

Cubans in America: Push and Pull Factors of Immigration

To the student: This question is based on the accompanying documents. It has been created in order to test your ability to work with historical documents. Some of these documents have been edited for the purposes of this question. As you analyze the documents, try to understand the source of the document and any point of view that is presented in the document.

Historical context: One million people of Cuban origin live in the United States. There have been many historical push and pull factors that have affected Cuban immigration to the U.S. Cubans began migrating to the U.S. during the war for Cuban independence from Spain in 1868, and many settled in New York City, Buffalo, and other areas of New York State. It was not until the Castro revolution in 1959, however, that the largest group of Cubans began arriving in the U.S. Most settled in the area of Miami, Florida; but many traveled to New York State to establish their homes and careers. This “first wave” of immigrants consisted of mainly upper-middle and middle class professionals and skilled workers. The “second wave” of immigration occurred in 1965, when Castro allowed Cubans with relatives in the U.S. to leave the island. Half of Cuba’s professional class fled to the U.S. during this time. The “third wave” of immigrants became known as the “*Marielitos*,” left Cuba after an incident at the Peruvian Embassy in Cuba. After six Cubans obtained political asylum from the Peruvian Embassy, Castro announced that anyone who wanted to leave the country should go to the embassy grounds. The Mariel Boat Lift began in 1980 when Castro opened the port of Mariel to American boats. The “fourth wave” of immigrants are known as “*balseiros*” because they left the island on boats and rafts in 1994. In a departure from past policy, President Clinton stated that illegal refugees from Cuba would not be allowed to enter the U.S., and he quarantined the refugees at Guantánamo Bay in Cuba. The U.S. grants visas to 20,000 Cubans yearly under provisions of an agreement between the two countries.

Task: Using information from the following documents and your own knowledge of history, answer the questions that follow each document in Part A. Your answers to the questions will help you to accomplish the writing assignment given in Part B.



Document 1: Map of Cuba. State Department of the United States. October 1994.

Mr. DIAZ BALART. Rafael Lincoln Diaz Balart.

Mr. SOURWINE. And your residence?

Mr. DIAZ BALART. I live in New York.

Mr. SOURWINE. You are a lawyer?

Mr. DIAZ BALART. Yes, sir.

Mr. SOURWINE. Are you a member of the bar of Cuba?

Mr. DIAZ BALART. Yes, Sir.

Mr. SOURWINE. Are you a member of the bar of any State of the United States?

Mr. DIAZ BALART. No, Sir.

Mr. SOURWINE. Where did you go to school?

Mr. DIAZ BALART. Havana, University, and University of Oriente.

Mr. SOURWINE. When?

Mr. DIAZ BALART. From 1945, when I started Havana University.

Mr. SOURWINE. Did you have a prominent classmate in law school?

Mr. DIAZ BALART. Yes. I was a classmate of Premier Castro.

Mr. SOURWINE. You were it, classmate of Fidel Castro?

Mr. DIAZ BALART. Yes.

Mr. SOURWINE. Were you formerly a member of the National Legislature of Cuba?

Mr. DIAZ BALART. Yes, Sir.

Mr. SOURWINE. How long have you been in the United States?

Mr. DIAZ BALART. Since January 15, 1959.

Mr. SOURWINE. Why did you leave Cuba and come here?

Mr. DIAZ BALART. I left Cuba, on December 20, 1958, to Europe, for some professional business, find while there the Communist forces of Castro arrived to power, so I remained there until January 15 when I came here, to the United States...

Document 2: Excerpt of Diaz-Balart Testimony Before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws, of the Committee on the Judiciary, May 3, 1960. Available online at <http://www.rose-hulman.edu/~delacova/us-cuba/diaz-balart.htm>.

Document 2 Short-Answer Questions:

1. Where did Mr. Diaz Balart live at the time of his testimony before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee? _____

2. When did Mr. Diaz Balart leave Cuba? _____

3. Why did he come to live in the United States instead of returning to his home in Cuba? _____

4. What was Mr. Diaz Balart's career when he was in Cuba? _____

Document 3 Short-Answer Questions:

1. When and why did the family of Carmen Miyares-Núñez immigrate to the U.S.? _____

2. Using your own thinking, why do you think Mrs. Núñez sent her eleven-year old son to live in the U.S., away from his parents? _____

3. What events made it possible for Mr. and Mrs. Núñez to come to the United States? _____

Document 4 Vocabulary:

Overt: open, unconcealed.

April 25, 1961

NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM NO. 42

TO: The Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare
The Director, Central Intelligence Agency

SUBJECT: Assistance to Cuban Refugees

In approving the Record of Actions of the April 22, 1961, meeting of the National Security Council, the President directed that levels of support for Cuban refugees should be reported to him for recommendations for their improvement (NSC Action 2486 a). The President also expressed his desire that such support should be open and overt. In addition, he directed that the adjustment of Cubans to life in the United States should be given particular attention by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Accordingly, it is requested that the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency submit a report to this office on these matters as soon as possible, together with such recommendations for the attention of the President as they deem appropriate.

McGeorge Bundy

cc: The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Labor
The Secretary of Commerce
Director, Bureau of the Budget

cc: Bromley Smith
Mrs. Lincoln
McG B's file ✓

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NSC NLK-76-140
By SKF NARS, Date 9-17-76

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Document 4 Short-Answer Questions:

1. What was the desire President Kennedy expressed about how support for Cuban refugees should be? _____

2. What agency would be responsible to give special attention to helping refugees adjust to life in the U.S.? _____

3. What effect would this supportive attitude by the U.S. Government have on Cuban immigration? _____

Document 5 Vocabulary:

Repression: The state of keeping down, or under restraint.

Chaotic: A state of confusion or disorder.

Excerpt from President Jimmy Carter’s May 14, 1980 Statement

...Tens of thousands of Cubans are fleeing the **repression** of the Castro regime under **chaotic** and perilous conditions. Castro himself has refused to permit them a safe and orderly passage to the United States and to other countries who are also willing to receive them. Repeated international efforts to resolve this crisis have been rejected or ignored by the Cuban Government. At least seven people have died on the high seas. The responsibility for those deaths and the threat of further loss of life rests on the shoulders of Fidel Castro, who has so far refused to cooperate with us, with those escaping his regime, or with other countries in establishing a legal and orderly procedure for dealing with this Cuban problem.

First, we are ready to start an airlift and a sealift for those screened and qualified people to come to our country, and for no other escapees from Cuba. We will provide this airlift and sealift to our country and to other countries as well, just as soon as the Cubans accept this offer. The U.S. Government will have aircraft ready and will immediately charter ships—one of which will be standing by in Key West—to bring the first group of Cubans, after they are screened, to our country. These ships and the Key West plans will be ready to go to Cuba to receive properly screened Cubans for entry to the United States and to other countries, to help in their resettlement...

Document 5: Excerpt from President Jimmy Carter’s press statement, May 14, 1980.

Document 5 Short-Answer Questions:

1. What dangerous situation has occurred with regards to refugees from Cuba? _____

2. What does President Carter say the U.S. will start providing? _____

3. What effect will this policy have on Cuban immigration to the U.S.? _____

Document 6 Vocabulary:

Defected: Deserted one's country.

Dissident: One who is in open disagreement with their government.

Impeded: Blocked, stopped.

Revenues: Incomes, earnings, profits.

S. Hrg. 106-992

CUBA'S OPPRESSIVE GOVERNMENT AND THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE

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HEARING
before the
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED SIXTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION
MARCH 1, 2000
Serial No. J-106-67

Excerpts of Prepared Statement of Juan Carlos Formell

My name is Juan-Carlos Formell. I am a singer/songwriter from Cuba living in New York since 1993. Recently I was honored with a Grammy nomination for my first record, but it is an even greater honor to be here today and address this committee. I speak as a refugee and a product of the Castro regime; I was born in it and it was all I knew until I **defected** six years ago ...

... Parents in Cuba have no rights because rights such as this do not exist. I am the son of the most famous celebrity in Cuba, a bandleader who has maintained his popularity in Cuba for over thirty years--The Rolling Stones, might be a good comparison. Not only is he the most famous person in Cuba, he is also known throughout the world as the most important figure in contemporary Cuba. Yet when I found that I could not offer mindless obedience to the system--I regret to say that I was not even close to being outspoken or a **dissident**, I simply wanted to practice yoga and play Cuban music in my own way--I was punished and my father, despite his popularity, was unable to help me. The government threatened not only me, but let me know that my meditation and pursuit of individualism could affect him. State Security developed a file on me that made it impossible for me to get an exit visa from my own country, which meant that my life as a musician was **impeded** because without permission to travel you cannot enter any musical band, whose **revenues** depend on touring. And without government authorization you cannot start your own band. My future was taken away from me but worse things have happened ...

Document 6: Excerpt, Juan Carlos Formell Testimony, 106 Senate Hearings [From the U.S. Government Printing Office via GPO Access] [DOCID: f:72703.wais].

Document 6 Short-Answer Questions:

1. When did Mr. Formell immigrate to the U.S. from Cuba? Where has he lived since then? _____

2. In Cuba, what two things did Mr. Formell do to cause him to be “punished” by the Communist government? _____

3. What prevented Mr. Formell from being able to tour with his music while he lived in Cuba? _____

Document 7 Vocabulary:

Dissent: Expression of disagreement, opposition to government policies.

Imperviousness: Not receptive to argument or sensitive to the views of others.

Scarcity: Shortage.

Crucially: Very important.

Emigres: Those forced to leave their country for political reasons.

... Cuban Immigration to the United States

... In 1959, an estimated 124,000 Cubans were living in the United States. In the early years of the revolutionary government, an additional 215,000 moved here, and now the Cuban community is well over a million. As we mentioned above, the center of that community is in Miami, but there are sizable communities in other cities in Florida and in New York, Illinois, and California as well.

The existence and size of the Cuban community in the United States is a result of both "push" and "pull" factors. The revolutionary government's inflexible attitude toward **dissent**, and its **imperviousness** to demands that dissenters make, probably constitute the greatest push factors: Cubans who are unhappy have had no reason to believe that they can effect changes in their lives. Another strong push factor for the recent

wave of newcomers is the economic situation and **scarcity** of **crucially** necessary goods like medicine.

The "pull" factor has been the United States' policy with regard to Cuban **emigres**, which has effectively been, until recently, an unqualified welcome for both documented (Cubans entering the United States through normal immigration procedures, including legal departure from Cuba) and undocumented (Cubans arriving in the United States without immigrant visas, who have usually left Cuba illegally). Until 1985, there was no quota for Cubans entering the United States via normal immigration procedures, as there was for other immigrant groups ...

Document 7: Excerpt from Refugee Fact Sheet Series No. 12, The Cubans, written by Barbara Robson, Refugee Service Center. 1996. Entire text available online at <http://www.culturalorientation.net/cubans/CUBANS.HTM>.

Document 7 Short-Answer Questions:

1. How many Cubans lived in the U.S. in 1959? _____

2. How many Cubans immigrated in the early years after Castro's revolution in 1959? _____

3. Although many Cubans live in Miami, Florida, what other states have large communities of Cubans? _____

4. What two "push factors" does the author of the document talk about?

a. _____

b. _____

5. According to the author, what has been the "pull factor" for Cuban immigration to the US.? _____

government closes Mariel harbor in September.

- Dec 22, 1980** Initiation of meetings between U.S. and Cuban officials to discuss the **repatriation** of the Cuban migrants of the Mariel exodus.
- July 31, 1984** U.S. and Cuban officials hold talks on migration issues.
- Dec 14, 1984** The United States and Cuba conclude a migration pact under which Cuba agrees to accept the return of some Cuban migrants of the Mariel crisis.
- May 20, 1985** Radio Marti begins broadcasts to Cuba. The Cuban government immediately jams the signal. Castro later suspends the 1984 U.S.-Cuban immigration agreement.
- Nov 19, 1987** The United States and Cuba reinstate the 1984 agreement.
- Oct 1, 1993** The United States and Cuba reach an agreement on the **repatriation** of the return of additional criminal Cuban migrants. Not implemented absent final GOC approval.
- Aug 1994** Following Castro's declaration of an open migration policy, a new boat lift begins when 30,000 refugees set sail from Cuba as economic conditions continue to deteriorate. President Clinton instructs the U.S. Coast Guard to **interdict** migrants and transport to non-U.S. safe havens.
- Sep 1, 1994** Migration talks on the August migrant crisis begin in New York City between Cuban and U.S. officials.
- Sep 9, 1994** The U.S. and Cuba issue a joint **communiqué** on measures that ensure that migration between the two countries is safe, legal, and orderly. The U.S. agrees that total legal migration to the U.S. will be a minimum of 20,000 per year.
- May 2, 1995** The U.S. and Cuba issue a joint statement reaffirming their commitment to promote safe, legal, and orderly migration. Under this accord, Cubans **interdicted** at sea or who enter the Guantanamo Naval Base illegally are returned to Cuba provided that they do not have any protection concerns. The circumstances of returned Cubans are monitored by personnel from the United States Interests Section.

Document 8: United States Department of State. Fact Sheet on Cuban Migration, 1958-1998. March 20, 2000. Available online at http://www.state.gov/www/regions/wha/cuba/migration_chron.html.

Document 8 Short-Answer Questions:

1. What U.S. operation brought 14,000 Cuban children to the U.S. after the Castro revolution? _____

2. When did the Freedom Flights program begin and when did they end?

3. What 1980 event caused Castro to open the Port of Mariel to allow refugees to leave Cuba for the United States? How many left? _____

4. What caused another wave of refugees to leave Cuba in 1994? _____

5. How many Cubans are allowed into the U.S. each year under the current immigration policies? _____

PART B: Using information from at least five of the documents in Part A to support your thinking, and your own knowledge of history, write an essay describing at least three push and three pull factors that have affected Cuban immigration to the United States since 1959. Your essay should be well-organized and include an introduction, at least three paragraphs, and a conclusion.