# Latino Legacies: Crossing National and Creating Cultural Borders

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The core of much discussion of the legacies of hyphenated Latinos emanates from their Hispanic background. But the Hispanic is not the only legacy; there are multiple legacies in the case of Hispanics in the United States. First there is the Hispanic legacy—the conquest, colonialism, language, religion and related elements. Then there is the variant which derives from the various Latin American nations of origin—from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Caribbean, Central and South America and Spain. This is the Latin American national legacy. But the question of legacy does not stop with the identification of the various countries of origin and the colonial Hispanic element. These only explain part of the cultural and social underpinning of life in the United States today.

In addition to the pervasive Hispanic legacy, there are others which overlay this one in different quantities and variations depending upon the historical make-up of the region or nation of origin of the group. One example of this is the African and indigenous legacies which show up in some nations. Among Cubans and Puerto Ricans, for example, as explained in the previous chapter and in other essays in this book, there is the heavy influence and remains of African gods and practices in the santería religion. This is only one such example of this legacy. Similarly, the indigenous legacy is evident in religion, magic, curing, the use of herbs and other techniques, food products, language and others.

The other legacies come from several different sources. The first, of course, is the -American part of the hyphenation, that is from participation in institutions originated and developed by Anglo-Americans. We shall call this the American legacy. It consists of the historical and social context within which the Latino must exist and live every day. It means the history of the formation of the nation, the pledge of allegiance to the American flag learned in the first grade, learning English, working at jobs in American institutions, adjusting to American neighbors with their curious customs and prejudices, a new political system, new forms of entertainment, a highly developed material culture and much more. It also means serving in the Armed Forces, playing football and baseball, eating hot dogs and hamburgers, instead of going to bull fights and eating tacos. Regionalism is a factor here, too, as explained in the previous chapter. Ethnic groups settle in regions of the country, solidifying their national origins within the context of a regional American culture.

The ethnic legacy is the ethnic experience in this country. It is what distinguishes Mexican Americans from recent Mexicans and Puerto Rican Americans from those who have never lived the ethnic experience in the United States. It means living in this country as part of a discriminated against minority, of uncertainty, of adapting to new cultural circumstances and the sharing of this experience with others of the same or similar backgrounds. It is often what links Chicanos with Puerto Ricans, or Cubans with American Blacks.

Much of the first part of our discussion on legacies has been discussed under the rubric of borders, crossing borders, mostly national boundaries, and the development of border cultures, especially along the United States-Mexico border (Weaver 1983). This includes such considerations as when the migration of the Hispanic people occurred and the conditions at the place of origin and at the place of destination. How were they treated when they arrived in this country? Were they treated as criminals because of the nature of their entry, as in the case of Mexicans and others? Or were they welcomed because they were considered political refugees from an oppressive communist regime, as in the case of Cuban migrants? But there are other borders which are not physical. These are ethnic boundaries, psychological states crossed, utilized and developed in adjustment, in dropping one set of national cultural standards and picking up another, and of replacing old social habits with new ones.

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Gonzalo Espinoza, one of the artists honored at the Museo Chicano. The work is entitled "Las Señas Están Llenas de Noche." (Photo by Thomas B. Weaver.)

This essay explores the many legacies carried by Latinos living in the United States and also describes and analyzes the problems of crossing national and creating cultural borders, which is another way of saying creating legacies. This will entail the discussion of how borders were created which made up the new homeland for Latinos, how their old national polities are related to them and to the United States, in what numbers and when these borders have been crossed, and what the consequences have been in terms of social and cultural adjustments and quality of life. Before covering this topic, however, we must review the basic demographics and locations of the various Latino populations in the United States.

## Demographic Considerations

Hispanic or Latino is not a monolithic or uniform category. Each regional group differs in the demographic characteristics or indices of poverty, education and other such factors, but even where they are similar there are different historical and local conditions which dictate the particular profile.

A United States census survey of March 1989 found 20.1 million Hispanics living in this country. The subgroup composition included 12.6 million Mexican Americans, 2.5 million Central and South Americans, 2.3 million Puerto Ricans, and 2.7 million Cuban and other Hispanics. The "other Hispanics" category also includes migrants from Spain, Basques in Nevada and northern California, and Sephardics who have lived all over the United States for a number of years, but who have remained relatively separate and not unified politically. The total represents a 39.1 percent increase over the 1980 population of 14.5 million. The 1980 Hispanic population constituted 6.5 percent and the current numbers represent 8.2 percent of the total United States population. About two-thirds of Hispanics live in three states, California with 34 percent, Texas with 21 percent, and New York with 10 percent. Other states with large Hispanic populations are Florida, 8 percent, Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico, 8 percent combined, Illinois, 4 percent, and New Jersey, 3 percent.

These census figures do not include the 1989 estimate by the Immigration and Naturalization Service of from 1.7 to 2.9 million persons who live in the country illegally. They are mostly Mexicans, but also include substantial numbers of Guatemalans, Dominicans, and others. If current trends continue Hispanics will constitute the largest minority group in the United States by the year 2000. This projection has many implications for the political, cultural, educational, economic, and other aspects of life in this country for Hispanics, as well as for non-Hispanics.

## Mexican American Demographics

Mexican Americans are the largest of the Hispanics groups living in the United States, representing almost two-thirds of all Hispanics. Ninety percent of all Mexican Americans live in the Southwest, with smaller proportions scattered along the Pacific coast, in the Midwest near Chicago and smaller groups in every state. The phrase Mexican American also covers the descendants of the colonial population who survived in the Southwest after the American occupation. Of the whole population, some 80,000 colonials were created through conquest and annexation between 1845 and 1854, and there may be as many as 250,000 descendants today. Another larger number is accounted for through Mexican immigration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They have a higher birth rate than Puerto Ricans, Cubans and Anglos. Today there are almost 13 million Mexican Americans, most of whom arrived in recent decades. The Mexican side of the border has become one of the fastest growing urban regions in the world, swelling to a population of 20 million persons. Many Mexican border residents cross the border into the United States every day legally for employment under various United States laws as commuters, as shoppers, or illegally to fill the high demand for agricultural, industrial or other low paying jobs available on this side of the border.

Mexican Americans living in different parts of the country vary slightly in demographic characteristics by age, sex, place of origin, background, physical characteristics, place of residence, class, education, occupation, religion, political beliefs and experience in the United States and Mexico. The reason for this is that they came at different times from different regions in Mexico. They also represent what has been referred to as reflections of the changing characteristics of the migrant stream. This means that the early migrants from Mexico represented a rural to urban movement of uneducated, agricultural, unskilled laborers, whereas the recent migrants are urban to urban migrants and are more highly educated, skilled and likely to work in other than agricultural occupations. In recent years a change from rural-farm to urban-industrial occupations and residence has occurred as the migrant stream has matured, which means that migrant characteristics continue to reflect the current characteristics of the home population. The average Mexican American is young, speaks both English and Spanish and was born in the United States of United States born parents. Ninety percent of all Mexican Americans belong to the Catholic Church. They have less education than the average Anglo, and also than any other Hispanic group.

## The Cuban Demographic Profile

The 1970 census counted over 560,000 Cubans living in the United States with about 80 percent having been born in Cuba. By 1980 the Cuban population based in the United States had risen to 831,000, and in the next decade to over 1,000,000. The Cuban Refugee Program helped to resettle over 150,000 Cubans away from Florida between 1961 and 1972, so that now they are found in every state in the union. An interesting aftermath of the Cuban Refugee Relocation Program is that in the last decade many have returned to Florida. There are an estimated 2.3 million Cubans living in the United States today, a figure which represents ten to fifteen percent of the total population of Cuba, itself. Perhaps there is no other nation, except Mexico, which has such a large percentage of its native people living in another country.

Cubans, more than other Hispanic groups, live in urban and metropolitan areas (97 percent in fourteen cities), usually suburban (57 percent), centered in Dade County, Florida and Union City—West New York in New Jersey, across the Hudson from New York City, but large groups also live in Hartford, Los Angeles and Chicago. The New Jersey area has been a favorite place to settle because of employment opportunities in its light industry, warehousing and transportation businesses. The early migrants, but also the later ones came from urban areas in Cuba, and the recent migrants from rural areas tended to settle where they had relatives or where they could find a Cuban cultural ambience, which turned out to be an urban area.

The demographic profile of Cuban Americans falls in the middle, closer to whites than to Hispanics or Blacks. This is true for all demographic measures such as fertility, age composition, education, economic and social status, male to female ratio and others. Cubans are older than other populations in the United States, 11 years older than other Hispanics and 3 years older than other Americans. In this connection Cubans have a lower fertility rate than other Hispanic groups. Part of the reason for these two characteristics has to do

with selective factors influenced by Cuban politics as to who could or did migrate. Another factor is the generally higher socio-economic class standing of Cubans. Persons of higher class status tend to have less children in the Western world as a whole. Cubans are better employed, earn higher per capita incomes, have lower unemployment rates and higher labor skills than Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans.

In 1953 a Cuban census listed whites as composing 72 percent of the population, whereas in 1970 a United States census indicated that 95 percent were white Cuban Americans. Some of the same selective factors which worked in the migration of other Cubans from Cuba played a selective part in the migration of Black Cubans. The socialist revolution focused more on the poor lower classes than on others and Blacks formed a large part of this sector. Because they were the poorest, Blacks benefited much more from the revolution than did the upper class whites. White Cubans had family networks present which helped in their settlement and easier adjustment, whereas, Black Cubans had none. Black Cubans have suffered more discrimination than white Cubans in the United States, both from Americans and from Cubans. There is a feeling among Cubans that Blacks welcomed the Castro revolution and cooperated with it, and they hold this against them. Black Cubans are found in higher numbers and percentages in the New York-New Jersey area than in the Florida region because, as some have suggested, of the more tolerant racial atmosphere found in the northern than in the southern United States.

## Cuban Sub-Group Variation

Although most Americans tend to think that all Cubans are industrious, white, hard working people, rich and upper or middle class, this was probably only true of the migrants who came before the 1970s. Since then emigres have tended to represent all walks of Cuban life from the upper to the lowest classes and all occupations and skin color. Still, there is more white Cuban representation than Black. The Cuban revolutionary leadership emphasized racial equality as a factor in socialist Cuba and has continued to highlight the problems of persons of color in the United States. The experiences of Black Cubans in the United States have tended to support this disparity.

Other variation in the Cuban American population includes representatives of the elderly, of Puerto Rican Cubans and of Asian and Jewish Cubans. Asian Cubans is a category of migrants little known or discussed. In 1953 there were over 16,000 persons of Asian descent in Cuba, and in 1970 the United States Census listed two percent of the Cuban American population as being of Asian extraction. Most were small business owners and worked in service industries in Cuba before the revolution, employment which was eliminated by the socialists. A large contingent of Cubans live in Puerto Rico—between 40,000 and 45,000 persons. This is a place used by other Caribbeans, such as Dominicans, as a staging area for migration to the United States. However, Puerto Rico is also the final destination of many Cubans and Dominicans. The elderly are a large component of the Cuban migratory population, composing about 10 percent of Cubans in the United States who are 65 years or older. Although Jewish and Black Cubans represent rather small proportions of the Cuban American population, symbolically they are significant.

Movement to the United States has changed the social class structure of the Cuban population. In Cuba before 1959, class was based on family background; in the United States it is based on occupation, income and achievement. Many early families of higher social status in Cuba have lost their wealth and social standing. A class consciousness has developed along with the success which Cuban Americans have had in economic endeavors. The consequence has been the publication of social registers, the rise of social clubs and reporting in newspapers of significant and lavish social events. Weddings, birthdays and the Quinceañera, or fifteenth birthday coming out party for girls, are occasions for families to display their wealth.

## Puerto Rican Population

Like Cuba, Puerto Rico was taken from Spain in the Spanish American War of 1898 and it was governed directly until the 1940s when it received the dubious title of Commonwealth and some supposed autonomy over its own affairs. Puerto Ricans are citizens of the United States, but do not control monetary and military policy. Puerto Ricans are economic migrants, coming to the United States during times when job opportunities are greatest and returning to Puerto Rico when economic conditions decline. Another very important difference is that since 1971 Puerto Ricans have been citizens of the United States and so arrive with a different legal and residency status. However, they are not so perceived by the majority of Americans who are liable to see them as Puerto Ricans rather than as Americans.

Since World War II, Puerto Rico has been characterized by high unemployment—as high as 40 percent at times, and for this reason there has been high out migration. In 1946 travel restrictions imposed during wartime were lifted and the result was the migration of about 40,000 people, mostly to New York City, adding to the estimated 50,000 to 75,000 Puerto Ricans living

there. As expected, most of the early migrants were men seeking employment, of lower class and rural origin. Between 1950 and 1960, persons born in Puerto Rico and living in the New York City increased by 292,000. After this, in the 1970s migration diminished, but there is now a third generation of Puerto Ricans in the United States who are increasing mostly by natural means (Dominguez 1975, 24-27). In 1972 there were an estimated 1.5 million Puerto Ricans living in this country, mostly in the inner cities of metropolitan areas. Although the early migrants tended to congregate in New York City, more recent populations have moved to New Jersey, Hartford, Connecticut, and other seaboard metropolitan areas. Today, they number over 2.3 million persons.

### Dominican and Other Hispanic Demographics

Dominicans constitute the largest of the "other Hispanic migrants," but in recent decades they have been joined by persons of Hispanic origin from other Latin American nations. The largest recent group are Central Americans, mostly Guatemalans and Nicaraguans, who, displaced by turmoil in their own countries, have been settling in areas which have previously attracted Hispanics. The mass migration of Dominicans to the United States began with political conflicts which occurred after the death of President Trujillo in 1961, hence most of those who came were political refugees, but in recent years they have come for economic reasons. In 1971 there were about 180,000 Dominicans in New York City alone. Many Dominicans entered the country through Puerto Rico, sometimes posing as citizens of that region to avoid deportation. In 1970 about two-thirds of the migrants were housewives, children and others with no occupation. Professionals accounted for under three percent, low in comparison with migrants from other places. The rest were skilled and unskilled workers (Dominguez 1975, 18-20). Today there may be as many as one million Dominicans living in the United States, many in the Southwest and California.

Although most of the Dominicans who migrate to the United States live in the New York City metropolitan area, about 18 percent reporting under the alien address program in 1972 claimed Puerto Rico as home. This would be consonant with the use of Puerto Rico as a staging area for eventual migration to the mainland. Reports are that Dominicans cluster in several regions in a self-segregating pattern. After reaching New York, the migrant lives with relatives and friends for a period of time until employment and more permanent residence is found. This pattern duplicates that of other migrants from Latin America.

## The Hispanic Legacy

The Hispanic legacy is separated theoretically from the Latin American national legacy, but in fact they overlap. The first starts with the arrival of Spaniards in the New World and merges with national legacies with the cutting of political ties with Spain. Briefly, the first named refers to a heritage of Hispanic language, family, religion (specifically the Catholic religion), a tendency towards authoritarianism, hierarchical ordering, patriarchy, importance of the male and other institutions, norms and behaviors which have a long standing tradition in people who live in Latin America or who are Latinos in the United States. The Latin American national legacy is the heritage which has developed since the gaining of autonomy from Spain around the first third of the nineteenth century. It includes specific histories of local revolutions, the succession of caciques, military leaders, sometimes political oppression and poverty and of the special mix and interactions of Black, indigenous and European peoples. We say European peoples because the contact within each country has included other than Spaniards in the last century.

About two-thirds of the Hispanics living in the United States are recent first-generation migrants (Estrada 1985). However, Hispanics are not new residents to this country. By the time of the first European settlement in the northeast coastal region there were persons of Hispanic culture and language living in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Florida and in the southwest of what has become the United States, but which was then the northern extension of northern New Spain, later to become northern Mexico. Most of this Hispanic population interbred with indigenous populations, and so most of the migrants to the United States have been of mixed origin, Mestizos, as they are called in some places. A portion of the new migration to the United States is of African descent. These are descendants of the Black slaves introduced into the Caribbean beginning in the sixteenth century as laborers when the indigenous population was reduced or eliminated through disease, warfare, or forced labor. This topic of mixed legacies—Hispanic, African, indigenous, has been alluded to above and will be discussed later.

### Early Settlement of the Southwest, Florida and Louisiana

Parts of what came to be called the United States were opened up to settlement by Spanish explorers in the sixteenth century. Ponce de León was governor of San Juan Bautista (later named Puerto Rico) when in 1513 he landed in "la Pascua florida" (later called Florida) in the quest of which many are still involved

today—the search for perpetual youth and immortality. In 1565 Spaniards founded the first city in North America at St. Augustine, Florida, which later became an important military garrison. Similarly, sorties by Cabeza de Vaca in 1527 from Louisiana through the Southwest, and of Coronado in 1540, also through the Southwest, fired the imagination of potential explorers and settlers of New Spain (the Southwest of the United States). The first city here was established at Santa Fe at the end of the seventeenth century, well before the founding of the settlements in the northwest by pilgrims from Britain.

It is evident from the historical events depicted that early Hispanic populations were not migrants in the sense of their twentieth-century counterparts, that is economic or political refugees. Instead, they were pioneers, explorers, itinerant merchants, soldiers and missionaries who came to explore these regions, to construct homes, to wrest the land away from the aboriginal inhabitants, to establish businesses and permanent settlements and to Christianize the natives. They were the Hispanic colonial settlers of Cuba, Puerto Rico and of Florida, Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. The descendants of these colonial peoples in the continental United States came to be called Tejanos, Hispanos (Manitos) and Californios. Missionary activity in the latter mentioned territories did much to establish the basis of city and town life in Santa Fe in the seventeenth century and San Antonio, Albuquerque, Tucson, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego and El Paso in the eighteenth century. In these and other towns and villages they pacified, subjugated, Christianized and congregated Indians who were then used as laborers in mines, farms and cattle ranches, and were made to produce crafts and materials to be shipped south to Spanish commercial centers in what is present day Mexico.

In 1762 France had secretly ceded the Louisiana Territory to Spain, received it back in 1800, and in 1803 sold it to the United States. The French character of parts of the state of Louisiana is more prominent today than its Hispanic spirit. In 1819 the United States purchased and annexed Florida, but, contrary to the case cited above, Florida maintained its Spanish legacy in architecture and popular myth, although not much is heard about descendants of its colonial populations. It is important from an Hispanic point of view today for its large Cuban community, which is a relatively recent phenomenon.

## Mexico and Creation of the Southwest

Texas and New Mexico were colonized in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries by the establishment of missions, presidios, towns and ranches along the present United States border with Mexico. There were extensions of Spanish settlement from Durango and San Luis Potosi northward to the Southwestern settlements. By the next century, there were settlements established in Arizona and California. At the time of Mexican independence from Spain in 1821, there were four principal areas of settlement in the southwest United States: the northern Rio Grande in New Mexico, scattered towns and ranches along the California coast from Los Angeles to San Francisco, small settlements in the lower Rio Grande River and in San Antonio and Tucson. The economy focussed mainly on agriculture and livestock. A class-caste like system had developed with government officials, land owners, priests and military officers at the top of the system, and lower down were the soldier-settlers, with the mixed-breed Indians and Indians at the bottom of the class heap. Independence from Spain diminished Mexico's centralist holds on its northern frontier settlements, which quickly developed economic and other links to the United States, primarily through the overland trade along the Santa Fe Trail between New Mexico and St. Louis.

## The Cuban and Puerto Rican Hispanic Legacy

Cuba and Puerto Rico had been ruled by Spain from the early 1500s to 1898. The patterns for both Cuba and Puerto Rico were similar during this period. In its earliest years, Cuba was a supply port and communications center for colonizers bound for other places in Latin America. The Indian population dropped quickly from a high of near 200,000 to 3,000 at the time of the first expedition to Mexico in 1519. The native population could not cope with the new diseases and social and work conditions introduced by the Spaniards. After this the island's population grew very slowly. Although sugar and slavery were introduced as early as 1517 they were not economically important until the latter half of the nineteenth century. Tobacco, beef and hides became important products in the 1700s. After the American Revolution, sugar became an important export to the United States and the introduction of steam powered mills in 1819 led to the expansion of the sugar and, later, the coffee industries.

The growth of sugar and coffee production precipitated an increase of the use of slaves until emancipation was declared in 1880, but not before 1,000,000 slaves had been brought to Cuba. An 1846 census showed over one-half million whites, one-quarter million blacks and mulattos and 660,000 slaves (Boswell and Curtis 1984, 14). A booming economy followed independence and almost 850,000 European and American people migrated to the island so that the

1953 census vouched that 73 percent of the population was white and 27 percent either black or mulatto. The latter part of the nineteenth century witnessed several attempts by Cubans to gain independence from a Spain which controlled the economy, forbade the cultivation of certain crops, regulated prices and monopolized trade and commerce. The most prominent of the rebel leaders was José Martí, who eventually, after exile to Spain and life in the United States mounted a military attempt to win independence. By this time the Cuban economy was ragged, with sugar prices at low levels, the cheap labor available through slavery abolished, with tobacco and coffee in low production and unemployment at high levels.

The almost 400-year history of rule and dominance by Spain left its imprint on Cuban culture. Spanish language, the Catholic religion, a plantation, monocrop economy, Spanish social structure and other institutions were well ensconced in Cuba by the beginning of the twentieth century. Spanish law created a centralized government and trade and commerce were in the hands of a few upper-class persons. Sugar and tobacco were the major crops for export to Spain. The social system was stratified, with a few rich families in control of polity and economy, and a large mass of poor people working the land and reaping little for themselves. Family patterns which emphasized the importance of male dominance, female virginity and submission, of aristocratic family names and submission to paternal figures were part of this legacy from Spain.

## The American Historical Legacy

The political economy of Latinos in the United States is related to the history of political and economic relations between this country and the country of origin of its Hispanic migrants. Economic relationships over the past century and a half have created changes in their native lands and affected the migrations and lives of these people. The ups and downs of the American economy and its political vicissitudes are clearly related to the attraction of this country for the migration of workers, the kind of work they will do and the lack of employment in their own countries. Although Latino groups have experienced generally similar patterns there are differences among them partially related to the region of the country settled in, the economy of that region and the characteristics of the original populations before they emigrated.

The rapid economic and territorial expansion of the United States in the nineteenth century affected the countries of origin of the majority of the Latinos who came to live here—Mexico, Cuba and Puerto Rico. Towards the end of the century, each country came under its hegemony through direct conquest. Mexico lost one-third of its land by incorporation into the United States, Puerto Rico and Cuba were lost to Spain, with Cuba regaining autonomy and Puerto Rico achieving commonwealth status. The economic activity of the United States during the early part of the current century brought each of these countries further into its aegis.

### The American Historical Legacy for Mexicans

The earliest Americans had penetrated the mountains north of New Mexico in the early part of the nineteenth century and illicit trade and trapping occurred until the opening of the Santa Fe Trail in 1821. Following the establishment of links with the United States, many Anglo-Americans arrived—trappers and merchants, mountain men, other vagrants, and later mostly bankers, lawyers, businessmen and government officials. All of these intruders had interests in resources such as trade, furs, or in land. These early Americans intermarried with Hispanic women and in this way attained some land grants. At this time, three-fourths of all Hispanic colonials lived in New Mexico. The intruders found a population which had developed in relative isolation on the far northern frontier of the Spanish and Mexican government and society.

In the 1830s American settlers were granted permission to live in Texas by the Mexican government and they became citizens, soon outnumbering the Tejanos 25,000 to 5,000. These Americans, mostly from the southern part of the United States, came with their prejudices and racism in place, took control of much of the available land and revolted in 1835 after offers to purchase Texas by the United States were rejected. Texas was annexed in 1845 after it had declared its independence, an act which angered the Mexicans. War broke out between Mexico and the United States in 1846, and this led to the invasion of Mexico and the capture of Mexico City in 1847.

Initial conquest of the Southwest in 1848 occurred with little bloodshed, but outbreaks occurred afterwards in California and New Mexico. The resulting Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that year ceded one-third of Mexico's territory to the United States. It gave a choice of citizenship to the residents of the area. The Mesilla Valley had been excluded, but it and an area extending westward was needed for a southern railway route, and, therefore, was purchased under the Gadsden Treaty of 1853 for ten million dollars. This vast region was eventually divided into the present states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming.

When the current boundary between Mexico and the United States was finalized in the 1850s, there

were some 80,000 persons of Mexican citizenry who chose to remain in the United States. After this the colonial Hispanic population became a maligned minority, objects of discrimination, land confiscation and a people with second-class citizenship. The migration of Mexicans for the remainder of the nineteenth century was modest, but it became increasingly larger during the twentieth century. It has always been tied to the periodic economic needs of Mexican workers in Mexico and opportunities in the United States. For example, the California gold rush in the 1850s attracted thousands of miners from Sonora, with many remaining after the gold rush. Also, economic booms in cattle, sheep, cotton and vegetables in Texas during the last third of the nineteenth century increased migration from Mexico.

Arizona remained predominantly Mexican American until the late 1870s. Tucson served as a supply center for the Army and as a trading center and conduit between the east and west coasts. New Mexico continued to have an ethnic plurality throughout the nineteenth century. Large numbers of Anglos were not attracted at the beginning because of the lack of economic opportunities. After 1870 Anglo ranchers moved into "Little Texas" in the southeast part of the State. Southern California also continued to have a plurality of Hispanics for a long period representing an exception to the northern part of the state which was inundated with Americans, Chinese and others who were attracted by the Gold Rush of the 1850s. Where they were in the plurality, Hispanics continued to wield some political power, such as in southern California and New Mexico. In Texas they had little political power because Mexican Americans were in the minority. Anglo political bosses had economic power and poll taxes were imposed to restrict access to elective offices. The control over police and legal institutions perpetuated this powerlessness, which was further hampered by language barriers and lack of understanding of the new social and political institutions. Early Californios, as in the case of Texas and New Mexico participated in politics and elections, but later were outnumbered and lost power. Inequitable laws were passed which placed them at a disadvantage economically and socially.

In Arizona Anglos convinced Congress to separate it from New Mexico in 1862 and they dominated politics and economy after that. Arizona became a state before New Mexico in 1912, and one of the arguments made to keep New Mexico as a territory, and which had kept both states waiting, was the high "Mexican" population, which was considered not capable of citizenship. New Mexico was different because of its ethnic plurality, political bossism (patrones), and the holding of politically important offices by members of the colonial population. The 35-member Hispano block among the 100 delegates to the first constitutional convention in 1910 brought many rights and privileges to the native population in the form of the prohibition of segregated schools, bilingual teacher education, the reaffirmation of the rights granted under provisions of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and making Spanish and English official languages required in all public documents.

There were many changes which occurred in the late nineteenth century. Whatever power was garnered by the post-American conquest by the colonial populations was soon diminished as a result of the loss of their lands as an economic base. Many people were cheated out of their lands in Texas, California and New Mexico because they lacked understanding of new laws and institutions, language problems, lack of education, legal manipulations and outright cheating, lying and stealing by the Anglo migrants. The once land based population became migrant laborers, working at low paying wage labor, with the economy characterized by women as domestics, debt peonage as a form of economic enslavement and traditional towns being converted into barrios when they were overrun by urban settlements. Segregated barrios and colonias developed and survived through a combination of choice by its residents because of cultural attachments and by force of law and segregational forces. Within areas in which the Mexican origin population predominated customs persisted—bullfights, rodeos, horse races, fiestas, Mexican Independence Day (September 16), Cinco de Mayo (May 5), and the Church remained the center of religious life.

Catholicism in the Hispanic regions which were to become American territory had been well tended by Jesuits, Franciscans and other orders of the Church. After the American Conquest, the void left by the loss of priests in the Southwest was filled by Irish, French, German and American priests. They did not understand the folk Catholicism and language of the people. The parishes were poor and there were few parochial schools. The new priests had prejudicial attitudes towards the colonial frontier population. This discrimination and neglect of the population by the Church continued for many years and in a way opened the way for Protestant competition.

The building of the railroad in northern Mexico in the 1880s provided an easy means of transportation. At the same time, economic pressures on the small landowners caused them to lose their lands to large haciendas, with farm workers trapped into peonage relations with their employers through credit servitude. One of the consequences of this situation was a large scale migration to cities within Mexico. The development of mining and agriculture in northern Mexico in

the early part of the twentieth century set the stage for future migrations by commencing the build up of population on the northern border.

## Mexican Migration History

The first wave of Mexican migrants was out of the rural areas into the larger cities in Mexico and the United States. They were mostly male, young, single migrants. Many were circular migrants at first, moving back and forth seasonally between the home village and place of work. The revolution after 1910 against Porfirio Diaz caused a great social upheaval and many political refugees migrated to the United States where they found jobs with higher paying wages. This pattern continued into the 1920s with the pressures of the Cristero Revolution (1926-29) and with continued pull factors in the American Southwest. One-half million Mexicans entered the United States in the 1920s with permanent visas. The first migrants were from the poorest, rural areas in the central plateau region. Those who came to the United States went mostly to the Southwest, but also elsewhere in the United States.

The strict immigration rules and regulations of 1921 and 1924 did not apply to the Western hemisphere, but opposition to Mexican immigration slowly grew. The Border Patrol was established in 1924, an act which was to herald a period of repression and difficulty for those trying to cross the border. In 1928 the literacy test as a requirement for immigrant status in the United States began to be applied with rigor. This and the onset of the Great Depression led to a lessened migration of Mexicans in the 1930s, and many Mexicans left the United States. The perception that Mexicans were surplus labor, competing for jobs with Americans and a dredge on welfare funds, led to the Repatriation Program in which one-half million persons were sent back to Mexico, among whom were American citizens who were the spouses and children of the deported workers.

The Mexican American experience between 1900 and 1940 included mostly migratory agricultural labor, with an increase in urbanization in some regions characterized by overcrowded barrios, cheap housing and the creation of isolated pockets of Mexican communities where they had been employed in the construction of railroads, or along migrant agricultural streams. This is sometimes referred to as "fallout" migration. The predominant settlement pattern in the early years of this century, however, was in small rural towns near large agricultural farms where seasonal work was readily available. The creation of these population enclaves led to other activities—development of sociedades mutualistas (mutual aid societies), many for different self-help functions, such as burial services, to act as social clubs, to promote voting rights, for cultural purposes, for legal defense, to create educational opportunities or to fight discrimination in educational and other institutions. LULAC and GI Forum were the most well known. The chapter in this volume by Vigil discusses this topic at length.

## The American Historical Legacy in Cuba

The final stage of territorial expansion by the United States came with the termination of the Spanish American War of 1898. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Cuban people had begun to rebel against Spanish dominion. When the revolution was well on its way and it appeared that the rebels were succeeding, the United States anchored the battleship Maine in the Havana harbor, presumably to protect American citizens. The Maine was mysteriously blown up, killing 260 sailors; the explosion turned out later to have been caused by an on-board accident. Spain was blamed for the disaster; the United States declared war and, after a combat that lasted four months, both countries signed an armistice by which Spain ceded the colonies of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, Hawaii and the Philippines to the United States. The Cuban rebel forces were not invited to the signing of the treaty and were not included in the negotiations, a fact which has been resented by the Cuban people and government ever since. Cuba was granted independence in 1902, but was occupied and administered by the U. S. government from 1898 to 1902.

Conditions did not improve for the Cuban people as a whole after the revolution and independence from Spain. The pattern continued of economic and political domination by another country—this time the United States. Technology, know-how and the presence of many Americans on the island were attributes of this domination. Under American influence the Cuban economy grew. American capital was used to construct new sugar mills and plantations, and by the 1950s 80 percent of Cuba's total exports went to the United States. Americans owned most of Cuba's electrical industry, railroads, the telephone company and much of the tobacco and mining industries. Between 1933 and 1959, Cuba was under the influence of Fulgencio Batista and many claimed that he was a puppet dictator imposed or allowed by the United States because he was good for American business. But before Batista, there had been a series of leaders who had arrived poor and left rich, a symptom of the corruption which pervaded the society before 1959.

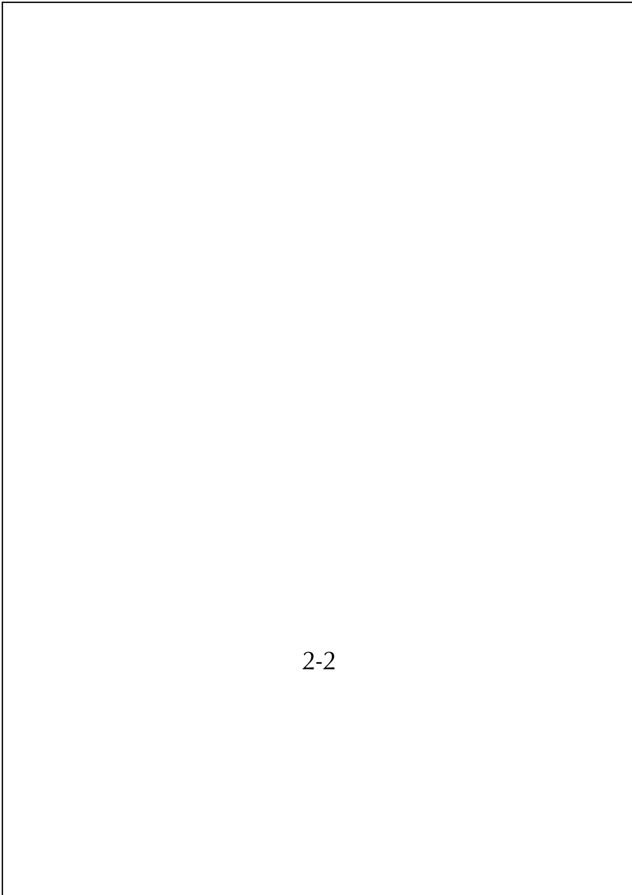
Although Cuba compared favorably with other third world countries, in 1950 the distribution of this wealth

was skewed towards the upper and middle classes. Health conditions were good for the upper classes in Havana, but the rural region was populated by poorly nourished people. Havana witnessed gambling, the "high life," prostitution and tourism. High profits were made by the upper classes and by foreigners, mostly Americans. The poorest 40 percent of the population received 6.2 percent, with the wealthiest 20 percent receiving 60 percent of the income. One-fourth of the population was illiterate, 30 percent were unemployed, employment was seasonal and there were great disparities between city and country, with the best health facilities and services and highest standards of living prevailing in the city (Boswell and Curtis 1984, 19).

## The American Legacy for Mexicans in the Twentieth Century

It could be said that although the American legacy began its impact on the Mexican-Spaniard who had been living in the Southwest in the eighteenth century, it was affecting a very small population. The American legacy for Mexicans becomes more apparent in the first part of this century when Mexicans begin a more deliberate migration to the north to seek employment and to avoid the poor conditions found in Mexico. The first 30 years of the present century saw a continued expansion of the economic base of the Southwest in agriculture, mining, food processing, packing, shipping, textile manufacturing and chemical production. The passage of the Reclamation Act of 1902 authorized the federally funded construction of large dams and reservoirs and led to labor intensive irrigated farming. The railroads, mining and oil industry expanded, also encouraging the migration of laborers from Mexico. A growth concomitant to these economic expansions occurred in the migration of Mexicans until the 1930s, with about 700,000 migrating legally. World War I also brought many Mexicans willing to help with the shortage of labor in the Midwest and North. During the first 30 years of the twentieth century most migrants went to the Southwest, with an eventual distribution of 40 percent to Texas and 30 percent to California by the 1940s.

Most of these migrants went into occupations which were unskilled or semi-skilled, mostly in agriculture, with 35 percent of the men and 20 percent of the women working as farm laborers in 1930, but they also worked in other occupations. Women's participation in the labor force was minimal at first, but increased with the arrival of families, instead of the single unmarried men who were the first migrants. In later years a small middle class developed in the barrios or colonias because of the need to serve the Chicano population. Small businesses sold dry goods and groceries and provided services in restaurants, bars, barbershops, tailor shops, funeral businesses and small construction firms.




**One of the Día de los Muertos dances celebrating the dead. Men and women cross-dress for this dance. (Photo by Thomas B. Weaver.)**

However, the Mexican American community remained an isolated society which was restricted as far as growth and integration into the broader social system were concerned. This isolation, the type of employment and the settlement and residential patterns all dictated that the education of children and future leaders would be negatively effected. Harvesting seasons and the use of children in the fields as supplemental labor precluded their full education. Various forms of segregation were encountered: the separation of schools, restrictive covenants on property, segregated restaurants, barbershops, theaters and swimming pools. Mexican laborers worked at lower wages than Mexican Americans and were used as strike breakers by employers. For this reason and for reasons deriving from local prejudices, Mexican Americans were not allowed to join unions. However, they did become labor strikers and members of unions in the copper

mines of Arizona and in the strawberry fields of California. Chicanos later also created their own unions, with as many as 40 units in the agricultural field at one time in California.

The development of industrial agriculture, the building of dams in the west, of railroads and of a national system of highways all contributed to the demand for labor. Also capital investments, loans, trading relationships and new commercial enterprises continued the pattern of dependence and interdependence which characterize relations between the Latin American countries and this one. During all this time, the emigration from the three main sources was but a trickle compared to what it would become during World War I and after World War II. The World War I period witnessed the arrival of the first real wave of migration. Economic conditions in Puerto Rico and political and economic factors in Mexico acted as push factors, while the economic activity which accompanied the war effort drew laborers to the United States. Most of these were single males who worked in agriculture.

## The Great Depression

Mexicans and Mexican Americans suffered the effects of being ethnics at the bottom of the social and economic rung during the Great Depression. The widespread unemployment, the closing of many businesses, the midwestern “Dust Bowl” drought, the migration of farmers and laborers to California, all had a domino effect on the well being, employment and stability of the Chicano population. About 1/2 million Mexicans were deported or voluntarily left during the Repatriation of the 1930s. They were viewed as competing for jobs with “real Americans” and as a drain on public support funds. Everywhere they were almost completely replaced as farm laborers by dust bowl workers, except in Texas, but even there the Mexican-born population declined by almost 40 percent. Eight thousand small farm holders lost their properties in New Mexico. This economic strife was reflected in heightened prejudice, discrimination by Anglos and public institutions alike, with repression being reflected by law enforcement agencies, especially the feared Texas Rangers. One joke which is circulated among Mexican Americans and sympathetic Texans is: “Did you know that every Texas Ranger has Mexican blood?” After a momentary pause to get a reaction from the listener, the joke teller says “on his boots.” The joke alludes to two important factors in Mexican American-Texan relations: the fear by the Texan of genetic contamination from a supposed inferior “blood line” and a reference to the sometimes brutal repression and strike-breaking activities of the Texas Rangers.

## The Second World War

In bad times Mexican workers were deported and in good times they were invited back to work. The pattern continued during and after the second World War. The coming of World War II precipitated the movement of Mexican workers to the United States again because of a labor shortage caused by increased industrialization and the loss of workers to the draft and the military forces. They not only came as workers, but 350,000 Mexicans and Mexican Americans served in the Armed Forces, many with distinguished records. Seventeen medals of honor were awarded to Mexican Americans, and many report with glee that 5 of the 14 medals awarded to Texans went to TexMex soldiers. After the second World War, the expansion of industrial work opportunities provided new job experiences comparable to those acquired in the Armed Forces. Tension and discrimination, as well as conflict with soldiers and the legal institutions were especially prevalent during the early 1940s. The so-called Zoot Suit Wars are remembered by Mexican Americans because open war was declared on them, especially those who wore the long draped coats and pegged pants which characterized them in Los Angeles and elsewhere. Instead of protecting those being beaten, the police stood aside, and arrested the victims after the fight was over.

Despite some of these negative events, World War II proved to be a watershed for the Mexican American. Positions of high rank held in the Armed Forces, high paying and important jobs held in industry, worldwide travel which exposed them to different, usually more open, social relations with greater equality, the benefits of the GI Bill of Rights which allowed for continued education and loans for small business starts, all raised the self esteem of the Mexican American and pushed them into greater participation in American Society. The GI Forum, one of the outgrowths of the second World War, and other voluntary associations were formed to help defend the Mexican American’s rights to better education, housing, desegregated facilities and businesses, for equal participation in politics and daily life, and things would not be the same again. Renewed activism occurred in labor organizations and these were reflected in changed occupational participation.

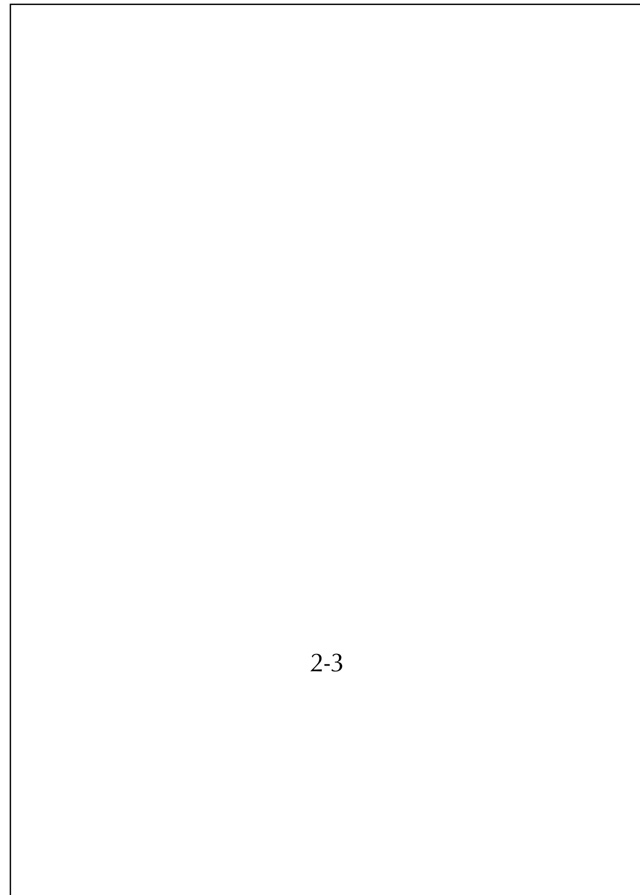
## From Post War Years to Present

From the second World War through the early 1960s another boom period occurred, and workers were eagerly sought, recruited and welcomed. The Bracero Program was commenced in 1942 as a result of an agreement between the two countries, with

200,000 workers recruited to work in 21 states, particularly welcomed annually to its harvest fields. The program was restarted in 1951 because of the Korean War and continued until 1964, peaking in 1959 when 400,000 workers were recruited under this program, accounting for 26 percent of all agricultural workers in 1960. But when the economy cooled after this period and almost slowed to a stop after that until the present time, migration has been discouraged. The problem of undocumented workers, however, continues to create problems for American unions, liberals, and humanitarians alike.

What economists call the "Great U-Turn," and described by Hinojosa-Ojeda in his essay, refers to the 60% rise in earnings from 1947 to 1973 followed by a reversal from 1973 to 1987 which saw an income decline of 15%. This was accompanied by a dampening of the economy with a reduction in the production growth of the postwar period of from 2.4 percent annually to 0.8 percent in 1973. This event reflected more strongly on Latino groups than on others, particularly in widening the income gap between White and Latino males and between White and Latino females. It was a period which has been called the feminization of labor, or the feminization of poverty, because women began to work more than they had in previous periods and to replace men in many activities in the labor market, and also because the bad economic times began to show in the impoverishment of women and children, particularly ethnic and minority women and children. This fall in wages occurred while the percentage of the labor force for Latinos was actually increasing. During this period of a down turn in the economy there were periodic roundups of undocumented workers by the Border Patrol, leading to Operation Wetback when more than 3.8 million were expelled, possibly some more than once. Civil rights violations occurred.

The picture of the economic status of Latinos provided by Hinojosa-Ojeda can be attributed to factors which are described by him, Chavez, Chavira, Arvisu, and Vigil and Long in this volume. The problem lies in the diminishing returns from the educational system for Latinos. Fewer Latinos finish high school and go on to college than practically any other group in this country. In an economic system which demands higher levels of education and training as time passes, this is a fact which does not bode well for the future and is reflected in income inequality among ethnic and gender groups. A clear decline in economic participation and income equality has occurred among Latino groups. That is to say, Latino workers compared to White workers have demonstrated a downward mobility in types of jobs held and with lower salaries in recent times. The recent migration of Cubans and Mexicans with poorer educational and skill levels has been a factor in this statistical position, but poorer education and discrimination continue to take there toll.




**A woman dances with "La Muerte," one of the characters symbolizing death at the celebration of El Día de los Muertos. (Photo by Thomas B. Weaver.)**

## The Latin American National Legacy

During the 1820s and 1830s, the Spanish colonies in Central and South America became independent nations. The northern portion which was the viceroyalty of New Spain now became part of the new country of Mexico when it received its independence in 1821. In the next few years, Central American countries separated from Mexico. Each of the Latin American contributors of migrants to the United States provides its people with a special legacy. This is most clearly demonstrated in the chapter in this volume by the Suarezes, who discuss the special problems of adaptation of Guatemalans to this country, the guilt of leaving their relatives behind in dangerous situations, while they are studying or working in this country. This national legacy overlies the Hispanic legacy at the time the migrant comes to the

United States. And what happens after that depends upon the different migration histories and relationships developed within the United States in terms of regional economy and culture. Puerto Ricans, for example, are citizens of the United States because Puerto Rico has commonwealth status. This means that they can come and go between mainland and island as they please. Over the years this migratory pattern has produced a residual, or permanent Puerto Rican population of several million in a major urban area in this country.

Cubans were political refugees in the beginning of this century, but only a few thousand actually migrated to this country, mostly as merchants and cigar manufacturers to the Tampa area in Florida. It was not until the Communist Castro revolution in the 1950s that there were large numbers of migrants, all political, from that country. Because of their special status, and due to the Cold War which existed between this country and the Communist sphere, Cuban migrants received a treatment which is unparalleled in migration history in the United States. They were given transportation, educational, refugee and other services in assisting their emigration. Dominicans and other Central Americans have been economic and political refugees, and, with their closeness to Puerto Rico, have had easy access to regions of the eastern seaboard. Like Mexicans, they have been largely undocumented workers, coming to this country for economic reasons. Mexicans have a longer migration history than the other Latinos partially due to the physical proximity of their country, but also because of the disparity in income and standard of living between Mexico and the United States.

## Emigrants from the Caribbean

The peoples of the Caribbean speak Spanish, English, French and a creolized variation of these languages. Only the Spanish-speaking migrants are of interest to this discourse—the people who come from Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Up until 1970 only about one million migrants had come to the United States from the Caribbean. Since then there have been about 6 million according to some estimates. Most of these arrived under the provisions of the immigration act which allowed the relatives of migrants to enter the United States, and after 1965 which permitted migration only if there were insufficient workers of a particular occupation in the place where the migrant expected to move.

## Socialist Cuba

With the advent of the Castro-led socialist revolution in 1959 a great change occurred. Those persons who were highly educated and who occupied high positions in the social, political and economic system left for the United States. Plantations and other lands were confiscated and distributed to the poor or made into state operated farms. Rental properties were turned over to renters. Foreign property was also confiscated. Disagreement occurred with the United States, embargoes were placed on imports and exports, a central planning socialist system was created and Cuba moved into the Russian orbit of trade and influence. Although Russia subsidized Cuban sugar and other economic enterprises, and became its major trading partner, Cuban leaders claimed that there was little other influence and no Russian ownership of Cuban businesses.

Conditions have not always been best for all groups under socialist rule. But most Cubans, especially the lower classes, have enjoyed relatively higher economic standards. In contrast to what prevailed before Castro, the poorest 40 percent of the population now controlled 20 percent of the total income compared to six percent in 1953, and the wealthiest 20 percent of the population received 35 percent of the income in 1973 compared to 60 percent in 1953 (Boswell and Curtis 1984, 23). Rents have been lowered, home ownership is higher, the disparity between the rural and urban areas has lessened, unemployment has been reduced, social services are more readily available and subsidized. In the wake of the second Russian revolution in 1990, with its power and support for its satellites disappearing, it will be interesting to see what happens to socialist Cuba.

There have been other changes in socialist Cuba, but this is not the place to review them. The interest has been in Spanish, not socialist, Cuba, because the assessment of changes and adaptations made by Cuban Americans in the United States are made in comparison to a baseline which is mostly Spanish and American. It was the Spaniards who introduced an agrarian economy and class distinctions. It was the Americans who created a dependent capitalist economy which nurtured the social system which spawned the first Cuban migrants to the United States in the early 1960s. And these have been the two primary legacies of Cuban Americans until recent times.

# Cuban Migrations

The first post-Castro Cubans represent one of the most unusual migrations in the history of the United States. Cubans, at least in the first decade of their entry, were welcomed as refugees from an oppressive government and provided with aid programs to resettle, adapt and educate themselves. Additionally, unlike

other Hispanic migrants they were experienced in business and industry, were of higher class, independent, had high socioeconomic goals and were competitive. They aggressively sought to learn English and other new skills and this attitude has been reflected in their remarkable adaptational and economic success. They have had a tremendous influence on the local society where they have settled, infusing Hispanic culture, creating economic opportunities for themselves and others, and providing a different picture of Hispanics than has been provided by others.

## Migration History

Why Cubans have migrated to the United States in preference to some other Spanish-speaking country with an Hispanic culture in place is a good question. One reason for this preferred migration has been the close physical proximity of the United States, perhaps as little as 90 miles. But the primary reason, at least for the migration that occurred after the Castro revolution, is the close class and economic ties between Cuban business and upper class persons with people of the same category in the United States. Thirdly, this country dominated the economy, technology and cultural influence of the capitalist class in Cuba for over a century before Castro as explained earlier.

In the years before 1959, Cubans had represented only a trickle of immigrants to the U. S. The 1950 U. S. Census listed only about 34,000 Cubans in the United States, a relatively meager number which increased to about 40,000 in 1958. Some had been political refugees from the strife caused by attempts to gain independence from Spain before the turn of this century. Others had been economic opportunists such as the cigar manufacturers who established this industry in Key West, Tampa and New York in the prior century. Still others had come to join their families. This pattern changed drastically after the overthrow of the Batista government by Fidel Castro and the establishment of a socialist regime. From 1959 to 1980, almost 700,000 Cubans migrated to the United States.

In this time span, Cuban migrants arrived in several waves. The first stage lasted from January, 1959, to October, 1962, and included about 155,000 emigres, but some estimates go as high as 215,000. Commercial flights were used as the primary means of exiting Cuba. The end of this stage came in 1962 when commercial flights were suspended between the two countries as a result of the missile crisis. The second stage of Cuban migration lasted from 1962 to 1965, and was marked by a diminished migration of about 30,000, but included some political prisoners and their families. The third stage between December, 1965, and June, 1973, began when Castro proclaimed that henceforth all persons with relatives and, later, all those wishing to go to the United States would be allowed to depart. Some 285,000 Cubans took advantage of this opportunity. In 1974 and 1975, the attorney general permitted another 20,000 Cuban exiles living in Spain to enter the United States during a liberalization of immigration requirements.

The early arrivals included so-called batistianos, persons from the upper and middle class affected by the revolution, and a little later upper-level managers and employees of large national and international businesses, all of whom acquired visas easily. They were generally people of light skin color and good education (Dominguez 1975, 21-24). Later migrants have equalized the demographic profile of Cuban Americans because they have come from the lower working classes, representing skilled and unskilled workers, persons with lesser education, Blacks and the elderly.

The more recent migration from Cuba—the so called Marielitos who came after 1980, have continued this equalization. The Marielitos numbered about 125,000, 26,000 of whom had criminal records, many for petty or political crimes, and about 5 percent of whom were hard core criminals, persons with mental illness, homosexuals, prostitutes and elderly and disabled persons. It appeared that Castro had used the Marielito emigrated to rid Cuba of unwanted and burdensome persons. Disturbances at various refugee camps where the Marielitos were temporarily held prior to relocation, and a series of violent crimes in New York and Miami called attention to this attribute of the most recent Cuban migrants.

This last migration came at a time of American recession and high unemployment. The result was that, unlike the prior events of population influx which elicited sympathy and assistance from Americans, this one caused antipathy and prejudice. The American press sensationalized the most violent of these cases, and feelings of discrimination and prejudice were projected on to the general Cuban American population. This situation was not as conducive to good adaptation as prior conditions. Additionally, other problems of adjustment were caused because the Marielitos overrepresented males (70 percent), blacks (20 percent), and a greater proportion were single and unemployed than those of prior migrations.

The exodus from Cuba has been characterized as being political, consisting of persons leaving an oppressive environment. Interviews with the migrants indicate that 20 percent left because they feared imprisonment. Another 20 percent indicated that harassment and persecution for not supporting the Castro government was a reason for their migration. Thirty seven percent disagreed with government activities or communism,

only six percent left because of a loss of employment or possessions, and the remainder for other reasons (Boswell and Curtis 1984, 43).

## Culture and Community

Because of their need for assistance from fellow Latinos, the fact that few spoke English, and the need to be near relatives, enclaved Hispanic communities were created by migrants all over the United States. This meant living in segregated residential communities, working in mostly skilled and unskilled jobs and depending upon families and relatives for financial and emotional support. In the discussion which follows, we highlight only the Cuban experience because of a lack of space. Many of the characteristics of the Mexican American community have been described elsewhere in this essay and in many of the essays in this volume, especially by Vigil and Long.

### The Cuban Community

The Cuban American experience did not repeat completely the ethnic ordeal or discriminatory exclusion from employment, education and housing suffered by other ethnic and Hispanic groups in their migratory history. Cubans, more than many other American ethnic groups, tend to segregate from non-Cuban populations. Studies in Dade County, Florida, for example have shown that Cubans are isolated from other Latinos (Mexicans and Puerto Ricans), Blacks, Jews and non-Latin whites. In fact, many refer to "white flight" to describe the movement of whites from places where Cubans settle, but this movement to outlying and suburban areas is a situation which had started before the arrival of Cubans (Boswell and Curtis 1984, 68).

Cuban culture is probably better preserved in American Cuban communities than in Cuba itself because of the broad scale changes which have occurred there in consonance with the socialist revolt. A rich entertainment life highlights popular music, dancing, classical music and festivals honoring special religious or national days. Miami has even been able to commercialize this by highlighting a section of town known as "Little Havana." Restaurants feature Cuban foods groceries stock traditional foods, and small industries support other necessities of the Cuban life. Artists exhibit in Miami galleries. Original plays and musical productions in Spanish are directed and played by Cubans. Artists and actors, comedians such as Desi Arnaz who was the directing force behind the successful television show "I Love Lucy," and others have kept Cuban artistic skills before the American public for many years. Musicians such as Xavier Cugat, Arnaz, Perez Prado, to mention only the most prominent, have introduced new music and dance to the United States. Some of these have included the rumba in the 1930s, the mamba of the 1940s, the chachacha of the 1950s. The last named is probably most easily remembered in the tunes by Perez Prado called "Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White" and "Patricia." Cubans have been prominent in sports, particularly baseball, but also in other sports.

Miami and Florida have also been changed because of the strong Cuban economy. Almost one-third of the businesses and 40 percent of the industry are Cuban owned and 75 percent of the work force in construction is Cuban. In 1980 there were 18,000 Cuban owned businesses, and 25,000 Cuban garment workers, 3,500 doctors, 500 lawyers, 60 car dealerships, 500 supermarkets and 250 drugstores—all Cuban. This is only part of the picture. The Cuban community earns an aggregate income of over 2.5 million dollars. Also 20 percent of the Miami banks are controlled by Cubans, with 16 of 62 bank presidents and 250 vice-presidents (Bean and Tienda 1987, 32). Any store one visits in the region is staffed by Spanish-speaking Cubans. There are more Hispanic owned businesses in the Miami standard metropolitan area than any other in the United States, except for the Los Angeles-Long Beach standard metropolitan statistical area (SMSA) (Boswell and Curtis 1984, 86-87). No small part of this success is attributable to ethnic preference in hiring and a felt obligation to help fellow Cubans. That they have had an enormous economic, political, social and cultural impact on the communities where they have settled is evident. Cubans have made remarkable adjustments to living in the United States and shown rapid upward socioeconomic mobility.

Miami's economic structure has been radically changed by the presence of Cuban Americans. Because of the Hispanic culture and predominance of a Spanish-speaking population, and its Cuban dominated and owned businesses, Miami has become a prominent center for banking, commerce and trade for Latin America. In this role it has become the headquarters for a large number of multinational corporations who do business in Latin America. As much as one-third of all economic trade, amounting to almost five million dollars with Latin America, originated in this area in 1978, and this proportion has continued to increase in recent years. There are nine Latin Chambers of Commerce to assist in this business.

### Little Havana (Miami)

Cuban Americans are indeed a very unusual American ethnic group. They are most unusual in their creation in Miami of what has been called "Little Havana,"

"Havana North," or the "Cuban Capital of America," a region which forms part of the large urban Cuban population in Dade County, Florida. Estimates are that there are over 700 or 800 thousand today. Most of the recent migrants have either settled in or returned to the Miami area after being settled elsewhere by the Refugee program. Everything has been affected by the Cuban presence—business, schools, housing, the international economy, politics and, above all, culture.

The settlement of the metropolitan area has followed a pattern of ethnic development beginning with the establishment of a core community, followed by rapid expansion into outlying areas. Later, the core becomes the point of entry for subsequent migrants. For the Miami area, besides the core community, there are three other areas: a middle area characterized by better housing and more space, a contiguous area known as the fringe and a series of outlying clusters of ethnic enclaves (Jordan and Rountree 1982, 276-78). The vast majority of early migrants settled in the core community area, which came to be called Little Havana, an area measuring approximately four square miles near the central business district. This was an area which was in the process of being abandoned and housing was cheap. Other Cubans had established prior residency and newcomers could depend on relatives to help them find housing and jobs. It was close to downtown and churches, schools, markets, restaurants, and other small businesses were readily available. The core of the area is occupied by the lower, working classes and the fringe and outlying clusters by more affluent members, corresponding to social and ethnic class divisions which Gordon (1964) has labeled ethclasses. The fringe suburban communities formed in this process include Hialeah, another working class neighborhood, Sweetwater and Miami Beach. Today there are Cubans found in every census tract in the region with a half dozen having more than 50 percent Cuban population. Hialeah and Sweetwater have had Cuban mayors.

One can buy anything from a variety of Cuban businesses—prescriptions (modern and santería), herbs, traditional foods, typical shirts and other dress, services from doctors and lawyers, pharmacists and dentists, beauticians, and other services and products. However, Cuban economics and business are not the only evidence of Cuban culture present in Little Havana. There are cultural events such as fiestas, carnivals, special parks where old men play dominoes all day, parks dedicated to the memory of the fallen men of the fatal Bay of Pigs invasion, a José Martí Park, and parks dedicated to other old heroes and where past presidents are buried. The visual ambience is very Cuban, or at least very Latin American, for there are mixtures of other Hispanic cultures found in Little Havana.

The business activities of Little Havana are located along two streets, of which Calle Ocho is the most commanding, since it divides the region and is the major street along which Cuban business and culture exist in Miami. Although the architecture is not predominantly Spanish, there is enough in signs, lampposts, tile and other decorative motifs to provide a clue. Neon signs in Spanish announce "Joyería, Ferretería, Mueblería, Farmacia, Mercado, Zapatería," and other businesses and services. Many of the businesses have Cuban or other Spanish adjectives as part of their names. Maps of Cuba, posters of José Martí, announcements in Spanish, Cuban flags, pictures of patron saints are indicators of the Cuban culture which dominates. The supermarkets with their Spanish-speaking workers and the small grocery stores which dot each block are marked by signs announcing that Cuban products are available. Street vendors have fresh fish, fruits, and vegetables and poultry available. All pharmacies can ship medical supplies to Cuba; small signs indicate "Envíos de medicinas a Cuba". Health clinics are staffed by Cuban doctors. Also present are "botanicas," which sell items for ritualistic purposes in the santería cult including herbs, ointments, oils, sprays, potions and a variety of other notions required. Flower shops, bookstores, car dealerships, banks, gift shops, jewelry stores, travel agencies, movie houses with Spanish language films, not to mention restaurants and cafeterias, all line the streets surrounding la Calle Ocho. Furniture stores abound with lines of chairs along the front and loitering is welcome. Coca Cola, McDonalds and other signs and businesses, however, attest to the amalgam which Cuban American culture represents. Even so, Boswell and Curtis (1984, 91) proclaim that "it is possible for a Cuban who lives in Little Havana and speaks only Spanish to shop, dine out, be medically cared for, attend church, school, shows and theaters, die and be buried without a word of English being uttered." They could have easily added "be born, baptized, educated, married, give birth," and whatever else is necessary to fill out the life cycle in the Cuban American community.

The physical environment is not all that marks the community as Cuban. For a full appreciation of the Latin American and Cuban cultural atmosphere, we must turn to the descriptions provided by Boswell and Curtis (1984, 89, 91) taken from reports of the *Miami Herald* of 1983 describing fiestas, particularly the Miami Carnival and the Open House of Calle Ocho.

> On a sultry Sunday in early March, 1983, a 15-block stretch of S.W. Eighth Street ("Calle Ocho") . . . has been closed to vehicular traffic in preparation for la fiesta. In place of cars

and buses moves a river of humanity, flowing, bobbing, strutting, and dancing to the infectious rhythms of salsa that fill the air. Bursting onto one of the many stages where over 40 bands will perform during the day and well into the night is the famous Cuban singer, Celia Cruz. Dressed in a bright green ruffled outfit, the "queen of salsa" grasps the microphone and begins to sing in a thunderous voice: Come down, come down to Miami. Come down, come down to Miami. The audience packed around the bandstand roars its approval and instantly hands begin to clap and hips start swaying. Nearby, an old man wearing a straw hat, guayabera shirt, baggy pants, and Nike track shoes breaks into a solo rhumba. Colorfully clad comparsa dancers prance by as conga lines over 50 people long snake through the crowd that fills the narrow street from sidewalk to sidewalk. At various intervals along the mile-and-a-half route are dance troups and folkloric groups from Brazil, the Bahama Islands, Colombia, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago. On one corner the sounds of reggae blast forth as the Bahamian goobay dance group, the Sunshine Junkanoos, perform in a rainbow of papier-mache costumes. Down the street the Latin-Caribbean flavor gives way to American popular culture at the Ronald McDonald and Burger King shows. Lining the sidewalk are hundreds of exhibits and displays featuring painting and crafts, boxing and weight-lifting, cooking and karate. Most of all, there are booths offering food and drink. At one the fare is pan con lechón (pork sandwiches), black beans and rice, guarapo (sugar cane juice) and Heineken beer. At another there are hamburgers, hot dogs, Coca-Cola and Coors beer. Next to it, a Bahamian woman sells conch fritters, pigeon peas and rice, and Budweiser beer. Estimates of the size of the crowd range from 600,000 to 750,000; the latter figure is more than twice the total population of the City of Miami. One thing about the crowd, however is certain: most are Cuban-Americans. Overhead flies a helicopter pulling a sign that they can relate to. It reads, "Miami es para mí" (Miami is for me).

## African and Indigenous Legacies

Only a brief development, other than what has been said above summarily, can be made in the limited space available of the subject of the African and indigenous legacies of Latinos. Early migrants to the northern hemisphere also included the Black slaves and indentured Indian workers or soldiers and servants. Hispanic settlers intermingled genetically and culturally with the American Indian and African groups they encountered. Likewise, the indigenous and Black groups were heavily influenced, passing over into the Hispanic culture, or amalgamating Hispanic institutions and material culture into new cultural assemblages. "Mestizaje" (race mixture) has greatly interested anthropologists, historians and sociologists. Some writers and politicians use it in a racist manner to indicate the inferiority of the "impure" mixtures. The miscegenation of ethnic and national groups has been a part of all wars of conquest and even of casual commercial or other contacts between different groups. The historical study of the formation of various nations which include Spaniards, Anglo-Saxons, Germans and Americans, clearly dispels as mythology the notion of the purity of "races." Physical anthropologists and geneticists have demonstrated that the genetic purity of ethnic groups is rare, and at best insignificant in light of their greater similarities as members of a single species of one human race.

## The Ethnic Legacy

Perhaps, the most important legacy for the Latino (and for other ethnics) is the one which has the most immediate impact on life and living—the ethnic experience. The ethnic experience is one which has been developed over generations of adjustment and adaptation by family and friends. It is a separate culture shared with other ethnics of the same background, a culture which includes rules and ways of exploring, adjusting, learning the Anglo-American way under special circumstances. It constitutes separating, mixing, and compartmentalizing aspects of Hispanic and prior-national cultures within the context of Anglo-American habits and ways. The ethnic experience is a culture which is passed on in the socialization process to subsequent generations. It also separates Latinos in the United States from their relatives and friends in the country of origin. This is the legacy which comes from the establishment of ethnic enclaves and communities in the United States.

There is a need to make a distinction between the American and the ethnic legacies. The distinction is a fine one. We see the American legacy as learning all those things which make one an American in the United States. These are the non-Hispanic elements—the English language, voting behaviors, working in American institutions and other similar activities. An ethnic who assimilates, or a non-ethnic American, would

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**Thelma Jlagroo, a mother, stands before her son's prize-winning truck named "Wrapped with Envy." This family sponsored truck has won numerous low-rider contests. (Photo by Thomas B. Weaver.)**

have learned or become enculturated into the American experience. Unfortunately, this is not the usual case for Latinos. Acculturation into the American legacy is only partial, limited, or compartmentalized, with some of the other legacies remaining for many generations. The ethnic experience, on the other hand, may involve many of the same institutions and behaviors as found in the American legacy, but the participation and learning is done under special circumstances—prejudice and discrimination, domination, a state of being a minority member, with disadvantages present in the system which influence the ethnic experience.

In some regions of this country the ethnic experience includes a history of agricultural work, of being braceros, wetbacks, la Migra, border patrols, a working class experience and lower class activities such as watching boxing matches. It means visiting relatives in another country, of having a mother country which is helpless in solving economic and political problems which cause migration. It means having lower educational and occupational skills than others, of being placed in a second class position, of being inadequately bilingual in two languages, and of being forbidden to speak Spanish on the school grounds and in workplaces. It is also a culture of poverty, being there or still having relatives there, of participating in a culture of discrimination, of violence and of having a sociology of wide ranging problems with one's ethnic group at the bottom of the social scale in all measures. It means acculturation to the use and misuse of the welfare system, of being domestic servants and day laborers, or having relatives or parents who are or were there, of unemployment, or seasonal employment, substandard housing and of criminal activities, either directly or peripherally because friends and relatives are involved in all these things. This is the ethnic legacy to which Latinos are socialized in America.

The ethnic legacy is not all negative, however. Those negative elements cited above have a strong influence in dictating the quality of life of the Latino's life in the United States. Discussed in other chapters are such positive, strength engendering qualities as loyalty to friends, a strong supportive nuclear and extended family, close and loving interactions between parents and

children, well developed male and female characteristics which provide caretaking and nurturing strengths to each gender, a strong philosophy deriving from a centuries old religion, mysticism and spirituality, a great, nutritious culinary inventory, fiestas and a joy of life, the enrichment bequeathed by another cultural and linguistic tradition, and a rich literature, art, theater, music, poetry, and history. When these positive characteristics are working together, they provide a unifying and satisfactory life, even in the face of adversity.

## Conclusions: The Legacy of Racism

In this essay we have explored the topic of the legacies which the Latino experiences. There is the Hispanic legacy, on which most writers focus. But there are also Latin American national legacies, which are experiences learned in the country of origin, and the children of migrants hear about and learn something of them. African and indigenous legacies refer to part cultures which are intermixed with the national and other legacies, but which have identities of their own as parts of religious sects or curing regimens. The American historical legacy is the background information to which persons are acculturating or are learning, partially or wholly. The center piece for Latinos, and other ethnic minorities, however is the ethnic experience. One of the differences between persons of Hispanic or Latin American origin who come to this country as adults and those who have lived here or have been socialized here is that they have not learned or experienced the ethnic process. Mexicans in Mexico are not ethnics (unless they are Indians or other minorities), but when they cross the border they become ethnics. But they still have to suffer the ethnic experience, that is, live, work and think as an ethnic.

Hispanics have suffered much discrimination in the United States. They fit into the category which is favored as a target of racism—people of color who are not quite white, or better yet, dark persons who do not speak English, or do so with an accent, individuals with non-Anglo-Saxon names, recent arrivals and, generally, persons with a different way of life, or with strange looking relatives. The history of racism in the United States began with the American Indian and has coursed through religious groups such as Quakers, Mormons, the Protestant sects, Catholics and ethnic or national groups such as Scandinavians, Germans, Italians, Jews, Blacks and through all the varieties of Asians and now, Hispanics.

Whatever economic and political gains have been made by Latinos in comparison to what they had in the country of origin did not mean equality with other Americans. Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans and other Latinos are still over-represented in the lower level unskilled and semi-skilled jobs and under-represented in the upper scale employment levels such as lawyers, professors and managers. Likewise, income averages still lag far behind their American fellow citizens. This inequality is paralleled and has as its base low educational levels and achievement. Historically, Latinos have experienced educational segregation and unequal opportunity. Low expenditures, segregated schools, the poorest teachers and facilities, poor teacher-student ratios and other such factors have been part of the picture. Also, they have been under-represented as elected officials; part of the reason for this has been poor education achievement, poor turnouts at the polls, lack of registration, or disinterest. This is part of the ethnic legacy and experience.

The statistics of poor performance and the underlying poverty which powers them are but abstract discussions compared to the real experience which brings on feelings of shame, guilt, inadequacy, discrimination, unfairness, injustice, incompetence, ineptness, hesitancy, helplessness, deficiency, futility, sorrow, loneliness, of not fitting anyplace and being out of place everywhere. A great ambivalence is socialized into every ethnic child who is made to feel inadequate when faced with a foreign language and being told that they cannot speak at school the language they use at home. Experiencing a sense of not belonging in school and society is only part of not having one's home culture validated by teachers and others one wants to admire. Other feelings include shame of one's parents who do not dress as well or speak as well as others, and the guilt which comes from a deep feeling that someone should have done something about the whole mess at home before it was publicly exposed. Anger, too, is part of it—anger at the system for its injustice and lack of compassion, but also worse—at one's own parents and culture for being who and what they are. It all begins when the Latino child steps into school the very first day. Up to that point, the language, food, furniture, house, car, neighborhood, friends, relatives and parents have all been taken for granted by the child and accepted by everyone in their vicinity. These feelings begin the first day of school, and continue for the rest of the Latino's life. This psychological state which comes from the ethnic experience, perhaps, is the most impressionable and controlling legacy for Latinos in the United States.

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