treatment over black Haitians arriving in the United States at the same time. I argue that while the paper continued to fight white racism against blacks, a primary theme in the paper endorsed the idea that black Americans and white Americans were the "real Americans," a position that stems from but contradicts the aim of the paper to fight white racism. However, the larger presence of black Cubans among the new refugees from Cuba brings the bipolar racial paradigm by which immigration policy was evaluated into question, and highlights the instability of racial categories even as white racism against blacks persists. I use Claire Jean Kim's concept of "racial order" to analyze the insider/foreigner divide that characterizes not only Anglo reactions to immigrants but also those of African Americans and other traditionally underrepresented groups, as they fight to preserve their tenuous claim to U.S. citizenship.

Chapter 3 provides the political context for the fourth wave of Cuban migration characterized as the Balsero crisis, and investigates the coverage of the event in both *El Nuevo Herald* and the *Miami Times* newspapers. The Cuban American framing of the Balseros in *El Nuevo Herald* relied on the trope of the worthy suffering immigrant, an ideal that worked because it was already sanctioned in U.S. public opinion and in mainstream television news coverage about the Balseros. I argue the worthy/suffering frame was effective because many Balseros were barred from entry and held at Guantámamo Air force Base in Cuba, and their relative absence on U.S. soil lessened the idea of the migrants as threat. Moreover, the *Miami Times*' coverage of the Balsero Crisis reflected African American discontent that after more than a century as "Americans" they remained unworthy citizens themselves, leading them to view the acceptance and opportunity provided immigrants as a slap in the face. Afro-Cubans were acknowledged to a greater degree in both newspapers, but the coverage indicated that there was no place for them in traditional American discourse except in relation to model Cuban Americans and racialized black Americans. Still, the African American and Cuban American newspaper coverage of the Balsero immigration reflected the overlaps between the two communities in more detail than during Mariel.

Chapter 4 moves us to the present, to explore how Afro-Cubans in Miami and Los Angeles perceive other U.S. ethnic/racial groups place them within the U.S. ethnic and racial structure, and how they negotiate their own multiple identities. Unlike Anglos and other minorities who appear or sound "unmixed," Afro-Cubans, like other multiracial individuals, are often directly asked to explain their racial and ethnic backgrounds. Their experiences reveal how the combination of their blackness and Spanish accent is viewed

as an anomaly and is drawn upon by people from various communities (Miami Cubans, African Americans, and other Latinos, such as Mexicans in Los Angeles) to "other" them and place them "outside." However, Afro-Cubans use their "othered" identity to reposition themselves in society and, in the process, undermine fixed notions of race and ethnicity in ways that lead us to a more complex understanding of how racialization processes have changed over time and how they are working in the 21st century.

The dissertation concludes with a discussion of the implications of the study in light of the recent U.S. Presidential election of Barack Obama, a (biracial) Black man, and recent events that will have a significant impact on the subject of race in the future of America, offering suggestions for future research and outlining what the results of this research contribute to Ethnic Studies in particular and to interethnic understanding in general.

CHAPTER I
Blackness and Constructions of Proper Citizenship: The 1980 Mariel Exodus in *El Herald*

The 1980 Mariel exodus, when approximately 125,000 Cubans were brought to the United States by boatlift, helped trigger a dramatic shift in U.S. immigration policy from an earlier "open-door" stance to one with significant entry restrictions for Cuban refugees. Vilified in the press and in public discourse as a threat to U.S. economic, cultural, and security interests, the new arrivals disrupted the common construction of Cuban Americans as model citizens—economically mobile, patriotic, and for the most part white. Mariel brought more poor and black Cubans who, caught between enduring stereotypes about the inferiority of black or African American identity and anti–immigrant/Latino discourse, were doubly stigmatized in U.S. society. Constructed in the mainstream press as undesirables, as Cubans, and as black, Mariel immigrants were situated at a crossroads that would affect their incorporation into the United States in ways significantly different from how previous Cuban migrants had been received.

The Mariels were a potential threat to the whitened image of the exile community because they brought with them a negative stigma not usually associated with Cuban Americans, who were described as having earned the title "Golden Exiles" through hard work and middle-class respectability. Miami's Cuban community had become well established and had gained tremendous influence in the city, and the image of the Mariels jeopardized this success. The public response to the Mariel exodus was a wake-up

call about white American anti-immigrant sentiment and revealed the instability of their status as model citizens (Portes & Stepick, 1993).

This chapter investigates coverage of Mariel during the first six months after the exodus, in *El Herald*, a Spanish language newspaper that was created, owned, and distributed by the English language *Miami Herald*, Miami's flagship newspaper. The research focuses on reports portraying the Cuban exile community's reception of the Mariels. Although *El Herald* contained multiple and contrasting perspectives, I argue that in the midst of the Mariel crisis, the newspaper reflected the racial project[24] of disseminating racialized morality discourses about good and bad citizens, which conformed to a black/white frame. Op-editorials and letters to the editor in *El Herald* were more likely to be supportive of the Mariels than news stories and editorials, which relied on or were direct translations of articles from the English language *Miami Herald*.

However, whether articles were supportive of or critical of the Mariels, I argue that the reports veiled inconsistencies and exclusions of nonnormative Mariel subjects within the United States which shifted the focus onto the Mariels and their supposed inability to conform to appropriate standards. These standards relied on producing norms of conduct and behavior—patriotism, respectability, and hard work—that assume a white, middle-class identity. Such normative behaviors could "whiten" any newcomers who adopted them just as they had "whitened" the exile community in the past. On the other hand, my analysis reveals that the language used in *El Herald* to describe the

[24] According to Omi and Winant (1994), "A racial project is simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, an effort to recognize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines" (p. 56). Entman and Rojecki (2000) provide further clarification: racial projects "seek to define race and racial identity in ways that advance larger policy aims and score political or economic gains" (p. 75).

Mariels distinguished “proper” (white) Cuban citizens from the “improper” (black) Mariels by further “blackening” the Mariels, using tropes that establish African American blacks as nonnormative citizens (including discourses about laziness, dependency, and criminality). Thus, despite the fact that an overt racial distinction was rarely made between the exiles and Mariels in the paper, the ideals of normativity and proper citizenship conformed to a black/white frame.

As the U.S. population continues to shift and whites become a numerical minority, the dissemination of racialized ideals of normativity in media and other institutions maintain the old system of racial hierarchies, inhibiting real change and inclusion. Understanding the role of ethnic media in the process can allow us to think about ways to support traditionally underrepresented groups as they attempt to resist the dominant racial paradigms. In particular, to challenge the continued power of the stigma attached to blackness, this research analyzes how blackness as a trope of “improper citizen” was employed in the case of *El Herald* coverage of Mariel.

El Herald was created to attract Cuban readership and in response to dissatisfaction with the *Miami Herald*’s coverage of events related to their community (Portes and Stepick, 1993). Striking a balance between Anglo American or mainstream ideals and the concerns of the Cuban American community would perhaps be a goal necessary to help sell papers. However, because the Spanish paper was controlled by the same editorial board that produced the mainstream paper, which demonstrated an often expressly negative view of Mariel, the paper exhibits the press’s role in enforcing a racialized normativity by directly presenting the same overarching views promoted in the mainstream paper in editorials and news stories, along with more explicitly Cuban voices

in op-editorials and other material. Such a move, I argue, could placate and control the Cuban American community by promoting mainstream ideals in addition to giving Cuban Americans hope of becoming or remaining American by adhering to normative behaviors. Still, the different voices in the paper illustrated also the complexities of Cuban Americans' struggle as they grappled with both deploying and resisting predominant nativist and racist U.S. discourses in their reactions to the stigma attached to a newly arrived group from their country, whose negative treatment in the United States disrupted idealistic views about the "inclusion" of their group within the definition "American."

The next sections will provide the background required to contextualize the reports on Cuban American reception of the Mariels: background on the Mariel boatlift as crisis, the construction of Mariels as deviants, and the stakes for the Cuban American community. I then briefly discuss how African American blackness was employed by politicians and media in the eighties to define nonnormative subjects, a move that established whiteness as the ideal and would be a template adopted by non-Anglo groups as well. This background is followed by a discussion of scholarly arguments about the role of media in maintaining the status quo, providing specific context of *El Herald*. Finally, the prominent themes that emerged in *El Herald* coverage will illustrate my arguments.

The Mariel Exodus as Crisis

According to media scholar Ronald Jacobs, "of those types of events that 'demand narration' crisis is one of the most important. Crisis develops when a particular event gets narratively linked to a central cleavage in society and demands the attention of

citizens as well as political elites." He argues that media depictions of "racial crises" like the 1965 Watts Riot and the 1992 Rodney King uprising expose racial representations in their rawest form (2000, p. 9). Media depictions of the Mariel exodus, I argue, similarly make such representations clear.

On April 1, 1980, six Cubans seeking asylum used a bus to crash through the gate of the Peruvian embassy in Havana, Cuba. One Cuban guard was left dead after the ensuing gun battle, but the embassy refused to surrender the gate crashers to the Cuban government. The Cuban government responded by announcing it would remove the Cuban guards from outside the embassy and allow anyone seeking to leave Cuba to go to the Peruvian embassy. Within 72 hours, a staggering 10,000 people gathered there (Masud-Piloto, 1996). The situation at the embassy became chaotic and dangerous, but the people who gathered there were intent in their protest. Angered at this sign of defiance, Fidel Castro announced on April 20th that anyone who wanted to leave for the United States could do so, through the port of Mariel.[25] This action would serve two purposes—to rid Cuba of political dissenters and to allow the Cuban government to thumb its nose at the U.S. government and its policies by overwhelming it, particularly south Florida, with thousands of migrants (Skop, 2001).

At the start of the Mariel immigration, the U.S. government was favorable to allowing the refugees to enter, but became more restrictive as time went on. Since 1959, when Castro came to power, the United States had an open-door policy towards Cuban exiles, who, fleeing communism, came to be viewed as model immigrants because they

[25] The name "Mariels" and the more common "Marielitos" are derived from the fact the immigrants of this wave left through the Cuban port of Mariel.

were economically, socially, politically, and racially congruent with the dominant elite. But the U.S. government had already begun reversing their open-door policy towards Cubans with the passage of the Refugee Act of March 1980, right before the Mariel exodus began. According to this act, the Mariels could not be accepted automatically as refugees; their status would be determined by review on a case-by-case basis.[26] As massive numbers of Cubans continued to arrive from Mariel, the Carter administration became less welcoming. A total of 6,000 refugees arrived in the first week, and in May, 3,000 refugees arrived per day (Masud-Piloto, 1996). The exodus, which began in April, lasted until October. The Mariels' reception contrasted sharply to how previous waves had been received; they were treated more like economic immigrants than as political refugees (Aguirre, Sáenz, & Sinclair James, 1997). The Mariels were much less likely than previous exiles to have family in the United States so instead of smoothly transitioning into the larger community, large numbers were held in tent cities and on military bases (Masud-Piloto, 1996). According to one source, 55% were sent to camps in Florida, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Arkansas to be screened and processed (Fernández, 2002, p. 41). Hence, major differences that distinguished their incorporation from that of previous waves were that U.S. policy had changed and the local and federal governments had no effective means of incorporating such high numbers.

A crucial factor affecting U.S. policy and public attitudes towards the Mariels was that they were characterized as criminals and as "undesirables." Previous waves of Cuban immigration had occurred in a more orderly fashion and had been sanctioned by

[26] The act limited Cuban immigration by establishing a yearly quota of 19,500 Cuban refugees and required individual case reviews to determine eligibility for refugee status. If approved, refugees could become permanent residents after two years (see Masud-Piloto, 1996).

the United States. However, the Mariel exodus was initiated by Castro's response to protestors. Fidel Castro released some people viewed as undesirable (homosexuals, criminals, and the mentally ill) into the population of those leaving as a strategic move to disrupt and complicate the United States' immigration policy towards Cuban refugees (Aguirre, 1984; Bach, Bach, & Triplett, 1981/2; Hufker & Cavendar, 1990, p. 333). Although these "undesirables" were but a small proportion of the people leaving Cuba (5% according to estimates), the Castro government played up the characterization of the Mariel immigrants as deviants in their media (Hufker & Cavendar, 1990). Previously the United States had refuted Castro's disparagement of the exiles who sought U.S. asylum, but in the case of Mariel, the U.S. public and popular press magnified Castro's negative depictions. An ABC news survey reported that by mid-May 1980, most Miamians disapproved of accepting the Mariels: 57% of adult respondents said they should not be allowed to live in the United States, 68% thought President Carter should not have let them enter, and 62% said Castro made the United States look foolish when he sent the "social misfits" (Aguirre et al., 1997, p. 494).

The media's powerful role in stigmatizing the Mariels has been a major topic of many studies on the Mariel exodus (Masud-Piloto, 1996; Wilsbank, 1984; Hufker & Cavender, 1990; Bach et al., 1981/2; Aguirre, 1984; Camayd-Freixas, 1988). According to Felix Masud-Piloto, the U.S. nightly news and the popular press helped solidify that the Mariels were a burden to society by repeatedly reporting on the large numbers arriving, the unfavorable results of public opinion polls, and negative consequences of the exodus (1996). In particular, Mariel criminality received much media attention. According to Mark Hamm, who conducted research on the detainment of Mariels, the

Miami Police Department adopted the word "Marielito," as an epithet to identify the city's worst threat: "'Marielito' became a synonym for thief, drug dealer, rapist, and murderer, and was analogous to racist terms such as 'nigger,' 'spic," and 'kike'" (1995, p. 76).[27] Research on the crime wave occurring at the time contradicts the negative portrait of Mariels. Hamm notes that the crime wave had in fact started before the Mariels came to the United States and was a result of drug trafficking. Furthermore, most crime that involved the Mariels was found to be against other Mariels (1995). But the reports did lasting damage: studies on Mariel adaptation, years after they first arrived, show signs that Mariel immigrants continued to suffer social consequences of the stigma, such as higher rates of imprisonment than other Cubans, likely due to the greater surveillance they received (Fernández, 2002; Aguirre, 1984).

Several scholars make passing mention of the fact that blackness added another layer to the stigmatization of the Mariels; however, no studies to date have focused specifically on the role of blackness in the stigmatization of Mariel immigrants.[28] Maria Cristina García estimates that between 15% to 40% of the Mariels were blacks and mulattos compared to 3% of the 1959–1973 migration (1996, p. 60). An *El Herald* article put the percentage of blacks in Mariel at 19.6%, while Bach et al. cite the percentage of blacks as 40% (Voboril, 1980, p. 4; Bach et al., 1981/2). Regardless of the actual number of blacks among the Mariels, the wave came to be distinguished from earlier waves by its blackness. In his study on the reception of the Mariels, B. E. Aguirre

[27] Although "Marielito" is commonly used even in scholarly works to describe refugees who left Cuba from the port of Mariel, I abbreviate the term and use "Mariels" throughout this dissertation in the attempt to avoid the stigmatized connotation.

[28] See, for instance, Aguirre, 1984; Bach, Bach, and Triplett 1981/2; Hufker and Cavender, 1990, p. 333; Portes and Stepick, 1985; Soruco, 1996, p. 10; and Boswell and Curtis, 1984.

(1984) notes that the race of the Mariels was in the consciousness of the U.S. public, and most Americans believed the Mariels were young, black, unmarried, and criminal. Thomas D. Boswell and James R. Curtis (1984) explain that the Cuban Refugee Resettlement Center had most difficulty resettling single, black, adult Cuban males.[29] Scholars have noted that blackness was also a factor in the exile community's rejection of the Mariels. Media scholar Gonzalo Soruco argues, "Because the new population [from Mariel] was largely black, it forced the earlier arrivals to face the racial reality of Cuba—the Cuba they had longed to return to. After Mariel, many of the established refugees were less eager to return to the island" (1996, p. 10).

Although I focus on the United States' construction of blackness, it must be noted that racist ideas cultivated in Cuba also play a part in this discussion. Cuban reactions to Mariels were also based on preconceived notions about blackness that were pervasive in Cuba. That is, some Cuban Americans already harbored racist attitudes towards blacks. Slavery was also a fundamental institution in Cuba which continued to shape social relations and racial ideologies after it was abolished in 1886 (Thomas, 1998). It is likely then, that the United States' negative constructions of blackness only reinforced those prejudices.

I assert that the Mariel stigma cannot be completely understood without full attention to blackness. The mere acknowledgement by previous scholars that blackness played a part in their stigmatization only naturalizes the fact that stigma is attached to blackness; it is viewed as a given. The characterization of the Mariels as black, in spite of the fact that the majority were white, is reminiscent of the United States' one-drop

[29] Boswell and Curtis (1984) put the percentage of blacks at about 20%.

rule, whereby one drop of black blood has a polluting effect. Black Cubans incurred the denigration African Americans have historically received in the United States.

The Mariel exodus became a "racial crisis" because public citizens and political elites were up in arms about the real logistical problems of accommodating such large numbers of people, and government officials were concerned about quelling public fears over the perceived threat these purported homosexual, criminal, mentally ill, and black bodies posed. In the public eye, these newcomers had more in common with economic refugees than with the "bold freedom fighters" of previous migrant waves.

The "Golden Exiles" and the Creation of Normative Subjects

Because of Miami's status as "the Cuban capital of America" (Boswell & Curtis, 1984), much scholarship has focused on the Miami Cubans and their astonishing upward mobility in contrast to other immigrants (Grenier & Pérez, 2003). The first waves of Cuban immigrants included the elite and upper middle classes of Cuba, which placed them at a financial advantage, and they also benefited from the U.S. open-door policy towards them. In addition, they received unprecedented governmental aid from direct and indirect assistance programs. For example, between 1968 and 1980 Cubans received 46.9% of all small business administration loans in Dade County (Porter & Dunn, 1984, p. 196). Although they maintain strong ties to Cuba, they also have exhibited great patriotism towards the United States and the government has largely supported their strong anti-Castro politics. According to Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick, Miami Cuban exiles have created a moral community that dictates that they must "espouse [anti-Castro] points of view repeated ceaselessly by editorials in Miami's Spanish radio and

press—the same voices that take care of denouncing any member of the community who strays too far from the fold" (1993, p. 139). Thus exile politics, based on fervent opposition to Castro and staunch support of the Republican Party, has been a primary unifying element for the Miami exile community (Stepick, Grenier, Castro, & Dunn, 2003). They successfully built a thriving enclave in Miami with tremendous economic and political power (Grenier & Pérez, 2003). However, researchers have argued that the homogenous depiction of Cuban Americans as white, politically conservative, and successful has been too simplistic. Members of the exile community have had varied U.S. experiences based on differing race, class, and gender dynamics. Indeed, the Cuban exile community has not been fully embraced by U.S. society—they also have been racialized as Latinos and immigrants threatening to take over America (Grenier & Pérez, 2003; Pedraza, 1995). Thus, their "whitened" standing has always been precarious.

Still, their political power has been a force to be reckoned with. Miami Cubans established a tradition of vocal political involvement and advocacy for the concerns of Cuban Americans regarding U.S./Cuba relations and immigration policy. The election of Republican candidate Ronald Reagan in 1980 and his reelection in 1984 was supported by 90% of Miami's Cubans. When it became clear the Cuban community could significantly influence the result of presidential elections, politicians became attuned to their needs to advance their own political goals. The Carter administration knew the power of the Cuban American contingent, and his indecision regarding how to deal with Mariel immigration (whether to stop it or allow more people to enter), was in response to fears that Cuban voters would be alienated. In fact, Carter's indecision during Mariel

turned the exile community solidly against him in the November 1980 election (Portes, 1993).

The exile community showed strong support for the Mariels when they first arrived. Exile Cubans acquired boats to retrieve Cubans attempting to leave Mariel, bringing thousands of Mariels to the United States solely through their efforts. Hundreds of Miami Cubans also offered their support by taking to the streets, raising funds (over $2 million by the end of April), and gathering clothing, food, and supplies for the new Mariels (García, 1996, p. 60). They responded to Anglo backlash by forming ethnic organizations, engaging in ethnic lobbying, and stepping up their civic engagement (Stepick et al., 2003, p. 40). Yet despite these grand early shows of support, their opinions became mixed as time went on and the full impact of the stigmatization of the Mariels was felt. In 1980, changes in U.S. policy that were less favorable to Cuban migration and the stigmatization of the Marielitos would be perceived as a threat to Miami Cubans' standing as "proper citizens" of the nation.

Blackness and Improper Citizenship

At the time of Mariel, concern over the problems of African Americans was a hot media topic in the nation as a whole. By the late 1970s, economic recession, deindustrialization, rising unemployment, and the growing disparity between the top 20% and bottom 20% of the population had adversely affected African Americans (Rose, 1995). However, neoconservatives groups in the eighties pointed to the African American middle class, which had grown significantly by 1980, as proof that the virtues of capitalism and bourgeois individualism worked, and thus they claimed poor African

Americans were to be blamed for their own problems. Threatened by the gains of the Civil Rights era, affirmative action, and programs designed to fight poverty, neoconservative groups sought to protect the privileges associated with whiteness, by exposing the social problems affecting the United States and defining them in racial terms (Gray, 1995). The black underclass was discussed as the "unworthy poor" who suffered because they had the "wrong" moral and family values and took advantage of the welfare system. The media incited fears about black welfare cheats, the pathological black family, drugs, and violence in the black community, and focused on black males who were constructed as a socially irresponsible menace. Media discourses about blackness and black bodies were used by conservatives to achieve particular political objectives. According to media scholar Herman Gray, blackness became an important tool of the new right to define proper citizenship and "Americanness" (1995). I argue this use of blackness was also applied in the depiction of the Mariels.

While racialization often foregrounds the idea of race as it is attached to actual dark bodies, Bonnie Urciuoli argues that it is also a process of othering that relies on several markers besides skin color, such as poverty, poor education, low intelligence, and laziness—qualities associated with "race" (1996). Media scholar John Fiske provides the telling example of how President Bill Clinton, although a white man, was "blackened" as a result of his sexual infidelities during the Monica Lewinski controversy. Fiske polled black Americans and found they believed Clinton was blackened because "his behavior was subject to intense, disproportionate and unfair surveillance…because it was 'known' to be a threat to the social order, and thus everyone had a right to know about it" (2000, p. 50). The Mariels were similarly blackened in the U.S. media regardless of their actual

skin color. Blackness was a primary trope used in *El Herald* to construct the group from Mariel as undesirable and as criminal, playing into already existing U.S. stereotypes about poverty and blackness. This practice fit in with the growing racial explanation of social and economic problems in Florida and in the nation.

El Herald Coverage

El Herald was created by the Knight-Ridder company in 1979, in response to Cuban American criticism of the English language *Miami Herald,* Miami's flagship newspaper, and to take advantage of the readership potential of the growing Cuban population. The Cuban American community had by the late 70s become fed up with the *Miami Herald*, which they believed was insensitive to Cuban issues, painted Cubans and other Latinos as criminals, and was too soft on communism and Castro (Soruco, 1996, Portes & Stepick, 1993).[30] *El Herald* was under the complete editorial control of the English language edition, and much of its content was a direct translation of the *Miami Herald.* Although the paper was not fully accepted by the community until it became independent of the English language version in 1988, it was still the most widely circulated Spanish language newspaper in Florida at the time (Veciana-Suarez, 1987).[31]

Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick (1993) provide insight into the politics of the *Miami Herald* which influenced the way the Mariel crisis was reported on in *El Herald*. The English language *Miami Herald*, they argue, was the local Anglo community's voice

[30] See Portes and Stepick (1993) for a full discussion of the extent of the exile community's protests against the paper.
[31] By 1981 the circulation of *El Herald* was 83,000 on weekdays and 94,000 on weekends. The other prominent Spanish-language newspaper was *Diario Las Americas*, a Nicaraguan-owned newspaper that catered to the right-wing, exile community (Rodriguez, 1999).

and a tool to discourage the acceptance of the Mariels. While prominent media scholars would argue against the idea that any newspaper has a singular voice, Anglo or otherwise, Portes and Stepick's analysis underscores the Cuban American community's evaluation of the newspaper as being biased against them. The paper castigated the U.S. government for its involvement in the Mariel crisis, and criticized the Cuban American community for its support of the new arrivals. The *Miami Herald*'s harsh criticism of the U.S. federal government, Portes and Stepick argue, stemmed from the fact that the local Anglos believed Washington had sacrificed them in favor of the Cuban American community. Portes and Stepick explain, "For Washington, the Miami exiles were not an 'ethnic' group, but an important ally in the fight for Cuba and Latin America. Forcefully stopping these supporters in the high seas as they attempted to 'liberate' their kin would not play well abroad, especially among friends of the United States elsewhere in the hemisphere. Hence, the bigger goal of preserving American global hegemony clashed with the local goal of preserving Anglo hegemony in Miami" (Portes & Stepick 1993, p. 29). For the federal government, appeasing both the local Cuban and Anglo communities in Miami required a delicate balance, but the local Anglo community and the *Miami Herald* criticized these efforts.

Camayd-Freixas's 1988 study on the local Miami newspaper's coverage of Mariel illustrates the strength of the local adverse reaction to Mariel. The study provides a day-by-day chronology from April 7 to September 26, 1980, of the reporting on Mariel in a review of both the English and Spanish versions of the *Herald*, to determine the media's role in shaping public opinion about Mariel Cubans. Although both the Spanish and English versions of the paper were studied, Camayd-Freixas's report focuses mainly on

the English version's coverage of the events. The stories Camayd-Freixas collected from the *Miami Herald* are rated as "positive" or "negative": negative articles depict the Mariels as negative or problematic, whereas "positive" are descriptive, positive, neutral, or indifferent. Despite the fact that the rating system inflates the positive category, Camayd-Freixas found that over half of the coverage in the first 4 weeks of the crisis depicts the Mariels negatively. The negative coverage peaked in May and was stable during the remaining 5 weeks (half negative, half positive); Camayd-Freixas concludes that the coverage was negative overall (p. 43). The *Miami Herald*'s editorials during the period encouraged a public debate over the pros and cons of accepting the Mariels and warned of the burden that accepting them would place on the United States in general and the local government in particular. Letters to the editor also expressed public concern and disgust with the new arrivals. Furthermore, Camayd-Freixas asserts that "the *Herald* may have actively and at times aggressively followed a discernable editorial policy which advocated a specific set of social policies vis a vis the refugees," such as the idea that other countries besides the United States should take part in accommodating the refugees (p. III-36). The construction of Mariels as negative, he argues, was also a result of the reporting of the biased opinions of nonexperts, and the omission of positive stories about them, which would have offset the negative coverage.

Camayd-Freixas' study found many similarities in coverage between the Spanish and English versions of the *Miami Herald*, because the Spanish paper relied on direct translations of the English version for much of its material. *El Herald*'s editorials were the same as those in the English version and also had a generally negative outlook on the Mariel Cubans. However, Camayd-Freixas notes significant differences as well. First,

he claims that the Spanish version included more Mariel coverage than the English paper, although it is not clear how this was measured or exactly how much more coverage appeared. In addition, there were more pro-Mariel supportive letters to the editor in *El Herald*. Furthermore, some of the stories in the Spanish language paper may have been "tweaked" to make the discussion appear more favorable towards Cubans from Mariel. Camayd-Freixas makes note of one instance: the May 11 story titled "Dade fears refugee wave" in the English paper was titled "90% of Hispanics believe that refugees will help Dade" in the Spanish paper (1988, p. III-60 - III-61). The English version's title highlighted the negative reception of the Mariels and the fear they generated, whereas the Spanish version focused on the positive reception of the Mariels by Cubans who viewed them as potential contributors to the local community.

It is outside the scope of my research to systematically compare the coverage in the *Miami Herald* and *El Herald*, but my work also corroborated Camayd-Freixas' observations. I too found that news stories in *El Herald* were likely to be direct translations of those in the English language paper, but in some cases there were subtle differences in their presentation of photos, wording, and placement in the paper. For example, "'Escoria' es lastre y sambenito del nuevo exilio" (September 1), a story about the effects of negative stigmatization on Mariels, ran on the first page of *El Herald*.[32] However in the English version, the same story, titled "Job-Hunting Exiles Are Stuck with Reputation of Criminal," also ran on September 1 but was not as prominent, and could be found on page 1 of section D.[33] Thus, a story on Mariel in *El Herald* placed

[32] Dan Williams, September 1, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 1, 3.
[33] Dan Williams, September 1, 1980, *Miami Herald*, p. D1.

prominently on the first page was sometimes placed on a later page in the *Miami Herald*. In addition, some news stories that appeared in the Spanish language paper did not appear in the English language paper and vice versa. Furthermore, *El Herald* tended to run more stories about Mariel, such as on July 25, 1980 when *El Herald* ran four news stories about Mariel and the *Miami Herald* ran only one. These differences demonstrate a desire to cater to the contradictory interests of the Spanish and English readers. Letters to the editor and op-editorials in the Spanish language paper were often written by people with Spanish surnames or who self-identified as being of Cuban descent, but these articles did not appear in the English language paper. My reading of *El Herald* suggests an attempt by the newspaper to maintain a balance between the ideals found in the mainstream paper, which stigmatized the Mariels, while at the same time attempting to gain Cuban American trust and readership.

My study expands on Camayd-Freixas's work by focusing on the areas where the *Miami Herald* and *El Herald* differ to capture how the paper framed the Cuban American reception of the Mariels, not the Anglo reception. Close to 400 (394) articles on Mariel were collected from *El Herald* (microfilm) for the six-month period from the start of Mariel on April 4, 1980, to two weeks after the end of the exodus on September 16. These articles represent all the items that reported on or discussed the Mariel exodus or the people arriving from Mariel (news stories, op-editorials, editorials, and letters to the editor). The articles were analyzed for examples of the attitudes of the Miami Cuban community towards the Mariels, including stories that illustrate a direct evaluation of the Mariels themselves. Three specific themes were identified as most prominent in the description of the reception of the Mariels by the local Cuban community. Theme #1,

Mariels viewed as compatriots of the established Cuban community and therefore worthy of being helped and accepted, accounted for 17% of the total articles on Mariel. These were mostly editorials, op-eds, and letters to the editor advocating direct support of the immigrants and sympathy for their plight, defense of them against negative images, or statements by Cubans that the Mariels are the same as the established Cubans. Though this theme was not the most frequent overall, I discuss it first because it describes the most common attitude towards the Mariels at the beginning of the crisis. Theme #2, Mariels viewed as criminal or deviant, accounted for 23% of the Mariel articles. These were mostly news stories focusing on crimes committed, possible criminality, and reports on homosexuality or mental states. The criminality theme became the main focus in the paper beginning with the coverage of the Fort Chaffee riot, and as time went on it became the predominant depiction of the Mariels. Theme #3 covered Mariels viewed as improper citizens (10%). I discuss this theme last because it demonstrates the ways the Cuban American community grappled with their desire to support the Mariels while attempting to escape the criminal label and other stigma attached to them. These were mostly editorials, op-eds, and letters to the editor explaining why or how they are different and what they should do to better fit in U.S. society.

The articles containing the prominent themes account for a little less than half (192 or 49%) of the total number of Mariel articles. The remaining 51% of the articles, most of them news stories, contain general or "neutral" reports about the numbers of Mariels arriving, or about U.S. and Cuban politics rather than specific evaluations of or attitudes about the Mariels. The three most prominent themes, when taken as a percentage of only those articles that include a direct evaluation of the Mariels are as

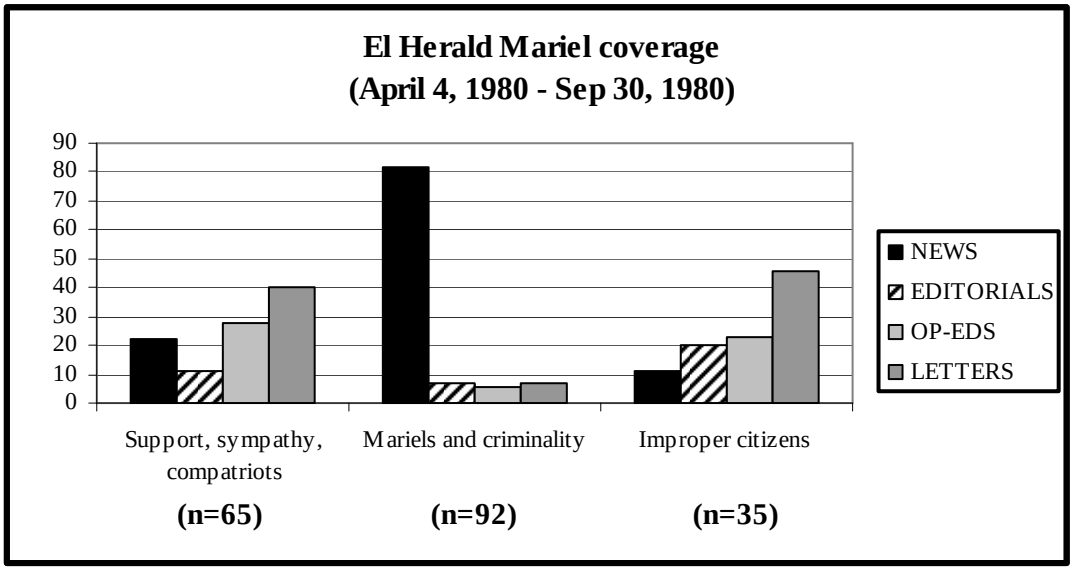
follows: Theme #1, Mariels as compatriots (34%); Theme #2, Mariels viewed as criminal or deviant (48%); and Theme #3, Mariels as improper citizens (18%).

My analysis expands on previous studies of newspaper coverage of Mariel by going beyond a discussion of the depiction of Mariels in polarized terms (as negative or positive) or highlighting only the negative depictions; I also discuss the ambivalence in the paper as represented in the preference for certain themes in certain types of coverage. Graph 1.1 illustrates this ambivalence by providing a breakdown of the percentage of the three prominent themes in four types of articles: news, editorials, op-eds and letters to the editor. When the topic of Mariel criminality was broached, it was overwhelmingly within news articles (82%). As will be discussed in more detail later, the Fort Chaffee riot involving immigrants from Mariel became national news in June and Mariel criminality received extensive coverage in the Miami newspapers. Because most of the news articles in *El Herald* were direct translations from the English paper, they reflect the bias of the *Miami Herald*. The editorials, which reflect the official voice of the paper, were also direct translations of the English language newspaper. There were few editorials in the sample overall; most editorials focused on other newsworthy topics besides the Mariel exodus during the time period investigated. In contrast to articles reflecting the priorities of the *Miami Herald*, the op-editorials and letters to the editor were more specific to *El Herald*. The largest percentage (40%) of the articles demonstrating support and sympathy for the Mariels were letters to the editor, which reflected the voices of a segment of the Miami Cuban community.[34] However, the largest

[34] It must be noted that letters to the editor are not a purely accurate way of measuring public opinion because newspapers make editorial decisions about which letters to include and because people who write letters are not necessarily representative. Still, the letters to the editor allow a look into alternative voices.

percentage (46%) of the articles criticizing the Mariels as improper citizens were also letters to the editor. Thus, the articles reflecting the public voice demonstrate great ambivalence among the Cuban American community in regard to the Mariels, although editorial choices influence the extent to which conflicting views are presented. The ambivalences illustrated in the article types reveal the complexity of the struggle the Cuban American community had with the dominant circulating discourses about their incoming compatriots.

Graph 1.1: Prominent Themes. Percentage of theme in four types of articles.



In the next section I will discuss the three major themes that arose in the Mariel coverage and how the themes classify the newcomers as either inside or outside of the Cuban American community (and therefore outside or inside the configuration of "American") in a manner which makes evident the overlaps between dominant racializing frames-- native/foreigner (whereby groups perceive themselves as having more claim to a U.S. identity because they have been established in the U.S. for a longer period of time); morality (wherein groups are framed as outsiders because they do not

conform to sanctioned moral standards), and black/white, a frame which more overtly invokes race and positions outsiders as "black." Of particular interest are those stories that specifically made reference to blackness in respect to the Mariels to determine the significance of the focus on blackness. I collected every story that mentioned the word "black" and/or "Afro-Cuban," as well as those that contained pictures of Cubans who appeared to be black to determine the context in which the words were mentioned and black Cubans were depicted. This search yielded a total of 41 articles, or a little more than 10% of the total.

Theme 1: Mariels as Compatriots

After Fidel Castro came to power in 1959 and the first large wave of Cubans left for the United States to escape the regime, Cubans continued to come steadily during the 1970s and were welcomed by family members who had arrived earlier. In keeping with this tradition, the newspaper portrayed the first impulse of Cuban Americans was to celebrate the new arrivals, and to interpret their arrival as further evidence that Castro's regime was not working. In their eyes, the fact that such large numbers of immigrants who had lived under the regime for 20 years were not satisfied with the conditions in Cuba meant that the regime would soon fall. Accordingly, the *El Herald* coverage reflected a strongly supportive stance among Miami Cubans as the Mariel exodus began. Although this support seemed to wane as time went on, it was also evident in later months in op-eds and letters to the editor. Articles offering support for the newcomers criticized Castro, highlighted the horrors of Cuba, and mentioned the refugees' hopes for

their new life in the United States.[35] One of the first news reports on the Mariel exodus, "Alternativas de nuevos exiliados son reducidas" emphasizes the right of the newcomers to be in the United States and calls upon the nation's historic commitment to accept the world's "poor, tired, and needy." The article discusses the fact that the new refugees might have a harder time in the United States than those from previous Cuban waves, but encourages support for them by quoting the plaque at the Statue of Liberty and Lyndon B. Johnson's original promise to the Cubans (in 1965):

> "Declaro que todos los cubanos que estén buscando refugio aquí lo encontrarán. La dedicación de Norteamérica a nuestra tradición de brindar asilo a los oprimidos será mantenida" Lyndon B. Johnson, 3 de octubre de 1965. Con estas palabras pronunciadas a los pies de la Estatua de la Libertad, mientras firmaba una nueva ley de inmigración de Estados Unidos, el Presidente Lyndon B. Johnson abría las puertas de este país para cientos de miles de refugios cubanos.
>
> ["I declare that all Cubans who are looking for refuge, will find it here. North America's dedication to our tradition of offering asylum to the oppressed will be maintained," Lyndon B. Johnson, October 3, 1965. By signing a new immigration law in the United States and speaking these words at the feet of the Statue of Liberty, President Lyndon B. Johnson opened the doors of this country for hundreds of thousands of Cuban refugees].[36]

The quote refers to a speech made by President Johnson when he signed into law the October 3, 1965 immigration bill that did away with the national origins quota system, a practice Johnson deemed "un-American." In this speech, Johnson paid special attention to Cuban asylum seekers, saying they would be welcomed to enter the United States, with first priority being for the purpose of family reunification, then asylum for political prisoners.[37] The article is optimistic about the newcomers' ability to be incorporated in the United States and responds to the public outcry against the Mariel exodus, which also

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[35] See, for example, Hay que poner orden en el caos creado por Castro [editorial], April 26, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 6.
[36] Guillermo Martínez, April 9, 1980, Alternativas de nuevos exilados son reducidas [news story], *El Herald*, p. 4.
[37] http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/Johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/651003.asp.

lamented the growth of the established Cuban community. Using the words of an American president and the Statue of Liberty, the article reminds the general public that all Cubans had as much right to be in the United States as Anglo immigrants of the early 20th century, whose claim to the United States is unquestioned.

Other early news stories seek to provoke sympathy for the newcomers by bringing the readers' attention to the tremendous hardships they faced in Cuba under Fidel Castro's tyranny, (e.g., "Llegan familiares de Cubano que sobrevivió al paredón [Families of Cubans that survived torture are arriving]");[38] and by appealing to the notions of family and family unification. A report in April on the crowds that congregated at the Mariel military base before they could be brought to the United States reads, "Por lo menos 1,000 futuros cubanoamericanos están esperando en la base militar del Mariel para ser trasladados a Estados Unidos. Los hombres duermen en la yerba. Las mujeres y los niños permanecen en las barracas [At least 1,000 future Cuban-Americans are waiting at the Mariel military base to be transferred to the United States. The men sleep in the weeds. The women and children remain in the barracks]"[39] The passage calls attention to the fact that women and children (the most vulnerable) were among the refugees and in need of protection. With the descriptor "futuros cubanoamericanos [future Cuban-Americans]" the piece shows the expectation that these people, women, children, and the elderly among them, would indeed make their way to the United States and become incorporated into the American family.

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[38] Cheryl Brownstein, April 15, 1980, Llegan familiares de cubano que sobrevivió al paredón, *El Herald*, p. 2.

[39] Mujeres y niños duermen en barracas en Cayo Hueso, April 26, 1980, *El Herald* p.1.

An op-editorial by Cuban American Roberto Fabricio (who would later become the editor of the independent *El Nuevo Herald*) titled "Que vengan los asilados! [The exiles are coming!]" similarly invokes U.S. patriotism and the rhetoric of the American Dream, but it is evident he believes the United States might take some convincing: "Lo que sí creo es que no podemos darnos el lujo de darles la espalda. Sería cruel y alevoso. Y esta es una ciudad edificada sobre las esperanzas y los sueños [What I believe is that we cannot give ourselves the luxury of turning our backs on them. It would be cruel and treacherous. And this is a city built around hopes and dreams]."[40] He argues that the successful Cuban enclave was built on the Cuban American dream and it is only right that the newcomers be given their opportunity to seek the same dream, but acknowledges the reality that the Mariels might not be fully accepted in U.S. society or by fellow Cubans.

Other articles similarly illustrate that *El Herald* (and the Cuban American community) recognized Americans would need to be convinced to accept the Mariels. Mariel supporters had to overcome the anti-immigrant sentiment circulating at the time, Castro's early depiction of the Mariels as deviants, and the U.S. media's increasingly negative depiction of the group. Thus, as time went on, some articles (mostly letters to the editor) were written in their defense, with titles such as "El exilio nuevo si tiene iniciativa [The new exile has initiative]," by an ex–political prisoner,[41] "Condena ataques a los recién llegados [Condemn attacks on those who have recently arrived]," by a recent arrival,[42] and "Los refugiados no son escoria [The refugees are not scum]."[43]

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[40] Roberto Fabricio, April 12, 1980, Que vengan los asilados! [Editorial], *El Herald*, p. 4.
[41] Melquíades B. Fuentes, September 4, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 4.
[42] Romilio Espinosa Pereda, September 8, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 6.

A September article from a series of news reports on the adaptation of Mariels in the United States titled "'Escoria' es lastre y sambenito del nuevo exilio ['Scum' is a defamation of the new exile]" attempts to repudiate the negative labels attributed to them. The article shows that the stigma attached to the Mariels had become part of the consciousness of the general public, academics, and the Cuban community alike. It explains how the Mariels had a difficult transition in the United States because of these labels. It cites a study by Robert Bach from the Brookings Institute in Washington that found criminals to be only 1% of the new arrivals.[44] A related news story reports on Bach's study that same day but on a different page; "Nuevo exilio es 'clase obrera sólida', dice estudio ["The new exile is a 'solid working class,' says study"] attempts to paint the new arrivals in a positive light by emphasizing the contributions they could make to Miami as a workforce. Bach's study disputes the claim that Mariels are lazy and do not work, and likens them to the already established Cuban community, which has been defined as having a good work ethic. Efforts to defend the Mariels paint them as worthy compatriots who were *wrongly* accused of being deviants and demonstrate how the newcomers actually did fit the ideal of the worthy citizen who would contribute to U.S. society. Mounting a defense against the stereotypes levied against the Mariels, such articles put forth the idea that "they (we) belong here"—the articles include the newcomers in the Cuban American family and demonstrate that the exile community would fight for their (own) honor.

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[43] Braulio Sáenz, September 30, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 4.
[44] Dan Williams, September 1, 1980, [top news story], *El Herald*, pp. 1, 3.

Other articles contend the Mariels suffered from stereotypes and stigma not only from the wider public but also from the established Cuban community, but promote Cuban American unity by criticizing those members of the community. A July 3 op-editorial by Roberto Fabricio about the need to support the new arrivals states, "Muchas familias cubanas que por lo general hubiesen podido servir de *foster parents* no han respondido porque se ha hablado y escrito tanto de que si estos muchachos pueden haber estado presos o no, que se ha dejado de considerar las causas que llevaron a estos niños cubanos a las prisiones de Castro [Many Cuban families that generally would have been able to serve as foster parents have not responded because there has been so much said or written about whether or not these children could have been imprisoned, that they have stopped considering the reasons why these children were in Castro's prisons]."[45] Fabricio decries the power of the media to scare off support for the Mariels, which had by July become apparent. The piece cites a social worker who was dedicated to helping her Cuban people, and the director of *El Centro Hispano de Consejos Familiares de la Universidad de Miami*, who both offer their expert opinion on the situation. They remind the public of the conditions in Cuba, and that many of the newcomers who were considered criminals had been put in jail in Cuba for petty crimes related to hunger or desperation.[46]

The attitudes of some Cuban Americans who prided themselves on leaving Cuba when Fidel Castro came to power are chided in several articles. The author of "'Escoria' es lastre y sambenito del nuevo exilio" says:

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[45] Roberto Fabricio, July 3, 1980, Un problema de imagen [op-editorial], *El Herald*, p. 8.
[46] Ibid.

> Muchos antiguos refugiados también estiman que los nuevos refugiados son diferentes a los que vinieron de Cuba con anterioridad. Algunos creen que los recién llegados no quieren hacer los mismos sacrificios que ellos hicieron para abrirse paso en Estados Unidos….Los antiguos exiliados asumen una actitud de superioridad al señalar que ellos abandonaron la isla mucho antes de los recién llegados].
>
> [Many prior refugees also feel that the new refugees are different from those who came from Cuba previously. Some believe that those who have recently arrived do not want to make the same sacrifices that they made for free passage to the United States … the previous exiles take on an attitude of superiority because they abandoned the island much earlier than those who just arrived].[47]

This article presents the idea that "we Cubans should stick together;" asserting that people from Cuba, regardless of when they arrive, should view one another as brothers and sisters. In an op-ed, "Veamos una cronología del exilio cubano [A look at a chronology of the Cuban exile]," the author, who identifies himself as part of the Cuban community, writes, "El problema es que el cubano refugiado de cada etapa, se consideraba, y se sigue considerando, distinto a las demás etapas [The problem is that the Cuban refugee from each stage, considered and continue to consider themselves different from the other stages]." The op-ed ends, "¡Que va, chico! No tenemos remedio. Todos somos igualitos [Tough break, man! It's hopeless. We are all equal]."[48] An op-ed written by a Cuban American journalist from Miami, "Apuntes de lo del Mariel [Notes about Mariel],"[49] continues this theme of Cuban unity as he comments on the new division:

> Y uno de los aspectos mas deplorables de esa crisis es que, como parte de ella, la colonia cubana se ha dividido contra si misma. Porque, en efecto, para muchos de los 'refugiados antiguos,' los que vinieron por Mariel son unos apestados…la única actitud realista es ayudar a las personas decentes que han venido por Mariel, y que son la mayoría, a integrarse económica y socialmente a nuestra comunidad para fortalecerla.

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[47] Dan Williams, September 1, 1980, "Escoria" es lastre y sambenito del nuevo exilio. *El Herald*, p. 3.
[48] George Childs, September 21, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 13.
[49] Luis R. Caceres, Jr., September 9, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 4.

> [And one of the most deplorable aspects of this crisis is that, as a part of it, the Cuban colony has divided against itself. Because, effectively, for many of the 'old refugees,' the ones who came through Mariel are plagued … the only realistic attitude is to help the decent people that have come through Mariel, who are the majority, and to help them integrate economically and socially into our community in order to strengthen it].[50]

These articles hold to the tradition of Cuban American support of any newcomers from Cuba and demonstrate an effort from members of the Cuban American community to maintain the idea of unity so crucial to the exile identity and their strength in the Miami economic, cultural, and political economy. Yet the articles recognize the growing split that was occurring between the "antiguos" and the new arrivals, a split that threatened to contribute to the disempowerment of the Cuban American community as a whole.

Congruent with the predominant exile ideology, placing blame on Castro seemed the most acceptable way to explain why waves of refugees from the same country could be so different, and the Castro regime were most often invoked to explain the difference between the established Cubans and the newcomers. That the Cubans who had endured his regime for 20 years could be so "corrupted" from their "true" form, that is, law-abiding and respectable, was viewed as testament of the failures of his government. For example, in the op-ed, "Los jóvenes del Mariel [The youth of Mariel]" (September 8), the author, an ex-political prisoner turned journalist, writes in defense of the Mariels by discussing the psychological effects of living in Cuba under Castro: "En una sociedad cuyos valores son impuestos oficialmente por el Estado y rechazados cruentamente por la nación, no puede existir estabilidad social y individual. Hombres que han crecido cronológicamente pero siguen siendo infantes sico-socialmente [*sic*] [In a society whose

[50] Luis R. Caceres, Jr., September 9, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 4.

values are officially imposed by the State and violently rejected by the nation, social and individual stability cannot exist. Men that have aged chronologically continue to be social infants]."[51] The op-ed is meant to defend the new arrivals, but the author's words could be used as evidence against the Mariels. He infantilizes them, describing them as in a state of underdevelopment, which is also an indictment of the state of the Cuban government in contrast to the United States. The author asserts the new Cubans suffer from a personality disorder and that in today's Cuba the youth do not want to work or study and do not have discipline. On the one hand, the problems with the Mariels are attributed to Castro and his regime, but on the other hand the author implies they have embodied these deficiencies and does not offer reasons why the reader should believe that in the United States they would overcome this upbringing. Still, he writes in defense of the Mariels, in spite of the demeaning language.

The stories supporting the Mariel refugees demonstrate the paper's depiction of Cuban efforts to overcome the negative opinions of the wider public and show the frustration of some of the established Cubans with their treatment. We see that some Cuban supporters sensed a need to "prove" that the new arrivals "are just like us," and recognized that the new arrivals were being depicted as criminal, less ambitious, less "worthy." Such stories attempted to refute the claim that the new arrivals were deviant by talking about how they did fit the "proper citizen" characterization as hardworking contributors. Any deficiencies were attributed to Castro and his regime. By blaming Castro for the problems of the Mariels, politics (rather than race) predominated in the paper as the basis for distinguishing the Mariels from members of the established exile

[51] Juan J. Alborna Salado, September 8, 1980, Los jóvenes del Mariel, *El Herald*, p. 6.

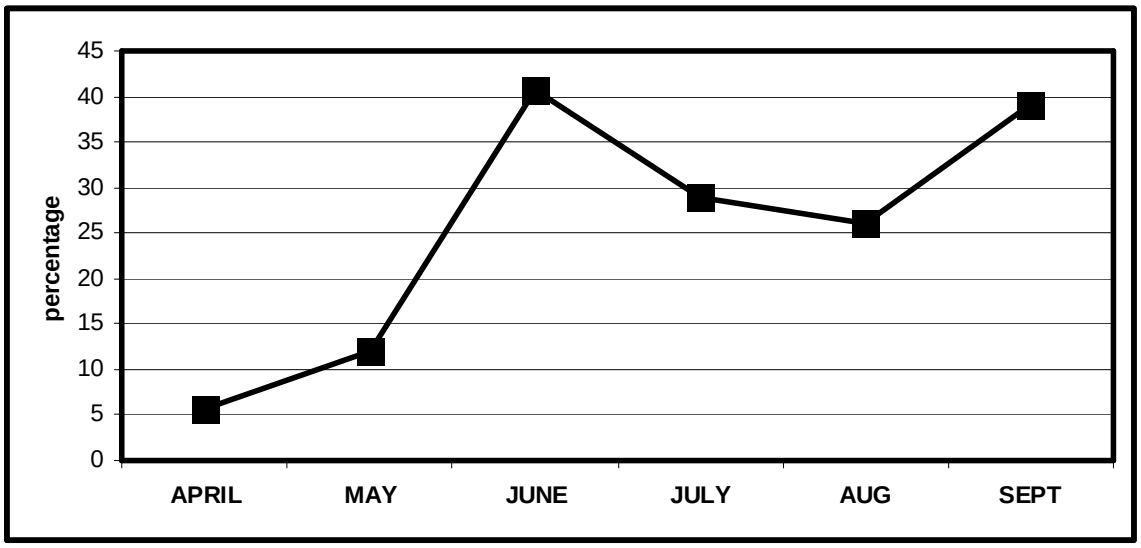
community. These stories demonstrate an effort on the part of Cuban Americans to hold fast to the ideals that the U.S. nation will embrace the "poor, tired, and needy" of the world and that soon enough, their compatriots will gain acceptance. The stories also depict how central the idea of Cuban unity was for making demands on the U.S. nation during the beginning of Mariel, when the government seemed to be failing in upholding the "nation of immigrants" narrative.

Theme 2: Criminality: "Achacan a Refugiados Alza del Crimen en Miami Beach [Rise in crime in Miami Beach is attributed to the refugees]"

Although the Cuban community attempted to include the newcomers, the national media attention to reports about Mariel deviance, and the fact that the process of incorporating Mariels into U.S. society was much more difficult than that of previous waves, made it tough for them to continue to project the Golden Exile image they wished to preserve, that is, the idea that Cubans were (inherently) law-abiding, patriotic, and hardworking model immigrants. The indictment of Mariel Cubans, they feared, was also an indictment of all Cubans. In addition, the stigmatization of the Mariels by the public challenged the "nation of immigrants" narrative which held out the idea that Cubans could become Americans. Responses to the depictions of the Mariels as criminals demonstrated both Cuban American attempts to defend their compatriots and the desire of some segments of the community to dissociate from them. Though references to the Mariels as blacks is rarely overt, criminalizing stories indicate how a black/white racializing frame intersects with morality frames to explain how criminality distinguishes the Mariels as undeserving of citizenship in contrast to the deserving established exiles.

In my sample, 23% of the articles about the Mariels make criminality the dominant theme. A total of 82% of these reports are news articles, reflecting the voice of the English language *Miami Herald* and its depiction of the Cuban community's responses to the Mariels. There is a dramatic increase in coverage of Mariel criminality between April and June, from 6% in April and 12% in May to a peak of 41% in June. From July to September, the criminality theme remained a popular topic, between 29% and 39% of stories focus on it. After the Fort Chaffee riot and the June spike in coverage, there is a downward trend in reporting. Significantly however, the reporting on criminality never again dipped to the lows reflected in the beginning months of the exodus. In September there was another spike in criminality coverage, though not as dramatic as in June (See Graph 1.2). This rise is due to coverage of incidences of plane hijackings by Mariels attempting to return to Cuba.

Graph 1.2: Criminality Theme (*El Herald*). Percentage of total articles (n=394) containing theme per month.



In the coverage from May to September 1980, titles such as the following abounded: “Llegan 400 dementes y convictos en el América [400 madmen and convicts arrive to America]” (May 12, 1980); “Protestan refugiados cubanos en Arkansas [Cuban refugees protest in Arkansas]” (May 31, 1980); “Estalla rebelión cubana en Fort Chaffee [Cuban rebellion explodes in Fort Chaffee]” (June 2, 1980, about the rebellion of about 1000 refugees in the Arkansas camp on June 1 and the efforts to bring calm); “Detenidos mas de 100 refugiados cubanos [More than 100 Cuban refugees detained]” (June 4, 1980, about the detaining of those responsible for the Fort Chaffee rebellion); “Llegan criminales hacia fin de puente marítimo de Cuba [Criminals arrive toward the end of the maritime bridge from Cuba]” (June 5, 1980); “Ordenan devolver a los reos [Criminals ordered to return]” (June 8, 1980), about the United States’ efforts to return delinquents to Cuba); “Abarrotada la cárcel de Dade por refugiados [Dade jail is packed with refugees]” (September 11, 1980);[52] “Muerto a tiros en Opa-locka un joven refugiado cubano [Young Cuban refugee shot to death in Opa-locka]” (September 6, 1980);[53] and “Refugiados matan a hombre en bar [Refugees kill a man in a bar]” (September 22, 1980).[54] Such titles and reports frame the arrival of the Mariel Cubans as a crisis and the group as violent criminals.

As mentioned earlier, the big jump in articles addressing criminality in June is a result of reports on the June 1 Fort Chaffee rebellion, which received massive press coverage. Fort Chaffee in Arkansas was the largest of the settlement camps and held Mariels that were the hardest to process, many of them black (Fernández, 2002; Hoeffel,

[52] Zita Arorcha, September 11, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 1.
[53] Jane Daugherty and Marie Betancourt, September 6, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 2.
[54] Eric Rieder, September 22, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 2.

1980, p. 47). Although Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton first welcomed the Mariels, the Arkansas locals became increasingly hostile to their arrival. By mid-May 1980, Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke led a KKK protest against them. According to Gastón Fernández, who studied the effects of stigma on the Mariels, when the Mariels first settled in Fort Chaffee, the camp had the atmosphere of a "little Cuba." The inhabitants became frustrated however as the camp routine grew monotonous and efforts to resettle the people there dragged on with no results. Mariels inside the camp and their supporters outside the camp demonstrated their frustrations with sit-ins and hunger strikes, culminating in the Fort Chaffee riot on June 1, 1980 (Fernández, 2002).

Two-thousand Fort Chaffee Cubans armed with clubs rioted and four buildings were burned. More than 200 Mariels escaped and headed towards the outskirts of the city. The Mariel protestors were met with armed resistance from police outside the camp, who had set up roadblocks and shot into the air to force the Mariels back into the camp. Citizens of the city became vigilantes; 300–400 armed themselves and gathered near the city limits. According to early reports, 15 troopers and 4 refugees were injured and, according to later reports, 5 Cubans were shot. Governor Bill Clinton responded to the crisis by declaring a state of emergency and increasing security. Ninety "leaders" of the crisis were detained in an effort to quell the fears of the public. Changes were made in the leadership of the camp as more concentrated efforts were made to speed the processing of the remaining Mariels (Fernández, 2002). Because of the notoriety of the Fort Chaffee camp, the image of all Mariels came to be defined by the goings-on there, even though less than 2% of the 18,000 Mariels at the camp were involved in the Fort Chaffee protests (García, 1996).

By July, the idea that Mariels were criminals was firmly established. A news report "Achacan a refugiados alza del crimen en Miami Beach [Rise in crime in Miami Beach is attributed to the refugees]" (July 25, 1980) emphasizes the negative impact of the Mariels in Miami.[55] Although the story acknowledges that the rise in crime in Miami Beach had begun even before the Mariels arrived, in the article the Miami police attribute the rise in rapes and transport of arms to the Mariels, which is the basis for the title of the story. In fact, the article reports that police had begun the practice of distinguishing the arrests of refugees with an "R" to keep track of how many crimes were committed by refugees. The Mariels are described as dangerous, young single males who may rape women. According to the article, these men do not comport themselves in the "proper" fashion: "Los refugiados, generalmente jóvenes y solteros, representan igualmente un impacto cultural para los antiguos residentes. Los hombres caminan por las aceras descamisados. Les gustan hablar en las esquinas bebiendo cerveza...que solamente hablaban español y que tenían puestos sus radios a toda voz [The refugees, generally young and single, represent a cultural impact for the previous residents as well. The men walk around shirtless. They like to talk on the street corners while drinking beer… they only speak Spanish, and they have their radios turned all the way up]." The article does attempt to include an unbiased explanation of the Mariel behaviors, attributing them to Cuba's customs, where drinking in public is acceptable, and to the fact that the prohibitive signs in the neighborhood were all written in English. It also includes the testimony of a recent arrival who does not fit the stereotype and who says, "Todos mis familiares trabajan. Nosotros no andamos vagando por las calles [All of my family

[55] Dan Williams and Joan Fleischman, July 25, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 2.

members work. We don't wander around the streets like vagabonds]."[56] Yet the title and the story, despite these disclaimers, are meant to cause fear and alarm.

By September, the rupture between the established Cuban community and the newcomers was more clearly distinguished. A September 1 letter to the editor, "Beneficio a Castro éxodo del Mariel [Castro benefits from the Mariel exodus]," calls for the established Cubans to completely disassociate from the Mariels because of their criminality. The author maintains that the Mariels were sent to the United States by Cuba for the purpose of infiltrating the United States with communists. Furthermore, he says, "Y ahí están los hechos que nos avergüenzan tanto a los cubanos: campamientos quemados y violencia provocada por esos elementos, miserables y ruines violaciones de jovencitos. Esos y los delincuentes que han venido a dañar la imagen constructiva del cubano, esos no son compatriotas nuestros [And there are the acts that embarrass the Cubans so much: burned encampments and violence provoked by those elements, miserable and despicable rape of children. These delinquents that have come to damage the constructive image of the Cuban, these are not our compatriots]."[57] Although there may be some truth to his claim that Castro sent criminals to damage both the United States and the image of those Cubans who decided to defect, the letter draws attention away from the fact that the Mariel exodus also included many more people who, just like the previous waves of Cubans, came to the United States not with the intention of committing crimes or spreading communism, but of working to achieve the American dream.

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[56] Dan Williams and Joan Fleischman, September 25, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 2.
[57] Cesar E. Montejo, September 1, 1980, [letter to the editor], *El Herald*, p. 4.

A September 18 news story, "Cifras policiales comprometen a refugiados [Police estimates compromise refugees]," similarly illustrates the rupture between the old and new Cubans by discussing how Little Havana had changed for the worse with the arrival of the Mariels. The story describes how the Antonio Maceo Park in Little Havana, which used to be where older Cuban Americans went to play dominos, was now a place where criminals congregated and drugs abounded. The same story continues on a different page with the headline "Estadísticas incrimen a refugiados [Statistics incriminate the refugees]." This title itself legitimates the negative view of the refugees. The story cites a 51.3% increase in police calls for service in Little Havana in August. It acknowledges the evidence is circumstantial, because the statistics document only the increase in calls for service and there was no way to determine exactly who committed the crimes, but by stating that the evidence was incriminating, discussing the increase in calls for service, and indicating the areas from which the calls originated, the article makes a case for attributing the rise in crimes to the Mariels, despite the lack of clear evidence. Because this rise in crime took place in the well-known Cuban community in Little Havana, a contrast is made between the established "law-abiding" Cubans and the Mariels who were believed to be criminals.[58]

It should be noted that not all the stories focusing on criminality were fervent portraits of the Mariels as deviants. Several criticize the U.S. government for being slow to help the Cubans resettle in the United States. In addition, stories reporting on criminal acts were often meant to invoke sympathy for the refugees. Some stories give voice to

[58] George Stein and Guillermo Martinez, September 18, 1980, Cifras policiales comprometen a refugiados, *El Herald*, pp. 1, 3.

advocates: for instance, the Hispanic American League Against Discrimination made a point that the public should realize criminals were but a small percentage of the refugees.[59] Still, the language of the headlines of even these stories serves to alert the community to the criminality and other forms of deviance among the Mariels.

On the whole, the stories on the criminality of the Mariels do not directly implicate blackness (in a biological sense) in their critique of the Mariels. Only one story, about the response of Arkansas residents to the Cubans who had been brought there, specifically describe a Mariel as both black and criminal. A Cuban is gratuitously described as "black" by one of the Anglo residents, who seems to use the word to intensify the negative image of the man:

> Los residentes de Jenny Lind [Arkansas] insisten en que la multitud fugitivo "esgrima cuchillos y garrotes", golpeaba los autos y gritaba en forma histerica. "Parecía una horda de animales salvajes", afirmo el miércoles Ron Dukes (a resident).…El camionero John Chase echo hacia atrás su sombrero de vaquero y le contó a un visitante que, durante la fuga del lunes, un cubano negro corrió hasta su camioncito y asió la ventanilla del asiento del conductor.
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> [The residents of Jenny Lind [Arkansas] insist that the fugitive crowd "wields knives and clubs," were hitting cars and shouting hysterically. "It seemed like a pack of wild animals," said Ron Dukes (a resident) on Wednesday. … The truck driver John Chase threw back his cowboy hat and told a visitor that, during the escape on Monday, a black Cuban ran up to his truck and grabbed the driver's side window].[60]

Although the article is actually highlighting the hysteria among the Jenny Lind residents, the imagery invoked in this passage is of savage fugitives, at least one of whom was black, wildly attacking the (white) innocent residents of Arkansas. Words historically associated with blacks, particularly black males (e.g., savage, animal), and qualifying the descriptor "Cuban" with "black" makes blackness central in the idea of threat. Given the

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[59] George Stein and Guillermo Martinez, September 18, 1980, Cifras policiales comprometen a refugiados, *El Herald*, pp. 1, 3.
[60] Williard P. Rose and Stephen Doig, May 29, 1980, Furiosos, achacan a Cubanos, *El Herald*, p. 1.

historical association in the United States of "threat" with "black male," this depiction resonates with the characterization of Mariels as a whole as black. Although the Mariels were not often described explicitly as black, *El Herald* characterized them with many surrogates for blackness.

The use of the word "ghetto" in three articles functions as a concrete surrogate for blackness, making an association between the Mariels and African Americans. Two of the articles, one an editorial and the other a news story, are direct translations from the English language paper. The editorial, "Falta un plan para asimilar al nuevo exiliado Cubano [No plan exists for integrating the new Cuban exiles]" (May 31, 1980), discusses the profound impact of the refugee crisis given the other various problems plaguing Miami at the time (including the recent McDuffie riot).[61] The new arrivals are described as young people who grew up in a repressive regime, and repeats the refrain that they learned to work as little as possible and rely on the black market. The language and imagery of lazy youths waiting for a handout or too willing to turn to crime; juxtaposed with the editorial's discussion of African Americans rioting in response to the McDuffie beating, compounds the implied idea of black threat. Furthermore, the word ghetto is employed in the editorial to contrast the Mariel immigrants with the Golden Exile entrepreneurs, as polar opposites:

> Esta no es la clase empresarial que se movió en 15 años y convirtió una comunidad en decadencia en un bullicioso distrito comercial. Esos hombres constituyen la materia prima de la cual podría surgir un verdadero *ghetto* cubano, con todos los problemas que sugiere esa palabra [emphasis in original].
>
> [This isn't the working class that moved in 15 years ago and converted a declining community into a bustling commercial district. These men are the

[61] Falta un plan para asimilar al nuevo exiliado Cubano [editorial], May 31, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 6.

> building blocks from which a true Cuban *ghetto* can emerge, with all of the problems that that word implies].[62]

The editorial claims we know the problems that the word ghetto suggests without actually filling in that blank for us—but the association with poor African Americans is what is implied. The articles using the word "ghetto" also make a strong statement about the peculiarity of Cubans being characterized as deviant and living in conditions similar to those of African American ghettos, preserving the good image of the Cuban American community.

The peculiarity of using the word ghetto in conjunction with Cubans and the implication that the word most appropriately associated with African Americans or blacks appears to be indicated by the use of quotation marks around the word in the title and by the use of italics in the text of the news story, "Ciudad de carpas: 'Ghetto' cubano en Miami [Tent city: Cuban 'ghetto' in Miami]" (August 24, 1980). The story, about the deplorable living conditions at the tent cities housing the refugees, asserts the camps are the *first* Cuban ghetto: "El campamento es una llaga purulenta, que en menos de cuatro semanas se ha transformado en el primer *ghetto* cubano de Miami. Si las condiciones no mejoran, podría provocar el primer motín cubano en Miami [*emphasis in original*]. [The camp is an open wound, in less than four weeks it has been transformed into the first Cuban *ghetto* in Miami. [The conditions] could provoke the first Cuban riot in Miami]."[63] A direct link between the Mariels and African Americans is made in the reporting on a fight that occurred between refugees and the camps and the police. The article quotes a threat made by a Cuban upset over their treatment by the police: "Los

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[62] Falta un plan para asimilar al nuevo exiliado Cubano [editorial], May 31, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 6.
[63] Guillermo Martinez, August 24, 1980, Ciudad de carpas: "Ghetto" Cubano en Miami, *El Herald*, pp. 1, 5 (quote on p. 1).

negros americanos quemaron la zona y causaron daños por $200,000,000", gritó un refugiado. "Tenemos más agallas que ellos y vamos a quemar este lugar ['The American Blacks set the zone on fire causing $200,000,000 in damage,' yelled a refugee. 'We have more guts than they do and we're going to set this place on fire']."[64] Hence, although the news article calls attention to the deplorable living conditions in the tents, and by implication the failures of the local and federal government, the ultimate message that comes through in the focus on the deviance/blackness of the Mariels demonstrates a concern that the real problem and threat to the local community and the Cuban image was the Mariels themselves.

"Ghetto" is also used in an op-editorial by Roberto Fabricio titled "Una marea humana [A human tide]" (June 18, 1980) in which he asserts that the new arrivals are creating "*ghettos* de bolsillo [*ghetto* pockets]" in corners of the city.[65] The op-editorial, written by the Cuban American who would later become the editor of the *El Nuevo Herald*, is somewhat sympathetic to their plight, but the use of the word "ghetto" again connotes a particular meaning most associated with poverty, degradation, and blackness, far different from the adjectives associated with the Golden Exiles, even though some did in fact live in ghettos. Although the word "ghetto" is used in these articles to describe the places where the newcomers lived, the use of the word "ghetto" is less about an impoverished enclave than a set of behaviors. The use of the English word instead of a Spanish word with a similar meaning is reflective of the bias of the English language power base of the newspaper, since two of these stories are direct translation of an

[64] Guillermo Martinez, August 24, 1980, Ciudad de carpas: "Ghetto" Cubano en Miami, *El Herald*, p. 5.
[65] Roberto Fabricio, June 18, 1980, Una marea humana, *El Herald*, p. 6.

editorial in the *Miami Herald*. However, the fact that so many of the Mariels were black, especially those whose transition in the United States was more difficult, also appears to be a factor in the use of the word because of the association of the word with African Americans.

By framing the Mariels as deviant/black in with the use of the word ghetto, the coverage in *El Herald* illustrates John Fiske argument that predominant social orders contain possibly dangerous bodies in "their place"—in spaces such as ghettos that are usually ignored. He says, "The ghetto is not surveilled, because it is that which the eye of power does not wish to see, the regime of truth [it] does not wish to know" (2000, p. 60). On the one hand, poverty, degradation, and crime are viewed as naturally occurring in the ghetto, and thus naturally associated with certain bodies. The plight of the people in the ghetto and the government's contribution to their condition, can be ignored. On the other hand when the problems of the ghetto begin to have an impact on those outside of it, they become issues of intense scrutiny and concern, (as in Fiske's 2000, p. 50) description of how president Clinton was placed under intense surveillance and blackened), for which a solution must be found.

Depictions of the Mariels as improper citizens who do not know how to live in freedom, who are lazy and less inclined to working hard, who are the black rioting "inmates" at Fort Chaffee, and whose deviant natures affect the environment around them by creating ghettos, defines them as outside the white middle-class norm and distinguished them from the law-abiding exiles. The characterization of a large proportion of Mariels as criminal further racialized and blackened the Mariels, and

justified that they be put under the same type of surveillance experienced by other black (and brown) bodies in the United States.

Theme 3: Aquí vs. Allá: Teaching the Mariels to Be Proper Citizens

In light of the "evidence" that reports of the criminality and deviance of the Mariels constituted, preserving the image of "Cubans" for the Golden Exiles meant finding ways to dissociate from the Mariels or finding ways to explain and help correct the Mariels' "deviant" behaviors. Portes and Stepick (1993), argue the *Miami Herald* purposively sought to turn their readers against the newcomers in their editorials and news reports. While the present study cannot determine intentionality, articles with this theme "proper citizens" advanced the mainstream newspaper's stance at the same time that they communicated Cuban American anxiety over the Mariel stigma.

Beginning as early as May, approximately 10% of each month's articles sent a message to the newcomers that they were not acting like "proper citizens": that is, they were not among those who adhered to laws, were hardworking, and educated themselves, and thus they needed to change their ways to more fully fit the "Golden Exile" image. The stories also communicated that those who committed unlawful acts deserved to be punished. As Herman Gray points out, discourses about the "rehabilitation" of the underclass involve the "the idea that the inculcation of appropriate moral values, self-discipline, and a work ethic can effectively break the vicious cycle of dependency that cripples the poor and disadvantaged" (1995, p. 24). Words such as "standards," "traditions," and "morals" used in the reports become effective codes to determine race (Urciuoli, 2003; Gray, 1995).

In *El Herald*, the opinions about proper citizenship were delivered mostly in the form of editorials and op-eds or letters to the editor primarily written by news staff or members of the public who identified as Cuban or had a Spanish surname. The articles reflect the ambivalence of the Cuban community towards the newcomers by demonstrating a desire to help the Mariels in the spirit of Cuban unity, but also including veiled criticism, as is clear in the following letter to the editor, "Urge unidad a los cubanos exiliados [Urge unity for the Cuban exiles]":

> No deben pensar los que aquí llegaron hace 20 años que son ni mejores o peores, todos somos humanos y todos poseemos virtudes y desgraciadamente defectos, pero hay algo que sí diferencia a los recién llegados y es que necesitan un aprendizaje para vivir en libertad. Unos porque olvidaron lo que era, otros porque no la conocieron, pero esto no debe levantar barreras entre compatriotas, por contrario ha llegado el momento de cerrar filas uniendo a todas las gentes de buena voluntad de ambas partes para que ampliada la comunidad cubana en estas tierras, los que llevan mas tiempo puedan servirle un poco como de tutores en su nueva vida a los nuevos refugiados.
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> [They can't think that those who arrived here 20 years ago are better or worse, we are all human beings and we all possess virtues and unfortunately, defects, but there is something that does differentiate the recently-arrived and that is that they need to learn how to live in freedom. Some because they forgot what they were, others because they don't know it, but that shouldn't create barriers between compatriots, on the contrary the moment of closing the lines has arrived, unifying all the people of good faith from both sides so the Cuban community can grow in this land, those that have spent more time could serve as tutors for the new refugees in their new lives.][66]

The letter emphasizes the idea that the more established Cubans should not see themselves as superior to the new arrivals, citing the effects of living without freedom as the only characteristic that distinguished the new arrivals from the established group. Although the letter is supportive of the Mariels, it implies they have a deficiency, namely that because the regime in Cuba was so harsh, Cubans who lived under it were now

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[66] Urge unidad a los Cubanos exiliados [unsigned letter to the editor], July 7, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 4.

unable to adapt to another type of government on their own, and thus needed to be tutored by the more established Cubans.

Other letters and op-eds detailed the skills the newcomers would need to learn to live in freedom, including how to adhere to U.S. laws and to value hard work and education. One letter to the editor "Comportamiento en Estados Unidos [Behavior in the United States]" paints the United States as the undisputed savior of the Cuban people and argues that each individual Cuban is a representative of the Cuban people and needs to comport her/himself in ways that demonstrate gratefulness to the United States. The letter outlines several lessons about the gratitude, language, and behavior that the author, a Cuban American, believes newcomers needed to learn upon arriving upon "freedom's beaches":

> Creo necesario ofrecer consejo a los miles de compatriotas que ahora llegan a estas playas de libertad….Primero que otra cosa, todos debemos gratitud y reconocimiento al pueblo y gobierno de Estados Unidos por todo lo que en nuestro favor han hecho….En segundo lugar, se impone la necesidad de entender vida y costumbres de Estados Unidos….Bien claramente hay que decir que no hay posibilidad alguna de mejoramiento de las condiciones de vida, si no se aprende el idioma [Inglés]. En tercer lugar, el comportamiento….Aquí la gente no teme a la policía….Aquí el orden, además de resultar de la educación general, tiene el elevado propósito de mantener las condiciones sociales de existencia para todos.
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> [I believe it is necessary to offer counseling to the thousands of compatriots that are now arriving to these free beaches … above all, we all owe gratitude and recognition to the people and government of the United States for everything they have done in our favor … secondly, understanding life and the customs of the United States is a necessity… Obviously, it must be said that there is no chance at improving the conditions of one's life if one does not learn the [English] language. In the third place, the behavior … Here, people do not fear the police … Here, order, in addition to being the result of general education, has a higher purpose - to maintain a standard of living for all of us].[67]

[67] Helio Nardo, [letter to the editor], July 12, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 6.

The letter declares newcomers should become accustomed to the way the United States works as soon as they can and learn English so that they can make a contribution (rather than be a liability) to the nation. The letter advances the idea of the "good immigrant" (Saito, 2001) which is really about affirming the exile community's own acceptance in U.S. society and maintaining their sense of power. With the title "Comportamiento en Estados Unidos," the advice seems to be a response to the increasing reports on the criminal or deviant actions of some Mariels.

The extensive coverage of the June 1 Mariel uprising at Fort Chaffee prompted members of the Cuban community to write letters to the editor of *El Herald*. Most letters in reference to the uprisings criticize the Mariels rather than the mistakes made by the U.S. resettlement of the refugees. "Refugiados: Están en nación de leyes [Refugees: you are in a law-abiding nation]," written a day after the uprising, exemplifies the widespread concern about the lack of Mariels' adherence to laws, and the negative repercussions for the exiled community: "Estos desordenes, además de perjudicar la imagen del exilio cubano, en su inmensa mayoría ordenado y respetuoso de las leyes, perjudica a los propios refugiados. Yo creo que a los mismos debe hacérsele saber que Estados Unidos es una Nación de Leyes, bien diferente del aquelarre demoníaco instalado en Cuba por Castro, y que esas leyes hay que obedecerlas [These hoodlums, in addition to harming the image of the Cuban exile -- who in their vast majority are orderly and respectful of the laws -- are hurting the refugees themselves. I believe that they should know that the United States is a Nation of Laws which are very different from Castro's evil installation

in Cuba, and that these laws should be obeyed]."[68] The author goes so far as to insist that those who do not follow the laws should be sent back to Cuba. He expresses a fear of guilt by association and seeks to defend the image of the established Cuban community. This letter and others like it present a simplistic view that ignores the changing U.S. political stance towards Cuba and towards the new Mariels that contributed to their problems in the United States. The United States' handling of the group is erased, and difficulties faced by the exiles are blamed on their character and their unwillingness to obey laws, in a classic example of blaming the victim.

The role of the United States was not ignored in the coverage and was in fact highlighted in several articles, but following the reporting in the *Miami Herald*, such stories were more concerned with the economic effect of the government's indecision on the local community. For example, an editorial "Carter cavila mientras los refugiados se enfurecen [As Carter stalls the refugees become angry]" follows the impulse of the *Miami Herald* in its criticism of President Carter's indecision regarding U.S. policy towards the new arrivals but is not supportive of the Mariels. Its main point is a scathing critique of the new entrants and their lack of a work ethic:

> Esos nuevos refugiados cubanos tendrán que aprender el sistema Americano en una u otra forma. Ellos tendrán que aprender rápidamente que libertad no significa que usted puede tener todas las cosas que desee en cualquier momento que lo desee. Ellos tendrán que aprender que la próspera comunidad cubana de Miami ganó su comparativa riqueza a través de trabajo duro, largas horas de estudio y atención diligente para conocer las reglas del juego norte-americano.
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> [These new Cuban refugees will have to learn the American system in one form or another. They will have to quickly learn that freedom doesn't mean that you can have all the things you want at any time you want them. They will have to learn that the prosperous Cuban community in Miami earned their relative wealth

[68] Jose Cobo, June 2, 1980, Refugiados: Están en nación de leyes [letter to the editor], *El Herald*, p. 6.

> through hard work, long hours of study and diligent attention to learning the rules of the North American game].[69]

The editorial makes the claim that the established Cuban community in Miami became affluent because they learned how to be proper citizens, therefore, the trouble the newcomers experienced is attributed to their own weaknesses rather than U.S. policy or racism. They are portrayed as having unrealistic expectations and desiring freedom and goods without sacrifice. The hardships the group may have endured in Cuba, while traveling to the United States, and being processed in the United States are erased. This editorial and other items criticizing the Mariels starkly distinguish the new arrivals from the earlier immigrants, in contrast to earlier articles that mostly portray them as compatriots in pursuit of similar goals. The articles indicate that the behaviors and nonnormativity of Mariels disqualified them not only from being Americans, but also from being Cubans. The "real" Cubans are portrayed as those who left Cuba in earlier waves before their morals could be corrupted by Castro.

As evident in the previous discussion, the distinction between the "real" Cubans and the newcomers did not directly implicate blackness or even acknowledge the blackness of the Mariels although, especially in discussions of Mariel criminality, blackness was implied in the discourses used to frame the Mariels as nonnormative citizens. In the time period studied, articles that directly mention blackness in reference to the Mariels or include pictures of Cubans who appear black constitute only 10% of the total number. The relative silence about the blackness of Mariel Cubans in *El Herald* is not surprising given the racial democracy discourse inspired by Cuban Patriot Jose Martí

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[69] Carter cavila mientras los refugiados se enfurecen [editorial], June 3, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 4.

that has infused Cuban ideas of their nation. In addition, learning that African Americans are stigmatized in the United States, Cuban exiles may have wanted to avoid "guilt by association" with African Americans by avoiding attention to Cuban blackness. Furthermore, in the U.S. context, the idea of the "black Cuban" was relatively new, because blacks were such a small percentage of those who came during previous waves. "Cubans" were most often discussed in U.S. public discourse as a homogenous group without regard to differences in socioeconomic status, race, or gender because they fit the "white" middle-class norm and were further unified by their anti-Castro, anti-communist stance. In addition, the "silence" on race belies the more insidious racism of the neoconservative 1980s (Gray 1995). Given these silences, the fact that there is any direct focus at all on the blackness of Mariel Cubans is noteworthy.

Early on, three stories in the paper establish that the Mariel Cubans included more blacks than previous waves.[70] An April news story, "Tensa la situación en embajada peruana [The situation in the Peruvian Embassy is tense]," reported on "…la extraordinaria diversidad de antecedentes entre los negros, blancos, y mulatos que hay allí […the extraordinary diversity of the previous ones, between the blacks, whites and mulattos that are there]."[71] In May, two news stories provided estimates of the percentage of blacks among the Mariels. One states almost 20% of the new arrivals were black but notes that the majority (a little over 80%) were white.[72] The other, "Recién llegados: Más jóvenes y pobres [The recently-arrived: younger and poorer]," cites

[70] Guillermo Martínez and Dan Williams, April 10, 1980, Tensa la situación en embajada peruana, *El Herald*; Mary Voboril, May 5, 1980, Sumase al éxodo lo más valioso de la poblacion de Cuba, *El Herald*, p. 4; Guy Gugliotta, May 11, 1980, Recién llegados: Mas jóvenes y pobres, *El Herald*.
[71] Guillermo Martínez and Dan Williams, April 10, 1980, Tensa la situación en embajada peruana, *El Herald*, p. 1.
[72] Mary Voboril, May 5, 1980, Sumase al éxodo lo más valioso de la población de Cuba, *El Herald*, p. 4.

research by sociologist Juan Clark from Miami-Dade Community College, along with statistics taken from the Opa-locka Center for Refugees and the Elgin Air Force Base, which also states that blacks constituted 20% of the Mariels. The article describes the new arrivals: "La abrumadora mayoría son hombres, lo cual representa un cambio notable frente a las emigraciones cubanas anteriores; hay también muchos más negros que nunca antes [The overwhelming majority are men, which represents a notable change from the previous Cuban immigrants; there are also many more blacks than ever before]."[73] The stories referring to official statistics about the blackness of the Mariels are few, but they constitute an official recognition that blackness distinguished the new arrivals.

Eight stories use "black" to describe a particular person featured in the story. For the most part, the description of people as black seems gratuitous or unnecessary, that is, their race is not significant to the story just as their weight or height is not, which begs the question of why it is mentioned at all except for the general practice of the media at the time to mention race, for example, "Díaz es negro, bajito y fuerte, nacido en la provincia de Pinar del Rió [Díaz is black, short and strong, born in the province of Pinar del Rió]"[74] or "Sánchez es negro y alto [Sanchez is black and tall]."[75] It is also possible the use of the descriptor was influenced by the fact that the majority of stories mentioning "black" are news stories, many of which were written first in English and then translated.[76]

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[73] Guy Gugliotta, May 11, 1980, Recién llegados: Mas jóvenes y pobres, *El Herald*, p. 1.
[74] Alfonso Chardy, May, 25, 1980, Señelan que no todos quieren irse de Cuba, *El Herald*, p. 8.
[75] Sara Rimer, June 22, 1980, Insuficientes fondos locales para refugiados, *El Herald*, p. 1.
[76] The other stories not covered in the text are: En Cuba era muy duro ser homosexual (Williams, 1980. p. 1); El inglés y el transporte son necesarios: A los refugiados se les dificulta encontrar trabajo (1980, p. 7);

In all the stories collected, only one directly states that the blackness of the Mariels was a factor in why Mariel immigrants, at least inside the camps, were having such difficulty being resettled into the United States. The story "Esperanza y desesperación en el campamiento de carpas [Hope and desperation in the tent camp]" states,

> Las agencies voluntarias admiten que están teniendo dificultades al reubicar a los refugiados que están en las carpas, y a los 15,000 que aun están en los campamentos de refugiados. La razón principal, dicen, es que la mayoría son hombres solteros, negros o mulatos.…El color de los refugiados, así como la publicidad negativa de que han sido objeto, hace mucho mas difícil el que las agencies pueden encontrar garantes, según los trabajadores sociales.
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> [The volunteer agencies admit that they are having difficulties relocating the refugees who are in the tents, and 15,000 who are in the refugee camps. The principal reason, they say, is that the majority of them are single men, black, or mulattos…The color of the refugees, as well as the negative publicity that they have had, makes it much more difficult for the agencies to find sponsors, according to the social workers].[77]

The news report is straightforward in asserting that being male, single, and black or mulatto makes it difficult for the Mariels to find sponsors in the United States. The statement implies that racism or prejudice against blackness is what distinguishes the experience of Mariels from that of the established or white Cubans. The fact that only this one article explains the role of race in the difficult transition of the newcomers demonstrates the erasure and denial of racism that existed in the newspaper, a silence that is deafening in what it reveals about the subtleties about how racism can be manifest in discourse.

One op-editorial, "Drama y comedia del éxodo [Drama and comedy of the exile]," offers a more overt stereotypical view of a black Cuban man, and his

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Instalanse refugiados en antiguo consulado de Cuba (Rivas, 1980, p. 1); and Perdura la inquietud bajo carpas (1980, p. 1).

[77] Esperanza y desesperación en el campamiento de carpas, August, 31, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 10.

disappointment with his black relatives who arrived during Mariel.[78] "El negrito Nicolás" is described as a friend of the author who came to the United States well before Mariel. Although he worked a blue-collar job in construction, he had achieved a modicum of middle-class status and is described as "vestido a la última moda [dressed in the latest fashion]." Nicolás is portrayed as "flashy" in his display of wealth, wearing multiple gold medallions and a Rolex watch, with two cars in the driveway, and his kids and wife well taken care of. "El negrito Nicolás" had gone to visit relatives in Cuba before Mariel. Back in the United States, he received a call from some relatives, sons of his sister Tomasa, who had arrived from Mariel. After confirming that they were black like him and thus truly his relatives, "Sí viejo, negrísimos…, [Yes old man, (we're) definitely black]" he picked them up and let them stay with him. But they sat around the house until he had to ask them to get a job and leave. The story ends with him lamenting his worst mistake; that he had visited Cuba and allowed his relatives to see his "wealth." The editorial attempts a humorous discussion of the Mariel exodus, and is written by someone who was a journalist in Cuba, where there is a different way of talking about race. The author uses the colloquialism "negrito" to describe the key figure. Using the diminutive "ito" may soften the reference to race or color and is customarily an endearment, but it also infantilizes. The op-ed uses humor to contrast the "good black" who arrived at an earlier point in time with the good Cubans from the "bad, good for nothing, and lazy black" Mariels. Contrasting the "good black" from the "bad blacks" takes race out of the equation and emphasizes the idea that the black Cubans who left

[78] Octavio M. Jordan, June 25, 1980, Drama y comedia del éxodo [editorial], *El Herald*, p. 8.

Cuba before the revolution were accepted in the established Cuban community and just as successful as the whites. Still, as the article employs the element of buffoonery traditionally associated with blacks, it puts the attack on the newcomers in the voice of the established "negrito," who is nevertheless ridiculed himself.

All in all, *El Herald* did officially recognize that blacks were a larger proportion of the Mariels than of previous waves of immigrants but paid little attention to the role that blackness played in their stigmatization and did not discuss how blackness might make their experience more difficult, or at least different from other Cubans, due to the historical denigration of African Americans. In their study of Cuban exiles, Grenier and Pérez have noted that Spanish-language press was often inattentive to the issues of the African American community and perpetuated the denial of racism, identified African Americans with crime, and supported police comparison of Cubans as hardworking, self reliant, and family oriented in contrast to blacks, who were perceived as being dependent on welfare, and so on (Grenier & Pérez, 2003). It is outside of the scope of this project to investigate how *El Herald* reported on Miami's African American community, but we can see that in the case of the Mariels, little attention was paid to the significance of blackness. Instead blackness was more covertly implicated in the production of good and bad citizens to distinguish the exile community and the good Mariels from the bad ones.

Mariel Voices in *El Herald*

In all the reports on the Mariels, what are often lost are the voices of the Mariels themselves. There were special interest stories and times when Mariels were quoted in news stories, but for the most parts Mariels are a faceless group, pawns of either Castro

or the U.S. government, a problem to be solved. Although the paper rarely included the voices of Mariels, a few stand out: one letter to the editor in which a recent arrival joins the attack on other recent arrivals, another that indicts Golden Exiles, a news report in which Mariels express their discontent with the United States, and the articles that give voice to an Afro Cuban family as the paper followed their progress in the United States after arrival.

A letter to the editor "Critica la postura de refugiado [The refugees' attitude merits criticism]," by a member of the Mariel group, expresses a sentiment similar to those expressed by more established Cubans. He responds to those Mariels who complain of life in the United States: "Estados Unidos no es un país de hada; es un país de realidades, trabajos, y sacrificios [The United States is not a country of fairy tales; it is a country of realities, hard work and sacrifice]." The letter takes the position that those who are not content in the United States have unrealistically high expectations and implies they do not have the fortitude to work hard and sacrifice.[79] The other letter by a Mariel woman addresses the Cuban community's rejection of the newcomers. The author's anger is palpable in her strong statement "Los Cubanos deben recibirnos mejor [Cuban [Americans] should receive us better]." She says,

> Muchos de los cubanos residentes en Miami son los primeros en negarle trabajo a los nuevos refugiados, y de hacerse eco de rumor de que todos son delincuentes y faltos de todo conocimiento…En Miami hay hasta salones de belleza para gatos y perros, pero 600 refugiados (muchos con familiares y amigos aquí) tienen que dormir bajo las gradas de un stadium.
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> [Many of the Cuban residents in Miami are the first to deny work to the new refugees, and to spread rumors that they are ignorant delinquents…In Miami

[79] Gustavo Lezcano, July 22, 1980, [letter to the editor], *El Herald*, p. 4.

> there are beauty salons for dogs and cats, but 600 refugees (many with family and friends here) have to sleep under the bleachers of a stadium].[80]

Her statement demonstrates a critique of capitalism and its excesses (e.g., salons for pets but tent cities for humans), a sensibility reflecting Fidel Castro's philosophies. She refers to the appalling conditions in the tent city housing new Cuban refugees that had been erected in the Miami Orange Bowl stadium. The strong words and imagery used by the writer of this letter demonstrate the great hurt and pain she felt from being rejected by wealthy Cubans who took better care of their dogs than their compatriots.

The voices of the Mariels could also be heard in news reports expressing their discontent with the United States. For instance, in a July news report, "Refugiados arrepentidos quieren regresar [Regretful refugees want to go back]," a recent arrival dismayed by his bills and taxes says, "En Cuba no hay que pagar electricidad ni agua, las cosas que se necesitan para subsistir. Aquí veo la inflación, los impuestos. Usted compra un automóvil y tiene que pagar además el seguro. Todo el mundo tiene que trabajar todo el día, no hay tiempo ni para leer el periódico [In Cuba, you don't have to pay for electricity or water, the things you need to survive. Here, I see inflation, taxes. You buy a car and you have to pay the insurance on top of it. Everyone has to work the full day, there isn't even time to read the newspaper]."[81] The article is accompanied by a picture of three of the six men discussed in the article, and all the men pictured are black. Although the article includes the critiques voiced by the Mariels, it depicts the men as being unable to adapt to the capitalist system of the United States: "Más acostumbrados al socialismo de lo que habían pensado al salir de Cuba, los refugiados arrepentidos se

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[80] Juana Baro, July 29, 1980, [letter to the editor], *El Herald*, p. 4.
[81] Dan Williams, July 16, 1980, Refugiados arrepentidos quieren regresar, *El Herald*, p. 1.

han convertido en disidentes instantáneos en el principal país capitalista del mundo [More accustomed to Socialism than they had thought upon leaving Cuba, the regretful refugees have become instantaneous dissidents in the foremost capitalist country in the world]."[82] If the voices of the Mariels were privileged and they were given more opportunities to express themselves publicly, we might be able to see a fuller picture of the situation surrounding the Mariel exodus and the conditions in the United States that made the incorporation of them more difficult. What made these six black men from Cuba want to go back after trying out the United States? Did being black in Miami make a difference? How were they received by Anglos, African Americans, and Golden exiles? What particular obstacles and challenges did they face? Studies in which Mariels have been interviewed (e.g., Portes & Stepick, 1993) conclude there is no uniform Mariel voice; like the writers of the letters to the editor of *El Herald*, they have differing perspectives. But if *El Herald* had listened more closely to their voices we might find a picture of the Mariel crisis more critical of U.S. racism, imperialism, and capitalism.

La Familia Casanova: A Case Study of an Afro-Cuban Family

Two months after the beginning of the Mariel exodus, *El Herald* began a series of articles that follow the experiences of a recently arrived family to document their "immigrant story." Although the articles' accompanying pictures indicate that the family is black, there is no direct reference to their race. Juan Casanova, his wife Natividad, and her eight-year-old son from a previous marriage are first introduced to us through the words of Juan Casanova. Juan had been a journalist in Cuba, and *El Herald* provided

[82] Dan Williams, July 16, 1980, Refugiados arrepentidos quieren regresar, *El Herald*, p. 1.

him with the opportunity to write about his family's experiences. His story, titled "Diez mil buscaban refugio y hallaron el infierno [Ten thousand were looking for refuge and found hell]," a top front-page story on June 1, 1980, tells of the preparations they took to leave Cuba, such as getting clothes together, saying good-bye to relatives, and consulting the Santos, or the gods, for safe journey. He documents their harrowing experiences at the Peruvian embassy and the details of the journey until their arrival in the United States on April 30, 1980.

Subsequent stories about the family were written by an *El Herald* staff writer, who gives a blow-by-blow account of their daily lives and the little victories and setbacks they encountered. The family brought very little money with them from Cuba and did not have relatives in the United States to help them settle in. After moving from camps to churches for shelter, a North American family took notice of their plight and rallied others to help them with housing, furniture, and food. Nevertheless, struggles continued. Juan had trouble holding onto his job as a gardener because of transportation problems: the family could not afford a car and relied on bikes that kept getting stolen. Natividad could not find work comparable to the scientific information processing work she did in Cuba because she did not have the equivalent certificate in the United States. They both struggled to pay their bills.

The staff writer's articles focus on the family members' optimism as they sought to incorporate themselves into U.S. society despite these hardships. This optimistic focus is evident in the titles of the articles: "Exiliados del Mariel tienen vida nueva [Exiles from

Mariel have a new life]" (June 21, 1980);[83] "Familia no se desalienta, a pesar de problemas: Los Casanova se adaptan, poco a poco [In spite of problems the family does not get discouraged and is adapting little by little]" (July 26, 1980);[84] "Los Casanova van adaptándose al exilio [The Casanova family are adapting to exile]" (September 6, 1980);[85] and in captions to the accompanying pictures (e.g., "Casanova rehúsa dejar que la inestabilidad le desaliente [Casanova refuses to let instability discourage him]").[86] In addition, after accounts about their difficulties, the next paragraph would often begin with a statement like "nevertheless the family is optimistic." The last article in the series, written four months after they first arrived, ends their story on a high note. It begins, "Podría ser una historia de éxito," and continues, "Tras la pesadilla en la Embajada del Perú en La Habana, el viaje de Mariel a Cayo Hueso y los primeros días sin hogar en Miami, la familia parece adaptarse a la vida en Estados Unidos ["It could be a success story." It continues, "After the nightmare of the Peruvian Embassy in Havana, the trip from Mariel to Key West and the first days without a home in Miami, the family seems to be adapting to life in the United States]."[87] The stories' accounts frame the family's adversity as the obligatory struggle immigrants undergo to earn the privileges of the American dream.

One of the articles describes an incident when Juan faced discrimination. Juan recounts the incident that dampened his usual optimism: "Ocurrió una noche en que se perdió, dijo Casanova, y dos mujeres detuvieron su auto en la carretera y se ofrecieron

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[83] Ileana Orozo, June 21, 1980, Exiliados del Mariel tienen vida nueva, *El Herald*, p. 8.
[84] Ileana Orozo, July 26, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 10.
[85] Ileana Orozo, September 6, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 7.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid., Los Casanova van adaptándose al exilio, *El Herald*, p. 7.

para ayudarle. Las mujeres le preguntaron si era cubano. 'Cuando dije que sí, se fueron y me dejaron solo en la carretera. Me sentí como si me hubieran dado una bofetada.'" ["It happened one night when he got lost, said Casanova, and two women stopped their car on the highway and offered to help him. The women asked him if he was Cuban. 'When I said that yes I was, they drove off and left me on the side of the road. I felt like they had slapped me in the face']." [88] It is not clear from the story what the ethnic/racial backgrounds of the women were (whether they were African American or Anglos). Casanova understood his experience of prejudice to be about his identity as a Cuban (and not about blackness), which could very well be the case if the women were African Americans. The fact that the details of the story are unclear and that the discrimination is said to be because Juan was Cuban, not even because he was from Mariel, is puzzling.

Despite this one incident, by and large the stories leave out the tremendous stigma attached to the Mariels by the U.S. public and the discrimination many black Cubans faced. The Casanovas are depicted as a generic Cuban family; unlike other Marielitos, their blackness is of no consequence. They have suffered, but their optimism has allowed them to find some success. They are good immigrants—they do not complain, nor do they wish to impose on the U.S. government. For instance, Juan is recorded as saying, "Estoy loco por dejar de recibir los sellos de alimentos. No quisiera depender de ellos….[p]ienso que eso se lo pudieran dar a otra persona que lo necesite mas ["I'm crazy for not receiving food stamps. [But] I refused to depend on them," … "I think they could give that to someone else who needs it more.]"[89] Juan demonstrates "proper" moral

[88] Ileana Orozo, September 6, 1980, *El Herald*, p. 7.
[89] Ileana Orozo, July 26, 1980, Familia no se desalienta, a pesar de problemas: Los Casanova se adaptan, poco a poco, *El Herald*, p. 10.

values by expressing his discontent with having to rely on the government for assistance. The family is slowly but surely becoming a part of the American family—their acquisition of a washing machine, which the reporter asserts is a symbol of independence and freedom in the United States, and the son's love of hot dogs, Coca Cola, and children's television programs are all cited as evidence. Although they arrived as "Marielitos," a group stigmatized because of their blackness, association with Castro's Cuba, and supposed criminality, the stories depict them as refugees who redeem themselves and succeed because of their hard work, struggles, and attitudes.

Yet, a closer look at the stories and Los Casanova's own words demonstrate a greater complexity. The family is indeed optimistic, but not naive. While they criticize the Cuban government, their comments also represent a critique of the United States. For instance, Juan speaks of the fact that all societies have their problems and does not demonize Cuba. He makes a sophisticated critique of both the United States and Cuba, saying, "En Cuba, la escasez lo que crea es una sociedad de consumo no satisfecha. Se traduce a un hambre sicológica. Es verdad que aquí todo está encaminado a que uno compre cosas, pero uno reacciona frente a eso. Además, uno sabe que las cosas siempre estarán ahí ["In Cuba, shortages create an unsatisfied consumer society. It translates into a psychological hunger," he says. "Here, it all comes down to people buying things, but some people are against that. But on the other hand, you know that there will always be goods available]."[90] His assessment of the United States is mixed. He comes from a society where he lived in extreme scarcity and the extreme abundance in the United

[90] Ileana Orozco, July 26, 1980, Familia no se desalienta, a pesar de problemas: Los Casanova se adaptan, poco a poco, *El Herald*, p. 10.

States can be overwhelming. It is clear that one does not have to worry about basic needs in the United States. However, he hints at the possible cynicism that can come after the "psychological hunger" is satisfied in the United States—an experience many new immigrants go through after they are confronted with new hardships that living in a capitalist system entails. One is always chasing the dollar, and this makes for another type of dependency where survival relies on one's ability to pay for goods.

Though the staff writer's articles about the Casanova family do not make note of the fact the family is black, in his own article about his family's experiences, Juan is not silent about their adherence to Santería, a religion with African origins practiced in Cuba but often maligned in the United States. He writes of consulting with Ochún (described in the article as la an incarnation of la Vírgen de la Caridad) and he talks of waiting for his wife at her home in Cuba, where her relatives were playing Santería drums.[91] He also recounts that after he and his wife made the decision to leave, her brother-in-law consulted a babalao (Santería priest) about the decision. He does not hide the importance of his faith or this African aspect of his culture.

The Casanova family is also noteworthy in how they disrupt the common depiction of the Mariels as uneducated and unskilled. It is true that a larger percentage of Mariels were lower skilled than previous waves, but many were professionals and intellectuals in Cuba, as were Juan and Natividad. They were equipped with the social capital many pre-1980 refugees had, yet they still struggled to achieve in the United States. Juan and Natividad sought to continue the intellectual pursuits that may have been stifled in Cuba, but the hardships of taking care of their basic needs in the United

[91] Juan Casanova, June 1, 1980, Diez mil buscaban refugio y hallaron el infierno, *El Herald*, p. 1.

States hindered those plans. They aspired to middle-class stability and to own the possessions that symbolized capitalist success, while still offering a sophisticated critique of capitalism. The reports on the Casanovas provide a view into how one black Cuban family confronted the questions of what it means to be included in the American family. Their story is hopeful that full inclusion or "success" is possible for them, but also presents an indictment of the United States' exclusionary practices. The stories on the family catch them in the early months of entry into the United States and we and they cannot see what is coming down the pike. How might they evaluate the United States in terms of racial issues and their treatment? Subsequent chapters will allow insight into this question as black Cuban immigrants discuss their experiences with race in the United States.

In contrast to the treatment of previous Cuban waves, the U.S. government was confused about how it would process the Mariels; thus many Mariels suffered from being put into a holding position for months. With no sponsors or families to take them in, they languished in detention centers, military bases, and tent cities with no jobs or financial support. *El Herald* did express criticism of the role of the federal government in making it more difficult to incorporate the Mariels into U.S. society. However, a close look at the coverage of stories reflecting the local and exile community's response to the Mariels reveals that more often, the blame for the Mariels' difficult incorporation was placed on Fidel Castro or on their own behaviors, a move that shifted focus away from the United States' role and preserved the image of America as the great democracy and a place of refuge. These ideals were particularly strong in the Cuban American community as well as the mainstream society. Thus *El Herald* catered to the sensibilities of the audience

they were courting while at the same time reaffirming dominant ideologies about the U.S. nation.

The paper struck a delicate balance; overall the tone of *El Herald* towards the Mariels was negative and paternalistic but there was a range of voices in the paper and an ambivalence that was most pronounced in op-eds and letters, where there was a broader range and sense of voice of the community. There we could see that the exile community was actually more likely to be supportive of the Mariels and to refute mainstream depictions. Yet, the strategy most used to legitimize the Mariels was to demonstrate how they could/did also conform to sanctioned normative behavior and the bootstrap ideals of American democracy. Thus, whether the depiction of the Mariels was positive or negative, the language used reinforced "race" as a legitimate signifier of who belongs and who does not belong in the nation. I argue in this chapter that although *El Herald* rarely used overt racial language, tropes of good and bad citizens still racialized them. The newspaper was generally silent about the fact that the newcomers represented a higher percentage of blacks and about how racist attitudes towards blackness may have affected their experiences in the United States. The actual color of many of the Mariels was silenced or erased, but it is my contention that the silence is deafening. The depictions of the Mariels in the paper demonstrated how race is created overtly through the juxtaposition of good and bad groups along indexes of race (norms of behavior) whereby "good" = Golden Exiles = white versus "bad" = Mariels = black.

As we move forward in a supposedly "post-race" society, this discussion reminds us of the ways race continues to be an organizing principle of citizenship in the United States, even if disguised in the definitions of proper and improper citizens. The study

highlights the role of media in disseminating these discourses, and how these ideals affect how traditionally underrepresented groups receive new immigrants. Although the case of Miami and the exile community is unique because of the staunch conservative politics of that community, the issue of making claim to the U.S. nation and the impulse to demonstrate how one's own group is more deserving also comes into play for other traditionally underrepresented groups in their reception of new immigrants. In the next chapter, we will turn to a discussion of how this played out among African Americans in Miami during the Mariel exodus.

CHAPTER II
And Justice for All?
Miami's Leading African American Press on the 1980 Mariel Exodus

In January of 2007, Toys R Us, a leading toy and baby product retailer, ran a publicity contest to start off the New Year. All expectant mothers nationwide could enter the contest for the first baby born after midnight of December 31, 2006, to win a $25,000 U.S. savings bond for their child's college education. In a random drawing between three babies who tied for the award, Yuki Lin, born in New York to parents of Chinese origin, was the winner. The parents could not rejoice for long however—the fine print stated that the mother of the awardee must be a legal resident, and when it was revealed that Yuki Lin's mother was not, Toys R Us revoked the award. It was given instead to Jayden Swain, born in a Georgia medical center to an African American woman. The decision to take the award away from Yuki Lin created a firestorm of controversy, and amid protests by Chinese American organizations, businesses, and citizens, the store decided to reinstate the award. Worried the reinstatement would mean her granddaughter's award would be taken away, Jayden Swain's grandmother argued that her daughter was "an American all the way" and that awarding Yuki Lin would be unfair. She said, "If she's an illegal alien, that makes the baby illegal…She was disqualified—that should be it. Don't go changing your mind now."[92] In the end, the retailer decided to award all three

[92] Nina Bernstein, January 6, 2007. First-Baby Sweepstakes Fuels Immigration Debate. *New York Times* [online].

babies that were born that midnight, Yuki Lin, Jayden Swain, and Yadira Esmeralda, born in Long Island, to immigrants from El Salvador.[93]

The controversy over who was most deserving of the Toys R Us award illustrates on a smaller scale the key question at the heart of current immigration debates. Given limited resources, who is most entitled to them? Some economists and right-wing conservatives have used the case of African Americans to take a stand against immigration, arguing capitalist interests have motivated the United States to import skilled and unskilled labor rather than raise wages for native workers (Steinburg, 2005; Beck, 1996). Black leaders and members of the Black public have worried that the gains of the Civil Rights Movement were being eroded, and that immigrants would take the few jobs available to African Americans, particularly to the poorer classes. In the Toys R Us story, Jayden Swain's grandmother made the case that as an African American, her grandchild's "authentic" Americanness was not in doubt, and therefore she was more deserving of the award. Swain's grandmother, who seemed unaware of the fact that the children of "illegals" born in the United States are U.S. citizens, echoed the sentiments of those African American citizens who, still disenfranchised, view new immigrants as a threat to their tenuous claim to the United States, and use their American citizenship and longer history of residence as leverage. All of these themes appear in the Mariel coverage in Miami's leading African American newspaper, the *Miami Times*, albeit to different degrees.

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[93] Nina Bernstein, January 6, 2007. "First-Baby Sweepstakes Fuels Immigration Debate." *New York Times* [online]; Timothy Williams and Nina Bernstein, January 7, 2007. "In reversal, Toys "R" Us gives 3 Baby Prizes." *New York Times* [online].

We saw in the previous chapter that some Cuban Americans were threatened by the stigma attached to the Mariels, fearing it could affect their image and good standing in the United States. This chapter analyzes reports on the Mariel exodus in the *Miami Times*, an African American newspaper in operation since 1929, for a closer examination of African American attitudes towards this large wave of immigrants and towards the greater presence of black Cubans among them. The Mariel exodus elicited a stance among African Americans similar to that of some Miami Cubans, but with distinct motivations. Whereas *El Herald* often argued for proper citizenship, newspaper reports in the *Miami Times* supported the idea that black Americans and white Americans were the "real Americans" according to a native/foreigner frame. Furthermore, Black criticism of U.S. immigration policy in the *Times* molded itself to the organizing structure of a black/white binary.[94] Miami Blacks compared Cuban and Haitian immigration, asserting that white Cubans received preferential treatment denied to black Haitians. Afro-Cubans were generally elided in their discussions.

The seeming disdain for Cuban immigration reflected in the *Miami Times* is a symptom of the Black population's pressing desire to challenge white supremacy and promote greater equality and acknowledgment of Blacks in the larger sphere of U.S. culture. However, I argue the *Miami Times*' use of the native/foreigner frame and the black and white binary to critique U.S. immigration policy was problematic because it denies the realities of actual relationships between racial and ethnic groups in close contact, and ignores the complexity of how power works to maintain the status quo for

[94] This black/white binary or paradigm refers to the way the nation is commonly conceived of as a black and white nation, with little recognition of the actual diversity. This differs from the black/white racializing frame, which assigns a specific value to blacks and whites, with whites framed as superior and blacks as inferior.

powerful groups. The greater presence of Afro-Cubans among the Mariels calls the simplistic analyses of the impact of Mariel according to a black and white binary into question by highlighting the instability of racial categories. As blacks and as "foreigners," Afro-Cuban immigrants also offer a challenge to native/foreigner divides.

To understand African American reactions to the Mariel exodus, I begin with a discussion of research on African American attitudes on immigration and a brief description of race relations in Miami affecting African Americans. This context reveals the historical disenfranchisement of African Americans in Miami and explains why African Americans would view Cuban immigration as a threat. The concept of racial order helps make clear how the racial status quo is preserved by the way blacks, whites, and "intermediary" immigrant groups are framed and positioned in reference to each other in U.S. society (Kim, 2000). The chapter concludes by comparing the findings from Chapter 1 about Cuban American reactions to the Mariels in *El Herald* with the findings in this chapter to discuss how the stakes of the Mariel influx differed for these two communities.

Black Attitudes on Immigration

Despite the substantial attention immigration issues receive in the United States, scholarship examining African American attitudes towards immigration had received little attention until relatively recently (Schulman, 2004). Existing studies depict African American ambivalence towards immigration. In his research on Black press coverage of immigration events and policy between 1917 and 1929, historian David Hellwig found Blacks were supportive of immigration at the beginning of the period around WWI.

Blacks saw a resemblance between poor immigrants and themselves, and championed the idea that the United States should be a haven for them. However, soon the immigrants were seen as a threat. The Civil War had curtailed immigration and expanded the nation's economy, affording free and newly freed Blacks new job opportunities, but the many new immigrants of the early 20th century soon became direct competition for these jobs. Blacks were dismayed also when the new immigrants did not naturally align with them or support their continued fight for equality. Rather, many European immigrants sought to distance themselves from Blacks to gain the benefits attached to whiteness (Hellwig, 1981).

When the immigrants in question were non-white, such as the Chinese who arrived between 1850 and 1882 and Mexicans during World War II, there was similar ambivalence, which was heightened by African American criticism of white imperialism and the desire to align with other people of color. On the one hand, the Black press and prominent leaders such as Fredrick Douglas and Booker T. Washington decried the passage of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and the differential treatment of Irish and German immigrants compared to immigrants from China. On the other hand, other Black leaders and Black press adopted the discourse of (white) nativists referring to these groups as "unassimilable" or "disease-breeding heathens" (Fuchs, 1990). Jobs were the point of contention; some Blacks believed they were entitled to these jobs due to their status as native-born Americans and the debt the United States incurred during slavery. In his study of African American press in regards to Woodrow Wilson's Mexican Policy (1913–1917), Hellwig found Black opinions also varied concerning immigrants from Mexico. Although many Blacks were against Mexican immigration, the Black press also

demonstrated that many other Blacks were critical of U.S. imperialism in Mexico and supportive of Mexican immigrant rights. Blacks were particularly supportive of darker skinned Mexican leaders and rebels whom they viewed as being disparaged in a manner similar to Blacks in the United States (1987).

Lawrence Fuch's study of Black attitudes towards immigration in the 20th century found Blacks were often negative towards immigration, but by 1980 Black opinion had dramatically shifted in favor of immigration (1990). The Civil Rights Movement had clarified the moral priorities of Black leaders to fight against the oppression of Blacks and all other aggrieved groups. For instance, when Cubans began to arrive in Miami after the Cuban Revolution during the 1960s, some Blacks showed concern that Cubans would infringe upon them, but civil rights leader Martin Luther King warned against actions by Blacks that would work to create division between Blacks and Cubans (Dunn, 1997). In the 1980s, prominent Black leaders such as Jesse Jackson framed immigration issues as human rights issues and stuck closely by the Hispanic leaders on immigration policy (Fuchs, 1990), and Black legislators were instrumental in passing bills in favor of immigrants (Jaynes, 2000). Black and Hispanic leaders mutually supported the liberalization of the Immigration and Reform Act of 1986 (IRCA), so it would provide amnesty for illegal residents who had been in the United States continuously since January 1, 1982 (Jaynes, 2000; Diamond, 1990). Into the 1990s, the Black and the Hispanic congressional caucuses aligned with each other to oppose legislation against illegal immigration, and worked together to help pass the Immigration Act of 1990, which enlarged immigration quotas (Fuchs, 1990).

Some scholars have argued that Black support for immigration during the 1980s and 1990s reflected the ideals of Black leaders and not the general Black public (Fuchs, 1990). However, the results of public opinion polls demonstrate Black public support. The 1992 Los Angeles County Survey, conducted by the Social Science Research Survey Center at UCLA, shows that although African Americans were more likely than other Americans to believe immigration was detrimental to the labor market, Blacks were more supportive of immigration and immigrants than non-Blacks. About two thirds of the Americans polled said immigrants take jobs from native borns, and more than three quarters of African Americans believed employers would rather hire immigrants over Blacks. However, African Americans were evenly split between those who favored increased immigration and those who believed there should be a decrease. In contrast, other Americans favored decreased immigration by a margin of two to one. In addition, while the majority of white Americans were against bilingual education, African Americans were in favor of it by a margin of four to one (Jaynes, 2000).

Michael C. Thornton and Yuko Mizuno (1999) conducted a more nuanced study that analyzed data from the 1984 and 1988 National Black Election Study data sets to determine Black attitudes towards West Indian and Mexican immigrants. Their study found Blacks who felt less economically secure were *more* likely to feel affinity with immigrants than Blacks who felt more secure, perhaps due to feelings of empathy. In addition, the study found Blacks who believed immigrants were in competition with them felt less close to whites, a sentiment that according to Thornton and Mizuno indicates a sophisticated assessment of how power works in society, and a belief among Blacks that white racism may be the cause of the inequalities between marginalized groups. Due to

their position in the United States as both minorities and as Americans, Blacks sought to align racially with the "other" but also desired to establish their rightful place in the U.S. nation (Brock & Castañeda Fuertes, 1998).

In a more recent study Manuel Pastor, Jr. and Enrico A. Marcelli cite a Gallup poll from 2003: 49% of whites were in favor of a decrease in immigration and only 11% said it should be increased. However, while 44% of Blacks supported a decrease in immigration, a significant 20% supported an increase (2004, p. 119). Pastor and Marcelli argue that Blacks believe the gains that could result from political coalitions with immigrants outweigh the other problems that could result from increased immigration. In their view, Black values about equality and humanitarianism may shape opinions more than economic realities (2004). The findings of scholars investigating Black opinions on immigration reveal a strong contradiction: Blacks generally support the rights of immigrants but tend to oppose immigration when it infringes on their job prospects. The response to the Mariel influx in Miami in 1980 demonstrates a similar contradiction, complicated by the fact that Cubans, who were the "other," were constructed simultaneously as "white" and viewed as a privileged group.

Race Relations in Miami

Despite a long history of amicable relationships between African Americans and Cubans on the island, relations between the incoming Cubans and Black Americans in Miami during the mid-20th century were strained. According to Hellwig (1998), 19th-century African Americans were aware of racism in Cuba and supported Black Cuban struggles. The 19th-century African American press documented racism in Cuba and

rather than blaming racism on white Cubans, asserted racism was the result of the influence of "the Anglo-Saxon style." Lisa Brock notes that before the Cuban Revolution, the U.S. Black press was more anti-imperialistic than the white press. In addition, many prominent African Americans opposed U.S. involvement in Cuba in solidarity with Cuban blacks (Brock & Castañeda Fuertes, 1998). Cubans also have historically aligned with African Americans. For example, in the 1930s, famous black Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén and other black Cuban voices sympathized with the plight of African Americans, criticizing U.S. imperialism and racism against black Americans. Furthermore, more so than other Latin American countries with significant black populations, Cuba has celebrated and relied on its black/African identity for the purposes of solidifying a national identity (Gomez-Garcia, 1998). Cuban immigrants who arrived in the United States during the 19th century found solace from white racism by building relationships with African Americans (Greenbaum, 2002; Mirabal, 2003, 1998).

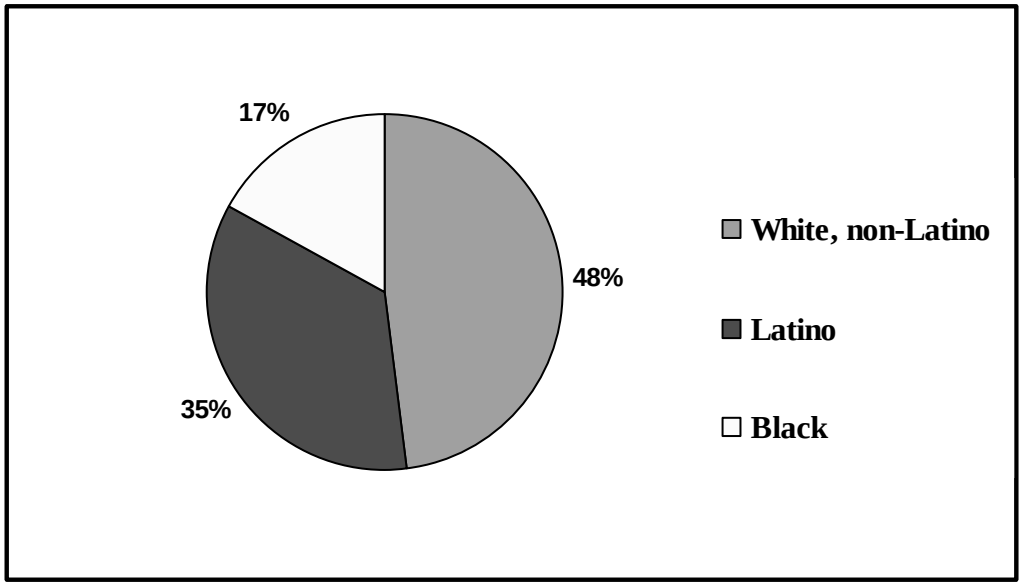
When Cubans began arriving en masse in the United States, they were viewed by African Americans as possible allies at first, but as Cubans settled in and gained power in Miami, they came to be viewed by African Americans as rivals and as a new (white) oppressor (Grenier & Stepick, 2001, p. 156). Before the Cuban influx in 1960, Miami's population consisted mainly of Anglos and Blacks. Like most Southern cities, Miami, incorporated in 1896, was built upon a racist foundation with a political, economic, and social structure designed to exclude nonwhites. This foundation would set the stage for the explosive racial tensions and unrest that manifested in the 1980s. According to Florida historians Marvin Dunn and Alex Stepick, during the first third of the 20th century, it was not uncommon for the major Miami newspapers such as the *Miami*

Herald and the *Miami Metropolis* to refer to Blacks as "coons" or similar epithets. Blacks were systematically excluded from Miami politics even though it was Black labor that originally brought progress to Miami's economy.[95] Blacks were segregated into "Colored Town," now known as Overtown, an area that became a thriving business and cultural center between the 1900s and 1950s (1992). Because of this history, African American attitudes towards the Cuban influx occurred within a racial framework already clearly established in the United States—where white is defined in opposition to black.

Just when African Americans were beginning to experience a Miami without de jure segregation, the 1959 revolution in Cuba began to shift local and federal political attention from the concerns of blacks to the issues of immigration. Cuba was the object of intense focus during the Cold War, particularly during the missile crisis in 1962, and as Cubans sought refuge in the United States, the government gave significant resources towards accommodating them. The generous governmental aid the U.S. government provided to help resettle Cubans was in marked contrast to that provided local African American communities. For example, between 1968 and 1980, the Small Business Administration gave 46.6% of its loans to Hispanics and only 6% to Blacks. The disparity in aid provided to Blacks and Cubans caused some Black leaders to argue Hispanics should not be included in minority set asides (Grenier & Stepick, 2001, p. 156). The tremendous shift in Miami demographics also made Cubans more visible than Blacks. In 1960, African Americans had greatly outnumbered Cubans but, by 1980, there were more than twice as many Hispanics than non-Hispanic blacks (see Graph 2.1).

[95] According to Dunn and Stepick (1992), the first Blacks in Miami were immigrants from the Bahamas who arrived at the turn of the century, followed by native Blacks from other Southern states.

Graph 2.1: Population of the Miami metropolitan area, 1980. Source: Metro-Dade Planning Department, Research Division, Dade County Facts (*Miami: Metropolitan Dade Country Government, 1990, p.6* in Portes and Stepick, 1993, p. 20).



By the 1980s, the economic and social plight of African Americans intensified their view of Cubans as rivals. Although by the 1970s the Black middle class in Miami had a higher average per capita income than other African American communities nationwide, African Americans were the hardest hit by the country's economic downturn at the end of the century. By 1980 the Black Miami community was in crisis; they were the poorest Blacks in the country, and the most frustrated of Miami's residents. Blacks were 24% of Dade's unemployed in 1980 compared to 17% in 1970, with a poverty rate (29.8%) triple that of whites (8.3%) and double that of Hispanics (16.9%) (Dunn & Stepick, 1992, p. 47). Urban renewal destroyed thriving Black cultural centers and middle-class Blacks left these areas for the suburbs. Miami's poorest Blacks were concentrated in the inner city (Grenier & Stepick, 2001).

A string of incidents of police brutality reminded blacks that they could not count on the police and local institutions to protect them. African Americans responded to the recurring incidents of police brutality with riots, the biggest being the McDuffie riot, which broke out May 17, 1980, just as the Mariel exodus was underway. The McDuffie riot was a response to outrage over the acquittal of four white cops who were involved in the beating and death of 33-year-old Arthur McDuffie. On December 17, 1979, Arthur McDuffie was chased by cops after he came to a rolling stop at a red light and made an obscene gesture to a nearby cop. McDuffie was beaten to death by at least six cops while in handcuffs. Police claimed the death stemmed from accidental injuries during the chase. After the trial, when all the officers were acquitted of the charges, shocked Black citizens participated in an uprising that lasted three days, resulting in 18 dead, $804 million in damage, and 1,100 arrests (Dunn & Stepick, 1992). The police brutality and subsequent release of the perpetrators was testament to the continued need to fight against white domination. Thus, as Blacks endured volatile race relations and a depressed job market, many of them were not happy to see a new group of Cubans when they began to arrive in April 1980 from Mariel.

During the time of massive Cuban immigration, Haitians were also arriving in large numbers. When the dictator Francois Duvalier (Papa Doc) assumed power in 1957, the upper classes, most threatened by his regime, began to flee. The first Haitian boat people began arriving in Miami in September 1963. By 1964 members of the middle classes also began leaving, and during the 1960s and 1970s some members of lower classes began to leave (primarily for New York). Between 1977 and 1981, 50,000–70,000 Haitians arrived in Miami. Negative stereotypes about Haitians (as AIDS

carriers, for example) spurred politicians to work hard at keeping them out. But Black activism was strong in support of Haitians and helped defeat some government efforts to restrict Haitian immigration and incorporation into U.S. society. Black churches, civil rights agencies, and human rights organizations galvanized to support Haitian immigrants in the face of U.S. policy that sought to send Haitian refugees back (Stepick, 1992).[96] The seeming preferential treatment of Cubans compared to Haitians reinforced Black sentiment that the United States' tradition of privileging whiteness over blackness was being perpetuated during Mariel; this heightened African American opposition to Cuban immigration. African American criticism of the United States' immigration policy was a predominant concern in the *Miami Times*.

Miami Times Coverage of Mariel

The *Miami Times* weekly, based in Liberty City (one of Miami's historically African American neighborhoods) was and continues to be the most widely circulated Black community newspaper in Miami. In 1980, the paper reached 23,049 people on a weekly basis (National Research Bureau 1980). Established in 1929 during the heyday of the Black press, it performs for Miami what Ronald Jacobs describes as the Black press's role: it provides a forum for debate and to promote self-improvement, monitors the mainstream press by providing alternate readings of news, and increases Black visibility in mainstream society (2000, p. 4–5). Between 1900 and 1950, the Black press in the United States was at its strongest, and provided a valuable space for discussions of

[96] See Stepick (1992) for a more complete discussion of the changes in immigration policy towards Cubans and Haitians in the 1980s.

integration and issues of civil rights. Black newspapers were important venues for Black organizations and leaders to mobilize the community (Jacobs, 2000). Similarly, the *Miami Times* reported on civil rights concerns (such as unfair hiring practices, etc.), local events and politics, Black firsts, and sports. The paper also contained a large section on local Black church happenings, a poetry section, death announcements, classifieds, and a section where community members could offer thank you notes to other community members and supporters.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the huge numbers of Cubans arriving during Mariel and the tensions between the Cuban regime and that of the United States made the Mariel crisis a top story in the *Miami Herald* and in *El Herald*. The exodus however, received little coverage in the African American *Miami Times* except in reference to Haitian immigration, to which it dedicated much space and coverage. A search for articles in bound newspaper archives and on microfilm covering the 1980 Mariel exodus and its aftermath between the dates April and October 1980 yielded only 30 articles: news stories, editorials, and letters to the editor. What it did cover, however, provides important insight into the tensions in the Black community regarding the entrance of refugees from Mariel.

The majority of the news stories, editorials, and letters to the editor express a fear that Cubans would push African Americans to the bottom of the U.S. racial hierarchy, below Cubans and other immigrants (e.g., an editorial from Aug 14, 1980, "Too many minorities: Blacks getting left out," and a September 11, 1980, news story "Illegal immigrants displacing American workers"). Less than a generation removed from the Civil Rights Movement with its promises of better days, African Americans held a

precarious position, particularly in Miami, and sought to hold onto it in the face of changing demographics.

Claire Jean Kim's discussion of the dynamics of the Black-Korean conflict in New York City in 1990 is useful for understanding the attitudes of African Americans towards Cubans and other immigrants. In "Bitter Fruit" (2000) Kim presents her research on the Red Apple Boycott, a picketing campaign led by African American, Haitian, and Caribbean activists against two Korean-owned produce stores in Flatbush, New York. The boycott was a response to the beating of a Haitian woman customer by the Korean manager during an argument at the cash register. The incident and boycott became a major crisis, mobilizing the Black and Korean communities and attracting the attention of local government and mass media. The local politicians and media pressured mayor David Dinkins to denounce the boycotts, framing the protests as merely the actions of irrational and emotional Blacks who were using the Korean community as scapegoats. Kim's book seeks to illuminate the more complex context of the conflict and Black response. Kim connects such conflicts to the way racial power perpetuates white dominance over nonwhites in a variety of political, economic, social, and cultural processes. In the case of the New York Korean-Black conflict, the portrait of Blacks as irrational and Koreans as scapegoats served to blind the public eye to the role of white dominance in the conflict, and presented whites as normative, uninvolved bystanders, and denied the ways white racism contributed to the interethnic conflict.

Kim's discussion of how Blacks were constructed as irrational actors targeting Koreans, who were constructed as model minorities, illustrates the stability of the position of African Americans at the bottom of the racial order despite the changes

brought forward by new immigration, a positioning that helps explain the African American "defensiveness" and critique of U.S. policies that appear to favor other groups while neglecting the concerns of Blacks. Because of the position African Americans have held historically as "the ultimate other" against which whiteness was constructed, they continue to hold a stigmatized position. Blacks have been set apart as especially disadvantaged, and the stigma attached to blackness has been particularly enduring (Noguera, 2003; Jordan, 1977).

To overcome such positioning, some African Americans may invoke the native/foreigner frame (also referred to by Kim as the insider/foreigner axis). Because of their supposed status as the "indigenous" minorities of the United States (Dávila, 2001) and their own identification with American culture and identity, African Americans may counter their continued disenfranchisement with the argument that they have more claim to the nation than those groups that are placed in the racial order as "foreigners." The superior/inferior and native/foreigner axes or frames Kim discusses in her explanation of the 1990 New York conflict can also be drawn upon to explain how non-white groups may position themselves in relation to other groups when their status as insiders seems threatened. In the next section, we look at these dynamics in a study of how African American opinion of the Mariel exodus and the Mariels in particular were framed in the *Miami Times* newspaper, a community paper that presented an official voice on matters affecting the Miami African American community. Three themes predominate in the coverage of Mariel in the *Miami Times*: black Haitians versus white Cubans (47%); native-born Blacks as Americans versus foreigners or immigrants (27%); and the necessity of support for all oppressed peoples (27%).

Black Haitians versus White Cubans

As the first black independent nation in the world, Haiti has been a powerful symbol of black redemption. The emancipation of the Haitian slaves and its independence on January 1, 1804, inspired black struggles for independence and slave emancipation across the diaspora (Pamphile, 2001). This history, and the fact that a majority of Haitians had darker skin, allowed African Americans to view them as unequivocally black in contrast to Cubans. Therefore, in the opinion of many African Americans expressed in the *Times*, the brutal regime and much poorer conditions within Haiti warranted as much attention from the U.S. government as the Cuban case, if not more. The majority of Cubans who had arrived previously had been white, and their preferential treatment by the government further whitened them.

The first reference to the Mariel events in the *Miami Times* was an op-editorial by Ricky Thomas on April 17, 1980, during the same month that Mariel began, titled, "Immigration policies should be colorblind." The article sets the tone for future reporting and questions the federal support of Cubans in the absence of support for Haitians. The author begins with a powerful statement about government favoritism for white immigrants: "The immigration policies of this nation are prejudicial and anti-black." He points to the widespread support the Cuban immigrants had from the exile community, which mobilized demonstrations, raised money, and collected food to help those at the Peruvian embassy. "On the other side of the immigration coin while the Cubans were demonstrating, the lowly black Haitian refugees were in federal court fighting

deportation, fighting for survival and the right to remain in this country as political refugees just like the Cubans."[97]

The columnist provides stories and testimonies of the harrowing experiences of the Haitians refugee seekers. For instance, a man recounts that Haiti's secret police, the Ton ton Macoutes, had forced him to stand for four days in a cell where all he had to drink was his own urine. With such testimonies, the columnist seeks to convince readers that the Haitian condition was horrible, if not worse than that of the Cuban refugees:

> I don't buy the U.S. government's answers about one nation is communist and the other a dictatorship. If you are killed by the forces of a dictator you are just as dead as if it were by communist forces….I am not against Cuban, Nicaraguan, Vietnamese or any other refugees who are admitted to this nation. What I am totally against is the lilly [*sic*] white immigration policies of these United States which has an unwritten code which states, "if you're white you're right, if you're black go back." Write our U.S. representatives and tell them to stop treating our Haitian brothers and sisters unjustly.[98]

The article calls into question the main defense used by the government for accepting refugees from communist countries over those seeking refuge for economic reasons. The author paints the Haitian situation as a human rights issue, asserting that the oppression experienced by groups seeking refuge should be what determines whether they should be offered asylum. The columnist reduces the whole cold war rhetoric to mainly a racial issue and discusses racism as if it was experienced only by those with black skin (not by Cubans, Nicaraguans, and Vietnamese). Cubans are discussed as whites, therefore favored by the U.S. government, whereas Haitians are constructed as the "brothers and sisters" of African Americans. He speaks directly to the African American community: "So you see my people" and "So black folks, we must bring forth pressure upon our U.S.

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[97] Ricky Thomas, April 17, 1980, Immigration policies should be colorblind [op-editorial], *Miami Times*, p. 6.
[98] Ibid.

representatives." The piece calls for African American activism around immigration issues in support of Haitians as members of a black diaspora.

In "Cuban sealift illegal," another op-editorial by the same columnist, he complains about the many Cuban American citizens who took boats to pick up their compatriots leaving Mariel. He argues that "our" laws prohibit such actions and illegal immigration, "But our governments from the national, state, county and cities are aiding and abetting them in the breaking of our American laws to illustrate the two kinds of justice which is practiced by our governments."[99] The two types of justice Thomas refers to depend on whether the defendant is white or Black. Besides stopping the boatlift, he advocates the following:

> The other immediate thing which the federal government needs to do is to declare the Haitians political refugees, so they could come under the Federal Migrant Refugee Act and receive political asylum in this nation just as all other white refugees have received with open arms.[100]

Here Thomas makes clear that the Cubans are considered white immigrants and that Haitians were not receiving the same welcome in the United States because they are black. He petitions the Black community to become involved and to voice their concerns about U.S. immigration laws. He contends that the government would not take the appropriate actions to mobilize federal assistance for both the Cuban and Haitian refugees or stop the boatlift because they did not want to anger Cuban American voters. Therefore, in his op-ed he seeks to convince African Americans to mobilize and put pressure on the government to listen to African American voices.

An editorial published a month later (May 6, 1980) establishes an official

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[99] Ricky Thomas, April 1980, Cuban sealift illegal [op-editorial], *Miami Times*, p. 5.
[100] Ibid.

newspaper viewpoint on the matter that corroborates the views of the columnist. Titled "Haitian refugees finally noticed," the editorial maintains that the Mariel influx may have had the unintentional benefit of forcing leaders to deal with the Haitian refugees. It opens with, "It took an inflow of 24,000 new Cuban refugees in the past week to bring attention to the 25,000 Haitian refugees who have been here among us for two years."[101] This opening statement expresses disapproval of the favoritism showed Mariel refugees. While the piece calls for the equal treatment of both groups, the wording of the headline, lead sentence, and much of the article downplays the Cuban immigration in favor of a focus on Haitian immigration. This indifference toward Mariel Cubans is ironic, given that the article is about the indifference of the federal government toward the Haitian cause. The article reports that a coalition of Miami-Dade leaders voted to demand changes in the 1980 Refugee Act and more equitable treatment of Cuban and Haitian refugees. The new attention to the Haitian case is viewed as a positive development for African American/local government relations: "It was a good move by the Dade County Coordinating Council because it comes at a time when many black citizens in this community are beginning to wonder if the county really gives a damn."[102] The article demonstrates the Black community's concern that their interests are not being addressed by the local government and that the Haitian issue was seen as an *African American* issue.

Another editorial, "Cuban refugees and Haitian refugees," published May 15, 1980, is a critique of the federal government and the Carter administration's indecision in

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[101] Haitian refugees finally noticed [editorial], May 6, 1980, *Miami Times*, p. 1.
[102] Ibid.

regard to the equitable treatment of Cubans and Haitians. It leads with, "A refugee is a refugee no matter how you may look at it. Wrong. There are Cuban refugees and there are Haitian refugees. And between the two there is a world of difference." The "world of difference" statement refers to the differences in U.S. policy towards these groups rather than intrinsic differences between them. In fact, the article implies that because the two groups are *not* different, according to the 1980 Refugee Act they should be treated the same. The editorial ends with a statement that establishes the Haitian/Cuban treatment by the government as part of the historical U.S. preference for white over black: "One representative of the Administration, when confronted with the facts stated, 'If we give asylum or any positive status to the Haitians already here we will simply be inviting all of the Haitians in Haiti to come.' And that's the way it is in America." It is clear the statement about America is not only about the United States' treatment of immigrants and refugees, because the article is not expressing concern about the specifics of the Cuban refugee situation and the obstacles they were encountering. Instead, the article implies the contrast between the Cuban refugees and the Haitians is part of the same old story of white discrimination against blacks that African Americans have been experiencing for hundreds of years.

An op-editorial written by prominent Black leader Vernon Jordan, whose syndicated column appeared regularly in the paper, echoes the predominant sentiment of the *Miami Times*. The op-ed begins with the assertion that the government has been wishy washy about their policy on the Mariels, "but for those who managed to reach our shores, America has welcomed them, in the President's words, with 'an open heart and

open arms.' But the Haitians [*sic*] refugees are the 'invisible boat people.'"[103] As in other articles in the *Times,* Jordan questions the U.S. policy, i.e., assisting refugees from communist countries and not from others such as those under the Duvalier dictatorship. He notes that "denial of basic human and political rights is hardly a monopoly of communist countries," and he asserts that race was most likely the reason for the differential treatment of Haitians:

> [W]hile immigration authorities implemented a deportation plan for Haitians, there was no such plan to deport Asians or Cubans as a "deterrent." Why? It is hard to escape the conclusion that race is a factor. Many white Americans may harbor prejudice against Asians and Hispanic people, but those feelings flower into brazen racism when they are confronted with blacks.[104]

He argues that while other minorities were discriminated against in the United States, it was not as blatant as anti-black racism. Jordan's piece, like many of the other editorials and news stories related to Mariel, stands within a black and white framework. In this reaction to the black/white framing of racial hierarchies, new immigrants such as Cubans were not necessarily aligned with Blacks as oppressed brothers and sisters but rather received preferential treatment from whites, or were viewed as being "foreign whites." This view ignores that in the case of the Mariels, those deemed undesirable were being deported, and that while race was a factor in the treatment of refugees, there were other issues at stake such as the fact that Duvalier was a puppet of the United States whereas Castro was its avowed challenger. Hence, the fact that the United States' treatment of the Cuban refugees was also part of a greater imperialist project was not criticized.

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[103] Vernon Jordan, June 5, 1980, A fair break for Haitian Refugees [op-editorial], *Miami Times,* p. 5.
[104] Ibid.

Native-Born Blacks as Americans versus "Foreigners" or Immigrants

Besides invoking the black/white binary, the *Miami Times*'s news stories and editorials most often paint Cubans as foreigners who should not receive privileges over African Americans, who were "natives" to the United States entitled to the privileges of citizenship, and who stand closer to whites. For instance, an editorial titled "America's partiality to Cubans" asks the readers to consider whether the United States should draw the line in helping the Cubans. It argues African Americans were getting the short end of the stick and that the racialized experiences of African Americans were worse than those of Cubans. For example, the article claims Cubans suffered less scrutiny than African Americans and that Cubans were rarely falsely accused of crimes as were African Americans.[105] Ironically, as discussed in the previous chapter, the new wave of Cuban immigrants from Mariel (many of whom were black), were depicted as criminals within both the Cuban and U.S. press (Masud-Piloto, 1996).

Another editorial written later that summer (August 21, 1980), "Government should accommodate those Cubans wanting to go back," firmly establishes African Americans as part of the "we"—American citizens, who along with white Americans, believe in preserving the economic and political interests of the nation: "It is inexcusable that American citizens are being victimized by the federal government's shoddy handling of the Cuban boat flotilla….It's time we remind Castro that he's not dealing with the thirteen original colonies."[106] The editorial lays claim to the U.S. nation and its "greatness" as it criticizes the federal government for "sidestepping its responsibility"

[105] America's partiality to Cubans" [editorial], May 1, 1980, *Miami Times*, p. 4.
[106] Government should accommodate those Cubans wanting to go back [editorial], August 21, 1980, *Miami Times*, p. 5.

towards the refugees and leaving the mess to the local government to clean up. This criticism of the federal government echoes the view put forth in the *Miami Herald* and *El Herald*'s editorials (Camayd-Freixas, 1988). In addition, the editorial reflects a stereotypical "get tough" opposition to Castro that is similarly expressed in the other local Miami newspapers.

An emphasis on the controversies of language in several articles was also a prominent way of establishing African Americans as "real" Americans and as more deserving. A top front-page news story titled "'No habla español' costs Black maids their jobs" (August 7, 1980) reports that a hotel manager fired Black maids because he wanted to hire Spanish-speaking maids to better cater to the Latin American tourists who frequented the hotel. The article expresses the fears found in several other stories and editorials that Cubans were taking jobs from Blacks, and that Blacks should fight against linguistic discrimination by Spanish speakers. Indeed, the hotel manager did tell the paper that a large volume of his patrons are tourists from Latin American countries and that some guests complained that the maids could not understand Spanish. As Cubans became more powerful in Miami and Cuban-owned businesses grew, African Americans seeking employment would very likely encounter Cubans as employers. The article ends by linking these firing incidents with the larger controversy that was going on at the time over an anti-bilingualism proposal that was being circulated. The proposal sought to repeal the Bilingual-Bicultural Ordinance that was originally passed in 1973, and prohibit the use of Metro funds for any programs that used any language other than English (García, 1996).

One of the most scathing letters to the editor regarding Cuban immigrants and bilingualism, "Cubans should not be 'one up' on Blacks," reads,

> Spanish should not be crammed down Americans' throats whether Black or White. When refugees are invited into a person's home (America), they shouldn't rearrange the furniture (English language), after getting here, but they leave all cultural ties either at home or in that foreign country that they come from in order to adapt the culture of America namely, an appreciation for an English speaking society. They are both minorities but Cubans should not have one up on language whereby it is a liability not to speak Spanish."[107]

The writer presents the metaphor of the United States as a house, a house where both Blacks and whites belong, in part because both groups speak English. The stance that newcomers can be accepted only if they are willing to give up their own culture and adopt the culture of the United States reiterates the traditional assimilation imperative and the Anglo nativist stance, firmly planting African Americans as the indigenous minority of the United States.

Another letter to the editor, "Bilingualism an excuse for discrimination," (October 9, 1980) complains that bilingualism has been used by Spanish-speaking people to justify discrimination against Blacks.[108] The letter was in response to an editorial published September 11 (described in more detail in the following section on positive coverage) that advocates Blacks learn a second language. The author asks, "Why should our people waste their hard earned money and time to learn a second language? Giving in to such a measure would show our people to be weak and passive." Furthermore, the letter expresses anger that immigrants were benefiting from the hard work of Blacks:

> It seems as though our people have been discriminated against more so since America has adopted an open door policy. Europeans, Asians, Latins, etc. can come to this country and produce on a grand scale at the expense of a people

[107] Cubans should not be "one up" on Blacks [letter to the editor], May 15, 1980, *Miami Times*, p. 35.
[108] Bilingualism an excuse for discrimination [letter to the editor], October 9, 1980, *Miami Times*, p. 35.

> whose blood, sweat and tears are part of the foundation that makes this country what it is.[109]

This letter and those like it complain that Cubans and other immigrants were forcing their way of life on everyone else, and they assert that Americans should speak English.[110] African Americans, having worked hard to establish themselves in the United States and to secure the civil rights that benefit other groups, are now being run over and taken advantage of. The authors advocates that Blacks "stand up for what is ours."

Another letter to the editor "South Florida's goal: Keep out Haitians" takes a similar stance. Although the title of the letter signals that it is about south Florida's stance towards Haitians, the letter is more about the city's treatment of African Americans and neglect of their needs. Haitians are in fact only mentioned in the first sentence and the rest of the letter complains about the advantages and discriminatory behavior of Cubans:

> Why is it that the news media are always aligning the Cubans with Haitians, or for that matter with us blacks. Nonsense!! South Florida will do anything to keep out Black [*sic*] illegally at random. The only time the Cubans align themselves with blacks is when it is to their advantage. It has become part of the criteria for getting a job to speak Spanish. This takes jobs away from blacks. Must we always be last [*sic*].…I'm sorry but the "Cuban love affair is over." Every black voter should vote against bilingualism because it is only the beginning! The other South American countries do not welcome the Cubans—why should we?[111]

Ironically, while the letter criticizes the United States' plan to keep Haitians out, it advocates keeping out Cubans. It frames the issue of immigration as a Black issue, using a similar argument often put forth by white nativists against all immigration, stating that because Cubans jeopardize African American jobs, they should not be allowed to enter

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[109] Bilingualism an excuse for discrimination [letter to the editor], October 9, 1980, *Miami Times*, p. 35.
[110] See also Immigrants insist on bilingualism.[letter to the editor], September 6, 1980, *Miami Times*, p. 39.
[111] South Florida's goal: Keep out Haitians [letter to the editor], September 30, 1980, *Miami Times*, p. 13A.

the United States. The letter also makes reference to the ongoing bilingual debate described in previous news reports and editorials. By November 1980, voters had successfully passed the ordinance that repealed the Bilingual-Bicultural Ordinance and made it unlawful to use Metro funds for any non-English language programs (García, 1996).

The strong stance taken against bilingualism by some members of the African American community is incongruous, given the paper's wide support of Haitian immigrants. Haitians were also not English speakers (over 90% are monolingual in Kreyol, a language without the number of speakers or the international scope of Spanish), yet there was little mention in the newspaper of conflict over language between Haitians and African Americans. Haitians were arriving in large numbers at the same time as Cubans from Mariel, and they also were potential competitors for jobs. Only one article in the sample, by nationally syndicated civil rights leader Bayard Rustin, acknowledges in passing that conflict also existed between African Americans and Haitians.[112] Besides this one acknowledgement, the majority of the newspaper articles demonstrate an assumption that the blackness of Haitians represented a kinship between them and African Americans—a natural alliance that erased economic, linguistic, and other lingering conflicts.

Call for Unity among All Oppressed Peoples

Although almost half of the articles covering Mariel and the influence of Cubans in Miami are generally negative, about a fourth of the articles also express positive

[112] Bayard Rustin, June 5, 1980, Tragedy in Miami: Oppressed vs. oppressed, *Miami Times*, p. 5.

opinions. These articles express the civil rights agenda to preserve alliances between minority groups and to explain conflicts between the two groups with a critique of white racism. For example, the editorial "Bilingualism is here to stay" (September 11, 1980) argues in favor of bilingualism, maintaining Blacks should accept the reality that (at the time) Dade County was 53% Latino.[113] The editorial suggests bilingualism could be an asset and advocates that Black kids learn Spanish as well. This more positive editorial demonstrates that the newspaper did not have one singular stance on the issue of immigration and on Mariel.

Prominent in supportive articles were the voices of Black leaders. As discussed earlier, the writings and actions of prominent Black leaders have been influential in swaying Black public opinion and political behavior concerning immigration throughout the 20th century (Pastor & Marcelli, 2004). In the 1980s, the *Miami Times*' reports included stories about the NAACP's stand on immigration issues and ran regular or guest columns by leaders such as Vernon Jordan, Jesse Jackson, Bayard Rustin, and renowned African American scholar Manning Marable. Such articles about the stance of Black leaders or columns from Black leaders were much more supportive of the recent Cuban immigrants and the ideals of social justice for all.

In his column titled "Bayard Rustin speaks" (June 5, 1980), civil rights leader Bayard Rustin argues that the major political problem in Miami was the pitting of one oppressed group against another. He provides a wide view of some of the problems plaguing Miami at the time—the barbarism of white hate crimes, the Black response to racial inequality including the recent McDuffie riots, Black unemployment and the

[113] Bilingualism is here to stay [editorial], September 11, 1980, *Miami Times*, p. 4.

depressed economy, and Black fears about the Cubans arriving during Mariel. Rustin argues,

> the widespread hatred and animosity of blacks toward the Cuban and Haitian refugees demonstrates that our economy of scarcity has at least succeeded in breaking the natural bonds linking the oppressed, the old strategy of "divide and conquer" has been resurrected, and black people have been distracted from the real sources of their problems by those who use refugees as convenient scapegoats.[114]

Including Cubans along with Haitians, Rustin asserts a "natural" affinity between African Americans and other oppressed peoples, regardless of color, based on issues of social justice. He points to an outside source of conflict between the groups: the "powers that be" that manipulated and divided the groups using immigrants as scapegoats. Rustin implies that the white power structure had not taken care of African Americans' concerns, which were exacerbated by the 1980s depression. According to his ideals, Blacks and other oppressed groups should not feed into the divide-and-conquer tactic but work together to bring about the changes that had not yet come into fruition.

A September 18, 1980, news story presents a similar view promoted by the greater Miami Chapter of the NAACP. In "NAACP decries anti-bilingual petition" the NAACP argues that such an ordinance would not just affect the groups targeted (such as Spanish speakers) but would also affect African Americans and jeopardize events celebrating Kwanzaa (for example). The NAACP contends that anti-bilingualism efforts support white supremacy, something Blacks have been fighting against for centuries. The reporter spoke to Dr. Bill Perry, president of the greater Miami Chapter of the NAACP who "compared the proposal to eliminate Dade's bi-lingual status with the way

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[114] Bayard Rustin, June 5, 1980, Tragedy in Miami: Oppressed vs. oppressed [op-editorial], *Miami Times*, p. 5.

African slaves arriving in America had their native language taken away from them—'the first step in destroying us,' he added."[115] The report shows how the NAACP situated the suffering of several minority groups within a larger context of white racism and aligned the Black community with other minority communities.

It is noteworthy that there are no letters to the editor that present arguments supportive of the Cuban immigrants. It is not clear whether this is because the newspaper was not receiving such letters or if it was because the paper chose to publish only those letters that represented the dominant opinion in the paper. Still, articles written by Black leaders and other articles supportive of immigration demonstrate the complexity of African American/Cuban conflict and serve as a reminder that there was no simple unified African American stance on the issue. The reception of the Mariels was shaped by African American civil rights principles, the United States' historical treatment of African Americans, and local Black experiences with Haitians and Cubans. Additionally, class differences may influence the extent to which members of Black communities are supportive of immigrant communities (Thornton & Mizuno, 1999).

The supportive articles in the Mariel coverage also point to the agency African Americans (and immigrants for that matter) can exert to resist dominant racial orders. In Kim's discussion of the 1990 Korean-Black conflict, she points to the agency reflected in African American, Haitian, and Caribbean organizing endeavors, and in the alternative choice offered by the civil rights agenda, i.e., to fight the oppression of all marginalized groups by bonding and creating coalitions with other people of color (including in this

[115] NAACP decries anti-bilingual petition, August 18, 1980, *Miami Times*, p. 25.

case, Asian Americans).[116] This option remains an important strategy adopted by Black activists but, as Kim suggests, it must be pushed beyond a "colorblind" ideal. This strategy points to another side of Kim's racial order triangle, whereby Blacks and immigrants decide to align themselves together against a white power structure. In this configuration they resist the superior/inferior and insider/foreigner divides.

Cuban Brothers and Sisters? Afro-Cubans in the Miami Times

Along with articles by and about Black leaders, reports on Afro-Cubans in the *Times* represented other views taking a more positive stance. The larger presence of Afro-Cubans among Mariel refugees presented a challenge to the newspapers' simple binary between black and white, and complicated the insider/foreigner divide. As discussed in the previous chapter, between 15% and 40% of the Mariels were black or mulattoes (García, 1996). Mariels received intense scrutiny and were criminalized because they were perceived as fitting stereotypes commonly associated with blackness or African Americans (Hamm, 1995). Although the Mariels came from the same country with the same leader as the members of the exile community, their welcome by the federal government was not the same. On the whole, the *Miami Times* did not account for this complexity, asserting that the main reason for the difference in immigration policy towards Cubans and Haitians was racism, rather than political ideology or economics, because Cubans were viewed as white. What to do then with black Cubans? If Cubans were white, but black Cubans were benefiting from the same "liberal polices"

[116] See Kim's discussion of organized multiracial opposition to the boycotts by "colorblind" proponents of racial harmony (2000, p. 153–155).

towards "white" Cubans, could U.S. policy toward Cuban immigrants be attributed simply to racism?

In 5 of the 30 articles (or a little over 16%), the newspaper did acknowledge the existence of black Cubans, pointing out that "the new Cuban refugees are bringing a far larger number of blacks than the original freedom flights of 10 years ago."[117] When discussing black Cubans, the paper demonstrated more sympathy than it did towards "white" Cubans, and pointed out the racism they experienced. Each time the paper reported on black Cubans, a photo was included, perhaps to demonstrate the dark color, or "black look" of these Cubans.

The paper first took notice of black Cubans in an op-editorial, "Reflection," by Haiba Jabali (April 24, 1980), who connects black Cubans to a black diaspora and declares that the concerns of black Cubans should also be the concern of African Americans. Discussing important current events in the international black world in the previous month, she critiques the oppression of blacks by other Blacks:

> The suffering of Haitians are [*sic*] no different from the suffering of South Africans or the Afro-Cubans or the Jamaicans, or the Afro-Americans. Like the Cubans who jammed the streets of little Havana in Miami in support of their fellow countrymen, blacks too should rally behind supporting each others' efforts to break forth with human dignity, justice and freedom, and the basic necessities needed to live a decent life in today's world.[118]

The op-editorial paints Cuban American activism in support of Mariel as a positive phenomenon that should inspire African American action. The author advocates the unity of a larger black community beyond the United States. Her final thoughts affirm a reevaluation of Pan-Africanism, proclaiming "together we will win."

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[117] Cuban refugees and Haitian refugees [editorial], May 15, 1980, *Miami Times*.
[118] Haiba Jabali, April 24, 1980, Reflection [op-editorial], *Miami Times*, p. 24.

On May 15, 1980, the same author wrote a feature story more directly focused on Afro-Cubans titled "Afro-Cuban refugee point of view." The feature talks about how becoming resettled in the United States has been more difficult for Afro-Cubans than for their lighter skinned compatriots. The author recounts what happened when she and an Afro-Cuban friend were shopping in downtown Miami. Her friend reprimanded some white Cuban women in Spanish because they had assumed that the Afro-Cuban friend was an African American and warned that the two black women should be watched closely because they might steal something. The story does not delve into the conditions of black Cuban immigrants in the United States, but is instead interested in finding out if black Cubans believed there was racism in Cuba. The author went to the Orange Bowl in Opa-locka where a large camp was set up for incoming Mariels and interviewed an Afro-Cuban man and his family. When asked about racism in Cuba the man did not seem to get the concept or understand what she was asking, until she asked why so many blacks in Cuba are poor and in less skilled jobs. Put that way, the man did say there were some racial problems in Cuba. At the end of the article the author speaks of an overwhelming desire to help the family who "were so hopeful and willing to face whatever situation that may come in their new homeland."[119]

The editorial "Cuban refugees and Haitian refugees," written on the same day (May 15, 1980), focuses on the differential treatment of Cubans and Haitians by the government but also notes that among the Cuban refugees, very few black Cubans could be found in Miami because they were often singled out as having criminal records. A larger proportion of them were sent to federal correctional institutions or refugee sites

[119] Haiba Jabali, May 15, 1980, Afro-Cuban refugee point of view, *Miami Times*, p. 11.

such as the Elgin Air Force base in Pensacola, FL, and Fort Chaffee in Arkansas.[120] This editorial focuses on the plight of Haitians but acknowledges that blacks existed among the Cuban refugees and that they were discriminated against in the same ways as other blacks. By making these connections about the similar criminalization of various black peoples in the United States, the author makes space for black Cubans to be joined with other blacks and for African Americans to sympathize with them.

A news story, "Black [Cuban] refugees forced from commandeered houses" (September 4, 1980), similarly brings African American readers' attention to the fact that black Cubans existed and were experiencing discrimination because of their blackness. The article describes the fate of 37 illegal black Mariel Cubans who had so few resources they resorted to squatting in abandoned houses before they were commanded to leave. The story paints a very sympathetic picture, starting with how one 23-year-old woman, worried about how she would support herself and her unborn child, wanted to douse herself with gasoline and end it all. The story also says black Cubans received limited support from their own community, alleging the existence of a conflict between black and white Cubans.

The idea that non-black Cubans were rejecting black ones was also picked up in an October 30, 1980, letter to the editor, "South Florida's goal: Keep out Haitians."[121] The letter was very unsympathetic to the Cuban case (as described earlier in the section, "Native-Born Blacks as Americans versus 'Foreigners' or Immigrants") except for in its critique of the differential treatment of black and white Cubans. In a discussion of city

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[120] Cuban refugees and Haitian refugees [editorial], May 15, 1980, *Miami Times*.
[121] South Florida's goal: Keep out Haitians [letter to the editor], October 30, 1980, *Miami Times*, p. 13A.

plans to take down the tent cities and house unemployable Mariels in African American neighborhoods such as Opa-locka and Allapattah, the letter writer asks, "Why not build housing in Hialeah [a Cuban neighborhood] or around 701 SW 27th Ave? It appears as if the non-black Cubans are shunning the black ones that were brought here. They certainly are not getting the assistance and placement that their non-black brothers receive."[122] Although the letter writer does not find resemblance among African Americans and white Cubans, she points to the ways the local government and the exile community appeared to be making choices to place the people they found to be undesirable, who were also black, in African American neighborhoods. Such moves, according to the letter, demonstrate white disdain of African Americans and of black Cubans.

Despite the letter to the editor that is negative to Cubans overall, even though it singles out and supports black Cubans, the majority of articles that brought the readers' attention to black Cubans express the idea that all black peoples in the African diaspora should unite or, at least, they imply a natural link between black peoples. However, although articles that mention Afro-Cubans represent 16% of the total articles, Afro-Cubans are the main focus in only one of these articles. Thus, despite the long history of cooperation between African Americans and Cubans outlined earlier, due to the specter of possible cultural, economic, and political losses, appeals to Afro-diasporic identities that bonded African Americans and Cubans during the 19th century were less of a concern for many African Americans in 20th century Miami. In the *Miami Times*, only identifiably black Cubans were included within the Afro-diasporic family. Such a stance does not account for the "mixed" racial identities of many Cubans, and ignores the

[122] South Florida's goal: Keep out Haitians [letter to the editor], October 30, 1980, *Miami Times*, p. 13A.

complexity of where they fit and how they view race. Furthermore, it denies the ways Cubans of various colors are linked, which makes strict separations between black and white Cubans impossible. Likewise, the political, economic, social, and racial problems in Miami are too interlinked to use a simple black/white binary as a solution.

Comparison of El Herald *and* Miami Times *Coverage of Mariel*

Ultimately, both the *Miami Times* and *El Herald* took on nativist stances that drew upon the ideals of democracy, freedom, and justice, and constructed both Cuban exiles and African Americans as Americans, but only in the interest of what they perceived to be their own community. African Americans included Haitians in their community and excluded Cubans, and exile Cubans included those Mariels who conformed to proper behaviors and ideals to the exclusion of those that did not. For Cubans, the "other" also was Castro and his regime, while the *Miami Times* paid little attention to Castro. Rather, the *Miami Times* was more concerned with the ills of the U.S. government. The paper was more critical of the U.S. government overall, because of the United States' historical disenfranchisement of African Americans. *El Herald* was also critical of the U.S. federal government, but for another reason--because its mishandling of Mariel placed undue burden on the local government. The coverage in *El Herald* revealed that in contrast to many African Americans, many exile Cubans viewed the United States as a benevolent nation where Cubans escaping the ills of Castro could find refuge. This focus on the Cuban government concealed the racism and injustices of the U.S. government towards the Mariels.

In the previous chapter, I argued that *El Herald* constructed the idea of "belonging" according to the black/white and morality racializing frames. In these frames the paper corresponded to ideas of behavior that were racialized as white = "proper" and black = "improper." This stance promotes the idea that groups can only be proper and worthy citizens of the United States when they achieve whiteness by conforming to sanctioned behaviors and adopting legitimized ideals. These ideals reflected those of the Anglo community in Miami and of the Cubans exiles who clung to the same ideals. In the *Miami Times*, we again see the strength and endurance of the black/white frame, but it is employed in a very different way. The *Miami Times* invokes the black/white racial frame in its reaction *against* it; it acknowledges and attacks the evaluations of whiteness and blackness promoted in *El Herald* coverage which positions whiteness as superior to blackness. However, the *Times*'s position is also limited. The *Times*'s stance reaffirms dominant ideas about race by conforming to rigid constructions of a binary racial structure that leave out other complexities that determine immigration decisions, such as the United States' political relationships with other countries. In addition, it does not allow space for racial ambiguities, mixtures, and non–African American constructions of blackness, particularly as conceptualized in Spanish-speaking countries.

In a critique of the coverage in the *Miami Times*, I do not wish to imply that the concept of "race" is or should be done away with; minority groups understandably cling to "race" as they seek to bring about change. This is because, as Stuart Hall argues, "[race] is also the principal modality in which the black members of that class 'live,' experience, make sense of and thus *come to a consciousness* of their structured subordination. It is through the modality of race that blacks comprehend, handle and then

begin to resist the exploitation which is an objective feature of their class situation….Thus it is primarily in and through the modality of race that resistance, opposition and rebellion *first* expresses itself [*emphasis his*]" (1978, p. 347). Blacks learn that race matters via the ways they are treated, and then race becomes a primary way to resist that treatment.

In efforts to overcome white denigration, organizing around and celebrating a black identity along with connections to other African peoples has been historically important to African Americans. Booker T. Washington, Marcus Garvey, and other black leaders have rallied people of African descent to fight their common oppression. Afrocentric thinkers such as Molefi Asante have argued for the need to define a separate African identity because, he asserts, "an African renaissance is only possible if there is an African ideology, distinct from a Eurocentric ideology, that allows African agency, that is, a sense of self actualizing based upon the best interests of African people" (2003, p. 1). Such ideologies have circulated among African Americans, inspiring a common identity and social action. Hintzen and Rahier argue that race has been paramount in the U.S. political arena in struggles for economic, social, and cultural power. They believe that because black identity has been "taken for granted" as a product of the politics of race in the United States, African American representations and practices "constitute *political* challenges to the Manichean juxtaposition of whiteness as superior and blackness as inferior [*emphasis theirs*]" (2003, p. 2). Thus, holding onto "black" as an identity has great importance.

However, although the *Miami Times* did acknowledge the presence of Afro-Cubans and demonstrated more sympathy towards them than towards white Cubans in its

reports, the newspaper's overwhelming construction of Cubans as monolithically "white" and of Haitians as "black" erased possibilities for new alliances and sites for protest in Miami, a city that continues to grapple with conflicts between its "native" and foreign-born residents.

Perhaps more African American readers could have been inspired to think differently if the messages in the *Miami Times* had been more extensive and more direct in linking *all* refugee issues to Black concerns of justice, while noting the specific differences between Haitian and Cuban waves that include but go far beyond race. For example, the dictator Duvalier was the U.S. prop in Haiti for decades, so any recognition of his tyranny had to acknowledge the United States' complicity in his regime. In addition, more complex focus on the actual plight of the Mariels, and the existence of Afro-Cubans and their relationships to other Cubans, African Americans, and how they fit into the U.S.-Cuban political conflict, could perhaps have influenced a closer look at the broader contexts of racism and imperialism affecting local conflicts.

Today, almost 30 years after Mariel, we can see that the larger contexts inspiring U.S. racism and how the plight of African American and immigrant communities are linked continue to elide some members of African American communities, as illustrated in the comments of Jayden Swain's grandmother, discussed at the beginning of this chapter, and in public opinion polls. We live in a country where it is increasingly more likely that the winner of another such Toys R Us contest would be the child of an immigrant. New black immigrants such as Afro-Cubans challenge the meaning of "black," or more specifically, of black *American*. Beyond this though, they also challenge the logics behind the native/foreigner divide. How can African Americans

continue to work towards social justice for themselves and build alliances with other minorities? How will they incorporate groups such as Afro-Cubans, other Afro-Latinos, and other immigrants without an African heritage? In the *Miami Times* we could see that the presence of Afro-Cubans among the Mariels hardly challenged the African American community's construction of Cubans as white and as competition. We return to these issues in chapter III, when another wave of Cuban exiles entered Miami 14 years later.

CHAPTER III
The Worthy Suffering versus Unworthy Immigrant: Framing the Balsero Crisis in *El Nuevo Herald* and the *Miami Times*

In the years following the Mariel exodus, immigration from Cuba came to a lull. Smaller numbers of Cubans were still making their way to the United States—some with the help of their Cuban American relatives—but it was not until the summer of 1994, fourteen years after Mariel, that the movement of people from Cuba to the United States was again conceived of as a crisis.[123] The Balsero Crisis,[124] when more than 35,000 Cubans fled Cuba for the United States, prompted a dramatic change in U.S. immigration policy. After 35 years of maintaining an open-door policy, the Clinton administration responded to the Balsero Crisis by instituting "Wet Foot, Dry Foot" legislation that allowed only those Cubans who made it to dry land without being discovered by the U.S. Coast Guard to remain in the United States. The impact of the crisis on the local Miami community was lessened by the government's actions to stop the exodus, as 55% of the Balseros caught at sea were taken to Guantánamo, the U.S. base in Cuba, and other "safe havens" (Soderlund 2003).

As discussed in the previous chapters, the Cuban case has been quite exceptional in terms of U.S. immigration policy because Cubans have historically benefited from an open-arms stance with almost no restrictions on entry into the United States. The Cuban Refugee Adjustment Act of 1966 stipulated that Cubans who reached U.S. shores were guaranteed refugee status and asylum (Soderlund, 2003). This policy was a subject of debate because Haitians and other groups did not enjoy the same privileges, even when

[123] See Ackerman and Clark (1995) for a detailed discussion of the Balseros who arrived before and after the crisis.
[124] "Balsero" refers to the mode by which these refugees came to the United States: on homemade rafts or "balsas."

they suffered from what some argued was a worse political regime. However, the Balsero Crisis signaled the closing of the open-door welcome.

The policy change happened in a time of increased anti-immigrant sentiment in the nation, evidenced by the 1994 passage of prop 187 in California, a bill seeking to deny undocumented immigrants social services and education, and by the proliferation of nativist discourses in the public and mainstream media as society reacted to the growing presence of Latinos (Santa Ana, 2002). Thus, Clinton's hard-line against newcomers was championed, not the least by those local African Americans who saw the change as an effort by the United States to be more equitable in its treatment of Cubans and Haitians. However, although the Cuban community had been bracing itself, hoping to avoid "another Mariel," the new Wet Foot, Dry Foot policy and the denial of automatic asylum angered them, and made the Balseros sympathetic figures. Fourteen years after Mariel, another large scale migration from Cuba had a polarizing effect on the African American and Cuban American communities, indicating the persistence of interethnic tension and the force with which established "Americans" held onto their positions in the U.S. racial hierarchy, and to their positions within their specific communities.

This chapter analyzes the news coverage of the Balseros and the impact of the new immigration policy on the Miami Cuban American community in *El Nuevo Herald* (formerly known as *El Herald*). Moreover, it investigates the coverage in the African American *Miami Times* for insight into the citizenship concerns of African Americans in the new political, economic, and racial climate. The chapter also focuses on the instances when Afro-Cubans were included in the coverage to determine whether bringing them into the picture had any impact on clarifying the potential for understanding

among/between African Americans and Cuban Americans. Throughout the discussion, the chapter compares the framing of the Balseros in both newspapers to their prior coverage of Mariel, to ascertain how the concerns about the significance of mass immigration from Cuba in the communities they served may have shifted in the years between Mariel and Balsero.

The coverage of the Balseros in *El Nuevo Herald*, which, by this time, had become independent from the mainstream English-language *Miami Herald*, was almost entirely positive; gone was the marked ambivalence the paper exhibited in its depictions of the Mariels in 1980. The findings indicate that the black/white frame that was more overt in racializing the Mariels was less prominent in the framing of Balsero events. Instead, a morality framing of the worthy/suffering immigrant predominated. This framing, I argue, worked in part because it correlated with the dominant framing of the events by the mainstream media (Ackerman 1996; Soderlund 2003), which echoed the public and political dissatisfaction with President Clinton's foreign policy (Soderlund 2003; Girard, 1994).[125] As media scholars have argued, the media framing of news relies on the ideals of the public to produce a product that increases its profitability because it connects with their common sense ideals (Robinson, 2002). The fact that the government's foreign policy was highly unpopular among both Democratic and Republican party politicians at the time may have contributed to the media's adversarial stance towards the official government position. When political elites are in conflict, the media is more likely to be less affirming of their ideals, and can even be highly critical of

[125] While the local Miami public and local media were more supportive of Clinton's policies, despite the fact that there was a rise in nativist sentiment in the 1990s (Bosniak, 1997), the mainstream media outside of Miami, more intent on criticizing Clinton's post-Cold War foreign policy, presented a favorable depiction of the Balseros (Ackerman 1996; Soderlund 2003).

the political establishment at such times (Hallin, 1986; Robinson, 2002). This tendency may help explain how *El Nuevo Herald*'s coverage of the Balsero crisis was so different from *El Herald's* coverage of Mariel, when the newspaper was more supportive of the government. But perhaps more significantly, the independence of the newspaper from the mainstream *Miami Herald* allowed a more sympathetic Cuban voice.

Furthermore, I argue the restrictive new government policy indicated an erosion of the Cuban American standing as worthy citizens, therefore, the "empathy framing" (Robinson, 2002, p. 28) of the Balseros in *El Nuevo Herald* reflected a move by some members of the Cuban American community to recapture their position in the nation. Piers Robinson (2002) and Lawrence Freedman (2000) assert that media has the potential to enable public support for politicians' decisions to intervene in world humanitarian crises through discourses and images that provoke empathy for the plight of suffering people. In the case of Balseros, however, the empathy frame went against the government stance in favor of the sentiments expressed among Cuban Americans. I argue that in the case of the Balsero crisis, the empathetic media framing was effective because, unlike Mariel, when the arrival of thousands of criminalized Cubans in Miami had a profound economic and social impact, the relative distance from actual Balseros resulting from their containment on Guantánamo allowed the public to view this influx as less of a threat. The smaller overall impact thus created an opening through which the public and politicians could jump on the humanitarian band wagon and criticize the government for being *restrictive* in immigration policy. The depiction of the worthy suffering immigrant in *El Nuevo Herald* proved most effective for capitalizing on the public impulse to reclaim the narrative of the United States as a nation of immigrants;

the ideal and welcoming haven for the world's poor, tired, and needy (at least for those escaping political regimes the U.S. does not support). Drawing upon this morality frame, which distinguished Cuban refugees as worthy because they were the good "type" of immigrants who eschewed deviant behaviors and were willing to suffer for freedom, the coverage in *El Nuevo Herald* demonstrates that members of the Cuban American community understood the conditional nature of U.S. American citizenship, and exposes the contradictory beliefs held by many members of the exile community about their acceptance as "Americans" in the United States.

In contrast to the generally positive depiction of the Balseros in *El Nuevo Herald*, the *Miami Times* coverage was similar to their Mariel coverage in tone and subject matter, reflecting sentiments voiced not only by African American Miamians, but also by Anglos. The continued high rate of poverty among Miami Blacks and the growing political influence of Cuban leaders in contrast to the diminishing political clout of Black leaders painted a bleak picture for Miami Blacks. After years of struggle and supposed inclusion as "native minority" Americans, the reports in the *Miami Times* demonstrate a move by members of the African American community to hold fast to their status as true citizens. The very strategic move by members of the community to invoke a native/foreigner frame, while simultaneously resisting the white/black racializing frame which has historically cast African Americans as non-citizens, reveals the truth about the U.S. racial framework; that is, that blacks, whether Afro-Latinos or African Americans, cannot escape their constructions as "other" in some shape or form when compared to whiteness or "Americanness."

Several Afro-Cuban journalists' voices figured prominently in both *El Nuevo Herald* and the *Miami Times* in the months covered in this analysis, specifically those of Dora Amador, an award winning contributor to *El Nuevo Herald*, and Rosa Reed, an Afro-Cuban business woman who wrote her own column in the *Miami Times*. The Afro-Cuban journalists confronted *El Nuevo Herald*'s silences, or denials of race and racism, and allowed the *Miami Times* to make some small connection to the Cuban American community. Including the voices of Afro-Cuban journalists and paying some attention to Afro-Cubans contributed to a more complex analysis of the interethnic conflict in Miami, and of the meaning of the social, economic and political change occurring in the local community. However, the voices and specific concerns of Afro-Cubans remained relatively small.

The following sections will describe the Balsero Crisis and the resulting change in immigration policy instituted by the Clinton administration. Information provided on public and mainstream media reactions and the factors contributing to the positive portrayal of the Balseros, even as anti-immigrant sentiment ran high in the country, will help explain the results in the newspapers. Next, I present an analysis of *El Nuevo Herald's* coverage of the Balsero Crisis, focusing specifically on the depiction of the Balseros themselves, and then turn to the *Miami Times'* coverage, providing the social, economic, and racial context that contributed to this newspaper's framing of the crisis. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the contribution of these findings to our understanding of interethnic conflict and processes of racialization or racial formation.

The Balsero Crisis and Changes in Immigration Policy

By the 1990s, Cuba had begun experiencing a period of extreme economic deterioration, known as the "special period."[126] The government of the Soviet Union, Cuba's main source of economic stability, fell, causing the value of the Cuban peso and Cuba's gross domestic product to plummet. Simultaneously, the U.S. government had tightened its embargo against Cuba, further contributing to Cuba's economic and social woes. The main staples of life—food, water, electricity, medicine, and petroleum—became scarce (Fernández, 2000). Youth unemployment was high, and well-educated graduates suffered from the problem of "over education," unable to find jobs comparable to their experience and training (Ackerman & Clark, 1995). In addition to the economic situation, the inconsistencies of Fidel Castro's government caused many Cubans to become disenchanted. The harsh economic conditions and political instability occurring in the 1990s caused tremendous frustration among the Cuban population. The notorious Malecón riot that broke out on August 5, 1994, when outraged Cubans gathered and broke store windows, is an example of the extent of unrest that Cubans were experiencing at the time. Conflicts between the Cuban government and citizens, culminating in riots, characterized the period leading to the Balsero Crisis in 1994.[127]

In response to these conditions, discontented Cubans sought to escape Cuba. They set out en masse for Miami in *balsas*, or homemade rafts, which were made of various kinds of scrap material and inner tubes (Ackerman & Clark, 1995). These rafts were crafted with great ingenuity and creativity; however, trusting the safety of these

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[126] See Louis Pérez (1995) for a more complete discussion of the impact of the Special Period on the Cuban economy.

[127] See Ackerman and Clark (1995) for a detailed discussion of the Balseros who arrived before and after the crisis.

balsas in the unpredictable sea was a dangerous endeavor. At first, the Cuban Navy pursued those leaving the island. However, as the numbers of rafts increased due to the growing tensions between Cuban citizens and the government, the Cuban government decreed, on August 12, that it would no longer try to stop those attempting to leave in a raft or other vessel; the dissenting voices against Cuba's regime could be exported to the United States (Nackerud, Springer, Larrison, & Issac, 1999). After the announcement, the number of people setting off in *balsas* jumped significantly; in January of 1994 the U.S. Coast Guard rescued 248 people, in July the number of rescues was 1,010, and by August the number of people rescued shot up to 21,300 (Ackerman & Clark, 1995).

Previously, Cubans setting sail for the United States were assured they would find asylum because of the 1966 Cuban Refugee Adjustment Act. But on August 18, in a historic move, President Bill Clinton announced that Cuban refugees found at sea would no longer be brought to the United States, and ordered 12 Navy and Coast Guard vessels to patrol the seas and transport refugees back to Cuba (Fernández, 2000). Those Cubans who did make it to U.S. shores would be sent immediately to the Krome Detention Center in Miami for processing or a hearing, but Cubans caught at sea would be sent to the Guantánamo air force base or "safe havens" in other countries (Henken, 2005). Cubans held in Guantánamo, Clinton decreed, would be held there indefinitely (Greenhill, 2002). The quick action of the Clinton government halted the exodus by September 13. With the change in policy, the U.S. began to employ punitive measures never before used against Cubans.

The Balseros who were arriving in the United States in 1994 were disproportionately young; 64% were men and 36% were women. Fewer were black or

mulattoes than during Mariel, but at 8.3%, the percentage of blacks who came as Balseros was still more than double the amount of blacks than came as part of the pre-1980 exodus (3.1%) (Ackerman & Clark, 1995). The Balseros generally had few relatives in the United States, and were sponsored by friends, many of who were also recent arrivals (since 1980). Of the Balseros who were captured by the coast guard and taken directly to Guantánamo, 83% were young adult males. According to data from a survey administered in the camps between July and August 1995, 18.5% self-identified as black, and 12.1% as mestizo.[128] This percentage, Ackerman and Clark note, was "a considerable increase of Afro-Cubans over the *Balseros* who entered the U.S. directly [*emphasis theirs*]" (1995, p. 28). The authors could not determine the reason for this difference, but speculated that Afro-Cubans were more likely to leave Cuba when government sanctions were lifted. Regardless of the exact reason, it appears Guantánamo became a warehouse for the detention and surveillance of black bodies, just as before the Balsero Crisis it had held immigrants from Haiti.

Beginning August 26 and ending September 9, the United States and Cuba entered into historic meetings to negotiate migration policy. As a result, Cuba agreed to encourage Cubans to stay in Cuba and promised to receive the repatriated Cubans with no threat of reprisal. In turn, the United States agreed it would try and persuade Cubans at Guantánamo to return to Cuba and apply for U.S. citizenship through legal means (Soderlund, 2003). The most important U.S. policy change, according to Henken, was that the United States promised to "treat the 20,000 legal immigrant limit as a quota to be

[128] Ackerman and Clark use the term "mestizo" rather than the more commonly used "mullato, /mulata/o."

filled each year" (2005, p. 399–400).[129] In addition, thousands of Cubans already on the waiting list for visas at the time would immediately receive them. In May of the following year (1995), President Clinton loosened his stance on the Guantánamo refugees and agreed to begin to gradually allow them into the country over the next nine months, but his hard-line against immigration directly from Cuba remained. Unless Cubans seeking refuge made it directly to U.S. soil on their own, any Cubans caught at sea would be taken back to Cuba (Henken, 2005).

Researchers speculate several reasons for Clinton's unexpected move. Nackerud and colleagues argue that an overarching reason for the policy change was Cuba's diminished importance to U.S. interests (Nackerud et al., 1999, p. 186). The United States historically has had great stakes in its relations with Cuba: economic interests were strong in the early 1800s to mid-1900s when Cuba was dependant on the United States for trade. The United States occupied Cuba between 1898 (after Cuba's war of independence from Spain) and 1902. Later, while supporting the Batista regime in the mid 20th century, it held some political control over Cuba (Soderlund, 2003). Then the United States was very invested in the fight against Castro during the Cold War. But by 1994, when the Cold War was over and the Soviet Union was no longer a looming threat, Cuba was less of a concern. In the early 1990s, under George Bush Sr.'s leadership, the United States had moved on to the war in Iraq and a focus on the Middle East. By September 1994, under Clinton, the United States was gearing up to invade Haiti and reinstate the ousted leader, Jean Bertrand Aristide.

[129] Also see Grenier & Pérez (2003).

Another important motivating factor for the harder stance was Clinton's desire to avoid "another Mariel." Clinton had directly experienced the political cost of not appeasing the public's fears of Cuban immigrants when he was governor of Arkansas. His welcoming of Mariels to Fort Chaffee and his responses to the Fort Chaffee riot cost him re-election (Henken, 2005). As President, he could not ignore the fact that although mainstream media generally depicted the Balseros positively (Ackerman, 1996; Soderlund, 2003), public sentiments opposing the newcomers were reported in major news media such as the *New York Times, Time* magazine, and *Newsweek.* These media entities framed the Balseros as a potential crisis to be avoided, focusing on the record-setting numbers that arrived in August 1994. On September 5, *Time* magazine took an uncharacteristically harsh posture against the newcomers in a cover article titled "Cubans Go Home" (Masud-Piloto, 1995, p. 29–38). Another factor to be taken into consideration was the fact that the striking impact of Mariel was still being felt in Miami. The local *Miami Herald* had been bracing for a new exodus, printing repeated interviews with sociologists and political scientists to provide "'migration forecasts': analyses of social and economic conditions in Cuba that might foster another migration" (García, 1996, p. 78). As the Balsero Crisis began, the *Miami Herald* reflected local fears with titles such as "We won't allow another Mariel" (August 19, 1994, A1, quoted in Masud-Piloto, 1995). Miami Governor Lawton Chiles was also very vocal about his support for a harder line on Cuban immigration. Because of the negative impact of Mariel, the Clinton government sought to appease public fears about another major "invasion" (Masud-Piloto, 1995).

Other political scientists maintain Clinton's new policy was also a response to the Congressional Black Caucus' accusations of discrimination against Haitians (Vanderbush & Haney, 1999). Clinton actively developed strong relations with his African American constituency after they played an essential role in electing him president in 1992; 82% of Blacks voted for him. He maintained a high approval rating among African Americans throughout his presidency; it was even at 90% during his impeachment. Clinton leaned on Black leaders for advice and recognized that he owed much of his success to the Black community. Because African Americans were very vocal in their support of Haiti and Haitian immigrants, Clinton's policy change, which would treat Haitians and Cubans more equally, and his decision to invade Haiti, were viewed as positive moves to attend to the African American voices that had been largely ignored by past presidents (Girard, 1994).

As the Balsero Crisis was getting underway in August 1994, the United States was also gearing up to invade Haiti. Political unrest and poverty in Haiti had reached stunning proportions, causing some Haitians to leave on rafts for the United States. During the previous Bush administration in 1991, a coup in Haiti took out the U.S.-backed Jean Bertrand Aristide, and in 1994 Clinton made moves to intervene and restore the ousted leader with a military invasion of Haiti. Congress and the general public disagreed with the plan, not seeing Haiti as a priority. Nevertheless, Clinton moved forward to please his African American constituency, to boost his personal and foreign policy credibility, and to stave off a mass exodus from Haiti (Girard, 1994).[130] The

[130] On September 19, 1994, US troops went to Haiti but the conflict was ultimately resolved without war, and Aristide was successfully reinstated to power through a deal negotiated by Jimmy Carter, Colin Powell, and others. See Girard (2004) for a more detailed discussion of these events.

impending invasion of Haiti topped the news in 1994; thus, the Balseros did not come to the media's full attention until after Clinton's immigration policy change (Soderlund 2003).

The negative evaluation of Clinton's foreign policy was reflected in the public stance toward the Balsero Crisis and in the sympathetic reporting of the Balseros in the media. In one study of TV coverage of the Balsero Crisis, Walter Soderlund (2003) found that the larger English-language TV network news stations were negative toward Clinton and sympathetic to the Balseros. The study analyzed news coverage (a total of 89 news stories containing 41 news segments) between the dates of August 12 and September 13, when the crisis ended. A textual analysis was conducted, focusing on the language used by sources, reporters, and anchors to describe and evaluate President Clinton, the U.S. government, Castro, the Cuban government, and the Balseros. The responses were coded as favorable, neutral/ambiguous, or unfavorable. Two frames dominated the coverage: U.S./Cuba foreign-policy decision making (64%); and human interest concerns about the rafters and their detention (47%). The depiction of human suffering, human risk, frustration, and tragedy was the primary lens through which the crisis was viewed in pictures and video footage. Most of the evaluative discourses were about the U.S. and Cuban governments and their policies, with neither the U.S. government nor the Cuban government portrayed favorably (although the U.S. government was constructed somewhat more positively than the Cuban government). Rarely did the news discourses evaluate the Balseros themselves, but their evaluative language focused on the Balseros' suffering and was highly favorable toward them, with 50% positive, 46% neutral, and 4% negative comments (Soderlund, 2003). Hence,

despite the fears projected in early media stories and in the local African American and Anglo communities, scholars agree that overall, the public, both political parties and the media, soundly criticized Clinton's new "Wet foot, dry foot" immigration policy.

Miami's *El Nuevo Herald*, which by 1994 had become more accepted as the voice of Cuban Americans (Soruco, 1996), also depicted Balseros positively. In 1987, *El Herald* became independent of the *Miami Herald,* with a separate staff and editor, and changed its name to *El Nuevo Herald*. A Cuban American, Roberto Suarez, became the paper's editor, and the journalists were almost exclusively Cuban (Soruco, 1996; Portes & Stepick, 1993). Although the paper was still owned by the Knight-Ridder Corporation, the move to independence from the English language paper allowed a more prominent Cuban voice and identity of the paper. Under the editorship of Suarez, *El Nuevo Herald* grew to a daily circulation of over 100,000 by 1990, and continued to be the most widely read Spanish-language paper in Miami (Soruco, 1996). *El Nuevo Herald* was a primary source for news about the local Miami area, Cuba, and Latin America.

The paper captured the reactions of members of the Cuban American community, who, not surprisingly, were angered by Clinton's policy changes. Miami Cubans staged mass protests, and rallied to support the Balseros. In an effort to appease the Cuban American community, on August 20 Clinton requested a meeting with Miami leaders, including the influential Jorge Mas Canosa, the leader of the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF). In the meeting, Clinton promised to further strengthen the embargo against Cuba in exchange for support of his new policy (Henken, 2005). The President was able to appease some Cubans with these agreements, but others lamented the fact that repatriation was now an option, and that refugees found at sea would not be

immediately brought to the United States. *El Nuevo Herald* functioned as a sounding board for frustrated Cuban Americans and a space for dialogue about the implications of the new policy.

El Nuevo Herald **Coverage**

To investigate the discursive framing of the Balseros and the crisis in *El Nuevo Herald*, I searched for the key word "Balsero" in the online database of *El Nuevo Herald* between the dates of July 13, 1994, and December 31, 1994, to capture the discourses immediately leading up to the crisis, the reporting of the crisis, and the aftermath.[131] The term "Balsero" was the common word used within the media to describe the refugees who arrived on rafts, and thus a search for this word was most likely to yield stories about the refugees fleeing Cuba at the time. Of those articles, I counted only those stories dealing with the Balseros in the United States, Cuba, and Guantánamo, leaving out stories reporting on their condition in other resettlement countries such as Panama, the Caiman Islands, and Spain. Stories that made only passing reference to the Balseros were also excluded, yielding 319 articles. To determine how/if Afro-Cubans came into conversations about the crisis, I also conducted a search for the key words "*negro/a*," "*mulato/*a," and "*afrocubana/o*" within the Balsero articles. After eliminating articles with a non-racial use of these terms, the search yielded only 5 articles; three made reference to Afro-Cuban gods to which Balseros prayed for safe journey, and the other

[131] The online database allows searches for articles from 1982 to the present. *El Herald* before 1982 is currently not available online.

two discussed discrimination experienced by Afro-Cubans.[132] The overall tone of the articles and the most prevalent themes regarding the reception of the Balseros by the established Cuban community were identified.

As demonstrated in chapter 1, in 1980 the incoming Mariels were depicted in *El Herald* as criminals through many negative news stories, but only six stories about the Balseros have a negative tone. The overwhelming majority of articles indicate full support of the Balseros by the Cuban American community. The bulk of the reporting on the Balsero crisis focuses on U.S./Cuba foreign policy decision making, and on human interest concerns about the rafters and their detention (a finding identical to that described in Soderlund's (2003) study of TV news coverage). Rather than viewing Clinton's policy changes as a positive way to relieve the pressures on the local and federal government that new immigrants could pose, as they might have been framed in the *Miami Herald* and *El Herald* in 1980, the policy changes are discussed almost exclusively in terms of their negative effects on the Balseros. Here, the reports on the numbers arriving are not intended to create anxiety, but to emphasize the desperation of large numbers of Cuba's citizens, and to rally the community to help the newcomers. The article themes are subsumed in three categories: 1) Positive coverage, which includes human interest articles with a sympathetic focus, and reports on community efforts to help newcomers; 2) Neutral coverage, articles about U.S./Cuba foreign policy and decision making, and reports on dramatic numbers; and 3) Negative coverage, articles containing negative depictions of the Balseros or the local consequences. Positive articles accounted for 52%

[132] The database does not include pictures, therefore it could not be determined whether the paper included black Cubans in photos.

of the coverage; 47% were neutral, and 3% were negative.[133] The next section will present my analysis of *El Nuevo Herald*'s reports on the Balseros, beginning with a discussion of the two predominant themes in the supportive reporting on the Balseros: human interest articles or stories providing a sympathetic focus on specific individuals' lives; and stories reporting on community efforts to help the newcomers. I then focus on negative coverage, followed by a discussion of articles about the impact of the events on the Cuban image, and of articles giving voice to Afro-Cubans.

Human Interest: High Stakes at Sea and Child Suffering

> Ni la probable muerte en el Estrecho de la Florida, ni un futuro incierto en campamentos en la base naval, amedrentaron a los cubanos. Se repite el sentimiento general de un pueblo. "Es preferible morir en el mar o ir a cualquier otro lugar que vivir en la cárcel que es Cuba." Y siguen llegando balseros.
>
> [Not even the possibility of death in the Florida straits nor an uncertain fate in the refugee naval base daunted the Cubans. A nation's general sentiment is repeated. "It is preferable to die at sea or end up someplace else than in the prison that is Cuba." And the rafters continue arriving.][134]

The dramatic retelling of the exodus in the news articles and editorials in *El Nuevo Herald* depict the Balseros as sympathetic and courageous figures who braved great dangers to escape Cuba, and illustrate the pain and suffering the Balseros endured as they set out on the high seas. Human interest stories also describe the separation of family members, the anguish of the search for their relatives, and the joys of family reunification. Such coverage was welcome because it portrayed Castro's regime as so horrid that Cubans would risk all to come to the United States, a stance which corroborated the exile community's negative evaluation of Cuba's regime. For instance, one editorial's sympathetic stance opens with this vivid description: "En su afán por

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[133] Numbers do not add to 100% due to some overlap in the positive and neutral categories.
[134] Roberto Suarez, ed., September 4, 1994, Cuba: Peligro en la orilla, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. A22.

escapar de la represión y el hambre, la gigantesca ola de refugiados que vienen en balsas y pequeñas embarcaciones desde Cuba podría enfrentarse a la ira de la naturaleza [In their zeal to escape repression and hunger, the gigantic wave of refugees in inner tubes and small vessels departing from Cuba could be faced with the wrath of nature]." [135] In a similarly dramatic news story, a woman who lost her son at sea describes his intense desire to come to the United Status: " 'La pasión de él era Estados Unidos.…Mas de una vez me dijo que prefería que se lo comiera un tiburón americano porque en Cuba había uno que se lo estaba comiendo lentamente' ['The United States was his passion,' said Rosales. 'More than once he told me that he preferred to be eaten by an American shark because in Cuba there was one that was devouring him slowly']."[136] By painting such detailed pictures of the dangers faced by Balseros and contrasting them to whatever dangers or mistreatment they might encounter in the United States as preferable to Castro's regime, the stories about the Balsero Crisis firmly claim the Balseros as the welcome compatriots of the Cuban exile community, and reaffirm the idea that the United States continues to serve as a place of refuge for Cuban immigrants.

In addition to the dramatic retelling of events, the newspaper invokes even more sympathy by focusing specifically on the children involved in the crisis. For example, "Cuba se desangra en cada balsa [With every raft that leaves, Cuba is bled dry]" describes the plight of an eight-year-old child who was the only one in his group to survive the voyage to freedom; his parents sacrificed themselves to save his life:

> El lunes, un niño de ocho anos, llamado Daniel Bussot, fue el único sobreviviente de un barco en que viajaban seis personas. Exactamente antes de que el niño viera como una tormenta arrojaba a los otros en medio de las olas, su

[135] Roberto Suarez, ed., September 4, 1994, Cuba: Peligro en la orilla, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. A22.
[136] Cynthia Corzo, November 5, 1994, Llega de cuba madre de balsero ahogado, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. B1.

> madre echó su único salvavidas alrededor de su cuerpo, y su padre lo puso en otro barco que los acompañó en el viaje. Ha habido otros niños como Daniel desde el éxodo definido como un Mariel. Pero sus historias, como las historias de los que nunca llegaron, han venido a nosotros en olas indefinidas y azarosas. Mientras tanto, a medida que los sobrevivientes se diluyen entre la población, nos aprestamos para un Mariel.
>
> [On Monday, an eight-year-old child by the name of Daniel Bussot was the only survivor of a vessel on which six persons traveled. Moments before the child witnessed the way in which a storm spilled the others into the sea, his mother placed her only life vest around his body, and his father placed him on the other accompanying boat. There have been other children like Daniel since the exodus defined as another "Mariel." But their stories, like the tales of those arriving, have come to us in undefined and impacting waves. Meanwhile, as the survivors blend in with the population, we prepare for another Mariel.][137]

The story uses the word "Mariel" in reference to the fact that the Balsero Crisis was called "another Mariel," and the Cuban community was advised to prepare for it. The connotation of "Mariel" here is not negative, as is often the case. Instead, the language describing the sacrifices of the boy's parents to save his life invoke sympathy, which could encourage the community to mobilize to help the newcomers as they did during Mariel.

Another news report, "Fugitivos de Cuba afirman hubo tiroteo al dejar Mariel [Fugitives from Cuba Confirm Shootout when Leaving Mariel]," tells the story of a child and her mother who arrived from Cuba on a raft and illustrates the contrast between the poverty of Cuba and the prosperity of the United States:

> Bravo y su hija Zoila, de dos años, fueron llevadas al hospital Lower Florida Keys Health System para que la niña recibiera atención, por una pequeña herida que se hizo en la cabeza a bordo del buque Monhegan de los guardacostas. Ante varios periodistas, la niña, intranquila y hambrienta, le dijo: "Mama, leche." Por habito, su madre inmediatamente respondió: "No hay leche." Pero Arturo Cobo, director del Hogar de Tránsito para Refugiados Cubanos, cerca de Cayo Hueso, interrumpió: "Sí, hay leche. Hay leche en abundancia."

[137] Liz Balmaseda, August 17, 1994, Cuba se desangra en cada balsa, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. B1.

> [Bravo and her two-year old daughter, were taken to the hospital, Lower Florida Keys Health System, so that the child could receive medical attention. Aboard the Coast Guard vessel, the Monhegan, she suffered a small wound to the head. In front of various members of the press, the child, restless and hungry, said: "Mommy, milk." Out of habit, her mother responded: "There is no milk." But, Arturo Cobo, director of the Transit Home for Cuban Refugees, near Key West, interrupted: "Yes, there is milk. There is milk in abundance.][138]

The image of the mother from Cuba finally being able to ease her child's hunger in the United States, where "there is milk in abundance," offers a heartwarming portrait of the United States as a safe place for children and indicts Cuba for its abuses of the most vulnerable of its population.

The plight of children was also used to demonstrate the inhumanity of Clinton's policies. In one news story, a spokesperson for the Valladares Foundation, an organization that helped the Balseros, argues the Clinton government was using children as sacrificial lambs: "'Eso es criminal,' dijo Valladares. 'Están utilizando (el tratamiento) de esos niños para desalentar a la gente para que no salgan de Cuba. [That is criminal," said Valladares. "They are using (the treatment of) these children to discourage others from leaving Cuba]."[139] It is noteworthy that the governments of the United States and Cuba are criticized for the treatment of children but the children's parents are not indicted for child abuse for risking their children's lives at sea. Instead, they are depicted as people who should be praised for saving their children from a worse fate, life in Cuba.

In later months, news stories continue the theme of sympathy in reports focusing specifically on the plight of the Cubans held in Guantánamo, advancing a harsher view of the United States and the new policy change. The horrors of Guantánamo were depicted

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[138] Ana Santiago, Ivan Roman, and Francisco García Azuero, August 11, 1994, Fugitivos de cuba afirman hubo tiroteo al dejar Mariel, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. A1.
[139] No regresa a la base de Guantánamo niño refugiado, September 29, 1994, *El Nuevo Herald*.

in numerous stories about the heat, sickness, shortages of food and supplies, and unmet needs of the old people and children being held there, as illustrated in this lead sentence: "El calor y la polvareda de los campamentos en Guantánamo terminaron hoy para 63 refugiados cubanos que llegaron a la Base Aérea de Homestead en el segundo viaje de una serie que liberará del cautiverio a cerca de 400 balseros todavía retenidos allá. ["The heat and dust of the Guantánamo camps ended today for 63 Cuban refugees who arrived at Homestead Air Forces Base on the second trip, in a series of trips, that will free nearly 400 rafters still held over there."][140] In another story, once again the plight of children is underscored, by emphasizing the fact that Guantánamo is no place for children. In the last line, a doctor held there reports: "Esta es una base militar. Aquí hay medicinas para emergencias de guerra, no para niños. ["This is a military base. Here we have medication for war-related emergencies, not for children.]"[141] The sympathy of the stories is driven home in the lead or closing sentences. With such opening and closing strategies, such articles in *El Nuevo Herald* lament the new policy's adverse effects on the lives of the refugees, and makes a strong statement against the United States' decision to hold Cuban Balseros on Guantánamo. Thus, the aspect of human suffering is the primary trope used to encourage sympathy and critique.

Other stories criticize the new policy change as unjust and rally the support of the Cuban American community by pointing to the good character of the detainees in Guantánamo. The very act of holding the Balseros at a military base was viewed as an insult because it suggests that they are criminals, not people pursuing freedom:

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[140] Jorge Dávila Miguel, November 11, 1994, Llega a la libertad segundo grupo de Guantánamo, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. B1.
[141] Agencia Reuter, November 5, 1994, Profesionales crean "incipiente democracia" en Guantánamo, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. A12.

> Tiene que resonarnos hoy la campana para despertarnos ante la agonía de los miles de balseros que se lanzaron a la mar y que hoy están retenidos en la Base Naval de Guantánamo o en Panamá. El exilio, con su fuerza numérica y su influencia, tiene que hacer sentir su peso en favor de esos hermanos sometidos a un cautiverio inhumano que no merecen porque no son delincuentes; son hombres, mujeres y niños que se arriesgaron para buscar la libertad.
>
> [The wake-up call needs to be sounded loudly in face of the agony of thousands of rafters who throw themselves into the sea and who today are held at Guantánamo Naval Base or in Panama. The exile community, with its force in numbers and influence, has to make its presence felt in favor of those brothers subjugated to an inhumane confinement they don't deserve because they are not criminals; they're men, women, and children who risked their lives in the pursuit of liberty.][142]

The implication here is that if the Balseros were truly criminals they might deserve exclusion, but they only seek freedom, which does not merit punishment. The stark difference between the image of the Balseros and the criminal is driven home here and in other stories that bring to the attention of the public that many of the 20,000 adults held in Guantánamo had university degrees; they represented professionals, including doctors, teachers, sculptors, artists, engineers, carpenters, dancers, electricians, and plumbers, i.e, regular people with education and skills.[143] The sympathy expressed in *El Nuevo Herald* for the "brothers and sisters" of the Cuban American community who were being mistreated in Guantánamo expressed the Cuban American disappointment and anger that the worthy Balsero immigrants were being wrongly excluded from the United States and denied access to the American dream/immigrant success story.

Community Aid: "Estás ayudando por lo menos los tuyos"

> "Estoy cansada, muy cansada," dijo una empleada de la agencia, de 57 años, que no quiso dar su nombre, mientras salía hacia su casa al mediodía del jueves

[142] Gustavo Peña, October 10, 1994, Diez de octubre en la vorágine, *El Nuevo Herald,* p. A10.
[143] Joanne Cavanaugh, November 16, 1994, Balseros se ayudan mutuamente tras el paso de Gordon, *El Nuevo Herald,* p. A8.

> después de una agotadora jornada. La mujer dijo que había comenzado a trabajar el miércoles a las 8 a.m., día que procesaron a 225 balseros, sin regresar a su casa. El jueves esperaban procesar a un número mayor de refugiados. Pero no se quejó. "Es bonito trabajar en esto", dijo la mujer. "Estás ayudando por lo menos a los tuyos."
>
> ["I am tired, very tired," a 57 year-old employee, who declined to give her name, said as she walked home at noon on Thursday after a tiring workday. The woman said that she began to work on Wednesday at 8 a.m., the day that 225 rafters were processed, without going home. On Thursday, a larger number of refugees were to be processed. But, she did not complain. "It's lovely to do this work," she said. "At least you are helping your own kind."][144]

With the expression "at least you are helping your own," a Cuban American service agency employee working to help incoming Balseros settle in Miami poignantly captures the message emanating from articles on Cuban American efforts to support the Balseros. The stories reveal that members of various segments of the Cuban American community helped the Balseros, including high profile Cuban American stars, singers, athletes, politicians and ordinary citizens, and children.

For instance, in "Misivas de niños escolares infunden esperanza a los refugiados [Schoolchildren's Messages Encourage Hope in Refugees]," Cuban American kids show their support by drawing pictures for the refugees at Guantánamo:

> Algunos estudiantes dibujaron pequeñas embarcaciones, símbolos de paz o banderas estadounidenses y cubanas. Otro, hizo un mapa con la distancia de La Habana a Miami. Otro, dibujó rostros felices y citó versos de una popular canción de Willy Chirino: "Ya vienen llegando". Un niño incluso dibujó a Fidel Castro, dentro de un círculo atravesado por una raya, a la manera de la señal de "no", hecha famosa por la película Ghostbusters.
>
> [Some students drew small vessels, peace symbols, or American and Cuban flags. Another made a map showing the distance between Havana and Miami. Another drew happy faces and cited verses from a popular song by Willy Chirino: "And, still they are arriving." One child, specifically, drew Fidel Castro,

[144] Francisco García Azuero and Ivan Roman, August 19, 1994, Agencias tramitan casos de cientos de refugiados, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. B1.

> within a circle intersected by a line, in the style of the "no" icon, made popular by the film, *Ghostbusters*.][145]

Through the description of the pictures drawn by the youngest members of the exile community, the article elucidates several things that promote Cuban American unity—a shared disdain for Fidel Castro, the idea that Cubans, regardless of immigration status, are part of a cohesive (family) unit, and the music of popular Cuban American singer Willie Chirino. In this story and others illustrating the high level of Cuban American involvement in rallying to the Balseros' cause, the newspaper reinforces the view that the new immigration policy and the plight of the Balseros was, and should be, the concern of every Cuban American. *El Nuevo Herald* proved its own concern by honoring community activists for their support of the newcomers.[146] Reports on the tireless efforts of Cuban Americans from all walks of life portray a Cuban community unified in their welcome of the Balseros.

However, despite the fact that the Balseros are depicted as worthy of help simply because they are fellow Cubans, an underlying message in the articles is that this worthiness depends on the extent to which the newcomers conform to moral notions of proper citizenship. This is evident in the articles described earlier that eschew a criminal image, and in those that argue the Balseros were potential assets to the United States. For instance, a September 14 news story describing the visit of the Cuban American director of Radio Martí to Guantánamo, to provide aid, highlights the good character of the refugees: "'Salí muy impresionado con todos los cubanos que conocí…Eran gente decente, trabajadora, honesta, muchísimos profesionales y gente joven. [I was highly

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[145] Misivas de niños escolares infunden esperanza a los refugiados, September 4, 1994, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. B3.
[146] *Herald* galardona a 6 activistas de la comunidad, September 30, 1994, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. B1.

impressed with all of the Cubans I met…They were decent, hard working, and honest people, many professionals and young people.]'"[147] The emphasis on the moral character of the Balseros, in addition to their skills, is the primary argument validating the worthiness of the Balseros for U.S. citizenship.

Similarly, a story about how a Balsero directly benefited from the support of the Cuban American community suggests that the Balseros would not be a liability for the United States because of their bootstrap mentality. A recently arrived Balsero, Mojena, highlights how he fits the U.S. ideal for citizenship: "'No cogí ayuda ni nada cuando llegué. Ni Medicaid, ni nada,' afirmó Mojena, que es de Marianao, suburbio de La Habana. 'Si uno se mueve y camina, uno encuentra trabajo, porque aquí trabajo hay. Uno tiene que empezar poquito a poco con cualquier cosa en lo que uno se supera. ['After arriving, I did not take benefits or anything. Not Medicaid or anything else,' confirmed Mojena, who is from Mariano, a suburb of Havana. 'If one looks around, one finds work because here there are jobs to be found. One has to begin little by little, doing anything while you move ahead.']"[148] Ironically, Mojena boasts that he did not need social services, but the article focuses on how he benefited from the intense mobilization of Cuban American organizations on behalf of the Balseros. He could avoid requesting welfare and Medicaid because, unlike other poor immigrants or minorities without U.S. based networks, he could draw resources and support from the strong Cuban American enclave and their network of community aid. Nevertheless, his statements about coming to the United States and starting from the bottom without public aid affirm the idea of the

[147] Cubano a alto cargo civil en base de Guantánamo, September 14, 1994, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. A7.
[148] "Red" ayuda a balserosa conseguir trabajo, September 1, 1994, *El Nuevo Herald*, B1.

good immigrant who arrives willing to work at anything in order to succeed. Hence, this and other supportive articles invoke a morality frame by implying that the Balseros are the right "type" of immigrants, deserving of U.S. asylum. This "type" not only shares the moral characteristics that can ensure upward mobility, they are willing to suffer to become American.

Negative Coverage

The small number of articles depicting the Balseros negatively, (3%), emphasizes the overwhelming supportive stance of the paper. Yet the language in these few articles confirms that lingering fears associated with Mariel had not dissipated. The overwhelming association of Mariels with crime, and fears about the economic impact of another wave of mass immigration, colored the local reception of the Balseros. In a story which ran early on (August 19), a woman described as "a Cuban resident of Hialeah" states, "Esto es un mini Mariel que ya comenzó [This is a mini Mariel that already began]." A 25-year-old Cuban man who also lived in Hialeah agreed and spelled out the danger: "Va a pasar lo mismo que pasó en 1980: problemas de crimen… ["The same thing that happened in 1980 will happen again: an increase in crime…]."[149] The article makes clear that other Hialeah residents were not in agreement with this idea, but in another article, a comparable sentiment was expressed by representatives from the private sector who warned that the newcomers could be even more of a burden on the local government than the Mariels had been:

[149] María A. Morales, August 19, 1994, Ansiedad cunde en las calles de pequeña Habana, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. B1.

> También han dicho que los refugiados que llegan no tienen tanta educación como los que arribaron en 1980 por el puente marítimo Mariel-Cayo Hueso, lo que permitió que la economía local se recuperara al cabo de unos pocos años. Los nuevos refugiados acabarán trabajando en empleos de bajos salarios y necesitarán más ayuda pública.
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> ["[Representatives from the private sector] have also said that the refugees currently arriving are not as educated as the ones who arrived in 1980 through the Mariel-Key West sea-lane, which permitted the local economy to recover in a matter of years. The new lot of refugees will end up working in low wage jobs and will need more public assistance."][150]

It is noteworthy that the Balseros are described here as less educated than the Mariels, and therefore more likely to need public assistance, though in fact, Cubans arriving in the U.S. after 1990 were likely to be more educated than the Mariels, and even slightly more than the pre- 1980 "Golden Exiles" (see table 3.1). The contradictory depiction of the Mariels and the Balseros here is puzzling. These comments suggest that had the Balsero crisis not been averted by the government's decision to refuse them entry, opinions about the impact of the newcomers might have been much less positive overall.

Table 3.1: Educational attainment of Cubans age 25 and older by year of entry into the United States. *Source: Pew Hispanic Center Factsheet (2006, p. 12).*

Year of entry into U.S.	**9th Grade Or Less**	**9th-12th Grade**	**High School graduate**	**College Graduate**
Before 1980	18%	10%	48%	24%
Between 1980 and 1990	25%	15%	47%	13%
After 1990	11%	14%	49%	26%

One reason why *El Nuevo Herald* may not have picked up on the "criminal" theme as it did during Mariel was because fewer Cubans actually made it to U.S. shores; thus, the perception of the threat they posed was lessened. Because the U.S. government took swift action to make the Balsero Crisis a more orderly one, and sent Balseros to

[150] Sector privado teme consecuencias del éxodo, September 2, 1994, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. B3.

Guantánamo and other detention centers rather than allowing them to walk freely on the streets of Miami, there was a greater sense of calm in the local community. As Kelly Greenhill observes, "Cubans leaving on rafts and boats and transporting them to Guantánamo quieted domestic discontent and made the crisis far less visible to the U.S. public, which lowered the domestic political costs of the crisis" (2002, p. 61). So, the fact that the Balseros were already detained allowed *El Nuevo Herald* and mainstream media the space to criticize the U.S. government for taking such severe action against innocent freedom seekers. In addition, the Balseros' detention provided reassurance that they would not "act up." The lack of dramatic events such as the Fort Chaffee riot which involved Mariels in 1980, which might be used to construct the Balseros as deviants, may also have allowed for a more favorable evaluation of the Balseros.

Consequently, almost no reports associate the Balseros with crime. Only one story suggests that there were criminals among the Balseros, and it does so by reinstating the stigma attached to Mariel, explaining that some of these criminals were former Mariels who had been deported and were now attempting re-entry:

> WLTV Canal 23 trasmitió el viernes entrevistas con cubanos en la base que están bajo "segregación administrativa" por conducta problemática. Entre ellos hay algunos que llegaron a Estados Unidos por primera vez durante el puente marítimo Mariel-Cayo Hueso en 1980. Fueron deportados tras haber sido declarados culpables de delitos en este país. Este verano, volvieron a intentar la entrada por balsa.
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> [On Friday, WLTV Channel 23 aired interviews with Cubans on the base who are under 'administrative segregation' as a result of misconduct. Among them are some that arrived in the United States initially during the Mariel-Key West boatlift in 1980. They were deported after being found guilty of crimes in this country. This summer, they once again attempted to return by raft.][151]

[151] Guarione Díaz fue mensajero de refugiados, October 29, 1994, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. A1.

By noting that the Balseros who were criminals were being held in Guantánamo, the story suggests that the threat is contained, but that greater efforts should be made to ensure that Mariel criminals could not re-enter. No mention is made of the race of the other criminals, and in general, news reports do not make it clear whether the fewer blacks among the Balseros, compared to the Mariels, also lessened their association with criminality. But Ackerman and Clark (1995) found that a disproportionate number of black Cubans were held in Guantánamo, when compared to those who went directly to the United States. Thus, to a greater extent than during Mariel, black Cubans were out of sight, and because they were grouped with the other unseen Balseros who were tragically denied access to the freedom of the United States, they benefited from the sympathy of a U.S. community that valued the idea of people risking all to escape a communist dictator to find democracy and freedom. In addition, that they were depicted as brave souls who fled Cuba voluntarily on homemade rafts, rather than being the criminals and antisocials *sent* by Castro during Mariel, enhanced their image as worthy asylum seekers.

The erosion of a Cuban American identity and connecting to "others"

Despite the Cuban community's support for Balseros, as reflected in *El Nuevo Herald*, the negative articles indicate that most non-Cuban Floridians were against Balseros. According to Stepick and colleagues, this "us against them" dichotomy may have helped solidify Cuban support for their compatriots (2003). A popular sentiment among Cuban Americans, expressed in *El Nuevo Herald,* was the idea that the United States had turned its back on the Cubans and their cause. The Cuban American community had historically relied on the United States to support their anti-Castro stance,

and to allow Cubans refugee status, but now that the Clinton administration had placed limitations on Cuban immigration, Cubans were being treated more like other immigrant groups. Consequently, the U.S. government, or more specifically, Clinton, was regarded as a traitor. As one Cuban American visitor to Guantánamo put it, "La política de Clinton le parece una falta de respeto a los cubanos. Clinton es un traicionero [Clinton's policies seem disrespectful to Cubans. Clinton is a traitor]." [152] Reports in *El Nuevo Herald* frame the United States' actions as a moral failure which privileged "national interests" over human lives.[153] Though Castro remains demonized, President Clinton is represented as a new enemy of the exile community. Targeting the U.S. government is a major departure from the discourses about American benevolence that circulated during Mariel. But the focus on Clinton and the view of the new policy as an aberration obscures the reality that Clinton's move was in line with a historical pattern of governmental decisions designed to satisfy U.S. imperialist needs.

The government's response to the Balsero Crisis, like the Mariel exodus fourteen year earlier, exposed the reality that Cubans were not exempt from being used as pawns of the United States. *El Nuevo Herald* articles that frame the Balseros in a positive light, even though critical of U.S. policy changes, still uphold the dominant ideals of the U.S. nation that promise inclusion. However, several articles reveal that the Cuban American community was being confronted with realities that challenged their "taken for granted" assumption that the United States would always honor their needs.

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[152] María A. Morales, Jannice Reyes, Ivan Roman, and Maydel, August 20, 1994, Freno a éxodo provoca furia y lagrimas [editorial], *El Nuevo Herald*, p. A1.
[153] Ramón Cotta, ed., October 5, 1994, El costo es moral, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. A10.

The theme that Cubans were not (or were no longer) exceptional is expounded in an editorial written in November, after Clinton's policy change. The author argues that Cuban Americans could no longer be accused of being "*una minoría mimada,*" or "a spoiled minority." The detention of the Balseros in Guantánamo, he argues, proves his point: "La reconcentración de balseros también borro de un plumazo otra expresión del mito: la creencia común de que la política estadounidense hacia La Habana se halla 'secuestrada' por los cubanos de Miami [In one swift stroke, the increased numbers of rafters also erased another expression of the myth: the common belief that the United States' policy toward Havana is held hostage by the Cubans in Miami]."[154] With the title "El año de la reconcentración [The year of Mass Concentration]," and the implication in the editorial that the detention of Cubans in Guantánamo could be likened to the containment of the Jews in Nazi concentration camps, the editorial is a powerful indictment of the United States' treatment of the Balseros.[155] The editorial writer contends that in fact, Cubans had never really been privileged because the United States' stance was the appropriate and just response to a "despotic regime." Further, he insists, the allegation that Cubans are a "spoiled minority" overlooks the fact that Cubans worked hard and sacrificed, and that their conservatism stems from their gratitude for the nation that took them in.

A news article written later than month laments the disappearance of the "special pact" between Cuban Americans and the United States. "Se desvanece el trato especial para los cubanos [Special Treatment of Cubans Dissipates]" (November 20) explores the

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[154] Daniel Mórcate, November 3, 1994, El año de la reconcentración, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. A16.
[155] Some members of Miami's Jewish community wrote to *El Nuevo Herald* speaking out against this comparison which was made in several articles.

implications of the new immigration policy for Cuban American identity, which was inextricably tied not only to the idea of exile and possible return to Cuba, but also to being American and "favored" in America. The article reads:

> El país que les había dado la bienvenida durante décadas cambió de actitud abruptamente este verano. Por primera vez, los balseros cubanos se veían interceptados en el mar por patrullas del Servicio Guardacostas, y trasladados a otro lugar. Desde Los Ángeles hasta El Paso, y Miami, con un fervor que algunos analistas dicen no haber visto desde los años 20, los norteamericanos están culpando a la inmigración desmedida de la erosión del nivel de vida en Estados Unidos. Y casi de la noche a la mañana, el pacto entre Washington y los cubanos anticastristas empezó a deshacerse. Del mismo modo que el drama de Cuba parece acercarse a un momento crítico, el lugar que ha absorbido a tantos inmigrantes cubanos parece estar cerrando sus puertas, su bolsillo y su corazón.
>
> [The country that had welcomed [the Cubans] for decades had an abrupt change in attitude this summer. For the first time, the Cuban rafters saw themselves intercepted at sea by the Coast Guard patrol, and transferred elsewhere. From Los Angeles to El Paso- and Miami- with a fervor, according to some analysts, not seen since the 1920s, Americans are faulting excessive immigration for the erosion of the quality of life in the United States. Almost overnight, the alliance between Washington and the anti-Castro Cubans began to unravel. In the same way that the drama in Cuba is reaching a critical stage, the nation that has taken in so many Cuban immigrants looks as if it's closing its doors, pockets, and heart].[156]

The author expresses the Cuban American community's disillusionment with the policy change which struck at the heart of exile identity, its special treatment. As he goes on to explain, "Suddenly, the official U.S. opinion viewed Cubans as no different from mere poor and hungry foreigners, including the Mexicans that dream of reaching California and the Haitians huddled in tents at Guantánamo [translation]."[157] Now lumped with other economic refugees, Cubans could no longer count on their image as the brave souls who fled communism for democracy to ensure their position atop the hierarchy of Latinos in the United States. Hence, the sympathetic framing of the Balseros in *El Nuevo*

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[156] Christopher Marquis, November 20, 1994, Se desvanece el trato especial para los cubanos, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. A1.
[157] Ibid.

Herald served as a strategy to preserve and bolster the former "Golden" identity in the face of a policy that equated Cubans with Mexicans illegally streaming across the border in California, and uneducated Haitians in crowded camps in Guantánamo. Accordingly, the Balsero Crisis forced the exile community to come to terms with the fact that they were perceived as no different from other immigrant populations in the United States, exposing the limited benefit of embracing whiteness and moral superiority.

Only a few stories in *El Nuevo Herald* compare the Balsero Crisis to the plight of Haitian migrants, although the latter were also setting out for the U.S. on rafts, and the limited discussion of Haitians underscores the distance between their experience and that of Cuban refugees. One article, "Listas 40,000 libras de donaciones para Guantánamo [40,000 Pounds of Donation Ready for Guantánamo]," reflects a similar concern for Haitian and Cuban detainees in Guantánamo:

> El miércoles, en un trabajo realizados en su mayoría por cubanos de Hialeah y afro americanos del noroeste de Miami y que se prolongó durante todo el día, fueron clasificadas y empacadas 40,000 libras de ropas donadas, zapatos y juguetes en un almacén de materiales para construir cercas. "Esto no es solo para los cubanos, sino también para los haitianos", dijo el cubano exiliado Oscar Torres, dueño del almacén. "Todos somos seres humanos".
>
> [On Wednesday, in a labor of love accomplished mostly by Hialeah Cubans and NE Miami African-Americans- and that lasted the whole day- 40,000 pounds of clothing, shoes, and toys stored in a cement warehouse- were catalogued and packed. "This is not only for Cubans but for Haitians," said Cuban exile Oscar Torres, owner of the warehouse. "We are all human beings."] [158]

The newspaper's report of the efforts of the Cubans and African Americans communities to work together is noteworthy given that for the most part, African Americans were represented in the local Miami newspapers as being concerned about the needs of Haitians, to the exclusion of Cubans, and Cuban American were depicted as concerned

[158] Listas 40,000 libras de donaciones para Guantánamo, September 8, 1994, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. A12.

with Cuban migrants, to the exclusion of Haitians. In this exemplary case, the group that packed 40,000 pounds of donations was organized by a Cuban exile who believed that "we are all humans," implying that ethnicity should not matter when distributing aid. This example of Cuban American and African American cooperation is rare, but it reveals the shared interests that could unite the two communities.

In contrast, another story linking Haitians and Cubans sets up an oppositional relationship by citing an Afro-Cuban Miami lawyer, William Allen. Allen argues that Haitians in 1994 were in a better position than Cubans because the United States planned military intervention in their country, which would allow Haitians to return, but was not moving to overthrow Castro:

> "La situación legal de los cubanos detenidos en la Base Naval de Guantánamo es diferente a la de los refugiados haitianos, y la solución al problema de los balseros está en la presión política que puedan ejercer miembros del exilio", dijo el abogado miamense William Allen. "Los haitianos tienen una esperanza realista de que el gobierno en su país va a cambiar", dijo Allen el miércoles en Coconut Grove ante una reunión del grupo internacional Mujeres por los Derechos Humanos, fundado en 1987 para defender a las víctimas de violaciones de los derechos humanos. "Los cubanos no tienen ninguna esperanza en este momento. Por eso, sus peticiones de asilo serían muy diferentes".
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> ["The legal situation of the Cubans held at the Guantánamo Naval Base is different than that of the Haitian refugees, and the solution to the rafters' dilemma lies in the political pressure that members of the exile community may exert," said Miami lawyer, William Allen. "Haitians have a realistic chance that the government of their country will change," Allen said on Wednesday, at Coconut Grove, before a meeting of the international organization, Women for Human Rights, founded in 1987 to defend victims of human rights violations. "At this moment, there is no hope for Cubans. That is why their asylum requests would be very different."][159]

As we shall see in the next section of this chapter, the position advanced in this article contrasts sharply with views expressed in the *Miami Times*, where Cubans are portrayed as having the advantage. Even in *El Nuevo Herald*, another article argues that Cubans

[159] Grupo femenino presiona por ayuda a balseros, September 15, 1994, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. B1.

had a better deal than Haitians because by mid-November, Cuban children held on Guantánamo were being allowed into the United States in response to humanitarian concerns. A member of the Miami Haitian community is quoted: "Todos los niños son iguales…Yo quisiera que soltaran a todos los niños de la base, no solo a los cubanos. ["All children everywhere are the same…I would like them to release all the children on the base, not just Cubans.]"[160] In the same article, activists for the Haitian cause claim Haitians were being punished because they did not have the same political influence as Cuban Americans, for racial as well as political reasons. A lawyer at a refugee center explains, "Creemos que es maravilloso que estén dejando entrar aqui a los cubanos", dijo él. "Nuestra querella es con la administración de Clinton, que cree que el color blanco de la Estatua de la Libertad no se aplica a los haitianos negros ["We think it's wonderful that Cubans are being allowed to come here," he said. "Our only complaint is with the Clinton Administration, which believes that the Statue of Liberty's whiteness does not apply to black Haitians]."[161] The lawyer takes the position voiced by many members of the African American community, that color was a major determinant of the (preferential) treatment of Cuban immigrants. The few articles that discuss the plight of both Cubans and Haitians show that, overall, the concerns of the Cuban, Haitian, and African Americans are viewed as being in opposition.

A focus on Afro-Cubans could potentially complicate the framing of Cuban, Haitian, and African Americans concerns as being in opposition. However, Afro-Cubans were the focus in only three stories. As mentioned earlier, although the percentage of

[160] Lizette Álvarez, November 17, 1994, Miami se prepara para recibir miles de balseros, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. A1.
[161] Ibid.

blacks among the Balseros was smaller than among the Mariels, it was still much higher than among the pre-1980 exiles. Still, no articles in this sample focus on the racial background of the Balseros as a group or make any racial distinction between this group and earlier waves. Two important articles containing the word "negro" cover discrimination as experienced by black Cubans, without specifying Balseros.

The first article is an op-editorial "A puerta cerrada," by Dora Amador, an award-winning journalist for *El Nuevo Herald* who self-identifies as a black Cuban; she addresses the response to one of two articles she wrote on black Cuban experiences with white Cuban discrimination in the United States. She comments on the negative reaction of the Cuban American community to this topic:

> Dos veces más he abordado el racismo cubano en mis escritos, en ambas he escuchado la misma objeción grotesca a que se toque ese tema: que crea divisionismo en el exilio, que le hace daño a la causa de Cuba, que Fidel Castro lo utiliza para sus propios fines, que no es el momento de hablar de eso—curiosamente nunca es el momento apropiado—que primero hay que liberar la patria, y después ya habrá tiempo de hablar de esas cosas, etcétera.
>
> [On two more occasions, I have taken on the issue of racism in my writings, on both I have met with the same despicable objections to bringing up this topic: that is fosters division in the exile community, that it hurts the Cuban cause, that Fidel Castro uses it for his own ends, that this is not the time to talk about this--interestingly enough, it is never the right time-- that first we have to free the motherland, and later there will be time to talk about such things, et cetera.][162]

The author takes a very strong stance against the excuses made by critics, arguing that now is the time to broach the issue of racism among Cubans to help unite the Cuban community. In conveying her disappointment with "los históricos," or the historic exiles, for discriminating against the Mariels, she chastises their ideology of "limpieza de sangre," or glorification of pure (white) blood, and contends that their negative reception

[162] Dora Amador, September 22, 1994, A puerta cerrada, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. A16.

of the Mariels in 1980 exposed a true but hidden picture of Miami. Amador's focus on the discrimination faced by black Cubans was a rare voice in *El Nuevo Herald*. She noted Cuban American resistance to discussions about racism between white and black Cubans, which explains why the topic of race was generally avoided in *El Nuevo Herald.* Notwithstanding her critique, it is clear that Amador's main concern is Cuban unity, which she argues can only occur when racial unity is achieved.

As the opinion piece develops, Amador shifts from a focus on black Cubans to the issue of Cuban and Haitian immigration. It is apparent in this discussion that despite her concerns about the stigmatization of blackness in the Cuban American community, she does not promote a pan-African connection between Haitians and Cubans. She compares the case of the Balseros to that of the Haitians and argues Haitians have a better deal than Cubans, and that African Americans have not shown any concern. In her view, "Somos hoy los mendigos y parias que todo un continente rechaza, los hacinados en campos de detención en cuya defensa no se ha alzado ni una sola voz anglo ni afroamericana ni latinoamericana." She ends with, "Hoy envidio a los Haitianos. Por lo menos en su país ya desembarcaron los marines. [Today, we are the beggars and pariahs that a whole continent rejects, those herded in detention camps in whose defense not one voice is raised- not by Anglos, Afro-Americans, or other Latin Americans." She ends with, "Today I am envious of the Haitians. At least in their country, the marines have landed.][163] Amador paints the Cuban community as being alone in their struggle because other Americans—Anglos and African Americans are silent. Alleging government discrimination against Cubans, her words are in sharp contrast to rhetoric

[163] Dora Amador, September 22, 1994, A puerta cerrada, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. A16.

expressed in *El Herald* during the Mariel exodus, when the United States was praised for its stance toward Cuba and the Cubans. Her words corroborate the opinions expressed by some members of the Cuban American community, and are in opposition to African American arguments in the *Miami Times* which insisted that Haitians were the ones being discriminated against, not the Cubans. In Amador's opinion, Cubans have been situated by "native" Americans within Miami's racial order as forever foreign. Her contention that Anglos and African Americans were not supportive of the Balseros and the Cuban community had some credibility, according to public opinion polls and as can be seen in the reading of the *Miami Times* presented below.

Amador recognizes the complexity of the racial issues affecting Miami but, although she addresses racism against black Cubans by white Cubans, she makes no connection between black Cubans, African Americans, and Haitians, as the *Miami Times* often did. Amador is concerned instead with the political conflicts between the United States and Cuba on the one hand and the United States and Haiti on the other, and she reaffirms the role of the United States as the arbiter of freedom and democracy, without acknowledging how her concerns may reflect the specificity of her (black) Cuban American subjectivity.

The second article that tackles the subject of racism in the Cuban American community further disrupts *El Nuevo Herald*'s general depiction of a singular Cuban voice by illustrating how black Cubans who are at times excluded from Cuban American-ness experience the exile identity differently. In "Cubanos negros afirman que sí son discriminados [Black Cubans Affirm They Experience Discrimination]," Francisco García Azuero reports on *La Asociación Tradicional Mambisa's* celebration of the

liberation of the slaves in Cuba, which occurred on October 10, 1868. The article quotes the president of this Cuban American organization who criticized other Cuban American organizations for not including blacks. He says, "Irónicamente, esta discriminación existe entre los líderes del exilio que elogian los méritos de la democracia, especialmente los que aspiran ser dirigentes en Cuba después de la caída de Fidel Castro. ["Ironically, this discrimination exists among the leaders of the exile community who praise the values of democracy, especially those who aspire to lead Cuba after the fall of Fidel Castro.]"[164] The leader of *La Asociación*'s sentiments are corroborated by Silvia Santana, an artist and president of *La Asociación Afro Latino Internacional*. She laments, "No tenemos imágen publica.…La poca imágen que se presenta es de que los negros somos brutos y que no sabemos hablar [We don't have a public image…the only image presented is that we blacks are uncouth and do not speak properly]." By pointing out the contradiction in the simultaneous celebration of democracy and the discrimination against blacks, the leaders quoted in this article cut at the heart of the Cuban American exile philosophy. The voices of black Cubans undermine the "happy" picture of the Cuban American family unified in their exaltation of the American ideals of freedom and democracy and anti-communism.

The rarity of articles touching racism against black Cubans, and their negative reception, reveal a silence surrounding the taboo topic of black Cuban experiences and race in general. To acknowledge race would undermine the ideals of U.S. democracy and expose how those ideals are used by some members of the Cuban American community

[164] Francisco García Azuero, October 10, 1994, Cubanos negros afirman que sí son discriminados, *El Nuevo Herald*, p. B1. The author seems to be referring to Jose Mas Canosa.

to conceal the uncomfortable hypocrisy that exists. The contradictions in the Cuban American community are linked to the lingering racist beliefs that existed among whites in Cuba, but they also suggest that alignment with the ideals of the U.S. nation, democracy, and freedom also involves the erasure of "race," or a denial of racism. Holding on to these beliefs requires turning a blind eye to the fact that the privileges that come with being American are conditional and are not given freely. The predominant depiction of the Balseros as the worthy suffering immigrant in *El Nuevo Herald* suggests that Miami's Cuban community was not blind to the conditions, and that they hoped that proving they had suffered and made ultimate sacrifices would guarantee their acceptance as Americans.

Miami Times **Coverage**

El Nuevo Herald's coverage of Balseros was dramatically different from *El Herald*'s treatment of Mariel, but the *Miami Times* included similar themes in their coverage of both migration waves. By 1994, Miami Cuban experiences may have been different, but the African American social and economic context in Miami was much the same, and this shaped the newspaper's frames. After having suffered through slavery and all the battles for civil rights, African Americans were finding that in 1994, they were still treated as unworthy citizens. The country was still reeling from the 1992 Los Angeles uprising, a response to the beating of Rodney King, an African American male, by four white police officers. The beatings and the subsequent riots were a reminder of the power of race and racism in U.S. society, and that suffering had not fully paid off for African Americans. Blacks had made some important gains by 1990, for instance, the

percentage completing high school rose from 51% in 1980 to 63% in 1990. But at the end of the 1980s, the unemployment rate among Blacks was at 13%, slightly *higher* than it was for blacks in 1979, and more than twice that of whites (5%). Due to economic recessions, the poverty rate had decreased only slightly between 1980 and 1990, from 29.9% to 29.5% (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1993). In the fourteen years between Mariel and Balsero, the economic situation for African Americans had not improved.

Looking specifically at Miami, by 1990 the population of blacks had become more ethnically diverse, due to increased immigration from the Caribbean. Native African Americans were in better jobs and were better educated than ever before, but Black business growth was far behind that of whites and Latinos. While many Blacks were making it into the middle class, the gap between poor and higher income Blacks was wide, and the lower income Blacks in Miami were the poorest in the country (Dunn, 1997). The median family income for African Americans was $13, 897, less than that of Anglos ($44, 092) and Latinos ($19, 801). While 18% of Anglo families and 23% of Latino families lived below the poverty line, 43% of African American families fell below it in 1990 (Martinez, 1997). Miami in the 1980s was torn apart by several urban conflicts, including Black uprisings against three incidents of police brutality against blacks, two of which involved Latino police officers (Portes & Stepick, 1993). Black concerns, expressed during the riots about racism, as well as the continuing interethnic conflict between Cubans and African Americans and concerns over poverty, would carry into the 1990s (Porter & Dunn, 1984; Portes & Stepick, 1993; Martinez, 1997). These matters provide the background context for the reporting in the *Miami Times* during the Balsero crisis.

A search for articles in the *Miami Times* in bound newspaper archives and on microfilm covering the Balsero Crisis and its aftermath between the dates of July 1, 1994 and December 31, 1994 yielded 22 articles. As in 1980, the paper dedicated much more space to the situation in Haiti than to the Balsero Crisis. Similar to the *Miami Times* coverage of Mariel, the issues were framed according to a black/white binary in criticism on the white/black racializing frame; and constructed the Balseros within a native/foreigner frame. However, as could be seen in *El Nuevo Herald*'s reporting, the *Time'*s coverage differed from the coverage of Mariel in reports than took more of a view of larger national issues regarding immigration and changing demographics. The theme categories used in the previous chapter to organize the reports about Mariel remained salient in this context: 1) Cubans versus Haitians and critique of U.S. society preference for whiteness over blackness, and 2) African Americans as "Americans" versus foreigners. However, the themes overlapped in the Balsero coverage in such a manner that I will discuss them together rather than separate them out as in the previous chapter. The category of the "necessity of unity among all oppressed peoples" that was prevalent in the Mariel reporting was less salient. Articles with a focus on Afro-Cubans numbered 8, or about 36%, including op-editorials by a Miami Afro-Cuban businesswoman. These are discussed separately from the themes. The following provides examples of the two predominant themes, which represented 64% of the coverage, and the coverage on Afro-Cubans.

Cubans versus Haitians (White versus Black) & African Americans versus Foreigners

> The names of Cuban rafters detained at the Guantánamo Bay Naval Base can be found posted on Bulletin boards at Radio Mambi and grocery stores in Little Havana and published in Spanish-language newspapers. But no one knows the names of the nearly 15,00 [*sic*] Haitians detained at the base—and for a longer period.[165]

Fourteen years after the Mariel exodus, the United States was still in the middle of a debate over the handling of the Haitian and Cuban refugees. As noted in the previous chapter, African Americans took on the cause of Haitians as an African American or "Black" issue. The African American community was aware of the intense activism of Cuban Americans for the incoming Balseros and the United States' history of "catering" to their needs. Although the most recent Cuban waves brought more blacks to the United States than previously, the *Miami Times*, for the most part, continued to frame the incoming Cubans as white and as receiving preferential treatment over black Haitians. As in 1980, the *Miami Times* gave less space to the coverage of Cuban immigration in 1994, and when it did report on it, it was mostly in contrast to Haitian issues, with editorials setting the tone.

For instance, in a July 14th editorial "The Haitian impasse," the *Miami Times* notes the larger influx of Cubans that year, "the biggest since 1980," but went on to focus on the differential treatment of Cuban and Haitian immigrants, arguing that the difference between the treatment of the two groups is race.[166] Similarly, an editorial "What about Haiti?" written August 25, after Clinton's policy change asks, "Why is Clinton working so hard to avoid another Mariel and so slow on Haiti?" The idea that the U.S. was doing

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[165] Clemence Fiagome, September 8, 1994, Attorneys demand release of names of Haitian refugees held at Guantánamo: Double standard policy protected, *Miami Times*, p. 1.
[166] The Haitian impasse [editorial], July 14, 1994, *Miami Times*, p. A5.

more for Cubans than Haitians was a direct opposite view to that expressed in *El Nuevo Herald*. The editorial begins, "The rapidity with which President Bill Clinton is moving to confront the Castro regime in Cuba over the threat of another Mariel boatlift stands in sharp contrast to the foot-dragging that has come to characterize the Democratic administration's response to the nose-thumbing and atrocities of the military government in Haiti."[167] Like other stories in the paper addressing Haiti, this article points out that the atrocities happening in Haiti are the same if not worse than those in Cuba and should be dealt with.

The opinions voiced in the editorials are echoed in a September letter to the editor "President Clinton's new Cuba policy is welcome," written by a woman who says Cubans should be locked up just like the Haitians, and that the United States is racist against Haitians. Moreover in her view, the United States has done more than enough for Cubans: "We have paid our dues with the Cuban people.…We welcomed the Cubans with open arms and slammed the door in the Haitian people's face because our great country has had a fixation with race, meaning if the Haitian people were White, we or, say, the White people, would have welcomed them with open arms too. But since their skin is dark, they don't deserve the same consideration as others."[168] The writer includes herself within the definition American by saying "our great country" and "we" let the Cubans in with open arms, but then corrects herself by noting that the real decision makers are "the White people." It is about time, she argues, that Haitians also get their due. Speaking as an "American" responding to immigration and as an African American

[167] What about Haiti? [editorial], August 25, 1994, *Miami Times*, p. A4.
[168] President Clinton's new Cuba policy is welcome [letter to the editor], September 1, 1994, *Miami Times*, p. A4.

who has less of a say than "the White people," the letter writer provides a good example of African American double consciousness and of their duality in Miami and in the national framework.

In a feature titled "Street talk," where reporters from the *Miami Times* connect with people "on the street" and ask their opinions about particular questions, members of the general public corroborate the newspaper's predominantly negative evaluation of the new wave of Cuban immigration. An August 11th installment asked, "What should the U.S. do about Mariel II?" All respondents commented on the inequitable treatment of Haitians and Cubans, arguing that both groups should be treated the same. But, beyond a concern about Cubans, all the respondents (four men and two women, all African American) asserted too that there were too many illegals and that the Cubans should be shipped back to Cuba. One respondent argued that America should worry about itself instead of other countries. One woman said, "We've got enough people here; there are too many now. They still put the Haitians down—and the Cubans get what the Haitians should get. I've been here all my life and Miami's still the same to me as before the first Mariel boatlift. I think they are going to let them in, I sure do. They let anybody in… the Cubans, anyway."[169] These respondents' comments portray that the differential treatment of Haitians and Cubans continued to be of primary concern, but some African Americans were also concerned about the influx of immigrants regardless of country of origin. The language used here such as "too many," "illegals," and "ship them back," mirror the

[169] Street talk: What should the US do about Mariel II? [feature article], August 11, 1994, *Miami Times*, p. A5.

nativist discourses identified by Otto Santa Ana (2002) and Leo Chavez (2001) as circulating in the general public about Latinos during the 1990s.

The congruence of the opinions expressed in the *Miami Times* with the general anti-immigrant sentiment at the time is further illustrated in that Haitians were at times also included in with the "immigrant threat." In another installment of "Street talk" which asked, "What effect will the Cuban crisis have on the black community?", of the six African American people polled (three men and three women), five argued the crisis would make it more difficult for African Americans to get jobs, and two of the six respondents argued that not only would Cubans hurt African Americans' ability to get jobs, but Haitians would too. Although in the 1980 coverage of Mariel Haitians were almost exclusively discussed as the "brothers and sisters" of African Americans, stories in *Miami Times* during the Balsero Crisis reflect a move toward grouping them also in this idea of "illegal." As evidenced in some of the "Street talk" installments, members of the African American public may not have always argued *for* the acceptance Haitians, but may have argued that either both groups should be excluded or if the Cubans are included, then so should be the Haitians. The real stake for the African American community, as expressed by one man, was that "As we divide the pie between more people, our [African American] slice of the pie keeps getting smaller."[170]

An op-editorial feature taking up about three quarters of a page and written by a member of the community, elaborates the local concerns of some African Americans. The title, "We are a community controlled by others and failed by our leaders" puts forth

[170] Street talk: What effect will the Cuban crisis have on the black community? [feature article], September 1, 1994, *Miami Times*, p. A5.

several of the reasons, the author argues, that African Americans remain disenfranchised. He says African Americans are not in positions of power where they can make their own decisions about what happens to their community, the children do not see themselves represented in the curriculum of the educational system, and Black Miami leaders are not as visible as Cuban and Jewish leaders. The main problem he says, it that Blacks are too concerned with helping all: "Whites for Whites, Jews for Jews, Cubans for Cubans, Blacks for everybody!"[171] The author advocates Black self-reliance and the ideas of racial uplift with a critique more in line with the sentiments of members of the public, which diverges from the Civil Rights rhetoric of coalition-building and general social justice/equality endorsed by prominent Black leaders such as Jesse Jackson. Jesse Jackson weighs in on Clinton's policy towards Cuba with a stance that expresses sympathy for members of the Cuban American community and with a position aligned with a liberal anti-imperial politics.[172] But the real "on the ground" problems faced by Miami's blacks and the fact that they indeed had the highest poverty and joblessness rate of all ethnic groups in Miami gave credence to the idea that when immigrants and other groups win, African Americans lose. The problem is that placing blame on other minority groups and immigrants obscures the underlying causes of these disparities. But the conflict over how to address the problems of African American communities speaks not only to the fact that one cannot assume a unity of opinions within African American communities, but also that the new multiculturalism in the United States presents complex new challenges for the directions they will take to resolve lingering inequality.

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[171] William D. C. Clark, November 24, 1994, We are a community controlled by others and failed by our leaders p. A5.

[172] Jesse Jackson, September 1, 1994, Clinton is digging a deeper hole with hard-line Cuban policy [column: New ideas for America], *Miami Times*, p. A5.

Two op-editorials speak to the new diversity and endorse an African American response more affirmative of the strategy of coalition. "Immigrant as scapegoats" by Mohamed Hamaludin argues against placing blame on immigrants for the U.S. economic and social problems. He says, "There should be a natural alliance between immigrants and African Americans and other non-whites in America because of the similarities of their history of exploitation. Those who seek to set them against each other should be thoroughly rebuffed." Further he argues, "The anti-immigrant lobby carefully disguises its real intent, which is to be a part of the current effort to make American [*sic*] decidedly Anglo-Saxon at a time when there is a growing clamor for the country to move away from just such a bigoted position and acknowledge diversity in all aspects of American life and culture."[173] The author's critique is similar to that argued in this dissertation—that at the heart of interethnic conflict between African Americans, other minority groups, and immigrants, is the workings of racial power to keep the United States white. But the assumption of the natural alliance between African Americans and immigrants because they are denied access to whiteness, would also assume that this denial is equally allocated.

In his regular Column "Across the Color Line" African American political scholar Manning Marable argued similarly for alliances between Blacks and Latinos. He talks about how the population of Latinos is now surpassing Blacks in some cities, but does not view this phenomenon as negative, but merely as a matter of fact. He ends the article with a statement recalling DuDoisian themes. He says, "The problem of the 21st Century is the problem of "the new color line"—whether Blacks, Latinos and other people of

[173] Mohamed Hamaludin, October 6, 1994, Immigrants as scapegoats [editorial], *Miami Times*, p. A5.

color can overcome their differences to construct a new democratic, multicultural majority for America."[174] Writing in 1994 when the major demographic shifts that have now occurred across the country had become profoundly evident, Marable spoke to the inevitability that African Americans would need to go beyond a binary analysis of racial problems. Viewpoints expressed by Marable, Jackson, and Hamaludin allowed the *Miami Times* to present alternative evaluations of the Balsero crisis and of the significance and impact of increased immigration on the African American community, offering a challenge to the predominant negative view of the impact of immigrants on African Americans.

Afro-Cubans in the Miami Times

The articles involving Afro-Cubans in my sample offer another view into the complexity of the issue of immigrant/ African American relations and more specifically, the interethnic relations between Cubans and African Americans. In the articles collected for this time period, six of them covered Afro-Cubans in the form of a news story, an op-editorial, and a column written by Rosa Reed, an Afro-Cuban woman. A July 14th news story, "Afro-Cuban dissident takes refuge in Miami," demonstrates the African American press's interest in the concerns of Afro-Cubans but also reports on Cuban American awareness that their community was being criticized for receiving preferential treatment over Haitians. The article reported on the arrival in Miami of Angele Herrera, who left Cuba because of the threat of imprisonment. She was president of the Cuban Democratic

[174] Manning Marable, December 29, 1994, Blacks and Latinos must identify common interest and seek to unite, *Miami Times*, p. A5.

Coalition (the largest human rights organization in Cuba) and founder of the Afro-Cuban rights group Maceo Movement for Dignity. In the article, Cuban American leader Jorge Mas Canosa, director of the Cuban American National Foundation CANF), explained that the arrival of Herrera was significant for the Cuban democratic movement: "[The arrival of Herrera is] symbolic because it shows that Black and White Cubans fight for a common cause.…It destroys a common notion that the Cuban community holds something against Black people." The article also reported that the CANF recently paid $20,000–30,000 to reunite Haitian children in Haiti with their families in the United States.[175] The notoriously conservative Cuban American leader included both black Cubans and Haitians in the category "Black people" by referring to both the usefulness of Herrera's arrival and CANF's efforts for the Haitian community to undercut criticism that white Cubans, and more specifically, white Cuban American organizations were racist. Although Mas Canosa's actions and statements may be viewed as opportunistic and insincere by some, particularly members of the African American community, the article displays how attention to Afro-Cubans bring a complexity to the racial conflicts in Miami, between Blacks and white Anglos, black and white Cubans, Haitians and Cubans, African Americans and Cubans, and so on, and point to areas of overlap, such as mutual concerns about immigration, and possibilities for coalitions. The presence of Afro-Cubans "forces" Cuban Americans to see race, and push African Americans to acknowledge Cubans are more than "white."

The subject of race and racism among Cubans referred to by Mas Canosa is tackled in another article which focuses on Afro-Cubans. In the editorial "Race at heart

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[175] Afro-Cuban dissident takes refuge in Miami, July 14, 1994, *Miami Times*, p. A2.

of Cuba crisis," Ricardo E. Gonzalez focuses on the "conspicuous" *absence* of blacks among the immigrants. Although studies have characterized the two most recent immigration waves from Cuba as containing a higher percentage of blacks than the pre-1980 waves, Gonzalez notes the high percentage of blacks in Cuba (65–70% according to his estimates) and claims 90% of exile Cubans are white. Gonzalez's op-editorial is concerned more with race in Cuba; he argues that Castro needs to be more concerned about race and cites the Malecón riots (described earlier), of which he says that the majority of the participants were blacks and mulattos, as evidence of black Cuban discontent on the island. Although Castro took action to solve racial inequalities in Cuba, Gonzalez says blacks in Cuba remain disempowered by white communist elites. Although his focus is not on the experiences of black Cubans in the United States, he argues that the "powerful, conservative anti-Castro lobby in Miami, whose leaders are itching to switch places with Castro" are taking the racial situation in Cuba into account; they pray for the end of Castro but are apprehensive about the large numbers of blacks there. He says,

> And so the much-tabooed "racial question," sometimes timidly addressed but more often ignored, once again feared, is heard on both sides of the Florida Straits through the resurgence of the old paranoid phobia known throughout Cuban history as the "Peligro Negro" (the Black Peril)! [176]

Gonzalez's article serves to inform the African American community that the issue of race and the stigma attached to blackness is not only an African American concern (or a Haitian concern for that matter) but also "is at the heart of Cuba's crisis." This also translates into U.S. shores, where the differential treatment of blacks and white Cubans speak to the tenacity of white racism against blacks in the United States. His article,

[176] Ricardo E. Gonzalez, September 1, 1994, Race at heart of Cuba crisis, *Miami Times*, p. A4.

written for the African American *Miami Times*, connects the Afro-Cuban cause to that of African Americans.

The newspaper also connected their African American audience to the plight of Afro-Cuban Balseros in two photo essays which include pictures of exclusively black Cubans setting out on their voyage to the United States. One essay "Thousands flee from Castro's failed revolution" showed a large picture of black Cuban men in the water saying good-bye to a woman as they set off on their raft.[177] The photo essay is very short, only describing the picture and announcing that the United States and Cuba will begin talks to resolve the immigration disputes over policy. But on the next day, the paper ran another photo essay, "Rafter stocking up for sea trip," which contained a photo showing black Cubans buying bread to bring with them on their trip and notes that Cubans who leave Cuba are now being brought to Guantánamo naval base as a result of changes in immigration policy.[178] In contrast to the supposed whiteness of the Cuban Balseros, the photos allow the reader to see that some of the refugees are black, providing an alternative interpretation of the events revolving around U.S. policy toward Cuba; that this policy too impacts black peoples. Yet given the overwhelmingly predominant depiction of Cubans as whites in the newspaper, and with little discussion in the newspaper about the significance of the fact that some Cubans are black, the pictures may not have had much impact for revising negative reactions to the crisis.

However, the newspaper did open a major channel for connecting to Afro-Cubans, and perhaps, white Cuban Americans, by running a regular op-editorial column

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[177] Thousands flee from Castro's failed revolution [photo essay], September 1, 1994, *Miami Times*, p. A3.
[178] Rafter stocking up for sea trip [photo essay], September 1994, *Miami Times*, p. A2.

by Rosa Reed, whose ethnicity was displayed prominently in her by-line "an Afro-Cuban businesswoman in Miami."[179] Five op-editorials by Reed were published during the time period investigated. Perhaps to offset the fact the *Miami Times* did little reporting on Cuban Americans, her articles discussed U.S. immigration policy and Cuba, along with other Cuban American concerns. In "Support the president on his tough stand against Castro," Reed takes a stance contrary to a large proportion of Cuban Americans, most of whom were against Clinton's policies. She argues, "We Cubans should stop criticizing Clinton.…We must also make sure that all Cuban refugees are processed fairly, whether Black or White, rich and influential Miami relatives or not."[180] Reed supports stronger sanctions against Cuba proposed by Clinton although she is opposed to Clinton's decision to send Cubans to Guantánamo. The article does not explore at length the differential treatment of black and white Cubans, but her plea that they both be processed fairly implies she believes that race has been a factor in whether the Cubans were treated fairly or not and that it is also linked to class preferences. Like the Afro-Cuban writers for *El Nuevo Herald,* Reed's voice demonstrates that Cuban Americans did not all agree, even on issues that were viewed as what unified the Cuban American community. Her contribution then had the potential to provide a wider view of Cuban Americans among members of the African American community.

In another article, Reed makes a direct statement to Black American leaders and by requesting they also involve themselves in issues affecting black Cubans implies that just as Haitian issues were considered African American issues, African Americans

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[179] However, the "Afro-Cuban" was dropped from her byline in September.
[180] Rosa Reed, August 25, 1994, Support the president on his tough stand against Castro [editorial], *Miami Times*, p. A2.

should also care about the concerns of Afro-Cubans. In "Black Cubans need friends, not defenders of Castro's regime" in which she criticizes Jesse Jackson's argument that the United States should suspend its trade embargo with Cuba, she also draws attention to the fact Afro-Cubans have specific concerns and claims they are puzzled by Jackson's stance and that he does not try to represent those who "have no representation in exile and are politically invisible."[181] By looking to African American leaders to take on the Afro-Cuban cause, she affirms a connection between the two communities, or that this connection *should* exist on the basis of their shared racial background. Although she shares an anti-Castro stance with other Cuban Americans,[182] her comments also highlight the fact that race makes her and other Afro-Cubans *invisible*, even though it distinguishes them from the majority of the exile community.

In another article she brings further attention to how race comes between black and white Cubans and puts forth a firm criticism of the powerful white Cubans in Miami in a discussion of a local political race that polarized the Cuban and African American communities. County Commissioner Arthur Teele,[183] a black Republican, was pushing for his candidate for the position of County Manager, Cynthia Curry, but "the so called 'Latin bloc' flexed its muscle" and the Latino candidate Armando Vidal won. The article goes on to detail rumors about a physical confrontation between Teele and another politician and the move by some Latino commissioners to oust Teele. She is highly

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[181] Rosa Reed, September 23, 1994, Black Cubans need friends, not defenders of Castro's regime, *Miami Times*, p. A5.
[182] Rosa Reed, September 1, 1994, Is Castro winning the immigration stalemate? *Miami Times*, p. A4.
[183] Teele was a high-profile politician who ran for mayor of Miami in 1996 but lost to Alex Penelas. He had a successful but troubled political career and, as he was awaiting trial in 2005 for fraud charges, walked into the *Miami Herald* building and shot himself to death. His supporters claim the "trial and conviction by the media" of Teele can be blamed for his death.

critical of the Latino power base and asks, "Have the Hispanics decided that Teele's power trip is now over, he has served his purpose and it's time for him to move to the back of the bus?" With the "back of the bus" reference she equates powerful Latinos with whites and alludes to her own siding with African Americans. White powerful Cubans are trying to take over she says; "We have a white Cuban public schools superintendent, we have a white Cuban county manager. What's next?...Are the white Cubans salivating at the prospect of absolute power?"[184] The specific political context Reed describes offers a fascinating look at a concrete contest over power between African Americans and Cubans. It is also interesting how she, a black woman and a Latina, positions herself so firmly with African Americans. Reed's critiques reflect indictment of Cuban Americans for deploying the notion of white supremacy to elevate themselves, or to exclude "others," particularly, African Americans, Afro-Cubans, and other blacks, who they see as threats to their own livelihoods.

Reed's articles demonstrate she thinks of her blackness in a diasporic sense and aligns herself closely with African Americans though still concerned about issues affecting the Cuban American community. In "Elect candidates who are caring," she labels herself and other groups of African descent living in the United States as African Americans. She says, "African Americans regardless of their roots (Cuban, Jamaican, Panamanian, Nicaraguan, Haitian, Nigerian, etc.) are not asking for handouts, welfare or more social programs. We are asking for solid jobs, quality and affordable healthcare…housing, less tax increases and less bureaucracy." She says 'we" must vote for politicians who will work with "us" to have the opportunity to share the American

[184] Rosa Reed, December 22, 1994, Cuban Power in Miami, *Miami Times*, p. 4A.

dream.[185] She affirms the overall stance of the *Miami Times* that race can be a unifying factor for people from various countries of African descent, but does not make the leap to necessarily include powerful white Cubans in the "us." The fact that she was given a column in the newspaper demonstrates a move by the newspaper to connect to the Cuban American community but affirms that this connection is made only on a basis that reaffirms the binary between black and white. The situation in Miami, whereby Cubans and African Americans held so much tension against one another, may have constrained any efforts to go beyond this reasoning. Still, the voices of Afro-Cubans and acknowledgement of their presence by the paper was a start towards connecting the two communities.

El Nuevo Herald and the *Miami Times* clarified the new political, economic, and racial stakes of Cuban Americans and African Americans in light of the 1994 Balsero crisis. Like Mariel, the Balsero crisis gave the Cuban American community further reason to fear that the whiteness seemingly granted them in the United States was conditional (Mirabal, 2003). During Mariel, some Cuban American voices in *El Herald* made the concession that because of the supposed criminality of some Mariels, the privileges of U.S. citizenship could/should be denied. During Mariel, the "evidence" of deviance among some Mariels required explanation, and *El Herald* demonstrated a blackening of deviant Mariels to distinguish them from the good ones, and from the members of the established exile community. In the absence of "evidence" of deviance among the Balseros, the fact that the U.S. government in effect, also criminalized the worthy/suffering Balseros by detaining them in Guantánamo and denying them entry into

[185] Rosa Reed, Elect candidates who are caring, *Miami Times*, p. 5A.

the States was too much of a contradiction for many Cuban Americans. Their outrage was expressed in *El Nuevo Herald*, which pointed to the suffering of the Balseros as proof they were worthy to be citizens. The different frames used by the papers during Mariel and Balsero speak to the strategic nature of employing them, and that the frames called upon depend on how the groups are being framed within mainstream society. Hence, rather than merely being an effort of members of the Cuban American community to decide who is worthy and who is not, the use of racializing frames is a testament to the fact that it is actually the dominant groups that imposes these restrictions. As we reread the discourses in the newspaper for the embedded critique of the national project of exclusion, I argue we can see that the acknowledgment of the conditional nature of whiteness, that the motivation for U.S. policy decisions is to protect U.S. interests rather that fulfill moral duties, and the linking of Cuban American experiences to those of other minority groups, opens up spaces of possibility that could help towards resolutions of interethnic conflict. There were few articles in the coverage that specifically made connections between Cubans and African Americans, but the articles that existed connecting the plight of Haitian and Cuban refugees, and that discussed Cuban Americans in relation to other Latinos in the U.S., demonstrated a realization among some Cuban Americans that their case was not exceptional, and that their fate was linked to those of other minority and immigrant groups. Furthermore, Afro-Cuban voices in the paper further challenged white Cuban Americans by emphasizing a need to acknowledge race.

As in the Mariel coverage, the *Miami Times'* Balsero coverage emphasized a critique of U.S. immigration policy, accusing the government of favoring white Cubans

over black Haitians. However, while during Mariel 47% of the articles invoked the black/white binary in a critique of the dominant black/white racializing frame, during Balsero, this focus was more intertwined with the native/foreigner framing of events, indicating a shift to more of a focus on immigration issues in general while still attributing the privileging of immigrants over African Americans to whites. With their economic, social and political standing in Miami hardly improved 14 years after Mariel, the Balsero crisis was merely *another* Mariel. Another mass immigration from Cuba was viewed as a disruption for the African American community continuing to struggle to make gains. Still some African American voices in the paper called for alliances between Latinos and African Americans, and the paper incorporated Afro-Cubans more than it did during Mariel, from 16% of the coverage during Mariel, to 36% during Balsero (owing largely to the articles written by Reed). The move to include Afro-Cubans under the African American umbrella affirmed the Pan-African philosophies of the newspaper, but also served in a small way, to connect African Americans to the Cuban American community and to Latinos in general, a connection that would be all the more crucial as the numbers of Latinos across the country was moving rapidly towards surpassing the those of the African American population.

The next chapter focuses more specifically on Afro-Cubans, who were marginally included in Cuban American and African American newspapers, to attempt a more full engagement with their voices, and to hear how they speak to the continued rigidity of race in the U.S. Their experiences illuminate how white Cubans, African Americans, and other communities make claim to the nation by promoting the exclusion of other minority groups, particularly those who do not fit within any dominant racial

paradigms. The chapter will provide greater insight into the Afro-Cuban challenge to dominant racial frames, and will offer insights useful for promoting the alleviation of interethnic conflict between African Americans and Latinos.

CHAPTER IV
Black and "Other": Afro-Cubans Negotiating Identity in the United States

During the historic presidential primary of 2008, Barack Obama, a bi-racial man, ran against Hillary Clinton, a white woman; after contentious debates, Obama became the United States' Democratic candidate. At this writing, he is the President elect, after running against John McCain, the white Republican candidate. For the first time in history, the American people have elected someone other than a white male to the U.S. Presidency. This monumental event, along with the demographic shifts changing the face of the U.S. from a majority white to majority-minority nation give concrete hope that racial attitudes have changed, are changing, and will move toward a more inclusive politics.[186] But, as Nicholas De Genova has argued, nativist and racist attitudes persist and are ingrained in society (2005), despite the tremendous growth of immigrant populations from Asia and Latin America that have contributed to the current multicultural image of the United States. The popularity of, for example, Latin music and food is often called on as evidence of the United States' greater acceptance of difference. However, as cultural studies scholar Lisa Lowe explains, ethnic differences are aestheticized by the nation through a celebration of "multiculturalism," to absolve the United States from thoroughly addressing the problem of race (1996, p. 9).

One of the problems is the persistence of the conception of "race" as fixed or essential, and the rigidity of the black/white binary, evident in the categorization of Obama, the son of a white American woman and a black African man, as "Black" in the

[186] I will return to a discussion of the implications of the historic election of the United States' first black president in the concluding chapter.

media. It is also powerfully illustrated in the current experiences of black Cuban migrants in the United States, where blackness is the most prominent characteristic used to "other" them. Moreover, the combination of a black body with a Cuban accent makes them a spectacle not only for Anglos, but for African Americans and other U.S. Latinos as well. Most notably, their experiences differ from those of other Afro-Latinos because of the ways in which distinct Cuban immigration waves have been racialized, and because of the political enmity between their homeland's government and that of the United States. As mentioned in chapter 1, Afro-Cubans report they are not always fully accepted by some whites among the exile community who have held onto racist ideals that were pervasive in pre-revolutionary Cuba, and which were reaffirmed, after they emigrated, by U.S. racial ideologies that denigrate blackness. Afro-Cubans also diverge from other immigrants more readily identifiable with a particular race and country. Many Afro-Cuban immigrants are asked on a daily basis where they come from and why they look and sound as they do, because they often do not conform to preconceived racial norms. Like others with perceptibly mixed identities, they do not fit nicely in census boxes, nor are they allowed to be "more than black," as Cuban patriot Jose Martí had envisioned, because their blackness constructs them, as sociologist Pedro Noguera contends, as the "ultimate other" (2003, p. 193).[187]

As this chapter makes clear, Afro-Cuban responses to attempts to classify and contain them show how their multiple identities (black, Cuban, Latino, mestizo, and immigrant/refugee) as well as their negotiations of U.S. --and Cuban-- racial structures,

[187] Jose Martí is widely recognized as the father of the Cuban nation, and rallied for racial unity during the fight for independence from Spain with the now famous quote, "A Cuban is more than white, more than mulatto, more than black" (quoted in Greenbaum, 2002, p. 11). The title of this chapter is a play on his quote and on the title of Susan Greenbaum's book, *More than Black: Afro-Cubans in Tampa.*

challenge predominant racial paradigms. The fact that many black Cubans are often confronted with questions about their identities forces them to think about race and its complexity in ways that differ from people whose identities do not frequently come into question. In response to such questions, they confront people of all backgrounds, directly challenging their rigid constructions of race with intellectual critiques, anger, and humor, among other strategies.

Drawing on Jonathan Brennan's (2002) discussion of how mixed-race people in the United States use their "othered" identity to reposition themselves in society, I argue that Afro-Cubans similarly use specific strategies to overturn and undermine "our fixed expectations of identity and appropriate behavior" (p. 8). Their marginalized position allows them the ability to see more clearly what dominant actors cannot see. Gloria Anzaldúa argues that such people, as border crossers, have agency and act as mediators, translators, and interpreters for those encountering one another at the border (1999). Afro Cuban negotiations of national, racial, ethnic and linguistic borders reveal the strength of othering practices in the U.S., and underscore the need for challenging rigid notions of race and ethnicity.

Through an analysis of interviews with 30 Cuban men and women living in Miami, Florida, and Los Angeles, California (15 in each city), this chapter analyzes how recent Afro-Cuban immigrants navigate the U.S. racial climate. They were asked questions about how they believe Cubans from previous waves, African Americans, and other Latinos perceive them; about their relationships with members of these groups; and how they identify themselves and feel about their identities. Their answers to these questions contribute to our understanding of the fragile political solidarities in African

American, Cuban, and other Latino communities, and the sources of interethnic conflict between them. In cities such as Miami and Los Angeles, where Anglos are now in the minority and ethnic minority groups are often pitted against one another for scarce resources, U.S. racial codes intended to keep whites in power are adopted and disseminated even by non-Anglos, as historically underrepresented groups and immigrants vie for power and resources. As George Lipsitz points out, "All too often, racial minorities seek to secure the benefits of whiteness for themselves by gaining advantages at each other's expense" (1998, p. 185).

The Afro-Cuban stories about how they negotiate the various communities and identities they inhabit teach us to rethink the basis on which we form groups and allegiances, and what or who is left out. In addition, they suggest overlaps where coalitions between groups such as African Americans and Latinos might be possible. Although their resistance is not wholly emancipatory because some buy into stereotypical representations of race and ethnic groups, their confrontation of biases represent a resistance to the dominant ideology and structure of race. As we ponder the impact of U.S. racialization processes on the incorporation of post-1980 black Cuban refugees, the research also provides insight into the larger questions of coalitions and strategies.

Latinos Negotiating Identity

As Virginia Dominguez points out, social identities do not exist without public affirmation. In particular, people of color have less flexibility in defining their own ethnicity than white immigrants because of the legal and social quest to preserve the

privileges of whiteness (1986).[188] Thus, despite how a person decides to self-identify, their chosen identity may not be affirmed by society and another, often stigmatized, identity will be imposed. Latino immigrants who move to the United States often find this to be the case, particularly when they are thrust into a completely different racial category than the one they occupy in their country of origin. In the United States, Afro-Cubans learn that the U.S. categorizations of race and ethnicity do not fully accommodate their identities and understandings of themselves.

Since 1980, the U.S. census has included both ethnic and racial categorization choices. Respondents may choose "Hispanic" along with a racial identity—black or white. In addition, the 1980 census was the first to offer the ability to choose "other" within the racial category. For many Latinos, choosing "other" or a pan-ethnic term allows national origin, race, gender, and other identities to be redefined under a Latino banner that offers more ambiguity than the strict divisions of the U.S. black/white binary. Although a significant number of Latinos indicate their race as white (especially among Cubans, the most likely among Latinos to do so), the 1990 and 2000 censuses show that Latinos are more likely than any other group in the United States to avoid the black or white racial identity convention by choosing "other." In an analysis of the 1990 census, Clara Rodriguez found that 40% of Latinos chose "other," compared to less than 1% of non-Hispanics (2000). In the 2000 census, 42% of Latinos picked "other" (Logan, 2003; Landale & Oropesa, 2002).[189] Additionally, many Latinos wrote in the name of their country of origin in the box for "other" race.

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[188] Also see Waters (1990).

[189] The 1980 census marked the first time the census included a question for race and for Spanish ethnicity. The race question listed several Asian groups or nationalities separately, while the 1990 census also listed

Researchers give several reasons why Latinos are the group most likely to choose the "other" option. Clara Rodriguez argues their self-identification is often based on their understanding of race as constructed in their country of origin, which differs from U.S. ideas of race. In the United States, race has been viewed as predominantly biological, whereby the child takes on the race of the (black) parents regardless of phenotype (2000). This construction, born during the time of slavery, was rooted in white fears about miscegenation and strengthened the bipolar construction of race. Black blood was viewed as polluting, thus by the "one drop rule," children of white and black parents (most often a white father and black mother) took on the race of the mother. Rodriguez argues that although there has been some fluidity in the idea of race in the United States at various historical moments, in general "black" and "white" have been primary categories (2000). Hence, when immigrants of African descent arrive in the United States, they too are categorized according to the "one drop" rule.

In contrast, race in Latin American countries has been more fluid, a continuum, with many different terms for "intermediary" races (Wade, 1997). Skin color, hair texture, facial features, and social class all help determine race, so people within the same family can be of different races. Furthermore, with upward mobility, race can change over time. Nevertheless, a polarity between light and dark does exist, a "pigmentocracy" in which the whiter one is, the greater one's claim to honor and privilege. Darker-skinned people are more identified with African or Indian groups, which continue to be stigmatized (Rodríguez, 2000; Duany, 1985; Torres, 1998). Thus, while Latin American

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them separately but under the umbrella term Asian or Pacific Islander (API). The 1990 census asked people to choose a racial identity (with white, black, Indian, several Asian groups, and "other" as options under the category of race) and used a separate question to identify Spanish/Hispanic origin. The 2000 census was significant as the first to offer the option of choosing more than one race.

systems generally are more fluid than U.S. paradigms, they are also the result of the legacies of colonialism, conquest, and slavery. However, because racism is not as institutionalized as in the United States, modern ideals of racial democracy in countries such as Cuba and Brazil may influence immigrants from Latin America to hold onto the idealized mestizo and national identities (Vasconcelos, 1992).

Some scholars speculate that another reason many Latinos choose "other" is to avoid a stigmatized identity, i.e., to escape being Indian or black. Studies of black immigrants in the United States suggest that identity choices that privilege a national rather than a racial identity are an attempt to escape the stigma of a racialized black or African American identity.[190] Although studies focusing specifically on black Latinos are few, they have found that black Latinos have suffered from being associated with African Americans, experiencing disadvantages in terms of housing and labor, and in other material ways.[191] Latinos who classify themselves or are classified as white, on the other hand, fare better than other Latinos in earnings, hourly wages, and other socioeconomic variables.[192] William Darity and Patrick Mason's study on employment and racial disparities reveals that black Hispanics suffer ten times more income loss than white Hispanics due to differential treatment (1998).

Jorge Duany (1998) and Benjamin Bailey (2000, 2001) found that among recent Dominican immigrants, many perceived themselves as white, Hispanic, or other, which contradicted public perception that deemed them "black." Immigrants in cities such as

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[190] See, for example, Bryce-Laporte (1972), Waters, (1999), Landale and Oropesa (2002), and Bailey (2000, 2001). Most studies on black immigrants in the United States focus on those from the Anglophone Caribbean.
[191] See Duany (1998), Rodríguez (2000), and Denton and Massey (1989).
[192] See the studies cited in Rodríguez (2000) on page 175.

New York created distance between themselves and African Americans by speaking Spanish and holding fast to Dominican traditions. Yet Benjamin Bailey also notes that younger generations were likely to adopt black dialect, hip hop style, and rap music to align themselves with African American teenagers. He argues they conceive of race and identity as hybrid, and their experiences in the United States foster solidarity with non-white Americans, especially African Americans (2000, 2001). Researchers who study second-generation black immigrants explain that they may associate with African Americans because of their comparable social and financial capital, and through experiences with discrimination and racism they may develop an adversarial stance to white America, which affects their identity choices (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Waters, 1999).

Thus, although some research on Dominicans in the United States and Puerto Ricans on the island point to a general "disinclination of many Hispanics to identify as black" (Duany 1998; Landale & Oropesa, 2002), others say that this conclusion is too simplistic. Percy C. Hintzen and Jean Muteba Rahier's analysis (2003) of black immigrants in the United States argues that when black immigrants refuse an African American identity it may not be blackness or Africanness they are trying to escape, but the binary structure of race in the United States. Hintzen and Rahier argue that black immigrants in the United States destabilize meanings of blackness and speak to the diversity of the experiences of peoples within the black diaspora. Thus, their engagement with the politics of race and identity in the United States may challenge and deconstruct "the consensus" on the racial hierarchies in the United States.

Race in Cuba

Before discussing the experience of Afro-Cubans in the United States, we must understand the historical construction of race and national identity in Cuba. The island of Cuba shares a history of colonization, slavery, and imperialism with many of the countries of the Americas. Cuba was originally peopled by the Ciboney, Arawaks, and Tainos, who were colonized and enslaved by Spanish settlers following Columbus' arrival there and Spanish settlement in the early 1500s (Pérez, 1995). Spain abolished Indian slavery in 1542, but by then the Indigenous population had been largely decimated due to white men's diseases and European violence.[193] To supplement Indian slavery, Spain began importing African slave labor in 1505. The slave trade grew in importance as Cuba became an important sugar colony. With the growing number of enslaved and free blacks in Cuba, many whites feared the possible "Africanization" of Cuba and sought to maintain "una limpieza de sangre" (purity of white blood). Prohibitions of marriage between blacks and whites existed at various times during slavery, although they were not strictly enforced.[194] Many nations in the Americas are multiracial societies, and in Cuba multiracial status has had powerful currency (Kutzinski, 1993). During Cuba's early history, the population fluctuated between a white and black majority, which led some leaders to ask whether the nation was black, white, or both. During the struggle for independence from Spain between 1868–1898, Jose Martí and the Afro-Cuban patriot Antonio Maceo sought to unify the country and promote Cuban nationalism with the idea of fighting for a nation for all— neither black nor white, but

[193] However, Indigenous people and their cultures still exist and many "mestizos" claim Native ancestry.
[194] Although marriage between blacks and whites was officially prohibited in 1805, this law was not enforced until 1864 (Martinez-Alier, 1989).

Cuban (Ferrer, 1998, 1999). This ideology has continued to be predominant and reinforced in Castro's Cuba. Thus, when Cubans come to the United States they must reconcile their homeland's ideology with the different modes of classifying and living race in the United States.

Previous Research on Afro-Cubans in the United States

Race in Cuba has received significant scholarly attention, but little is known about the Afro-Cuban experience in the United States. As Nancy Raquel Mirabal (2003) and others have argued, the predominance of the 1959 exile model has limited analysis of the differential experiences of Cuban refugees, ignoring racial,gender, class, and geographical differences. Concerning Afro-Cubans in Cuba, Alejandro De La Fuente contends they are rarely acknowledged outside of a focus on "culture"—music, dance, and religion (2001, p. 3). In the same vein, Afro-Cubans in the United States are often aestheticized as "cultural" subjects in a manner that emphasizes dominant stereotypes about blackness, markets them as "ethnic others," and denies their political agency (Dávila, 2001). Several scholars make an important contribution linking culture and politics and Afro-Cuban agency in their critiques of the exoticization of the dance, music, and religion of Afro-Cubans in the United States and Cuba.[195] Lourdes Casal and Andrés Hernandez have argued newer studies need to focus on other areas of Afro-Cuban incorporation into U.S. society, their acceptance by white Cubans, self-identity, and attitudes toward other groups (1980).

[195] See, for example, Hagedorn (2001), Vélez (2000), and Moore (1997).

The only book-length study on Afro-Cubans in the United States to date, Susan Greenbaum's *More than Black*, focuses on Afro-Cuban cigar makers in Ybor City, Florida, and their mutual aid society, La Unión Maceo-Martí, from the 1880s into the Jim Crow era. Greenbaum studied the social and cultural adaptations of black Cuban cigar makers who traversed complex "transnational relations as 'doubly hyphenated' subjects in the United States" (2002, p. 2).[196] In her portrayal of Afro-Cuban relations with African Americans, she documents the complex ways Afro-Cubans negotiated the Jim Crow south, which separated them from their white Cuban compatriots. Critiquing theories of downward assimilation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes and Zhou, 1993), she argues that alliances with African Americans were an act of survival, and that these alliances did not signify downward mobility or a loss of Cubanness. She concludes that in the Jim Crow south, Afro-Cuban alliances with African Americans and the development of Afro-Cuban mutual aid societies allowed black Cubans to challenge their separation from white Cubans and exclusion from U.S. (white) society as they created new identities. The research presented here provides insight into the impact of U.S. racialization processes on the incorporation of recent black Cuban refugees, an area within Cuban studies that has not been widely addressed.

Post-1980 migrants from Cuba differ from previous waves not only in terms of class and race, but because many lived most of their lives under Castro's government. There is no uniform political stance among the newer migrants, however; opinions on Castro's government vary from complete support to strong opposition. Still, the Castro government promoted a political consciousness about capitalism and U.S. imperialism,

[196] Also see Mirabal (1998, 2003).

and the role of race, that these immigrants were exposed to for many years. According to Alejandro de la Fuente, Castro exploited race as a useful way to contrast the gains of communism with the capitalism imperialist systems. Cuban leaders sought to challenge U.S. imperialism by identifying the United States as the "real racists." By the 1960s, Castro's government asserted that racism had been done away with, and that Cuba had become a country in which people were not black or white, but Cuban. Cuba was constructed as a racial democracy, consequently, leaders insisted any attention to a racial problem or race would be unpatriotic and divisive. Exposure to years of the anti-racist discourses of the Castro government has equipped recent Cuban immigrants with a consciousness about race and politics which allows alternative and critical analyses of the racial context of both Cuba and the United States. They learned that Castro set out to equalize the society after his revolution, and saw that this effort did allow some gains for black Cubans (Sawyer, 2006). Furthermore, the government took on the project of celebrating Cuba's African heritage, particularly its contributions to music and dance. These efforts have been criticized as merely superficial by many in and out of Cuba; nevertheless, Cubans in post-revolutionary Cuba live in a society where Cubans of all colors celebrate a national identity over their racial identities, and celebrate the African contribution to that national identity. In addition, on the island, Cubans of all colors generally live in the same neighborhoods and regularly socialize with one another (2006). Thus, the stark distinction between black and white in most of the United States is in sharp contrast to how race is lived in Cuba.

Race in the United States: The Case of Miami and Los Angeles

As we have discussed in previous chapters, Afro-Cubans who settle in Miami encounter a highly segregated city with its share of interethnic conflict, stemming from the long history of southern-style racism that created the conditions for intense competition and conflict between Cubans and African Americans. Currently, Latinos and non-Latino blacks[197] make up the majority of Miami's residents. According to the 2006 U.S. census data, the population of Miami Dade County is 61.3% Latino or Hispanic, and Cubans make up the majority of this group. Another 20.2% are non-Hispanic black, and 18.3% are non-Hispanic whites (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). Because most Anglos live beyond the city limits, Cubans have emerged as one of Miami's most powerful groups. Although the Latino population has increasingly diversified in Miami, Cubans remain its leaders. As of 2002, Miami's city and county mayors, superintendents of public schools, police chief, congressional representatives, and the majority of Miami-Dade county state legislators are Cuban (Stepick & Stepick, 2002). As a result, Miami continues to be a Mecca for Cuban refugees, but Afro-Cubans may find themselves at the center of conflict between the city's Blacks and Latinos.

Latinos in Los Angeles have not attained the power and influence that Cubans have in Miami, but the Latino influence in Los Angeles, a city in the land that was once Mexico, is also quite dramatic. According to a 2007 census data update of Los Angeles county demographics, Latinos account for 47.3% of the population, with people of Mexican origin by far the highest percentage of Latinos.[198] The Mexican population is

[197] Here "blacks" include African Americans and immigrants from the Caribbean.
[198] U.S. Census Bureau State and County Quickfacts, [online], http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06037.html.

composed of very different cohorts, including newly arriving immigrants, old immigrants and their children, and a small representation of the descendants of Mexicans native to California (Ortiz, 1996). After the Bracero program, which brought Mexicans to the U.S. temporarily to work in agriculture during the World War II era, agribusiness attracted illegal Mexican immigration to the United States, particularly to Los Angeles (Waldinger & Bozorgmehr, 1996). United States immigration policy has not welcomed Mexicans as it has Cubans, who were constructed as political rather than economic immigrants. Mexican immigrants have instead been portrayed as a "problem"—poor, lawbreaking, and illegal (Hayes-Bautista, 2004; Chavez, 2001). Public concerns over increased Mexican immigration inspired Proposition 187 (1994), which sought to refuse undocumented immigrants medical and educational services, and Proposition 227 (1998), which banned bilingual education. Yet the Mexican influence stands out in Los Angeles, despite the fact it is one of the most diverse metropolises in the United States, with more Central Americans, Asians, and Middle Easterners than any other city (Sabagh & Mehdi, 1996). The current mayor, Antonio Villaraigosa, is of Mexican descent, the first in more than a century. As in Miami, Spanish television and radio thrive, and Spanish-language billboards pepper the city. Living in Los Angeles, as in Miami, one is inevitably touched by Latino culture, although Mexican influence predominates in the former, and Cuban influence dominates in the latter.

Like Miami, Los Angeles has had its share of interethnic conflict. Blacks came to Los Angeles during the 1930s and 1940s when the growth of industry created jobs, but racist hiring practices and dramatic shifts in the economy during the 1970s caused massive unemployment (Laslett, 1996). The economic restructuring from highly

specialized industry to diversified and decentralized jobs created competition, leaving Blacks with fewer employment opportunities. Industries such as garment manufacturing, subcontracting, and service-oriented jobs in hotels, motels, and restaurants began exploiting undocumented workers, especially those of Latino origin (Ong & Valenzuela, 1996). Blacks began to feel squeezed out from the bottom by immigrants and squeezed out from the top by whites (Johnson & Melvin, 1994).

Competition among Blacks and Latinos also emerged in the political arena, as Latinos have experienced a spectacular rise in political representation in California. African American political analyst and cultural critic Earl Ofari Hutchinson notes that an estimated one in every three voters in Los Angeles County is Latino, causing politicians to go out of their way to "court" Latino voters and to pay more attention to Latino needs. In contrast, Black political representation, Hutchinson reports, is dwindling throughout California. For example, in 1996, the California legislature had ten Black state representatives, but in 2000 there were only six (2000, p. A7). Given an environment in which social conditions have created competition among Blacks and Latinos, physical and political conflicts are overt manifestations of the uneasy relations between Blacks and Latinos in Los Angeles.

In the current economy, perceived competition over jobs continues, as well as competition over political representation and other resources, resulting in gang rivalries, school fights, and prison battles between African Americans and Latinos. However, not all interethnic relations are antagonistic; there is also a history of coalition building that continues today. From the early days of Los Angeles' growth, Blacks and Latinos have

stood together in the face of their common social and economic problems.[199] Poverty, unemployment, racism, police harassment, and political alienation are a reality for both Latinos and Blacks in these communities (Ransford, 1994). Still, conflict between Blacks and Latinos is of primary concern today as Los Angeles becomes increasingly Latino.

Afro-Cubans arrive in the middle of this conflict. California has the fourth largest Cuban population in the United States, although the numbers in Los Angeles are quite small; Cubans constitute only 38,664 or 0.4% of its total population (Logan, 2003). Because of the high percentage of Mexicans in Los Angeles, the people I interviewed were most likely to encounter and interact with Mexicans on a daily basis, and experienced the fact that most people did not perceive them as fitting the image of "Latino." Thus, this research allows us to see how Afro-Cubans negotiate not only the Cuban enclave of Miami, but also another highly Latin city with only a small percentage of Cubans in the population.

My sample includes 30 individuals, found through snowball sampling, consisting of 11 women and 19 men, ages ranging from 19–74 years old. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 (see appendix) provide more details, including a description of each participant in the categories of sex, age, year arrived, racial composition of his/her neighborhood, workplace, and friendships; occupation, education, and the language used (Spanish or English) during the interview.[200] Fifteen people in each city (Los Angeles and Miami) were interviewed in depth for about an hour and asked open-ended questions about how

[199] See Laslett (1996) for examples.
[200] Information on some variables for some participants is unknown.

they think Anglos, African Americans, Cuban Americans, and other Latinos position them in the U.S. racial hierarchy, and about how they locate themselves. The majority of the interviewees self-identified as black and/or expressed having been mistaken for a member of another group of African descent. They are listed as "Afro-Cuban" in tables 4.1 and 4.2.[201] Whether or not the participant self-identified as black, being mistaken for another group of African descent often allowed participants to understand how blackness figures in how other U.S. ethnic groups position them in the racial structure. Five "white" Cubans also participated because they arrived during Mariel, and/or because of their insights about Cuban racial identity and culture.[202] Eleven interviewees arrived in the 1980s (9 came as part of the Mariel exodus); 9 arrived in the 1990s (2 arriving during the Balsero Crisis), and 2 arrived since 2000. Four pre-1980 arrivals were included in the sample for their insights about being black and Cuban in the United States. Four interviewees were born in the United States. The sample came from various walks of life, including entrepreneurs, professionals, and the unemployed, but overall the sample was well educated, having received an education in the United States, in Cuba, or in both countries. Ideological differences may exist based on date of arrival, income, or education, but for the Afro-Cubans, experiences based on race proved to be alike, regardless of date of arrival. Fourteen interviews were conducted in Spanish and 16 in English, to accommodate the varied levels of English proficiency. Due to the small and non-random number of participants, their experiences cannot be generalizable to a larger population; however, the small numbers allowed a more in-depth view into their lives.

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[201] Partipants self-identified as "black" or "Negro." Only three interviewees self-identified as "Afro-Cuban" and the term is rarely used on the island. However, the term "Afro-Cuban" is used in the dissertation as it is commonly used in scholarship on black Cubans.

[202] Interviewees quoted can be assumed to be Afro-Cubans unless identified otherwise.

The next sections will discuss the interviewees' responses in regard to their identity choices and attitudes about being black, their relations with African Americans, their relations with white Cubans in Miami, and their encounters with Mexicans in Los Angeles. The final section explains how Afro-Cubans use strategies to manipulate otherness, and elaborates on further implications of the study.

Identity Choices and Attitudes about Blackness

One of the first people I talked with for this project was Pedro,[203] a 44-year-old man living in Los Angeles who came to the United States on a raft in 1994. Because he was a refugee who fled the scarcity of Cuba's Special Period, the extreme abundance Pedro saw in the United States came as a shock and required a period of adjustment. When he first began searching for a job, he learned another aspect of U.S. culture he would need to adjust to besides the language—the question of "race" and what it would mean in his everyday life. The "race" question on his job application caused him much confusion. He explained, "I put on one application that I'm black when the guy, when I went to the interview he looked at me and said, 'You ain't black, you're Cuban.' I said, "Well"—now when I went across the room where he worked, I asked a lady, 'What color I am? And she said, 'You're black.' So after then, you see?" It was not clear to him how he should be defined—should he be defined by his place of birth as the man who called him "Cuban" explained? Does "race" refer only to the color of his skin? Should the language he speaks define him? Because he had to choose between identities on some

[203] All names are pseudonyms.

forms, Pedro felt he could not represent his full self. As we will see, he soon learned from others' reactions to him that being black stood out among his other identities.

The majority of my interviewees reported that when filling out forms, they pick some combination of identities such as "Hispanic or Latino" and "black" and/or "other," depending on the choices offered. When black could be chosen in combination with a Latino or Cuban identity, it was often chosen. The interviews suggest that at least for this sample, the choice to identify oneself as "other," "Hispanic," or a combination of identities is not necessarily an attempt to dissociate from blackness, but rather an effort to account for all their identities, including blackness. Those who said they pick "Hispanic" or "other" or "Cuban" --but generally did not choose black on forms-- acknowledged that "black" was still a salient identity. Fermín, a 38-year-old living in Los Angeles who arrived during Mariel as a child, explained that although he identifies himself by a national identity, he also identifies with being black: "I call myself Cuban. But I'm not afraid or I'm not embarrassed to say that I'm black, that I'm Cuban black or Hispanic black. Yeah, we consider ourselves Hispanic black."

Ernesto, who arrived in the United States during Mariel and now lives in Los Angeles, indicated that he preferred to pick "black" alone. In response to a question about whether he believes black Cubans face more discrimination than white Cubans in the United States he replied, "Oh, yeah [I've experienced discrimination], hey. When you're black they don't care if you're Cuban, they just look at your color. And I'm proud to be black. When I fill out an application, you know, I just put 'black'!" Because Ernesto realized he experienced more discrimination because he was black rather than because he was Latino, he sought to venerate and protect his black identity. He added

that sometimes he chooses 'black' *and* 'Hispanic' to account for the fact he is a Spanish speaker, but being black was more of a salient identity than being Hispanic. Carlos, a 45-year-old man living in Miami who came to the United States in the late 1990s, also prefers not to subsume his identities under "Hispanic;" he chooses to highlight his national identity and his black racial identity. He said, "I am a black Cuban. This is not something that can be checked off on paper applications."

Like Carlos, Digna, a 52-year-old woman living in Miami, expressed her frustration with the limitations of demographic categories and checking boxes on forms. She said,

> Bueno, nosotros no vinimos en ese censo. Eso es unas de las cosas con que estuvimos luchando mucho en esta asociación que teníamos. Porque tu puedes decir que eres blanco, no caucáseo. Puedes decir que eres chino, que eres indio. Puedes decir que eres hispano. Pero, en los hispanos no están los negros mezclados ahí. Y hispano realmente no es una raza. Es una- ni una etnia- esos son solamente una categoría analizante. El lugar donde vive que habla el idioma Español. Entonces no se sabe realmente cuantos negros hay en Estados Unidos… Y, como minoría, no tenemos ninguna, ni ninguna ayuda. Estamos en el bulto de los hispanos y ahí los más conocidos son los que se conocen más. ¿No?
>
> [Well, we are not really portrayed in the census. This is one of the issues that we were fighting for in the association we had.You can say that you are white and not Caucasian. You can say you're Chinese. That you're Indian. You can say that you are Hispanic. But, within the Hispanic category, blacks are not included. Hispanic, in reality, is not a race. It is not even an ethnic group, but it is an analytical category, regarding those that speak the Spanish language. Then, one does not know how many blacks are in the U.S. …As a minority, we don't have benefits or a special aid. We are included in a faceless group of Hispanics. In this group, those that have higher visibility are better-known. Right?][204]

While in reality, Afro-Latinos can now check "Black" in the racial question and "Hispanic" in the ethnic question, Digna offered a critique of the pan-Latino category that does not capture the particular experiences of black Latinos. As scholars have argued, when people think of the "Latino vote" or immigration, education, and language issues

[204] When English translations are provided the original statement was in Spanish.

affecting Latinos, they generally have the larger groups in mind, such as Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans, and do not account for racial distinctions or how the problems of black Latinos are compounded and are afforded less attention.

Because black achievements have been celebrated in post-revolutionary Cuba, the interviewees did not seem to view blackness as a liability. They proudly explained that blacks were integral to Cuba's nation-building project and were more integrated in Cuban society than they are in the United States. It was common for interviewees to express pride in their black identities by talking about the Guerra de Independencia, Cuba's war against Spain for independence, naming the black generals who participated in it. Roberto, a 54-year-old man who came to the United States during Mariel, listed black and white generals of the 10 years' war, highlighting black contributions:

> El noventa por ciento de los mambises eran negros…Y el 90 % de los soldados de infantería que iban a pie eran negros. Los generales- empezando por José Antonio Maceo- después tenemos a Masó, Bartolomé Masó. [Ignacio] Agramonte…Y Quintín Bandera como unos de los tantos negros de la guerra civil Cubana.
>
> [Ninety percent of the rebel forces were black.… And, 90% of the infantry division on foot were black. The generals—beginning with Jose Antonio Maceo—then we have Masó, Bartolomé Masó, Ignacio Agramonte.…and Quintín Bandera as some of the many blacks fighting in the Cuban civil war.]

Roberto used this history to criticize the way Cuba and the United States' Cuban exile community have ignored the existence and contributions of blacks. Other respondents spoke of the contributions of blacks in other areas of Cuban life—religion, music, politics, and government—demonstrating a consciousness that black achievement deserves more recognition in Cuba and in the United States.

Although many respondents distinguished black *Cuban* pride, they also acknowledged a brother/sisterhood with other blacks because of their racial features. For

example, like the majority of the people I interviewed for this study, 41 year old Lucy in Los Angeles, who came to the United States in the early 1990s, is often mistaken as a member of other ethnic groups, based on her color. She said that in Cuba she would be considered a mulata, but in the United States people often think she is Puerto Rican or African American:

> Y tampoco me ofenden. ¿Porque de donde vinimos los negros? Todos vinimos prácticamente de haber sido nuestros ancestros esclavos. Y por nuestras familias anteriores. Y la mezcla, no, ya dió un color un poco más claro- en Cuba el "mulato," ¿No? Pero, también me han confundido con negros americanos. Ya cuando abro la boca, cuando hablo en Inglés que sienten mi acento, que me dicen, "Where are you from? "¿De dónde eres? Pues ahí empezamos a hablar- "Ah, pero mira tú pareces americana…"
>
> [That does not offend me [when people confuse me with another ethnicity] either. Because where did all black people come from? We are descendents of our ancestors who were slaves and through our past relatives and, so, the mix has created a lighter color- that is what we call in Cuba "mulato," no? But I've also been confused with Black American. When I open my mouth and speak in English, in which you can hear my accent, I am asked, "Where are you from?" And, from there we begin to talk and I am told, "Oh, you look American…"]

Like Lucy, the majority of the people I interviewed reported being mistaken for belonging to other groups—mostly African American, Puerto Rican, or Dominican, but also Jamaican, Belizean, Brazilian, Panamanian, Trinidadian, Bahamian, Guyanese, Haitian, and African. That they are often thought to be from these countries, which share significant African heritage, makes Afro-Cubans aware of their inclusion in a larger African diaspora. Like Lucy, they looked at this connection as a matter of fact and were not offended when people associated them with other black peoples.

Nancy, a 65-year-old Afro-Cuban who arrived in the United States in the late 1960s, illustrated how Afro-Cubans also draw on African American cultural symbols along with Cuban ones to express pride in their blackness. She talked about how she

responded to her U.S. American-born granddaughter about the racism the child experienced at school:

> Un día…le pregunto [a mi nieta], "¿Como te fue en la escuela?"…Y dice, "No, yo vi un niño que me dijo, que yo era negra." Y le digo, "¿Que paso?" Y le dije, "¿De qué color tu eres?" "Tu eres azulita, eres *brown*…tu eres *green*, tu eres *red*"…Le dije, "Mira, acuérdate, que de los grandes-grandes-grandes, cuántos eran (negro). "¿Martin Luther King que cosa era? No era verdecito. Era negro pero era Martin Luther King. Tenemos a [Celia Cruz]." Y le digo, fíjate tu en las grandes- "Nat King Cole"…"Tu eres negra, mija, si eso no es problema." Ahora al crear eso- podía haber creado un problema….¿Cuál es el problema?... Hasta los negros le han sacado música, fíjate que no le han sacado…no hay un tema de que la "blanquita rubia" siempre hay…pero esta la "Negra Tomasa." Es que hasta predominamos hasta en eso… Dime donde hay una canción que les dice, "¿La blanquita de los ojos verdes?" Ni el "blanquito rubio" ni el de "pecas." Pero, sin embargo esta la "Negra Tomasa." Y después Celia [Cruz] vino con "La negra tiene tumbao." Te fijas que no hay ni una blanquita, ¿Dime cual ha sido la blanquita o el blanquito que le han sacado una música? A ninguno…
>
> One day, my granddaughter told me what happened to her in school…and [my granddaughter] replied that, "I met another kid that told me that I was black." And I asked her "what happened?" Then I asked her "what color are you?"…I told her that she was blue, you are brown…you are green, and red…"Remember the greatest ones in our lives, how many were black?" "What was Martin Luther King?" He was not green. He was black but still he was Martin Luther King. "And, then, there's [Celia Cruz]. Look at the people who are legends, Nat King Cole…You are black sweetie! Being black is not a problem unless people make it into one. Even blacks have come out with songs about being black and using the term. There are no good songs about the "white Blondie"; it's always about blacks—"La Negra Tomasa." We even dominate in that. Tell me where are the songs about the whitey with the green eyes or the spicy whitey, or the freckled one. But, there is "La Negra Tomasa." Then, Celia [Cruz] came out with the song "La Negra Tiene Tumbao" ['the black woman has rhythm']. Take note: there are no songs about the white woman with punch or musical style. None…

Nancy's response to her granddaughter draws on the connections between people of African descent as well as the assertions of pride that come through in songs by Latinos where "la Negra" is praised. Nancy shows the kinds of connections Afro-Cubans make to navigate the U.S. racial system that denigrates blackness, regardless of country of origin. Her responses and those of other interviewees illustrate that it cannot be assumed that choosing a pan-ethnic category, national identity, or "other" means Afro-Cubans

seek to dissociate from blackness; rather, they make choices in an effort to account for all the ways they are positioned as "other" in U.S. society.

The Black/White Binary Reinforced: Relations with White Cubans

> When I go to the market, people ask me if I am American. Other Cubans do in English…It's the way I look or something.…It's funny—they come with a funny accent, "May I help you?" You know? I know it's an English-speaking country, but most of the time they speak Spanish in the stores, so you know, why me? But they were singling out the fact that I was black. (Mariela, Miami)

Living in Miami, Mariela daily encounters Cubans who assume she is African American, and address her in their accented English. She is a well-traveled dancer who came to the United States in 1991 and already knew English before she arrived, but she is surprised when other Cubans switch to English for her. She educates people about the importance of black culture and religion in Cuba as part of her job, and is critical about the lack of recognition of Afro-Cubans in Miami. Her activism heightens her annoyance with Cuban Americans who do not recognize that she is from Cuba.

Miami is a contested space in part because of the presence of U.S. Blacks. In Cuba, Afro-Cubans are assumed to be Cuban, but the presence of African Americans in Miami changes the backdrop against which Afro-Cubans are categorized. At least three of the interviewees from Los Angeles idealized Miami because of its Cubanness—as Lucy noted, it is a space where even major retailers like Target stores sold "Croquetas Cubanas" and "Vaca Frita."[205] Some respondents who lived in Miami talked about how the exile community helped them when they arrived and the good relations that exist

[205] "Cuban croquettes" and "a fried beef dish."

between Cubans. Luis, a 44-year-old Afro-Cuban who came to the United States on a homemade raft in 1994, felt some comfort in Miami because of its resemblance to Cuba:

> Yo te voy a decir, yo para mi Miami es como Cuba con de "todo." No siento que he llegado a los Estados Unidos. Todavía no te puedo decir que he estado en Estados Unidos. Porque es la misma comida de cubano, son las mismas…lo que veo diferente es que hay personas de otros países pero el clima es más o menos similar. Más o menos… Por eso donde quieras que vas no te hablar el Inglés no es fácil porque nadie te habla Inglés.
>
> [I will tell you that I feel that Miami is like Cuba but with everything [i.e., basic or material needs] that is missing from the island. I don't feel that I've reached the U.S. I still cannot tell you that I know the U.S. because it's the same food eaten by Cubans here, the difference is that you see other people from other countries.…But, the climate is more or less the same, more or less.…Wherever you go if you want to speak English it is not easy, no one speaks English.]

But nineteen other respondents, more than half the group, offered harsh critiques of the Miami Cuban community. The day-to-day encounters, like the one with the clerk at the market in Miami, and being asked if they were American, taught many of the interviewees that they could not expect to be fully accepted by other Cubans in America. The interviewees explained that a disconnect exists between white and black Cubans and pre-1980 and post-1980 refugees, based on real or perceived differences in politics, class, and race. Even four interviewees who live in Los Angeles and have visited Miami said they *hate* Miami because there are "too many Cubans." Miami Cubans were seen as white, not only because of skin color, but also because they were described as having adopted U.S. American values that made them racist, classist, materialistic, and less family oriented.

Carlos (Miami) laments the fact that Cubans he encounters there seem not to realize there are blacks in Cuba. As others have reported, he too is addressed in English by other Cubans who assume he is North American, or from Guyana or Haiti. He said,

"Y, aqui, definitivamente muchos cubanos empiezan hablandome en Inglés a mi. *Cubanos*- empiezan hablandome en inglés. Y lo mas- y entonces yo les hablo en Inglés. Por supuesto, se dan cuenta que yo tengo acento y me preguntan, "¿Pero tu hablas Español?" Digo, "Si." Dicen, "Porque me hablaste en Ingles." Le respondió "Porque me hablaste en Inglés." ["*Cubans* approach me speaking in English.…So, I respond in English. Of course, they notice that I have an accent and so they ask why I speak to them in English. I reply that, well, 'since you spoke to me in English I responded in English.'" For Carlos and others, responding in English is a way of sending a message of disapproval to those who assume that they do not speak Spanish and cannot be Cuban. Carlos believes Cubans who assume a black person cannot be Cuban are in denial. He says, "En Cuba hay pueblos que son casi un 90% negro. Hay pueblos enteros…! Y, entonces, por el favor de Dios!" ["In Cuba, there are towns that are 90% black. These are whole towns…and so, for the love of God!"]. He explains that these Cubans actually do know that there are blacks in Cuba, but do not want to know about them: "Es una voluntad, yo creo que es una voluntad. En el catolicismo hay una condición para el pecado que se llama "ignorancia culpable." Es cuando "Yo no quiero saber." ["It's a matter of denial or lack of will to acknowledge these things. In Catholicism there is a type of precondition for sinfulness called 'Culpable Ignorance'—and this is when someone makes up their minds and believes, 'I don't want to know'"]. This type of racism, he feels, is difficult to overcome.

Caridad, a 36-year-old Miamian who came to the United States in 1980 has few Cuban friends because she is turned off by how white Cubans have treated her. She

explained that white Cubans often act as if she is some sort of exception because she is educated and speaks well:

> I was always the big black one, and "Oh you're pretty enough to be, to be Cuban," "You sound, God, you sound white on the telephone!" "Yeah you're black but you know, your heart is gold." Things like that…It's just, for me it's frustrating when people are saying comments like that, you know? You're black, but….What do you mean 'but,' where's the 'but'?

Digna also resented being treated as an exception by white Cubans:

> Ellos dicen que soy "una negra muy decente." Te das cuenta? No pueden dejar el prototipo, no pueden dejar el patrón: que saben que los negros son chusmas…Tú sabes, yo en general siempre le causo un "trauma" – siempre le causo un trauma a las personas cubanas blancas porque tienen una idea. O tienen un cuadro en la mente de como deben ser los negros o como son. ¿Tú sabes? Entonces, cuando me conocen pues cambian de idea y dicen, "¿Que es esto?" Lo que ven es un fenómeno.
>
> They say that I am a "very decent black person." So, as you can see, they cannot let go of the stereotype. They cannot let go of the basic image of the black person as vulgar or uneducated. Generally, I cause some sort of "trauma" to white Cubans because of their misguided image of how blacks are—or, how they should be. You know? So, when they meet me their image changes and they think, "This is an exception," seeing you as some type of "rare phenomenon."

Being viewed as an exception illuminates the stereotypical views some white Cubans hold of blacks. These attitudes and the denial of blackness on the part of some Cuban exiles are considered a slap in the face to those blacks who have recently arrived from Cuba, where blacks and mulattos are the highest percentage of the "true" population of Cuba.[206]

Some respondents attempted to explain why some white Cubans in Miami display racist sentiments. For example, Mariela contended that this racism can be attributed to the lingering racism among white Cubans that existed in Cuba:

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[206] Recall that in chapter 1, some members of the exile community described themselves as the "true" Cubans because they were uncorrupted by Fidel Castro. Here, the implication is that the "true" Cubans are those who have lived there most recently and have more connection to the Cuba of today.

> I think that…many of them have old prejudice and patterns that people [from the exile community] have in their mind. And yeah, and then what happens is that, you know—do what the Romans do. And it reinforces what they had a long time ago in their minds, that Castro kind of put on hold.

Mariela connected racism among the exile community to racist attitudes that prevailed before the revolution, but she also observed that white American racism has influenced or strengthened white racism from Cuba. Carlos, who spoke of the white Cuban denial of blackness, above, argued that the white racism that exists in Cuba is stronger in the United States because some Cuban Americans adopt the United States' more rigid racism. Likewise, Fermín explained,

> Sometimes it's gotta do with the people [who] already live here, like the white American, Caucasian people, and most of them, they already have a little bit of that in their blood. White people they, automatically, most of them, they a little racist [*sic*]. Some of them more than others, but they're a little racist. And so you got another big group of white people, that are Cubans, that they come in and they fit in with their community, and since they fit in with their community they start working together, you know, helping each other out. So of course they're gonna think like the other person. Because you start hanging out with the other person, so you most likely gonna act like that person [*sic*]. And that's exactly what happens. You know people let that crap get into their head, you know, and they forget about where they came from. And who *they* are. And that's why it happens, real simple.

In their explanations of white Cuban racism in the United States, these interviewees highlight the fact that for immigrants, learning how to be U.S. American also means learning how to negotiate race. If one can become "white," a position that includes many advantages, many will do so. The fact that black and white Cubans, coming from the same country and fleeing the same communist system, are so differently received and racialized in the United States powerfully illustrates the continued strength of the black/white divide in the United States.

Some respondents maintained it was not race but generation and ideology that caused dissent. For instance, Antonio, a "white" Cuban who came during Mariel and endured the stigma of being known as a Marielito said, "Entonces pensaban que uno era comunista porque tenían una mentalidad diferente a los cubanos que llevaban más tiempo…que llevaban 20 años aquí. Entonces, hubo muchos choques en ese concepto. Vuelvo y te repito: la única persona que me ha discriminado a mí ha sido el mismo cubano, paisano mío…Que vino antes que nosotros en los- en la década del '60 y la década del '70. Esa gente si me discriminaron a mí. O, sea, yo siempre lo he dicho, no es que- yo no tengo miedo para decirlo. ["So, they [Cubans who arrived during the 1960s and 1970s] would think that one was a "communist" just because some of us would have a different mentality than those residing here for 20 years. So, there was a lot of conflict in this area.…I will repeat myself again: the only people to discriminate against me have been Cubans, my fellow countrymen that came before us in the 60s and 70s decades. Those people truly discriminated against me. I have always said it and am not afraid to say it"]. Carlos found their discrimination of him ironic "Porque yo soy tan cubano como *él*. Y posiblemente sea *mas* cubano que él. [Because I am as Cuban as they are, or maybe moreso"]. Although he is not black, Antonio also felt discriminated against because he arrived during Mariel, among a group that was blackened in their stigmatization by the U.S. public and media. Like black Cubans, he said he was able to build community with Cubans of all colors who arrived in the United States after 1980, but he and other interviewees viewed the 1960s/1970s generation as too concerned with Castro and too rigid in their politics.

According to Magaly, a 37-year-old dancer who lives in Los Angeles and came to the United States in 1997, it is difficult for one to feel comfortable among the "old guard" in Miami if one does not agree with their politics:

> I'm saying if you're living in Miami, then you don't have the freedom to express whatever you want to say because there they are against Fidel, so then you're not in a free country.…So they don't really want to talk about Cuba.…I mean, they don't say a lot of good things about Cuba. The first thing they want to talk about is Fidel. And then some of the people they say, well, if Fidel—I'm not going to send any money until Fidel dies. And I'm saying, well, your family is going to be starving, you know? They need money, so I don't think like that. For me, my family is my family. So even if Fidel, even if Bush, even Chavez, even—I don't care who is the president, but my family for me is priority [*sic*].

A major criticism levied against the Castro government has been its intolerance of ideas not sanctioned by the government. Magaly and others assert Miami Cubans are similarly intolerant of ideals not sanctioned by their community. For instance, Juan Carlos, a white Cuban musician in Los Angeles, explained that in Miami, it had been taboo for a while to play music directly from Cuba, but in Los Angeles Cubans were more relaxed about this issue. He said, exasperated, "Over there [in Miami], 'Oh, you're playing Fidel's music,' What the hell? Fidel's music? It's *your* music! It's like when I go to Cuba I don't give a damn about Fidel. I go see my family, I go have fun, I don't care about Fidel. He can stay there and do whatever, I don't care." Magaly, Juan Carlos, and others complained that capitalist values and political opposition of Miami's early exiles clouded what they viewed as the more traditional Cuban values of family and culture.

Despite the negative experience with white Cuban exiles, overall a Cuban national identity remained important for the interviewees. Race, political ideology, and class divisions sometimes got in the way of unity, but there was something about being Cuban that was special to all of them. For example, Mariela in Miami grew up in a family that

was very conscious about racism and organized against it and worked to preserve African traditions. Despite being very critical of white racism, she also spoke passionately about the connections between Cubans of all colors:

> The only thing that I have to say…we Cubans…for freedom we all get together, you know? That's one thing that really makes the country so great, to kick out the Spanish colonization…during the war [of independence], you know?...Because we still have a spirit of—we have our problems at home, but you don't mess with us, you know? We have problems in our family, but you don't mess with them.

Her comments characterize the sentiments that were expressed by all: a love for Cuba, and for Cubans. Racism among Cubans is a very complex issue, but much like African Americans with a "double consciousness"—those who cling to an American identity while still being able to see how they are positioned outside—the people I interviewed also held strongly to their national identity. As Mariela contended, Cubans are a big family who find ways to come together when it counts.

Relating to African Americans and Being "Black"

Some respondents countered rejection by white Cuban exiles by bonding with African Americans, although most of my respondents lived in Cuban, Mexican, or mixed neighborhoods where they were unlikely to associate with African Americans on a daily basis. Still, they were very aware of African Americans and African American identity because many were so often lumped into that category. Four interviewees expressed feeling more comfortable with or preferring to associate with African Americans than other Latinos even though they realized that they were also not fully accepted by African Americans. Only one person, Regla, a second-generation woman whose father is a black Cuban and whose mother is Salvadorean, said she was uncomfortable with African

Americans. Living in Los Angeles with many Mexican and Central American friends, most of her friends were Latinos.

Carlos feels that he is treated more fairly and as an individual by African Americans where he lives and encounters African Americans often, which he describes as a "ghetto" in Miami. When they first notice he is not North American they seem to withdraw, but he said if he continues to reach out they are usually accepting. He explained, "a mí me es más fácil lidiar con negros que con los cubanos. ¿Ves? Yo prefiero lidiar con esa, esa es la manera de que me acepten como individuo. Podemos compartir muchos valores comunes, tenemos bastantes cosas. Yo puedo- y con las cosas que no me gusten yo puedo- yo las respetos son de ellos. Y puesto a relaciones de respeto y eso, con los cubanos, me es más difícil." [Personally, it is easier for me to deal with African Americans than Cubans, and I prefer them. They will accept me as an individual. We share similar values and many things. It can be done. We have mutual respect and balanced relations while with Cubans it is much more difficult."].

Ariane, a 22-year-old living in Los Angeles who came to the United States in 2004, also expressed a preference for African Americans and their culture. He made note of how African Americans respond to him when he walks on the street, and that they address him as they would a fellow African American. When they hear his accent however, they are caught off guard and categorize him as not truly "black." Despite this, he explained, "I feel more comfortable with black Americans cause, I don't know if because it's the skin or I don't know but I feel, you know, we go out, we hang out, we talk, you know. It's almost the same [as with Cubans], you know." Of other Latinos, such as Mexicans, he said, "They like kind of boring [*sic*], so, they don't do what I used to do

in Cuba. They don't go and dance, they just go to a job…and I don't like that, yes, I like how you find like dancing, yes, talking, seeing, doing whatever." Ariane is hard at work earning his GED and working at a local Japanese restaurant, but when he is not working he enjoys playing basketball and dancing at a local dance club where he often "shows off" his dance style. He complained about the freedom that is lost in the United States because one must always be preoccupied with work to be able to pay the rent and have basic necessities, and sees Mexicans as caught in that trap. He relates to the lifestyle of many of his African American classmates in his GED class who also include music and dance in their socializing.

Charlie, a 38-year-old who lives in Miami, does not have a perceptible accent in English and is able to blend in with African Americans for the most part. It isn't until he speaks Spanish or hangs out with other Latinos that African Americans at his job or elsewhere realize he is not "one of them":

> [The African American person says,] "Yeah, man, you a Chico?"[207] I tell them, "Yeah, I'm a Chico, man."…Some of them, you know, if they know me for a long time, they're like, man, it ain't no thing, man. You're still down with me but others would be like, "You're a Chico, yeah." They're like, dang, you know, they like watch the way they be around me like, if, you know, so they got something against it. Whatever, you know, I say it's all good. It's all gravy, baby.

Charlie feels at home with both Latinos and blacks, speaks in black slang, and has had experiences much like those experienced by urban Black and Latino youth, including surveillance by the police. He views these challenges to his identity as just part of the territory; they do not upset him. He mentions that his own biological family includes much racial mixing, and because his wife is Colombian and his children are mixed, he cannot afford to be racist himself, so he navigates the racial landscape with ease.

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[207] Slang term used by some African Americans to refer to people of Latino descent.

Some respondents desired to connect with African Americans but found language a barrier. Caridad recalled how her experiences in grade school in the United States showed her that she was not fully accepted by African Americans, or white Cubans:

> I couldn't talk to them, to the black American kids. Because I had no ways of communicating [because of weak English].…For the born Cubans I was the black, you know, the black student or the black girl. For the black students, I was not a true black. I was not a true sister so to speak. And they always, they never understood why it is that I hung around people who didn't look like me.

Caridad describes being caught in the middle: among white Cubans she stood out because of her color and among African Americans she stood out because of her language. In grade school the language barrier forced her to hang out with other Cubans, but as her English proficiency improved, she was offered more choices. Today, she does not associate with Cubans because of the racism she endured as a child, and she feels more at home with African Americans, Haitians, and "international" people. Despite not fully fitting in with African Americans, she chooses friendships with African Americans over Cubans.

When Juan (Los Angeles) first arrived in the United States in 1993, he also desired to connect to African Americans but found few could speak Spanish and communicate with him. Sometimes African Americans disbelieved that he could not speak English well:

> [African Americans] see me black and I…with my broken English, sometimes, people thought that I was "retarded" or something, you know? It's funny, sometimes, you know. When I speak with the black dudes, they look at me like, "Come on, Bro." They think I am making an accent. You know, and they look at me like, "Come on. Cut it out, you know. Can you speak correctly, you know?" And they look at me like I am making fun or something.

For the African Americans Juan encountered, a black person who spoke with an accent or another language was so unusual that they believed he had to be faking it. Juan also

noted that whereas he could find Anglos who could communicate with him in Spanish because they had learned a second language, he rarely encountered African Americans in Los Angeles who could speak Spanish.

As Benjamin Bailey (2002) and others have found in their studies of second-generation black immigrants who adopt African American culture and style, four of the interviewees chose to speak African American Vernacular English (AAVE) in the interview, exhibiting their affiliation with African Americans. Two came to the United States at a relatively young age (11 and 21 years old), but the other two arrived in their thirties and forties. Although previous studies attest to the reluctance of first-generation black immigrants to be associated with African Americans or to adopt their style of language and culture, these men contradict such findings. All four men --the adoption of AAVE was less noticeable among women-- lived in Los Angeles, where they became proficient in African American English because jobs and neighborhoods put them in contact with Black Americans. In Miami, interviewees on the whole were less proficient in English in general, and in AAVE in particular.

Digna lives in Miami and felt more comfortable conducting our interview in Spanish, but affirmed a strong black identity (as noted earlier). She criticized the African American view that she was not a "real" black in a narrative about an encounter with a black security guard in a department store:

> Si, una vez, yo no sé que pasó en una tienda que fui a cambiar algo y la mujer estaba muy atallada y un poco atormentada. Y, entonces cuando yo me separe, el security que estaba sentado dijo, "Estos negros latinos, no son negros."…A decirle, "¿Que cosa es lo que usted dice?" ¿Se cree que yo nací en una "incubadora"? Este color lo tengo de alguna incubadora…Le dije, "No yo tengo…mi gallina es de 'África' también." Y, ahí bueno, el hombre se quedo abochornado. Ya no sabía lo que iba hacer.

> [I don't exactly recall what happened at a department store when I went to exchange a purchased item and the attending employee was a bit stressed. The store security guard said something like, "These black Latins are not *real* Blacks."…I replied, "What are you saying?" Does that person think that I was born in an incubator, that got this color from being in an "incubator?"…I told him, "My hen is from Africa, too."…So, the man was embarrassed and did not know how to respond.]

She used the analogy of a hen (mother Africa) and her chicks (people of African descent) to argue that she too has a real black mother and was not made in an incubator. She criticized the African American for his belief that African Americans can make exclusive claims to blackness. In her view, African Americans have learned racism from Anglo Americans and because there is so much racism in the United States, both Anglos and Black Americans judge new immigrants as outsiders. In confronting the U.S. racial structure and assumed notions of blackness, black immigrants challenge the idea of black racial unity, a construct that was vital in African American civil rights struggles. As Hintzen and Rahier (2003) suggest, and Digna and others illustrate, immigrant communities can and do contest exclusive claims to U.S. citizenship by both black and white Americans.

In cities with so many Spanish speakers, such as Miami and Los Angeles, black and white Americans often call for the exclusion of Latino immigrants by asserting that Spanish speakers have an unfair advantage, or that Latinos (viewed as immigrants) are taking American jobs. Both arguments have been prominent in African American/Latino conflict. Being both black and Cuban, how do Afro-Cubans fit within such debates? The interviewees provide many examples, as we have noted, of being discriminated against because of their language *and* their color, but in at least one instance, being both black and Cuban (or Spanish speaking) was more of an advantage than being African

American. Pedro recounted a story about applying for the same job as an African American, with whom he became friendly in the process. According to Pedro, although the African American was highly qualified, he was rejected because he could not speak Spanish, and Pedro got the job instead. As he told the story it was clear that the incident still saddens him:

> So when it came down to—to the position—you know, they chose me because I was speaking Spanish. And they did not choose him. Boy, I wish you could have seen that boy's face…That was one of the things that I feel bad about that I was chosen over an American because I speak Spanish. It really hurt me…And I said, "Brother, you know what, listen, my man, we can still hang together and you just have to speak Spanish, you have to learn how to speak Spanish."

Pedro's sadness about disenfranchising a "brother" reveals a consciousness that can be drawn upon to try and bridge differences based on language. Pedro has very dark skin and his own blackness cannot be denied. He has adopted AAVE because, in his quite diverse social group, he has many African American friends, but he speaks it with a strong Cuban accent. Pedro's complex subjectivity and positioning between Black and Latino categories may enable increased awareness among African Americans that "Latinos" are not a faceless hoard of people taking their jobs, but include people who look like them who are also trying to navigate a system that pits brother against brother, and sets one disenfranchised minority group against another.

"Latinidad" in Los Angeles: Relations with Mexicans

In Los Angeles, there is no Cuban enclave, but an annual festival at Echo Park serves as a place to bring LA Cubans together. Historically Mexican Echo Park, made famous by the 1994 film *Mi Vida Loca* about the lives of female Mexican gang members, hosts a Cuban festival on May 20 each year, in commemoration of Cuban Independence

Day. The festival takes place at Echo Park Lake, which includes a statue of Cuban patriot Jose Martí among its monuments. I met several of the people I interviewed for the first time at this festival, which many attend on a yearly basis. They indicated that the festival is a space where newly arrived Cubans can find people to help them get settled in the United States. But most of the Latinos they talk with on a daily basis are Mexicans.

The interviewees reported a range of positive and negative experiences relating to Mexicans[208] in Los Angeles. Some were angered by multiple incidents when Mexicans seemed to look down on or dismiss them, while others chose to focus on more positive interactions. Five interviewees spoke very specifically about having good relations with Mexicans and other Latinos based on a common language or immigrant goals. For example, Nancy stated,

> Y, ahí, dije, "Aquí no importa el problema que sea mexicano o de ninguna parte." Es unirnos- esa es la clave. Y llegue y la verdad que aquí no me importa ya, vaya ya no pregunto *si* son cubanos o *si no* son cubanos. Me siento feliz cuando oigo a alguien que habla español. Ya no pregunto de donde…"Oye, tu hablas Español" y ahí ya es el amigo, ya es el hermano… Y las mismas necesidades porque después miramos que ellos vienen a lo mismo que nosotros- de diferente forma- pero vienen a lo mismo: A abrirse paso, a los estudios de los hijos, a las oportunidades que hay en este país, y vienen a lo mismo. Así que nos une- aparte del idioma- las mismas necesidades.
>
> It does not matter if my friends are Mexican or from elsewhere, "unity" is the key. The truth is I don't care, nor do I ask, if they are Cuban or not. I just feel happy when I hear someone speaking Spanish. Instantly, people turn into friends and brothers that's what happens.…The language unites us all.…And, necessity unites us, too. We can see that they came with the same intentions—in different ways—but to make a better life for themselves, to better educate their children, to take advantage of the opportunities afforded to us, and, so, they come for the same. So, aside from the differences, the same basic necessities unite us.

Nancy talked about a common immigrant experience, which encouraged empathy with Mexicans and other immigrants in Southern California. If someone new to the country

[208] The term "Mexican" was often used to refer to anyone of Mexican descent with no distinction made for immigration status or generation.

needs furniture, food, or other resources, Nancy feels compelled to help, as others helped her when she first arrived.

Lucy enjoys Los Angeles' diversity and spoke of the blending of cultures as a positive part of the immigrant adaptation process:

> Pero, yo le entiendo porque aquí estoy mezclado con mucha gente de otras nacionalidades. Y entonces, tantos mexicanos en mi trabajo. Mi mejor amiguita en el trabajo es mexicana. O sea, otras conque yo trabajaba en otros lugares también. O sea, que hay tanta mezcla. Tanto rose a diario en cuestiones de trabajo, en cosas que no va comentando- ya ahí entonces te vas creando un habito y vas agarrando unas palabras mismas que uso constantemente, que no usaría en Cuba. Y las uso aquí porque quieras o no quieras se te va mezclando la cultura.
>
> [And, so now I understand that here I mix and interact with many people from other nations. And, then, with so many Mexicans in my job. My best friend at work is a Mexican woman and another one that I worked with at another job was also Mexican—there's so much of a mix, so many daily interactions, because of work, things that one says…one starts to create a habit of using certain words that one begins to use constantly, that I would not use in Cuba. Whether one likes it or not, the cultures begin to mix.]

Lucy spoke further of having to modify her Spanish so that her clients from other countries who use words that Cubans would not use could understand what she was talking about. Living in Los Angeles, one cannot help but learn about Mexicans and Mexican culture, especially their Spanish, and one can speak Spanish daily. As Afro-Cubans find their commonalities with the Mexican community a common "Latino" identity can be forged, with Spanish at the foundation.

According to Fermín, however, a black person in Los Angeles is not readily regarded as Latino because in that city a Latino is supposed to look like an Indian or be of Mexican descent. While this stereotype leaves blacks out of the Latino category, in California this can be an advantage for black Latinos who thus avoid the intense surveillance of, and stigma attached to, people identified as Mexican. He said,

> If you don't look like a Mexican, then you ain't no Hispanic. And the same thing with immigration, that's the reason why, when…supposedly the police or the immigration, when they attack people, they only attack a certain group. You know, if you look like this, you're Hispanic. And I could, like me, I'm Hispanic too, and I could be walking down the street they won't mess with me, because I don't look like them. Which is what, a stereotype, right?

Fermín's comments remind us of the difference immigrant or refugee status makes, and that being African American allows a certain privilege based on the perception that African American = American and that Latino = foreign or non-American. Here we see a concrete way that the complex native/foreigner frame discussed in Chapter 2, which black Americans sometimes endorse, can work in the favor of people perceived to be Black. Because their blackness leaves Afro-Cubans out of the Latino category, they benefit from the assumption that they are American in a state where whites use the native/foreigner frame to exclude and police "foreigners," particularly Mexicans.

Still, other interviewees lamented the fact that they were not viewed as Latinos because of their skin color. They reported negative relations with Mexicans who questioned their identities and presumed they were not Spanish speakers. Ernesto, who arrived in the United States during Mariel, criticized Mexican friends who are ignorant about geography and racist toward black people:

> "You know, I have a lot of Mexican friends, but they have issues with blacks, you know? They have issues with blacks. They're ignorant. Those that don't got an education, they're ignorant regarding blacks. That's what I hate, because those that live in a black neighborhood listen to the black music....And they love black sisters!"

Ernesto, a major proponent of Afro-Cuban culture and religion, complained that Mexicans (and whites) often enjoyed black culture without paying respect to black people.

Juan chose to confront Mexicans who did not realize he could understand them when they spoke Spanish and talked about him in a derogatory manner. He provided an example of an incident at his workplace:

> I was working one day…I used to do a lot of "extra" [acting] work—in the background. You know, I was around the "catering"—there was a "catering" you know. And they were wrapping up, you know, putting everything away…and there was some cake left over and some pie, you know. And, I was with another friend of mine who is an African American [and we were] eating. And, one of the guys said [in Spanish], "Hey you better hurry up, you know, and put everything away because see 'the flies.'" And, I turned around and said, "Excuse me." So, of course, I said something back in Spanish. "You have to be careful with what you say, you know. Because you never know. And, that's very disrespectful, blah, blah, blah…."

Several interviewees mentioned that they confronted Mexicans who disrespected them head-on. In most accounts, after they were confronted, the perpetrators usually backed down because of their surprise or embarrassment over their mistake. However, Pedro recounted the following story about an incident where racial misunderstandings with Mexicans quickly escalated:

> You know, it's a big thing because I was in this Latin club in Hollywood, really low down, I mean, piece of shit club. Most people are Mexican or Central American, so I went to the club with this friend of mine who is the detective. And his girlfriend, she's a detective, too. So, he is black; his girlfriend is Mexican. So in the club we're sitting there, so you know, when his girlfriend came in, so it was two black guys sitting with two Mexicans. Mexican men didn't take to that. They did not like that shit. So they started picking on me, picking on me, and my friend said, "You know what, let's get out of here." And his girlfriend said, "Oh, yeah, yeah." And the other girl said, "Oh, let's go." Once we got to the door, one of the guys attacked me. That drunk asshole, I had to punk his ass. So we started getting in a fight with him. My friend, you know, the detective he pulled the gun and he had to shoot one to the air. So once that happened and I started speaking in Spanish, they were not believing. They were like, what? This nigga's Hispanic! No wonder he's so crazy. You know, because I went crazy! I started throwing chairs and, oh God. So by the time the police came in, it was—that was another place where I found out that I was black.

As Pedro noted, these incidents helped him realize that being black obscured his Hispanic identity when he was among other Latinos, because it was more salient, and it was

viewed as more of a problem that his Latino or Cuban identity. In his experience, he suffered more racism at the hands of Latinos than by "Americans": "Now, I'm laughing about it, but…the racism that I felt here most in LA, it was by Latin people. Not by Americans. It's ironic it's like that." Due to Los Angeles's demographics, my respondents were more likely to interact with ethnic minorities than Anglos in their daily lives. Pedro and at least three other interviewees mentioned that Anglos seem less surprised about their ethnicity once they explained it, and that they felt less discriminated against by them.

Pedro's attitudes seem to contradict the way racism in the United States is usually framed, as white prejudicial attitudes and discrimination against blacks and other minorities. Because of its institutionalized nature, white racism in the United States is complex and may not always be manifest in face-to-face encounters, especially in areas where whites are a smaller percentage of the population. The fact that whites may view Afro-Cubans as a mere curiosity can be attributed to white American privilege, which allows them to ignore and be oblivious of intricacies of race that must concern African Americans and Latinos. Still, it is necessary to interrogate racist attitudes toward blacks held by other Latinos. These attitudes speak to prejudices that also exist in their countries of origin, prejudices that developed because of the legacy of colonization by whites. These prejudicial attitudes transported from the home country intersect and interact with those cultivated in the white-dominated culture of the United States.

Despite living in a city with a large "Latino" population, a national identity as Cuban was more salient than a pan-Latino identity overall. Fermín illustrated this in his strongly held desire to retain Cuban Spanish. Fermín came to the United States during

Mariel when he was 11 years old and now has a barely perceptible accent in English. When he speaks, he often uses AAVE. I asked him, "now that you've been here [in Los Angeles] so long, have you started to pick up Mexican Spanish?" He replied,

> Oh no, no no no no no no…[laughs]. I try to stay 100% Cuban.…When I do hang around my Cuban people, I like to let it all out. I talk 100% Cuban. Yeah…cause I cannot, that cannot go away. That's why a lot of people say "Oh," you know, "you been here for so long, and your accent, your Cuban accent, man, it's like you just came from Cuba." And I'm like "Yeah man, you gotta keep it real."

Fermín sticks to a Cuban Spanish accent to reaffirm his national identity, not to distinguish himself from blacks, because he in fact chooses to speak English in a way that would associate him with African Americans. Regardless of the way English was spoken by interviewees and despite the fact that they all speak Spanish, the unique political concerns of Cuban refugees and the idea of Cuban exceptionalism—whereby the experiences of Cubans differ greatly from those of most other Latinos—may cause Cuban Americans to fall somewhat outside the Latino banner. For Afro-Cubans, their blackness also calls their identity as Latinos into question. Living among other Latinos in a city with no sizable Cuban community, some find ways to connect with other Latinos and build on their commonalities. But the particular experiences of black Cubans which do not allow them to fully fit as Latinos illustrate what is left out in the pan-ethnic category.

Manipulating Otherness

For almost all the black Cuban respondents, defining and asserting an identity is always in their consciousness because they are confronted by people curious about their identities on an almost daily basis. Their responses reveal they are always surprising

other people—showing people that their preconceived notions about race, national origins, and language are wrong. Ultimately, the fact that they are constantly questioned illuminates the ways they do not fully fit in many traditional categories and communities, but Afro-Cubans negotiate racial identity and the implicated power relations in the U.S. context by manipulating their otherness in ways that challenge racial power and interrogate rigid ideals of race. Some examples were discussed earlier, but in this section I highlight other scenarios as illustrations of particular strategies, such as humor, chameleon/masking, and anger and confrontation.

Humor

For some interviewees, the interest people have in their identity makes them feel "special" and is not a negative experience. Several spoke about the experience as being "fun" or funny. The humor they found in various situations allows them to be in a "one up" position in their interactions with people who exclude them or do not understand them. For instance, Carlos (Miami) finds a bit of humor in his interactions with people who are curious about his identity and has some fun with it, albeit in a sometimes "bitter way":

> Mira, al principio me sorprendía, ahora, a veces me divierto con una risa amarga. ¿No? Como una diversión amarga. ¿No? Porque, en definitiva no es algo que yo hubiera determinado- ser distinto. ¿No he determinado mi perfil, no? No, no es algo que yo escogí. ¿No? Entonces, pero, me doy cuenta también que las personas tienen sus límites, las personas tienen su capacidad y *allá ellos*. Es como una diversión amarga. A veces me burlo un poco de ellos. Juego un poco con ellos- y esas cosas así… Me entiende? Entonces, eh…Incluso, cuando me doy cuenta que es un latino entonces ya lo cojo para burla, porque ya este viene pensando que yo soy de Haiti.

> [Look, at the beginning I felt surprise [about people's curiosity and attitudes], but now I have some fun, in a bit of a bitter way sometimes—a sour diversion, because it is not something I chose, being different. I've also come to the awareness that people have their limitations. And, well, that's up to them. It's a bitter form of diversion sometimes making fun of them, or playing with them, and such things…Understand? Especially, when it is a Latin speaking to me, I take it as a joke: "Look at this one thinking that I am from Haiti." I take it as a joke, then.]

Carlos makes a game out of figuring out what people think he is, and he approaches people knowing that what they formulate in their minds about his identity usually ends up being wrong. Luis (Miami) plays a similar game when he encounters African Americans. He said, Por ejemplo, en lo "Afro," puedo confundirlo pero creo qué es diferente. ¿No se? Para mí…pero hay gente que me han dicho, "No, yo pensaba que tú eras 'negro americano.'" En los sitios que he estado pero yo no he hablado, he estado así como quien diga." ["For example, in African American circles, they think I am one of them and, eventually, say "I thought you were African American." I stay quiet on purpose to see what they think and say"]. Roberto (Miami) is often taken to be Dominican. His wife laughed, "Yeah. Entonces él le lleva la corriente. [He lets them think it]. He'll start talking like a Dominican. He plays along with them and allows them to think he's Dominican—going with the flow!" Although his wife makes light of this, for Roberto the humor is bitter; indeed, he responds to her comment: "It's not funny for me."

The interactions described here are bitter on one hand, because depending on who is asking and why, the person posing the questions may express an entitlement and a demand that "others" explain themselves. The person who asks places him or herself in a superior position and the person being questioned is positioned as subordinate. On the other hand, by playing along with people's assumptions Afro-Cubans invert the hierarchy

and establish that they are actually the ones who are more knowledgeable. They expose the ignorance of those who are asking questions and who do not get the joke.

In another example, Caridad discussed making light of people's ignorance about her identity. "But what I tend to do lately," she said, "is that I tend to say, 'I'm from the largest island of the Caribbean' and so, just to make it fun." She describes Cuba in this way to provide a bit of a lesson for many Americans unfamiliar with world geography. She laughed about the extreme ignorance of some, such as an African American who asked about her identity:

> It happened to me that I was in New Orleans with my parents and obviously this, this black guy here says, "speak." And you know [I was speaking Spanish with my dad]. And, I started speaking Spanish, so he asked, "Where are you guys from?" And I said, "Oh, we're from Cuba." And he said, "Is that close to Africa?" And I said, "Yes it is." Because I figured at that point, it really didn't matter.

Thus, the use of humor in these scenarios displays a sort of glee that can be gained from pointing to the ignorance of those in power or those perpetuating the ideals of the powerful. The interactions between Afro-Cubans and those who question them about their identities point to the continued rigidity and strength of race in U.S. society, but they also present a critique of it.

Chameleon / Masking

Charlie highlights his ability to blend into various identities and be one step ahead of most people he encounters. When asked if it upsets him that white Cubans often do not recognize that he is Cuban, he replied,

> No. I just feel like, good, 'cause I'm more a chameleon; it's good that you don't know what's going on in here. You know what I mean? I'd rather know…like put it that way, [it's] smarter for me to know what's going on and make them

> think— make other people think, oh, yeah, they know it—they think that they know what's going on, but I really do.

Charlie expresses the pleasure of knowing that although Cuban exiles underestimate who he is and what he knows, it is he who knows more. Thus, rather than be hurt by their rejection, he can take their dismissal of him in stride. In addition, he can navigate several communities with the advantage of knowing what they do not know. With multiple identities, Charlie and other black Cubans know what it is like to be black, and what it is to be Cuban. This knowledge provides a multiple consciousness and an ability to anticipate how others perceive them and how to respond. They are able to use this knowledge to "play" people—they can hide behind disguises that allow small victories in their everyday encounters with others.

Juan also expressed his ability to navigate several communities because of his experiences in Cuba. He noted that people of different ethnicities often do not mix residentially in Los Angeles, but "the good thing is that I pass those boundaries [between groups]. Because I come from Cuba—that we don't have that. You know, what I mean? And, I feel that I take advantage of the cultures here. That's the good thing." Further, he said,

> What really amazes me is how people sometimes, they don't go farther than…I mean, people from the West LA, they don't go to the South Central…and, vice versa, no? People from the east like my ex-wife, you know, she was Chicana, you know, 100 per cent—"viva la Raza." Proud to be a Chicana. She, you know, and her friends they never come to the west side. And, I love, I love the west side. Because there is, culturally, a lot of things happening here. You know what I mean? And they don't cross from downtown down to here [Santa Monica]. Then, you have the white Americans, you know, they don't go south—they don't pass from Pico and La Brea. So every time I talk to somebody, they're from a different, you know, group, I mean, *etnia* or ethnicity and I…I tell them that I went to this part of town and they look at me, "You crazy?! Don't go there!" I am like, "So?" And, people sometimes in that community when I go there…You know, sometimes, they look at you like, "What are you doing here?" It's crazy.

> Sometimes, it's kind of fun. You know the way… I mean for me it's something strange to see how people self-segregate themselves.

Juan relishes being transgressive and going into the neighborhoods where supposedly he should not go or does not belong. He acknowledges that he does not fully fit in any community, but not fitting allows him the freedom to navigate several different communities. This freedom, and his Cuban past, allows him to be less afraid to venture into places many others will not go.

Anger and Confrontation

In addition to humor and a stoic "know it all" stance, anger is another prominent response to being placed "outside." When people take a position of superiority vis a vis Afro Cubans, assuming they cannot speak Spanish or making other conjectures about their identities, respondents are more likely to be insulted. In these cases, some said they would confront people directly or "trick" them as means of "getting them back." Pedro (Los Angeles) spoke of "tricking" unsuspecting Mexicans by showing them his Spanish-speaking ability:

> Sometimes I trick motherfuckers…sometimes I just speak the best Spanish. I go—for example, I go to the place where there's a whole bunch of Mexicans, a whole bunch of Mexicans. And I go there and I ask the question in the best Spanish I can speak. And they do not understand me most of the time. Because why—because they are really, really low, low, low class people. They don't have education. So when they see this black guy speaking that perfect Spanish, they totally get scared. I mean, I've seen that many, many times.

Pedro expressed his frustration living in Los Angeles where he often encounters Mexicans who assume he is African American and make derogatory comments. The constant assumption that he cannot speak Spanish is seen as an affront, and Pedro plays with people to teach them a lesson about assumptions. In doing so he perpetuates

stereotypes about Mexicans, exposing the cycle of misunderstanding that may occur between groups. Here he uses anger, or indignation—another strategy marginalized groups use to resist hegemony (Lorde, 1984).

Fermín expressed a desire to "put people in their place" as well, by revealing that he too can speak Spanish. He recounted an incident when a Spanish-speaking person mistakenly assumed he could not understand him:

> I went and ordered a…croissant sandwich, so he [the person behind the counter] just felt like saying something [in Spanish]. You know, trying to be funny. He wasn't being like racial, I didn't feel intimidated, or anything like that, but you know he was just trying to be funny. So I let him know I know Spanish too…it hasn't happened really that much [that people say negative things about Fermín]. But when it happens, I get 'em good. And I love doing that because I shut 'em down quick.

He expressed the frustration that others spoke of in their relations with Cuban Americans—annoyance with the presumption that they could not speak Spanish—and then "showed them" by demonstrating his Spanish ability.

Jorge, a second generation "white" Cuban living in Miami, expressed his anger in a critique of the United States' racial classification system. I interviewed him because, as a Santero, he associates closely with many black Cubans, especially those who came during Mariel, and he feels "black." When we first spoke he talked about his disgust over how the Miami community was discriminating against him and other practitioners of Santería. During the course of our conversation, I asked how he identifies himself on the census or other forms. He replied that in response to questions about race, he plays with identity:

> Yes, the minute you open your mouth and if you sign your name and if it's Hispanic—you are "other." To the point where they give special little boxes. You put "Hispanic" ethnicity…because for a long time, my race was "Hispanic." Up until 1989 or 1990, when I finally got sick and tired of…checking the "white"

> box, just for the hell of it. And when I felt like it, I checked the "black" box. Just for the hell of it! Just to hear them say, "Well, this is conflicting. You can't do this!" And, I would say, "I'm right in the middle, I can do whatever I want." Today, I feel black. You see what I'm saying?...Then, they started finally putting the ethnicity thing—"Hispanic." Then, they started saying, "You're supposed to put "Hispanic" because you're Hispanic." I would go, "Hispanic is not a race.…Hispanic is a language. OK? I am not a language. I am a human being. You're looking in this box and even though you are trying to belittle me and my people by making me pick a box, I will continue to play the charade with you, picking my own boxes, according to my own desires." …So, finally, I don't know what's happened—apparently they took notice to a lot of people doing that 'cause now they have the "Hispanic box" and you're Hispanic unless you pick.…Then, they tell you do this*: pick* only *one* box. I always pick two boxes. I just put Hispanic and then I put black or white—whichever one I feel like at the moment. At other times, just to bother them and get them pissed off, I put "white." 'Cause I know they hate it. They're like, "You can't be white."

Notwithstanding Jorge's confusion concerning the U.S. Census, which does allow respondents to choose a race and an ethnic identity, his response is very close to those of black Cubans interviewed who play with perceptions and discrete categories. To him, choosing "other" is not about resisting a black or stigmatized identity; it is about resisting the United States' racial categories that imply a hierarchy that privileges whiteness and puts "others" in their place—in a subordinate position. He responds by using the power of choice: by *not choosing* expected identities to undermine these practices. I asked him about the tendency of Latinos to choose "other" on the census. He responded, "'Other' is another way of saying, 'Fuck you.' You either pick the two of them or 'other.' Or, if you really want to be a ballbuster, you pick three of them!" Jorge speaks of the term "other" in two ways: 1) as the way mainstream society marginalizes non-whites by "othering" them, and 2) as a way for Latinos, through choosing a non-identity, to not cooperate with mainstream society's attempts to categorize them. Jorge's close association with black Cubans, his Cuban identity (which he noted is not considered "white" by Anglos in U.S. society), and his strong devotion to Santería allow him to relate to the experiences of

black Cubans and to express similar anger and disgust. Nevertheless, as a white, second-generation Cuban, he is in a more privileged position that allows him more power of choice, especially in face to face interactions.

Afro-Cubans use various strategies to find community in the United States and to protest their exclusion, using their multiple identities to traverse many different cultures and contexts. However, as Carlos explained, the stigma attached to blackness imposes limits that whites and mestizos do not encounter:

> Mira, bueno, recursos me da algo- recursos me da- tengo un "background" más amplio que las personas que tienen una sola raza.- que tenga una sola regencia. Pero, en la vida real, yo tengo solo una identidad: yo soy negro cubano- eso no, y no puedo ni siquiera poner una adelante de la otra depende de circunstancia. Porque siempre soy para los cubanos- siempre voy a ser negro. Eso está además. Y, para los negros, siempre voy a ser negro y, además, cubano que es decir no es como el caso de personas blancas latinas que pueden jugar con…Porque no es el caso, siempre voy a ser negro- y ser negro es un "issue". Ser blanco *no* es un "issue". Incluso, ser mestizo claro *no* es un "issue".
>
> [My identity gives me varied opportunities, more so than someone with one racial component. But, in real life, I have only one identity—black Cuban—that's non-negotiable and I cannot just switch one on and the other off, depending on circumstances. For other Cubans, I will always be black, that's for sure. And, for Blacks, I will be black and, on top of that, Cuban. This is not the case for white Latinos and they can really play with their identity. I will always be black and being black is an issue. Being white is not an issue. Being mestizo is not an issue either.]

Carlos points to the limits in resistance strategies. These strategies illuminate the agency of marginalized groups and provide hope that power can be manipulated and transcended. Still, as Carlos reminds us, the reality is that although someone like him who appears black may have more "opportunities" to identify with varied groups than someone with only "one racial component," the latter's racial identity is not "an issue," whereas "being black is an issue." Blackness continues to be central and supersedes his other identities

because it is more salient and limiting no matter which group he interacts with in North America—it has the principal "othering" effect.

For the black Cubans in this study, the issue of blackness was preeminent regardless of their time of arrival in the United States, city of residence, gender, and country of birth. Because the study focuses on the experiences of post-1980 arrivals, only four pre-1980 Cubans are included in the study; of them, three are black and one is white. All the Afro-Cubans acknowledged that people often ask them about their race and identity and mistook them for belonging to other groups. The Cubans who came to the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, regardless of color, tended to be less likely to feel they had experienced discrimination than those who arrived after 1980. Earlier arrivals were more likely to say that dealing with racial issues is a matter of attitude—race does not have to be a problem if you do not make it one. There were few differences between the responses of interviewees from Miami and Los Angeles in regard to their experiences of race in the United States. Interviewees from both cities viewed white (Miami) Cubans as racist or as less accepting of them. For some LA Cubans, this assessment was based on personal experience when they first arrived and spent some time in Miami, and for those who never lived in Miami, it was based on their experiences during occasional visits to the city. Still other LA Cubans who had never lived in or visited Miami based their assessment on hearsay. Miami is the preeminent Cuban enclave, and so it provides some cultural familiarity for the respondents who live there. Still, the fact that the exile community often does not recognize that the Afro-Cubans are also Cubans reminds them they are not totally at home. In Los Angeles, interviewees had varying reactions to having to negotiate being black, Cuban, and Latino in an

environment where Spanish speakers are largely defined as being from a culture other than their own. At least three LA interviewees asserted that living outside the enclave was preferable to living in Miami because it allowed them to integrate more with other U.S. Americans and forced them to learn English.

Gender came up infrequently and did not seem to pose significant differences. Women and men living in Miami were just as likely to report being positioned as "other" by several groups, especially white Cubans in Miami, although the women interviewed in Los Angeles seemed to have fewer complaints about their racialized experiences overall. Proportionally, slightly more men recounted specific stories about confronting people directly about their assumptions. The women expressed passion and anger as they talked with me about their experiences too, but of the black Cubans, 30% (3 out of 10) of the women specifically recounted confrontation stories, while 40% (6 out of 15) of the men did. Future studies with a larger number of Afro-Cuban participants and with more focused attention to the difference gender makes would add an important analysis.

The study includes five white Cubans: one who came to the United States in the 1970s, three who arrived during Mariel, and two who were born in the United States. Because many U.S. Americans have a particular idea of what "Latino" looks like (dark hair, skin, and eyes), people who appear European or Anglo but have an accent are also often asked about their identity. In addition, Cubans who are considered "white" among Latinos but do not look like Anglos also experience an "othered" identity because they are perceived to be Latino by U.S. Anglos. From the few white participants in this study, it seems being mistaken for Anglo can be seen as an advantage rather than a liability. White Cubans with an accent who live in Los Angeles may suffer from the stigma of

being associated with or mistaken for Mexican. White Cubans who arrived during Mariel spoke of experiencing the stigma attached to being viewed by exile Cubans as "un Marielito." They associated often with other black Cubans and were not in denial about the differential experiences of black and white Cubans. Antonio, a 55-year-old white Cuban who arrived during Mariel, spoke of the black generals in the fight for Cuban independence with as much pride as that displayed by black Cubans who spoke of them. Jorge, a U.S. -born Santero, was a proponent of Afro-Cuban culture and very critical of racism in the United States and among Cubans. White Cubans in this study were either young or more recent immigrants and thus had less in common with the white "old guard" Miami Cuban community. Future studies should look more closely at the differential experiences of white and black Cubans in terms of how they negotiate race in the United States.

The Afro-Cubans interviewed for this project illustrate their particular experiences with what it means to be "other" in U.S. society, experiences which reflect traditional U.S. racial binaries, and also expand them in ways that reflect recent political and demographic realities in the United States. Their everyday encounters confirm that the negative ideologies about what it means to be black, Latino, immigrant, and a refugee in this society have real effects on the daily lives of people who have those identities. In addition, we can see that despite the new emphasis on multiculturalism and colorblindness today, very rigid ideas of what it means to be black remain popular. Some Afro-Cubans felt they were not accepted as real "blacks" among African Americans, and they found many U.S. Latinos could not associate a Latino identity with blackness. Black Cubans also felt rejected by their white Cuban compatriots in Miami. Thus, they

are deemed inauthentic subjects who are not fully accepted in any of the worlds that should supposedly accept them. In their stories we mostly see how they are viewed as not fully fitting in any group—white Cubans, African Americans, Mexicans— and the problems they encounter in relating to people from these groups.

Still, we can observe in these discussions the ways black Cubans use their identities as "other" to reposition themselves in society and how they may more clearly see what others who do not have to think about their own identities in the same way cannot see—the gaps and overlaps in common conceptions of race, community, and identity. Post-1980 Afro-Cuban immigrants in the U.S. have a strong sense of the political and racial histories which determine the ways they as blacks are positioned in Cuban and U.S. society, but they also understand the cultural and political significance of a Cuban identity regardless of color. For Cuban immigrants, part of this hinges on the fact that they were important pawns in the attempt to discredit Fidel's revolution, and to bolster the Miami Cuban community's political strength. They are aware of and can relate to the marginalized experiences of African Americans as well as critique the ways some U.S. Blacks limit "black" to an African-American identity. They also challenge the black/white binary because though many identify or are identified as black, they also acknowledge their mestizaje—within the same family one can find members of various colors. All in all, their unique vantage point enables them to critique the rigidity of race and racism and to illuminate how deeply the legacies of white racism and imperialism are rooted in U.S. society, and perpetuated by some white Cubans who brought their particular version of racism to the United States.

We witness some encouraging areas of convergence; a salient Cuban national identity allows them to unite with some other (white) Cubans, their similar experiences of discrimination on the basis of blackness allows them to build bridges and associations with African Americans, common immigrant/refugee experiences bond them with recent immigrants, especially other Latinos such as Mexicans; and Spanish language bonds them to all Latinos. If people from all these groups were to recognize these overlaps and, more specifically, that the boundaries separating groups are less important than the possible points of unity, more productive dialogue could perhaps ensue. This dialogue must be based on a clearer understanding of power relations in U.S. society and how race is manipulated to maintain the status quo. Confronted with black Cubans and others who sit in the racial and ethnic intersections, people who occupy the "center" of racial and ethnic categories must recognize the limitations of discrete categories. In their daily lives, one person at a time, many Afro-Cubans confront and challenge and open minds. On a larger scale, as we look in, we are reminded of our shortsightedness as well, and of the purposeful insights from the periphery that deserve a more central position. The experiences of Afro-Cubans draw attention to prevailing racism that is obscured by discourses of multiculturalism, and who we leave out as we form our groups and fight for our slice of the American pie.

CONCLUSION

More than three years ago, when I began conceptualizing this project, I could not have foreseen that the questions I had begun to engage would achieve such prominence, both in the United States and internationally, by the time the research reached its final phase. The findings of the 2000 census had sparked a flurry of scholarly interest in the dramatic demographic shifts and what they would mean for race in the United States, but the recent election of Barack Obama as the 44th president of the United States has made the issues discussed in this dissertation even more explicit in the national discourse. Forty-five years after Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, "a Black man" has been elected to the country's highest office. Television news journalists discussing the historic election have painted the Obama win as a moment of arrival, claiming that the nation is finally becoming "a beautiful multicultural family." Obama embodies this identity because he was born in Hawaii, one of the United States' most diverse states, he is of biracial heritage, both black and white, with international connections as the son of a Kenyan father and Indonesian stepfather. His white American mother from Kansas gives him roots in middle white America, a heritage also emphasized throughout the campaign in the story of how he was raised in part by his white grandparents. The new president, it is said, represents what America truly is today, and is a testament that "America has overcome its historical prejudices," or, as Obama himself said in his acceptance speech, "Change has come to America." The numbers appear convincing; 43% of white voters, 55% of women, 66% of the youngest voters, 67% of Latinos, and 95% of black voters put

Obama into office.[209] The scholarly community, political commentators, and activists have been quick to add a note of caution in the midst of this wave of excitement. They remind us of what this dissertation also argues: that despite the significance of this moment and the reality of the nation's increasing diversity, we cannot prematurely celebrate the end of racism. In fact, we must instead face the challenge to become even more aware its insidiousness. As Entman and Rojecki have warned, "the public face of race is now cloaked in a chameleon-like form, an ever-changing camouflage that obscures its force" (2000, p.1). Certainly there is room to celebrate; for African Americans, who could not even vote in elections only 50 years ago, the election of a Black man to the presidency *is* a major victory. But moving beyond the celebration, Ethnic Studies scholar Dylan Rodriguez argues the new climate will actually make it *more* difficult for scholars and activists dedicated to antiracism to advance their work: "The dreadful genius of the multiculturalist Obama moment is that it installs a 'new' representative figure of the United States that, in turn, opens 'new' possibilities for history's slaves, savages, and colonized to more fully identify with the same nation-building project that requires the neutralization, domestication, and strategic elimination of declared aliens, enemies, and criminals."[210]

This dissertation takes as a point of departure what W.E.B. DuBois wisely observed over a century ago; that non-white groups have been seeking to more fully identify with the nation building project all along. Using examples from the late 20th century, and focusing on the complexity of relations among African Americans, Cuban

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[209] Inside Obama's Sweeping Victory, (November 5, 2008). Pew Research Center, http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1023/exit-poll-analysis-2008.

[210] (Dylan Rodriguez, "Inaugurating Multiculturalist White Supremacy," Email communication, distribution list, (November 9, 2008).

exiles, and Afro-Cubans, chapters I-III looked closely at official media discourses to reveal exactly *how* this happens, and how the reinscription of white racializing frames comes to be accepted as the common sense approach to becoming a part of the nation. The investigation of mass immigration and interethnic conflict, diverse reactions in Miami's ethnic press, and how Afro-Cubans living in Miami and Los Angeles today negotiate the U.S. racial structure, all get at broader issues concerning the demographic change in the nation and the new configurations of white racism. The dissertation argues, as Nicholas De Genova maintains, that "…nativism appears to be necessary for the production of national identity" (2005, p. 7), and by extension, nativism, to some degree, is necessary for national inclusion. When the fundamental philosophies of nation building which enabled its creation are adopted and enacted by minority groups, the nation offers what *looks like* inclusion, but as Guinier and Torres (2002) argue, it is an elusive racial bribe.

In the dissertation's introduction, I identified the following overarching questions driving this research: What will be at stake for minority groups still seeking to establish their place in American culture when other minority groups, rather than whites, are viewed as their main competition? How will native minority groups receive new immigrants? How will we as researchers and activists work to challenge white supremacy as it is manifested in different forms, even perpetuated by people of color? How might people embodying both black and Latino identities, such as Afro-Cubans, challenge dominant racialization paradigms, and what possible solutions could they provide for easing interethnic conflict? The next sections of this concluding chapter respond to these questions, identifying some contributions and limitations of the current

project, with final thoughts on how the conversation and research might be pushed forward by scholars and activists as we enter the Obama years, and beyond.

Interethnic Conflict and Immigration: The Media Study

This study has focused on the reactions of African American and Cuban exile communities to the two most recent immigration waves from Cuba, the 1980 Mariel exodus and the 1994 Balsero crisis. It foregrounds the voices of African Americans and Cuban exiles and their local, national, and international concerns about the impact of new waves of immigrants. Their reactions are analyzed as depicted in ethnic media, in order to highlight the views of those most directly affected by immigration, interethnic conflict and issues of national belonging, rather than those of mainstream Anglos. Both immigration waves have been the subject of intense scholarly study. This research contributes to previous studies on the adaptation of the newcomers (i.e. Aguirre, Sáenz, & James, 1997; Boswell & Curtis, 1984; Camayd-Freixas, 1988), the local social and economic impact on the Miami community and the impact on immigration policy (Camayd-Freixas, 1988; Greenhill, 2002; Henken, 2005; Nackerud et al. 1999), and the criminalization and treatment of the Mariels in the media (Masud-Piloto, 1996; Wilsbank, 1984; Hufker & Cavender, 1990; Bach et al., 1981/2; Aguirre, 1984; Camayd-Freixas, 1988). Research on the Mariel exodus has delved into the reception of the newcomers by the Cuban American community, but race has not been a main focus, although several scholars acknowledge it was a likely factor in their stigmatization.[211] I argue that because

[211] For instance, Aguirre, 1984; Bach, Bach, and Triplett 1981/2; Hufker and Cavender, 1990, p. 333; Portes and Stepick, 1985; Soruco, 1996, p. 10; and Boswell and Curtis, 1984.

of the intense interethnic conflict in Miami, in part shaped by local opinions about mass immigration from Cuba and other countries, including Haiti, the Mariel exodus and Balsero crisis deserve a new look, one that shifts from the earlier focus on adaptation with its neutral accounting of historical events, portraying Cubans as a homogenous group without blacks, and depicting African American and Cuban communities as bounded. This dissertation takes a new look at these events by analyzing them within the context of interethnic conflict, investigating the diverse discourses of text and talk, and taking seriously notions of intertextuality and multiple identities in the (re)framing of the nation. An investigation of local concerns offers the opportunity to develop a wider understanding of the dynamics in play for minority groups who are in competition with each other, and of the contradictory ways "native minority" groups, specifically African Americans, receive and construct immigrant groups. Miami serves as an exemplary case for this investigation because by 1980, the racial dynamics that are now occurring across the country as whites become the numerical minority, had already occurred in this highly diverse city. The resulting intense interethnic conflict between the two largest minority groups, African Americans and Cuban Americans, can be viewed as an example of the worst case scenario that might occur across the country (Grenier & Stepick, 2001).

For this study I focused on media because it is historically tied in with the nation building project. We cannot ignore, as Benedict Anderson explained, the fundamental role of print media in the foundation and construction of modern nationalism (Anderson, 1991; Rodríguez, 1999). Though scholarship usually looks to dominant media for its role in the nation building project, similar nationalist ideals can also be read in ethnic media. By looking at the discourses in the most prominent Cuban and African American

newspapers in Miami, *El Nuevo/Herald* and the *Miami Times*, in the context of two major historical moments and immigration crises that heightened the perception of threat in both communities, we can expose the "logic" involved in the ways Cubans and African Americans make claim to the nation by challenging their exclusion, while still calling on the U.S. to redress its wrongs (Blommaert, 2005; Fairclough, 1989; van Dijk, 1993). Understanding the logic involved is key, if efforts to intervene in interethnic conflict and root out white racism in the new America are to succeed.

Following a Gramscian view of power relations, scholars of Critical Discourse Analysis (i.e. Blommaert, 2005; Fairclough, 1989; van Dijk, 1993) emphasize the importance of examining text and talk for how to illuminate the subtle ways people, even those most negatively affected by dominant ideologies, are persuaded that these ideologies are natural or legitimate (Fairclough, 1989). A major persuasive strategy is the constant affirmation by members of the dominant group that they are the "real victims" (i.e., "they" are taking "our" jobs or otherwise threatening "us") (van Dijk, 1993). Van Dijk also states that the issue of collusion with power elites by subjugated groups, (which can be apparent in minority-run media), is a major topic within CDA. He claims that power may be "jointly produced" by powerful elites and dominated groups. While my methodological approach does not employ the intense linguistic analysis of the actual words used in text and talk that is characteristic of CDA, my work is in alignment with the theoretical goals of CDA, to target the power elites in society and fight for those who are subjugated (van Dijk, 1993; Fairclough, 1989). In future work, CDA's careful analysis of pronouns and other linguistic elements may further explicate the power

relations I discuss in these particular case studies and illuminate their subtleties, particularly within the present post–Civil Rights era.

By situating my discussion within particular historical moments, I hoped to contribute what Jan Blommaert has noted is often absent in critical discourse analysis—a sense of history:

> A critical analysis of discourse necessarily needs to transcend the present and address history in and through language. Power and inequality have long histories of becoming; so have the linguistic repertoires of people; so too have social structures and systems such as capitalism and its many transformations. We need to take history seriously, for part of the critical punch of what we do may ultimately lie in our capacity to show that what looks new is not new at all, but the outcome of a particular process which is systemic, not accidental. It may help us to avoid looking at symptoms and to expose causes... (Blommaert, 2005, p. 37).

In an attempt to "avoid looking at symptoms and expose causes," as Blommaert suggests, I build on the work of Kim (2000) and Picca & Feagin (2007), who explain how white racial power creates "others" in order to keep whites in a position of dominance. I illustrate the ways in which non-white groups, specifically African Americans and Cuban exiles, continue to reinscribe these old frames, though perhaps unconsciously, even as they advocate for their own inclusion. The prominent themes in the news coverage in *El Nuevo Herald* and the *Miami Times* clearly demonstrate the acceptance and use of black/white, morality, and native/foreigner racializing frames. But it is important to keep in mind that the use of the racializing frames by Cuban Americans and African Americans in the Miami scenario is not the same project as that enacted by whites. i.e., minorities are not *merely* "doing to each other what whites did to them." Rather, they are in effect, *resisting* their exclusion by whites by attempting to position themselves favorably within the racial hierarchy. By the very act of subscribing to racializing

frames, they betray the fact that, even when minority groups grow larger than whites numerically, they still do *not* have much power. Hence, an emphasis on the historical context and "crises," in the larger context of the nation's imperialist project in the U.S./Cuba conflict, is essential for understanding the racializing discourses found in *El Herald/ El Nuevo Herald* and the *Miami Times*.

The ways in which Mariels and Balseros were framed in Miami's ethnic press, and their reflection of dominant notions of race and the racial order, represents an indictment of society's exclusionary practices that require complicity from minority and immigrant groups. A simplistic solution, that "minorities just need to change their attitude," must be rejected as misguided and ineffective. It is mainstream society that needs to change its exclusionary practices, as minority groups are reacting to existing parameters of racial oppression. By exploring how groups making claim to the nation interpret the impact of new immigration and multi-racial neighbors on their communities, I seek to elucidate their concerns about jobs, family, social standing and, ultimately, their quest for human dignity. When we read between the lines of the concerns voiced by both communities, we discover a challenge to the discourses that claim Americanness is exclusive to whites, and a stance that underscores the need for a broader picture of the way racism is working today, particularly how it works in communities where Anglos are the minority, and the enemy is an "other" minority group. Such a perspective is necessary in future research in order to circumvent the temptation to blame the groups themselves as interethnic conflict arises, rather than connecting this conflict to the often invisible workings of white racial power. As Kim suggests, our scholarship on

interethnic conflict must avoid decontextualization, depoliticization, and the deligitimation of the concerns of minority groups (2000, p. 4).

Future research needs to continue exposing white supremacy in the "new America" by delving into how it is adapted by non-white groups. And on a more fundamental level, research needs to challenge the widely accepted notion of the U.S. as a white nation, which is at the root of the tendency to ignore concerns of minority groups. As Picca & Feagin (2007) point out, another manifestation of white racial framing is taking for granted the idea that various social institutions are normally white-controlled, without questioning white dominance and privilege. The normative framing of the nation is everywhere, as Entman and Rojecki have observed about the news, "At the most general level the color pattern of the news conveys a sense that America is essentially a society of White people with minorities…as adjunct members who mainly cause trouble or need help" (Entman & Rojecki, 2000, p. 63). Immigration researchers have explicitly questioned white privilege, but the insistence on defining immigrant adaptation by the extent to which they approximate whites socially, economically, and residentially continues to justify white privilege. In addition, a primary theme in immigration research maintains that immigrants enter the nation at different levels based on the cultural capital they bring with them. This encourages a "blame-the-victim" interpretation of immigrant failures, and does not account for the ways immigrants are "differentially included" in the nation to fulfill specific purposes (Espiritu, 2003). Kasinitz and colleagues argue for a shift within immigration research, away from focusing solely on the social traits of different immigrant groups, to an additional focus on societal responses to these groups (Kasinitz et al. p. 1031). To re-focus on the societal responses, we must reframe the

nation, i.e., the nation is not just a neutral geographical space that immigrant groups enter, or a white land with "adjunct members." Minority groups are integral to the nation. Thus, immigrant incorporation involves how they are accepted by minority groups, an acceptance that is shaped by the minority group members' own experiences with racism. Even more necessary, given the changing demographics, is the importance of demonstrating how minority groups resist exclusion by making claim to the nation, so that we can work towards new ways to define belonging. In this dissertation, this task is accomplished by revealing how such claims are made in Cuban and African American ethnic media texts and Afro-Cuban talk, exposing varying and sometimes contradictory degrees of willingness to accept other groups.

Since making claim to the nation and affirming the national project requires complicit misrecognition and subjugation, some scholars have argued that the nation itself and the goal of inclusion should be questioned, if not entirely done away with. This has been part of the project of immigration scholars who take a transnational approach (Aparicio, 2006; See Lowe 1996; De Genova 2005; Espiritu, 2003; Levitt, 2001, for example). In the transnational view, immigrants assert agency and gain empowerment as they maintain connections to their country of origin (Aparicio, 2006). They reconfigure their position of marginalization in the U.S. by creating a new sense of community through their involvement in the home country (Levitt, 2001). Transnational scholarship maintains that immigrants are not bounded by the nation-state, and stresses the importance of the role of global capital and the dialogue immigrants have with hegemonic contexts on both the global and national level (Aparicio, 2006; Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992).

The transnational perspective is important because it challenges traditional assimilation models which assume immigrants will abandon their connections to their home countries to become U.S. Americans. But as Aparicio asserts, "On the other hand, scholars focusing on transmigrant activity do not sufficiently analyze the extent to which immigrants organize in ways that are not transnational" (Aparicio, 2006, p. 7). While not ignoring the transnational connection, in the case of Cuban exiles, Nancy Raquel Mirabal tells us to look at what it means to "ser de aqui"—to be from "here," putting roots in the U.S. and building identities around an American identity. By showing specific ways in which Cubans claim American identity, this study has sought to address Mirabal's concern. Because so often the conflicts between minority groups are a contest over resources, their worries are most often connected to being "here," and what they might lose because of the threat of the "other." In the *Miami Times*, African Americans expressed fears that they would be knocked down the ladder, i.e., they would lose their place as the dominant and most oppressed minority group in the nation, and in *El Nuevo Herald*, Cuban Americans lamented that arbitrary changes in immigration policy made members of their group ineligible to be citizens, and worried about their own loss of status as privileged anti-communist partners of the U.S., and the model Latino minority. It is important to take notice of the struggles of immigrant groups to be included and survive in the "host" county, just as we must recognize the legitimacy of African American concerns about their economic and political losses. A perspective centered on what happens within the nation is necessary for understanding these concerns, without losing sight of the larger political struggles involved, because of their combined impact on face-to-face interactions between various groups.

Still, the current research would benefit from more engagement with transnational perspectives, particularly in regards to how Cuban American racism intersects with Cuban racism, and the ways these intersecting notions of race shape Afro-Cuban reception by white exile Cubans. Furthermore, a transnational perspective could help clarify how being raised in Cuba shapes Afro-Cubans' interpretation and negotiation of the U.S. racial structure. A fuller discussion of the context of Cuban slavery and its effect on the social relations and attitudes in Cuba, discourses of racial democracy, and the current Cuban government's role in shaping the beliefs of newcomers as well as those of Cuban Americans, would provide greater contextualization for the findings in this dissertation.

The study of ethnic newspapers and specifically the articles reporting on Mariel and Balsero revealed several prominent themes in terms of frequency of reports and contexts of messages in the stories. This in turn served to get at the overall framing of the events and of the newcomers themselves, and their significance for the communities served by the newspapers. However, further research would do well to engage more with the news organizations themselves, including interviews with journalists and editors to allow them to speak directly about the goals of the newspaper and the messages they desired to send. In addition, my method of looking for predominant themes in the reports on particular events may have neglected the added complexity of other messages in the paper which might have contradicted my findings. A more intense reading of the newspapers, comparing the coverage of other events may have revealed other themes or findings. For example, I did note that the *Miami Times* took an expressly anti-imperialist stance in reporting on Haiti and Africa, though Cuba was less a concern, and Cuban

immigration was not framed in terms of U.S. imperialism. A more detailed study of the newspapers that included coverage of Haiti and South Africa might allow other voices to be heard, and it would also be useful to look for class differences in the opinions advanced in different sections of the newspapers.

For this study, newspapers served as a historical record for insight into the opinions of particular communities about past events. However, newspapers today have lost prominence as a source from which U.S. Americans get their news. Future studies should incorporate news from television, internet blogs, and other alternative media in order to keep a finger on the pulse of ethnic media. In addition, community ethnographies and more direct observations and questioning of people from African American, Cuban American, and other communities can provide a first hand understanding of interethnic relations in these communities, and the sources of conflicts and resolutions.

The Afro-Cuban Challenge

Afro-Cubans are often ignored in discussions on the Cuban experience in the U.S., both in regards to Cuban American politics and in discussions of interethnic conflict between Cuban Americans and African Americans. Their low numbers among the exile community is likely a factor, but in fact black Cubans are often compartmentalized in ways that make them invisible. As Kameelah Benjamin-Fuller argues about Afro-Cubans in Cuba, “The ways in which the black body enters Cubanidad, then, is highly mediated by a tailored memory. This memory denies the lived experiences of black Cuban peoples or compartmentalizes (via the arts, food, and religion) the depth of Afro-Cuban centricity

to Cuban identity" (Benjamin-Fuller, p. 9). I extend Benjamin-Fuller's argument to contend that Afro-Cubans are also compartmentalized in this way in the U.S. mainstream culture. There is a long history of U.S. familiarity with Afro-Cubans through enjoyment of Afro-Cuban music, from the popularity of Mario Bauzá in the 1930's, to the "boom Cubano" of the late 1990's and the popularity of the late Celia Cruz (Knaur, 2001). As Law Professor Tanya Kateri Hernández asserts, the widespread popularity of the Buena Vista Social Club in the late 1990s, for instance, relied on marketing strategies that located the members of the group in a magical pre-Revolutionary period in Cuba, and was related to the overall marketing of Afro-Cuban culture as both musical and spiritual (Hernández, 2002). The acceptance of Afro-Cubanidad through a consumption of their cultural productions satisfies what Arlene Dávila describes as a "U.S. demand for exotic and segregated others" (2001). There is much to be celebrated about Afro-Cuban contributions to music and culture, but when Afro-Cubanidad is relegated to the realm of "the cultural," this reaffirms dominant stereotypes about difference, particularly blackness, and signifies an inclusion that is predicated on the idea of exclusion. This dissertation complicates research on Cubans and Latinos in the U.S. by listening to Afro-Cuban voices, paying attention to the experiences of Afro-Cubans, particularly their views on U.S. race relations and racial structures.

The relatively small number of interviews discussed in this project allowed for in-depth discussions with each of the participants, but future research on the experiences of black Cubans in the U.S. would benefit from interviewing and observing a larger number of respondents, to help identify patterns and differences based on time in the U.S., age, education, class, gender, and other variables, including distinct localities. A long term

ethnographic study would be beneficial for this purpose. In her research on Dominican Americans in Washington Heights, New York (including their relations with African Americans, non-Dominican Latinos, and others) as they negotiated their own political empowerment, Ana Aparicio found that an ethnographic approach was most useful for capturing the fluidity and complexity of these processes as they relate to larger structural issues. Aparicio notes that much of the research on immigration does not use an ethnographic approach (2006). For future research on a population like Afro-Cubans, whose racial/ethnic background is similar to that of the Dominicans in Aparicio's study, a larger ethnographic study should prove similarly successful.

A long term ethnographic study would also help resolve important issues that arise when an interviewer does not share the background of her interviewees. Charles Briggs problematizes "bias theories," which argue that aspects of the social identities of the researcher or interviewee will cause "bias." In his seminal work, *Learning how to ask*, Briggs has shown that the whole interview itself is contextualized by the ways both the interviewee and the interviewer interpret the interaction, so that the authenticity of the entire interaction is suspect. Interviewees do not simply respond to the questions asked, but to the interview interaction as a whole. The greater the difference between the norms of the interviewer and interviewee concerning this type of discourse event, the more likely there will be interpersonal tensions during the interview, and a misinterpretation of data by the interviewer. Thus, Briggs argues, researchers need to revise the starting point for interviews; they can avoid misunderstanding on both sides by first investigating the community's communicative practices, in order to better enter their communicative world (Briggs, 1986). The current research would have benefited from more engagement

beforehand with the community studied, to learn the intricacies of communicative practices among (Afro) Cubans.

In the Introduction, I noted that several interviewees were explicit about how they placed me in reference to themselves, not just on the issue of speech and language, but also in relation to other aspects of their experiences in the United States. Two interviewees, both members of the second generation, assumed I was Cuban upon first meeting, and asked, "What part of Cuba are you from?" Another woman describing race in Cuba used herself and me as a point of reference in defining what a *mulata* looks like: "*mulata como tú y yo.*" Because I am Black, with what some African Americans and Latinos term a "mixed" look, some Afro-Cubans suggested that we might have had similar experiences. For example, one woman who told me she was often questioned about her ethnicity, asked, "You know what it is like [to be asked these questions all the time], right?" Other interviewees, aware that I am African American, praised my Spanish pronunciation and expressed appreciation that I had learned to pronounce Spanish more like a native speaker than an "American." Others joked with me however, about the fact that my accent is influenced by a Mexican-style inflection since I grew up in Southern California and strengthened my knowledge of Spanish by listening to Spanish speakers of Mexican descent. One Afro-Cuban man from Los Angeles said, "Oh, now you gotta go to Miami, to learn the Cuban [accent]! And you know why, the reason why I say this, because you're black, so you fit in more to the Caribbean. If you speak Spanish, you know, it would be better for you to have that Caribbean style, or accent." Because I am a black person who can speak Spanish, some interviewees seemed more ready to include me in their circle, or assumed I might be familiar with aspects of their culture. Still, at a

local nightclub, some Cuban friends jokingly noted my outsider status by the fact that my salsa dancing is influenced by a Mexican style of dancing. I am thankful that, despite these differences, the interview process was facilitated because of the advantage of instant rapport with some of the interviewees.

My research contributes to studies on Cubans in the United States by interviewing Cubans living both inside and outside the Miami ethnic enclave. A larger ethnographic study could allow more detailed accounting of the difference geography makes in the experiences of black Cubans. This would also allow for a more nuanced look into the relations of black Cubans in Miami with white Cubans there, i.e. not all the interactions are antagonistic, and the notion of "we are all Cubans" does allow for amicable relations between Cubans of all colors. Indeed, the separation of Afro-Cubans from white Cubans is an artificial one: Cuban national discourse privileges national over racial identity, and, in one biological family there may exist both "white" Cubans and "black" Cubans. These realities also shape relations between white and black Cubans. However, as revealed in Mirta Ojito's NY Times story about the two friends from Cuba (see Chapter 1), and as evidenced in my own interviews with black Cubans, a profound difference exists in black and white Cuban experiences in the U.S. Their experiences are evidence of the continued strength of the stigma of blackness in Latin America and in the United States, and reminds us of the need to study race to understand the diversity of Cuban experiences.

Today, decades removed from the crises discussed in this research, we can see that dramatic changes have occurred for the Cuban American community that may affect the ideological bent of Cuban Americans in the future. The diversity in thought and opinion that has always existed but was submerged in the insistence on a united anti-

Castro posture has become even more apparent as the exile emphasis on "return" has dissipated. Cuban Americans, as Mirabal has argued, are moving away from a focus on returning to Cuba and the overthrowing of Fidel Castro, moving toward what it means to *stay* in the U.S. (Mirabal, 2003, p. 367). The second generation is questioning their parents' politics, and as Castro's inevitable demise approaches, he has handed over power to his brother. Many Cubans fear that in future years Cuba will experience more of the same, yet Cuba has recently slackened its prohibitions, lifting bans on consumer goods such as cell phones and computers. Moreover, since the recent election of Barack Obama, there has been talk of opening avenues of dialogue between Cuba and the U.S. The dramatic political transformations about to occur in the United States and Cuba should directly affect changes in the political leanings of Cuban Americans, and their relations with other communities in the United States.

The shifting political ideologies in the Miami Cuban community were compellingly obvious in the stark divide between the first versus the second and third generations of Cuban Americans during the Obama election. Researchers had long been pessimistic about the prospects for political cooperation among African Americans and Cuban Americans because they traditionally support opposing political parties, Democratic and Republican, respectively. However, for the first time in history, a Democratic candidate won the majority of the Latino vote, nearly tying with John McCain in the traditionally Republican-dominated Miami-Dade county. The Latino victory was largely due to the strong non-Cuban Latino presence that has grown in Miami during the 2000s. But 55% of Cubans aged 29 and younger voted for Obama. This contrasts sharply with the proportion of Cubans 65 and older, 84% of whom continued to

vote Republican. Hence, we see a growing division within the Miami Cuban community, as the older Cubans remain loyal to the Republican ticket while younger Cuban Americans are voting more in line with Latinos across the country.[212] It is outside the scope of this dissertation to account for all the reasons this shift has occurred: several complex issues such as intergenerational conflict, the economy, and others are probable causes. It can be reasonably speculated, however, that the historical lessons learned about the "real" place of Cuban Americans in the nation had a major influence. These lessons were alluded to in the *El Herald/El Nuevo Herald* articles studied in this research. Because of the increasingly moderate and liberal views of the second and third generations, future research on Miami should investigate the growing intersections between Cubans, Afro-Cubans, African Americans, and the growing population of black Caribbeans.[213] The interviews in the current study demonstrate that white Cuban racism against black Cubans and other blacks is not a thing of the past. But the dying out of the exile philosophy, the growth of Latino populations from other Latin American countries, and perhaps a newer migration from Cuba with a more visible presence of Afro-Cubans, will change what Miami looks like, necessarily changing the questions asked in future research.

This dissertation highlights the stigma of blackness in the lives of Afro-Cubans to challenge us to continue to pay attention to blackness and to realize the importance of

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[212] Woods, Casey. (Posted Thursday, November 6, 2008). Obama first Democrat to win Florida's Hispanic vote. *El Nuevo Herald* [online].

[213] Pop culture attests to this; a popular second-generation (white) Cuban American rapper *Pit Bull* commonly collaborates with African American and Haitian artists, and his record label, Bad Boy Latino, is a brainchild of African American producer P. Diddy and Latin Music producer and Miami cultural icon Emilio Estefan. Naming his albums to reappropriate the image of the Mariels, for example, *El Mariel* (2006), and *The Boatlift* (2007), the practice recalls the celebration by Hip Hop artists of the character in the movie Scarface. The movie, depicting a Marielito who is a gangster/criminal anti-hero, has been criticized for its stereotypical depiction of Cubans who arrived during the Mariel exodus.

attending to the situation of Afro-Cubans and other Afro Latinos, as well as to that of African Americans in the United States. The rejection of Afro-Cubans by some white Cubans can in part be attributed to attitudes about black inferiority held among whites in Cuba, but Afro-Cubans are also directly affected by the negative evaluations of African Americans by some white Cubans. For instance, the blackening of Mariel Cubans in *El Herald* on the basis of qualities used in the U.S. to disparage African Americans could be seen in the stories focusing on criminality and using the word "ghetto" to discuss a set of behaviors among the Mariels not sanctioned in U.S. society. Afro-Cubans in Miami and Los Angeles explicitly attest to the fact they are affected by the stigma attached to an African American identity when they were mistaken for African Americans by white Cubans and Mexicans.

The strength of the stigma attached to blackness and the continued disenfranchisement of African Americans justify Black leaders' continued attempt to organize around black identities and create a united front. For African Americans nationally, the educational achievement gap between white and black has widened after elementary school. Slight economic increases occurred between 2006 and 2007, but the median annual income of black men remains lower than that of white men: $34,443 vs. $46,807. For black women, the figures are even less promising: Black women are paid $0.87 on the dollar compared to white women, and $5,000 less than black men. Twenty-five percent of blacks are living under the poverty line, which is three times the percentage of whites living below the poverty line.[214] The unequal conditions and life

[214] The State of Black America 2007: executive summary. National Urban League [online], p. 3-4.

chances endured by African Americans are in part a result of continued racial discrimination and white privilege.

In their efforts to combat this inequality, African Americans have traditionally sought to frame race relations within a structural framework; hence they have often organized their struggle in a manner that is inclusive of other immigrant groups who, because they share the experience of living in a white supremacist society bent on preserving the status quo, also share a similar history of racism and discrimination. As Patram and colleagues (1996) have found, African Americans are still more likely than whites to look at immigration and immigrants positively and to view the immigrants' contributions to the U.S. in a positive light. But the complaint of some African Americans, as expressed in the *Miami Times* for instance, was that this stance of advocating for everyone else's rights places African Americans at a disadvantage because no one else is looking out for African Americans.

How can African Americans continue to work towards social justice for themselves while also building alliances with other minorities? How will they incorporate non African American blacks and other immigrants without an African heritage? Chapters two and three of this dissertation addressed this very question. The *Miami Times* demonstrated that pan-African ideals were important to the community it served, especially during the time of Mariel, but there was some evidence that the ideals were less important during the Balsero crisis, perhaps because of growing anti-immigrant sentiment in the country as a whole. For instance, Haitians, who were placed under the African American umbrella, were somewhat less accepted. In the *Miami Times*, Afro-Cubans could be integrated with African Americans because of their blackness, but

because the newspaper often painted Cuban Americans and other Latinos as Spanish speakers taking their jobs, a dichotomy was set up which excluded Afro-Cubans because they speak Spanish and are Latinos. This was further corroborated by the interviews with Afro-Cubans, who reported that they were at times viewed as outsiders by African Americans, a fact that further attests to the limits of the pan-African ideal.

As Stuart Hall argues, African Americans become conscious of their subordination through race, and thus they understandably use that modality to resist subordination (1978, p. 347). Therefore, they may look to bond with other blacks for a common cause. But research by scholars on African American acceptance of other black immigrants, such as Jamaicans, Haitians, etc., indicates that a shared black identity is not always enough to form alliances, especially when black immigrants are viewed as taking African American jobs, and when they do not automatically support causes championed by African Americans (Waters, 1999; Kasinitz 1992). Furthermore, the experiences of Afro-Cubans and that of other non-African American blacks challenge African Americans to reassess the models they use for organizing, and challenge the impulse among some African Americans to measure true blackness by an American identity and the use of the English language. With greater understanding of how racism affects Afro-Cubans, African Americans can continue to work to solve legitimate problems facing all blacks in the United States. The numbers of African Americans in Miami today are decreasing; much of the growth of the black population is attributed to the increasing numbers of Afro-Caribbeans from Jamaica and other islands. Thus, the new demographic shifts in Miami and the question of whether/how black Cubans and other black immigrants fit within/outside a pan-African or black identity present new dilemmas

for African Americans, and disrupt their longstanding reliance on black racial identity for political mobilization.

Afro-Cubans and other Afro-Latinos also present a challenge to the treatment of Latinos within scholarship and the public discourse as a monolithic category, illuminating the particularities of the experiences of being both black and Latino in the United States. With the rise of the U.S. Latino population, the pan-Latino identification has growing significance in the U.S., however many scholars have disputed the use of the ethnic umbrella terms, "Hispanic" as well as "Latino," because the labels obscure the localized differential experiences of peoples of Latin American and Caribbean heritage based on national origin, gender or sexuality, and race (Flores-Gonzalez, 1999). Yet in specific settings, Spanish speaking peoples from disparate groups have found families of resemblance, adopted one another's cultural practices, and broadened their sense of identity to include a collective one. William Flores and Rina Benmayor have argued that in the context of the U.S., this construction resists imposed binaries of race, gender, or national origin and emphasizes the ability of marginalized groups to reconfigure race (Flores & Benmayor, 1997). But the experiences of black Latinos (and other immigrants of African descent) in the U.S. also demonstrate the stability of the one drop rule; black Latinos are often asked to choose between their multiple identities, to privilege their black identity. Investigations of the "Latino" experience must also examine, as does the current research, what has been made invisible in the discussion of pan-ethnic identities.

Latinos are a major force today, with their numbers surpassing those of African Americans. The Latino vote is now more important than ever: in the Obama-McCain contest, 67% of the Hispanic vote in Florida, Nevada, New Mexico, Colorado secured the

reversal of historical voting patterns in these states. In a news report on the Obama win, Simon Rosenberg, head of a Democratic group that studies Hispanic voters states, "If the Republicans don't make their peace with Hispanic voters, they're not going to win presidential elections anymore. The math just isn't there."[215] The article goes on to say that immigration issues were of concern, but because a large percentage of immigrants are working class, the economy was a more pressing worry. A University of Washington political scientist and Latino pollster, Matt Barreto, noted that Latinos repeatedly chose New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton over Obama during the Democratic primary, and it was speculated that Latinos might not support a black presidential candidate. However, he argues, "The election results officially debunk the myth that Latinos will not vote for blacks," Barreto says. "That is officially laid to rest now." Barreto makes an important point, but the statement, "Latinos will not vote for blacks" already ignores the fact that some Latinos themselves are black.

Future research on Afro-Cubans and other Afro-Latinos would do well to investigate where they fall politically. The interviewees in this research were not directly asked about their political stance, either in regards to U.S. or Cuban politics, so we do not know if they are more inclined to support Latino or African American leaders and causes. What will be their response if Latino groups vie for their support as Latinos, and African Americans seek to include them as blacks? Judging by the varied opinions and responses in this research, no reliable patterns can be based on their time of arrival in the U.S., or skin color, i.e., assumptions could not be made that darker skinned Afro Cubans would

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[215] Lawrence, Jill. (November 6, 2008). Hispanic vote grows, shifts to Democrats. *USA Today*, http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/election2008/2008-11-06-hispanics_N.htm

support black candidates or that those who were lighter skinned would not). They do not fit preconceived categorizations. A larger study might reveal reliable patterns and a more conclusive answer to the question of how their racial identities intersect with their political choices.

Beyond the cultural and political arenas, scholarly interest in Afro-Latinos is growing; major efforts include UC Berkeley's now annual Afro-Latino conference sponsored by the Center for Latin American Studies, the organizing of Latin American Studies Association (LASA) scholars for better representation of themes related to blacks in the Americas within the conference, and the effort by Juan Flores and Miriam Jimenez Román to insert Afro-Latino concerns into the Chicano dominated 2008 National Council of La Raza's (NCLR) conference (San Diego, 2008). The hope is that this all of this scholarship will deepen our grasp of the changing nature of race in the U.S., and improve the conditions of all blacks. Some hold out even greater hope for the role that Afro-Latinos can play in tearing down the multiple racial barriers that persist.

Suzanne Oboler and Anani Dzidzienyo (2005) and Roberto Márquez (2000) argue that Afro-Latinos may be able to act as mediators in conflicts between African Americans and U.S. Latinos because of their multiple subjectivities, being positioned between black and Latino. In my research, Afro-Cubans were not always direct in advocating greater understanding, but their experiences in the U.S. force us to look at race differently because they reveal overlaps between Black, Latino, and immigrant issues, helping us to see that Latino and African American communities are not bounded, and may share similar concerns. Still, conflict in these communities is a current concern-- in Los Angeles alone, school fights, prison conflicts, and other high profile 2008 cases spotlight

the rifts in LA African American and Latino communities. In March, 2008 an African American 17-year-old high school football star was shot to death by an alleged gang member who was identified by prosecutors as an illegal immigrant. The subsequent mobilization by the victim's parents to pass a measure that would allow police to ask crime suspects about their immigration status pitted Blacks against Latinos, and immigration activists against other politicians.[216] In the face of such rigidly drawn borders, born of violence, sociologist Nicolas C. Vaca reminds us that the African Americans and Latinos have historically worked together in the past to redress their shared disenfranchisement (2004). Yet he warns us against thinking that an alliance can always be presumed, or taken for granted, as historical conditions and specific contexts change. According to Vaca, the Civil Rights agenda was set by African Americans and supported by other aggrieved groups; positive relationships between Mexican Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and others were forged during the 1960s by a common commitment to achieving Civil Rights goals. However the changes in the economy since the 1970s, U.S. labor needs, housing discrimination, increased urbanization, and political competition has affected immigrant and African American populations in different ways, jeopardizing such alliances (2004). Vaca's observations make clear that the larger structural issues affecting competition need to be addressed, in order to forge effective alliances.

I argue that the responses from the Afro-Cubans interviewed for this study challenge us to think about what we can do in our daily interactions to undermine racism

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[216] Farai Chideya, "Football Star's Murder Spurs Immigration Law." *NPR National Public Radio*. Air date May 20, 2008.

and inequality. We see clear problems in their everyday experiences—in the African American rejection of Afro-Cuban foreignness, sometimes rooted in language issues, as African Americans tend to associate English with a true African American identity. Latinos, on the other hand, may associate Afro-Cubans with an African American identity which is also stigmatized among some Latinos. But some of the Afro-Cubans interviewed demonstrated a willingness to cross boundaries viewed as rigid by others, in an effort to connect with others on the basis of shared race, culture, immigration status, and/or language. By pointing to gaps and overlaps, the Afro-Cubans interviewed for this research project challenge us to answer the hard questions posed by Nicholas De Genova in his work on the Latino and Asian challenge to U.S. nationalism. He asserts, "one of our critical tasks is to illuminate the ways that racially oppressed people do and do not make claims on Americanness. Do they disrupt, repudiate, subvert or endorse the hegemonic U.S. social formation? Are their efforts enlisted in the service of sustaining the resilience of their own or other's oppression?…[W]e must have the political courage to soberly assess not only the heroism of our organized mobilizations but also the mundane struggles of our alienated everyday life" (2006, p. 17). This dissertation's investigation of the Afro-cuban challenge to the (re)framing of the nation indicates that their complex racial identities contributes to their manipulation of otherness, revealing overlaps between African American and Latino communities. Together, these racialized minorities can provide and take advantage of spaces for resisting dominant racializing frames, thus enhancing the possibilities for greater interethnic understanding and alliances.

APPENDIX

Table 4.1: Miami Cuban Participants. Black= African Americans, Mixed= various ethnicities.

Name	Sex	Age	Year arrived	Afro-Cuban	Neighbor-hood	Co-workers	Friends	Occupation	Education	Interview language
Mariela	F	39	1991	X	Cuban	Cuban/ Anglo	unknown	arts, education	college (US)	English
Charlie	M	38	1970	X	Latin, Cuban	Anglo	Cuban, etc.	contractor, aviation mechanic	unknown	English
Caridad	F	36	1980	X	mixed	Latin Americans	multi/non-Cuban	legal field	law school (US)	English
Carlos	M	45	1997	X	Cubans mostly	Cubans, etc.	Cubans, etc.	freelancer	seminary (P.R.)	Spanish
Alberto	M	43	1980 Mariel		Venezuelan Cuban	Cubans	unknown	doctor	medicine (US)	English
Antonio	M	55	1980 Mariel		mixed	n/a	mixed	odd jobs	some college (Cuba)	Spanish
Digna	F	52	1980 Mariel	X	Cubans	unknown	white Anglos and Latinos	Librarian, activist	Cuba	Spanish
Victor	M	46	1980 Mariel	X	mixed	Cubans, etc.	Cubans and others	unknown	unknown	Spanish
Jorge	M	36	US born		unknown	Cubans	unknown	Santero/ business owner	US	English
Kris	F	24	US born	X	mixed	n/a	mixed	n/a	college (US)	English
Luis	M	44	1994 balsero	X	homeless	n/a	Anglos/ Blacks	n/a	Cuba	Spanish
Federico	M	54	1980 Mariel	X	n/a	n/a	various, Cubans	n/a	Cuba	Spanish
Jose	M	61	1980 Mariel	X	n/a	n/a	various, Cubans	n/a	Cuba	Spanish
Andrea	F	50	US born	X	mixed	Cuban	mixed	real estate	US	English
Roberto	M	58	1980 Mariel	X	mixed	Cuban	mixed	unknown	Cuba	Spanish

Table 4.2: Los Angeles Cuban Participants. Black= African Americans, Mixed= various ethnicities.

Name	Sex	Age	Year arrived	Afro-Cuban	Neighbor-hood	Co-workers	Friends	Occupation	Education	Interview language
Ariane	M	21	2004	X	Mexican	Japanese/ Mexican	mixed	student	Cuba/ US	English
Regla	F	19	US born	X	Mexican Asian	Asian, etc.	Latinos/ Blacks	business	US	English
Maritza	F	46	2006	X	Mexican	unknown	mixed	unknown	unknown	Spanish
Nancy	F	65	1969	X	mixed, Latino	n/a	mixed	retired	college, Cuba/ US	Spanish
Mateo	M	74	1971	X	mixed	n/a	mixed	retired	unknown	Spanish
Fermin	M	38	1980, Mariel	X	Mexican	Anglo/ Mexican	Cubans	real estate	unknown	English
Lucy	F	44	1996	X	Armenian, mixed	mixed	mixed	social services	college degree, Cuba	Spanish
Magaly	F	37	1997	Jabao	Mexican	n/a	mixed	arts, etc.	Cuba/US	English
Luisa	F	56	1974		Anglo	Mexican	mixed, Cubans	librarian	Cuba, post-grad (US)	English
Pedro	M	44	1992 balsero	X	mixed	Anglo, etc.	mixed	nurse assistant	Cuba, US	English
Ernesto	M	40s	1980 Mariel	X	Black/ Mexican	n/a	mixed, Cubans	construction	unknown	English
Juan Carlos	M	40	1980		mixed (Latino, Black)	n/a	mixed, Cubans	drafting	US	English
Juan	M	43	1993	X	mixed, (Brazilian, Middle East, Indian, etc.	Anglo	mixed (Latinos, etc.)	actor	College grad (Cuba)	English
Rafael	M	36	1996	X	mixed	unknown	mixed	unknown	unknown	Spanish
Ramon	M	35	1996	X	mixed	mixed	Cubans, etc.	unknown	Cuba	Spanish

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