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Diverse Contexts of Reception and Feelings of Belonging

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Abstract: The theoretical focus of this paper is the context of reception experienced by migrants in their new homeland. In particular we examine relations between established residents and newcomers or immigrants from Cuba, Haiti, and other Caribbean and Latin American nations in South Florida. Based upon long term fieldwork among late adolescents and young adults, we develop a framework and give ethnographic examples of established resident-newcomer relations that influence the contexts of reception for immigrants in South Florida. These contexts range from positive to negative, vary between national and local settings, and change over time.

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1. Contexts of Reception

The theoretical focus of this paper is the context of reception experienced by migrants in their new homeland. In particular we examine relations between established residents and newcomers or immigrants from Cuba, Haiti, and other Caribbean and Latin American nations in South Florida. In this issue, ROSENTHAL (2009) refers to the stigmatization, discrimination or exclusion exercised by established residents against newcomers. While these negative aspects are critical, she also calls our attention to changing "established-outsider figurations." Similarly in earlier research we have discussed changing relations between established residents and migrant newcomers (STEPICK & DUTTON STEPICK, 2002, 2003; STEPICK, DUTTON STEPICK, EUGENE, TEED & LABISSIERE, 2001). Based upon long term fieldwork among late adolescents and young adults, we develop a framework and give ethnographic examples of established resident-newcomer relations that influence the contexts of reception for immigrants in South Florida. These contexts range from positive to negative, vary among national, regional and local influences, and change over time. [1]

Established residents' objectification of newcomers can be conceived as part of the context of reception for immigrants (PORTES & BOROCZ, 1989; PORTES & RUMBAUT, 2006). This context can be broadly national and formally legalistic with the potential to have immense impact on a migrant's life. Where context of reception also matters is in personal day-to-day relations and interactions. The immediate ways in which we accept or discriminate towards each other is regional and local. [2]

If the United States is a country of immigrants it is also a land full of ambiguous, conflicted and shifting feelings about newcomers. The context of reception and particularly how the established residents of the host society perceive and categorize newcomers affects migrants' sense of belonging. This is not only a one way street. The presence of migrants as neighbors, workers and schoolmates in communities often elicits reflections on established residents' own sense of belonging and rights of belonging. The passage of time, intensity of personal interactions, and pivotal events also shape and may change individuals' feelings of belonging and privilege of place. [3]

As the United States faces the impact of its second great wave of migration in a century, its internal debate over the benefits and detractions of so many newcomers continues. As in the earlier parts of the past hundred years there is once again a factionalizing discourse as some established residents feel the new cultural norms brought by migrants threaten their perception of the American way of life, while others welcome the diversity and accept a new cultural pluralism. Some protectionists applaud and support extreme government measures intended to discourage migration such as building a wall on the southern border with Mexico or raids on workplaces to find and deport undocumented workers. At the same time migrants and especially their adult and coming of age children have expressed their political voice against anti-immigrant laws and regulations in unprecedented numbers and means like mass demonstrations. Also supporting the *status quo* are those who quietly benefit from migrants as is the case with many businesses that employ migrants, especially at lower wages than are unacceptable to established residents. Occupying the middle ground of this debate are the people who feel untouched or unthreatened by newcomers, or who simply accept a new infusion of multiculturalism. [4]

While fully or partially closing the entry gate to in-migration is part of the national political debate, the cultural debate is more about integration and assimilation to a dynamic, multi-class, culturally pluralistic society. This is the point in the debate at which people size up other people and determine how alike or different they are. While this judgment of others occurs in public discourse particularly through the informational and entertainment media, significantly it is also part of a private discourse in the minds of individuals and among individuals who judge themselves to have much in common, to be like one another in ways that are socially important to them. Opinions about "others," whether positive, negative or neutral, begin to form or be challenged when people come face to face and shoulder to shoulder in neighborhoods, the workplace and in schools. The tenor of these interactions also heavily influences local political actions, workplace and

school environments, and sense of community in residential neighborhoods that come together to create a regional context of reception toward newcomers. At the same time the newcomers play a creative role, even if it is primarily reactive, in the formation of regional social contexts. [5]

These conflicting forces have been theorized as the context of reception, i.e. the opportunities available to immigrants and how immigrants are treated by members of the host society (PORTES & BOROCZ, 1989; PORTES & RUMBAUT, 2006). If immigrants are welcomed, if they are given legal status and access to work, housing, and other amenities, they are more likely to prosper. If on the other hand, they are denied legal status, face barriers in the labor and housing markets and more general prejudice and discrimination, they are more likely to suffer. These opportunities and barriers are socially constructed by the established residents, that is, those who lived in the host country before the arrival of the immigrants and who continue to live where the immigrants reside. Some of the opportunities and barriers are created at the national level, such as awarding versus denying a legal immigration status. Others, such as access to employment, are more likely to be created and enforced locally. [6]

Not all immigrants are treated equally. In the U.S., some, such as those classified by the government as refugees, are welcomed and granted a legal immigration status and generally access to some form of benefits along with the possibility of free and legal access to the local labor and housing markets. Others confront a more negative context of reception. They may objectively be fleeing persecution and conditions that apparently deserve the treatment afforded to migrants recognized as refugees by the government. But, if the federal government does not define them as refugees, regardless of the documented circumstances in their home country, then they may not have legal status or access to benefits or the labor market, even if they settle in the same region as those who have been welcomed with a positive context of reception. Such is the contrast between those migrants considered in this volume. Cubans have been accorded a positive context of reception in South Florida, and subsequently contributed to a positive context of reception for later arriving Cubans in the region. In contrast, Guatemalans and Haitians, each fleeing often horrific repression and poverty in their home countries but not recognized as refugees, have confronted a much more negative context of reception in South Florida. [7]

Most previous writings considering context of reception have articulated only a general context of reception without distinguishing how the context may be different at national, regional or local levels (PORTES & BOROCZ, 1989; PORTES & RUMBAUT, 2006). Context of reception, that is influenced by and felt at the regional, and the much more micro, local, face-to-face level has been the object of somewhat less published analysis (STEPICK & DUTTON STEPICK, 2001; STEPICK, GRENIER, CASTRO & DUNN, 2003). The contexts of reception produced by these multiple levels may be consistent, viz., an immigrant group may easily obtain legal status, benefits, and also be welcomed by members of local communities. On the other hand, it may be inconsistent; for example, refugees may be accepted through the nation-state legal system and may have

established a comfortable niche for themselves in ethnic or immigrant neighborhoods, but encounter prejudice when they move beyond the neighborhood. [8]

Similarly, the context of reception may evolve over time. Immigrants to the U.S. in the last great migrant wave over the end of the 19th through the first part of the 20th century were often not welcomed by local communities (although the federal government did grant easy access to legal status until the 1920s). But, by the 1950s when the second generation had matured, there were relatively few expressions of rejection toward those of immigrant backgrounds in local communities.[1] In more contemporary times, PORTES and FERNÁNDEZ-KELLY (2008) have recently noted how context of reception has changed over time for Cubans who were warmly welcomed starting in 1960 until the 1980 Mariel boatlift. Although not noted by PORTES and FERNÁNDEZ-KELLY, the Mariel context of reception varied by level with the national government still allowing nearly all the Cuban Mariel newcomers a legal immigration status, while the local South Florida community was more likely to negatively stereotype the Mariel newcomers (ALBERTS, 2005; CROUCHER, 1997; PORTES & STEPICK, 1985). [9]

As the largest and earliest arriving immigrant group in South Florida, the context of reception received by Cubans and the context that they themselves have established for later arriving immigrants is critical to understanding the varying nature and evolution of South Florida's established-newcomer figurations. [10]

2. Miami Cubans' Positive Context of Reception

The South Florida county of Miami-Dade[2] has been an immigrant gateway since the early 1960's. In the same period Broward and Palm Beach Counties immediately to the north also, though more gradually, have absorbed large numbers of migrants. Nearly 38 percent of the population in the three counties was born outside the U.S. For Miami-Dade County, the largest of the three counties, over 50 percent of the total population was born outside the U.S., the highest proportion of foreign-born residents of any U.S. major metropolitan area and proportionally 50 percent more than either Los Angeles or New York.[3] [11]

This demographic shift began with the Cuban Revolution in 1959 that initiated migratory waves to the Miami region. By the year 2000 the number of Cubans

1 This is not to say that all prejudice toward, for example, Jews and Italians had disappeared; only that it was much less than it had been 50-75 years earlier.

2 It is difficult to determine the appropriate term for South Florida and Miami-Dade County. Commonly the greater Miami area, which often lumps together all of the area in Miami-Dade County and sometimes neighboring counties of Broward and Palm Beach to the north, is referred to as Miami. Within Miami-Dade County, the city of Miami is the largest municipality, but its boundaries are indistinguishable in the metropolitan sprawl that surrounds the city. Similarly, Miami Beach is sometimes referred to simply as Miami or included in a broader reference to South Florida, although it is a separate municipality that is geographically distinct because it is on a former barrier island with a bay separating it from the municipality of Miami and the rest of Miami-Dade County.

3 Both New York and Los Angeles do have a greater absolute number of residents who were foreign-born.

stood at over 870,000 in South Florida where they are not only the largest immigrant group in the area, but they are also the most concentrated newcomer immigrant group in the U.S. [12]

Cubans began arriving during the Cold War and the U.S. offered them an extraordinarily generous welcome that not only allowed them to achieve economic success unparalleled in its rapidity, but also vaulted them to local political influence and power. Miami Cubans receive permanent residency after one-year in the U.S., regardless of whether they originally arrived through a legal channel or an illegal route. They are also eligible for social benefits paid for by the federal U.S. government. In the 1960s and 1970s, a vast array of benefits was made available that allowed the then primarily middle and upper class Cuban immigrants to quickly re-certify their professional credentials or establish businesses. Today, they receive fewer benefits, but newcomers still receive a legal immigration status[4] and the possibility of various short term benefits, such as language and job-training classes. [13]

While the U.S. federal government provided an unambiguously positive context of reception for Cubans, the sentiments of the local Anglo[5] population was decidedly more mixed. Up through the mid-1980s, more than 20 years since Cubans first began to arrive, local leaders presumed that Cubans would assimilate, specifically that Cubans would learn English, stop speaking Spanish, and pay less attention to Cuban politics and more to American politics. Moreover, a significant part of the local population insisted on these principles of assimilation. In 1980, the Miami-Dade County electorate overwhelmingly voted in favor of a referendum that proclaimed that Miami-Dade County was not multicultural and that only English could be used by local governments (for more details, see STEPICK et al., 2003). [14]

The Cubans responded by intense local political organizing and soon had acquired both considerable economic and political power, especially locally in Miami. Within one generation, immigration has transformed Miami from a declining retirement and tourism center for North Americans into the northern capital of Latin America.[6] In Miami, it is easier to find a job, to shop, just to get things done, if one knows Spanish. It is also much easier to advance

4 There are a few exceptions. During the Mariel boatlift in 1980, those who were thought to have criminal records in Cuba were detained. Beginning in 1994, the U.S. government only granted a legal immigration status to those who made it to US shores. If a boat was intercepted by the US Coast Guard before it or the people in it touched US shores, the occupants could be returned to Cuba.

5 Anglo is the local term for non-Hispanic whites. Cubans object to referring to the Anglo population as "white" because many of the Cubans are predominantly of European origin and perceive themselves to be as white as Anglos. Jews, who have been historically important in Miami, object to being lumped in with Anglos, yet the term is still generally used to refer to non-Hispanic whites regardless of religious background.

6 Latinos are the demographic majority in some Texas cities such as Laredo, El Paso and San Antonio along with border areas such as California's Imperial Valley, but there they lack the clout that migrants have in Miami.

economically if one also knows English. Miami is truly multilingual and multicultural (GARREAU, 1981; LEVINE, 1985; PORTES & STEPICK, 1993).[7] [15]

Miami's Cubans, along with smaller numbers of other Latino immigrants, made Miami the economic and transportation gateway of the Americas. While Miami has only five percent of the total U.S. Latino population, it has close to half of the forty largest Latino-owned industrial and commercial firms in the country. Many of the area's most important private firms are also headed by Latinos, both Miami Cubans and other Latinos. The largest Latino firm in the country, MasTec Telecom, was established in Miami by a Miami Cuban. Miami also has the largest Latino real estate development company in the U.S., the largest Latino-owned banks, along with the majority of Latino owned large construction firms. Only New York has more foreign-owned banks than Miami. Nearly 50 percent of U.S. exports to the Caribbean and Central America and over 30 percent of U.S. exports to South America pass through Miami. Miami's Free Trade Zone is the first and largest privately-owned trade zone in the world. Miami International Airport is the top U.S. airport for international freight with more no-stop cargo flights to Latin America and the Caribbean than Orlando, Houston, New Orleans, Atlanta, Tampa and New York's Kennedy airports combined. This airport also serves more airlines than any other airport in the Western Hemisphere and it is frequently easier to get from one Latin American country to another by going through Miami than directly. Miami also has the largest cruise port in the world, ironically transporting primarily U.S. passengers on vacations throughout the Caribbean and Latin America while many of the citizens of those countries are immigrating to Miami. While Miami may not be a global city equal to New York or London, it is assuredly one of the leading economic capitals of Latin America (NIJMAN, 1996a, 1996b, 1997) and its Latino immigrants made it so. [16]

The influence of Miami's Cubans extends beyond economics into politics. Miami Cuban representatives of the real estate and construction industries have become the movers and shakers in local politics. Cuban immigrants politically dominate the City of Miami, Hialeah, the county's second-largest city, and Miami-Dade's County Commission. Two Miami Cubans are in the U.S. House of Representatives, and the Miami-Dade County state legislative delegation, along with the Miami-Dade County School Board are dominated by Cubans. [17]

The economic and political accomplishments of the earlier arrivals paves the path toward integration for newly arrived Cubans who can relatively readily find work among other Cubans, most likely in a firm with Cuban owners and management. Local government and non-governmental agencies are also likely to have many Cuban employees. Cubans may also dominate in the places where one does one's shopping and from whom one rents a place to live. All of this can be accomplished in Spanish resulting in little pressure to learn English. Perhaps most importantly, Cubans never have to worry about their immigration status. The

7 For greater detail on Miami's demographic changes and their political and economic impacts see GRENIER and STEPICK (1992), LAMPHERE, STEPICK and GRENIER (1994), LOGAN, ALBA and McNULTY (1994), R. MOHL (1989), R.A. MOHL (1983, 1985, 1986, 1990), NIJMAN (1996a, 1996b, 1997), and PORTES and STEPICK (1993).

U.S. grants permanent residence almost automatically to Cubans.[8] All of these factors combine to make it relatively easy for recently arrived Cubans to integrate into the Miami community, both economically and socially, and Cubans themselves have created a context of reception that greatly benefits more recent Cuban migrants. For Cubans the context of reception in the U.S. from the level of nation state policies to that of regional acceptance and local micro-level interactions is as consistently positive as possible. [18]

However, South Florida's newcomer immigrants are not all Cubans. Beginning in the 1980s, other Latino immigrants also began settling in the Miami area. Nicaraguans, Colombians and Venezuelans are the largest groups, but the numbers of Mexicans and Central Americans are also increasing, especially in Broward and Palm Beach Counties just to the north of Miami-Dade County (BOSWELL, 1994; VIGLUCCI, YARDLEY & HENDERSON, 2001). By the year 2000, Latinos had become the largest minority in the state of Florida, surpassing Blacks, which up to then had been the largest minority statewide (VIGLUCCI, DRISCOLL & HENDERSON, 2001).[9] [19]

3. Nicaraguans' Ambivalent Context of Reception

From the outside Miami may appear to be Latino or Hispanic,[10] but from the inside national differences matter. As the leader of a Nicaraguan organization proclaimed,

> "Nicaraguans are discriminated against in South Florida. No politicians want to hear what we have to say. I don't know why. They ignore us ... Every year we go to Washington to lobby, but they won't listen! ... There are several Cuban organizations, and they each receive millions of dollars per year (L. KONCZAL, 1999, p.1).[11] [20]

The father of one of the Nicaraguan adolescents in our study claimed that he was fired from his job because he was Nicaraguan. He added, "Cubans get more opportunities. They are able to move up in the work place easier" (L.N. KONCZAL, 2002, p.56). [21]

8 The most important causes of this positive context of reception were the class profile of the earliest arriving Cubans, who tended to be from the island's elite, and the unprecedented, extensive benefits the U.S. government granted Cubans as a symbol of the U.S. anti-communism policies in the middle of the Cold War (STEPICK, 1996; STEPICK & DUTTON STEPICK, 2001; STEPICK & GRENIER, 1993; STEPICK et al., 2003).

9 Significant numbers of Puerto Ricans also reside in Miami, but because Puerto Rico is a U.S. commonwealth its residents are U.S. citizens. This does not preclude them or their children from encountering discrimination or local negative contexts of reception when they move to the mainland U.S.

10 Hispanic and Latino are interchangeable. Hispanic is the official designation by the U.S. government for those descendants of people from Spanish-speaking countries. It is generally used in South Florida. In most of the rest of the U.S., however, leaders of Hispanic communities and academics use the term Latino.

11 Both this quote and the two that follow were part of parental interviews among Nicaraguans in Miami. The broader project from which these interviews come was part of an examination of the academic orientation of immigrant and native minority adolescents. For a description of the methodology, see STEPICK (1995).

Although Nicaraguan adults tend to see discrimination both from the federal government and on a local, day-to-day basis, such as in the workplace, Nicaraguan youth are more likely to think anti-Nicaraguan discrimination is limited to the federal government. On a local level they get along with young Cubans. At the school we studied, Miami Nicaraguans often hang-out, form close relationships, date and ultimately even marry Miami Cubans. No Nicaraguan in our adolescent sample had exclusively or even primarily Nicaraguan friends. Over half of the Nicaraguans in our sample claimed that at least one of their closest friends was Cuban. As one stated, "We're all Hispanics." According to school district statistics, over 50 percent of the staff at the high school attended by our Nicaraguan sample was Hispanic. Nicaraguan students felt that teachers did not discriminate against them as one young man told us, "because they (the teachers) are Hispanic, too, or they're of Hispanic descent" (L.N. KONCZAL, 2002, pp.74-75). [22]

For Nicaraguan youth, being Hispanic in Miami presents opportunities unavailable to Haitians or African Americans. Nicaraguans see Miami as a place where they are more likely to succeed than in other parts of the U.S. While they perceive discrimination from Cubans, they do not view it as insurmountable. Those adolescents who had jobs while attending school, claimed that there was discrimination toward them in the workplace, but that it was based on age not ethnicity or nationality. Management and co-workers treated them unfairly, they believed, because they were teenagers. Grace who moved from Nicaragua to Miami as a young child stated, "I think here in Miami we're not going to have a problem. But, I think if we move probably to Colorado, Michigan and stuff, they'll discriminate against any Hispanics."[12] In general for the Nicaraguan youth in our sample we found that adopting a Hispanic, as opposed to Nicaraguan, identity moves them closer to the Cuban majority and Miami's center of power. [23]

Nevertheless, Nicaraguan adults and youth experienced a less consistent context of reception at all levels than Cubans (PORTES & STEPICK, 1993; RODRIGUEZ, 2000). From the federal government, they have received mixed messages about how much they are welcomed, and they are aware that they have little to no political voice. Regionally Cubans have established a relatively comfortable environment for Spanish speaking migrants, but Nicaraguan adults are aware of the biases they may face from Cuban employers, while the second generation feels a stronger sense of equality and belonging and far less alienation about their employment prospects. [24]

12 This quote came from a focus group of diverse Latino children of immigrants in Miami that was part of the project mentioned above (STEPICK, 1995). The focus group was conducted in the wake of the Elian controversy described below.

4. Haitians' Negative Context of Reception

Miami also has received a significant influx of Caribbean, primarily Black immigrants (DUNN, 1997; FREEMAN, 2002; STEPICK et al., 2003). Much of the original Black population that settled and built Miami at the end of the 19th century was from the Bahamas (ANDERSON, 1996; SHELL-WEISS & DAVIS, 2005). Many Miami Blacks who appear as African Americans to outsiders claim a distinctively Bahamian background. More recently, other Caribbean Blacks have settled in Miami. In Broward County, immediately to the north of Miami-Dade County, Jamaicans followed by Haitians are the two largest immigrant groups. More black foreigners immigrated to Broward County between 2001 and 2005 than to any other county in the United States. Also, Florida is home to the largest concentration of Haitian migrants of any state in the U.S. with over 250,000 living in South Florida.[13] [25]

Among contemporary immigrant groups, Haitians confront at all levels consistently negative contexts of reception. The U.S. government has routinely sought to discourage Haitians from coming to the U.S. by using the U.S. Coast Guard to interdict boats off the shores of Haiti that may be headed for the U.S. Individual Haitians are almost never granted asylum or refugee status regardless of either general political chaos or evidence of individual persecution back in Haiti. Instead, the government jails without parole Haitians who do make it to the U.S. without a visa and claim they want to stay.[14] At the more local level, Haitians confront further prejudice and discrimination from the general population that commonly identifies them as poor and without skills, and undeserving of residence in the U.S. (STEPICK, 1998). [26]

5. Regional Variation

Although the largest concentration of Guatemalans in the U.S. are in California, Guatemalans, fleeing civil conflict in their home country, began arriving in South Florida in the late 1970s and this population grew most rapidly between 1980 and 1990 (BURNS, 1993). Guatemalans, most of whom are primarily indigenous, particularly Konjabal Mayans, first settled in rural areas of Florida where they joined already established Mexican communities working in Florida's agricultural industry since the 1950s (GRIFFITH & KISSAM, 1995). But, the new Guatemalan immigrants have also settled in places that had few immigrants before. For example, Jupiter, a town of about 40,000 on the coast in Palm Beach County, is the settlement location of a significant number of Guatemalans primarily Mayans. [27]

13 The 2000 Census counted nearly 270,000 Haitians in the state of Florida, making it the largest Haitian origin population concentration in the U.S., surpassing the numbers of Haitians in the New York metropolitan area. In 2000, Jamaicans in Florida numbered almost 170,000. Incidentally, estimates of immigrant populations are notoriously unreliable. The U.S. Census probably undercounts immigrants, especially those who may have an uncertain immigrant status. Conversely, immigrant organizations frequently overestimate their numbers.

14 During the 1980s the U.S. government mistakenly branded Haitians as public health risks. First, the government claimed Haitians were bringing tuberculosis into the U.S., and then it claimed Haitians were one of the sources of the HIV/AIDS virus (GEORGE, 1978; R.A. MOHL, 1987; STEPICK, 1998).

While the Guatemalans who arrived in the 1970s and 1980s were fleeing conflict in their home country and often feared for their lives, the U.S. government preferred to not grant them political asylum or refugee status. Rather, it overwhelmingly treated Guatemalans who arrived in the U.S. without documents as undocumented or "illegal" aliens and sought to discourage their remaining in the country (BURNS, 1993; HAGAN, 1994; MENJÍVAR, 2006). In this way, Guatemalans and Haitians were treated similarly by the U.S. government and many members of each group had to worry that they might be caught and deported back to their homeland, a fear that was never a concern for Cubans. [28]

While significant numbers of immigrants have settled in Broward and Palm Beach Counties, immigrants are not close to a majority in either county. Haitians are the largest immigrant group in these two counties, but Palm Beach County also is home to the largest concentration of Guatemalans along with Mexicans in any of the three counties. Still, the Palm Beach population is overwhelmingly, about 75%, Anglo (non-Hispanic White). In Broward and Palm Beach Counties immigrants have nowhere near the political, economic, and social power that Cubans exercise in Miami-Dade County. In Jupiter, moreover, some Anglos have mobilized against the primarily Guatemalan immigrant community, particularly against the gathering of day laborers near a Home Depot store. While other established residents of Jupiter have supported the immigrants, anti-immigrant feeling and expression is surely stronger in Jupiter than in Miami-Dade County (WILLIAMS, STEIGENGA & VASQUEZ, 2009). [29]

Immigrants, and especially those lacking legal status, are also subject to exploitation. In Miami-Dade, the Research Institute on Social and Economic Policy (RISEP) has been documenting "wage theft," that is the stealing by employers of wages legally owed to employees. RISEP found that in the construction industry and in the plant nursery industry, which supplies many of the ornamental plants throughout the U.S., underpaying workers is widespread. Workers who do not have a regular immigration status frequently are afraid to complain when they are cheated out of some or all of their wages. Although U.S. labor law applies to them, they fear that complaining about wage theft will make them vulnerable to deportation. The most extreme form of worker abuse documented in Florida is slavery. Cases of slavery, which usually involves the transportation of migrant workers and isolating them in rural labor camps, have been successfully prosecuted in Florida. In September 2008, five residents of Immokalee, Florida[15] pleaded guilty in federal court to charges of enslaving Mexican and Guatemalan workers in tomato fields in Florida, North Carolina, and South Carolina. It was the seventh such case of worker slavery prosecuted in Florida in less than 10 years. Much more widespread (including in Miami-Dade County) is the practice of wage theft by not paying workers time and a half for overtime work, shaving hours, asking them to stay on the job for an hour or two after clocking out and leaving day laborers unpaid at the end of a job. Employer abuse of workers forms part of the informal context of reception encountered by many Central American migrants in South Florida (BOWE, 2007). [30]

15 Immokolee, Florida is in Collier County to the immediate west of Miami-Dade and Broward Counties.

As described above for Miami-Dade County, who holds local political, social and economic power makes a big difference to the context of reception encountered by newcomers. In neither Broward nor Palm Beach counties do immigrants have significant political power. Except for the Boards of some small municipalities in Broward County, there is no significant political representation by individuals of recent immigrant background in either Broward or Palm Beach County. [31]

In short, Guatemalans, Haitians and any other immigrant living and working in Broward or Palm Beach counties face a significantly different context of reception than immigrants in Miami-Dade County just to the south. It is likely far more difficult for an immigrant in either Broward or Palm Beach counties to attain a sense of belonging among the majority non-Hispanic White population than it is for Hispanics to achieve a sense of comfort in the predominantly pro-immigrant, Hispanic environment of Miami-Dade County. Nevertheless, as reflected in the cases of wage theft and slavery, workplace discrimination can occur in any of these counties. [32]

6. Shifting from Positive to Negative Context of Reception

Miami Cubans so thoroughly dominate the local scene in Miami-Dade County that the children of Cuban immigrants often do not realize that they may hold views and values different from the rest of America. They can presume everyone outside of Miami is not so different from them, at least until they are forced to confront "mainstream American" perspectives and opinions about events and issues close to home. The case of Elián Gonzales, the Cuban rafter boy who became the focus of national attention in 2000-2001, jolted Miami Cuban youth into the realization of how much they may have been taking for granted. Elián Gonzalez was a 6-year-old Cuban boy who survived a raft trip to Miami while his mother drowned and his father remained in Cuba. His father and the Cuban government demanded the return of the child to Cuba. The Miami Cuban community insisted that Elián remain in Miami rather than return to Cuba. In the eyes of the community this was a far more humanitarian fate than returning the boy to be raised in a communist totalitarian state. Fidel Castro along with Elián's father equally adamantly insisted that the boy should be reunited with his father in Cuba. For months demonstrations enveloped Miami and seized national attention (ACOSTA, 2001; DE LA TORRE, 2003; STEPICK et al., 2003). [33]

As Cubans rallied to keep the boy in the U.S., non-Hispanics both inside and outside Miami retorted that the boy should be reunited with his father in Cuba. This clearly was a repudiation of the conviction widely accepted in the Miami Cuban community that Cuba, even with the biological father, was a far worse place for the boy than the U.S. Miami was filled with passionate argument and demonstrations as local Spanish language television covered the issue literally non-stop,[16] and polls revealed that the overwhelming majority of non-Cubans were angered by and opposed Miami's Cubans' strident opposition to the U.S. government's efforts to return the boy to his father. In response, many Miami

16 English language television covered it extensively, certainly more than in other U.S. cities, but not quite non-stop.

Cuban youth who had previously conceived of themselves as American suddenly emphasized their Cuban roots. After Elián was returned to Cuba, Vivian, a Cuban teen, concluded "The Americans [meaning non-Hispanic Whites], it's like this is their country and we're not part of this. We are visitors. Just that we're not Americans. We're from other places. We don't belong here."[17] [34]

Miguel, a Nicaraguan, added, "I think what she's trying to say is no matter how hard you try, you're always going to be from another country. We're not going to be American American. We're going to be Latin." [35]

Ronald, a second generation Cuban noted,

> "Like with Elián, that's when you hear about everything. That's when things start like surfacing. ... But, like that was completely and totally out of proportion because all it would show in the news was people, you know, setting trash cans on fire, getting in fights with the cops. When you see stuff like that and it's about you, you realize that, you know, they wanted to make us look like the angry Cubans. Right? To make everybody hate us." [36]

As with many other young Miami Latinos, Ronald suddenly felt as if he was perceived as different and that perception prompted political engagement. Ronald and other Latino youth, both Cuban and non-Cuban, frequented the daily demonstrations in front of the house where Elián stayed. All the youth we spoke with attended the demonstrations to express their solidarity. Ramon, another second generation Cuban high school student explained, "It was like a feeling that this was wrong and what can be done to show that this is not just going to be accepted by the [Cuban] community." Longitudinal ethnographic work indicated that the majority of the Miami Cuban youth in our sample grew up politically apathetic and presumed that their group, Latinos, was locally hegemonic. The Elián case shocked them into an awareness of their "otherness" vis-à-vis the national social and political landscape. This event also affected their Nicaraguan peers who had also been largely politically unengaged. The Nicaraguan youth were also forced into acknowledging the uniqueness of the region where they lived and their differentness from Anglos, i.e. non-Hispanic whites. Above all they were shocked into a new awareness that others in the broader U.S. society beyond Miami might hold different views of the world. They were forced to reflect upon their sense of belonging to their local place as well as their place in the broader U.S. society. [37]

17 All of these quotes come from the focus group mentioned in Note 10.

7. Local Shifts and Micro-contexts

Haitians in South Florida have never had the luxury of being able to assume acceptance on equal footing with "others" in the U.S. or more regionally in South Florida. Rosina, a Miami high school student born in the Bahamas of Haitian parents, asserts,

> "It's one thing I don't like about American people, they're always pickin' on Haitians. Like, any time, like, two Americans get into, like, an argument or somethin' like, I mean the curse word they use is 'Haitian' ... it's some type of curse word."[18] [38]

In the early 1980s, when Haitians first started entering Miami's Edison Senior High School in significant numbers, conflict episodically convulsed the school, forcing administrators to close it temporarily a number of times. African American students mocked newly arrived Haitian boys for playing soccer, instead of football and basketball. The majority African American students severely ridiculed and beat up anyone who looked Haitian, or who spoke Creole or accented English. [39]

In an early 1990s survey of Haitian eighth- and ninth-graders in South Florida schools, over 60 percent claimed that they had experienced anti-Haitian discrimination in the United States. Those who were born in the United States reported even more discrimination than those Haitians who were born abroad (FERNÁNDEZ-KELLY & SCHAUFFLER, 1994). For Haitians in South Florida, simply being of Haitian descent brings on discrimination. Given this negative context of reception, most Haitian youth choose other Haitians as their closest friends. Nearly 90 percent of the eighth- and ninth-graders reported that their friends were primarily other Haitians (FERNÁNDEZ-KELLY & SCHAUFFLER, 1994). We found many Haitian youth who when they master the accent and dress codes of American high school culture cover up their Haitian roots and culturally go undercover by posing as African American. [40]

While many Haitian youth in Miami assimilate to inner-city African American culture they do so with ambivalence, not certain whether they should be either Haitian or African American, or if it is possible to be both. Sometimes others uncover one's Haitian roots. In the spring of 1989, the Edison High newspaper wrote an article on one of the first Haitian girls to become a cheerleader. For two years until this article appeared, the girl had kept her Haitian background secret. Another Haitian girl kept her heritage a secret while she dated a popular African American boy. She arrived at school one day to find her name and the word "undercover" scrawled across the front steps of the school. [41]

Over the decades that we followed the students in Edison High School and watched the demographics shift from majority African American to majority Haitian we also saw a shift in the conflicted feelings and behaviors of belonging

18 This quote and the following one came from a focus group of Haitian high school students who were discussing the meaning of being Haitian in Miami. The focus group was part of the already mentioned research project on academic orientation (see STEPICK, 1995). The ethnographic examples in this section come from fieldwork conducted by Peggy NOLAN and Emmanuel EUGENE in a primarily Haitian high school in Miami.

expressed by Haitian students there. A Haitian boy who has been in the U.S. all of his life expressed his conflicted feelings about going undercover by claiming that, "Just because a person wants to become an American, you know, doesn't mean they have to forget their heritage and everything." [42]

While Haitians and African Americans maintain negative stereotypes of each other, racism pushes them together. Both groups acutely experience and astutely assess America's racism. Whenever the U.S. government jails newly arrived Haitians, refusing them a legal immigration status that the U.S. government does extend to Cubans, then both African Americans and Haitians interpret the actions as based upon racism. Similarly, both African Americans and Haitians in Miami celebrated the 2008 election of Barack Obama as a victory against U.S. racism. [43]

Nevertheless, as Haitians become successful cover-ups, as they talk the talk, walk the walk, and appear as African Americans, they gain acceptance from African Americans. In this way Haitians earn the right to be a part of the local society. This successful segmented assimilation establishes the foundation for the Haitians' next step, their reassertion of pride in their Haitian heritage. Once Haitians earn the respect of their African American peers, then they can fling off their covers and reveal their true Haitian identity. They can wear Haitian clothes, eat Haitian food, speak Creole in front of African Americans and as one young woman did declare to both African Americans and those Haitians who are still cover-ups, "I'm a real Haitian, girl!" [44]

The Haitians who rediscover Haitian pride have prevailed over prejudice and pressures to assume a singular ethnic identity. They exhibit what has been called reactive formation ethnicity, the formation of ethnicity as a reaction to prejudice and discrimination (PORTES & STEPICK, 1993). [45]

At the same time, they have become self-consciously, multicultural individuals. The Haitian youths' behavior is undoubtedly in most respects becoming more Americanized. They speak better English and come to prefer speaking English to their parents' native language of Creole. They may still go to church, but they prefer English-language services and are likely to try out new churches, different from the ones their parents attend. They are also more likely to have friends of the opposite sex, listen to American music with its suggestive lyrics, and females are likely to dress in a more sexually provocative manner in spite of parental opposition. To their parents and many others, the children of immigrants appear to have thoroughly absorbed and accepted American culture, specifically a preference for English, new styles of dress, gender relations, and occasionally expressions of independence and challenges to parental authority. Parents often do not see the disjuncture between the children's more American-oriented cultural preferences and their children‘s continued appreciation for their parents. Parents fail to recognize that their children's self-labeling increasingly reverts to a home country emphasis. Instead, the parents' concerns for their children's future create a backlash as the parents fear that cultural transformations mean the abandonment of home country values and failure to appreciate the opportunities in the U.S. [46]

In spite of parents' fears and a consistently negative context of reception, the Haitian second generation is finding a place of belonging in the regional context of South Florida. Behaviorally, Haitian youth are finding ways to "fit in" socially, and through education to advance economically. In Miami-Dade County, home to the largest concentration of Haitians in Florida, Haitians are discovering their political voice. At the larger local community level this is similar to the Haitian youth who felt more empowered at Edison High School as their numbers grew. [47]

8. Contexts of Reception and the Future of the Second Generation

The context of reception that immigrants confront fundamentally affects the social figurations they both respond to and construct themselves and accordingly their sense of belonging. If the established residents present a positive context of reception, then immigrants are more likely to feel a sense of belonging that incorporates the immigrants into the established residents' figurations. On the other hand, if the context of reception is negative and marked by prejudice and discrimination, immigrants are more likely to react by constructing alternative configurations apart from those of the established residents. [48]

A sense of empowerment is an important element of feeling a sense of belonging. For a recent immigrant group, Cubans are extraordinarily empowered in South Florida, particularly in Miami-Dade County. Based on the welcoming, legal mechanisms of adaptation afforded them by the U.S. government, they have created a social, economic and political environment where speaking Spanish is not a negative attribute and is, in fact, an advantage; and where being an immigrant or the child of an immigrant is not demeaned, but rather is accepted as a point of pride. Cuban youth express their sense of belonging in much the same ways that Anglo youth throughout the U.S do. They proprietarily take their place in society for granted. Only when an event or travel moves them out of the comfort of their region where their community is dominant, such as occurred during the Elián confrontation, are they forced to reflect on their sense of belonging. [49]

Nicaraguan youth who grow up among Cuban peers are able to benefit from a pan-Latino culture that has surely been enabled by the power and influence of Miami's Cubans. While the parents of newcomer Nicaraguan youth may feel some alienation from Miami's Cubans and resentment over the power Miami Cubans exercise locally, second generation Nicaraguans are more likely to feel a solidarity with second generation Cubans, which appears to be reciprocal. [50]

However, non-Latinos, such as Haitians, must contend with a very different context of reception that discriminates and expresses prejudices toward their language, culture or skin color. On virtually every level Haitians have experienced a consistently negative context of reception. In spite of a generally pro-immigrant sentiment at the local county level in Miami, Haitian youth have endured extreme, sometimes violent, social and cultural discrimination. However, the figurations imposed upon them by their host culture have changed over time and Haitian youth have exercised agency in bringing about that change. As a group they

learned what is necessary to be accepted by African American youth who constitute their immediate hosts; Haitians generally work hard in school and many excel in spite of high odds against academic achievement (NICHOLAS, STEPICK & DUTTON STEPICK, 2008). Locally, Haitians have numerically achieved a critical mass such that their children who are now coming of age are and will be an integral component of the local community, contributing their part to the social, political and economic contexts that will set the tenor of reception for newcomers. Overall in South Florida, they are unlikely to challenge Cuban and broader Latino power and they remain unlikely to be entirely accepted by them. Nevertheless, in the smaller context of Haitian and African American neighborhoods, they continue to increasingly integrate themselves and find a sense of belonging. [51]

It is less clear how Guatemalans in the two counties of Broward and Palm Beach to the north of Miami will fare. They are too much a numerical minority to have much of a political voice in their local communities, and too geographically isolated from Miami to benefit from the more pro-immigrant environment created by Cubans there. The Guatemalans confront a context of reception created primarily by Anglos and the Guatemalans will continue for some time to be numerical minorities, speaking a language other than English or Spanish, being viewed as poorly educated and skilled and as racially and culturally different. The Guatemalans' contexts of reception from the state to the local have been, on the whole, negative. Except for a few, strongly committed, community-based progressive organizations this population has few advocates to even protect it from employers who stoop to wage theft and worker slavery. [52]

By extending previous work on contexts of reception, this paper has delineated variations in context of reception. We have indicated variation between national context of reception established by the nation state and local contexts that may be either consistent or inconsistent with that of the state. We have also indicated how contexts may vary locally, particularly how in the case of Miami perceptions of immigrants' race eases integration for Latino whites and creates obstacles for Caribbean blacks. We have also indicated how contexts may change over time as happened with Cubans in response to the Elián crisis and for Haitians as the second generation learned the culture of local African Americans. [53]

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