The Evolution of the Cuban-American Decline in Influence in U.S. Policy Toward Cuba

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Introduction

This thesis will discuss and analyze the Cuban-American decline in influence in U.S. policy towards Cuba – namely the U.S. embargo on Cuba. The main reasons for the Cuban-American community’s decline in influence are threefold: a split in ideology inside the Cuban community between early arriving anti-communism, anti-Castro exiles and the more progressive second generation Cuban-Americans and later-arriving exiles, a loss of credibility because of the mass media’s portrayal of the actions taken by the Cuban-American community during the Elián González case, and the end of the "Red Scare" and threats to national security posed by Cuba. This thesis will show that these reasons have led to the Cuban-American community’s inability to influence the U.S. policies towards Cuba. However, in order to understand the decline of the Cuban-American community in politics, it is important to understand the history, support, and success of Cubans who emigrated to the United States after the Cuban Revolution in 1959.

The early Cuban exile population who fled the Castro regime was met in Miami with unprecedented political, social, and economic support. The first wave of exiles, known as the “Golden Exiles”, who arrived between 1959 and 1963, entered the United States during the time when the ‘red scare’ was sweeping throughout the US. “Immigration in the [post World War II] period attempted to maintain the foundational fiction of the Cold War whereby the United States was a ‘beacon of freedom’ to oppressed and appropriate people. At the same time, immigration policy was charged with screening out ‘undesirable immigrants’ who would not make good
citizens."¹ During the Cold War period, this 'foundational fiction', privileging particular immigrants over others, also equated notions of progress with assimilation and national harmony².

The Cuban golden exiles were very much considered 'desirable immigrants'; they not only "represented the only pro-US elite of Latin America whose loyalty to US interests", but they also shared the determination to defeat communism with the United States. Early Cuban exiles were not only ideal Latin Americans, but also ideal Americans; they fled from communist Cuba – and therefore also the grip of the socialist Soviet Union – to the United States, where they were finally 'free'. It is in this regard that most Cuban exiles received greater private and public assistance when they arrived in the United States than any other immigrant or refugee group had historically.

The political background and the social construction of the Cuban exile's journey to the United States and their life in the US has given them advantages that no other Hispanic group has experienced.

"Mexican and Latin American immigrants who live in Los Angeles have been constructed almost exclusively in economic terms, as desperate people fleeing their own countries to take advantage of the economic opportunities in the US. Cuban immigrants, on the other hand, have been represented almost exclusively as political refugees, thus legitimating the global dominance of the United States as a place of political refuge."³

The United States government created the Cuban Refugee Program, which spent nearly $1 billion between 1965 and 1976. Through this program, the federal

¹ "Immigration and Political Economy of Home" Buff, pgs. 128 -129
² "Elian González and The Purpose of America", Banet-Weiser, pg. 167
³ Ibid
government paid transportation costs from Cuba and offered financial assistance to needy refugees and to state and local public agencies that provided services. The Cuban exiles also took advantage of programs in Miami not specifically designed for Latinos. From 1968 to 1980, Latinos (almost all Cubans) received 46.9% of all Small Business Administration loans in Dade County.

Furthermore, Cuban exiles in Miami were given social support in order to incorporate themselves into the United States. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) – an agency of the US government – employed as many as 12,000 Cubans in Miami. The state of Florida also passed laws that made it easier for Cuban professionals to work in the United States. “In the late 1970s and early 1980s, 53% of minority contracts for Dade-County’s transit system went to Latino-owned firms. Dade county schools led the nation in introducing bilingual education for the first wave of Cuban refugees in 1960. The Dade County Commission also designated the county officially bilingual in the mid-1970s.”

The Cuban experience did not only occur because of the support that was given to the exiles in Miami, but also because of their appearance and backgrounds. The first wave of exiles was different from other minorities in the United States. The “Golden Exiles” were predominantly white, middle to upper class professionals; they were the tops of Cuban society who wanted to flee the socialist revolution. “The presence of entrepreneurs and professionals in the Cuban refugee flow provided a trained and experienced core who knew how to access and use the extraordinary

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4 "Power and Identity: Miami Cubans" Stepick, pg. 76
5 Ibid
6 "Power and Identity: Miami Cubans" Stepick, pg. 77
benefits provided by the US government.”  

Also, the “Golden Exiles” success and their ability to use resources given to them allowed them to establish a footing in Miami and in the United States. The roots laid by the earlier-arriving, higher-status refugees helped lead to the success other waves of Cubans incorporating into the culture of Miami and the US. Economically successful Cuban refugees would hire other Cubans newer to Miami to jobs with a real possibility of economic growth. This is evident in a comparison of Cubans and Mexicans “who came to the United States in the mid-1970s [that] revealed that the Cubans not only had higher wages than the Mexicans, even Cubans with the same educational level as Mexicans received higher wages.”  

This led to many later-arriving Cubans, who were not as educated or wealthy, becoming part of the middle and even upper class.

The political, social, and economic support given by the US government to Cuban exiles, as well as the foundation set by the “Golden Exiles” led to “Miami Cuban immigrants [achieving] economic and political power unprecedented in the entire history of U.S. immigrants.” The success that Miami Cubans have had is visible:

“Miami has proportionally the largest concentration of Latino businesses (over 55,000). Although Miami-Dade County has only 5% of the total U.S. Latino population, 31 of the top 100 Latino businesses in the United States are located there. U.S. Cubans’ rate of business ownership is more than 3 times that of Mexicans and nearly 6 times that of Puerto Ricans.”

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7 Ibid
8 “Power and Identity: Miami Cubans” Stepick, pg. 78
9 “Power and Identity: Miami Cubans” Stepick, pg. 75
10 “Power and Identity: Miami Cubans” Stepick, pg. 77
U.S. support of Cubans as well as the exiles' ability to take advantage of the opportunity given to them led unexpected and unprecedented success.

The early support given by the United States to the Cuban exiles led to the success of the Cuban community in the United States. For many years, the Cuban community seemed united. "Anti-Castro, anticommunist Miami Cubans invested locally and also enforced political consensus by harassing, boycotting, and even terrorizing their more liberal political and economic compatriots." The Cuban community in Miami, controlled by their right-wing leaders, banned any interaction with the Castro regime or the Cuban people. "An international music market conference that focused on the Americas had met in Miami Beach for several years, but in 1998, the [Cuban controlled] county blocked the conference because Cuban musicians were scheduled to attend." Also in 1998, "the Miami Light Project, a leading local arts group, had to forgo presenting a Cuban musical group in order not to lose $60,000 in county funding." Furthermore, the July 1999 the "Junior Pan American Games track and field meet was moved to Tampa after Miami-Dade refused to support it because Cuba would be represented in the games." The history of the Cuban-American community has been one of unity against communism and Castro, good standing with the U.S. federal government, and a lack of discrimination by Americans across the country. Because the Cuban-American community was supported economically and financially by the U.S., the community has had little opposition among Anglos as well as influence in Washington DC.

11 "Power and Identity: Miami Cubans" Stepick, pg. 79
12 "Power and Identity: Miami Cubans" Stepick, pg. 81
13 "The Second Generation:Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants" Portes, pg. 87
though the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF). However, this thesis will show that the factors that have made the Cuban-American community in the United States successful no longer have the same effect. This paper will discuss and analyze opinion polls and people’s sentiments through newspaper articles not only to determine how the ideological split in the Cuban-American community is widening, but also to see the detrimental effect that they Elián case had in respect to how Americans view the community in Miami. Furthermore, this thesis will compare literature that discuss the history of Cuban-American influence in Washington DC with newspaper articles that analyze the more recent situation of support for embargo policy.
The Split in the Cuban-American Community's Ideology

No aspect of the Cuban-American community attracts more attention than its politics. This is because even after 50 years, the Cuban community in Miami remains a community of exiles largely preoccupied with the political status of their homeland. At the same time, however, the community has demonstrated a strong participation in the U.S. political system at the local and state levels. For the first 30 years of the Cuban-American political participation, there has been compelling evidence that shows that the group is actually more heterogeneous with respect to its position on relations with Cuba than is frequently assumed.¹⁴

Anti-Castro, anticommunist Cuban-Americans in Miami invested locally and also enforced political consensus by harassing, boycotting, and even terrorizing their more liberal political and economic compatriots.¹⁵ The Cuban community in Miami, controlled by its ultra conservative leaders, banned any interaction with the Castro regime or the Cuban people. The reason for the early exiles' suppression of sympathetic beliefs towards Cuba is because the Cuban communist revolution took everything, including their country, away from the wealthy golden exiles. The hardliners in Miami demand that Cuba and Castro be punished by not allowing the country to trade, to be acknowledged, or to benefit financially from the United States.¹⁶ A homogeneous ideology with respect to Cuba and U.S. policies towards the island will result in Cuban-American influence in the eyes of the early exiles. It was for these reasons that Cuban-Americans boycotted, rioted, and cancelled events in

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¹⁴ "Miami Now!" Grenier and Stepick, pg. 9
¹⁵ "Power and Identity: Miami Cubans" Stepick, pg. 79
¹⁶ "Miami Now!" Grenier and Stepick, pg. 17
Miami when island Cubans were performing and quieted – oftentimes violently – dissenting opinions about Cuba. One example of the influence of the conservative exiles' influence was in 1990 when South African anti-apartheid activist and president, Nelson Mandela, was scheduled to visit Miami to thank his supporters. However, before his stop in Miami, Mandela “expressed gratitude to Fidel Castro for the support he and his communist regime had given to the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa.” The Cuban-American community’s response to Mandela’s praise was outrage. The predominantly Cuban-American city council voted to rescind the welcome for Mandela, and no elected city official attended the public ceremonies for Mandela. Cuban-Americans also showed up at the Miami Beach Convention Center to protest Mandela’s appearance.

Other examples of demonstrations include the Cuban controlled Miami-Dade County’s blocking of the international music market conference, the Miami Light Project, a Cuban musical group, and the Junior Pan American Games track and field meet in 1998 and 1999. Anti-Castro Cubans in Miami would not tolerate the inclusion of any Cubans from Cuba visiting Miami, because, to the exiles, it was a sign of acceptance of communism and Castro in Cuba.

There is much discussion about the homogeneity of the Cuban-American community in Miami and if it still exists in the 21st century. Some, like Stepick, Grenier, Garcia, and Olson, argue that the durability of the ideology of the Cuban-American community still exists because it is being sustained and reinforced by

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17 “Miami in the 1990s: City of the Future or City on the Edge” Croucher, pg. 232
18 Ibid
19 “Power and Identity: Miami Cubans” Stepick, pg. 81
20 “Miami Now!” Grenier and Stepick, pg. 90
important forces. The first reason that some believe the Cuban-American homogeneity has continued is demographics. In 1992, at least 70 percent of all Cubans who resided in the municipality of Miami were born in Cuba, meaning that most Cuban-Americans are persons who lived through the experience of an exile and are not far removed from the Cuban revolutionary process. Moreover, the age composition shows that most Cubans arrived in Miami as adults. This is important because a large portion of Cubans who dominate in Miami are exiles, while the younger generation – those persons who arrived from Cuba as children or those actually born in the United States – have been numerically underrepresented. In 1992, the median age for Cubans was 38, with 36% of the population over 50, compared to the total U.S., which had a median age of 32 with 27% of the population over 50. In 2004, the median age for Cubans in the US rose to 40.6, with 42.5% of the population over 45, compared to the total U.S., which had a median age of 36.2, with 36.5% of the population over 45. Many believe this to continue due to the low birth rate among Cuban-Americans, which is lower than the white, non-Hispanic population. 41.7 out of 1000 Cuban-American women gave birth in 2004, compared to 50.3 white, non-Hispanic women.

Another cause of continued homogeneity in the Cuban-American community is the political and economic predominance of exiles from the earlier waves. The upper and upper-middle levels of the socioeconomic structure of Miami's Cuban community are disproportionately composed of those who arrived from Cuba in the

21 "Havana USA" Garcia, pg. 146
22 "Miami Now!" Grenier and Stepick, pg. 98
23 Ibid
1960s. On the whole, these upper and upper-middle class Cubans in Miami share important characteristics: they do not have immediate family members in Cuba; they gained nothing by the process of revolutionary change – on the contrary, they lost property, livelihood, and a way of life, and they are likely to cast the struggle against the Castro regime in ideological terms. Because of the similarities between Miami’s Cuban upper and upper-middle class, these earlier migrants are much more likely to be in favor of policies of hostility and isolation toward Cuba.

Furthermore, the authors believe that homogeneity will persist because of the Cuban-American community’s enclave in Miami. The consequence of political, social, and economic success in Miami resulted in the institutional completeness, which tends to isolate members of the ethnic community, minimizing outside contact, and thereby reinforcing the culture and the ideology of the group. The Cuban-American enclave in Miami is unique in that it has its own media. The Spanish-language media in Miami, which consisted of two television stations, two daily newspapers, and four radio stations – which are almost exclusively devoted to Cuba – in 1992, are major factors in the persistence of an exile ideology.

Even those who believe that the homogeneity of the Cuban-American community in Miami will continue still admit that it is impossible for over three-quarters of a million people to share the same ideology. Despite the disparity in the Cuban-American community, those who believed in relations with Cuba, known as the ‘dialoguers’, felt intimidated and frightened to speak because of the backlash of

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24 "The Role of the Cuban American Community in the Cuban American Transition" Diáz-Briquets and Pérez-López, pg. 26
25 “Miami Now!” Grenier and Stepick, pg. 96
26 “Havana USA” Garcia, pg. 167
the elite conservative exiles for expressing an opinion that may damage the
influence of the community. In fact, such backlash occurred during the Carter
administration of 1977 – 1981 when groups of 'dialoguers' who attracted
considerable attention at the time for opposing the U.S. embargo on Cuba were
scorned, threatened, and two were murdered\textsuperscript{27}. Furthermore, neither the ranks nor
the leadership of groups in this time period were composed of individuals who
could claim legitimacy as leaders of the Cuban-American community.

While people who believed that the Cuban-American community's
homogeneity would last have convincing evidence, they neglected to understand the
factors of the community that would lead to the ideological split among Cuban-
Americans. While some believe that the homogeneity, power, and influence of the
waves of Cubans in the 1960s would lead to the continuation of a unified Cuban-
American ideology, it is important to discuss the differences in the waves of Cubans
that arrived in Miami.

In 1959, the first Cubans to flee the island were, unlike later refugees, former
supporters of the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. When subsequent
waves of Cubans arrived, they in no way favored a return to Batista, but opposed
Castro's radically nationalist policies, programs for redistributing wealth, and
eventual decision to seek an alliance with the Soviet Union\textsuperscript{28}. However, upon arrival
in Miami, circumstances forced what had once been pro-Batista and anti-Batista
political opponents into a strategic all-or-nothing alliance. Batistiano pariahs

\textsuperscript{27} "Miami Now!" Grenier and Stepick, pg. 100
\textsuperscript{28} "Elián González and the Real Cuba of Miami" Guerra, pg. 9
became anti-Castro refugees' political advocates, employers, and even friends. The subsequent waves of Cubans that came to the United States were, as a whole, a higher percentage black or mulatto. Blacks and mulattos in Cuba had the most to gain, as racial equality was one of the goals of Castro's revolution, and therefore the black and mulatto population felt generally optimistic about the future of Cuba.

Because of this, much of the first waves of Cubans were mostly white, well educated, and members of the upper class. It was not until the Mariel boatlift of 1980 that blacks and mulattos began their quest to come to the United States.

The Mariel Cubans were a liberalizing influence on the pre-existing exile community in Miami. Marielitos, as they were called, supported liberal issues such as universal health care and a woman's right to abortion. Having lived in a socialist economy for twenty years, they had a different perception of the responsibilities of the state and thus tended to favor government intervention. Also, the Mariel wave of Cubans still has strong relationships with relatives and friends in Cuba. The Mariel Cubans also promoted a more balanced interpretation of the revolution that acknowledged both its accomplishments and its failures. Due to the stark differences in waves of Cubans arriving in Miami, it is not surprising that contradictions underlying Cuban identity in the United States which makes the community not as homogeneous as some believe.

Not only did Stepick, Grenier, Garcia, and Olson underestimate the influence

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29 Ibid
30 "Havana USA" Garcia, pg. 116
31 "Cuban Americans from Trauma to Triumph" Olson, pg. 80
32 Ibid
33 "Cuban-Americans Debate Embargo" Boston Globe, May 21, 2002
of the later arriving Cuban waves, but they also did not incorporate the second
generation of Cuban-Americans into the evolvement of the Cuban community.
However, when discussing the ideological split in the Cuban-American
community, it is important to take into consideration the differences of not only the
waves of Cubans entering the United States, but also the second generation. In many
respects, the children of Cuban immigrants have been assimilated in characteristic
American fashion. Younger Miami Cubans prefer to speak English, watch English-
language television, listen to English-language radio, dress in American styles, and
adopt the attitudes of typical mainstream American adolescents.34 The second
generation, the ones who define themselves as Cuban-Americans and whose
attitudes and concerns are easily as much American as Cuban, will eventually shift
political attention of the Cuban-American community away from Cuba to domestic
issues in the United States.

Second generation Cuban-Americans who do participate in Cuban policies
have different attitudes than the hardliners of the exile community. The young
Cuban-Americans' involvement in Cuba and its politics is shown in the Roots of
Hope, a group of young Cuban-Americans who challenge the anti-Castro hardliners
and seek to change minds in Miami about building relations with Cuba. The Roots of
Hope, consisting of 2,800 members, which include second generation Cuban
Americans and Cubans who recently arrived to the United States, with an average
age of 2135, gained respect and publicity when they supported Miami-based singer
Juanes' 2009 concert in Cuba. While some anti-Castro hardliners called for a boycott

34 "Power and Identity: Miami Cubans" Stepick, pg 85
35 "Cuban-American Generational Shift" St. Petersburg Times, October 12, 2009
and sent the singer death threats for traveling to Cuba, others were open to listen to the Roots of Hope. "They actually have a better understanding of the realities of Cuba at the present time than we old historical guys" said Francisco Jose Hernandez, president of the Cuban American National Foundation. Despite the myth that the hard-line Cuban exiles are the voice of the homogeneous Cuban-American community, 73% of Cuban-Americans watched the Juanes concert in Cuba. Moreover, an opinion poll found that support for the concert leaped from 27% to 53%. Even more surprising, the biggest shift came from the older exiles, who went from only 17% in favor before the concert to 48% afterward. This is only one example of the ideological change from anti-communism, anti-Castro sentiment of the first waves of exiles to a more accepting view of Cuba and its policies in the Cuban-American community.

Another factor that those who believe in the homogeneity of the Cuban community did not foresee is the split in the ideology of the Cuban-American community within the anti-communist, anti-Castro first waves of exiles themselves. In fact, Fernand Amandi, executive vice president of Bendixen Polling argues, "the two main drivers behind the erosion of support for the embargo are the demographical growth of Mariel Cubans and Cuban-Americans born in the United States, who now favor the loosening of the embargo, and an ever-increasing segment of the 'historic exile' who no longer believe in continuing with a nearly 50-year-old policy" Bendixen polls showed in 1992 that 82% of Cuban born exiles said that the embargo should be kept in place. In 2005, 62% of Cubans wanted to

36 Ibid
37 "Among Exiles, Support for Trade Embargo Diminishes" Miami Herald, September 9, 2009
maintain the U.S. embargo on Cuba. However, when the poll ran again in August of 2009, only 47% of Cuban born exiles supported the embargo.\textsuperscript{38}

As a whole, the Cuban-American community has shifted its ideology with regards to their view on a once hard-line view of the embargo on Cuba. A longitudinal study by the New York Times on whether Cuban-Americans believed that the embargo should continue or end showed that in 2006, 61% or the Cuban-American community wanted to continue the embargo. Three years later, the support for the continuation dropped to 53%. Finally, in 2009, 42% of the Cuban-American population wanted the embargo maintained\textsuperscript{39}. A Florida International University poll shows that in 2004, 66% of the Cuban community in the Miami supported the embargo. In 2008, the same poll showed 45% of Cuban-Americans were in favor of the embargo, up from 58% in 2007\textsuperscript{40}.

Not only do the polls show the change in ideology in the Cuban community with respect to the embargo, but also of other once hard-line issues among early arriving exiles. A 2006 Florida International University poll shows that 55% of Cubans in Miami supported measures that would allow the sale of food or medicine to Cuba, renewed diplomatic relations or a national dialogue between exiles and Cuban government officials, and travel to Cuba. The same poll showed 65% of Cuban-Americans were in favor of formalizing diplomatic ties\textsuperscript{41}. A 2008 CNN poll found 7 out of 10 Cuban-Americans favored renewed relations with Cuba\textsuperscript{42}.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid
\textsuperscript{39} "Survey of Cuban-Americans" \textit{New York Times}, April 21, 2009
\textsuperscript{40} "Poll Shows Shift in Cuban-American Views" \textit{St. Petersburg Times}, December 4, 2008
\textsuperscript{41} "It's Broken, But Don't Fix It" \textit{Chicago Tribune}, May 29, 2007.
\textsuperscript{42} "Cracking Open the Door" \textit{Chicago Tribune}, April 14, 2009
The shift in ideology can also be seen in Cuban-Americans’ opinions on travel to and from Cuba. A longitudinal study done by the University of Miami, which questioned Cuban-Americans’ willingness to return to Cuba, found that in October 2000, 37.7% answered that they were likely to go back, an increase from only 26.9% in 1991. The more recent polls, however, show more of a change in opinion. An April 2009 New York Times poll found that 67% of the Cuban-American community supports lifting all restrictions for travel to Cuba, an 18-point increase from 2006. These findings are confirmed by a Bendixen poll, which showed that 64% of Cuban-Americans supported Obama’s new travel policy of giving Cuban-Americans visitation rights to see their families. Furthermore, an even larger number, 67%, said that all Americans should be able to go to the island.

An equally important indicator of the shift in ideology among Cuban-Americans is the change in attitude of the Cuban community. As mentioned before, up until the late 1990s, the Cuban-American community protested against Americans traveling to Cuba and Cuban citizens visiting the United States. However, in March 2000 *El Nuevo Herald* trumpeted the expectation of 120 Cuban scholars from Cuba for the Latin American Studies Association meetings, which was the largest contingent ever to visit the United States. Conference organizers from Florida International University feared massive public demonstrations and disruptions of the meetings. However, fewer than five protesters demonstrated and not a single event was disturbed. Furthermore, in 2002, leaders among Miami’s exile community embraced Jimmy Carter’s trip to Cuba, where he pushed for greater

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43 “Cuban-Americans are Ready for New Era in Relations” *New York Times*, April 21, 2009
44 “Power and Identity: Miami Cubans” Stepick, pg 86
democracy and called for an end to the embargo. The non-existent demonstrations of the Cuban-American community during these events signified that the influence responsible for driving previous riots and boycotts, the hard-line conservative exiles, was diminishing and dissenting opinions in Miami were finally being tolerated.

Some, like Stepick, Grenier, Garcia, and Olson, note that the characteristics of the Cuban-American enclave in Miami will lead to the homogeneity of the community's ideology. These authors argue that since the Cuban enclave is self-sustaining, Cuban-Americans will not assimilate into American culture, but rather the second generation will only be exposed to the politics and opinions of their community. The topic of assimilation is important to explore when it comes to the Cuban community in Miami. There are two features of the social contexts encountered by immigrants that restrict assimilation. The first is skin color. While many immigrants do not experience prejudice in their native lands, it is by virtue of moving into a new social environment, marked by different values, that physical features become redefined as a handicap. While Stepick, Grenier, Garcia, and Olson's arguments may be true for other minorities like Mexican-Americans and Haitians, they do not for Cubans. As noted before, not only were the first waves - who made up a majority of the exiles in Miami - mostly white, but they were greeted with political, economic, and social support by the federal government, thereby making the assimilation into life in Miami unlike the assimilation of other groups into the United States. The darker Cubans who began to arrive in the 1980s were

45 "Cuban-Americans Debate Embargo" Boston Globe May 21, 2002
46 "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants" Portes, pg. 83
not treated unfairly because of their 'physical features' because by the time they arrived in Miami, the earlier exiles had established themselves in society and received the later waves with open arms. Because of the 'whiteness' of the earlier arriving exiles, the more recent exiles did not have the same hurdles to overcome in regards to assimilation.

A second feature that limits assimilation is the concentration of immigrant households in cities, which puts newly arrived immigrants in close contact to native-born minorities. This leads to the identification of the condition of both groups – immigrants and native-born – as the same in the eyes of the majority. In turn, the prejudices that exist for immigrants are often felt by the native-born as well. However, as mentioned before, this is not applicable to Cubans because immigrants were given support by the government and, in turn, assimilated with ease compared to other immigrant populations. Furthermore, the Cuban community quickly became a majority in Miami, not only by numbers, but also because of the early exiles' educational and political background, which quickly propelled them into successful businesses in Miami and positions in City Hall. While many in the Cuban-American community live in concentrated areas, the educational background of the 'Golden Exiles' led to the Cuban community's notion of educational importance. It is because of this that Cubans averaged 12.2 years of schooling, 55% graduated from high school. Also, 16.2% of Cubans have 4+ years of college, compared to 4.9% and 5.6% or Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, respectively.

The assimilation of the Cuban community, as well as the importance and

\[47\] Ibid
opportunity of [an American] education has contributed greatly to the split between early exiles and the second-generation Cuban-Americans. Unlike other immigrant populations, many Cuban-Americans are given the opportunity, through education, to leave the enclave in Miami. Whether they return to Miami or not, the chance of breaking out of Little Havana not only gives the second-generation different opinions on Cuba and its politics, but also changes the focus of young Cuban-Americans away from Cuba and towards policies of their country: the United States. The growth and influence of the Mariel and later arriving Cuban waves and the second generation Cuban-Americans, along with the ever shifting opinions of the once strong anti-communism, anti-Castro early exiles shows that the once thought homogeneity of the Cuban-American community is changing.

The next chapter, which discusses and analyzes the Elián González case and its mass media attention, will not only materialize and put into context the ideological split in the Cuban-American community, but also show a split in beliefs between the early exiles and the mainstream American public. The next chapter will show that the cleavage between early exile Cubans' and the American public's beliefs about Elián has led to the alienation of Cuban-Americans from the rest of Americans, thus leading to the community's decline in influence.
The Elián González Saga

On Thursday, the 25th of November 1999, Thanksgiving Day, two fishermen rescued a six-year-old boy, Elián González, from an inner tube floating just three miles off the coast of Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The boy was one of only three survivors of a group of fourteen Cubans, who had embarked for the United States four days earlier on a sixteen-foot, homemade motorized craft. After only a day at sea, the boat capsized. Among the dead was Elián's mother, Elizabet Brotons. The two men fishing out at sea for the day rescued Elián and notified the U.S. Coast Guard who took him to Port Everglades.

After a day of treatment at a Miami hospital, Elián, who had no document or identification on him, was temporarily paroled by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) into the care of his great-uncle, Lazaro González. Although the boy's exiled relatives intended to send Elián home to his father, "... and few, if any, disputed the idea, both the González family's plan and the public opinion of Miami's nearly one million Cubans suddenly reversed course after Fidel Castro demanded that the boy be returned within seventy-two hours." Within a day of his release, Elián became the focus of an international diplomatic dispute between Havana and Washington and a child custody battle between Elián's relatives in Miami and his father, Juan Miguel González in Cardenas. With over 2,000 headlines in major U.S. newspapers and record triple-digit increases reported by cable news

48 "Elián González and the Real Cuba of Miami" Guerra, pg. 2
49 "The Paradox of Discretion and the Case of Elian Gonzalez" Dillman, pg. 166
50 Ibid
51 "Elián González and the Real Cuba of Miami" Guerra, pg. 2
52 "The Paradox of Discretion and the Case of Elian Gonzalez" Dillman, pg. 166
networks, including CNN which was up 284% in the March 2000, the spotlight given to the Elián González case highlighted the actions and status of the Cuban community in Miami to the entire United States, which resulted in the damage of the Cubans-Americans' reputation and success in influencing policy and gave people all over the United States a glimpse of how the Cubans in Miami stood on U.S. immigration policy, society, and democracy.

For many, the role that the Cuban-American community in Miami played in the Elián case led to the loss of respect and support for Cuban-Americans and their politics. Only a few days after Elián had been rescued, the beginning of the clash between Cuban-Americans and others in U.S. began. The Cuban-American population believed that the young boy was entitled to stay in the United States because of a May 2, 1995 Statement of the INS saying:

"Effective immediately, Cuban migrants intercepted at sea by the United States and attempting to enter the United States will be taken to Cuba ... while Cubans who make it to dry land are inspected by the INS and permitted to stay and seek permanent residence status after one year as provided by the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1996."\(^5^3\)

Thus, the wet-foot dry-foot law was born. Cuban-Americans and exile leaders argued that since Elián made it to the shore, he should be allowed to stay. However, their protests and actions made non-Cubans resentful of the Cuban-American community's sense of entitlement.

Two outraged groups were African-Americans and Haitians. U.S. House of Representative, Alcee Hastings, and African-American leader of the Congressional Black Caucus was irate at the attention that Elián was getting from the media and

\(^{53}\) "The Paradox of Discretion and the Case of Elian Gonzalez" Dillman, pg. 171
the country. She fired back, "Why did the U.S. Congress not also consider conferring permanent residency rights on a motherless six-year-old Haitian girl in his district?"

Hastings goes on to say, "If anything, the girl's plight was worse: not only did she face automatic deportation to Haiti, but the absence of anyone in Haiti who could claim her"\footnote{Elián González and the Real Cuba of Miami Guerra, pg. 14}

Also, the San Francisco Chronicle ran an article titled, "No Room for 5000 Eliáns", which demonstrates how the media spectacle surrounding the case warranted further consideration of the treatment other immigrant youth receive at the hands of the INS:

"While much of the nation is consumed by the plight of one little Cuban boy, more than 5,000 Haitian children are facing an even more frightening prospect: banishment by the Immigration and Naturalization Service to a Caribbean hell of filth, tyranny, starvation and, [in] some cases, even death."\footnote{No Room for 5000 Eliáns San Francisco Chronicle, April 3, 2000}

What's more, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution ran a stories of Haitian immigration that focused on Marc and Germanie Dieubon, two Haitian refugee children who were on a fishing boat with their mother and 408 others that ran aground two miles off the South Florida coast on January 1, 2000. While their mother was taken to the hospital for medical treatment, the two children were sent back to Haiti\footnote{The Afterimage: Immigration Policy after Elián Demo, pg. 38}.

With the national media's attention on Elián and U.S. – Cuban immigration policy, the San Diego Tribune commented:

"A vigorous legal battle has erupted over one Cuban boy who miraculously survived a sea crossing and arrived on American soil on Thanksgiving Day. From coast to coast, there has been a public outcry over Elián González's well being and the quality of his future. But here, along the U.S. – Mexico border,
thousands of Eliáns are caught between the two countries each year, their dramatic struggle passing largely unnoticed.\textsuperscript{57}

Why was Elián receiving so much media attention when there are so many stories like his elsewhere in the United States? The Elián media spectacle reinforced and made the American public aware of the ‘special treatment’ given to Cuban refugees. Both Hispanics and non-Hispanic immigrants throughout the country, especially those in border states, such as California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, felt as if the Cuban population in Miami was creating and receiving undue publicity from the media and the U.S. government for Elián, when children without parents are denied entry across the US-Mexico border everyday, without a mention from the media or the federal government.

What angered people was that despite the special treatment given to Cuban refugees through the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1996 and the INS Joint Committee on Migration’s wet-foot dry-foot laws, “organized [Cuban] exile groups, every elected official of Cuban descent in the municipal and city government of Miami-Dade County, and the exile-controlled media of South Florida launched attacks not just on Cuba, but on the U.S. Federal Government and the U.S. public itself for supporting Elián’s return.” \textsuperscript{58} The demonstrations, riots, and demands of the Cuban-American community with the nation watching led to the loss of respect for the Cuban-American community in Miami by other minority groups in the United States.

Another aspect of the Elián case that was highlighted because of the tremendous media attention is the Miami Cuban community’s open belief and

\textsuperscript{57} "The Afterimage: Immigration Policy after Elián" Demo, pg. 37
\textsuperscript{58} "Elián González and the Real Cuba of Miami" Guerra, pg. 3
expression of the idea that they, more so than the people of the United States or its government, represented the authentic commitment to freedom – especially from Communist totalitarianism – historically associated with the United States. Furthermore, as one Cuban-American protestor explained, “We are protesting to save the liberty of this country ... Communism is right around the corner.” Many protestors echoed this view to reporters on the scene, depicting themselves as self-appointed keepers of the ideals of democracy that both the U.S. government and the rest of the United States had betrayed. One Little Havana resident said, “We’re trying to fight against communism – that’s the bottom line.”

However, the loss of respect and credibility for the Cuban-American community in Miami was also seen in sectors of the mainstream majority Anglo-American public. “Hispanics and non-Hispanics simply do not view the world alike, and this is especially true where Elián González is concerned.” The American public did not see the Elián case as a battle between democracy and communism, but rather a debate as to the well being of a young boy. 81% of African-American residents in Miami supported Elián’s return to his biological father. “African-Americans have felt much more strongly about the bond between father and his son than anything having to do with politics in Cuba,” said Rob Schroth, a pollster who conducted a January 6, 2000 telephone poll of 400 Miami-Dade County residents. A Channel 23 poll showed that 79% of African-Americans agreed with the INS’ decision to send Elián back to his father in Cuba.

59 “Elián González and the Real Cuba of Miami” Guerra, pg. 5
60 “Thousands in Miami March for Elián’s Return” Chicago Tribune, April 30, 2000
61 “Hispanics, Non-Hispanics at Odds About Boy’s Fate” Miami Herald, January 8, 2000
62 Ibid
Many other non-Hispanics agreed with the idea that Elián should be sent back to Cuba to be with his father and that Cuban politics should not be a factor. The Schroth poll showed that 65% of white non-Hispanics in Miami-Dade believed that Elián should be returned to Cuba to be with his father, while the Channel 23 poll showed that 70% of non-Hispanics agreed with the INS in sending the boy back to his father in Cuba.

More important than the data were the feelings non-Hispanics had towards the Elián case. As the 5-month drama dragged on, the national rhetoric had escalated against the entire Miami Cuban community. "It's been a long time coming," said Andrew Buchner of Miami. "I think the kid needs to be with his father. There can be good fathers within bad regimes." Rev. David Carl Olson explained the stance of the rally sponsored by the Community Church of Boston, "We see this boy being used as a tool to divide the United States with Cuba. We think this is a form of child abuse ... we are united in the reunification of this family."63 "I believe Janet Reno is a hero, that she should be commended for the job that she did," said Anna Marie Andriole, a white non-Hispanic from Dania Beach, FL. "It should have been done a lot earlier. I believe the Cuban-American people do not act by the U.S. law."64 Haitian Charles Abanel said, "I think the government did the right thing.... Without a doubt, the boy should be with his father."65

The significant split of opinions between the non-Hispanics and Cuban-Americans about whether or not Elián should stay with his Miami relatives in the

63 "Group Wants Elián Returned to Cuba" Boston Globe, February 21, 2000
64 "A Torn Community Reacts Raid Stuns, Enthralls Fractured Public" Miami Herald, April 23, 2000
65 Ibid
United States or go back to Cuba with his father is better understood in polls. A Gallup poll was conducted between December 9, 1999 and April 24, 2000, which asked whether Elián should remain in the United States or live with his father in Cuba. The results are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Date</th>
<th>Remain in U.S.</th>
<th>Live with father in Cuba</th>
<th>Other (vol.)</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 9–12, 1999</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 25–26, 2000</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1,044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2–March 30, 2000</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 7–9, 2000</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 22, 2000</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 24, 2000</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>611</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table shows, after the Dec. 9 – 12 survey date, the percentage of the people polled who believed Elián should remain in the United States averaged 30.5% and was never higher than 36%. An ABC poll asked, who should be granted permanent custody of Elián González – his father or his relatives in Miami showed similar results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Date</th>
<th>His Father</th>
<th>Miami Relatives</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 24, 2000</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 7–10</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1,068</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, an NBC poll, which surveyed 680 registered voters, found that three out of four people said that Elián belonged with his father.

66 "American Attitudes toward Cuba", Mayer, pg. 605
67 Ibid
These data show that the majority of the American public and non-Hispanics in Miami overwhelmingly disagreed with the Cuban-American belief that Elián should have stay in the United States. However, there is data and sentiment that show that the Cuban-American population overwhelmingly believed that Elián should stay with his Miami relatives in the United States. The Channel 23 poll found that 86% of Hispanics (mostly Cuban-Americans) in Miami-Dade County disagreed with the INS' decision to send Elián back to Cuba. Also, a Miami Herald poll published on April 9, 2000 showed that 83% of Cuban-Americans in Miami-Dade wanted to see the boy remain in Miami. Cuban-American actor Andy Garcia declares, "This is not a complicated story. His mother died trying to get him here. He needs to stay. He wants to stay."68 "I sat in my room and shed some tears," said sympathizer Jose Cruz. However, it was their actions, rather than their pleas that created a divide between the Cuban-American community and the American public.

The tremendous divide between the American public's and the Cuban-Americans' views on the Elián case and the fight against communism has led to the alienation of the Cubans in Miami. Most of the United States believed that Elián should be reunited with his father because a child should be in the custody of his parent, however, the Cubans in Miami disagreed on the grounds that the boy should not return to communist, Castro-led Cuba. The Cuban-American community was using Elián to satisfy their anti-communist, anti-Castro sentiments, which, by the community's actions, was very clear to the rest of the United States. Historically, Cuban exiles have been accepted into the United States with support financially and

68 "For Cubans, Outside Reaction Angers, Bewilders Many" \textit{Miami Herald}, April 23, 2000
socially from the U.S. government. A main reason for success in politics was that they shared a common enemy with not only the U.S. government, but also the American public: Communism.

A Gallup poll asking Americans polled if they have a favorable or an unfavorable opinion of Fidel Castro showed that in July 1959, 15% of people polled were in favor of Castro, while 38% were not. When the same poll was run again in May 1960, only 2% of people polled were in favor of Castro as opposed to 81% who were unfavorable towards him. These results were retested in 1998 by ABC, which showed that 4% of Americans polled were in favor of Castro, while 78% were not.

These findings are relevant to the relationship between the American public and the Cuban-American community because the data show that the two groups overwhelmingly sided together not only against communism, but also specifically against Fidel Castro. However, as data show during the Elián case, most of the nation seemed to believe that Elián González should be with his father, while Cuban-Americans could not see beyond their hatred of Fidel Castro. During the Elián case, the fight to keep the boy in the United States became an all-or-nothing battle for many Cuban-Americans, the dominant culture in Miami, and it changed the way others around the country see them and their cause, which cost them prestige and power.

“This [the Elián case] has become a bizarre experience where family, flag and police – all parts of the American trinity – were attacked by Cuban-Americans,” said University of Miami professor, David Abraham. “There was the firing of the police chief because he kept public order, and the desecration of the flag, and it was very
disconcerting to middle Americans.”

People all over the United States, and around the world, saw hundreds if not thousands of people outside of a small home in Miami's Little Havana neighborhood chanting "Elián! Elián!" The nation heard Lazaro González, Elián's great uncle declare that the U.S. Government "will have to take this child from me by force." When the INS raided the González's house on April 23, 2000 to seize Elián, over a million homes watched as national news stations showed "4,000 Miami Cubans [in] a full-fledged riot, setting tires on fire and burning the U.S. flag on the streets of Little Havana." Americans saw "between 260 and 400 people arrested and at least one man was charged with the attempted murder of three police officers." These public demonstrations attacking important American values, 'family, flag, and police', which were seen by the whole country, further alienated the Cuban-American community from mainstream Anglo-Americans. Millions of Americans tuned in to watch the behavior of the Cubans in Miami and were disgusted about how they could attack the values of the same country that gave them so much support.

The next day, April 24, 2000, however, television cameras and newspapers told the nation about the quiet protests that involved thousands of Cuban-Americans in Miami. Little Havana's shops, restaurants, cafes, and markets were shuttered, while 10 percent of Miami-Dade County workers, 2,580 people, and 10 percent of nonessential City of Miami workers, and additional 260 people, used their

70 “The Elian Photo Op” Candiotti, pg.118
71 “Elián González and the Real Cuba of Miami” Guerra, pg. 5
personal days to stay at home ... about 3,900 of 20,000 public school teachers stayed home, as did 115,000 students. The protest got more attention when ten members of the Florida Marlins sat out the game against the San Francisco Giants; another half-dozen players around baseball protested as well.

Lisandro Perez, director of the Cuban Research Institute at Florida International University was worried about the consequences of the Cuban-Americans actions, which he described as being “not handled intelligently ... [the community’s actions were] driven by emotions and passions, and you don’t act intelligently when you are driven by emotions and passions.” Perez believes the Elián experience “has weakened the Cuban-American position... it’s not because Americans suddenly realize that Fidel Castro is a good guy. It’s because the Elián case has made Cuban-Americans lose a lot of credibility.” He attributes the loss of credibility to the reality that “Nationally, the behavior of Elian’s relatives [in Miami] is being seen as outrageous.”

Juan Rodriguez, professor of Cuban-American studies at the University of Miami, agrees, saying, “In the Elián affair, Miami Cuban-Americans lost credit, prestige with the American people, they lost support.”

“The Cuban exiles have shown such arrogance,” said Garth Reeves, the publisher emeritus of the Miami’s black newspaper, The Miami Times. “They’re saying, ‘this is our town, and damn it, we run it. We make the decisions.’ Reeves correctly described the Cuban community’s firm grip on Miami. During the Elián

73 Ibid
74 “For Cubans, Outside Reaction Angers, Bewilders Many” Miami Herald, April 23, 2000
75 “From Cardenas, Cuba” Chicago Tribune, January 16, 2001
case, Cuban-American mayor Joe Carollo, who fired African-American City Manager Donald Warshaw after he refused to fire Miami's non-Hispanic police chief, William O'Brien, named Carlos Gimenez, a Cuban-American, to be city manager and Raul Martinez, also a Cuban-American, to replace O'Brien as police chief.77

Abraham, Perez, Rodriguez, and Reeves' arguments are correct, as it is precisely the attitude of the Cubans in Miami that has angered the mainstream American and their values. The Cuban-American community, after receiving benefits from the U.S. unlike any other Hispanic population in America's history, was driven by their highly anti-communist emotions and had the arrogance to display outrageous behavior, such as burning of the American flag, disrupting family values, and attacking American police on national media.

During the same time, inside of Miami, dissenters of the mainstream Cuban-American community's opinions suffered rebuke and reprisals for harboring Communist sympathies. Cubans in Miami who believed that Elián should be reunited with his father are scared to express their opinions. This censorship has been common for many years in Miami not only because of the elite exiles' view that an ideologically split community is not as influential politically as a homogeneous, but also because sympathy for communist, Castro-led Cuba is a heated issue that is taken personally by many exiles. One dissenter said that if she spoke her beliefs, she "could be labeled as a Communist. [She] could lose [her] job." Ms. Rodriguez goes on to say, "I've never made [my opinions] public... what the story is here is a lack of freedom. I've been warned not to talk." Elena Freyre, executive director of the Cuban

Committee for Democracy, an advocate for U.S.–Cuban government relations, a view that is in the minority in the Cuban-American community, says, "There are people, many people, who feel like I do, but they're terribly quiet because they're scared." Ms. Freyre goes on further, "People come up to me all the time and say, 'we feel exactly the way you do, but we would never say this in public.'" Dissenters in Miami did not feel comfortable talking about their opinions because they were the minority. However, such intimidation and censorship that has been used by the Cuban-American majority in Miami is ineffective with regard to the American public, who believed that Elián should return to his father in Cuba are in the national majority.

Having been the dominant majority politically, economically, and socially in Miami since the days of the golden exiles, due to the early support given to them and the enclave the community has built in Miami, Cuban-Americans have been used to having the majority opinion. Furthermore, since the arrival of the golden exiles in the early 1960s, the Cuban-American community has rarely experienced failure in controlling the opinions of minorities (including Anglos) in Miami as well as national policy towards Cuba, with the help of the Cuban American National Foundation. However, the Elián case tested the Cuban-American community by making them into a national minority group whose opinions and actions were challenged by the national majority.

As much as they have tried, for the first time, the Cuban-American community could not silence the dissenters, which created an ideological split.

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78 "In Miami, Some Cuban-Americans Take Less Popular Views" New York Times, April 27, 2000
79 Ibid
between the Cuban-American community and the American public, in which neither side would compromise. Instead, because of the passion and emotion that the Elián González case brought, much of the Cuban-American community simply was not worried, or even aware, of what the American public believed. "Now [the Cuban-American community] hear[s] what the outside world is saying about them, and it really shocks them." Other Cuban-Americans' reactions included a sweeping sentiment that "It's really us [Cuban-Americans] versus them [American public]." The biggest reason for the divide between Cuban-Americans and the American public, during the Elián case, was the reaction of Cuban-Americans to dissenting national views including, "I could care less what the American people think about the Cuban exile community." While Cubans in Miami have been successful in quieting opposing views in Miami, their fight to quiet the nation has led them to lose credibility, power, and prestige.

The Elián case 10 years ago still holds relevance to the Cuban-American situation today. Since Elián in 2001, the hard-lined early exiles of the Cuban-American community have been met with competition by the increased dissenting opinion inside the community, which can be seen in the fast growing ideological split among Cubans in Miami in regards to U.S. policies towards Cuba such as travel restrictions and the embargo on Cuba. The growing voice of the dissenters in Miami has also affected the Cuban-American's most important influential influence in Washington DC, the Cuban American National Foundation, in becoming a foundation of the dissenters by rethinking its mission to support the opinions of the

80 "For Cubans, Outside Reaction Angers, Bewilders Many" Miami Herald, April 23, 2000
progressive, later arriving Cuban exiles and second generation Cuban-Americans, who, with the help of the Elián case, are expressing their views and are gradually becoming the majority voice in Miami.

Also, the Elián Gonzalez case branded the Cuban-American community contrary to popular opinions of Americans. During Elián's stay in the United States, the American public and the Cuban-American community were in disagreement and oftentimes desecrated the others values; the American public by calling for Elián to return to communist, Castro-led Cuba, and the Cuban-American community by attacking America's ideals of family, flag, and police. The actions of the Cuban-American community, which were captured on national media, distanced the community from the greater American community at large. This alienation led to an increase in players in U.S. - Cuba policies in Washington DC and a decrease in Cuban-American influence, which will be further explored and analyzed in the next chapter.
The Evolution of the Cuban-American Voice in Washington D.C.

Since the 1980s, the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) has been a central player in crafting Cuban policy. Founded in 1981 at the urging of Regan administration officials, who gave the Foundation its initial boost, the CANF quickly built a web of relationships in the executive branch. It also had bipartisan ties with several influential members of Congress who sponsored CANF-backed legislation. Jorge Mas Canosa, CANF’s influential and charismatic chief officer, persuaded fellow Cuban-Americans to make large annual contributions to the organization. By the early 1990s, the Foundation claimed more than 50,000 members and by the beginning of the twenty-first century 5,000 more, with 170 directors, trustees, and associates reputedly contributing $1,000 to $10,000 annually. The CANF was an active player in politics, taking in nearly $1.7 million and making $1.3 million in campaign contributions. CANF’s ability to collect money and stay active politically resulted in CANF’s influencing US policies towards Cuba. Its greatest success, in the early years, was maintaining a tight US – Cuba embargo. However, the foundation achieved other successes in their goal of controlling US – Cuba relations.

The Cuban American National Foundation financed campaigns of Cuban-Americans who defended tightening the U.S. embargo on Cuba. At the congressional level, the CANF donated funds not only to the campaigns of the three South Florida Cuban American Republicans, Mel Martinez, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, and Lincoln Diaz-Balart, but also to that of Robert Menendez, a Cuban-American New Jersey

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82 Cuba Information Archives n.d.; Tamayo, 2002
Democrat. Menendez, who became the third-largest recipient of Cuban-American political contributions, supported and advanced the Foundation's stance on Cuba matters to the point of breaking ranks with Democratic colleagues\(^{84}\). Washington policymakers have restricted ties between Cuban exiles and their homeland for half a century, since the Cuban revolution. Initially, policymakers justified the embargo as a means to advance security concerns. Yet when Cuba no longer trained Latin American insurgents, and when it halted its nuclear power facility, cut back dramatically its military capacity, withdrew troops from Africa, and ended its alliance with the Soviet Union, U.S. policy makers not only continued, but also tightened the embargo.

To rally congressional support for legislation it favored, the Cuban American National Foundation also supported campaigns of non-Cuban-Americans. Key sponsors of Cuba-related legislation were recipients of CANF funding. The main sponsor of a Congressional initiative during the Reagan years was Senator Paula Hawkins, a Florida Republican. Her legislation called for the government to allot $10 million in federal funds for Radio Martí to beam anti-Castro messages to people in Cuba. Afterwards, she became one of the top ten recipients of Cuban-American campaign funding between 1979 and 2000\(^{85}\). Furthermore, the chief congressional sponsor of the first post-Cold War embargo-tightening legislation, the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act, was Robert Torricelli, a non-Cuban New Jersey Democrat. Torricelli was the second-largest recipient of Cuban-American funding between 1979 and 2000 and, as the political contributions flowed to his campaign, the former advocate

\(^{84}\) Ibid
\(^{85}\) Ibid
of U.S. – Cuba dialogue fought to tighten the embargo.

The next major embargo-tightening legislation that CANF backed was the 1996 Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, informally known as the Helms-Burton bill, after its two key sponsors. The Helms-Burton bill called for Cuban prodemocracy and market reforms as prerequisites for lifting the embargo and also laid the legal basis for U.S. citizens to sue international investors in property the Castro government had confiscated from them. For sponsoring the bill, Dan Burton, an Indiana Republican, received $61,000 from Cuban-Americans in the 1990s, and nothing before that time. Republican Jesse Helms of North Carolina received $76,000 from CANF, almost all in 1995 – 1996 when he was running for re-election. Additional support for the Helms-Burton bill came when the Foundation courted both 1992 presidential candidates with campaign contributions. In the election, George H. W. Bush was the fifth-largest recipient of Cuban-American political donations. Bill Clinton, after receiving $275,000 from Cuban-Americans, announced his support for the Helms-Burton bill, which was then pending in Congress until Bush ultimately signed into law before the election. From its founding in 1981, the Cuban American National Foundation played a valuable role in determining the fate of major U.S. – Cuba policies through campaign contributions.

Not only did the CANF leverage political contributions, but they also used their votes in order to have their hand in U.S. – Cuba policies. Despite the fact that Cuban-Americans account for less than 1 percent of the U.S. population, they have

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87 "The Cuban Ethnic Electoral Policy Cycle" Eckstein, 2009, pg. 130
88 Ibid
magnified their political influence by primarily residing in the largest electoral 'swing state', Florida; by electing fellow Cuban-Americans to local offices; and by prioritizing ethnic concerns while voting\textsuperscript{89}. The U.S. state-based, winner-take-all Electoral College system contributed to the importance of their vote in presidential elections. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, Cuban-Americans accounted for 8 percent of the electorate in a state commanding one-tenth of the Electoral College votes\textsuperscript{90}.

Cuban-Americans take both citizenship and voting rights seriously. In 1990, nearly 60 percent of Cuban-Americans in Miami were U.S. citizens\textsuperscript{91}. By 2004, two-thirds of them were citizens, with 90 percent of Cuban-Americans above the voting age registered voters\textsuperscript{92}. For these reasons, U.S. incumbent presidential candidates have catered to the wishes of not only Cuban-Americans in Miami, but also the Cuban American National Foundation in Washington in order to win their highly sought after votes. The table below shows how each of the recent policy shifts that involve either loosening or tightening the embargo has affected the U.S. Presidential candidate's success in winning the state of Florida:

\textsuperscript{89} "The Cuban Ethnic Electoral Policy Cycle" Eckstein, 2009, pg. 125
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid
\textsuperscript{91} "Cuban Americans From Trauma to Triumph" Olson & Olson, 1995, pg. 63
\textsuperscript{92} "The Cuban Ethnic Electoral Policy Cycle" Eckstein, 2009, pg. 126
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Personal Embargo</th>
<th>Macro Embargo</th>
<th>Incumbent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loosening</td>
<td>Tightening</td>
<td>Loosening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>1995</td>
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<td>1996</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>[Elián] superscript a</td>
<td>X superscript b</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>X superscript d</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

superscript a Elián González returned to Cuba amid Cuban American opposition
superscript b Codification of travel cap, amid pressure to lift travel restrictions (but no change in frequency of permitted visits)
superscript c Incumbent vice president runs for office, associated with incumbent president's Elián policy
superscript d Loosening of restrictions for Cuban Americans, though tightening of restrictions for other Americans

The influence that the CANF and Cuban-Americans have had in Washington can be proven by analyzing the wavering policies by the executive office during election and non-election years from 1992 – 2004 with respect to the U.S. embargo of Cuba. President George H. W. Bush began the practice of catering to the Cuban American National Foundation and Cuban-American voters when he signed the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act, which tightened the embargo loopholes in regards to traveling rights for Americans to Cuba. This act prohibited foreign-based subsidiaries of U.S. companies from trading with Cuba and called for all countries trading with Cuba should discontinue doing so as well as cancel any economic

93 "The Cuban Ethnic Electoral Policy Cycle" Eckstein, 2009, pg. 133
activity with the country. Incumbent candidate Bush also lowered the remittance cap that President Carter had instituted by $800 annually and specified that the restrictions should remain in effect until the U.S. president determined that the government of Cuba had instituted democratic reforms and had moved toward establishing a free market economic system. Because these actions were performed during his last months in office, Bush, despite losing the election, received 70 percent of the Cuban-American vote and won the state of Florida.

After assuming the presidency, Democrat Bill Clinton used his discretionary power to regulate U.S.-to-Cuba travel. In 1994, he introduced measures more restrictive than those of his Republican predecessor. Clinton limited visits to cases involving 'extreme hardship'; Cuban-Americans had to demonstrate their cause for visitation and in order to obtain a special license from the Department of Treasury. However, in 1995, the Clinton administration relaxed restrictions by allowing Cuban-Americans travel to Cuba once a year without having to obtain a special license. The election year of 1996 saw the incumbent candidate Bill Clinton reverse his policy again in order to capture the Cuban-American vote. First, Clinton suspended U.S.-Cuba charter flights indefinitely and signed the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act which called for political changes in Cuba as a precondition for renewal of travel rights and specified that the Cuban government should permit the "unfettering operation of small businesses" before the U.S.

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94 "Monetary Policy In Cuba" Barberia, 2004, pgs. 390, 392
95 "Candidates seek Cuban-American Vote" USA Today November 16, 1999
96 "Policy Toward Cuba in the Clinton Administration" Vanderbrush & Haney, 1999, pg. 396
reinstated general licenses for the sending of family remittances to Cuba. Again, the tightening of the U.S.-Cuba embargo by the incumbent presidential candidate led to Clinton's winning of 72% of the Cuban-American vote and the state of Florida on his way to a second term in the White House.

In 1998 there was yet another turnabout when Clinton changed his travel and remittance rights towards Cuba. The second-term president not only permitted charter flights anew in March of 1998, but he also expanded the number of U.S. and Cuba cities between which air flights were permissible and eased travel license procedures. In the late months of 1998, Clinton relaxed remittance-sending rights letting all U.S. Citizens, whether or not they had close family on the island, send up to $1,200 annually. Unable to run for a third term, Clinton did not have the need to change policy to gain the Cuban-American vote. However, the Clinton administration's relaxed embargo policies resulted in the Democratic Presidential candidate, Al Gore, to win only 20% of the Cuban-American vote and lose Florida. Since Gore was a member of the Clinton administration, he was therefore looked at as responsible for the loosening of the U.S.-Cuba embargo in the eyes of the Cuban-American community.

The practice of inconsistent tightening and loosening the embargo continued with president George W. Bush. Initially, he blocked renewed congressional moves to lift the U.S.-Cuba travel ban. However, in 2003, Bush allowed Cuban-Americans to

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97 "Policy Toward Cuba in the Clinton Administration" Vanderbrush & Haney, 1999, pg. 393
98 "Florida Hispanics are Key to Presidential Election" Havana Journal October 1, 2004
100 "From Havana to Miami: U.S. Cuba Policy as a Two-Level Game" LeoGrande, 1998, pg. 82
visit the island to visit family members within three generations and raised remittance cap so that Cuban-Americans traveling to Cuba could carry up to $3,000, in addition to the $300 they could send quarterly from the United States\textsuperscript{102}. Nonetheless, similar to Clinton in his re-election bid, in 2004, Bush tightened the embargo to help secure the Cuban-American vote that had been so vital to his predecessors. Before the election, Bush reduced family visitation rights from once a year to once every three years, narrowed the range of relatives permitted to visit, limited trips to two weeks, required special Treasury Department permits, and allowed for no humanitarian exceptions\textsuperscript{103}. At the same time, Bush also lowered the amount of money that Cuban-Americans could carry to Cuba to $300. Furthermore, Bush capped the weight of luggage travelers could take with them to Cuba to 44 pounds in order to restrict the goods taken from the U.S. to the island\textsuperscript{104}. Not surprisingly, Bush's harsh tightening of the U.S. Embargo on Cuba helped him win 66\% of the Cuban-American vote and the state of Florida\textsuperscript{105}.

The three incumbent presidential candidates from 1992 – 2004 realized that in order to win the pivotal state of Florida, they had to support the Cuban-American stance through policies that the Cuban American National Foundation was supporting – mainly, tightening the U.S. embargo on Cuba. However, it was during this time period that the CANF and Cuban-Americans in Miami began to lose their influence.

As mentioned before, the split in the Cuban-American ideology in Miami had

\textsuperscript{102} "The Cuban Ethnic Electoral Policy Cycle" Eckstein, 2009, pg. 126
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid
\textsuperscript{105} "Has Florida Become a GOP Stronghold?" St. Petersburg Times November 5, 2004
an impact on politics in Miami. However, that same split in ideology was seen in the Miami-based, Washington D.C. lobbying group CANF. The Cuban American National Foundation began to shift its ideology in 1997 when its charismatic and powerful leader, Jorge Mas Canosa, died, leaving the Foundation in the hands of his American-born son, Jorge Mas Santos. The iron-fisted Mas Canosa, a multi-millionaire businessman who breezed through the halls of Washington, headed the well-financed CANF armed with loyal Congressional allies, drafted Cuba legislation, and established anti-Castro radio and television stations. However, since Mas Canosa’s death, the CANF has yet to put forth a national figure who commands the respect and fear in Washington. The new leader of CANF, Mas Santos, “hasn’t really taken up the cause.”

In fact, Mas Santos and CANF began to shift from its hard-lined embargo-strengthening policies to an effort to direct attention away from Fidel and Raul Castro and towards the Cuban people while guiding them in their quest for democracy and prosperity from the Castro regime. The CANF goes so far to recommend that the President of the United States pursue a proactive U.S.-Cuba policy that “increases support for the development of Cuban civil society, increases people-to-people exchanges, improves communication to advance freedom of information, and engages in targeted bilateral and multilateral diplomatic efforts.” Furthermore, Mas Santos, in a 2008 speech in Miami declared,

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107 Ibid
108 “Our Mission” *The Cuban American National Foundation*
"We at the Cuban American National Foundation have a new vision for a new time. We would encourage the next presidential administration to adopt changes to the current [Bush] policy that would help facilitate the democratic transition we all desire: allow direct, substantial, and unfettered aid to Cuba's dissents, changing the rules that today ironically make it impossible to send cash aid; rebuild our intelligence capabilities in Cuba, which have been dismantled over the last decade, leaving our nation's security vulnerable and depriving us of the information we need that could truly help the opposition movement on the island."

For the first time in the Foundation's history, Mas Santos called "on the lifting of the 2004 restrictions on travel and remittances imposed on Cuban-Americans, which have prevented us from becoming active participants in destabilizing the regime's hold on power." The 'new' CANF also recommends semi-annual diplomatic meetings between Cuban and American officials.

Not all members in the Cuban American National Foundation agree with its new image. In 2001, 26 members, including 3 of its founders, resigned from the Foundation, contending that the group had forgotten its purpose and softened its line on Cuban issues. One Foundation member who resigned said, "With Jorge Mas Canosa, we had to keep an unbreakable line, there was no kind of tolerance with Fidel or Raul Castro. Today, the words used in the foundation are that 'we must be tolerant'. These hard-lined anti-Castro Cubans felt alienated from the "young leader ... [who] is not bound by old ideas and concepts." Lisandro Perez, director of the Cuban Research Institute at Florida International University noted the difference in leadership. "Mas Canosa could one morning be in Washington meeting

111 Ibid
112 "More Exiles Quit Cuban Exile Group as Divide Deepens" Chicago Tribune, August 1, 2001
113 Ibid
with senators, congressmen, and prominent officials on the anti-Castro agenda and that evening be in Miami on the radio station identifying the enemy among us. Mas Santos does not mix as well in both environments.\textsuperscript{114} Former Miami Mayor, Alex Penelas says that the internal dispute in CANF "perhaps has caused people to reconsider what the role of the foundation is."

The internal split of the Cuban American National Foundation has alienated the people who were responsible for making the foundation succeed: the donors. Mas Canosa not only brought the consistency and charisma that CANF needed to persuade politicians in Washington, but he also brought in money. The Foundation's new and more progressive leaders have made speeches and pushed for legislation for dialogue with communist Cuba – something that older, more hard-lined Cubans in the community cannot support. The alienation of these early exiles has led to diminished contributions for the Foundation: in 2000, the CANF received $1.7 million, while only four years later their CANF only received $5,000 in contributions. At the same time, the Foundation's endowment plunged to the point that it had to downsize its staff, close its Washington lobbying office, and shut down its Miami radio station\textsuperscript{115}.

Political contributions, however, are not the only tool that CANF and the Cuban-American community used to influence U.S.-Cuba policy. Since its founding in 1981, the CANF has sold the Cuban-Americans in Miami as a single-issue vote: the U.S. embargo on Cuba. Washington bought the idea and all presidential candidates from 1992 – 2008 (excluding Obama) campaigned on the stance of tightening the

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid
\textsuperscript{115} "The Cuban Ethnic Electoral Policy Cycle" Eckstein, 2009, pg. 131
embargo on Cuba during their election year. The incumbent presidential candidates between 1992 – 2008 all passed or enacted an embargo-tightening legislature in their election year, and in those years – 1992, 1996, and 2004 – they won not only the Cuban-American vote, but also the state of Florida. However, the ideological and generational split in the Cuban-American community and CANF ended the notion that Cubans in Miami were single-issue voters. Presidential candidates were not secured a win among Cuban-Americans if they enacted embargo-tightening measures.

However, the 2008 election showed many around Miami, Washington, and the rest of the country that Cuban-Americans are no longer single-issue voters. By 2008, about half of the Cuban-American population was born in the United States\textsuperscript{116}, and because of reasons discussed previously in this paper, second-generation Cuban-Americans not only differed on their stance towards politics towards Cuba, but they also were more concerned with the policies of their home country: the United States. 2008 also showed the first time that two presidential candidates were on opposite sides of the embargo on Cuba. John McCain, the Republican candidate, publically supported continuing Bush's embargo-tightening policies. However, Barack Obama, the Democratic candidate, announced that he would lift the Bush administration's restrictions, thereby allowing Cuban-Americans to visit their relatives more frequently. Despite being the first presidential candidate to publically campaign in Miami on a platform to loosen the embargo on Cuba and facilitate dialogue with Castro, Obama received 35\% of the Cuban-American vote and won the

\textsuperscript{116} "The Cuban Ethnic Electoral Policy Cycle" Eckstein, 2009, pg. 139
state of Florida. Also, Obama did not face any protests while in Miami; but rather, 67% of Cubans in April 2009 agreed with his policies.

The split in ideology among the Cuban American National Foundation, resulting in its losing allies and contributions to get legislation passed, not only resulted in a non-existent presence in Washington, but also in a decline of influence that the CANF once had in the government. This diminished role in Washington opened the door for other lobby and interest groups to enter the embargo debate. The Clinton administration did what Regan had done in fostering the power of CANF - it tried to expand the scope of conflict to change the balance of political power. By reframing the embargo debate to focus on trade, Clinton brought new and powerful groups into the process of shaping Cuba policy. For example, 20 members of the American Farm Bureau, which came out against the embargo for the first time in January 1999, received permission to visit Cuba the same year. Upon return, the group's president testified before the Senate that the "embargo or sanction does long term harm to farmers and the agricultural economy." In early 2000, pharmaceutical companies added their voice to the other powerful businesses against the embargo.

The reframing of the embargo issue as one of trade, Clinton facilitated anti-embargo forces to acquire their most significant source of influence: the electoral interests of farm state members of Congress. "I need to stand up for the farmers in my district", said George Nethercutt, a Republican representative from Washington. The House of Representatives’ passage of permanent normal trade relations with

117 "Differences in Agriculture Productivity in Cuba’s State and Non-state Sectors: Further Evidence" Alvarez, 2000
China, a communist country whose human rights record was worse than Cuba's, fueled the debate for open trade with Cuba. The fact that Cuba had numerous trading partners, the largest being Mexico, Canada, and Spain, meant that there was little time to open Cuba to farmers in order to boost the agricultural economy.

Even more players, both businesses and individuals, entered the embargo debate after Pope John Paul II's visit to Cuba in 1998. In a series of masses across the island, the pope criticized U.S. sanctions and found common ground with Castro in a critique of global capitalism's market forces and he called for an end to "oppressive economic measures – unjust and ethnically unacceptable – imposed from outside the country." The Pope's visit led to business, church, and academic groups voicing their opposition to the embargo. The Pope's remarks had U.S. domestic implications because of its impact on the large U.S. Catholic community.

These influential groups were able to strongly oppose the embargo because of the diminished anti-communist fervor in the post-Cold War period. The end of the Cold War generated a decline in the importance of traditional security interests, and as a result, has opened the door to greater interest group activism over foreign policy. As Cuba ceased to be a security issue, the farm lobby, along with other substantial lobbying forces in Washington such as the pharmaceutical company and large businesses, felt comfortable in advocating an end to the embargo. This explains why after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, these groups

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temporarily stopped advocating the end the U.S.-Cuba embargo. However, because the security in respect to Cuba being on the list of terrorist states was short-lived, the U.S.-Cuba embargo policy debate was restored in Congress in early 2002\textsuperscript{121}.

The resources that the CANF had in the late 1980s and 1990s, along with the national security threat that Cuba posed because of the Red Scare, resulted in the Foundation being the only stakeholder and player in the U.S. policies towards Cuba. However, for the first time since its founding in 1981, the Cuban American National Foundation had competition from other powerful lobbying groups that challenged the CANF’s desired policies toward Cuba. With the ideological split in the Foundation that led to small contributions, CANF could not fight to influence Washington.

The Cuban American National Foundation is a weakening giant; it has lost its two most powerful resources: financial contributions and a strong single-issue voting bloc in Florida, the most important of the presidential election's swing states. The loss of both of these resources can be attributed to the ideological split in the Cuban community in Miami, which has led to the divide in beliefs in the CANF. The Cuban American National Foundation had influenced legislature by contributing heavily to the legislative and executive branches in Washington, however, the pathetic monetary gains collected by the Foundation led to them not being able to maintain their offices in Washington, much less financially contribute to campaigns.

Today, the Cuban-American vote is triggered not only by policies towards Cuba, but also by domestic policies in the U.S. Without its resources, and increased

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid
competition by other powerful lobbying groups like pharmaceutical companies, businesses, and agriculture to open up Cuba to boost the U.S. economy, the Cuban American National Foundation is simply unable to compete and, as a result, is left with only a fraction of the influence that it once had.
Conclusion

The Cuban-American decline in influence in U.S. policies towards Cuba can be seen by examining the Elián Gonzalez case, the internal ideological split in the Cuban-American community in Miami, and the evolution of the Cuban-American voice in Washington DC. Since their arrival in 1959, the Cuban Golden Exiles have been seen as political refugees by the United States government. Because of this, the Cubans who arrived in Miami in the 1960s were awarded economic and social support unlike any other immigrant population in the United States. However, as the threat of Cuba, an ally of the Soviet Union during the Cold War, and communism has greatly declined, the cries of anti-communism policy and attitude from the early Cuban-American exiles have not been as well received by the American public or Congress as they have been in the past.

However, tensions between hard-lined early arriving Cuban exiles and the American public during the Elián case has, and will continue to breach into the Cuban-American community as the later arriving exiles as well as the second generation Cuban-Americans populations grow, which can be seen by the increasing dissent towards traditional Cuban ideology against Castro and communism. This can be shown concretely when analyzing the Cuban-American voice in Washington D.C. as powerful American lobbying groups, such as those representing the agriculture, business, pharmaceutical, and farming industries) are, for the first time, questioning and fighting against the U.S. embargo on Cuba.

This paper has shown that with a growing progressive ideology in Miami and new wave of competitors in Washington, some of the hard-line early Cuban exiles
have changed their belief on the most important U.S. policy towards Cuba: the embargo. However, many anti-Castro, anti-communist Cuban exiles have remained dedicated to the isolation of Cuba until democracy is reached on the island. The data in this paper shows that since 2000, the number of people who favor the tightening of the embargo have, and will continue to steadily decrease. The hard-line Cuban exiles will have only a few supporters to fight to crush Castro’s communist regime once the next generation fully comes to power. This generational difference is personified when Jorge Mas Santos became the leader of the Cuban American National Foundation after his father, and the Foundation’s founder, Jorge Mas Canosa, died. Mas Canosa and dominant hard-line Cuban-American leaders ruled Miami with an iron fist. The majority of the Cuban community believed Mas Canosa to be “a heroic crusader who has worked tirelessly to publicize what he sees as the evils of Cuban communism under Fidel Castro.” Others, believed him to be “a ruthless opportunist who seeks to become Cuba’s next leader and who will stop at little to destroy his opponents.” In 1992, David Lawrence, the Miami Herald’s publisher, allowed a article in the paper what opposed a congressional bill to toughen the U.S. embargo against Cuba. Mas Canosa publically blasted the Miami Herald as a tool of Castro and accused it of waging a “systematic campaign against Cuban-Americans.” Also, death threats were sent to the Herald. In response, Mr. Lawrence wrote to Mas Canosa: “You, in fact, are the intimidator.” A new opinion of Mas Canosa, the CANF, and the Cuban-American leaders in Miami took shape in the form of ‘the intimidators’.

122 “Clash of Miami Paper, Cuban-American Reveals Ethnic Rift” Boston Globe February 26, 1992
123 Ibid
Despite the intimidation, a main factor of the Cuban-Americans' loss of national influence was due to an increasing voice - through numbers and through time - of the dissenting beliefs in Miami's Cuban-American community. However, the increased dissenting voice in Miami has led to the inclusion of all Cuban-Americans in the quest to help Cuba, whereas the suppression of beliefs led to alienation. One constant among Cuban-Americans regardless of when they arrived or what generation they belong to is that they want to help Cuba and her people from their dictator. Mas Santos has embraced the ideological shift in all phases of the Cuban community. While the Cuban American National Foundation and the Cuban-Americans in Miami no longer have the ability to greatly influence policy, they reside in a place that finally resembles a society where dissent is not denied, suppressed, or actively repressed. This progressive movement can be seen through the transformation of the CANF, which went from a foundation that heavily supported the tightening of the U.S. embargo on Cuba and founded Radio Martí to overthrow Castro, to one that calls for interaction with Cuban officials in order to help the Cuban people. A further growth, through time, of the later arriving Cuban exiles and second generation Cuban-American population will promote even more progressive views on U.S. policy towards Cuba, and leave the once dominant anti-Castro ideology as the dissenting opinion.

The Cuban-American case study is truly unique in comparison to other Latino immigrant groups. The support given to the Cuban community not only made the early exiles more able to adapt to Miami, but it also gave them key tools - financial and social capital - to overcome obstacles of assimilation into the greater
American society. In addition to the support they received, early Cubans' physical features – most importantly being white and a high level of education – have hurdles first- and second-generation Cubans over the barriers that other Latino groups have had to deal with. Alejandro Portes and Ruben Rumbaut note, the rate of assimilation depends on four factors: 1) the history of the immigrant group including its human capital and reason for departure; 2) the cultural and economic barriers confronted by immigrants in the host country; 3) the family and community resources available upon arrival; and 4) the differential pace of acculturation based on language skills. This paper has not only shown each one of these factors to be true for Cuban-Americans, but also that these factors have resulted in the extensive assimilation of second-generation Cuban-Americans into the American society.

A high median household income ($38,256) and educational achievement (16.2% of Cubans have graduated from a 4 year college) has led to young Cubans breaking out of the enclave and becoming Americanized; learning not only about politics and issues in the United States, but also to their hearing dissenting opinions about policies towards Cuba. Those who return to the Cuban-American enclave in Miami bring with them a new view on Cuban politics, and, in turn, advance the community's heterogeneity.

The implications of an ideologically split Cuban-American community can be seen even outside the realm of the community's heterogeneity and U.S. politics towards Cuba. Upon arrival, the Golden Exiles created an enclave in Miami where

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they employed fellow Cuban refugees. This created a power structure whereby the recent exiles were dependant on the Golden Exiles in order to survive financially in Miami. As described earlier in this paper, many Cubans in Miami feared that they would lose their jobs if they made their dissenting opinions public. It was in this way that the successful early Cuban exiles made a seemingly homogeneous Cuban ideology in respect to the embargo; Cuban-Americans in Miami were single-issue voters. Their political involvement as well as the fact that Cuban-Americans mostly reside in the most highly sought after ‘swing’ state, Florida, led to an increased importance on the part of the U.S. government to cater to the Cuban community's wishes. However, the experiences and shifts in the ideology of young and second-generation Cuban-Americans have led to the change in political affiliation of the Cuban community in Miami. This is broadly significant because "as goes Florida, so goes the nation." When Cubans began migrating to the United States before the 1960s, most became Democrats. However, after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, which many believe strengthened Castro’s grip on power, Cuban-Americans lost faith in President John Kennedy and began switching to the Republican Party. The switch was solidified during Regan’s presidency, with his staunch anti-communist policies.

Since the 1996 election, Democratic candidates have consistently received 35% of the Cuban American vote*. However, the emergence of more multi-issue

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126 Senator Hillary Clinton, 2008
127 “Hispanics Turn Florida into More of a Swing State” Chicago Tribune November 26, 2000
* The only Democratic candidate who received a significantly lower percentage was Al Gore in 2000. Many scholars believe that the low percentage was due to the Clinton administration's handling of Elián Gonzalez. Carrillo, vice president of the Cuban American Democratic Council argues that the Elián case "was an anomaly that will not be in the forefront four years from now." ("Hispanics Turn
second-generation voters – and their preoccupation of domestic (American) issues – may very well tip the Cuban-American vote to the Democratic Party. In fact, the Democrats may already have a force of Cuban-American voters. “The Republicans would make us out to be a small number, but about one-third of the Cuban-Americans in South Florida are Democrats and another third are independents,” said Herrera Carrillo, vice president of the Cuban American Democratic Council. Also, a study done by Bishin and Klofstad showed that the Bush administration’s attempt to firm support among Cuban-Americans by tightening the travel ban and trade embargo in July 2004 was exceptionally popular among older Cubans, but fiercely opposed by younger Cuban-Americans. The authors also found that in the 2004 election, older Cubans turned out in at much higher rates compared to more recent immigrants and the second-generation. As a shift in generations, through time, allows the more recent immigrants and second generation Cuban-Americans to be the majority of the Cuban vote, the Cuban community’s loyalty to the Republican Party is in danger of being called into question.

The once hard-line anti-communism, anti-Castro voice of early exile leaders in Miami has lost its influence because of the alienation from the mainstream American public during the Elián case, second-generation Cuban-American ‘Americanization’ leading to an ideological split on generational lines, and an increasing number of people – both around the country and in Washington D.C. –

Florida into More of a Swing State" Chicago Tribune November 26, 2000)

128 Ibid
129 “Deceit, Diversity, or Mobilization? Intra-ethnic Diversity and Changing Patterns in Florida’s Hispanic Vote” Bishin & Klofstad, 2009, pg 575
130 Ibid
contesting the U.S. embargo on Cuba. While these are not the only factors that contributed to the decline in Cuban-American influence in the United States, these factors are important not only when noting the evolution of the Cuban-American community, but also their future in the United States.
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