A study of the effect of the influx of Cuban refugees on the economic status of the Negro in Greater Miami

Hendrica Schepman
Atlanta University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/dissertations
Part of the Social Work Commons

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/dissertations/3189
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Mr. Floyd Yarborough, Associate Professor of Social Work Research, and to Mrs. Kathryn A. Brisbane, Assistant Professor of Social Work, for guidance and helpful suggestions in the writing of this study and the completion of my professional education.

Sincere gratitude is also expressed to Mr. W. T. Fair and Mr. Calvin Jennings, Director and Staff Member respectively of the Greater Miami Urban League, for their interest and cooperation in the organization of this study, and to Mr. John Borden, a Miami resident, for supplying some valuable information and for his patient help in setting up and selecting a modest but realistic work study plan. Finally, I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to both my daughters, Mrs. M. L. De Vries and Mrs. James Van Dijk, for their unfailing interest and their moral support and encouragement.

This thesis should be read in combination with a thesis, a study of the economic effects which the influx of Cuban refugees had upon the unskilled and semi-skilled Negro worker in Greater Miami, by James Roch Remon, May 1967.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of Procedure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Limitations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. HISTORY AND FUNCTION OF THE AGENCY</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE CUBAN REFUGEES</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Arrival of the Refugees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Federal Cuban Refugee Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE NEGRO AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT CRISIS</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Negro in the Greater Miami Area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Unemployment Crisis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Study

The study is designed to serve as a guide for any organization which may wish to undertake a program in Dade County to assist the Negro in maintaining and developing employment opportunities.

The Fulgencia Batista regime in Cuba, established in 1952, was overthrown on January 1, 1959. The following day Fidel Castro, who had led the guerilla opposition to the Batista regime, proclaimed Dr. Manual Urrutia Lleo Provisional President. Within a few weeks Castro became Premier. The Castro revolution raised the hopes of the poorer people, while the sophisticated were more skeptical about its future benefits. The result was an exodus of middle class Cubans who sought asylum in the United States, with Miami being used as the major port of entry. An emergency situation was created by the arrival of thousands of these exiles and in the beginning the complexity of the problem threw the Greater Miami area into a state of temporary confusion.

This is the first time a study has been undertaken in Miami to my knowledge, to ascertain how the influx of Cuban refugees has affected the economic status of the Negro. The writer became interested in this subject as a result of a six-months field work experience in the Greater Miami Urban League.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine whether or not the socio-economic status of the Negro has been adversely affected by the Cuban refugees, and to determine how and why, and to point the way toward a social program which may improve the relationship between the Cuban exiles and the Negro citizens.

Method of Procedure

The main source of information has been secured from interviews, newspaper articles appearing in the Miami daily papers, from labor reports, and from reports issued by the Federal Cuban Refugee Emergency Program. The individuals interviewed were tight-lipped. There was a definite tendency to paint a rosy picture, to gloss over the possibilities that Negroes had been displaced primarily by Cubans in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. The Negroes who were interviewed showed a remarkable ignorance and/or fear of discussing the subject.

Scope and Limitations

This study will deal with one of the problems created by the Cuban immigrants, namely, the unemployment crisis, and will treat superficially the other problems such as education, and health and welfare but only insofar as they affect the unemployment situation. This study then is limited to the Cuban refugee in the Greater Miami area and how his arrival may have affected the Negro economically during the period from 1959 until the present.
CHAPTER II

HISTORY AND FUNCTION OF THE AGENCY

Short History of the Agency

The Urban League is a charitable and educational organization. It is a community service agency which uses the tools and methods of social work to secure equal opportunity for Negroes and other disadvantaged minorities. It is a non-profit, non-partisan, and interracial agency in both leadership and staff.

In 1910 thousands of Negro migrants from Southern farms moved to Northern cities. They needed help in finding jobs and housing. A group of white men and women along with a number of Negro citizens sought to assist them. For this purpose these groups, namely, the National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes, the National League for the Protection of Negro Women and the Committee for Improving Industrial Conditions for Negroes, merged to form the National Urban League.

The National Urban League maintains a Washington bureau, five regional offices, and affiliates which are located in major urban centers of the nation. The Miami Urban League became an affiliate in 1943. This agency had been working in the interest of the Negro population in Miami since 1923 and was known at that time as the Negro Welfare Federation. It worked independently to help needy Negroes in Dade County. During World War II it switched its interest
from that of a direct service agency to become engaged in community organization activities. Its function was to advise and coordinate the activities of other agencies in the interest of the Negro community. Today, the Greater Miami Urban League is supported primarily by the United Fund, and maintains membership in the National Urban League. The national office is in New York City. It has a board of directors composed of men and women from civic, professional, business, industry and labor leadership. A trained professional staff directs the work of the organization. The staff of the Greater Miami Urban League includes a community organization practitioner, a caseworker, a sociologist, and two administrative secretaries.

The goal of the Greater Miami Urban League is to eliminate racial segregation and discrimination in American life; and to give guidance and help to Negroes and other economically disadvantaged groups so that they may share equally the responsibilities and rewards of full citizenship. Its objectives are:

1. To promote the improvement of interracial understanding and cooperation.

2. To employ the techniques of effective community organization in the discovery, the correction, and the prevention of conditions out of which racial tension, poverty, and disorder arise.

3. To discover unmet community needs in education, employment, housing, health and welfare; and to encourage and develop such types of programs for meeting these needs.

4. To encourage, assist, and engage in such activities and kind of work which will lead toward the improvement of underprivileged persons and families in the Greater Miami area.

The services of the agency are available to all citizens of Dade County
without regard to race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The programs of the Greater Miami Urban League are similar to the programs of its national headquarters but reflect the needs of the Miami community. Some of its major concerns are employment and job development; education and youth incentives; and leadership development.

The Greater Miami Urban League by function and design is one of the agencies in the city which should be involved in finding the solutions to the problem created by the influx of Cuban refugees which directly affect the Negro. Since one of its functions is to bring "positive change in the status of a deprived population,"\textsuperscript{1} it can be expected that efforts will be made by this agency to alleviate the problem.

CHAPTER III

THE CUBAN REFUGEES

The Arrival of the Refugees

Coming back to Miami in September 1966 after a lapse of many years, the writer could not help but notice the changes that had occurred in the downtown shopping area. The last visit was made during the 1950's. One of the most frequently heard languages is Spanish. It is heard in the streets as well as in stores and restaurants. It was noted that on previous visits, there had been signs in store windows; "se habla espanol," but now most stores advertise their articles for sale in both English and Spanish, and some used only Spanish.

After further investigation, the writer found that the Cuban refugee had settled mainly in and around downtown West Flagler, one of the main streets in Miami. At the time the exiles began to arrive in Miami, this area was a run-down section of the town. Deterioration had set in when numerous middle-class families moved to the suburbs of Miami in the 1950's. Thus West Flagler and the surrounding streets had become a dead part of the city. Empty houses and stores, run-down office and apartment buildings could be seen. Today there are no vacancies in this part of the town and it is as lively and hustling as any Latin-American city. This drastic change occurred on arrival of the refugees.
The first group of Cuban refugees arriving in Miami consisted mainly of political leaders and government officials, military officers and business men, who left Cuba between January and June, 1959. They did not need financial assistance and were economically prepared for years of exile in a foreign country. They numbered approximately 3,000 individuals.\(^1\) Those leaving the island in the second group came predominantly from upper-class families. Due to the seizures of land, cattle, farm equipment, and other properties between 1959 and 1960, the refugees began to include the island's richest families, the owners of sugar mills and plantations; large cattle ranches, and businesses. This second group was still allowed to bring their possessions with them.

An emergency situation developed in Miami when the third group of immigrants were forced to leave their belongings behind. This group was composed of the middle and lower socio-economic classes of Cubans. They began to arrive in Miami in September 1960 and continued through October 1962 when the flights were stopped because of the missile crisis.\(^2\) This large group of refugees was panic stricken when they left their native island. They arrived by every means of transportation—by air and ships. It was estimated that 13,000\(^3\) Cuban

---


\(^3\)Commission on Cuban Refugees of the Greater Miami Council of Churches, September, 1965.
children, mostly in their teens, came to the United States, unaccompanied by parents or relatives. Most of these children were sent out of Cuba by their parents to prevent Communist indoctrination. Thus the third and largest group needed emergency relief.

After the missile crisis, only a small trickle of refugees managed to leave the island in small boats. However, this fourth group who represented the lower classes primarily, needed extensive health and welfare services in addition to the regular assistance mentioned above. An estimated 9,000 persons entered Miami during this period from October 1962 up to December 1965.

When the airlift between Cuba and Miami was resumed in 1965, other Cubans took up residence in the United States. Two flights daily, five days a week, were bringing exiles into Miami. Some estimates approximated 40,000 Cubans a year. Preference was given to persons who already had relatives in the United States. This is still true today. Men of military age are not allowed to leave the island before they have completed their military service. Too, a great many elderly people have chosen to leave Cuba. Many of these are unable to work, too old to learn a new language, or to adjust to a new culture. Hence they will need continued financial assistance. Due to the confusion which marked the early years of Cuban immigration, no

---

2 Thomas, op. cit., p. 7.
accurate data were kept as to the numbers of arrivals. The number of exiles in the country at the present time is estimated at 300,000. Approximately 15,000 to 20,000 persons have never registered. The second and third group of immigrants are estimated to have numbered over 200,000 individuals. The figures mentioned of Cubans residing in the Miami area vary from 102,000 to 108,000, but it is the writer's opinion that the number is much higher. Thus the Federal Cuban Refugee Emergency Program which included the relocating of exiles in other parts of the United States was initiated. This step was necessary to relieve the burden on Miami. There is, however, no way of checking up on how many families have remained in the city of resettlement and the number which have returned to Miami because of its proximity to Cuba, the presence of relatives, and the more favorable climatic conditions.

It should be noted that since the United States terminated diplomatic and consular relations with Cuba as of January 3, 1961, it has not been possible to issue permanent resident visas to refugees who wanted to enter the country. The exiles have the status of "parolees," a term technically known as "indefinite voluntary departure."

However, under a new law signed by President Johnson on November 14, 1966, Cuban refugees are now allowed to change their immigration

---

1 Thomas, op cit., p. 7.

2 Interview with the Reverend William Black, Director of Miami Commission on Cuban Refugees, January 1967.
status from "parolees" to alien residents after having been in the United States for two consecutive years. Under this law, exiles become eligible for American citizenship after five years, following the initial two years.

The Federal Cuban Refugee Emergency Program

Toward the end of 1960, it became evident that the large numbers of Cuban refugees had exceeded the capacity of public and private agencies to provide emergency assistance. They had also gone far beyond the possibilities of the local labor market to provide opportunities for gainful employment.

President Eisenhower recognized that local and state agencies could not meet this emergency. He sent his personal representative, Tracy Voorhees, to Miami to plan with the local government. He was equipped with one million dollars out of the President's Contingency Fund under the Mutual Security Act. In December 1960, the Cuban Refugee Emergency Center was opened in Miami to give some overall directions to existing efforts.

On February 3, 1961, Abraham Ribicoff, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, was directed by President Kennedy to undertake a nine-point Cuban Refugee Program:

1. Providing all possible assistance to volunteer relief agencies in providing daily necessities for needy refugees, for resettling as many refugees as possible, and for securing jobs for them.

2. Obtaining the assistance of both private and governmental

---

1 Thomas, op. cit., p. 1.
agencies to provide useful employment opportunities for displaced Cubans, consistent with the overall employment situation in Florida.

3. Providing funds for the resettlement of refugees to other areas.

4. Furnishing financial assistance to meet basic maintenance requirements of needy Cuban refugees in the Miami area and as required in communities of resettlement.

5. Providing for essential health services for the refugees.

6. Furnishing federal assistance for local public school operating costs in the Miami area.

7. Initiating measures to augment training and educational opportunities for Cuban refugees.

8. Providing financial aid for the care and protection of unaccompanied children—the most defenseless and troubled group.

9. Undertaking surplus food distribution to needy refugees.

The main objective of the Federal Cuban Refugee Emergency Program, besides the regular health, education, and welfare services, is the resettlement of the Cuban exile to other parts of the United States in order to relieve Miami. The problems created by the daily arriving waves of immigrants was threatening the entire economy of the Miami area. The sharp rise in unemployment during 1960 continued all through 1961, and reached its peak in July 1962, at which time a great deal of unrest in the community became apparent.

As Miami's economy is mainly based on tourism during the winter season, it was ill equipped to enable the new arrivals to become self-supporting, contributing members of the community and to provide them with the opportunity of participating in the mainstream of American life. By relocating the refugees in other parts of the United States,
it was hoped this would give them the opportunity to find jobs similar to those they had in Cuba and in this way federal expenditures for assistance could be reduced. Financial aid was considered to be only a temporary measure and the Resettlement Program was based on the general recognition that families on public assistance and without work begin to deteriorate.

A short description of how the Cuban Refugee Center in Miami functions will indicate how the program is administered. The Center utilizes the services of existing agencies in order to prevent duplications. Agencies who became involved in helping the exiles have set up additional departments which work exclusively with the Cubans. There are nearly 500 employees in Miami alone who are working with the refugee programs in some federal, state, and private agencies. All are paid with federal funds. More than 225 million dollars in federal allocations have been used in the Miami area since the program started in the late 1960's.1

The Resettlement Program involves four national voluntary agencies, and they have offices in the Cuban Refugee Center in Miami. All four held contracts with HEW. The agencies are:

1. Catholic Relief Services of the National Catholic Welfare Conference.
2. Church World Service of the National Council of Churches (Protestant).
3. United Hebrew Immigrant Services.
4. International Rescue Committee (nonsectarian).

---

1Miami Herald (Sunday Magazine Section), June 26, 1966, p. 2.
Each refugee can register voluntarily with the resettlement agency of his choice. Federal assistance is also made available to a resettled immigrant in the new city of resettlement. Such assistance is on the same standards of need applied to other residents of the state, except that no residency requirements apply.\(^1\)

Throughout the nation, cooperating agencies and institutions include state and local welfare departments, public and voluntary children's agencies, local churches and civic groups participating in the resettlement program, colleges and universities participating in the loan program or in special training programs, and the resettlement committees of governors and mayors.

According to reliable sources, 70 per cent of the new arrivals are resettled within six weeks after they land. However, there are no data available which estimate the number of Cubans who returned to Miami after having been relocated elsewhere. The three main reasons for preferring to live in Miami are (1) proximity to Cuba; (2) relatives in Miami; and (3) climate in Miami similar to that in the native island.\(^2\)

The Dade County Health Department is under contract with the federal government to provide essential health services to the Cuban immigrant. These health and medical services include: outpatient clinics, dental, maternal, child and school health programs;

---

\(^1\)Interview with Mr. Marshall Wise, Director of Cuban Refugee Program in Miami, September, 1966.

hospitalization in accredited hospitals up to thirty days for acute conditions; and hospitalization beyond the thirty days limit for serious chronic conditions such as active tuberculosis or psychosis.

To most Cubans the health services in Jackson Memorial Hospital are inadequate in comparison to what they were accustomed to in Cuba, and they have formed their own clinics where they can get all the combined services for 50 cents a week for each member of the family, according to Mr. Marshall Wise. Although there was overcrowding in the beginning in outpatient clinics and hospitals, this problem has been mainly overcome because of the initiative of the Cubans in running their own clinics and small hospitals.

The response of the public to the problem of the estimated 13,000 unaccompanied children has been most generous. Some 5,000 of these children have been cared for by friends or private agencies without any participation by the federal government.

For the remaining 8,000 unaccompanied children, the government has found it necessary to arrange for and finance foster care in homes and institutions. Over the years more than half of these children have been reunited with parents or relatives who subsequently arrived in the United States.

The Dade County Public School System is being reimbursed for 50 per cent of the cost of educating the children of Cuban refugees. As there are some 24,000 Cuban children enrolled\(^1\) in the public

\(^1\)Information received by telephone in October 1966 from Dade County Public Instruction Board.
schools, this poses an enormous problem for adequate space and teachers. The Education Program was helped when, in the fall of 1962, the Dade County public schools received a grant of $278,000 from the Ford Foundation to be used in the development of projects relating to bilingual education.\(^1\) All of the educational programs for adult refugees are designed to increase their potential for resettlement and for becoming self-supporting. The most important course is the English Institute Program—an accelerated conversational English course. The University of Miami is under contract with the federal government to give professional courses for selected groups of refugees who want refresher courses in the United States, such as physicians, dentists, lawyers, teachers, and pharmacists.\(^2\)

Part of the federal program to help Cuban exiles is the United States' loan program for Cuban students. The federal government makes funds available to the University of Miami for loans to Cuban students under the terms of the loan program:

The maximum loan shall not exceed $1,000 per undergraduate school year or $500 per semester; for graduate and professional education the loan is $2,500 per year for up to four years. There is a year of grace, low interest, and favorable repayment provisions in this program.

The public assistance given to the refugee is financed by the federal government and administered by the Florida State Department of Public Welfare by special agreement. The Bureau of Family Services is

---


concerned with the program of financial aid and surplus food distribution. A refugee after arriving in Miami is not required to register at the Cuban Refugee Center. Although exact figures are not available, there may be between 15,000 to 20,000 exiles in Miami who have not registered.\(^1\) The vast majority, however, register because they are in need of assistance. When an immigrant registers and is found without funds or resources, he is referred to the Cuban Refugee Assistance Unit of the Florida State Department of Public Welfare, where his eligibility for financial assistance and surplus food is determined.

This financial aid, given to the Cuban refugee, is provided on the basis of the same standards of need applied to other residents of Florida. The maximum amount which a needy refugee may receive is $100 a month for a family and $60 a month for a needy single person who is not part of a family unit,\(^2\) and these amounts are often less than $90 and $53 respectively.

The average family size of the refugees registering at the Refugee Center is 1.8 persons.\(^3\) At the time this report was written there were about 12,000 Cubans on relief, mainly elderly people, disabled persons, and students.\(^4\) Due to the fact that many families are

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 7.
\(^2\)Ibid.
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 4.
\(^4\)Interview with Social Welfare Worker, Cuban Refugee Program, January, 1967.
still separated with part of the family still in Cuba, the other part in the United States, the size of the families is relatively small.

The Employment Service of the United States Department of Labor works closely with HEW in analyzing the occupational background of the refugees and in providing job opportunities through the cooperation of its affiliated State Employment Services.
CHAPTER IV

THE NEGRO AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT CRISIS

The Negro in the Greater Miami Area

The economic situation of the Negro in Dade County is in general not too different from what is found in Negro communities in other cities in the United States. An article in the *Economist*\(^1\) of February 27, 1960, states that while the average income of the Negro worker still lags appreciably behind that of his white counterpart, it has been rising faster since 1940. Even the ghetto-like existence that has been the Negro's customary lot when he migrates to the city is slowly giving way in the face of rising prosperity and the emergence for the first time of a sizeable Negro middle class. According to this report, 40 per cent of the American Negro families now own or are buying their own homes, and the split-level houses and new cars in Negro suburbs compare favorably with those in white districts.

Although this description in the *Economist* is unmistakably true, there is still the other 60 per cent to be considered, the unskilled, semi-skilled, household workers, and the farm laborers. It is this group that the researcher is concerned with in Miami. Due to the unusually great demand in Miami for menial workers such as porters, handymen, dishwashers, maids, and yardmen, to name a few, many of the

\(^1\) *Economist*, February 27, 1960, p. 816.
rural poor migrate to Miami to fill these positions. The executive director of the Greater Miami Urban League, Mr. W. T. Fair, says he has observed that the majority of this group is less ambitious than the Negro who migrated to the big industrial cities in the North and the East during World Wars I and II.¹

The education of the typical migrant does not go beyond elementary school. The United States Census reports show that the median education achievement of the Negro in Dade County was 7.9 years in 1960, in contrast to the median education level completed by whites of 11.3 years.² It is thus extremely difficult for the Negro with a rural background to move into the mainstream of economic life in Miami.

Not only is the Negro population of Miami over-represented in low-income jobs,³ but many of the jobs are temporary as a result of the tourist trade which slows down during the summer months. The results are high unemployment and little economic security for many residents in the Negro community. A recent study, conducted by the Equal Opportunity Program Incorporated (EOPI), found more than half of all Negro adults unemployed, and only a quarter of them fully employed⁴ in

¹Interview with Mr. W. T. Fair, Executive Director, Greater Miami Urban League, Miami, Florida, September 7, 1966.


³According to the U. S. Bureau of the Census, Eighteenth Census of the United States: 1960. Population, I, 843, household workers, service workers, and laborers comprised 61 per cent of the Negro labor force, as compared to 15 per cent of the white labor force.

⁴Miami Herald, April 17, 1967.
a Negro community in Dade County. The same article notes that this area, Brownsville, Liberty City--Orchard Villa, houses 39,000 of Dade County's 1.2 million residents. Many of the new residents are very low-income families displaced from the central Negro district by urban renewal and expressway construction. The median income in the Brownsville--Liberty City area is $3,600 per family compared to $5,348 per family for Dade County as a whole.¹

The Negro lower income family in Miami does not have a bright future. Besides educational and occupational problems, he is faced with a housing problem. Although Miami is a fairly new city, a strict pattern of residential segregation has been established. The divisions seem to be more clearly marked and more obvious than in other American cities. A wide avenue all of a sudden narrows down to half of its width when it runs through a Negro community. A beautifully tree-lined street suddenly becomes an unpaved muddy road without sidewalks when it reaches the outskirts of a low-income Negro neighborhood, giving ample warning that one has crossed the border.

The Unemployment Crisis

When written in Chinese, the word "crisis" is composed of two characters; one represents danger and one represents opportunity.² From this point of view a crisis is a threatening situation from which


alternate solutions have to be found to alleviate the situation.

The Cuban exile who was on relief in Dade County was not supposed to be seeking work. But he did and more often than not found it. In some instances it was felt that some of the Cubans were working while receiving public assistance. This may have accounted for the high unemployment rate in Dade County. The Cuban refugee was not included in the overall count. Due to this discrepancy, there are no reliable figures on unemployment relative to the refugees for the years 1960 and 1961. In 1962 the Miami Department of Labor began to include the Cubans in its labor reports. The 1965 November issue of the Bimonthly Labor Market Review is the most informative document the writer has found which gives an impression of the chaotic years. It notes that:

In September of the year (1959) Dade's estimated total labor force was 398,200 (excluding refugees). The total number of unemployed was 20,900—5.2 per cent of the estimated labor force. At that time, Cuban exiles added approximately 3,000 to the unemployment rolls, bringing that total to an estimated 23,900 and the estimated total for the labor force to 401,700.

By mid-1960, the trickle of refugees, as a result of the massive Cuban exodus, had swelled into the thousands. This was a distinct factor in Dade's faltering economy. However, in spite of the increasing number of refugees by September 1960, the total labor force (including refugees) actually declined 9,200 below the same month in 1959. It must be assumed that a considerable number of residents were departing Dade County at that time. At the same time, unemployment rose to 32,600—8.3 per cent of the labor force.¹

There is a general vagueness in the report of what actually happened during 1960. This is the period that the Cubans without property were

beginning to arrive by the thousands. There are no accurate figures in this part of the report and the only assumption to be made is that a considerable number of Negro residents must have left the County during that year. There is no literature which discusses this issue, and it was not until the spring of 1963 that articles began to appear in the leading Miami newspapers referring to the crisis in unemployment caused by the Cuban influx. One article in the Miami Herald quotes Luther L. Brooks, an outstanding leader in the Negro community, as saying that from 12,000 to 15,000 Negroes had left Dade County in the last eighteen months because of the depressed economic situation.

No organized attempts at protest were made during 1960 or 1961 nor in the peak year of the crisis, 1962. However, there appeared to be a lack of concern in the city and county governments for protecting this minority group of citizens. The unemployment figures of 1961, 1962, and 1963, are all swept together in one paragraph in the Labor Market Review:

In 1961, our labor forces reversed its direction and expanded to an all inclusive 409,500, with total unemployment jumping to 9.9 per cent—40,700 people. This escalating unemployment continued and finally reached the summit in July, 1962. An estimated 51,200 of the total labor force of 424,200 (including refugees) was out of work. This represented 12.1 per cent of the estimated labor force for Dade County. Excluding the refugees, Dade's labor forces estimate was 405,300, with the total jobless figure at a high of 8 per cent—32,400 people without jobs. This problem remained critical throughout the balance of 1962 and all of 1963.


The first sentence of this paragraph means that the Cubans were included in the unemployment figures in 1961, while an article in the Miami Herald notes that:

Congressman Claude Pepper announced that the United States Department of Labor will include thousands of Cubans among Dade County's unemployed this week when they start a resurvey of employment to determine eligibility for economic assistance benefits under the Area Redevelopment Program.¹

This is a discrepancy of at least one year between the labor market report and the announcement that it was actually going to function.

Furthermore, if one takes the total labor force of 1962 and deducts the total labor force of 1959, one gets a difference of 22,500 instead of 424,200 minus 405,300 = 18,900. If one adds the number of Negroes that presumably left Dade County during that period of time, one gets a total of Cuban refugees of 22,500 plus 15,000 = 37,500, or more than double the amount mentioned in the report. This comes closer to the figures mentioned when, in March 1963, Representative Claude Pepper and Dante Fascell held public hearings to probe complaints that 22,000 or 50,000 Cubans held jobs in Dade County and that the labor market was glutted by exiles.²

The article in the Bimonthly Review of the Miami Labor Market continues that the economic crisis ended in March 1964 without explaining why and how. Several factors may have contributed to alleviate the


serious unemployment situation: 1. The commercial flights between Havana and Miami were discontinued after the missile crisis and were not resumed until December 1965 (The relatively small trickle of refugees entering Miami during those three years did not pose such a big problem as the previous group); 2. An estimated 12,000 to 15,000 Negroes had left Dade County during that period; 3. The Federal Cuban Refugee Emergency Program\(^1\) had in the meantime included large-scale resettlement of the exiles all over the United States; and 4. The new Public Works Acceleration Program helped to relieve unemployment in Miami with the construction of public libraries, a planetarium, hospital additions, sanitary sewers, and water systems.

The fact that Cuban refugees have brought about the displacement of the Negro in jobs in Greater Miami is not easy to establish. Many Negroes who were asked this question in outpatient clinics, in their homes, or in the street, all admitted that they had heard about displacement, but it had not happened to them nor to their relatives, neighbors or friends. Some Negroes who had lost their jobs during the period 1960-1965 were unwilling to state emphatically that they had been displaced by Cubans. The real reason why they had been given notices was seldom explained to them. They thought their work had been satisfactory and they did not know whether their jobs had become obsolete or whether they had been replaced. Some of these Negroes had found jobs with less pay, others with higher pay, and some had remained jobless.

\(^1\)Miami became a disaster area when unemployment rose over 6 per cent and thus became eligible for federal help.
A young Negro woman interviewed in November 1966 seemed to have been a case of displacement. She had been employed in one of the big hospitals on Miami Beach for 18 months. She lost her job in May 1966 and the reason given her was that there were too many maids. Two other Negro women mentioned had lost their jobs at the same time for the same reason. She said that the housekeeper in the hospital was a Cuban and that she was not sure whether there were too many maids or that she had been displaced by a Cuban. She also said that her work had been satisfactory. As this seemed to be a case of displacement, the writer therefore decided to go to the hospital to check up. It was found that the housekeeper in the hospital was a French-Canadian who had been in her job for ten years. (It is possible that the housekeeper's accent caused the maid to think she was Cuban.)

She had 83 persons working for her, maids and porters. More than half of them were American Negroes, and four were from Nassau. There was one Hungarian and one Cuban employed; the rest were white Americans. She said that when she came to work in the hospital ten years earlier more white Americans were employed than Negroes, but because of their better education they were hard to get nowadays and for that reason more Negroes were employed. When asked how she felt about Cubans, she expressed a definite hostility toward them. She also explained that if work is not satisfactory, persons get two warnings, but that on the whole there were few personnel changes as the hospital pays well and has good fringe benefits, while every employee
earns the same standard wages.¹

After investigating this case it may be stated that because of
the French woman's dislike for the Cubans and the number of Negroes
working under her that Cubans were not displacing Negroes in this
business. Interviews with employers have proven to be very unsatis-
factory, as employers do not have to give race, creed, or nationality
of their employees and these employers were reluctant to answer ques-
tions. Interviews were also held with people who are involved in
giving aid to Cuban refugees and key people within the Negro community.

For instance, the director of the Cuban Refugee Emergency
Center in Miami was interviewed in October 1966.² He said that there
was no statistical material available to show that Cubans have dis-
placed Negroes, but that it was his opinion that the Cubans have not
taken jobs from Negroes as Cubans work in different types of occupa-
tions than those which are known to be filled by Negroes. Mr. Wise
said that he had heard those rumors, but found there was no proof for
it.

His statement was in contradiction to the statement made by a
member of the Cuban Refugee Commission³ who acknowledged the fact that
many Negroes had lost their jobs because of the Cubans. Mr. Kilpatrick

¹Interview with Mrs. Saint Marie, housekeeper of Mount Sinai
Hospital, January 1967.

²Interview with Mr. M. Wise, Director, Cuban Refugee Emergency
Center, September 26, 1966.

³Interview with Mr. R. Kilpatrick, Cuban Refugee Commission,
October 15, 1966.
stated that "not only unskilled but professionally trained Cubans had to take any kind of work they could find, due to the limited job opportunities in Miami. It was not by happenstance that Cubans were competing with Negroes for menial jobs."

The statement of Mr. Kilpatrick was similar to that in the report on the Cuban Refugee Program\(^1\) in the Welfare in Review in which Mr. Kilpatrick tries to justify the displacement by calling attention to his belief that:

> Arriving in Miami, refugees find themselves in an area with few job opportunities in relation to the potential number of applicants. Even those fortunate enough to find jobs in Miami have generally been unable to put their best skills to use. An engineer working as a dishwasher and a veterinarian working as a parking lot attendant are typical examples.

He stated further that Negroes are indifferent and apathetic toward their unskilled jobs which affected their productivity, but the Cubans were willing to make the best of the situation.\(^2\)

Remarks of this kind give sufficient evidence that the Cuban refugee did find many opportunities to displace the Negroes. In the first place, the Cuban is classified as Caucasian. In the second place, they sought to please the community by emphasizing industry and reliability. There was frequent mention in some interviews that the Cubans were willing to work for lower wages than the Negro. This was expressed in the interview with Mr. John Newton, Area Employment Coordinator, where he states that many unskilled and semi-skilled

---

\(^1\) Thomas, op. cit., p. 7.

\(^2\) Interview with L. Kilpatrick, Cuban Refugee Commission, October 15, 1966.
Negroes had been displaced by Cuban workers, and that there were varied social factors given as reasons for the displacement. Some are that Cubans will work for less money, and that they are more reliable and stable on the job.¹

In another interview it was established that the profit motive may have been the major consideration of the employers to engage Cubans rather than that of humanitarianism to a group of refugees. Mr. Charles Dent, Employment Counselor for the Economic Opportunity Program, added that "employers make up all kinds of reasons to justify displacing Negroes and they make many rationalizations just to perpetuate the feeling of inferiority among Negroes."²

Miss Hazel Adams, Director of District No. 9 of the Welfare Department of Dade County,³ who works in the Negro community, shed additional light on the situation as she was of the opinion that the Cuban refugee influx had been beneficial to some Negroes because, due to competition, their efforts to do a good job had improved. Mr. Charles Lockhart,⁴ public relations man from Bonded Rental Agencies, was well informed about the Negro unemployment situation during 1962,

¹Interview with John Newton, Area Employment Opportunity Coordinator, October 8, 1966.


³Interview with Hazel Adams, Director of District No. 9 of the Welfare Department of Dade County, January 23, 1967.

⁴Interview with Charles Lockhart, Assistant Director of Bonded Rental Agencies, January 14, 1967.
1963, and 1964. He was, however, of the opinion that the trend to leave Dade County was reversing itself and that many Negroes who had left Dade County during the crisis were coming back to look for jobs.

He explained that due to the fact that Cubans enter the United States as Caucasians (even when they are mixed or look Negroid) they can get licenses to open stores and businesses in parts of Miami where the Negro would be denied a license. In his opinion the Cubans have been taking advantage of this condition and are now beginning to employ Negroes themselves. Their businesses are expanding; they do not have enough relatives around to fill the jobs, so this creates new job opportunities for the Negro. The newcomer in the United States, whether he is Irish, Italian, German, Jewish, or Hungarian, in spite of a low educational level has always had better opportunities to climb the socio-economic ladder than the Negro due primarily to his visibility. In short, the Cuban is rapidly becoming an employer instead of an employee. Mr. Lockhart concluded the interview by saying that the Cuban refugees are now in keen competition with whites, especially the small businessman. Only one abortive attempt was made, on March 1, 1963, by Negroes to organize themselves.1 Mr. Cecil Rolle, editor of the Liberty News, a Negro newspaper, was aware of job displacement occurring all over Miami and the connection between Negro joblessness and the wave of Cuban immigrants. He and several other Negro leaders tried to plan a march on City Hall, but the inertia of the masses of Negroes struck by unemployment made only a handful turn up.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Miami has in seven years time become an entirely different city and it is likely to remain so in the future. If the Cubans are able to return to their native island, a great many of them will remain in the United States. They have settled down in Miami, their children were born here, and they do not want to go again through the same process of building up a new business in Cuba. It is obvious that the Cubans have become home owners, store owners, car owners, and in short, have become contributing members of the community.

Due to several important factors the Cuban refugees have been able to establish themselves economically in Dade County. One reason is the fact that the first Cubans arriving in Miami were allowed to bring their money with them and thus they were able to put it to work for themselves and their compatriots. The majority of the Cuban exiles fleeing the Castro regime had had an educational and cultural background which enabled them to use their creative energy and resources to achieve their own goals. On top of this, there is a federally financed Cuban Refugee Emergency Program to put the homeless and jobless immigrant on his feet. It is also apparent that most of them are mastering the English language, sufficiently enough to communicate with the Americans. There is no doubt about it that they have greatly benefited from the federal program.

30
The Cuban refugee as a whole, however, has not escaped the fate of the other minority groups who arrived in the United States earlier. He remains isolated from the majority group and lives mainly in one area of the town. He may be tolerated as a cheap source of labor, and praised for his industriousness, but he is as yet not welcome in the social life of the city.

Not only has the Negro in Miami been dealt a heavy blow by being displaced by new arrivals, but his hopes and his pride have been badly shattered. During 1961, 1962, and 1963, the Negro faced severe unemployment problems. From the interviews it may be gleaned that often animosity, indifference, and neglect characterizes the attitude of some of the Miami businessmen toward the American Negro. The Cubans, on the contrary, have been given many advantages and opportunities for education, language courses, and vocational training, to name a few, and today they are becoming fast a part of our affluent society. The Negro, however, is exactly where he was before—in the ghettos. Ironically, the Negro in Dade County is benefitting from the arrival of the Cubans in Miami in that the Cubans are beginning to employ Negroes. However, it would be beneficial for the Negro community if some organization like the Urban League would initiate a program to focus attention on the economic needs of this minority group and suggest possible solutions.

In the opinion of the researcher, the following recommendations may prove advantageous:

1. Negro high school students should be encouraged to take
Spanish courses in high school. This would enable both minorities to develop a better understanding among themselves and to decrease the social distance now existing.

2. The Urban League might step up its youth incentive programs to encourage young Negro students to remain in school in order to improve their job opportunities.

3. In addition, efforts might be made to encourage businesses and industries to examine their attitudes and the treatment accorded the Negro as a result of displacing him in certain jobs.

4. Both the Negro and the Cuban are minority groups, hence, they have similar problems by virtue of being minority persons. Therefore, an intercultural committee composed of Negroes and Cubans, which may include any other minority group, could plan together programs to advance their economic and social status.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Public Documents


Books


**Articles and Periodicals**

*Economist.* February 27, 1960.


**Reports**


A Preliminary Comprehensive Proposal of the Commission on Cuban Refugees to the National Planning Committee for Cuban Refugees and to the Greater Miami Council of Churches, for Information. September 30, 1965.


Other Sources

1. Personal interview with Mrs. Saint Marie, housekeeper, Mount Sinai Hospital, Miami Beach, Florida, January, 1967.


3. Personal interview with Miss Hazel Adams, Director, Florida State Welfare Department, District 9, Miami, Florida, January, 1967.


