Clockwise from top left:
- Freedom Tower, Miami, Florida [National Park Service]; International Rescue Committee waiting area, the Cuban Refugee Center, c.1965, Miami, Florida [University of Miami Libraries]; Salvadoran child soldier (gorilla forces), El Salvador [Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen]; Villagers fleeing Salvadoran military aerial bombing raids [Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen]; Wall in Guatemala City with missing (disappeared) persons flyers, Guatemala City, Guatemala [Product Etcetera]
Late-20th Century Immigration and U.S. Foreign Policy: Forging Latino Identity in the Minefields of Political Memory
Lillian Guerra

This essay illuminates the often dramatic differences in political perspective and general "visibility" in U.S. culture that characterize Cold War Latinos by exploring the ways in which U.S. policy toward Central American and Caribbean regimes shaped the economic and political possibilities open to these countries before and after the Cold War. It also reveals the hidden challenges that many survivors of Cold War violence faced upon arrival in the United States as they and their children struggled to make sense of their experiences and find their place in a society that frequently denied, confused, or ignored their reasons for being here. Although most Central American refugees arrived as undocumented refugees in the 1980s and subsequently spent years legalizing their status in order to improve their economic standing and gain greater political representation, Cubans who arrived in the 1960s and early 1970s became known for their unprecedented economic success compared with other Latinos and presumed unity behind unchanging U.S. foreign policy toward Castro's Cuba. However, even though Cubans have continuously benefitted from U.S. support for their immigration as part of a long-standing strategy to weaken the Communist regime in Cuba, Cuban communities have also become much more diverse than they are popularly perceived, especially since the 1980s and 1990s when tens of thousands of Cubans who experienced revolutionary Cuba brought more nuanced understandings of it and the Cold War with them to former enclaves founded by early wave "exiles" such as Miami. Indeed, these exiles' success in South Florida has made it a haven for Cubans of all generations, transforming Miami from a city dominated by white Southerners (who constituted 79 percent of the population in 1970) to a cultural mecca for all Latinos and the city with the highest proportion of foreign-born residents nationwide, including thousands of Central Americans and Haitians.

Differences in U.S. government support for Caribbean and Central American refugees undoubtedly affected their respective ability to consolidate a cultural and political presence on the public stage. Yet with or without this support, it is clear that refugees of the Cold War have successfully forged distinctive Latino identities based on historically meaningful memories of trauma, survival, and resilience that continue to transform political institutions, federal policies toward disadvantaged groups, urban landscapes, and cultural understandings of what it means to be "American" in countless ways.

Ironically, however, many foreign policies ultimately responsible for the creation of new Latino communities from Central America and the Caribbean in the U.S. were meant to have the opposite effect. One of the best illustrations of this can be found in President Ronald Reagan's famous nationally televised address on U.S. foreign policy toward the region, delivered on May 9, 1984. Portraying the emergence of revolutionary movements across Central America as the result of Cuban-Soviet machinations rather than any homegrown political or economic factors, Reagan warned that "Cuban-supported aggression" had already "forced more than 400,000 men, women, and children to flee their homes. And in all of Central America, more than 800,000 have fled..." Pinning the
blame for Nicaragua’s recent revolution against the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship on Cuba’s Fidel Castro, Reagan predicted that the refugee crisis would only worsen if the U.S. once again allowed Castro to "deceive Western public opinion" by fooling citizens into believing that any revolution against the authoritarian regimes of Central America would not automatically lead to Communism. "Communist subversion," Reagan argued, "poses the threat that a hundred million people from Panama to the open border of our South could come under the control of pro-Soviet regimes," jeopardizing the U.S. way of life and hemisphere as a whole. In short, Reagan declared, “America is Central America.”

The speech left little room to doubt either the logic or the merits of Reagan’s primary goal: renewal of U.S. funding for military dictatorships in Central America with few, if any, conditions attached.

At that very moment, the U.S. Congress was seriously debating Reagan’s demands with respect to El Salvador’s military-dominated government. In the wake of Reagan’s speech and the well-timed appeal of visiting Salvadoran President José Napoleón Duarte, the U.S. Congress approved $196.6 million in funding for El Salvador in the fiscal year of 1984 alone, a sum two and a half times greater than the year before; moreover, U.S. aid was no longer contingent on democratic reforms. Yet despite Reagan’s promises that increasing aid would staunch the flow of refugees, his policy of providing unconditional support to a military regime best known for ordering wide-scale massacres of unarmed civilians and selective assassinations of Catholic clergy had the opposite effect: not only did U.S. aid to El Salvador promote the state terror that led hundreds of thousands of civilians to flee across Mexican and U.S. borders, but U.S. aid also ensured that rampant corruption among Salvadoran officials continued to go unchecked. By the late 1980s, the combination of war and graft had so crippled El Salvador’s economy that President Duarte sent a personal appeal to President Reagan that he stop deporting thousands of undocumented Salvadoran refugees who found sanctuary in the U.S. Without the hundreds of millions of dollars in remittance payments that these refugees sent their families every year, Salvadoran society would have ceased to function.

Today, it is clear that the consistency of U.S. support for military regimes and dictatorships across the region of Central America and the Caribbean played a major role in the creation of diaspora communities across the U.S. that can trace their origins to the Cold War, a period that spanned the end of World War II through the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Cubans and Salvadorans compete for the top spot in terms of sheer numbers of Cold War era communities, with each community hovering around 1.7 million nationwide. At slightly over 1.4 million members, Dominicans come in third place, with Guatemalans and Haitians close behind. Nicaraguans and Hondurans constitute the smallest of Latino communities who can trace their foundations to the effects of the Cold War in their home countries, numbering approximately 350,000 and 630,000 respectively. Although the vast majority of Cubans, Dominicans and Haitians settled in only one city (Cubans and Haitians in Miami; Dominicans in New York), Salvadorans, the second-
largest group of Cold War Latinos can be found in almost equal numbers in Los Angeles, New York and our nation’s capital, Washington DC. [See Table below]

Salvadorans, Cubans, Dominicans, Guatemalans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Hondurans send billions of dollars annually to relatives and friends in their homelands. Contrary to expectation, the amount sent per group does not necessarily correspond to its numeric size or relative wealth. Indeed, Cubans, whose population and capital far exceeds that of Dominicans, Guatemalans, and Haitians, send roughly the same amount home: about one billion dollars a year since the mid-1990s. In all cases, national governments of these countries now count remittances as an important part of their countries’ GDP, or Gross Domestic Product; without it, their economic and political stability would inevitably suffer.

Nonetheless, most U.S. Americans, regardless of generation, remain profoundly unaware of how dramatically U.S. Cold War policy disrupted the lives and livelihood of these millions of Latinos from Central America and the Caribbean. As Juan Romagoza Arce, a former doctor who suffered torture and detention without charge at the hands of the Salvadoran military recalls of his arrival in the U.S., "I was surprised by how little people knew about what was happening outside their [borders]. People didn’t know too much about the war in Central America – all they knew were 'communists'... That was a shock. Because I suffered the consequences" of U.S. policies."⁸

Indeed, the rhetoric and logic of U.S. policies, as typified by Reagan’s 1984 speech, still represents how much of the U.S. public continues to understand the violence that consumed the countries of Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic from the 1950s to the mid-1990s. Fleeing "Communism" and not state terror or the generalized climate of repression created, in part, by U.S. policies in the region, also remains the way in which most Central American and Caribbean communities are arguably perceived by the average U.S. American. Seen as indirect victims of Soviet aggression rather than refugees of the U.S’s alliance with national aggressors, Central Americans’ and Caribbean’s complex, sometimes contentious views of their new adoptive home of the U.S. are often not only missed but also dismissed by journalists, politicians, teachers, and neighbors as confused, inaccurate or worse, "un-American."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group (Ranked by Size)</th>
<th>Total 2010 U.S. Population</th>
<th>Largest Concentrations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Cuban</td>
<td>1,785,547</td>
<td>1. Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL (919,486)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL (77,366)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Salvadoran</td>
<td>1,648,968</td>
<td>1. Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA (387,401)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV (211,844)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Dominican</td>
<td>1,414,703</td>
<td>1. New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA (796,166)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All figures from 2010 U.S. Census. The author gratefully thanks Christopher Woolley for his assistance in crafting this table.9

Living History: The United States' Long Cold War in Central America and the Caribbean

For contemporary U.S. diasporas of Central America and the Caribbean, the most burdensome legacy of U.S. Cold War policy may be living with the knowledge of that history itself and not knowing what to do with it—how to fit one’s country and one’s personal experience into larger narratives about U.S. democracy, its commitment to human rights, the "American Dream," and the victorious outcome over the Soviet Union in the Cold War that saturate the popular culture and mainstream discourse of today’s U.S. There are several reasons for this disparity. One is simply that most U.S. educators and public historians rely on history books that represent the Cold War as a triumphalist process that glosses the aim of U.S. foreign policy as simply containing Soviet designs.10 The denial of the U.S.’s record in Latin America is particularly poignant for the children of Latinos from Central America and the Caribbean who frequently encounter total silence in schools, museums, and the media on the relationship between the U.S.’s role in stoking the violence that gripped their home countries and the conditions that provoked their families’ flight to the U.S.

Thirsting for knowledge of their countries’ past and a way of relating it to the democratic values and struggle for cultural dignity that define them as U.S. Latinos, students at Los Angeles’ Belmont High School recently developed a popular (and free) on-line video game called Tropical America. Their goal was to teach
themselves and others the lessons and legacies of surviving hundreds of years of Spanish colonialism as well as dozens of non-representative republican governments, many of which cooperated with foreign investors and U.S. corporations, before and after the Cold War, to prevent tangible democratization.11 While these first-generation Latinos invented their own video game to explain the complexities of the U.S’s Cold War in Latin America, most U.S. teenagers and young adults preferred the simpler story told by "Call of Duty: Black Ops", a widely marketed commercial video game in which players compete to reverse the U.S.’s Cold War "losses" in Cuba and elsewhere through missions such as assassinating Cuban leader Fidel Castro. As the game’s popularity soared in 2011, many Cuban American parents were patiently offended, pointing out that the game does not teach history but amnesia. Ironically, "Call of Duty" marked a rare case in which many Cubans in the U.S. and officials of the Cuban government could—and did—find total agreement.12

The "Kill Castro" scenario of "Call of Duty: Black Ops" as well as the game’s now blockbuster status speaks volumes about the many factors that distort mainstream views of Central American and Caribbean history as well as the Cold War policies that produced unprecedented spikes in legal and illegal immigration from this region. These factors include the Castro-centric nature of public discourse regarding events in Latin America and the way in which early communities of Cuban exiles lined up their narratives of flight from Communism with the monolithic interpretations that U.S. officials derived from confrontations with revolutionary Cuba.

In part, the astounding ability of what has become known as the "Cuban exile lobby" to restrain changes in U.S. policy toward Cuba even as other barriers to normal relations with formal Cold War enemies like Vietnam collapsed can be traced to the Reagan era. Within a year of its organization, the exile-led Cuban American National Foundation became a primary advisor to the Reagan team on foreign policy toward Latin America, not just Cuba. Thus, Reagan’s approach to El Salvador in the May 1984 speech cited above echoed a larger tendency to reduce popular revolutionary movements in Central America and the Caribbean to the influence of one man, Fidel Castro. However, all U.S. Presidents after World War II, with the exception of Jimmy Carter, shared much of this view: that is, they interpreted the nationalist goals of movements that defied the power of local oligarchs and called for reforming economic models of development that benefitted only elites and foreign investors as the first step toward Communism and Soviet control.13 This was especially true after 1959, when Cuba’s revolutionary state launched an unprecedented attack on U.S. investments and the legitimacy of a U.S. role in Cuban political affairs.14

Not only did a broadly popular movement force Fulgencio Batista, a U.S.-supported dictator, from power in 1959, but also within three years, the new government overturned the previous six decades of near constant U.S. military occupations, interventions, and U.S. ownership of the most lucrative parts of Cuba’s national economy.15 Standoffs between the U.S. and Cuba emerged almost immediately in January 1959 as the revolutionary government began to try, convict, and execute hundreds of officials and supporters of the Batista regime.
for "war crimes" associated with the disappearance and assassination of thousands of opponents over the course of the Batista dictatorship (1952-59).

When U.S. officials protested the clear bias of the trials and summary executions, their protests only lent greater validity to the process as millions of Cubans gathered in mass demonstrations to defend "revolutionary justice": why, Fidel Castro repeatedly asked, had the same U.S. officials not issued similar protests when the tortured corpses of civilians still littered Cuba's streets only a few months earlier and Batista's air force was bombing peasant homes? Indeed, early popular support for repression of opponents facilitated the expansion of such methods and their reproduction over the course of the Revolution's first decade. Similar standoffs with the U.S., a rupture in diplomatic relations and U.S.-direction of the invasion at the Bay of Pigs created the pretext for the subsequent execution of hundreds of counterrevolutionaries and the jailing of tens of thousands more opponents and public critics, many of them former Castro supporters.16

In 1961, Cuba became the only society in Latin America where the U.S. was not present and not welcome. Except among former Batista supporters who had fled to Miami in 1959 and the once supportive Cuban middle class whose exodus to the U.S. reached its peak between 1965 and 1972, Cuba's consolidation of national sovereignty seemed to generate an incalculable degree of empowerment and national pride among the majority of islanders.17 Even Fidel Castro's eventual embrace of socialism and the Soviet Union only hours before the disastrous CIA-directed invasion at the Bay of Pigs strengthened most Cubans' faith in the Revolution's moral righteousness vis a vis U.S. efforts at subversion.18

As historian Thomas Paterson has argued, U.S. officials' unflinching preoccupation with determining if Fidel was a Communist or not rendered them incapable of recognizing the critical role of anti-imperialist nationalism that Fidel tapped among the Cuban people and that he himself came to embody.19 Subsequently, the primary lesson that U.S. officials drew from Cuba was not that dictators like Batista and repeated U.S. violations of national sovereignty promoted radical politics and anti-imperialist sentiment by repressing moderates and discrediting compromise; rather, it was that radical politics and "anti-American" sentiment provoked and justified the repression of moderates and the discrediting of compromise.

Thus, over the next three decades, stagnant and largely ineffective policies of isolating Cuba and attempting to assassinate Fidel Castro went hand-in-hand with unconditional support for "kleptocratic" dictatorships like that of the Duvaliers in Haiti, the Somoza family in Nicaragua, and the Balaguer regime in the Dominican Republic.20 Periodically, these dictators' talent for embezzling foreign aid often exceeded their propensity to kill or intimidate opponents.21 Nonetheless, these dictatorships produced just as many immigrants seeking political refuge as Castro's Cuba: indeed, because most opposition activists in countries like Haiti and the Dominican Republic hailed from the middle and educated classes, the first waves of immigrants to arrive in the 1960s coincided with Cuban exiles in terms of timing as well as social background. Where they differed was in their attitude toward the U.S. and the aid they received from federal agencies: Dominicans and Haitians were, after all, fleeing the violence of regimes that the U.S. supported while Cubans were fleeing the U.S.'s primary enemy, revolutionary Cuba. That most U.S. Americans might have inaccurately perceived Dominicans, Haitians, and other immigrants from Cold War hot spots in the region as "economic refugees" rather than political refugees on the order of Cuban exiles is not surprising. In many ways, such a view derived easily from U.S. officials'
public statements and the belief that if the U.S. supported them, right-wing military regimes opposed to Communism could simply not produce political refugees.

At the same time, U.S. Cold War policies of preventing "other Cubas" by supporting authoritarian states—regardless of the means they employed—simply reinforced a deeply embedded pattern in the region that predated the Cold War. Until World War II, U.S. companies operated hand-in-hand with the U.S. government to thwart the possibility that national states might pass laws favoring local capitalists' interests and/or workers' rights to the detriment of foreign businesses. U.S. companies frequently achieved this by securing concessions that gave them monopolies on trade, production, infrastructure, and control over workers on massive estates.22 Through such means, the United Fruit Company (popularly known as El Pulpo, "the Octopus") became a ubiquitous and infamous presence across Latin America as well as the largest landowner in Guatemala, Cuba, and other places.23 In its efforts to prevent unionization, the United Fruit Company also recruited contract workers extensively across the Caribbean, creating racially and nationally mixed diasporas in plantations from Costa Rica, Panama, and Honduras to Cuba and Jamaica. Galvanized by a work experience that often made them proficient in multiple languages and radical proponents of labor rights, thousands of United Fruit workers made their way to cities such as New Orleans, Mobile, and New York as early as the 1910s. There, former United Fruit workers such as Marcus Garvey championed black pride and social justice, forever transforming the nature and direction of U.S. civil rights struggles in the 20th Century.24

Often, U.S. investments in Latin America depended on the U.S.'s reliance on military interventions and occupations that protected those investments and often, the local political status quo. Thus, the U.S. carried out military occupations of the Dominican Republic (1916-1924), Nicaragua (1926-1934), Haiti (1915-1934) as well as repeated interventions in Cuba, including two military occupations (1898-1902; 1906-1909) and support for at least two coups by sectors of Cuba's U.S.-trained national army (1933 and 1952). Despite officials' justifications of intervention in the name of fomenting democracy and generalized prosperity, U.S. military occupations did not lead to democratic regimes and more inclusionary national economies. On the contrary, in the countries that experienced them, U.S. military occupations led to some of the longest standing and bloodiest dictatorships in the world, including that of Anastasio Somoza whose family ruled Nicaragua from 1936-1979 and Rafael Trujillo who ruled the Dominican Republic from 1930-1961. Both were star pupils of U.S. Marine training schools and the first chiefs of the "National Guards" that replaced U.S. forces when they withdrew.25 In Cuba, two-time dictator Fulgencio Batista began his political career in 1933 as the U.S.'s handpicked alternative to a revolutionary government that passed a slate of democratic reforms and repealed the Platt Amendment, a U.S.-imposed constitutional mandate that had allowed the U.S. to intervene militarily on behalf of U.S. interests since 1902.

Needless to say, ignorance about the history of U.S. interventions in the political and economic development of these countries before and after the start of the Cold War in 1948 can be astounding to those who live with the legacies of
those interventions. Cases in point include that of Guatemala whose democratically elected government was toppled by the CIA five years before the Cuban Revolution for attempting to carry out a much needed agrarian reform because that reform targeted U.S. investments, especially the United Fruit Company. The Guatemalan government therefore constituted a “Communist menace,” despite its unprecedented electoral validation and popularity in a country where universal suffrage and fair elections had been unknown less than a decade before.26

One legacy can be tallied in the number of human lives lost to the repressive policies of the dictatorships and military regimes that dominated five of these six countries from the 1950s through the 1990s; another lies in the vast waves of refugees that U.S.-financed policies of state terror and counterinsurgency warfare produced at the same time. Counting just the countries of Central America characterized by U.S.-backed military regimes and outright counterinsurgency wars targeting civilians, the totals are devastating: Nicaragua lost more than 80,000, of whom more than 30,000 died in the U.S.-sponsored Contra War against a revolutionary regime in the 1980s; in El Salvador and Guatemala respectively, 75,000 and 200,000 were killed or disappeared.27 According to the United Nations’ brokered truth commissions, which formed a key part of peace negotiations in all three cases, U.S.-trained armed forces were responsible for the vast majority of deaths and atrocities. In the case of El Salvador, state terror accounted for 85 percent of deaths and abuses.28 In Guatemala, the commission found the state responsible for 93 percent of atrocities; it also qualified military strategies against Mayan Indians as genocidal because they accounted for 83 percent of all killed.29 In addition, two million fled Central America.

In Haiti, where the Duvalier dynasty ruled from 1957 to 1986, state terror killed an estimated 30,000 to 50,000 civilians under Papa Doc’s reign alone (1957-1971) with an additional 90,000 Haitians seeking refuge in the U.S. from the 1960s through the 1970s.30 Tens of thousands more would die under Baby Doc as well as the multiple coups and counter-coups that followed his 1986 flight from power. The shattering of democratic hopes and ever-worsening economic conditions in the 1990s eventually produced a diaspora in the U.S. of Haitians that numbers just under one million today.31

Dominicans also fled the terror that followed the 1961 assassination of dictator Rafael Trujillo as Joaquín Balaguer, Trujillo’s former Vice President, and Trujillo’s military struggled to contain the radical impulses of the country’s long repressed citizenry. At first, the U.S. Embassy refused visas for Dominicans seeking asylum from the political terror that Balaguer unleashed because of their presumably radical political credentials; however, in 1965, it reversed course. By then, a U.S. military occupation had toppled a popularly installed revolutionary government from power and reasserted the authority of former Dominican military allies, including Joaquín Balaguer. Immigration visas thus became an additional weapon in the U.S.’s counterinsurgency arsenal because allowing political activists to escape “neo-trujillista” reprisals by Balaguer’s death squads acted as a safety valve for radicalization. Ironically, escape to the country most Dominicans blamed for the thirty-year Trujillo dictatorship and the vi-
In all cases except the Dominican Republic and Cuba where the granting of visas complemented U.S. foreign policy until the early 1970s, most of those fleeing state terror and political violence for the U.S. were undocumented upon arrival. Subsequently, refugees who applied for a legalization of their status encountered pronounced discrimination on the part of U.S. immigration and Naturalization Services [INS] based on the contention that they were economically motivated, exaggerating claims of individual repression or simply unable to "prove" that they would suffer persecution if returned to their homeland, however obvious the condition of generalized violence. For certain groups at the height of conflict, such as Salvadorans and Guatemalans in the 1980s, the political reasoning behind INS denials of claims for asylum had everything to do with U.S. Cold War policy toward their homelands.

Since the late 1960s, the Salvadoran military had increasingly relied on U.S. training and diplomatic support to prevent any substantive reforms and thereby preserve a tiny elite’s control over the national economy through a vast campaign of political violence. By 1980, that campaign had expanded far beyond its original targeting of left-wing guerrillas and unarmed activists to attack thousands of civilians, including students, professors, doctors, international aid workers, a disproportionally high number of peasants as well as dozens of Catholic laypeople, nuns, and priests. Most famously, in March 1980, the head of El Salvador’s national security agency ordered the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero, a vociferous critic of U.S. aid; the military then fired on the 30,000 mourners who gathered for his funeral, killing dozens. The military went as far as to threaten the entire Jesuit order with "extermination" and famously abducted, raped, and killed four U.S. church women, three of them nuns, on the presumption that their work with the poor made them allies of left-wing guerrillas. In the first four years of Reagan’s presidency alone, the military murdered between eight to nine thousand civilians per year; the Salvadoran government ordered not a single investigation of their deaths.

Not surprisingly, as legal scholar Michael H. Posner noted at the time, it was extremely difficult for the U.S. to admit tens of thousands of refugees and "thus acknowledge political persecution by the government of El Salvador, and yet ask Congress to certify more military assistance to that country based on significant human rights improvements of the refugee’s government."

Indeed, from June 1983 to September 1990, only 2.6 percent Salvadoran and 1.8 percent Guatemalan asylum seekers succeeded. In the case of Haitian refugees where a related, although highly racialized logic applied, only eleven of 22,940 Haitians intercepted at sea were deemed qualified to apply for political asylum between 1981 and 1990. Three years later, after the Bush administration sanctioned another bloody coup, this time against the democratically elected government of Jean-Bertrande Aristide, only 11,000 Haitians of 38,000 who attempted to enter the U.S. were granted the right to apply for political asylum. The U.S. Coast Guard returned the rest to Haiti. Surprisingly, refugees from Nicaragua did not necessarily benefit from INS largesse despite the fact that they were displaced by a civil war that pitted the country’s revolutionary government troops against the Contras, an army organized by the CIA, led by former somocista National Guardsmen and financed by the U.S.
granted asylum until 1985-1987 when Reagan's drive for massive aid to the Contras resulted in a spike in approvals as high as 84 percent. Once Congress cut off aid again, however, levels dropped to their previous rates.  

By contrast, Cubans or applicants from Eastern bloc countries enjoyed near automatic entrance to the U.S. Cubans, who had benefitted from U.S. State Department visa waivers in the early years of the Revolution, subsequently enjoyed automatic permanent residency status and additional benefits such as food, cash allotments, Cubans-only educational programs, and other privileges never extended to other immigrants or minority groups based on the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act and the two-billion-dollar Cuban Refugee Program that provided unprecedented federal support to individual refugees as well as schools, businesses, and state agencies attending them until 1980. Although Cubans arriving by sea must make landfall to avoid deportation since 1994, U.S. law has continued to consider virtually anyone who wants to leave Cuba a "political refugee," no questions asked. As María de los Angeles Torres explains, "For the U.S. government, Cuban émigrés provided the rationale for continuing a foreign policy aimed at containing communism and expanding the forces needed for battle." On this basis, nearly one million Cubans were admitted, with 20,000 more arriving every year through a U.S.-sponsored visa lottery and thousands of others by land and sea in the post-Cold War era.

Undoubtedly, Cuban exiles and those of more recent migrations struggle with unique traumas associated with living under the domain of a Communist state. Caught up in a "class war" for which most exiles felt they were not responsible, Cuban exiles bonded with one another in the famously all-Cuban enclaves of Little Havana and Hialeah in Miami Dade County, re-establishing the newspapers and small businesses that they had lost in Cuba and refounding the many Catholic schools to which they had sent their children. While the wealthiest exile elite, including a majority of batistianos (former Batista supporters), recreated racially segregated institutions like the Havana Yacht Club (renamed the Havana Yacht Club in Exile) and exclusive lily-white neighborhoods like Miramar, working-class and middle-class Cubans killed and roasted whole pigs in their backyards, bought land to grow traditional Cuban foods for local markets, and opened up grocery stores and restaurants for other Cubans.
Yet for Cubans of all social classes, Miami was not necessarily a welcoming place in the 1960s and early 1970s when nearly half a million refugees first arrived. Indeed, the display of "For Rent" signs in Miami that also read "No Children, No Pets and No Cubans" became a legendary example of the hostility that greeted many early refugees.48 Because Miami’s schools, beaches, and public spaces were still racially segregated, thousands of Cubans—whom local whites perceived as non-white however the Cubans themselves may have identified—courageously defied racial and cultural barriers en masse. Indeed, African-Americans "watched in disbelief" as Cuban black and mulatto children attended formally all-white schools, together with their racially mixed and Hispanic Cuban compatriots.49

Forced to accommodate thousands of Spanish-speaking Cuban children and hundreds of highly qualified, if uncertified, Cuban teachers, Miami’s public schools expanded wildly. Between 1960 and 1965, the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare established teacher training programs to jumpstart the certification of Cuban teachers, created the country’s first federally funded bilingual schools, opened vocational training courses for adults, launched Cuban-specific college loan programs and found jobs for the hundreds of University of Havana professors who had settled in Miami Dade County.50 Cubans also received cash relief at levels much higher than native residents and became the first beneficiaries of government-surplus food.51 Perhaps most ingenious was the "Training for Independence" program, targeted specifically at Cuban single-mothers and unmarried women in Miami who depended on relief. Offering intensive English-language classes and job training, the mandatory program was so successful that it became a model for welfare assistance projects nationwide.52

Undoubtedly, the symbolic competition between the U.S. and the Soviet bloc during the Cold War inspired much of the creativity and generosity behind these federal programs. Yet their success in aiding Cubans adjust and succeed ultimately helped justify the claims of other minorities, not just other Latinos, for similar kinds of federal support as well as policies that would promote multi-culturalism, not simply assimilation. Indeed, while Cubans were the principal beneficiaries of the Cuban Refugee Program, the hundreds of millions of dollars it pumped into South Florida schools, infrastructure and economy indirectly benefitted the whole regional economy, increasing tourism, and catalyzing a long-term real estate boom. Despite this, Miami’s self-described "Anglos" led the U.S.’s first English-only movement in 1980 that eventually amended the Florida Constitution to specify English as the official language of the state in 1988. In response, Cubans mobilized to defeat the Democratic politicians responsible for the amendment by registering to vote. Overwhelming the electorate in sheer numbers, Cubans ultimately overturned the amendment in 1993 and permanently established the character of Florida as a place that values bilingualism and promotes pride in Spanish fluency.53 As one Cuban writer has put it, "the Miami of today can hardly be compared to any city in the Cuba we remember...[However, in Miami] an exile has a choice to be one, the other, or both [Latino and American], and to communicate using English, Spanish or both languages—this is a key point."54

Today, any Latino resident of Miami would likely agree with this sentiment and the rea-
sons extend far beyond Cubans’ struggle to preserve their language. While Cubans faced cultural and racial marginalization for the first twenty to thirty years of their settlement in Miami, the most Cuban-identified areas of Miami are now the most culturally integrated by other Latino refugees, especially those from Central America, despite the array of public monuments and markers designating these areas as historically and culturally Cuban. "Calle Ocho" (or Eighth Street) in Little Havana provides a case in point. There, restaurants such as "Fritanga Erika" promise Nicaraguan food with Cuban flare and "Café Latina" advertises Central American fusion alongside authentic Cuban espresso. Even iconic spaces, long ago declared Florida Heritage Sites, have broadened the cultural identities and histories that they celebrate, to include far more than Cubans. For example, a large, painted mural featuring the images of Latin American leaders gathered at a summit in Miami during the Clinton administration flanks one side of the Parque Máximo Gómez, a small park where elderly Cuban men and women have gathered to play dominoes and talk politics since 1976. Calle Ocho also features a Hollywood-style walk of fame on its sidewalk with virtually as many Latin American entertainment stars as Cubans. A few blocks away, Cafetería Guardabarranco’s colorful mural also announces the unity of Cubans with other Latinos. One end features the faces of Afro-Cuban musician Celia Cruz, Puerto Rican bandleader Tito Puente, Mexican American Selena and Argentina’s Carlos Gardel; the other end highlights the visages of Latin America’s most famous nationalists alongside a bustling scene of traditional village life and the phrase, "¡Viva Nuestra Raza!" [Long live our race!].

Still, despite these clear signs of solidarity and inclusion, Little Havana remains the symbolic heart of official exile narratives about their place in the U.S.’s Cold War past. Erected through local fundraising efforts and maintained by the combined efforts of city government and vigilant residents, historical monuments punctuate the area. A monument featuring the Virgin of Charity, Cuba’s patron saint, announces Miami Cubans’ commemoration of the one-hundred-year anniversary of Cuba’s last war for independence against Spain with no mention of the U.S.’s fateful intervention of 1898 in the war and Cuban patriots’ subsequent struggle to rid the island of a four-year-long U.S. military occupation: indeed, the monument gives the impression that none of these things ever happened. Similarly, Little Havana’s monument to Cuban exile "martyrs" at the Bay of Pigs calls the event an "assault" rather than the more familiar U.S. term of "invasion" or "operation." Most bizarre of all is a monument to Manolo Fernández, "El Caballero del Tango," which features a dedication by its chief funder, Gilber- to Casanova, whom a plaque describes as the Secretary of Acción Cubana, or "Cuban Action." Founded in the early 1970s by Cuban exile extremists in protest of what they perceived as the softening of U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America and growing complacency among fellow exiles toward Castro, Acción Cubana claimed responsibility for the bombings of dozens of Cuban embassies and consulates throughout Latin America.  

These monuments speak to the minefield of memory in which Cubans of different generations have forged their identity in South Flori-
The region’s political culture developed in tandem with two, largely unique processes: first, the development of unprecedented programs of covert and overt subversion by national security agencies to topple and undermine the Cuban government led by Fidel Castro; and second, the development of equally unprecedented programs of direct legal, educational, and financial aid to Cuban refugees that no other immigrant or minority group has ever enjoyed. The former initially entailed easy employment in the world’s largest CIA station at the University of Miami. Endowed with an annual budget of $50 million a year, the CIA hired a staff of 400 agents and over ten to fifteen thousand informants, saboteurs, and self-appointed political saviors drawn from the early ranks of Cuban exiles.56 In addition, the CIA’s funding of front businesses in Miami ensured that certain Cuban exiles enjoyed a “subsidized” and financially guaranteed version of the American Dream while Anglo-owned businessmen and all others simply had to fend for themselves.57 Until 1980 when the much darker, much more working-class marielitos arrived, Cubans also enjoyed a variety of advantages in their public image thanks to a sympathetic U.S. media that usually depicted them as white, educated, and affluent, all qualities that mattered in a still highly segregated U.S. culture, even though in most cases, Cubans did not necessarily fit the bill. Moreover, their access to public funds facilitated by agencies of the U.S. government ensured that, among other privileges, Cubans gained greater access to federally funded loans in comparison to Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, and African-Americans.58

Cubans of subsequent generations who grew up in Miami continue to prosper from the historically accumulated advantages that their parents and grandparents’ utility to U.S. foreign policy granted them. But Cubans were not just beneficiaries of U.S. policy, they were also its victims. From the 1960s through the early 1990s, paramilitary groups based in Miami not only launched raids on Cuba with the support of the CIA; they also attempted to silence those Cuban exiles who favored dialogue with and travel to the island. The paramilitary groups used selective assassinations, death threats, and bombings of post offices, banks, the airport, an exile-owned art gallery, Miami’s FBI headquarters, and other institutions to intimidate their fellow exiles. Testifying to the deep connections that Cuban exiles enjoy at the centers of power, no group or individual was ever charged with these crimes.59

U.S. intelligence agencies’ willingness to either sponsor or tolerate illegal and criminal methods employed by right-wing exile groups to police the attitudes, public speech, and political positions of other Cubans and Cuban-Americans has played a key role in maintaining U.S. policy toward Cuba on a wartime footing. It has also fomented a culture of political "intolerance" in South Florida, especially Miami.60 As a result, individual Cubans and Cuban-Americans who disagree with exile points of view on U.S. policy toward Cuba or question key aspects of the exile narrative on the Cuban Revolution (most commonly portrayed as an event that never needed to have happened) often encounter hostility, name-calling, job discrimination, arguments with friends, and relatives as well as overt forms of intimidation.61

Equally important is the overwhelming support for change in U.S. foreign policy toward Cubans among Florida’s Cuban community.

Importantly, Cubans who most disagree with the U.S. embargo and travel ban on Cuba today are not registered to vote.62 Equally important is the overwhelming support for change in U.S. foreign policy toward Cubans among Florida’s Cuban community, despite the public positions...
taken by Cuban exiles and Cuban American elected officials, both locally and nationally. According to a Florida International University Cuba Study Group poll, conducted regularly since 1991, the percentage of Cubans favoring the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the U.S. reached 58 percent in 2011.63

The contradiction in positions between elected representatives and the Cuban community that elects them on the issue of U.S.-Cuban relations remains difficult to explain. Fear of rejection by one’s community as a Castro sympathizer and the apathy that over-politicization of life in both Cuba and among Cuban communities in the U.S. undoubtedly play a role. Yet despite the tensions with which Cubans live in the U.S., their numeric concentration in primarily one spot and their relatively high visibility in public consciousness gives Cubans an organizational advantage when it comes to representing their interests and identity at the local and national level.

By contrast, other Latinos who trace their community’s origins to Cold War struggles in their home countries find themselves geographically fragmented across multiple cities in the U.S. and far less empowered at all levels, culturally, politically, and economically—in part, because they largely arrived as undocumented refugees. Ignored by the mainstream media or simply "generalized" into the pan-ethnic category of Latino with little analysis of what makes each group’s culture and politics different, other refugees from Central America and the Caribbean often feel frustrated by the invisibility of their culture and the Castro-centrism that tends to pervade public representations of the Cold War. Getting beyond this Castro-centrism involves understanding how stories of trauma, survival, and recovery have woven themselves into the process of identity building among these Latino communities and members’ everyday lives.

Getting Beyond Castro-Centrism: Living the Legacy of Political Violence and Torture among Central Americans

How do Salvadorans or Guatemalans in the U.S. who suffered brutal forms of torture and mass terror at the hands of state security forces in the 1980s and 1990s talk about their society’s ordeal in a cultural context that fails to recognize that it even happened? How do they explain to their friends and neighbors their fear of visiting their homelands where, for the most part, the military officers responsible for atrocities not only enjoy near-total impunity but have remained critical players in their current government’s post-war "democratic" regimes? For years, Juan Romagoza Arce, a Salvadoran survivor of torture, asked himself such questions everyday. One way he responded to them was to courageously challenge the officials responsible for his torment, El Salvador’s Minister of Defense and Chief of the National Guard, in U.S. federal courts. Awarded multiple honors by U.S. officials, the generals had retired to South Florida where they led normal lives until Romagoza and two other Salvadorans won their case against the men in 2002.64 When the court’s ruling was repeatedly upheld under appeal, Romagoza then joined new litigants in launching another successful case, this time in Memphis, Tennessee, against Colonel Nicolás Carranza, El Salvador’s former Vice Minister of Defense and Public Security who oversaw the National Guard and
National Police.65 These cases represent enormous symbolic victories for survivors of torture everywhere, as their lawyers at the Center for Justice and Accountability based in San Francisco made clear.

Every case and investigation draws communities in Central America and the U.S. together in a process of survival and healing that helps younger generations share the historical witness that often mark their parents and grandparents’ perspectives. While the experience may unite and strengthen Central Americans’ transnational identity, it is unclear what effect it may have on uninformed or disinterested mainstream U.S. Americans in the U.S. Judging from the testimony delivered at the time of the Salvadoran generals’ landmark trial, not only did plaintiffs have to educate judge and jury as to the nature of their abuse, but they also had to battle the deeply ingrained discourse for which Reagan became so famous, that is, of equating Central American counterinsurgency methods with “freedom-fighting.” Attesting to this in the 2002 case, the defense attorney, in his closing remarks, compared the Salvadoran generals responsible for the atrocities civilians suffered to Thomas Jefferson and John Adams.66

Romagoza and his fellow plaintiffs’ victories represent one of many instances where victims of Salvadoran and Guatemalan government atrocities have sought redress transnationally, that is, either in U.S. courts or through the aid of international human rights activists and even historians based in the U.S. These instances, perhaps more than other examples, have helped make the presence and story of Central American migration more visible and relevant to the U.S. public. For Guatemalans who can afford it or have ties to U.S. institutions in the U.S., trying security agents responsible for individual deaths of relatives in U.S. courts has also become a means for contesting the impunity enjoyed by former military officers-turned-politicians, such as General Efraín Ríos Montt, Guatemala’s dictator of the early 1980s whom the United Nations accused of genocide.67 Addressing the Guatemalan military’s strategies against largely rural Mayan communities has also entailed transnational cooperation in excavating bodies from massacre sites as well unearthing critical documents. In 2005, historians discovered a secret police archive containing 30,000 files of citizens arrested and disappeared during the 1980s. In its analysis and preservation, Guatemalan historians and U.S. historians of Guatemala like Greg Grandin have played a vital role.68

Nonetheless, Central American refugees, like many Haitians, face the daily paradox of having sought refuge in the very society that many blame for the extent of the violence that they suffered in their homelands. Many also face the equally paradoxical reality of having fought deportation from the U.S. for years on the charge that they were not “real” political refugees but economic migrants, seeking jobs not sanctuary in the U.S. Incredibly, hundreds of former generals and other top security officers responsible for war crimes often found easy routes to permanent residency and eventual citizenship. For many, the INS’s apparent preference for deporting illegal immigrants from Central America, even if they were victims of human rights abuses, was not only complemented by a willingness to aid and abet known abusers, but a policy of helping them cover up past crimes.69 According to Amnesty International, about 400,000 sur-

Salvadoran child soldier [guerilla forces] (Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen)
vivors of politically orchestrated torture live in the U.S. and about 1,000 alleged torturers live among them, including many from Haiti, Nicaragua, and El Salvador.70 During the course of conflict and afterward, solidarity networks linking Catholic-led organizations such as Witness for Peace as well as non-profit Latino organizations such as La Peña in Berkeley and the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center in San Antonio played pivotal roles in helping Cold War refugees find sanctuary, help, and advice in making the transition to life in the U.S.

Violence has nonetheless remained a permanent part of life for many Central Americans who live in poor neighborhoods, especially in Los Angeles where young Salvadoran gang members govern key aspects of the drug trade, just as they do in San Salvador. In explaining the emergence of the gangs, many analysts point to the role played by child soldiers in the Salvadoran war, particularly those forcibly recruited into the state military ranks where they witnessed and carried out torture and corporal mutilation. In order to solve a deficit in the number of recruits, military forces regularly kidnapped individual boys as they were walking to school, running errands or playing; they also raided middle schools, abducting into their ranks whole classrooms or all the boys in particular grades.71 Of the government’s troops, 80 percent were under the age of eighteen, with most averaging 14-15 years old at the time of their incorporation. By contrast, 30 percent of guerrillas were minors.72 Often orphaned by army offensives, they joined the guerrillas out a desire to avenge their dead family members or because they had no one to care for them and therefore no other choice.73 Recently, Central American gangs have garnered increasing attention in the U.S. media, especially as former guerrilla commanders, Catholic Church authorities and Homies Unidos, a Los Angeles-based gang intervention project, prepare to broker a truce among gang members from California to El Salvador in May 2012.74

Unfortunately, few would contend that knowledge of their wartime roots plays a role in how most young gang members are perceived. The scars that they carry are as invisible as those carried by older immigrants and migrants, despite the fact that in recent years, the U.S. Federal Government has taken remarkable steps to recognize and deal with the trauma that the legacies of torture can inflict on families and communities, often for years. Such steps include the funding of clinics meant to treat torture victims and the Healing Club, a support group in Los Angeles for torture victims and their families. The club forms part of two dozen little-known, federally funded torture rehabilitation programs in the U.S.75

The attention of Federal Government agencies and legal victories over human rights abusers clearly have made Central Americans know that they are not alone in burdening the costs and the knowledge of history that they bear. Such a shift forms part of a larger process of empowerment that has clearly emerged in the last fifteen years as the majority of first-wave Central American refugees legalized their status and thereby, increased their political activism on behalf of community needs, fielded candidates for political office, and became key players in transnational efforts to subvert official silences in their homelands.76 For example, María Teresa Tula, leader of the human rights
group known as Co-Madres that Archbishop Romero founded in San Salvador shortly before he was assassinated, came to the U.S. as an undocumented refugee in 1987 despite the fact that Co-Madres had received the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award three years earlier. However, Tula’s long-standing ties to peace activists in the U.S. and U.S. academics who sponsored speaking tours in which Tula shared her story ultimately served to bring her and other Salvadorans’ struggle to greater public consciousness. A transcript of María Teresa Tula’s life history, published in 1999, quickly became and remains a bestselling textbook in U.S. colleges nationwide. Moreover, from her home in the U.S., Tula and the Co-Madres successfully led an alliance of NGOs that pressured the Salvadoran government to create the country’s principal war memorial in 2003. Modeled on the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, "The Wall" in San Salvador’s central Cuscatlán Park commemorates the thousands of dead and disappeared at the hands of the Salvadoran military.

Although even the largest Salvadoran community in Los Angeles does not yet boast its own monuments, it has scored several recent victories in gaining official recognition and support for public sites honoring Salvadoran history and presence. In 2000, the Salvadoran American National Association partnered with Catholic parishes in Los Angeles to commission a replica of the nation’s revered sacred image of Jesus Christ, Divine Savior, which normally resided in San Salvador’s cathedral. Highly symbolic of so many refugees’ own perilous journey, the statue left El Salvador on a pilgrimage through Guatemala and Mexico before finally arriving at the Dolores Mission Church. In 2009, Cal State Northridge, the General Consulate of El Salvador in Los Angeles, and Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen in San Salvador sponsored a series of multimedia events at the Los Angeles Theatre Center called "Preservacion de la Memoria Historica Salvadorena" (Salvadoran Preservation of Historic Memory). Meant to address "the civil war’s haunting legacy while looking toward the future of Salvador’s people, at home and abroad," the program included a photo exhibit, a symposium on historic memory, discussions of Salvadoran writers, and theatrical presentations celebrating indigenous heritage. In explaining his motivations for staging the festival William Flores, director of Olin Theater Presenters, noted, "Memory is something that mustn’t be lost . . . To kill memory is to kill the human being."

Salvadorans in Los Angeles have also found new sites to anchor, cultivate, and restore their much ravaged memory and cultural knowledge in a section of Vermont Avenue known designated as the El Salvador Community Corridor. Although it already boasts twenty-five restaurants and eighty other Salvadoran-owned businesses, the area still lacks the murals, monuments, and museums that typify historic districts such as Little Havana’s Calle Ocho. Moreover, a plaza in the corridor was named for the Salvadoran patriot and spiritual hero Archbishop Oscar Romero, it might soon compete with another commemorative space also named for Romero if a group of Salvadoran leaders succeeds in renaming MacArthur Park in the fall of 2012.

As this essay shows, the struggle for greater political representation and prosperity that arguably all immigrants face was notably complicated in the case of Cold War Latinos by the complex and contradictory history that led to their presence in the U.S. Their ability and willingness to forge a public identity and image for themselves has also been undercut by the ways in which memories of that history remain buried, distorted, or simply unknown to most U.S. Americans. Nonetheless, the political transformation that they have achieved and continue to achieve at the national and local levels is as important as the cultural transfor-
Ironically, even as federal programs undoubtedly favored Cubans in important material ways, their ascent as a community undoubtedly served to further other Central American and Caribbean Latinos’ self-representation in government, the media, and public space. While much of U.S. Cold War policy in their home countries might have backfired, the unexpected creation of new Latino communities in the U.S. that resulted from this policy clearly strengthened U.S. democracy at home and affirmed the right of all members of our society to pursue justice, freedom, and their own American dreams.

“Memory is something that mustn’t be lost...
To kill memory is to kill the human being.”

William Flores
Endnotes


2 Ibid., 46-47.


5 LeoGrande, 256-258.


7 María Cristina García, Seeking Refuge: Central American Migration to Mexico, the United States, and Canada (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006), 110.

8 Joshua E.S. Phillips, "The Case Against the Generals," The Washington Post (17 August 2003), W-06.

9 Information on the concentration of these and other ethnic groups may be found on the U.S. Census Bureau’s “American Factfinder” website at: http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml To replicate the data in the table found in this essay go to the American Factfinder website and follow the steps below:

- Click on Geographies-Metropolitan Statistical Area/select Microstatistical area 2010/select "All Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistic Areas within the United States and Puerto Rico." [click “Add to your selection,” Close]

- Click on Topics/select People/select Population Change/select Migration (Previous Residence) [Close]

- Click on People/Type in a race, ancestry, or tribe [e.g. Dominican, Salvadoran, Cuban, etc.] and click “Go”/Population Group Name [select group, click Add, Close]

- Select table BO7204 "Geographical Mobility Within the Past Year for Current Residence—State, County and Place level in the United States"/select View Table

For the group selected, the above table gives the total population for the largest 90-180 U.S. cities to include information on migration. It should be noted that these numbers are derived from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey and are current estimates based on both the 10-year U.S. Census and the Bureau’s annual surveys.

10 Gilbert Joseph, "What We Know and Should Know: Bringing Latin America More Meaningfully into Cold War Studies"
in In From the Cold: Latin America’s New Encounter with the Cold War, edited by Gilbert Joseph and Daniela Spenser (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 11-15.


28 Wood, 8-9.


33 García, Seeking Refuge, 84-89.

34 As Elizabeth Jean Wood summarizes this process, "The Salvadoran civil war was, at the macro level, a struggle between classes. The long-standing oligarchic
alliance of the economic elite and the military led to a highly unequal society in which the great majority of Salvadorans were excluded from all but the most meager life opportunities. The response of this oligarchic alliance to the social movements of the 1970s and their demands for economic reform and political inclusion was repression, not compromise." See Wood, Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 11.

35 Wood, 9; García, Seeking Refuge, 22-26; LeoGrande, 49-50;

36 LeoGrande, 48-50.

37 Janet Schenck, El Salvador: The Face of Revolution (Boston: South End Press, 1981), 60-62; García, 23; LeoGrande, 61; 63-64


40 García, Seeking Refuge, 113.

41 Lennox, 704.

42 LeoGrande, 89, 110-115, 121, 289, 298; LaFeber, 300-304; García, Seeking Refuge, 174 n.23.

43 García, Seeking Refuge, 113-115.

44 Ibid., 87-88.

45 Torres, 72, 80; García, Havana USA, 22-30, 36-37, 41-45, 84-86, 216 n.26, 216 n.28, 217-218 n.41.

46 Torres, 72.

47 These stories have yet to make their way into academic works. However, they are common to my personal and scholarly experience as the child of Cuban exiles with deep roots in Miami.


49 García, Havana USA, 29.

50 Ibid., 26-30; 40-41.

51 Ibid., 29; 41.

52 Ibid., 42.

53 Eckstein, 49-51.


55 García, Havana USA, 140; 144.

56 Guerra, Visions of Power, 4.

57 Torres, 75-76.

58 Ramón Grosfoguel and Chloe S. Georas, "Latino Caribbean Diasporas in New York" in Mambo Montage: The Latinization of
American Latinos and the Making of the United States: A Theme Study


Eckstein, 34-38.

Ibid., 96-97.

Cuban Research Institute, "2011 Cuba Poll", page 10. PDF available through http://cri.fiu.edu/research/cuba-poll/


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76 Leslie Berestein, "Look Homeward, Angels: Salvadoran Refugees in LA have Joined Forces to Help Rebuild Their War-Torn Homeland," Los Angeles Times (16 April 1995), 12;


79 Reed Johnson, "Salvaging El Salvador: A Week of Multimedia Events in LA brings the country's murky past out of the shadows," Los Angeles Times (23 October 2009), D1.

80 Frank Shyong, "LA Salvadoran Community Sees Hope Along a New Corridor," Los Angeles Times (9 September 2012), latimes.com/news/local/la-me-salvadorans-20120910,0,7437736.story