

Latinx Immigrants in the United States: A Comparative Analysis on the Venezuelan and Cuban Immigrants in Florida*

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Abstract

Latinx immigrants in the U.S. are often analyzed through single case study methodology where each selected Latinx immigrant group in the U.S. analyzed through separate chapters of a book or a sub-section of an article. This study is prepared to compare the push factors, migration journeys and post-migration patterns of Cuban and Venezuelan immigrants in Florida by adopting Charles Tilly's Individualizing Comparison methodology. Since both of the Venezuelan and Cuban immigrants have been fleeing from left-wing home governments and choosing the same point of destination (Florida), there is a common misunderstanding that both of these immigrant groups have the same post-migration patterns. For this reason, levels of English proficiency, income, education and political party tendencies are compared throughout this study to show the differences and peculiarities of both immigrant groups in a comparative perspective. According to the findings of this study, the common assumptions about the two immigrants groups are wrong.

Keywords: Comparative Migration Studies, Latinx Immigrants, Individualizing Comparison, Venezuelan Immigrants, Cuban Immigrants

Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'ndeki Latin Göçmenler: Florida'da Yaşayan Kübalı ve Venezuelalı Göçmenler Üzerine Karşılaştırmalı Analiz

Öz

Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde yaşayan Latin kökenli göçmenler çoğunlukla tekil vaka çalışmaları kullanılarak analiz edilmektedir, bu tür çalışmalarda ülkede yaşayan her bir Latin kökenli grup bir kitabın veya makalenin birbirinden bağımsız bölümlerinde ayrı ayrı ele alınmaktadır. Bu çalışma ise ABD'nin Florida eyaletine göç eden Kübalı ve Venezuelalı göçmenlerin, göç sebepleri, göç yolları ve göç sonrası Florida'ya yerleşme düzenlerini Charles Tilly'nin Bireyselleştirici Karşılaştırma yöntemini kullanarak analiz etmek üzere hazırlanmıştır. Her iki göçmen grubunun da göç etme sebepleri ve göç için tercih ettiği eyaletler (Florida başta olmak üzere) benzer olduğundan, göç sonrası yerleşme düzenlerinin de aynı olduğu varsayılmaktadır. Çalışma için diğer Latin kökenli göçmen gruplarının yerine, Kübalı ve Venezuelalı göçmenlerin seçilmesinin sebebi de bu



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varsayımdır. Her iki grup, politik sebeplerle, ABD tarafından diğer Latin göçmen gruplarına kıyasla daha sıcak karşılanmaktadır. Çalışma boyunca her iki göçmen grubunun İngilizce yeterli seviyeleri, gelir düzeyleri, vatandaşlığa kabul edilme oranları, siyasi parti eğilimleri vb. karşılaştırılarak söz konusu varsayımın yanlış olduğunu ortaya çıkarılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Karşılaştırmalı Göç Çalışmaları, ABD'deki Latin Göçmenler, Bireyselleştirici Karşılaştırma, Venezuelalı Göçmenler, Kübalı Göçmenler

Introduction

The foreign-born population in the U.S. has been reached to 45 million in 2019, they comprised 14 per cent of the total U.S. population during the same year and nearly half of them came from Latin American countries (Batalova, Blizzard and Bolter, 2020). Most of the Latinx¹ immigrant groups in the U.S. (Mexicans, Colombians, El Salvadorians and Dominicans etc.) receive a negative treatment from the American government and society. President Donald Trump repeatedly used his promise to build a wall between Mexican and U.S. border in order to prevent Mexican immigration to the U.S.; called Haiti and El Salvador as "shithole" countries during his presidential campaign in 2016 and also called a caravan of Central American Immigrants as "stone cold criminals" (Donahue, 2019; Jansen and Gomez, 2018). Studies show that Donald Trump's anti-immigrant sentiments actually helped him to get elected in 2016 (Hooghe and Dassonneville, 2018: 530; Ramshorst, 2018: 254). Interestingly, the U.S. government and society have been welcoming Cuban and Venezuelan immigrants with open arms unlike Mexican, El Salvadorian, or Columbian immigrants mainly because they both flee from U.S.' archenemies and left-wing governments.

Venezuelan and Cuban immigrants have many common traits like fleeing from left-wing home governments, having economic concerns especially about private property rights, having similar cultural backgrounds, choosing (mainly) Florida to settle, paying close attention to the political developments in their home countries and looking for a political change in order to go back to their home countries. They are more likely to be incorporated into the American society because they are wealthier and have higher English proficiency levels (compared to other Latinx immigrants). Because of their common traits, it is wrongly assumed that they also have the same immigrant profiles and post-migration patterns in the U.S. (Alberts, 2016; Cobas et al., 2015; Gosin, 2019). Still they also have their own unique characteristics, like different political tendencies, voting behaviours, education and income levels etc. These difference between Cuban and Venezuelan immigrants in the U.S. are mostly ignored by the scholars. This study aims to contribute to the related literature on the subject.

These two cases are so similar yet in some other ways they are so different. To reveal this uniqueness of each of these two cases, the following questions are asked: In what ways Cuban and Venezuelan immigrants in Florida differ? What kind of challenges do they encounter during and after the migration? Do they have the same political tendencies and voting behaviors since both of the immigrant groups flee from the socialist governments? How different or similar their socioeconomic characteristics are?

¹ Latinx is a new gender-neutral term which has been using by scholars as an alternative to the terms as Latino, Latina or Hispanic both in English and Spanish (DeGuzmán, 2017; Torres, 2018).

1. Methodology

Latinx immigrants in the U.S. are mostly analyzed by single case study methodology where each selected Latinx immigrant group in the U.S. analyzed through separate chapters of a book or different sub-sections of an article (see Arredondo, 2018; Saucedo and Itzigsohn, 2006; Morales, 2018; Stavans, 2017). Different methodologies produce different conclusions and knowledge. There are many studies on Latinx immigrants but they mainly created by using the same methodology, thus the produced knowledge on Latinx immigrants can only be partial. In order to reach more comprehensive understanding about a topic, different methodologies should be adopted by the scholars. The main contribution of this study to the literature is the knowledge produced by the comparative methodology.

The main aim of this study is to assess this understanding by looking closer to the profiles of Venezuelan and Cuban immigrants in Florida by adopting Tilly's (1984) individualizing comparison methodology. Cuban and Venezuelan immigrants are selected for this study because they have very different profiles compared to other Latinx immigrants in the U.S. but treated as the two same instances in the related literature. This study claims the opposite and even the both immigrant groups have some common traits, they display very different profiles after their settlement to the U.S. In order to prove this claim, this study adopts Tilly's small-N comparative methodology; individualizing comparison.

In his book "Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons" Tilly (1984: 74) admits that his book will mostly focus on the macro level analysis. Still, he emphasizes the importance of micro level analysis for assessing and understanding relations between social units (in this article's case it is the immigrant groups) and social phenomena (migration and adaptation to the host society) (1984: 64). Individualizing comparison is a type of micro level analysis. Small-N number cases are compared to get *the peculiarities* of each case. "Individualizing comparison treats each case as unique, taking up one instance at a time and minimizing its common properties with other instances" (1984: 81). Since the main aim of this study is analyzing the differences, the peculiarities of the Cuban and Venezuelan immigrant groups in the U.S., this methodology is the most suitable one for this article.

2. Venezuelan Migration to the Southeast United States

As many studies show, having great amount of crude oil reserve is both a blessing and a curse (Gelb, 1988; Ross, 2013; Schubert, 2006). Venezuela is not an exception to this claim as having the biggest proven crude oil reserves in the world with more than 300 billion barrels of proved oil reserves (U.S. Energy Information Agency, 2015). Venezuelan economy has been highly depended on oil revenues (OPEC, 2018) and since oil prices are determined by international market, this makes Venezuelan economy very vulnerable to the external developments. On the other hand, oil reserve is the source of high income. This is why Venezuela once was the primary destination country for immigrants from Central and South America and even Europe (Butzer et al., 2002: 230). However, the situation has changed after the election of Hugo Chávez as the president in 1998. Mostly because of political and economic reasons, middle and upper class citizens started to leave Venezuela, however since 2015, lower class citizens also forced to emigrate. As of April 2020, more than 5 million Venezuelans had left their country mainly because of the economic crisis. As of 2019, 11.7 per cent of these Venezuelans chose Florida as their point of destination (UNHCR, 2020).

2.1. Venezuelans' Pre-Migration Period

In order to reach a comprehensive understanding of Venezuelan migration to the U.S., first and foremost it is important to ask why these people have been leaving their country. Venezuelan migration waves can be divided into two periods as the first couple of years of the Chávez' presidency (after 1998 Presidential Election) and after the economic and political crises in 2014.

Thanks to the Punto Fijo Pact of 1958, the sharing of oil revenues between the elite made Venezuelan democracy an exception in compare to all other Latin American Countries (except Columbia). While all of these countries has been dealing with coup d'états (Coups of 1962, 1966 and 1976 in Argentina; 1959 and 1964 in Brazil; and 1973 in Chile etc.), in Venezuela there had been none (there was one failed attempt in 1992 organized by Hugo Chávez). The reason of this stability was the pact that made between the petro-elites and political parties in 1958 (Crisp et al., 1995; Karl, 1987: 64). The Punto Fijo Pact of 1958 was signed by the leading political parties of the country and these three political parties (Democratic Action, AD; Christian Democrat Party, COPEI and Democratic Republican Union, URD) were promising to respect the elections and to support the political stability in Venezuela. According to Karl (1987: 73), this pact was the result of bargaining processes between the representatives of the upper class (political parties) and private oil sector. This political period (pact democracy) had been continued for 40 years until the election of Hugo Chávez as the president. From 1958 to 1998, all the Venezuelan Presidents were the members of AD or COPEI or had past affiliations with one of them. Chávez was the first president who did not have any previous relations with those two political parties. He had always condemned this period and he argued that the people of Venezuela could not get any share of oil the revenues during this period. He claimed that the pact democracy was denying "the right of people to determine their own destiny", that he was going to change it with a participatory democracy model and will share the Venezuelan oil revenues with his people (Gott, 2005: 41). In order to do this, President Chávez started to change everything from the constitution to the electoral system and initiated the expropriation process (including electricity, telecommunication and oil companies). These structural changes got a very strong reaction from the old elites of the pact democracy (including a failed coup attempt against him in 2002 and a huge, countrywide oil strike in 2002 and 2003) but also created huge support for President Chávez from the previously excluded parts of the society (Salas, 2015: 151, 163). Since then, Venezuelan society has been deeply polarized as pro-Chavistas vs. anti-Chavistas (Ellner, 2013: 68). So after the 2000s, old elites (mostly upper and middle class Venezuelans) started to leave the country with their capital stock (Semple, 2008). From 2000 to 2010, 1.5 million Venezuelans had left the country and 260.000 of total Venezuelan immigrants chose the U.S. as their point of destination (Freitez, 2011: 26).

The second wave of emigration started after the death of Hugo Chávez in 2013. Nicolás Maduro, successor of President Chávez and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, became the new president with a highly disputed election in 2014. Economic crisis took place roughly at the same time with the Maduro's presidency. As already mentioned, Venezuelan economy has been highly depended on oil revenues and when the oil prices started to go down in September 2014, Venezuela started to face with a huge economic crisis. When the prices per barrel went down US\$ 35 in early 2016, the crisis became worse (U.S. Energy Information Agency, 2017). This time, more Venezuelans from all income levels forced to leave their country mostly because economic reasons and for security (Cadenas, 2018: 222). During the economic crisis, crime rates in Venezuela has been skyrocketed and the country became the most violent one in the world with 81.4 homicides per 100.000 people in 2018 (Observatorio Venezolano de Violencia, 2018).

Considering all of these, an exodus was inevitable. The percentage of Venezuelan population was increased 1132 per cent in Columbia (more than 500.000 Venezuelans), 104 per cent in Mexico, 26 per cent in Spain and 14 per cent in the U.S. between 2015 and 2017 (International Organization for Migration, IOM, 2018). As of April 2020, more than 5 million (17 per cent of the total population) Venezuelans have left their country. In 2018, Venezuelan immigrants in U.S. reached 394.000 and Venezuelan population in the U.S. has been increased 54 per cent since 2015 (Gallardo and Batalova, 2020).

During the Maduro administration, Venezuela became the most corrupted country in Latin America and ranked as 173rd out of 180 countries in 2019 (Transparency International, 2020). Also according to the InSight Crime (2018), Venezuela became the second most dangerous state in the world (Syria was the first) in 2017 with skyrocketed kidnapping and homicide rates. Alongside nepotism (favoring pro-Chavista groups), deterioration of democracy, oppression on opposition groups, high inflation and unemployment rates are also constituted the path to the Venezuelan exodus (Ellner, 2018: 400). As a study shows Venezuelan Americans' push factors were not differed between 2000 and 2013; 26 per cent left Venezuela for political reasons and 18 per cent for economic reasons, 16 per cent for personal reasons, 15 per cent for education, 9 per cent for cultural reasons, 8 per cent for double nationality and 8 per cent of them left for family reunification (Páez et al., 2014).

2.2. Venezuelans' Migration Patterns

During the first wave of Venezuelan emigration (during the Chávez era), the air route was the primary choice for migration journey. It is also important to mention that most of these Venezuelan immigrants had higher income rates than average Venezuelans so it was not an issue for them to obtain a U.S. visa, work permit and an airplane ticket. Those immigrants mostly chose Florida as their point of destination in the U.S. (Delgado, 2014; UNHCR, 2018). However during the second wave (after the economic crisis) the land and maritime routes have recently become more significant (Páez et al., 2014). An important reason for this is most likely about the income rates of these second wave Venezuelan emigrants. Due to the currency devaluations, exchange controls, the shortage of the U.S. dollar and very high inflation rates in Venezuela, it became nearly impossible for the common Venezuelans to pay for an airplane ticket or to apply for a U.S. visa or even for asylum. So they chose to migrate to the closer destinations like Columbia, Peru, Chile, Argentina etc. Currently Venezuela's neighbor Columbia hosts 1.8 million Venezuelan immigrants (UNHCR, 2020). Still, some of them chose the U.S. as their point of destination. Family ties (54 per cent), employment sponsorship (27 per cent), asylum applications (10 per cent) and education are major reasons for Venezuelan migration to the U.S (Migration Policy Institute, MPI, 2020). Along with family ties, geographical proximity could be the reason of Venezuelan concentration in the Southeast U.S. (Cadenas, 2018: 223). Recent statistics reveals that 69 per cent of Venezuelan population lives the Southeast U.S. (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, USCIS, 2019).

Venezuelan population in the U.S. has been increasing over the years. There were only 165.000 Venezuelans in U.S. in 2005, it was increased to 242.000 in 2010, to 321.000 in 2015 and to 484.000 in 2018 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019a). Their share in all the South American Immigrants in the U.S. reached 11 per cent in 2017. 208.000 of Venezuelans were obtained U.S. citizenship until 2017, 207.000 of them were not U.S. citizens (USCIS, 2019). Getting in the U.S. through tourist visas and then filing for asylum is the most common migration pattern for Venezuelans. Because after five months from the asylum application, they could get a work permit and pay taxes while waiting for their asylum process (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2019a). Education is another way to enter into the U.S.

for the Venezuelans. In the 2013-14 academic year, 7.000 Venezuelan students were enrolled in the U.S. universities with a student visa. During the 2016-17 academic year, the number increased to 8.540 (Loo, 2018). Getting in the U.S. with student visa did not increase as much as Venezuelan asylum applications during the same years because of the high costs of the American universities.

The U.S. only accepts a certain number of refugees each year basing on the Presidential authorization. Obama and Trump administrations accepted different number of refugees. In 2017, Obama administration planned to accept 110.000 refugees but Trump administration set the lowest admission quota (since the 1960s) as 45.000 in 2018 and because of the Travel ban only 22.491 refugees were granted asylum by the U.S. in 2018 (USCIS, 2019). The numbers of Venezuelan asylum seekers have been increasing over the years especially after 2015. In 1998 when Chávez elected as the President, the U.S. only accepted 14 Venezuelan refugees but the number increased to 1.086 in 1999. Since 2017, Venezuelans have been on the top of the list of asylum application to the U.S. In 2019, one out of every three asylum applications in the U.S. came from the Venezuelans. Roughly 50 per cent of these Venezuelans were granted asylum in the U.S. while the average acceptance rate was 28 per cent for all other nationalities in the U.S. (USCIS, 2019).

Overstaying tourist visas are the most common way of unauthorized immigration in Venezuelans' case. Around 190.000 Venezuelans overstayed their tourist visas until 2019 (USCIS, 2019). There is no data about other unauthorized entrance to the U.S. by Venezuelan immigrants. The deportation rates of Venezuelans from the U.S. are really low in compare to other Latin American countries. Only 248 Venezuelans were deported in 2017 while 74.000 Latinx immigrants were deported to Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador in the same year (USCIS, 2019).

2.3. Venezuelans' Post-Migration and Settlement Patterns

As of 2018, over 60 million Latinx immigrants have been living in the U.S. and Venezuelans only comprise 0.84 per cent of them with their nearly half million population in the U.S. (USCIS, 2019). Most (69 per cent) of them choose to live on the South side of the country, Florida comes first as the point of destination for 53 per cent of them, then Texas comes second with 12 per cent. New York and New Jersey are the other top two points of destination for Venezuelans (USCIS, 2019).

The Venezuelan population within the U.S. is often described as young and well educated. They also have higher income rates than other Latinx immigrants in the U.S. They are more easily "incorporated into the American culture despite such barriers as language and cultural identification due to the well-deserved reputation of being a well-educated and hard-working class" (Morales, 2018: 279). The findings of Pew Research Center's (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2019a) and Migration Policy Institute (Gallardo and Batalova, 2020) on Venezuelan immigrants (both U.S. citizen and non-citizens) also support these claims;

- About seven-in-ten Venezuelans (74 per cent) in the United States are foreign born,
- 54 per cent of Venezuelans have English Proficiency (ages 5 and older),
- Venezuelans have higher levels of education than the U.S. Latinx immigrants and then the U.S. overall population, 94 per cent of them finished high school, 57 per cent of them have bachelor degrees and 21 per cent have graduate degrees,

- The share of Venezuelans who live in poverty in the U.S. is 18 per cent. It is higher than the rate for the general U.S. population (16 per cent) and lower than the rate for Latinx overall (25 per cent),
- 80 per cent of Venezuelan immigrants in the U.S. are at working age (16 and older), their median age is 38. Also 73 per cent of them employed in civilian labor force (including business management, science, service, sales and office occupations),
- The median annual personal earnings for Venezuelans (ages 16 and older) was \$56,000,
- 64 per cent of Venezuelan immigrants in the U.S. have private health insurance which is a high rate compared to other Latinx immigrants in the U.S.,
- Venezuelan immigrants' homeownership rate (49 per cent) is higher than the other Latinx immigrants (45 per cent) but lower than the overall U.S. population (64 per cent).

During the 1990s Venezuelan community in Florida was very small, it was comprised of 20.335 Venezuelans, but right after President Chávez took the office the number reached to 70.000 (Freitez, 2011: 26). Over the years the number continued to increase and reached 131.825 in 2010, 164.851 in 2014 and finally 256.520 in 2019 (USCIS, 2019). The left-populist regime prompted an exodus of middle and upper class Venezuelans to Florida especially to Fort Lauderdale, Dade and Doral Counties. Fort Lauderdale has the most Venezuelan residents with 109.000 (MPI, 2020). Between 2000 and 2017, Venezuelan population in the U.S. increased by 352 per cent and thus they became the third fastest growing immigrant group in South Florida (Osorio, 2019).

Venezuelan investors also made huge impact on Florida's economy. In 2016 for example, Venezuelans accounted for 17 per cent of South Florida residential real estate purchases by foreign buyers in the U.S. and became the top group of immigrants that was investing in South Florida with over one billion dollars (NAR, 2017). In general they are very wealthy people and bring their businesses to South Florida or open new companies. Also unlike other immigrants, they are mostly welcomed by conservative politicians and the media, the main reason for this is the republican control of South Florida congressional districts. Cuban Americans view Venezuelan immigrants as natural allies in a regional struggle against Latin American leftism (Rothe and Pumariega, 2008: 252). Yet, Venezuelan Americans' voting behavior differs. More Venezuelans in Florida voted for Obama than Romney in 2012, and yet they tend to support Republicans in Congress like Marco Rubio and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen. According to a poll about Venezuelan Americans voting behavior in Florida, 62 per cent of them remain unaffiliated with any party, while 33 per cent of them registered to the Democratic Party while only 5 per cent chose to register to the Republican Party (Padgett, 2019). However, after the Trump administration imposed economic sanctions against Venezuela in 2018 and put pressure on the Maduro administration, Venezuelan-American voters started to give more support to the Republicans and President Trump. Since the elections in Florida has always been won or lost with very small margins, the votes of Venezuelan-Americans became very critic for the politicians (in the 2000 Presidential Election, President George Bush won presidency only by 537 votes in Florida) (Blitzer, 2019; Rabellino, 2017). Considering that Venezuelan immigrant population is increasing every day in the U.S., especially in Florida, their votes and investments are likely to stay very important for the U.S.

2.4. Cuban Migration to the Southeast United States

Cuban immigration to the U.S. has very different characteristics than Venezuelan immigration. First of all, after the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the U.S. had faced with the largest migration flow in its history. Second, since the 1970s, Cuba has been one of the top ten countries sending immigrants to the U.S. Also, unlike the Venezuelans, the primary destination country for Cubans is the U.S. Finally, due to the Cold War era, the U.S. has shown a unique approach (especially in terms of immigration laws) towards Cuban immigrants. Cuban immigrants had been on the top of the list of obtaining legal permanent residence (LDR) from the U.S. since the 1970s. With 6 per cent LDR obtaining rate, they took the third place among all other immigrants in the U.S. in 2016 (Mexico was first and China was the second) (Castellanos and Gloria, 2018: 75). As of 2018, the Cuban-born population in the U.S. had been reached 1.3 million and total Cuban population in the country reached to 3.2 million during the same year. Their share of total Latinx immigrant population in the U.S. was 5.3 per cent in 2018, less than the share of Mexican immigrants (18.3 per cent) but much more than the share of Venezuelan immigrants (0.80 per cent) during the same year (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019b).

2.5. Cubans' Pre-Migration Period

Just like the Venezuelan emigration, Cuban emigration has also different periods, different flows towards the U.S., mostly depending on internal developments and Cuba - U.S. relations. After the 1959 Cuban Revolution and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, there had been flow of Cuban immigrants to the U.S. Unlike any other immigrant groups (Latinx or not), Cuban immigrants have always been welcomed by the U.S. with open arms. "U.S. offered them a fast track to get legal permanent residence and immediate access to federal safety-net benefits—a preferential treatment unlike that afforded to any other immigrant group" (Duany, 2017). This is the very unique characteristic of Cuban immigration to the U.S.

The first wave of Cuban immigration to the U.S. had started right after the Fulgencio Batista's defeat to Fidel Castro in 1959 (Castellanos and Gloria, 2018: 76). After the revolution, large wave of exiles fled to U.S. from 1959 to 1962, during this term 248.000 Cubans migrated to the U.S. with commercial flights and 14.000 of them were unaccompanied children (as a result of Operation Pedro Pan). In 1961, U.S. cut all the diplomatic relations with Cuba and in 1962, the Cuban Missile Crisis has occurred. During this period, authorized immigration to the U.S. became nearly impossible so unauthorized immigration had started. Then, in 1965, Cuba agreed to open the port of Camarioca and allowed people to leave. With the agreement of Castro government, the U.S. created an "Air Bridge" from Varadero to Miami and started the U.S. funded free flights for Cubans who wanted to leave 'the communist regime' and the agreement has continued until 1973 (Duany, 2017). According to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) from 1960 to 1970, 208.000 Cubans arrived to the U.S. (The DHS, 1999). Until the 1990s, Cuban population in the U.S. had reached to 737.000 and their social, racial and economic profiles were differed from each other (Castellanos and Gloria, 2018: 83).

The second wave has started after the collapse of the Soviet Union when Cuba was deprived from the economic support of USSR and dealt with a huge economic crisis. The gross domestic product decreased 35 per cent from 1989 to 1993 (Duany, 2017). Unlike the post-revolution emigration wave, this time Cubans had started to leave their country mostly for the economic reasons. The economic recession triggered the distress in Cuba and then Castro regime decided to let the dissidents leave Cuba in 1994. A year later, when the Clinton administration ended the "open door policy" and introduced the "dry foot, wet

foot" policy², for the first time since the Cuban Revolution, the detention and the deportation of Cuban immigrants (who were caught at the sea) had started. In 2017, when Obama administration decided to end this policy, Cuban-born population in the U.S. was increased to 1.312.000 and Cubans comprised of 3 per cent of the total immigrant population in the U.S. (The U.S. Census Bureau, 2019b).

2.6. Cubans' Migration Patterns

The first wave Cuban immigrants comprised of Batista regime's bureaucrats, supporters, military officers and government officials. After the socialist revolution, business owners, land owners, upper and well educated middle class also started to leave Cuba (Portes, 1987: 343). Most of these Cuban immigrants arrived with airport transportation to Miami International Airport as authorized immigrants and stayed in their main port of entry; Florida and settled in there. Until the 1980s, most of the Cuban immigrants who arrived in the U.S. were skilled, semi-skilled and blue collared workers. They also chose Florida as their point of destination and most of them came through "Air Bridge" to the U.S. (Pérez, 1986: 132; Portes, 1987: 343). In 1980, Castro government let Cubans leave the island and opened Mariel Harbor. But this time 25 per cent of these Cubans had criminal records and some of them even had mental health issues, so the U.S.' behavior towards Cuban migration had started to change for the first time mostly because these new immigrants mostly consisted of young, uneducated and single males (Moreno and Warren, 2018: 170-171). Mariel incident is also important because for the first time, Cuban immigrants tried to reach to the U.S. through the sea from the North Atlantic Ocean. After the Cold War, the Ocean became the primary source of transportation, especially by the poor Cubans who could not afford plane tickets. They made their own vessels to pass the ocean but many of them died during the travel but it was still the most commonly used transportation (Duany, 2017). After reaching to the U.S. soils from the sea or from the U.S. Mexican border, Cubans could become legal residents. According to the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act, while other immigrant groups had to wait for five years in order to become eligible for government's assistance, Cubans did not have to wait at all (Castellanos and Gloria, 2018: 77). Even though the Clinton and Obama administrations restricted the benefits of it, the Act is still valid and this paves the way for more immigration from Cuba. In fact, in 2016, there were 74 per cent increase of Cuban immigration from the previous year and Cuba had the fourth place in the top sending countries list in the same year (Stavans, 2017: 68-70).

There were 439.000 Cuban born population in the U.S. in 1970s however this number reached to one million in 2010 and 1.3 million in 2017. When the U.S. born Cubans were added, this number reaches to 3.2 million (USCIS, 2019). With that, Cuban immigrants form 2.9 per cent of total immigrant population in the U.S. They have a very high citizenship rates in compare to all other immigrant groups because of the Act of 1966. In 1999, 25.838 Cuban immigrants became U.S. citizen while only 2.258 Venezuelan immigrants became citizen during the same year. This number increased to 32.101 in 2016 while only 7.633 Venezuelan immigrants became U.S. citizen during the same year. 58 per cent of total Cuban immigrants became U.S. citizens, which is the highest rate in the U.S. history. To give an example, in 2015, 55.000 Cuban immigrants came to the U.S. and 88 per cent of them came as refugees because it was a lot easier to get LDR this way again because of the Act of 1966 (USCIS, 2019).

² A program that granted (only) Cuban migrants enter the U.S. soil without visas to stay and become permanent residents with a fast track to citizenship.

2.7. Cubans' Post-Migration and Settlement Patterns

68 per cent of all Cuban population in the U.S. have been living in Florida. Just like Venezuelan immigrants, they also choose to live in close proximity to their home country. Unlike Venezuelans, Cubans were less likely to be proficient in English, have lower education, and earn lower household income. As of 2017,

- 40 per cent of Cuban immigrants in the U.S. are foreign born. This rate is lower than the foreign born Venezuelans since many of the Cubans came to the U.S. before the 2000s, while many Venezuelans migrated to the U.S. after 2000s,

- The English proficiency rate among Cubans is 64 per cent which is higher than Venezuelans in the U.S.,

- Cuban immigrants have higher education levels than the overall Latinx population in the U.S., still the rate is lower than the Venezuelan immigrants' education levels. 27 per cent of the Cuban immigrants have bachelor's degree, 32.7 per cent finished high school,

- The share of Cuban immigrants who live in poverty in the U.S. is 15 per cent, which is less than the Venezuelan immigrants,

- Cuban immigrants are older than Venezuelan immigrants and their median age is 40,

- They are mostly work in semi-skilled jobs as sales, office jobs and production, 68 per cent of the Cuban immigrants are at working age (from 18 to 64), 58 per cent of them has been employed in the civilian labor force,

- Their annual income (age 16 and older) is importantly less than Venezuelans (which is \$56.000 per year) with \$28.000,

- 56 per cent of the Cuban population in the U.S. has private health insurance while 35 per cent has public health insurance, both are less than the Venezuelan population,

- With 55 per cent homeownership rate, Cuban immigrants have higher rates than both Venezuelans and overall Latinx immigrants (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2019b).

	Venezuelan Immigrants in the U.S.	Cuban Immigrants in the U.S.
Total Population in the U.S.	484.000	3.200.000
Living in Florida	53%	68%
Share in total Latinx Immigrant Population in the U.S.	0.84%	5.3%
Obtaining U.S. Citizenship	43%	58%
Foreign Born Population in the U.S.	74%	40%
English Proficiency Levels	54%	64%
Obtaining High School Diploma	94%	32.7%
Obtaining Bachelor Degree	57%	27%
Living in Poverty in the U.S.	18%	15%
Working Age Population	80%	68%
Annual Income	\$56.000	\$28.000
Private Health Insurance	64%	56%
Homeownership Rate	49%	55%

Table 1: Comparing Venezuelan and Cuban Immigrants in the U.S.

Above, Table 1 clearly shows the post-migration patterns of both of the immigrant groups. Since Cubans have much longer history of immigration to the U.S. than Venezuelans, their total population in the U.S. differs substantially. For the same reason, Cuban immigrants have much higher citizenship rates than Venezuelan immigrants since the former has higher chance of obtaining LDR. Since the Venezuelan exodus is a new

phenomenon compared to Cubans, it is only natural that the rate of foreign-born Venezuelans are much higher than the Cubans.

Cubans still have some common characteristics with Venezuelan immigrants in the U.S. like their choice of destination (Florida). They both chose to live closer to their home countries. Just like Venezuelans, Cuban immigrants too are concentrated in Florida, especially in Miami-Dade County in Miami which is called as Little Havana. Since their population is much higher than Venezuelans, they also "transformed the social, economic and ethnic fabric of Miami" so their cultural impact on Florida is much higher than the Venezuelans (Duany, 2017). As of 2019, Florida has more than 1.5 million Cuban resident. Until 1990, this number was only 21.231 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019b).

Political scientists point out that unlike other Latinx immigrant populations, Cuban exiles have become Republicans due to their strong anti-Communist belief (Moreno and Warren, 2018: 173) but younger Cuban immigrants are less likely to become Republican because they are mostly U.S. born. Still, according to the polls, they are heavily affiliated with the Republican Party with 54% voter registration. Only 19% of them were registered to the Democratic Party. On the other hand, there is a difference on party affiliations among foreign born and U.S. born Cubans. 72 per cent of the foreign born Cuban population are republican, 11 per cent of them are democrats while only 41 per cent of the U.S. born Cubans are republican and 28 per cent of them are registered as democrats (Grenier and Gladwin, 2019: 22). The voter turnout rates of the Cuban Americans are very high (87 per cent during the 2018 Midterm Elections) compared to the overall U.S. population (Grenier and Gladwin, 2019: 23).

Conclusion

Latinx population in the U.S. reached to 60 million in 2018 (USCIS, 2019). Mexicans have the highest rate within this immigrant population with 18.3 per cent while Cubans have 5.3 per cent and Venezuelans have only 0.83 per cent (Flores et al., 2018). Even though their percentage is very small compared to other Latinx immigrant communities, Cuban and Venezuelan immigrants have been shaping the social, ethnic and political fabrics of Florida. Miami-Dade County is now called "Little Havana", Doral County of Florida is also called as "Doralzuela" because of its Venezuelan population (Murriel, 2016). The first Venezuela born politician (Luigi Boria) elected as Mayor from the Doral County in 2012. Cuban Americans have many prominent politicians especially from the Republican Party like Ted Cruz or Marco Rubio. Both of them were prominent candidates from the Republican Party for the 2016 Presidential Elections. Most of the time Florida is cited as the crucial swing voter territory and this status stems from the often-close outcomes of the U.S. Presidential Elections. President Bush won Florida by a margin of 537 votes in 2000. In 2012 Barack Obama won Florida by a margin of less than one per cent (Crockett, 2016). The results of 2016 Presidential Elections were not different and according to the polls, 2020 Presidential Elections are the same. Consequently it is no surprise that both of the political parties are after the votes of the Cuban and Venezuelan Americans.

Because of the close proximity to their home countries and family ties, the primary point of destination has been Florida for both of these immigrant groups. Their push factors seem alike since both of Cuban and Venezuelan immigrants have been fleeing from their home countries mostly because of political and economic reasons. In compare to any other Latinx immigration, these two immigrant groups have more advantage of obtaining asylum, legal permanent residence or citizenships, the statistics of the USCIS and U.S. Census Bureau support these claims. Even though they have some common characteristics, they also differ in many ways. Venezuelan immigrants in the U.S. are more

educated than Cuban immigrants. Cuban immigration to the U.S. is a much older phenomenon than the Venezuelan immigration; however, Venezuelan immigration accelerated more recently (the second wave started after the 2014). Compared to Cuban immigrants, Venezuelan immigrants in the U.S. are wealthier. Mostly upper and middle class Venezuelans had the means to arrive the U.S. through air transportation. Venezuelan immigrants are much younger than the Cubans and thus their working age population (80 per cent) is higher than the Cubans (68 per cent). Venezuelan immigrants are also more educated than Cuban immigrants, so they can work in high income sectors and get higher wages. On the other hand, Cuban immigrants have higher rate of English proficiency and homeownership. They also have higher citizenship rates than Venezuelans because of the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act. Even though recent U.S. Presidents restricted some aspects of the Act, Cubans are still have more advantage than any other immigrant groups in the U.S. in case of obtaining citizenship.

In contrast to the common inference, Cuban and Venezuelan immigrants have very different post settlement patterns in Florida. Even though both of these Latinx immigrant groups are more welcomed by the U.S. government, they have very different profiles; including age, proficiency levels, political tendencies, educational and occupational attainments etc. By adopting Tilly's individualizing comparison methodology to the Cuban and Venezuelan migration to the U.S., this study shows the peculiarities of the each immigration group.

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Özet

Bu çalışma, ABD'nin Florida eyaletinde yaşayan Venezuelalı ve Kübalı göçmenleri Charles Tilly'nin Bireyselleştirici Karşılaştırma yöntemini kullanarak analiz etmektedir. ABD'de, 2019 itibarıyla 45 milyon göçmen yaşamaktadır ve bunların neredeyse yarısını Latin göçmenler oluşturmaktadır. Latin göçmenlerin pek çoğu ABD hükümeti ve halkı

tarafından oldukça olumsuzlukla karşılanmaktadır. Pek çok bilimsel çalışmaya göre, ABD Başkanı Donald Trump'ın ABD-Meksika sınırına duvar inşa etme sözü ve göçmen karşıtı söylemleri, 2016 seçimlerinde Başkan Trump'ın seçilmesine oldukça büyük katkıda bulunmuştur. Meksikalı, Kolombiyalı ya da El Salvadorlu vb. Latin göçmenlerin aksine Kübalı ve Venezuelalı göçmenler ABD halkı ve hükümeti tarafından oldukça iyi karşılanmaktadır. Bu sebeple de her iki göçmen grubunun, ABD'ye göçleri sonrası aynı özellikleri taşıdıkları, aynı sosyo kültürel özelliklere sahip olacakları varsayılmaktadır. Bu sebeple de ilgili literatür ABD'de yaşayan Küba ve Venezuelalı göçmenlerin karşılaştırıldığı bir çalışmadan yoksun kalmıştır. Çalışmanın temel amaçlarından biri bu yoksunluğa bir nebze olsun katkıda bulunabilmektedir.

ABD'de yaşayan Latin kökenli göçmenler çoğunlukla tekil vaka çalışmaları kullanılarak analiz edilmektedir, bu tür çalışmalarda ülkede yaşayan her bir Latin kökenli grup ayrı ayrı bölümlerde ele alınmakta ve aralarında karşılaştırma yapılmamaktadır (Arredondo, 2018; Saucedo and Itzigsohn, 2006; Morales, 2018; Stavans, 2017). Bu çalışma ise Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin Florida eyaletine göç eden Kübalı ve Venezuelalı göçmenlerin, göç sebepleri, göç yolları ve göç sonrası Florida'ya yerleşme düzenlerini Charles Tilly'nin Bireyselleştirici Karşılaştırma yöntemini kullanarak analiz etmek üzere hazırlanmıştır. Dolayısıyla bu makale ile karşılaştırmalı göç çalışmaları literatürüne katkı yapılması amaçlanmaktadır. Bu çalışma için ABD'de yaşayan diğer Latin göçmen grupların yerine Kübalı ve Venezuelalı göçmenlerin seçilmesinin nedeni, her iki göçmen grubunun farklılıklarını ve özgünlüklerini karşılaştırmalı bir perspektifte ortaya çıkartmaktadır.

Çalışma sürecinde çeşitli ulusal kuruluşlar (ABD Nüfus Bürosu, ABD Ulusal Güvenlik Bakanlığı, ABD Vatandaşlık ve Göçmen Ofisi vb.), uluslararası örgütler (Birleşmiş Milletler Mülteciler Yüksek Komiserliği, Göç Politikaları Enstitüsü) ve Pew Araştırma Merkezinin Küba ve Venezuelalı göçmenler üzerine hazırladığı çeşitli veriler (İngilizce seviyeleri, eğitim durumları, yaş ortalamaları, istihdama katılım durumları, mülkiyet sahiplik oranları vb.) karşılaştırılarak, varsayılanın aksine, her iki göçmen grubunun ABD'ye yerleşmeleri sonrası ne derece farklı sosyo ekonomik ve sosyo kültürel profiller geliştirdikleri ortaya çıkarılmıştır.