



2020 FIU  
**CUBA** POLL

HOW CUBAN AMERICANS  
IN MIAMI VIEW U.S. POLICIES  
TOWARD CUBA

**FIU**

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Steven J. Green  
School of International  
& Public Affairs

Creating a Just, Peaceful and  
Prosperous **World**





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# FOREWORD

**M**uch has changed in the narrative shaping U.S./Cuba policy during the administration of President Donald J. Trump. The policy shifts initiated by President Obama in 2014 have all but disappeared. Old hostilities, dating to the Cold War period, now dominate relations between the two neighbors.

Two FIU Cuba Polls have been conducted since Trump's inauguration. The trend measured in the 2018 Poll of a community hardening its isolationist views have continued in this 2020 FIU Cuba Poll. The community's attitudes reflect those of the administration. Relations between the two countries since the last poll have not followed the path of engagement. While the community still supports quite a few engagement policies that it holds out as "carrots," the overall tendency is to establish a stronger hold on the "stick" that promotes sanctions and isolation.

The findings of the poll suggest that there is a return to traditional hard-line views toward U.S.- Cuban relations. While political and social engagement policies still have proponents, support for the wielding of the "stick" of the embargo—the economic isolation of Cuba from the U.S. economy—has increased among Cuban Americans as a whole. The second and third generations of Cuban Americans are driving the hope for engagement while more established residents insist on a tougher stand. The return to hard-line views might be driven by the slow pace of change on the island, or the hostile national narrative that currently surrounds U.S./Cuba relations in the United States. Whatever the reason, the demographics of the Cuban-American community in South Florida continue to change while many of their attitudes directed at the state-to-state relations between the U.S. and their homeland remain conflicted.

Various units within Florida International University contributed to funding the 2020 FIU Cuba poll. Along with the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs, these units include the Office of the President, the Division of External Relations, Strategic Communications & Marketing, the Cuban Research Institute and the Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center. We appreciate their generous support.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to once again recognize the co-principal investigators, Dr. Guillermo J. Grenier and his new collaborator, Dr. Qing Lai. Dr. Grenier has led the FIU Cuba Poll for almost three decades, keeping his finger on the pulse of the public opinions of the Cuban-American community in South Florida. We would also like to acknowledge the collaboration of the staff members of the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs, especially Pedro Botta and Amy Ellis.

**John F. Stack Jr., Ph.D**  
***Founding Dean***

***Steven J. Green School of International & Public Affairs***

# THE POLLSTERS



**Guillermo J. Grenier** is a professor of sociology and the chair of the Department of Global and Sociocultural Studies at Florida International University. Born in Havana, Dr. Grenier is one of the founders of the Miami school of social analysis and has authored or coauthored seven books and dozens of articles on labor, migration, immigrant incorporation and Cuban-American ideological profiles. His books include *A History of Little Havana*, with Corinna J. Moebius (2015); *This Land Is Our Land: Newcomers and Established Residents in Miami*, with Alex Stepick, Max Castro and Marvin Dunn (2003); *The Legacy of Exile: Cubans in the United States*, with Lisandro Pérez (2002); *Newcomers in the Workplace: Immigrants and the Restructuring of the U.S. Economy*, with Louise Lamphere and Alex Stepick (1994); and *Miami Now! Immigration, Ethnicity and Social Change*, edited with Alex Stepick (1992). Dr. Grenier has been a Fulbright Fellow and a faculty fellow of the University of Notre Dame's Institute of Latino Research and the director of the Florida Center for Labor Research and Studies. He lectures nationally and internationally on his research. He received his Ph.D. in sociology and his M.A. in Latin American studies from the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque.



**Qing Lai** is an associate professor of sociology at the Department of Global and Sociocultural Studies at Florida International University. He earned his Ph.D. in sociology at the University of Michigan. Dr. Lai received graduate training at the Institute for Social Research's Population Studies Center and Survey Research Center. His research interests include Chinese Muslims, development, demography and survey research. Dr. Lai has published peer-reviewed articles in *Social Science Research*, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, *Chinese Sociological Review*, *Chinese Journal of Sociology*, *Research in the Sociology of Work*, *Natural Hazards* and *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*. His current research focuses on the Muslim population in China. He analyzes census and survey data to examine the group's heterogeneity and its relations with the majority Han society, the Chinese State and the Islamic world. He has participated in survey projects on various Asian Muslim communities, including the Xidaotang Islamic sect in Gansu and the Dungan people of Central Asia, and studied Chinese Muslim pilgrims to Mecca.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The majority of the Cuban-American population in South Florida supports the way that President Donald Trump has handled key issues of national importance. He receives high marks in his handling of immigration (**64% support**), race relations (**55% support**), national protests (**55% support**), healthcare (**67% support**), Cuba policy (**66% support**), China policy (**71% support**), the COVID-19 crisis (**65% support**) and the economy (**80% support**). (Figures 26-33)
2. While the Republican Party maintains a slight majority among registered voters (**53%**), it is receiving new blood from the most recent arrivals. **Seventy-six percent** of registered voters who arrived between 2010-2015 report registering as Republicans. (Figure 36)
3. It is expected that President Trump will receive approximately **59%** of the Cuban-American vote in November. (Figures 38)
4. **Sixty percent** of Cuban Americans in South Florida support the continuation of the embargo. (Figure 5)
5. The support for some policies promoting engagement remains relatively high, such as the selling of food (**69% support**) and medicines to the island (**74% support**) maintaining diplomatic relations (**58% support**) and the resumption of airline travel to all regions of the island (**65% support**). (Figures 8, 9, 13, 21)
6. Cuban Americans strongly support the resumption of the issuing of visas at the Cuban Embassy in Havana (**62%**). All respondent categories are in support of this change in current U.S. policy. (Figure 14)
7. Cuban Americans support the resumption of Family Reunification Parole Program (**60%**). Only the oldest respondents and those migrating before 1995 oppose this policy by as much as **50%**. (Figure 16)
8. The community is evenly split on the issue of reinstating the “Wet Foot/Dry Foot” policy. (**51%** oppose and **49%** support reinstating the policy.) This split is evident along all respondent categories. (Figure 15)
9. The economy and health care remain the two most important national issues for Cuban Americans. Respondents were asked to independently rank the importance of six policies related to the economy, health care, race relations, immigration, Cuba and China. The economy and health care were considered to be the two most important issues facing the community across all age groups, migration cohorts and political party registration. Cuba policy ranked last for all but the oldest cohort and the non-citizens in the sample. (Figure 23-25)

### **About Florida International University**

Florida International University, a public university located in Miami, has a passion for student success and community solutions. The university is classified by Carnegie as “R1.” FIU is among the top 100 public universities in U.S. News and World Report’s 2019 Best Colleges and 18 academic programs are individually ranked. FIU was recently ranked as the second best performing university in Florida and graduates are among the highest-paid in the state. FIU has multiple state-of-the-art research facilities including the Wall of Wind Research and Testing Facility and FIU’s Medina Aquarius Program. FIU has awarded more than 330,000 degrees since 1972 and enrolls more than 57,000 students in two campuses and centers including FIU Downtown on Brickell, FIU@I-75, the Miami Beach Urban Studios, and sites in Qingdao and Tianjin, China. FIU also supports artistic and cultural engagement through its three museums: Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum, the Wolfsonian-FIU, and the Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU. FIU is a member of Conference USA with more than 400 student-athletes participating in 18 sports. For more information about FIU, visit [www.fiu.edu](http://www.fiu.edu)

### **About the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs**

Launched in 2008, the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs at FIU educates the leaders and changemakers of tomorrow through innovative teaching and research that advances global understanding, contributes to policy solutions and promotes international dialogue. One of the largest schools of its kind in the world, the Green School enrolls more than 5,700 students and employs 360 fulltime faculty. It offers 38 interdisciplinary degree programs at the bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral levels, as well as 54 undergraduate and graduate certificate programs. The Green School encompasses eight signature departments: Criminology and Criminal Justice, Economics, Global and Sociocultural Studies, History, Modern Languages, Politics and International Relations, Public Policy and Administration and Religious Studies. Home to 16 of the university’s most prominent international centers, institutes and programs, the Green School is an affiliate member of the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (APSIA).

### **About the Cuban Research Institute**

FIU’s Cuban Research Institute (CRI) is dedicated to creating and disseminating knowledge about Cuba and Cuban Americans. The institute encourages original research and interdisciplinary teaching, organizes extracurricular activities, collaborates with other academic units working in Cuban and Cuban-American studies, and promotes the development of library holdings and collections on Cuba and its diaspora. Founded in 1991, CRI is the nation’s premier center for research and academic programs on Cuban and Cuban-American issues. No other U.S. university surpasses FIU in the number of professors and students of Cuban origin.

# MAIN FINDINGS

This section presents the responses to key questions of the poll. The exact wording for selected questions, along with the Spanish version, is included in Appendix 3.

## Cuban Americans and U.S./Cuba Relations: Old Wine in Old Bottles

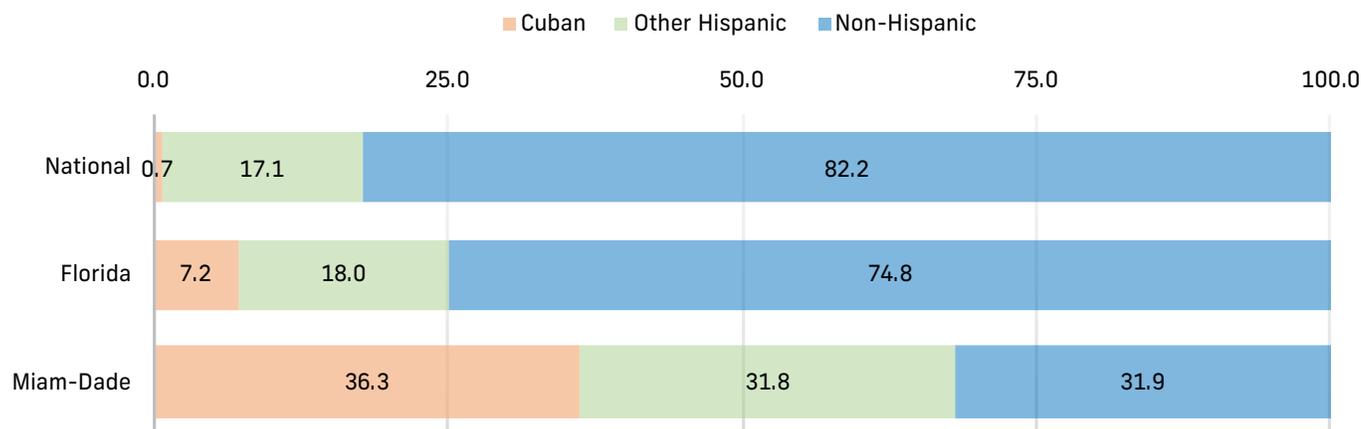
The Trump administration has altered all of the dynamics established by President Obama in U.S./Cuba relations. A dramatic shift in the tone of the relations between the two countries has established a new/old normal in the Cuban-American community. The hope of normalizing relationships—economic, familial, political, cultural—raised by the Obama policies has disappeared in the rearview mirror. The national narrative toward Cuba is one of hostility rather than engagement, confrontation rather than negotiation. While diplomatic relations have not been severed, diplomacy has all but disappeared. The reduction of consular activities at the United States Embassy in Havana has had a chilling effect on Cuban migration to the United States. The restrictions on direct flights to the island as well as the reduction in the categories available for legal travel by Americans has had a severe impact on the island economy, which had begun the slow process of diversification driven by the opening of the American market. The anticipated cessation of charter flights in October of 2020 combined with the impact of the COVID-19 crisis have added significant obstacles to the establishment of communications between the South Florida diaspora and Cubans on the island. It is in this climate that our respondents express their views in this 2020 edition of the FIU Cuba Poll. It is not the best of times. It is not the worst of times. It's simply another poll measuring fluctuating attitudes toward policies that have changed little in 60 years. The main findings of the poll follow.

We present the sample distributions of selected variables as well as their conditional distributions by age, migration/nativity and voter registration/party. All results are weighted to represent the current Cuban-American population aged 18 or older in Miami-Dade County. In the brief discussions associated with the charts, we will highlight the opinions of the entire sample and mention any category that diverges from the general opinion of the community as represented by the total sample. The Cuban-American community is not monolithic in its attitudes, even when certain tendencies might dominate.

## Contextualizing the Cuban-American Population in South Florida

Most of the Cuban Americans in the United States live in Florida and most of the Cuban-American Florida residents live in the South Florida region. As a result, Cuban Americans consist of a miniscule percentage of the national population but dominate the demographic landscape of Miami-Dade County. Their overwhelming presence in Florida makes their political involvement critically important, particularly in presidential election years.

Figure 1: Population Estimates: Cubans, Other Hispanics, Non-Hispanics



## Key Characteristics of the Cuban-American Population in Miami-Dade County

As Table 1 shows, the methodology utilized in conducting the 2020 FIU Cuba Poll has resulted in a representative profile of the Cuban-American population in South Florida along multiple dimensions. The weighted sample percentages reflect the estimates established by the Census Bureau in its 2014-2018 5-year sample of the American Community Survey. In our questionnaire we allow respondents greater flexibility in self-identifying racial categories. This accounts for the lower number of “white” respondents and a larger number of “others,” which would include the “mulato,” and “mestizo” categories. Overall, we achieve an excellent representation of the demographics of the Cuban-American population in Miami-Dade County.

**Table 1: Cuban Americans in Miami Dade County: Migration/Nativity, Age, Gender, Race (ACS and Cuba Poll Sample Estimates)**

	ACS	Cuba Poll (2020 weighted)
Nativity & immigrant cohort		
Cuba		
Migrated before 1980	19.2	19.6
Migrated in 1980-1994	15.2	15.5
Migrated in 1995-2009	29.8	30.4
Migrated in 2010-2020	15.0	13.6
United States	19.1	19.5
Other countries	1.6	1.5
Age group		
18-39	29.5	30.0
40-59	36.2	36.9
60-75	20.2	19.1
75 or older	14.1	14.0
Gender		
Male	48.6	49.3
Female	51.4	50.7
Race		
White	95.4	80.0
Black	1.9	3.6
Other	2.8	16.5
Years of education		
	12.5	14.3

Note: The Cuba Poll results are weighted toward ACS using a three-way weight based on nativity/immigrant cohort, age, and gender.

Sources: 2020 Cuba Poll; American Community Survey 2014-2018 5-year sample.

## Voter Registration Estimates for Cuban Americans in Florida and Miami-Dade County

Table 2 presents our estimate of the current number of registered Cuban Americans by party affiliation in Florida and Miami-Dade County. These numbers become relevant when voting preferences are disclosed. The charts that follow the table visually highlight the dominance of the Republican Party in the Cuban-American political life at the state and the county levels.

*Table 2: Estimated Number of Registered Cuban-American Voters by Party (Florida and M-D County)*

	FLORIDA			MIAMI-DADE		
	All	Hispanic	Cuban	All	Hispanic	Cuban
Republican	4,927,507	587,552	367,233	398,542	294,020	253,830
Democrat	5,167,930	920,324	180,227	622,818	272,397	124,572
Other	3,795,933	866,043	150,325	478,734	305,050	103,904
Total registered	13,891,370	2,373,919	697,785	1,500,094	871,467	482,306

Notes: Non-Cuban numbers are official voter registration data as of July 30, 2020.

Cuban numbers are estimated based on American Community Survey 2014-2018 5-year sample, 2020 Cuba Poll, and official Florida voter registration data.

Figure 2: Estimated Florida Voter Registration by Party (by Cuban/Hispanic/Non-Hispanic)

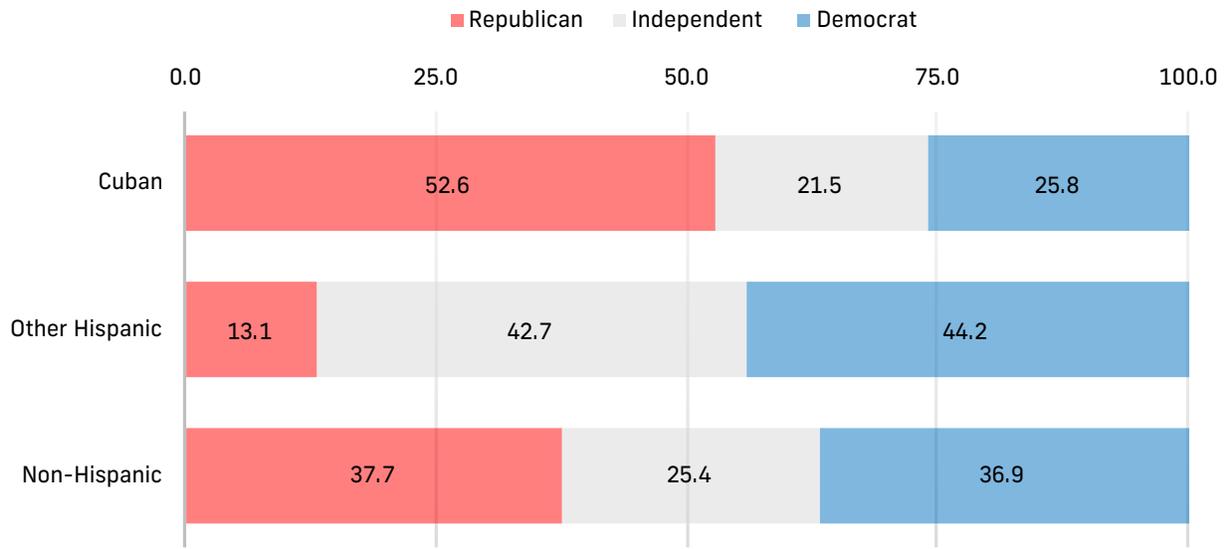
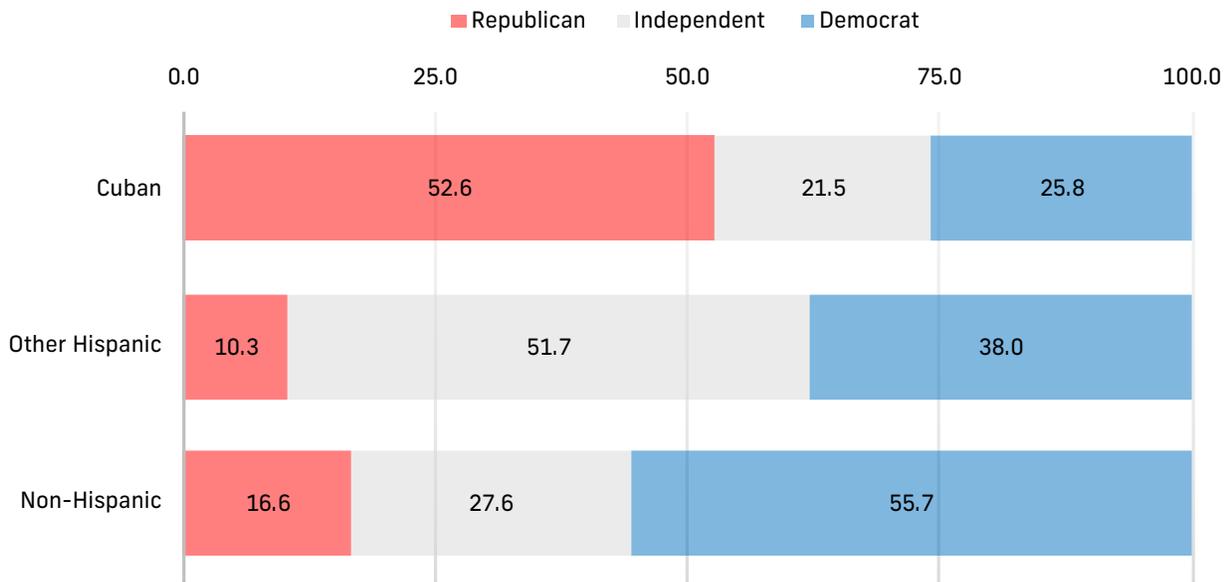


Figure 3: Estimated Voter Registration by Party: Miami-Dade County (By Cuban/Hispanic/Non-Hispanic)

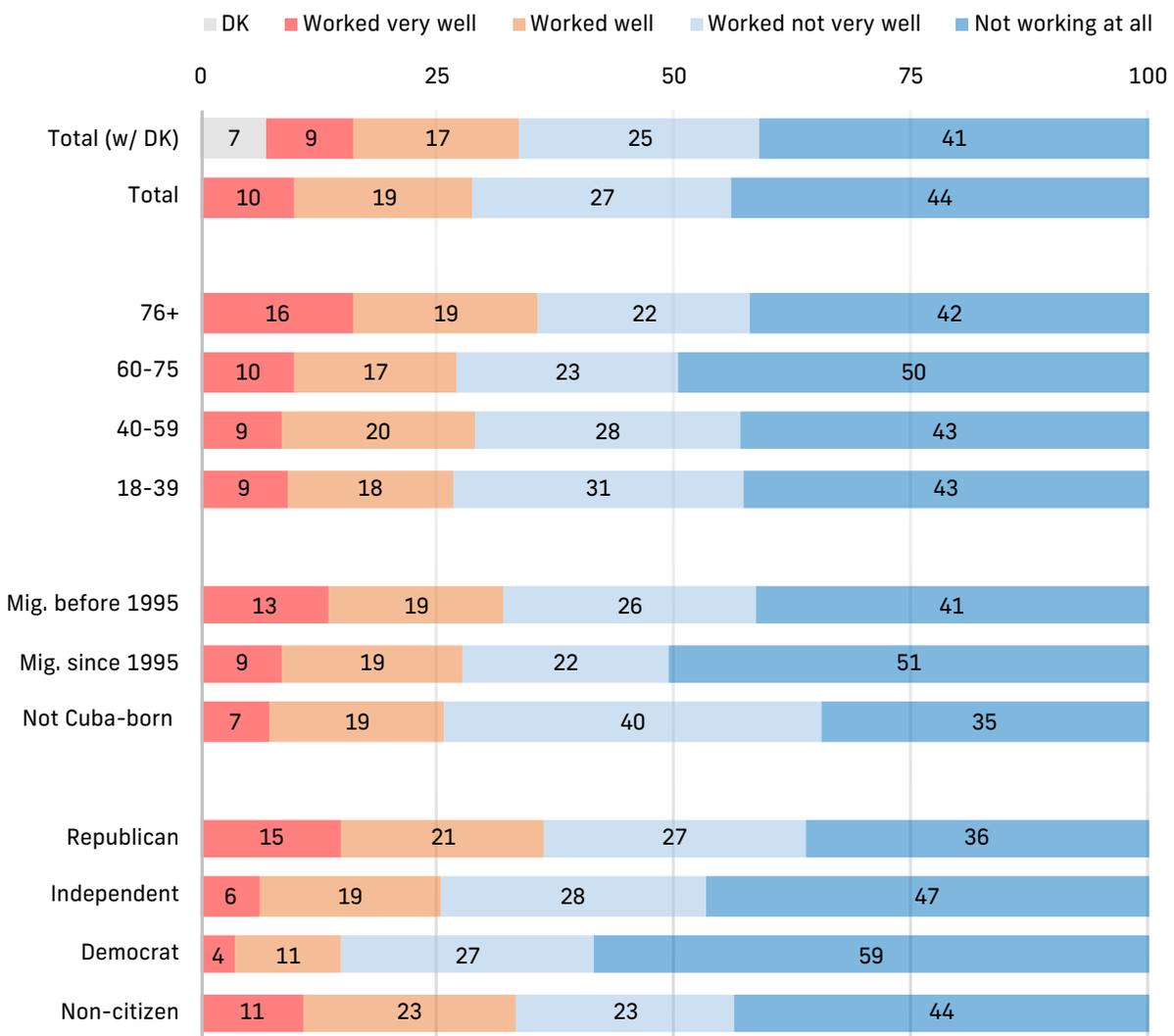


# The Embargo and Economic Relations

Over 70% of Cuban Americans living in South Florida believe that the embargo has not worked.

Since the beginning of the FIU Cuba Poll, a majority of Cuban Americans in South Florida have agreed: the U.S. economic embargo on Cuba has not worked. The question never interprets what could be considered a “successful embargo,” so each respondent is free to evaluate success/failure in her or his own terms. This year is no exception to the rule. Seventy-one percent of respondents recognize that the embargo has not worked. Respondents across all categories share this opinion although registered Republicans and the oldest members of the society tend to give the embargo the highest marks.

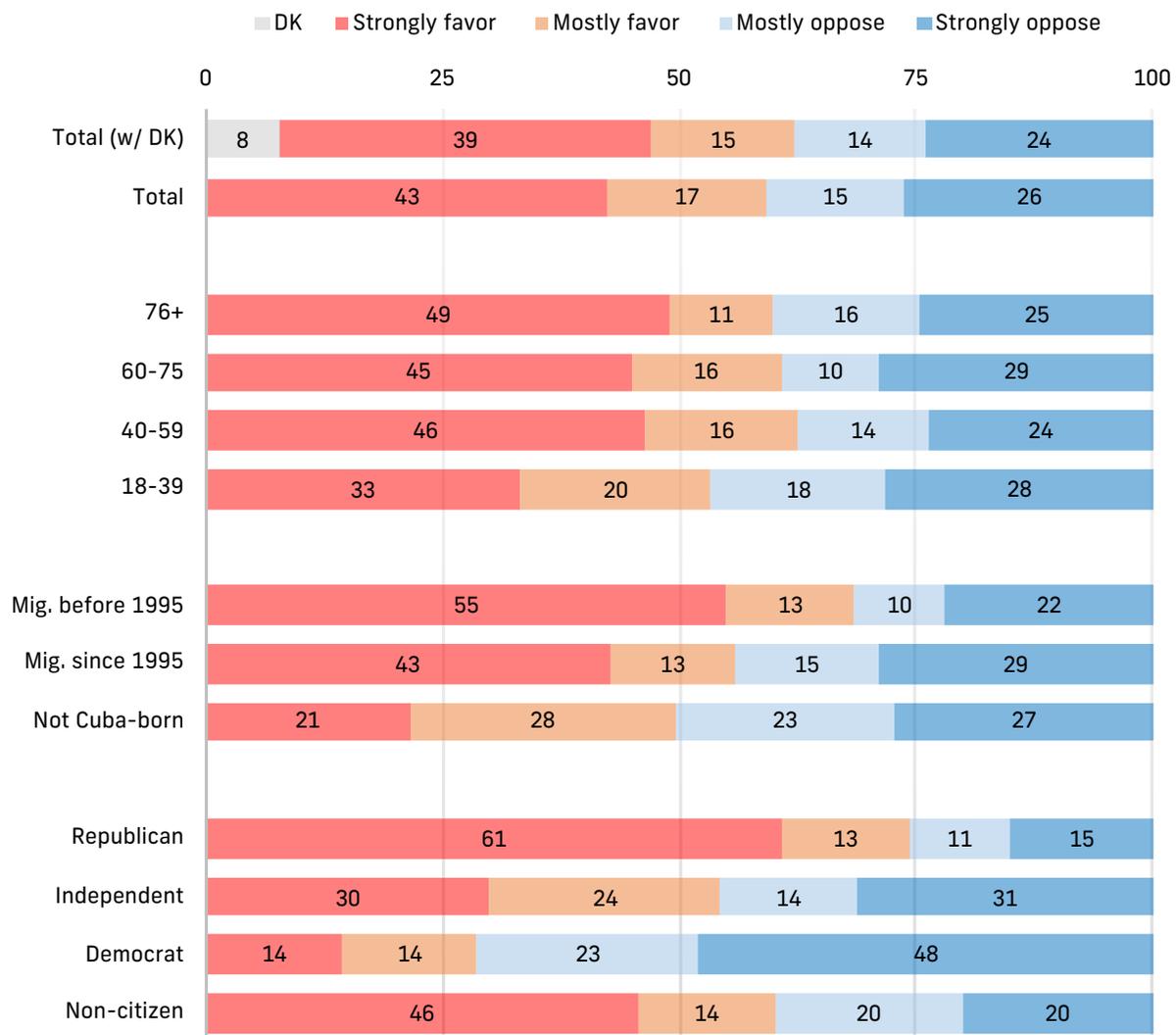
Figure 4



## A majority of the Cuban-American community supports the continuation of the embargo

An increase in support for the embargo, first noted in the 2018 FIU Cuba Poll, has continued to gain strength in the current environment. Approximately 54% of the Cuban-American community supports, either strongly or mostly, the continuation of the U.S. embargo on the island when Don't Know is considered a response. When an opinion is expressed, 60% of respondents support the continuation of the embargo. The youngest respondents, those born outside of the island and registered Democrats are the least supportive of the almost 60-year-old policy.

Figure 5

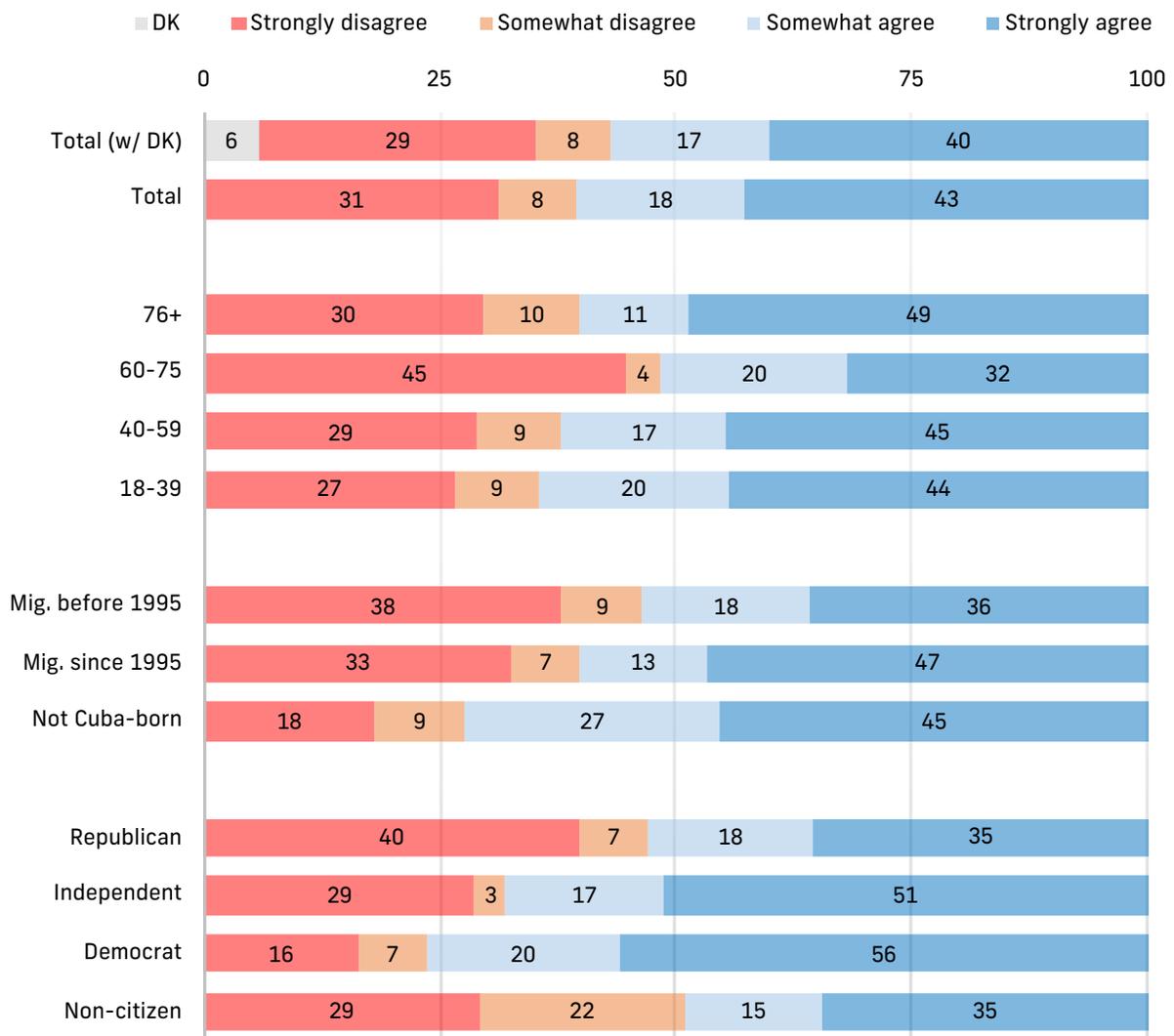


## Other Economic Relationships

A majority of the community supports the temporary suspension of trade sanctions on Cuba during the COVID-19 crisis.

Despite the reinforced support for the embargo, a strong majority of respondents support its temporary suspension in an effort to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. Sixty-one percent of respondents support a temporary halt to all economic sanctions. The hypothetical cessation of sanctions has broad support across all categories. The strongest desire to put the embargo on hold during the pandemic is expressed by registered Democrats and respondents not born in Cuba.

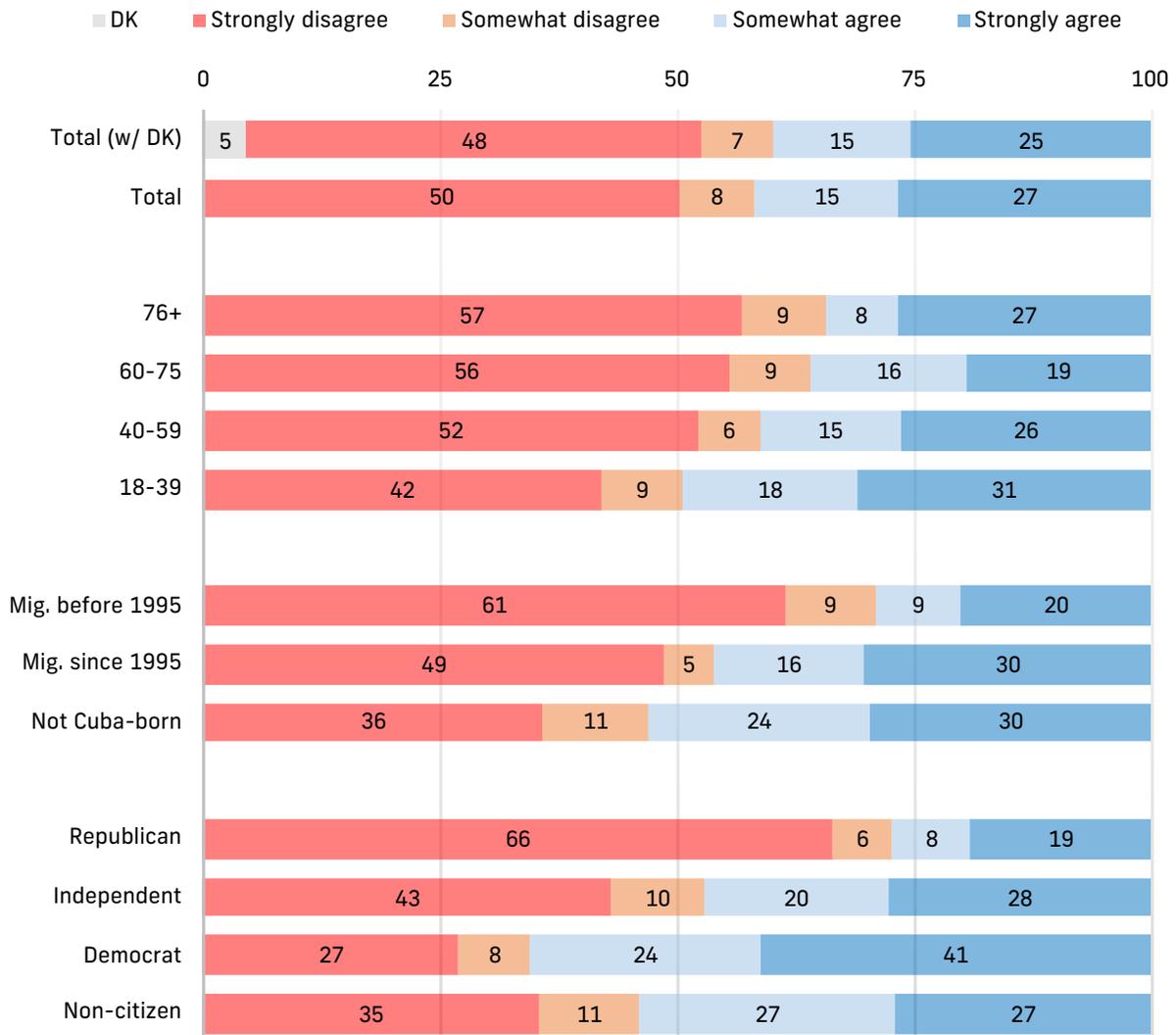
Figure 6



## A minority of respondents support the continuation of cruise ship operations to Cuba.

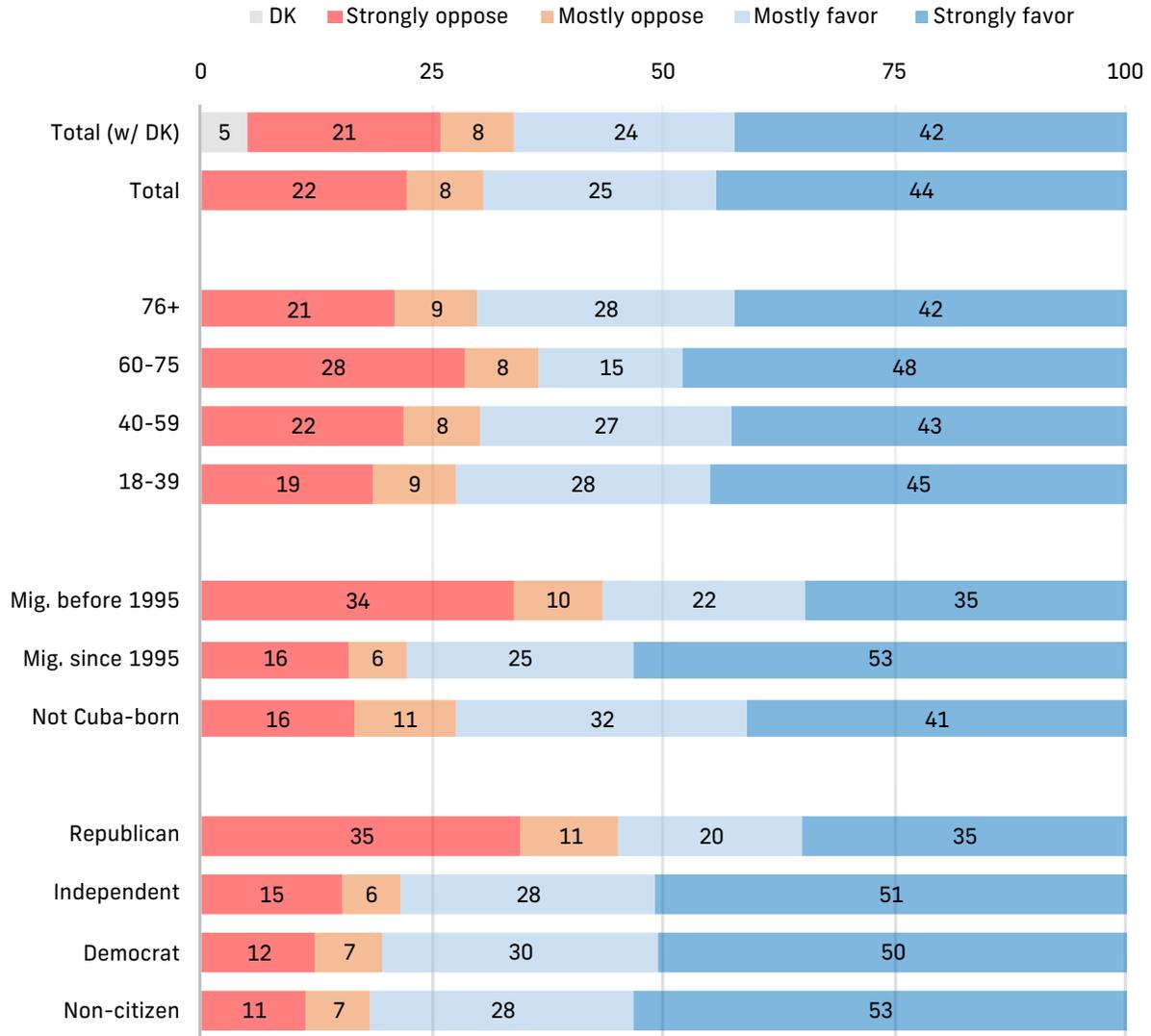
A minority of respondents (42%) support the resumption of cruise ship operations to the island. Several categories of respondents either support or are in a statistical split in their support for the resumption of cruise traffic. The youngest respondents (49%), the respondents not born on the island (54%) and registered Democrats (65%) are the groups most interested in resuming the operations of cruise ships to Cuba.

Figure 7



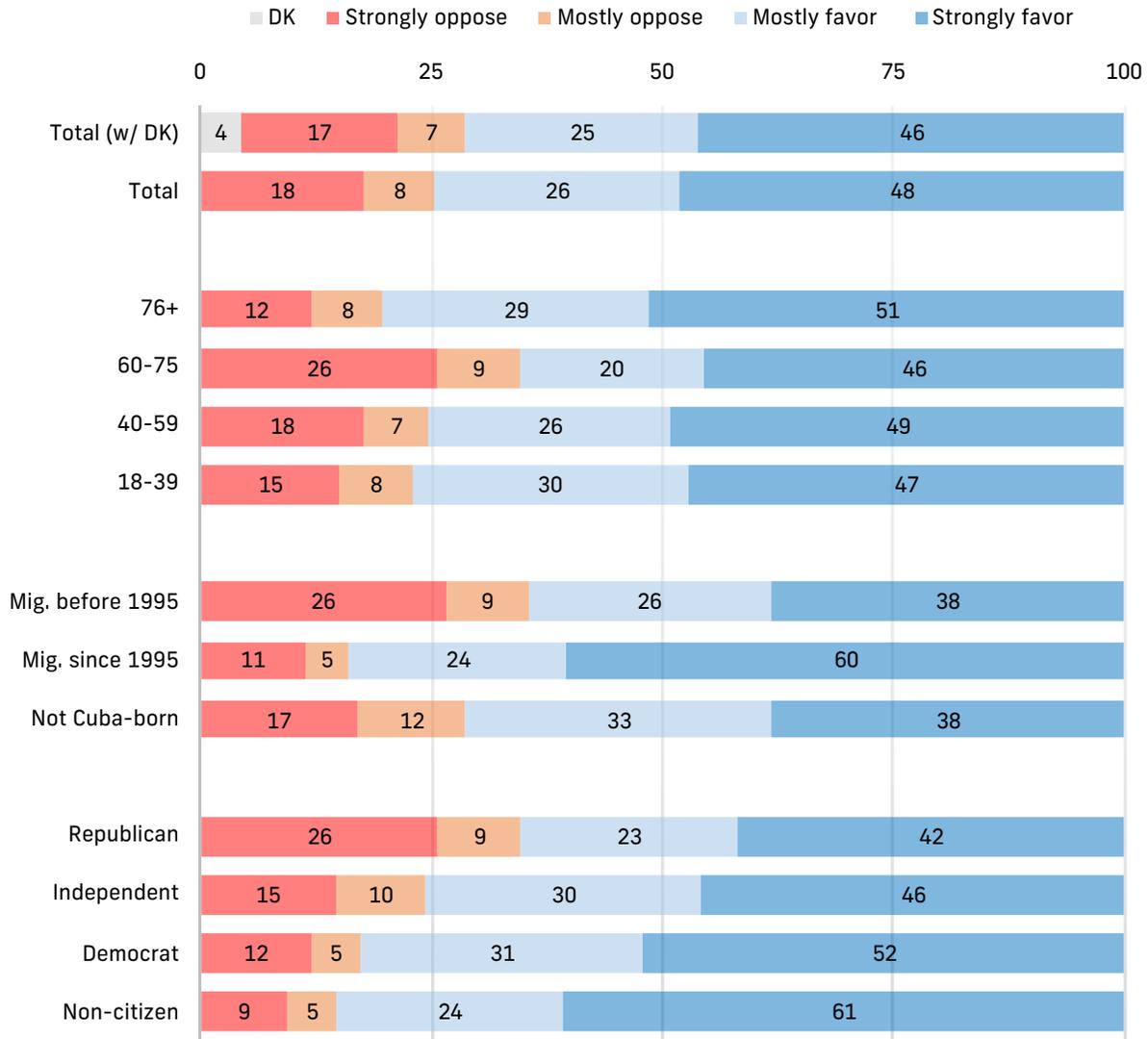
## A majority of Cuban Americans support the sale of food products to Cuba by U.S. companies.

Figure 8



## The sale of medicine to the island is strongly supported.

Figure 9

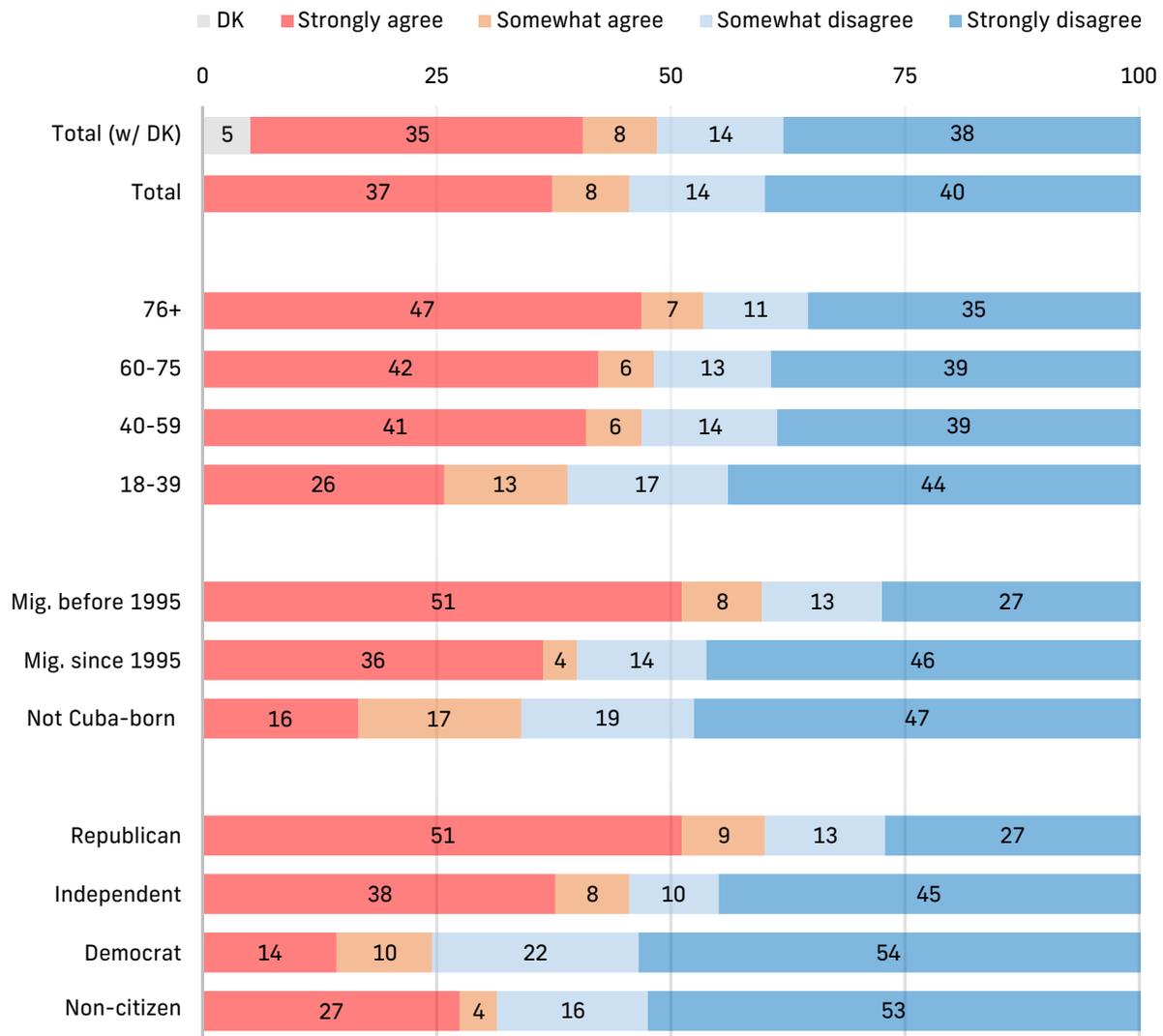


# The Politics of the Carrot and the Policy of the Stick

## Does Cuba pose a threat to vital American interests? Most say, “no.”

A majority of Cuban Americans do not consider Cuba a threat to vital American interests. The exception to this view is presented by the oldest group of respondents as well as those migrating before 1995 and registered Republicans. Cuban Americans born outside of Cuba, the youngest group and registered Democrats are most emphatic about the majority’s answer to the question.

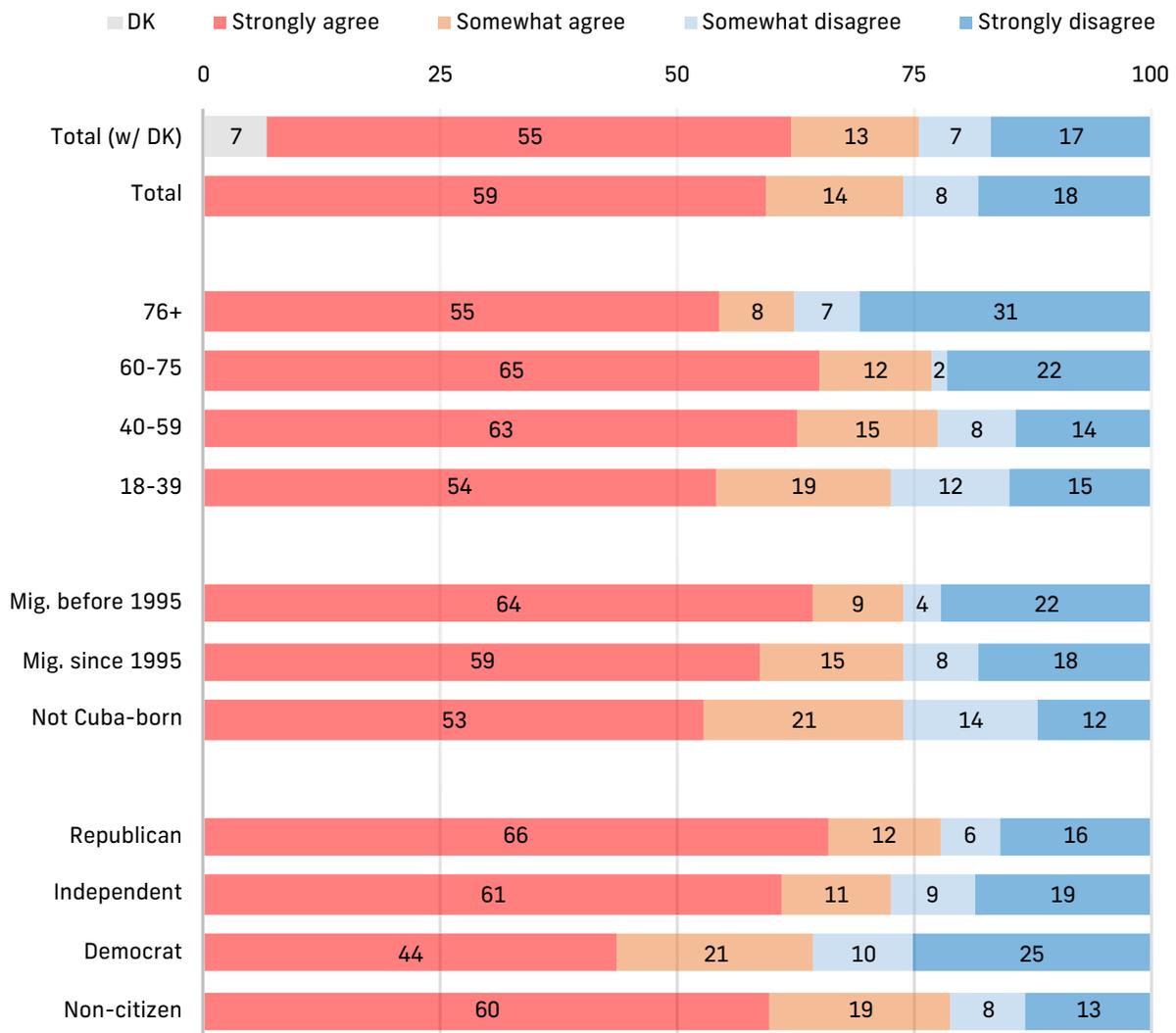
Figure 10



## Wielding the stick: a majority of respondents support policies designed to put maximum pressure on the Cuban government to promote regime change.

Since the beginning of the FIU Cuba Poll in the 1990s, the desire to wield a punishing stick on the Cuban government while simultaneously extending some kind of conciliatory carrot has been a constant in the community's attitudes toward U.S./Cuba relations. This ambivalent carrot/stick attitude is clearly seen in the two questions asking respondents to express their general policy preference. Asked in a general and abstract manner, both questions received overwhelming support. Seventy-three percent of respondents approved, in general, of policies designed to put maximum pressure on the Cuban government in order to promote regime change. All categories of respondents expressed overwhelming support for hard-line policies, with only registered Democrats and the oldest respondents (76 years of age and above) opposing the proposition by as much as a third of respondents.

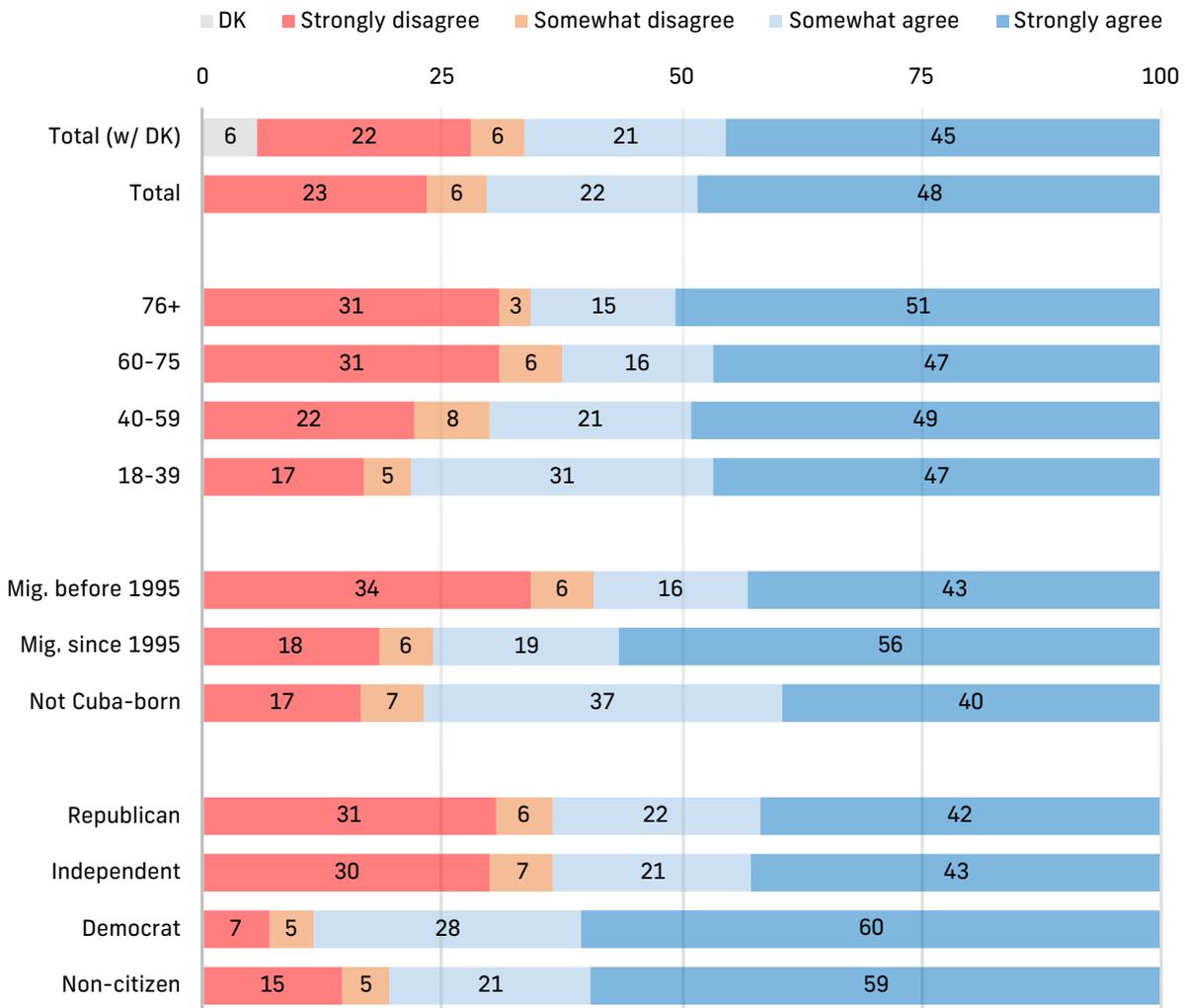
Figure 11



## Offering the carrot: a majority also support policies directed specifically at improving the economic well-being of the Cuban people.

Respondents are equally in favor of policies directed at improving the well-being of the Cuban people living on the island. Overwhelming support is expressed for these “softer” political approaches. There is sizable opposition (over a third of respondents) by several categories of respondents, as can be seen in Figure 12. Over a third of older respondents, the earliest migrants as well as Republicans and independents oppose this softer approach to U.S./Cuba policies.

Figure 12

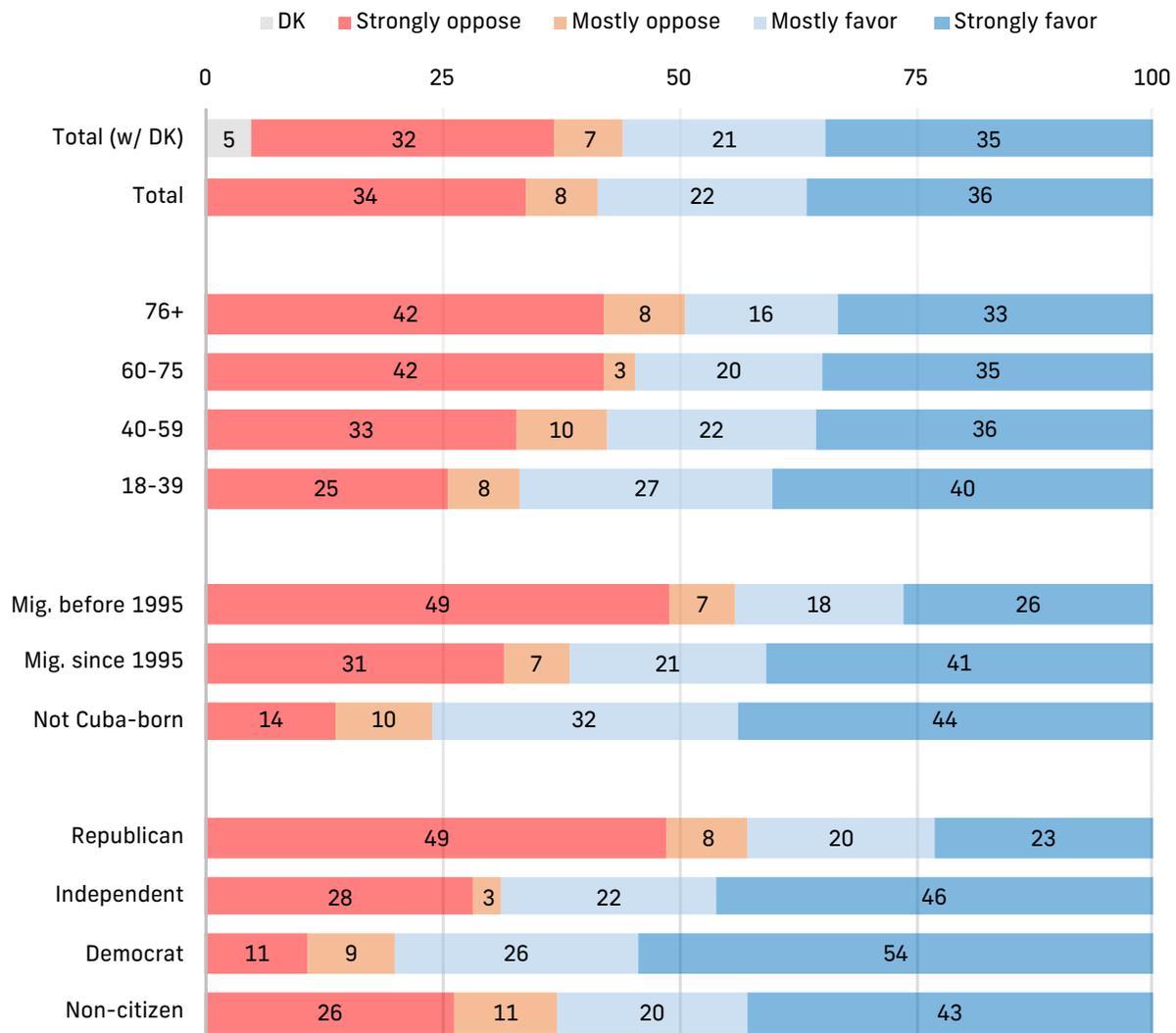


## On the issue of maintaining diplomatic relations

While there seems to be a retrenchment of attitudes toward the embargo as an economic pressure point to bring about change, Cuban Americans are also in favor of maintaining political connections to the island.

The maintenance of the status quo in diplomatic relations is supported by a majority of all respondent categories except those migrating before 1995 and registered Republicans. The oldest respondent category (76+), is statistically evenly split on the issue. There has been a retrenching of support for the policy since 2018, however, when 67% expressed support for the maintenance of diplomatic relations, as contrasted with the 58% support this year within the general population.

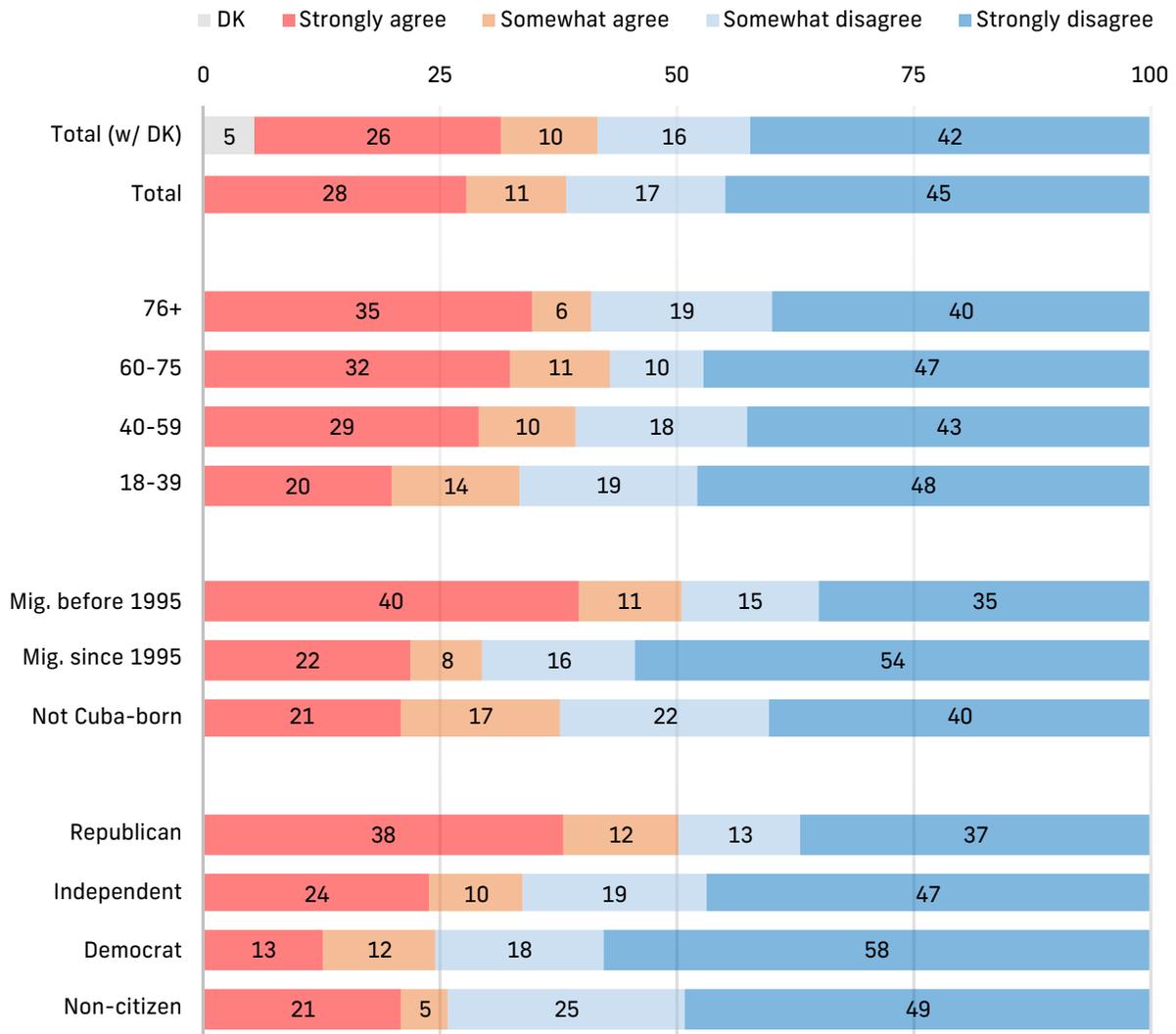
Figure 13



## Strong disagreement with the restriction on the issuing of visas at the U.S. Embassy in Havana.

Sixty-two percent of respondents disagree with the policy of curtailing the consular services of the U.S. Embassy in Havana regarding the issuing of visas to Cuban nationals. Only registered Republicans and those migrating before 1995 are split on the issue. All other categories disagree with the cessation of visa distribution at the Havana-based embassy.

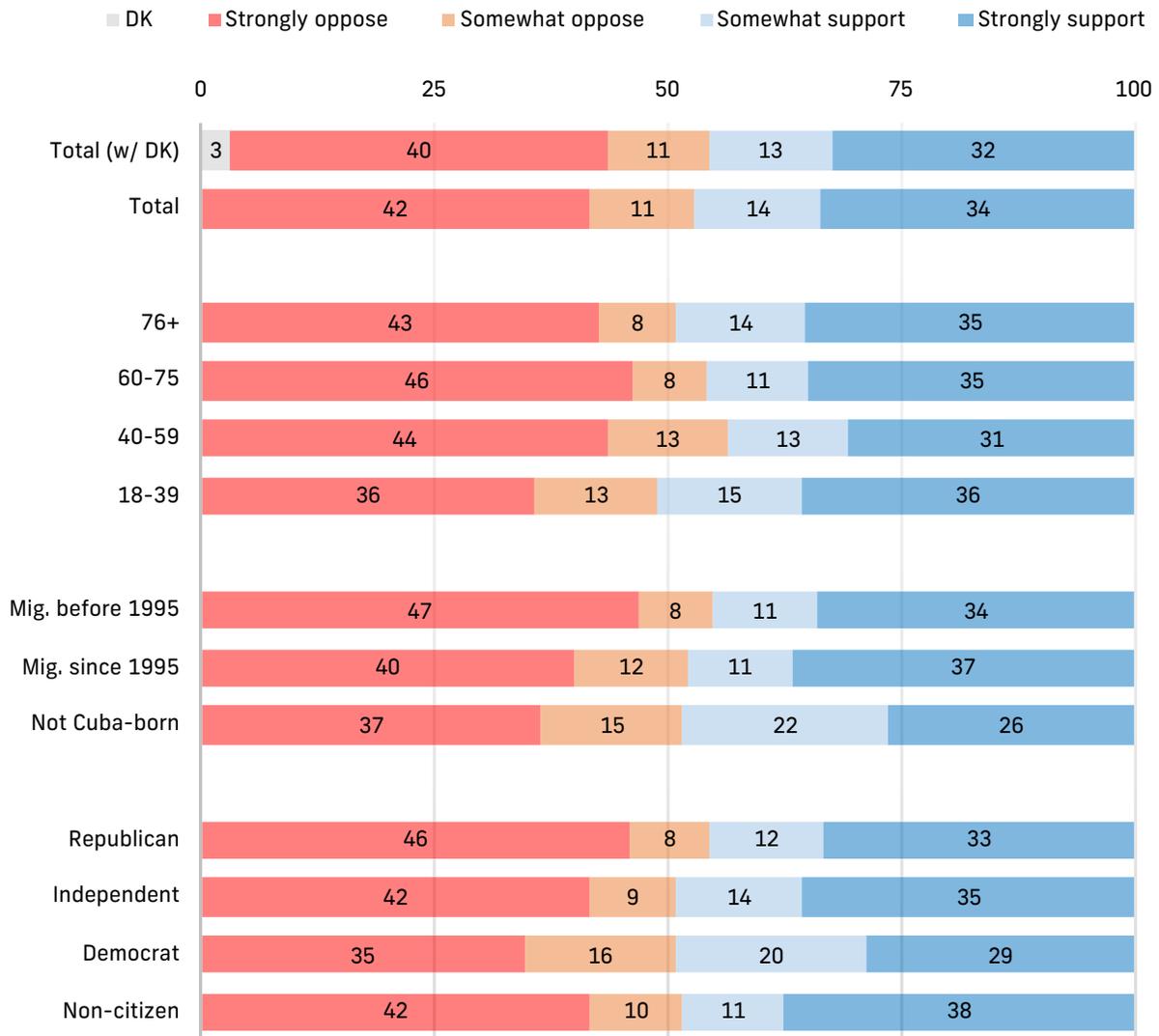
Figure 14



## Should the United States reinstate the “wet foot/dry foot” policy? Maybe yes...maybe no.

The community is evenly split on the “wet foot/dry foot” policy issue. Fifty-three percent would oppose the reinstatement of the preferential immigration policy while 47% would support it. Most respondent categories are similarly divided.

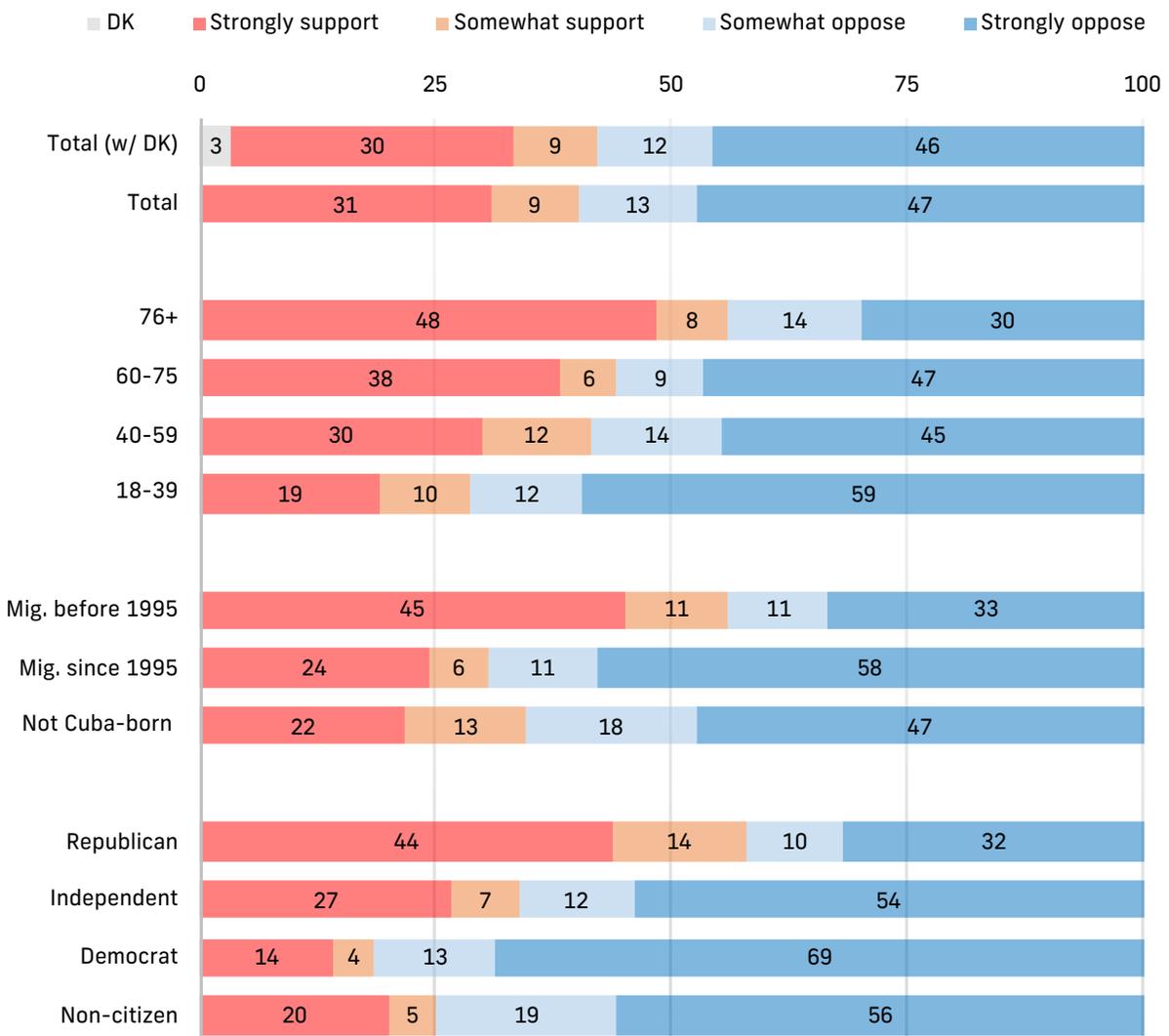
Figure 15



## Do you support the suspension of the Cuban Family Reunification Parole Program? No!

There is strong opposition to the suspension of the Cuban Family Reunification Parole Program by respondents in almost all categories. Only the oldest and pre-1995 respondents support the suspension of the program while 70% of the post-1995, a population who can be assumed has the closest ties to those on the island, express support for the resumption of the program.

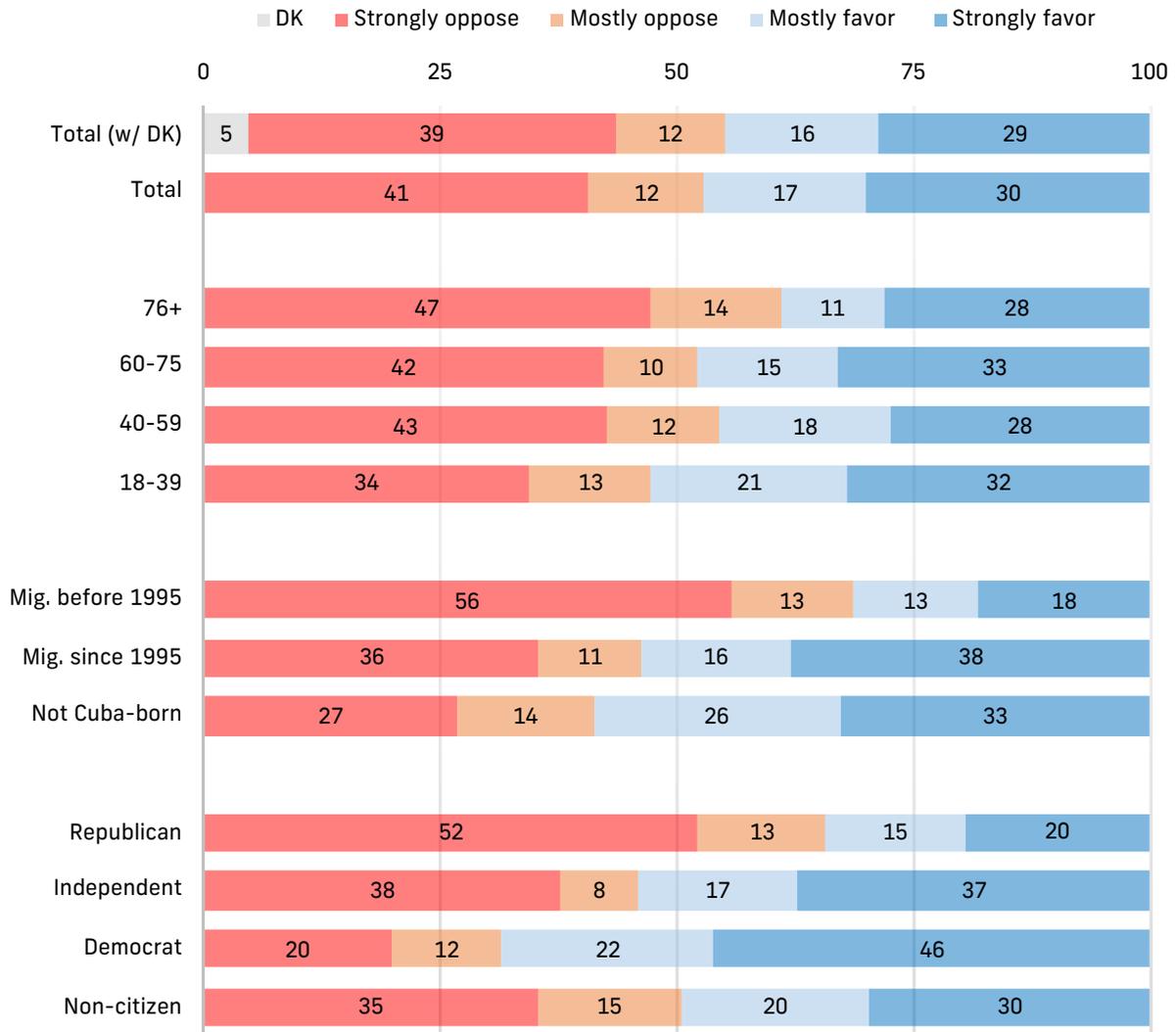
Figure 16



## Support for allowing all Americans unrestricted travel declines but younger Cuban-Americans and new arrivals beg to differ.

For the first time in many years, support for unrestricted travel declined below the 50% mark, although staying within the margin of error. Only 47% of respondents expressed support for allowing all Americans to travel to the island. The younger populations, those born outside of Cuba and the new arrivals are the exception. Each of these categories log in at over 50% support for free travel as do Democrats and independent voters.

Figure 17

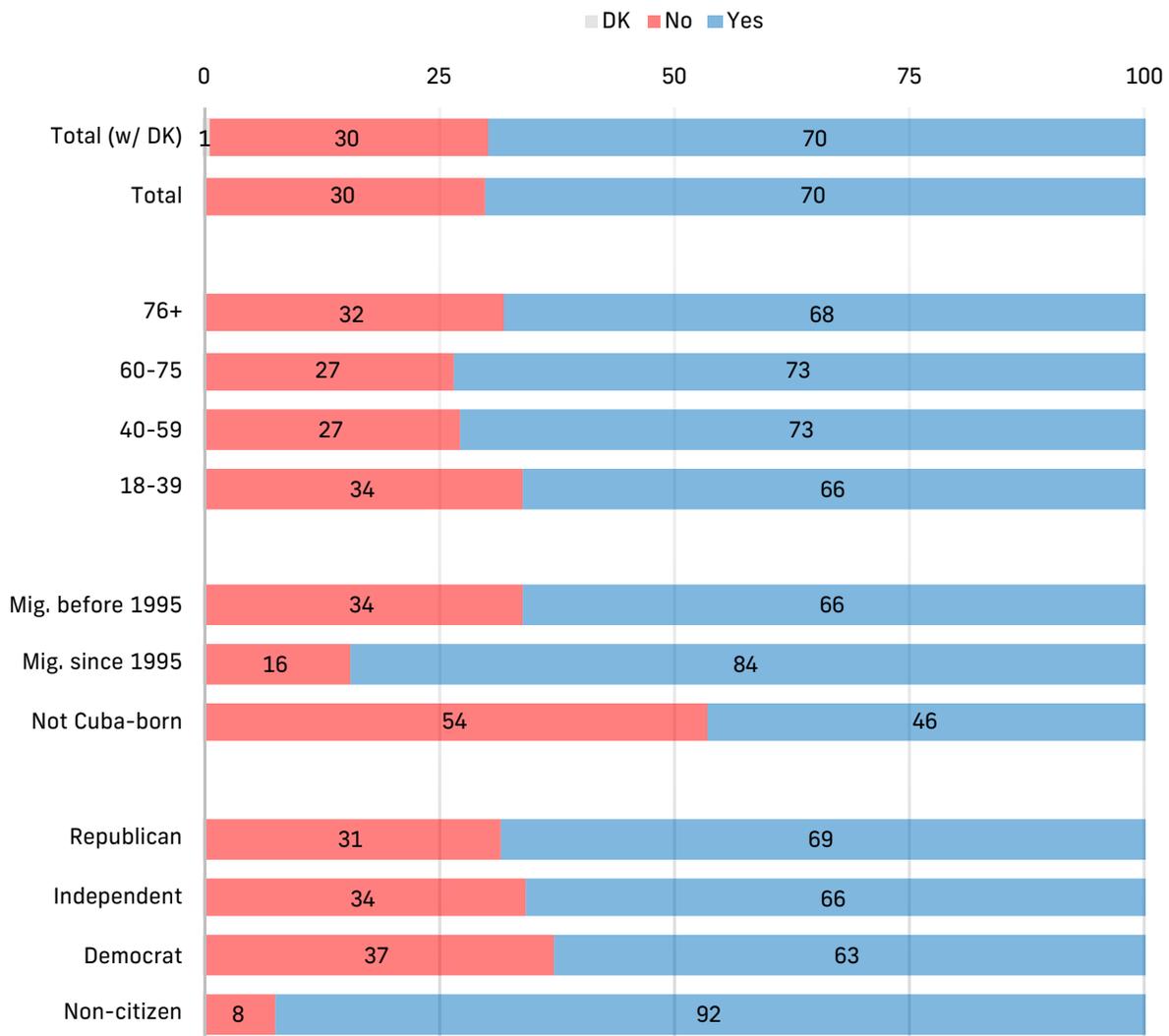


## Ties that bind

### A large majority of Cuban Americans in South Florida have relatives or significant others living in Cuba.

The South Florida Cuban-American community is developing into a true transnational diaspora. Despite the recent travel restrictions, many families have experienced the migration of one or more of their members. Approximately 70% of Cubans living in South Florida have relatives living in Cuba. Unsurprisingly, a higher percentage of those who migrated since 1995 (84%) have relatives left behind.

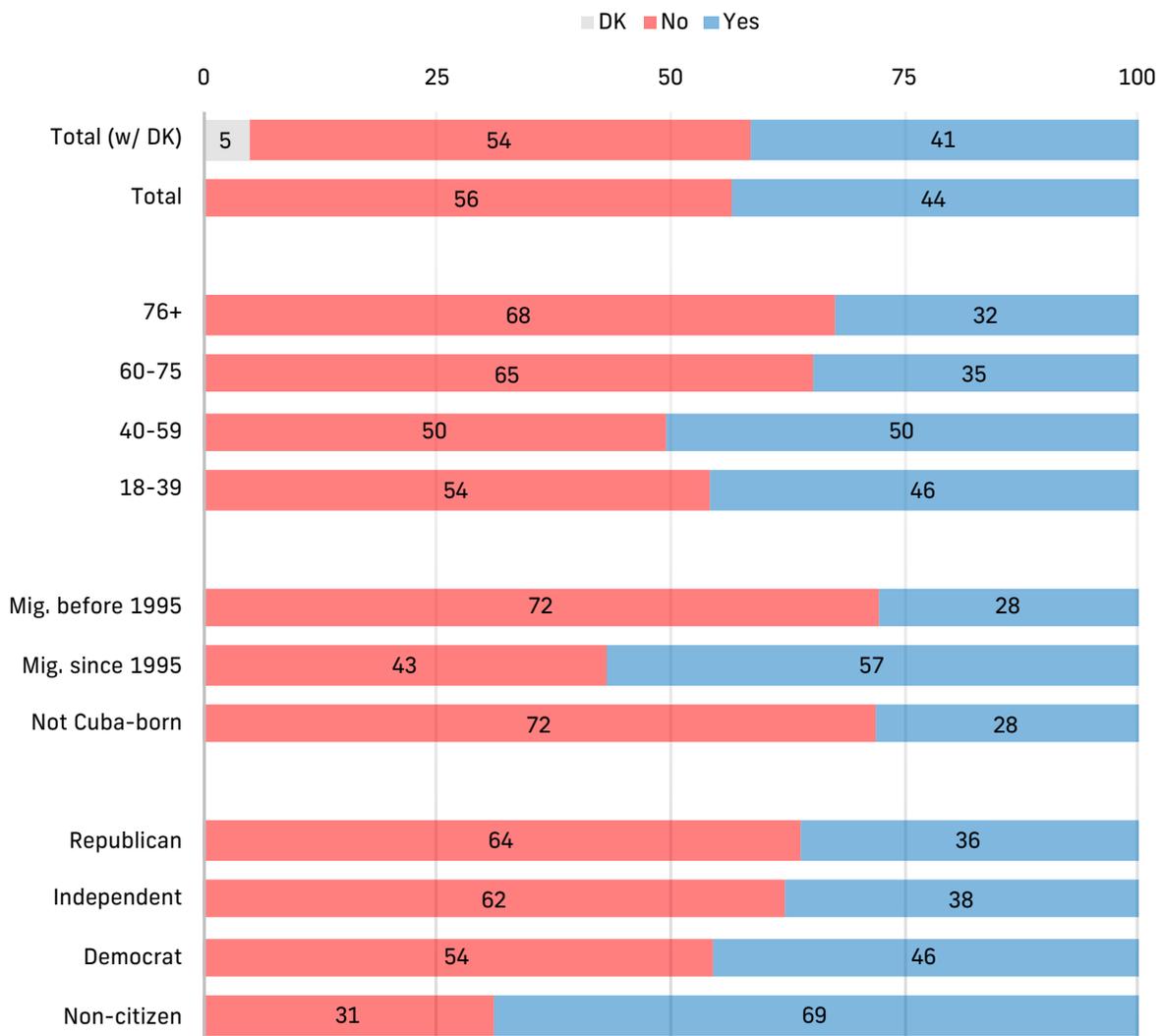
Figure 18



## Some remaining relatives will eventually be our neighbors. Others will not.

While a majority of Cuban-Americans have relatives on the island, a minority of community members plan to have these relatives travel to the United States to join them. The only group with a keen interest in reuniting with the relatives left behind are the post-1995 migrants and the noncitizen category, which is dominated by the most recent arrivals. A majority of both of these groups (57% and 69% respectively) hope to reunite with close relatives left in Cuba.

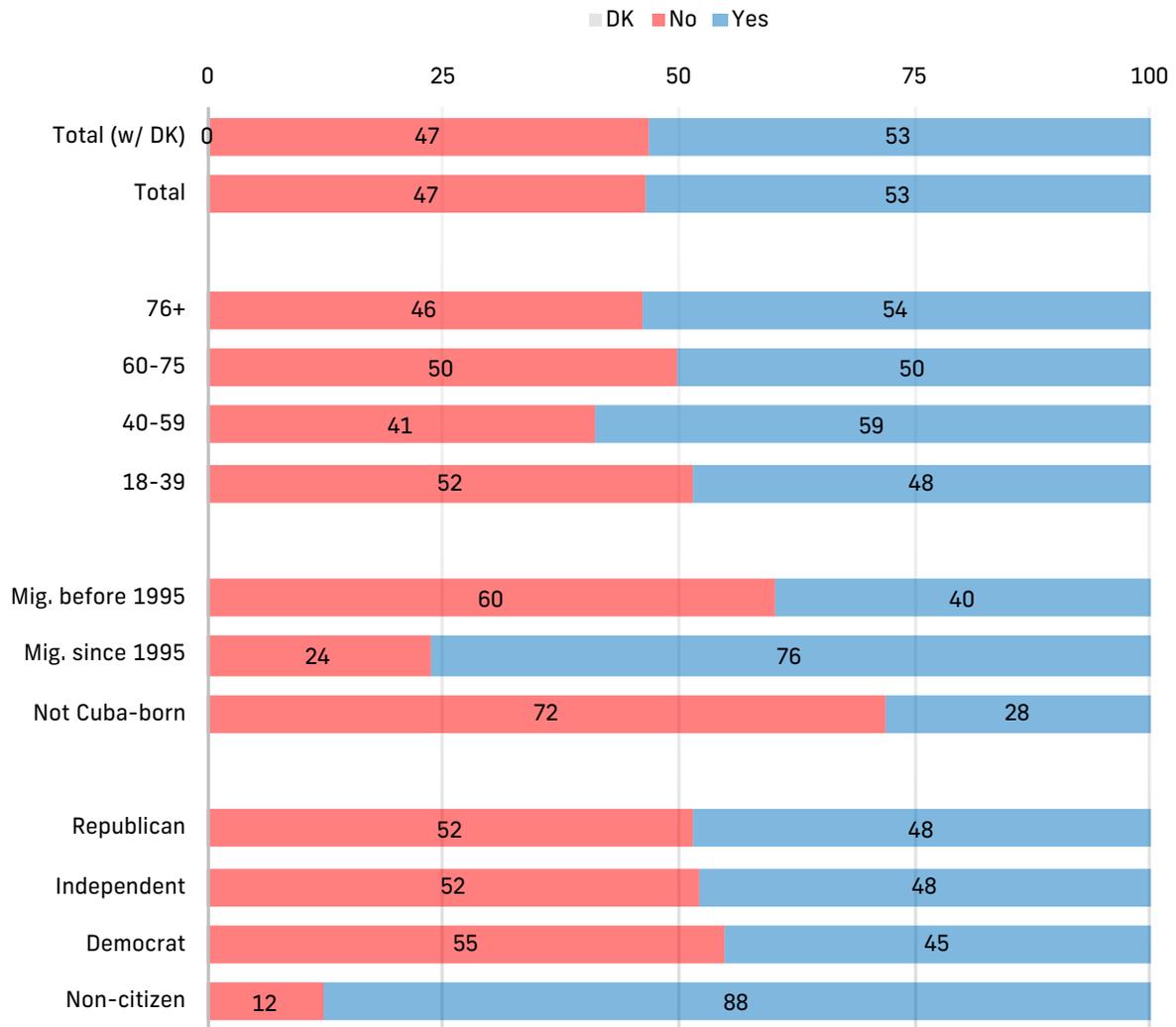
Figure 19



## Have you traveled to Cuba since leaving?

Over half of the respondents report traveling to the island since their departure. Most recent migrants are the most frequent travelers. More than a quarter of Cuban Americans born outside of the island have made the journey to their parents' homeland. Travel is similarly distributed across party lines.

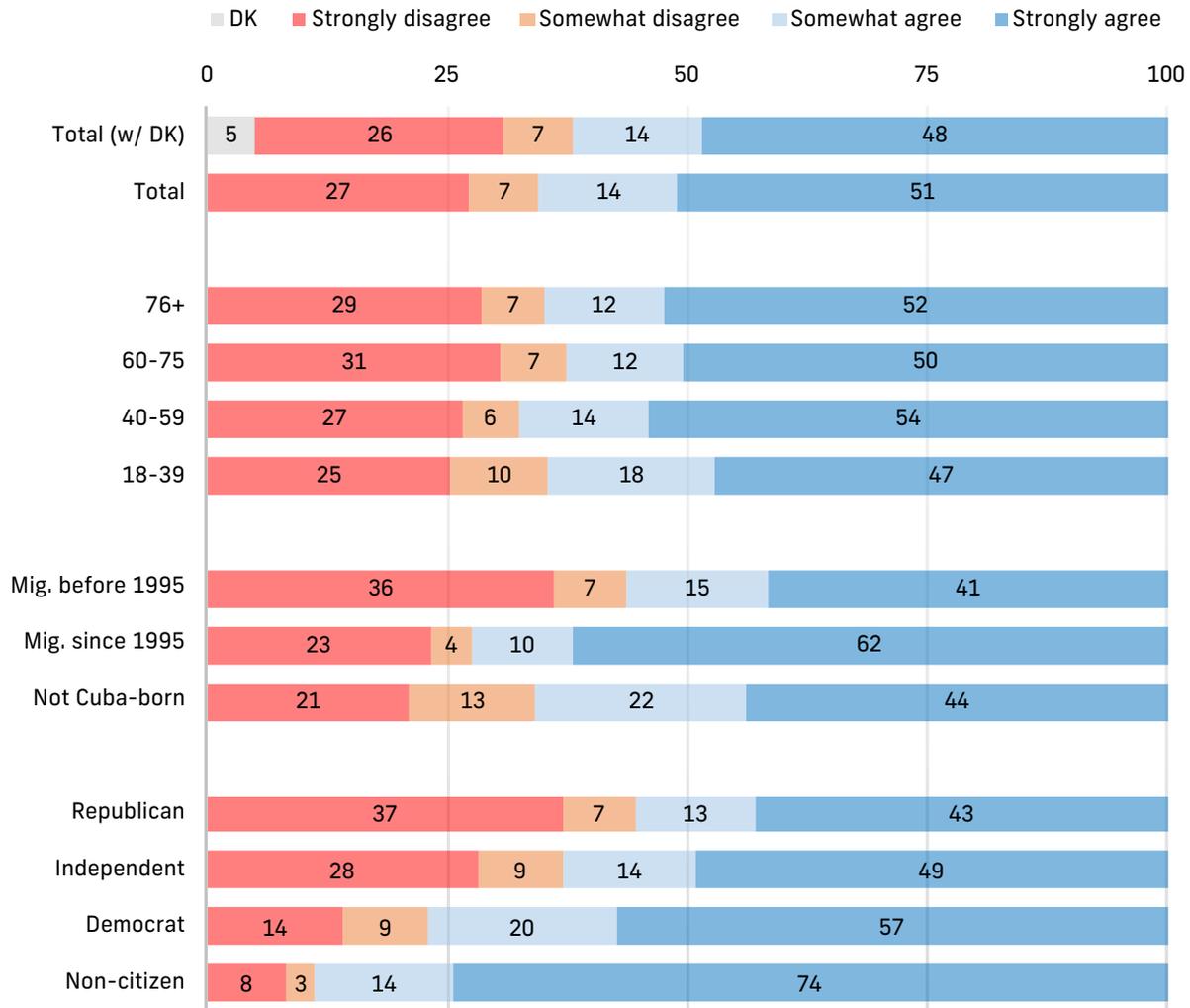
Figure 20



## Let the American airline companies resume previously established routes throughout the island, say a majority of Cuban Americans.

A strong majority of respondents are of the opinion that U.S. airline companies should be able to establish services throughout the island, not just to Havana. Approximately 65% of the community shares this opinion. Seventy-two percent of post-1995 migrants support this expansion of services, 62% feeling “strongly” about it. All respondent categories express majority support for expanding airline services beyond the capital.

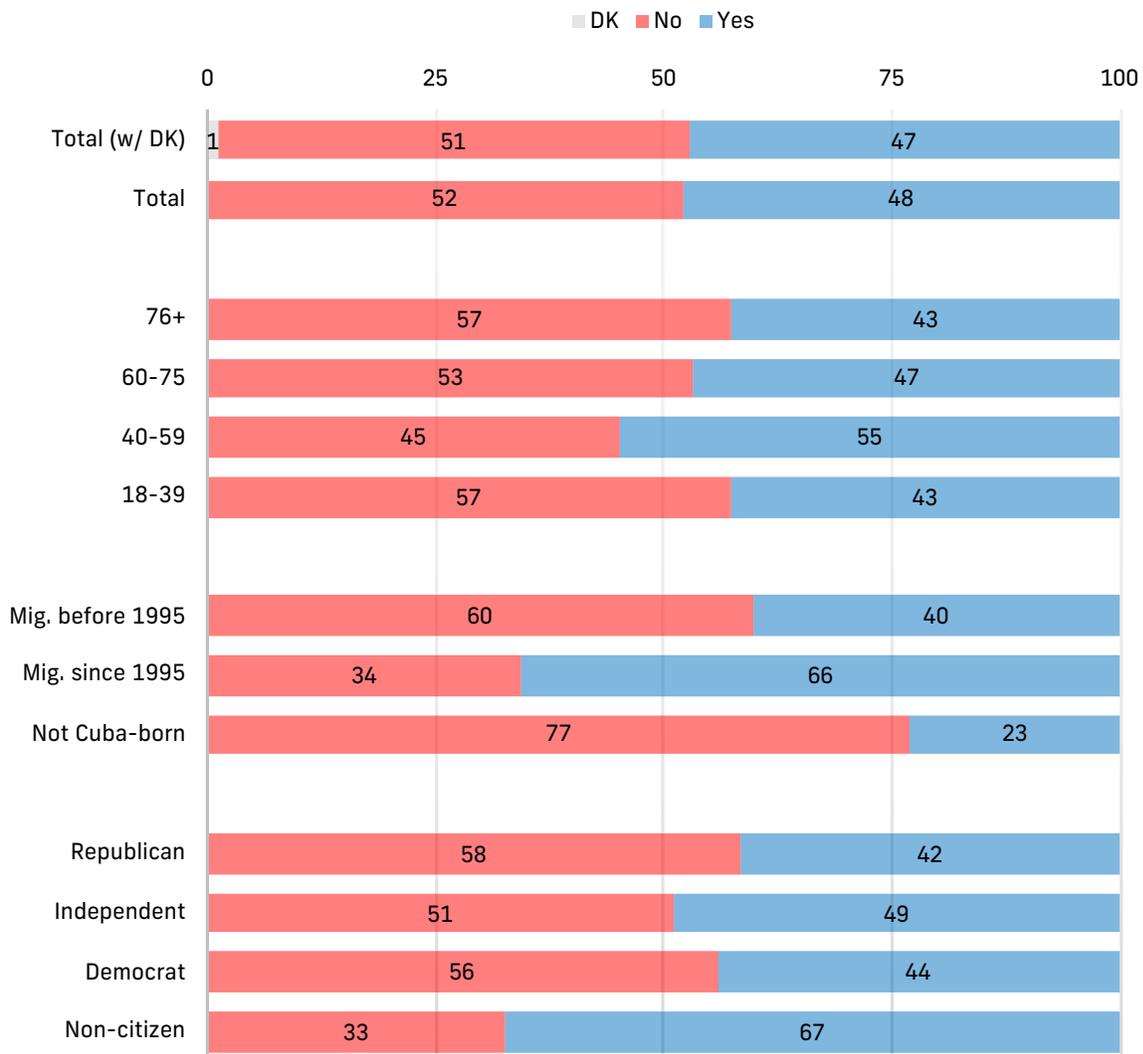
Figure 21



## Remittances matter. Almost half of Cuban Americans send them to family members on the island.

Approximately half of all Cuban-American families send remittances to relatives in Cuba. The most recent arrivals are the most likely to send remittances while the older population group and the pre-1995 migrants are the least likely to send money to relatives on the island. It’s worth mentioning that the most recent arrivals have fewer resources to contribute to relatives on the island but, nevertheless, manage to share these resources with those left behind. The old saying comes to mind: “Cubans share what they have, not what is left over.”

Figure 22



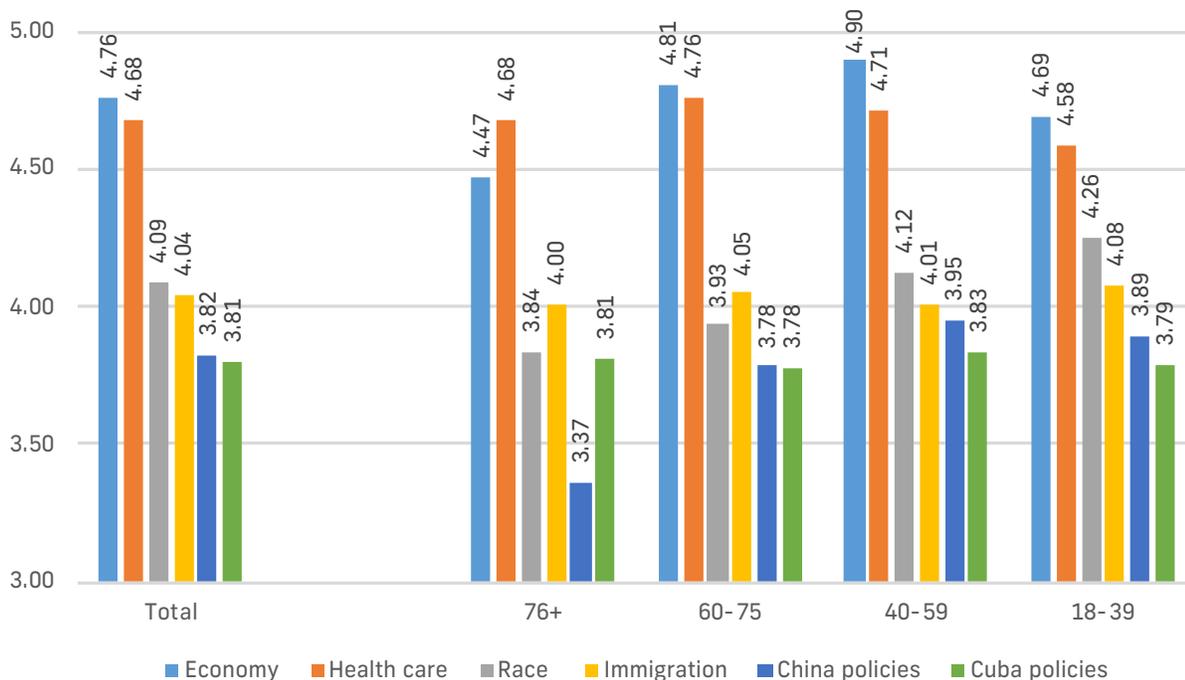
# Cuban Americans are not one-issue ponies. The importance of national policies regarding the economy, health care, immigration, China and Cuba

## Importance of National Issues by Age

Respondents were asked to rank the importance of each of these policies. Each policy was ranked independently. Respondents were not forced to prioritize the policies compared to each other, simply to rank the policy’s importance on a five-point scale. The results present a clear picture of the importance of each policy. Combining the answers allows us to evaluate how the Cuban-American community prioritizes them. Let us look at the importance of each policy to the respondents categorized by age.

The economy ranks as the most important policy concern among all respondent categories EXCEPT the oldest. The over-76 category of respondents considers health care the most important policy. Cuba policy is ranked the sixth, that is to say, last in importance, by three of the four age groupings.

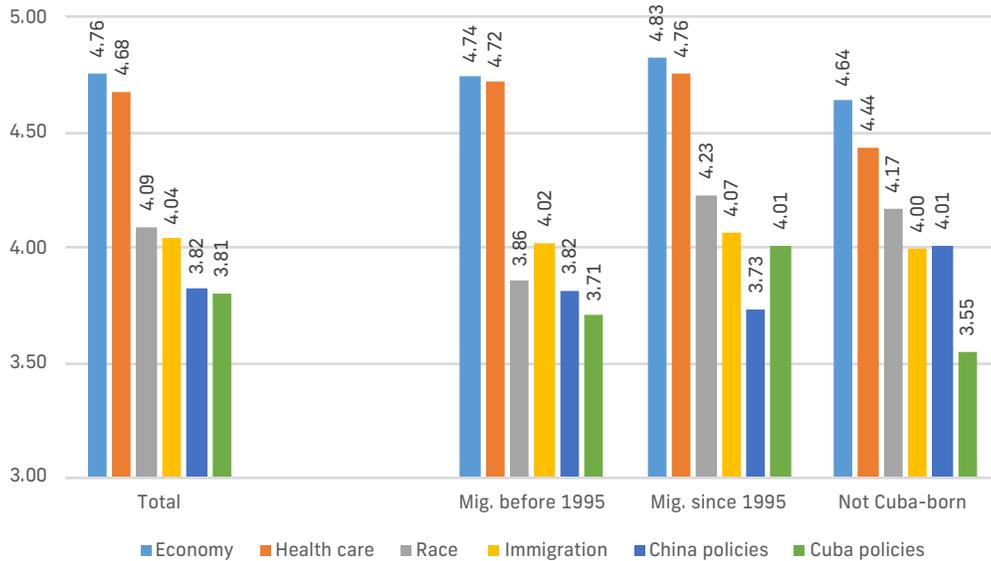
Figure 23



## Importance of National Issues by Migration Period

Again, regardless of when the respondents left Cuba, the economy edges out health care as the most important issue for Cuban Americans in South Florida. The government’s handling of Cuba policy remains the least important policy concern for all groups except the post-1995 migrants, who consider its handling more important than U.S. policy toward China.

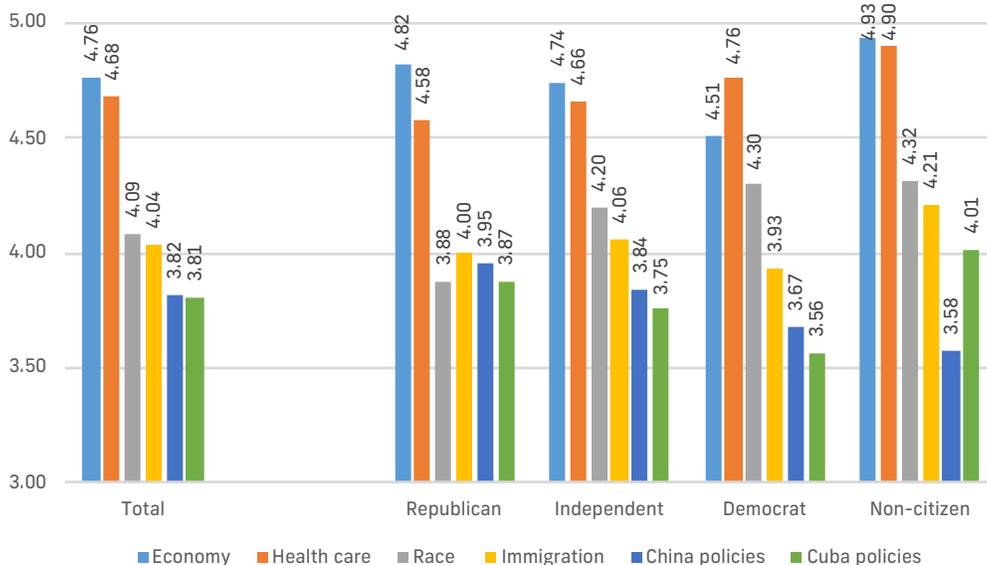
Figure 24



## Importance of National Issues by Voter Registration

The economy remains the most important issue for registered voters and noncitizens alike, with the exception of registered Democrats, who consider health care the most important policy concern. Noncitizens, that is the most recent arrivals, consider Cuba policy more important than U.S./China policy but all registered voters put Cuba issues as the least important of the six policy concerns.

Figure 25

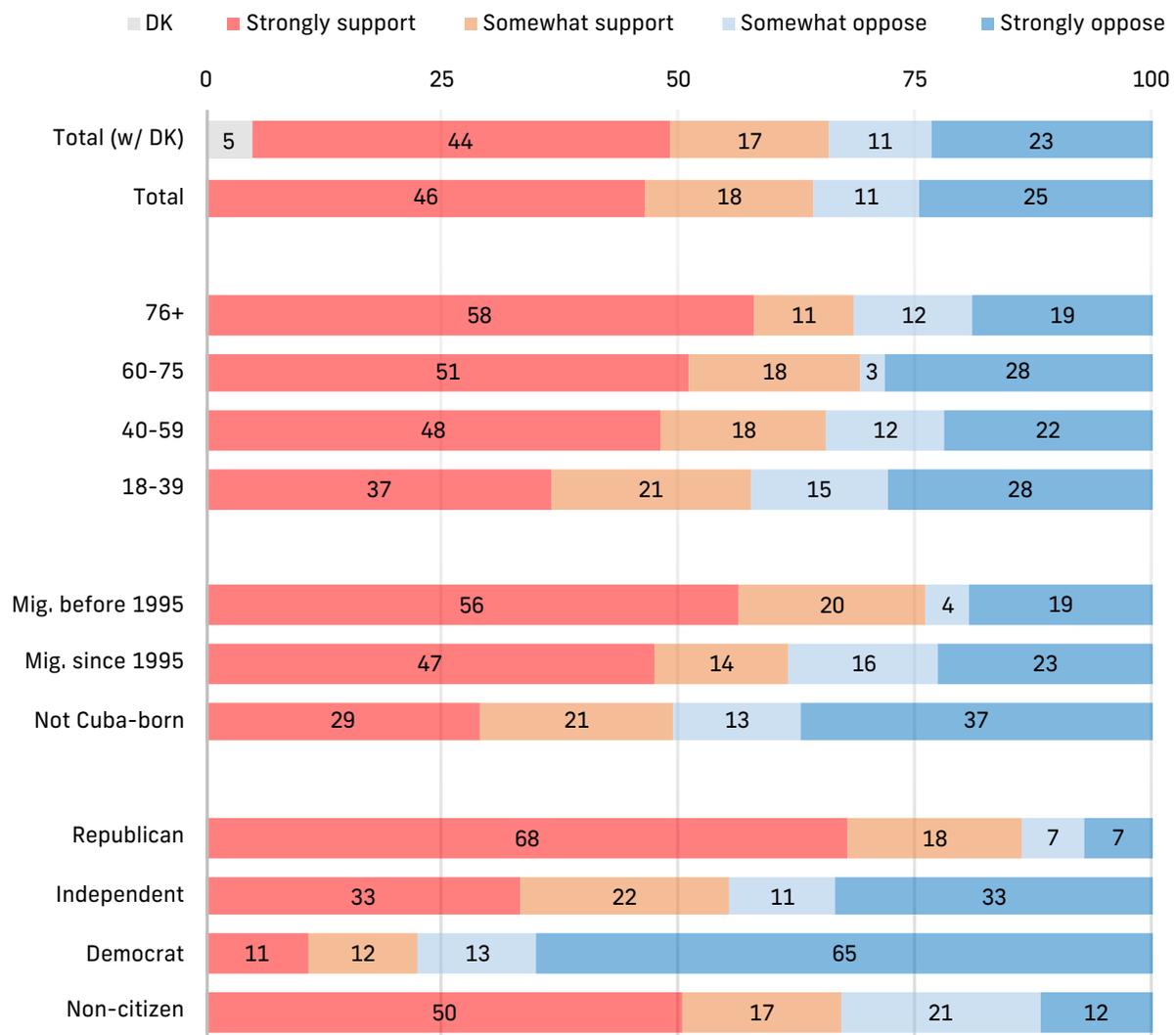


# Approval for Trump’s Handling of Key Issues

## Trump receives support for his handling of the issue of immigration.

An overwhelming majority of Cuban Americans (64%) strongly or somewhat support the way that President Trump has handled the issue of immigration. Respondents not born in Cuba and registered Democrats are the only two categories who express significant opposition to the President’s handling of immigration policy (50% and 78% opposition respectively.)

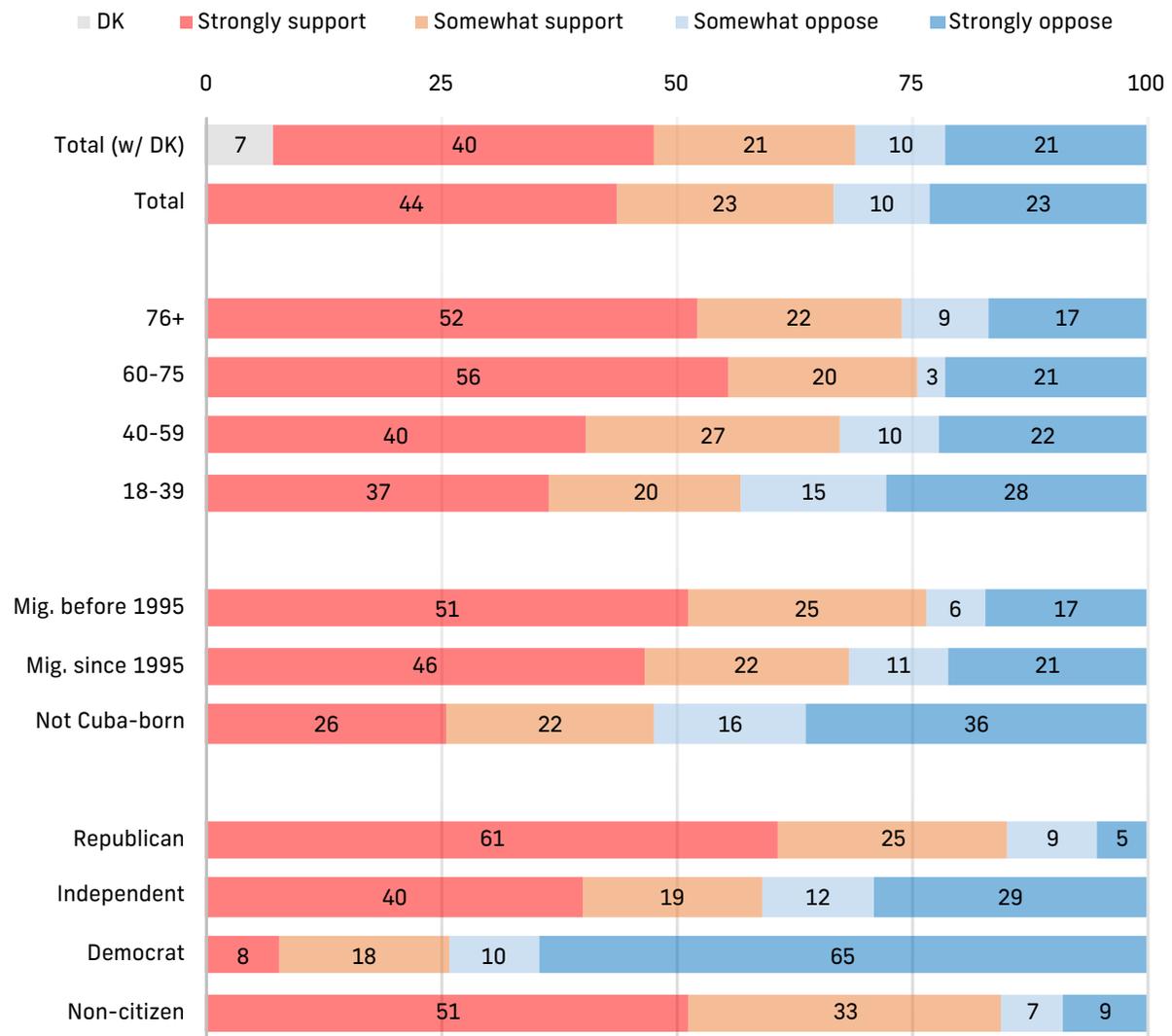
Figure 26



## Trump receives support for his handling of the issue of health care.

The respondents express solid support for the President’s handling of health care policy as well. Approximately 67% of respondents express the opinion of “strongly” or “somewhat” supporting the President’s approach. A majority of all categories of respondents, except those not born in Cuba and registered Democrats, express support. Approximately 52% of the non-Cuba-born respondents oppose the President’s handling of health care as do 75% of registered Democrats.

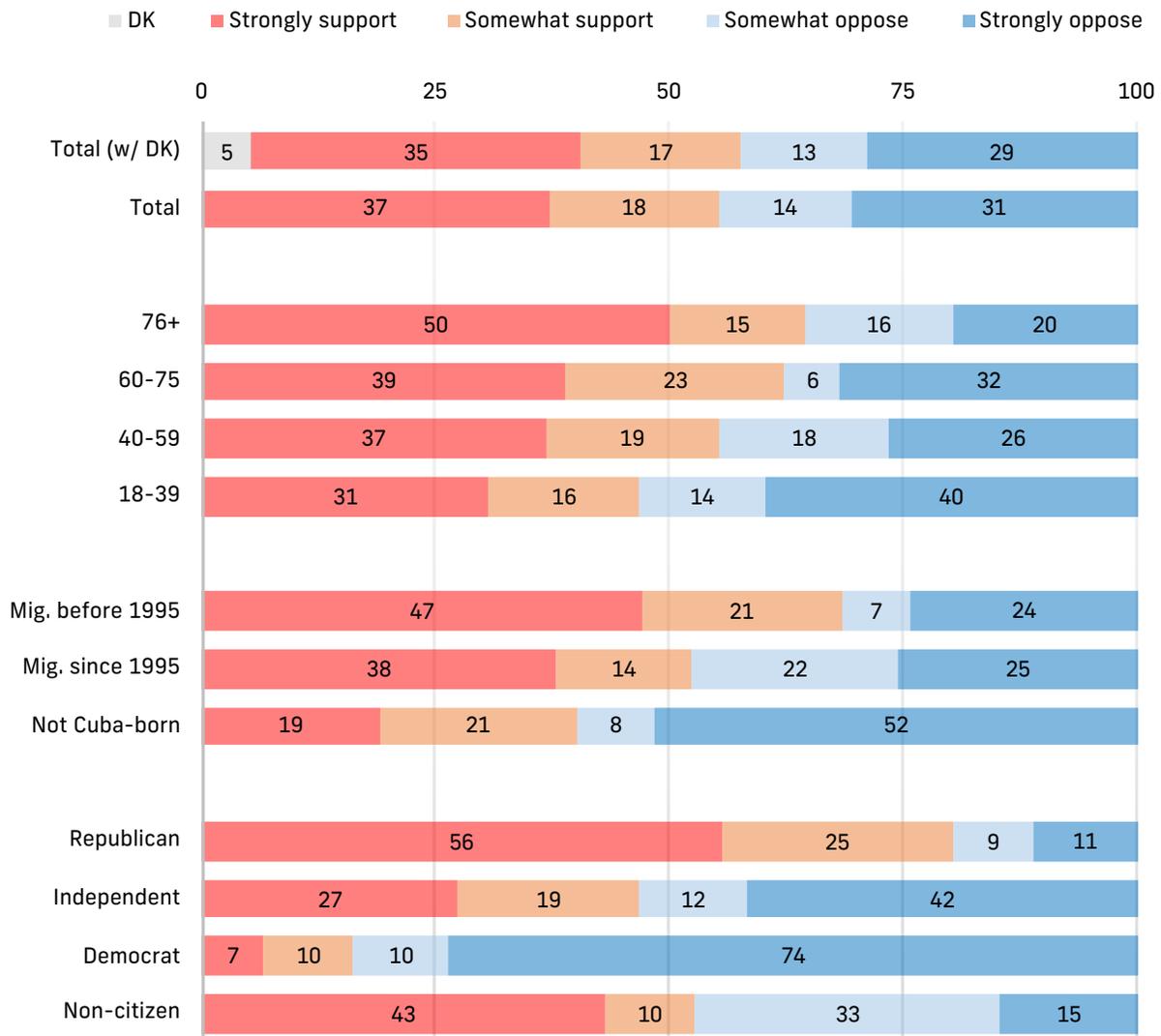
Figure 27



## Trump gets mixed reviews for his handling of the issue of race relations.

A majority of respondents (55%) support the way that President Trump has handled race relations issues during his term. The support is not unanimous across all of the categories of respondents. A majority (54%) of younger respondents (18-39) oppose the President’s handling of race issues as do a majority of the non-Cuba-born category (60%), independent voters (54%) and registered Democrats (84%). The opposition of the post-1995 migrants (47%) is within the margin of error of the poll as is the opposition expressed by the respondents included in the non-citizen category (48%).

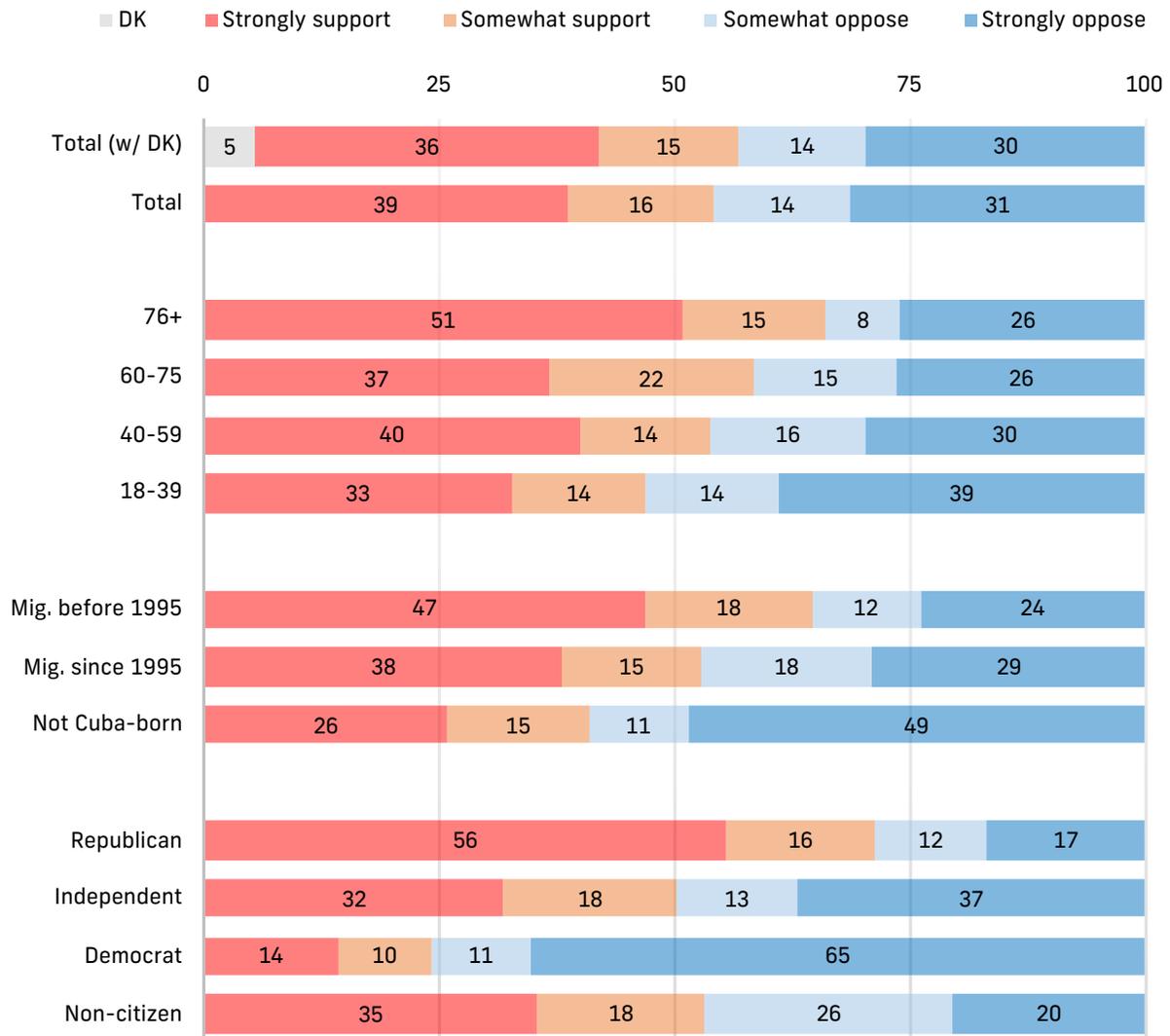
Figure 28



## Trump gets mixed reviews for his handling of the recent national protests.

The President's handling of the wave of protests that have swept the country for weeks receives mixed reviews. While 55% of respondents support the President's handling of the protests, the younger respondents and the non-Cuba-born respondents voice significant opposition (53% and 60% respectively) as do registered Democrats (76%) and independents (50%).

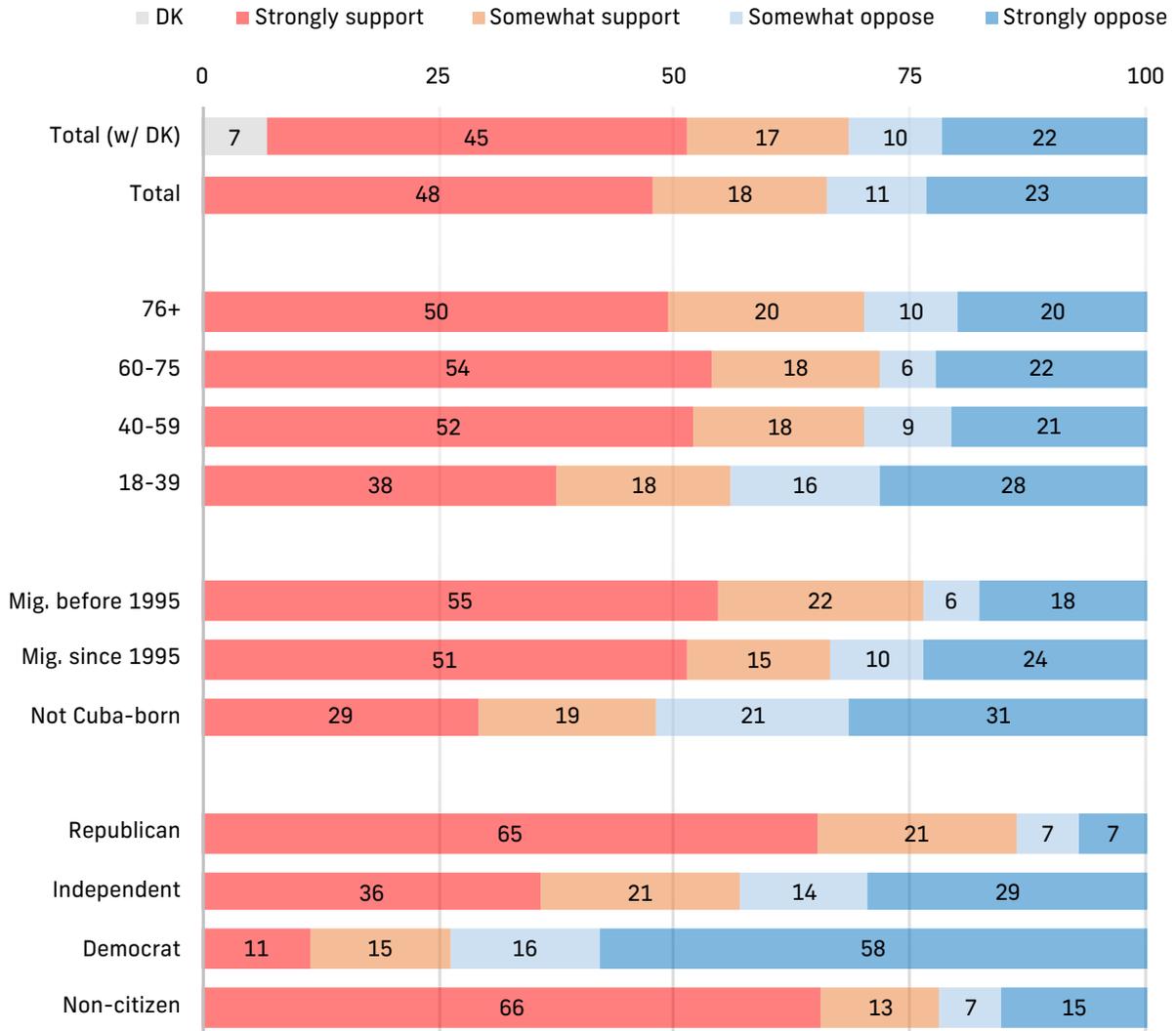
Figure 29



## Trump gets strong support for his handling of Cuba policy.

Approximately 66% of Cuban-Americans in South Florida support the President's handling of Cuba policy in general. The main opposition comes from the non-Cuba-born respondents (52%) and registered Democrats (74%).

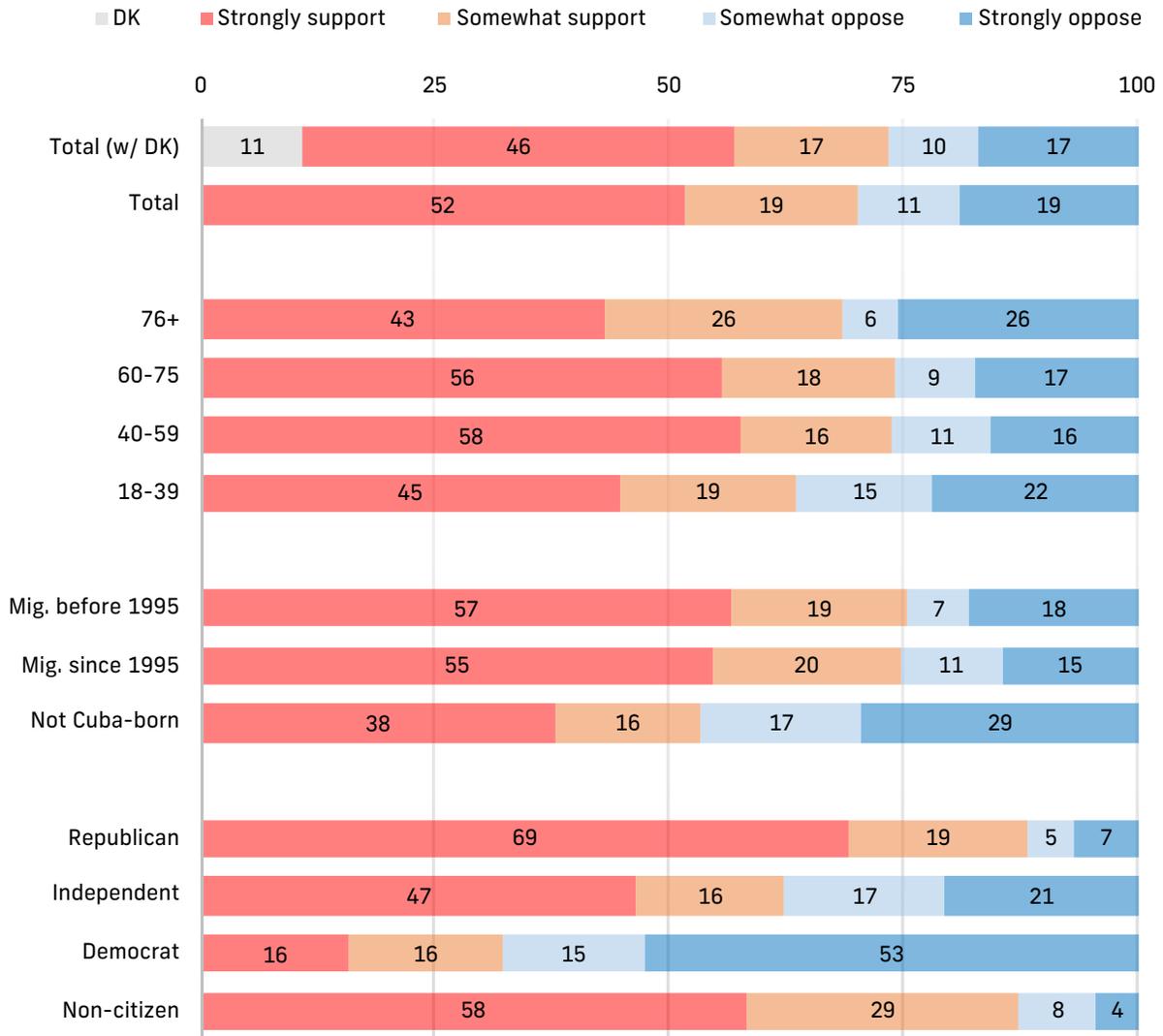
Figure 30



## Trump gets high marks for his handling of China policy.

The President's handling of China policy also receives strong support, with only the loyal opposition of registered Democrats raising a voice of dissent (68% oppose).

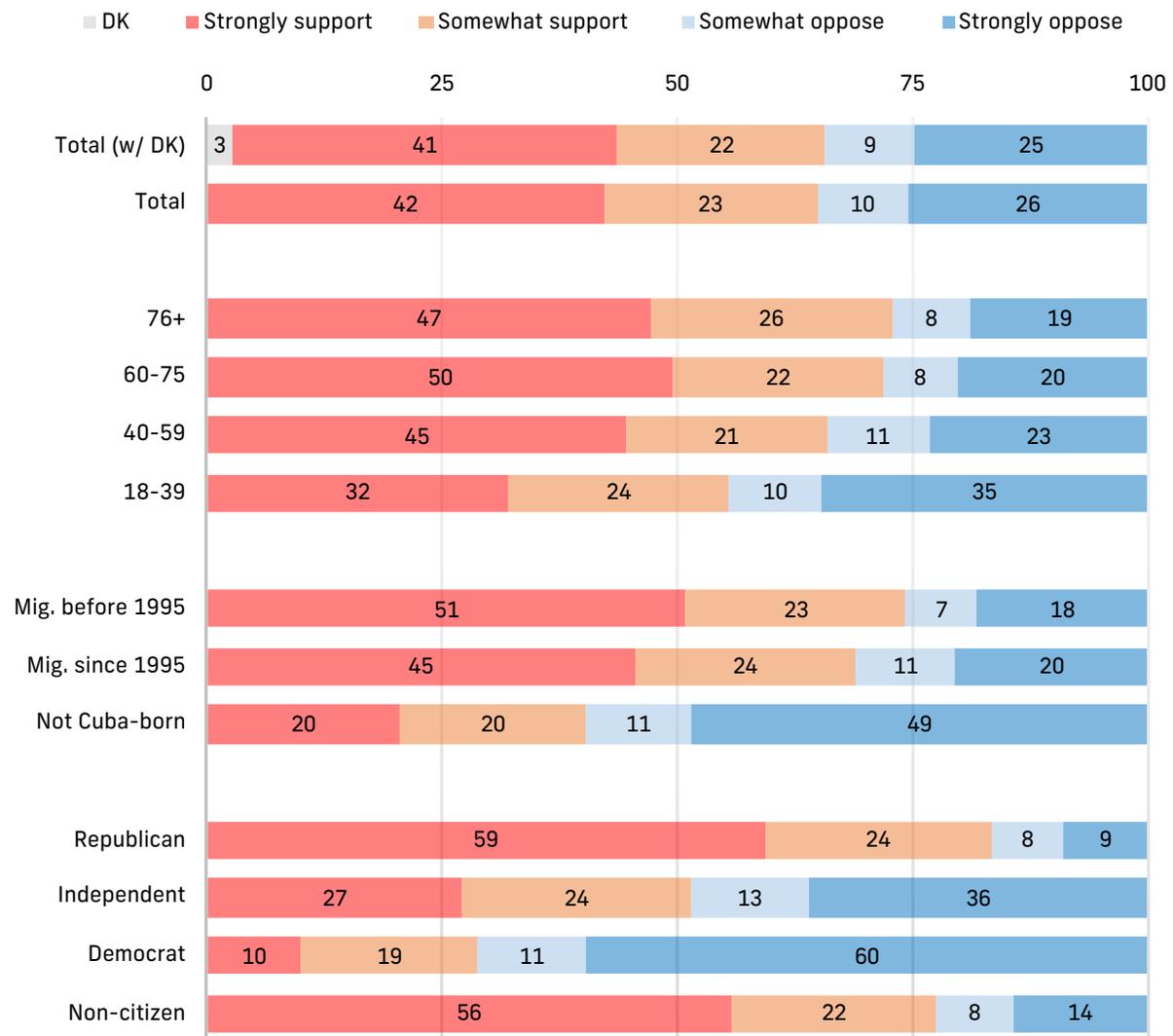
Figure 31



## Trump receives support for his handling of the COVID-19 crisis.

The President's often criticized handling of the COVID-19 crisis receives high marks from Cuban Americans in general. Approximately 65% support Trump's handling of the novel coronavirus crisis. Although over a third of respondents in several categories do not support his handling of the crisis, only non-Cuba-born respondents, registered Democrats and independents voice significant opposition (60%, 71% and 49% respectively).

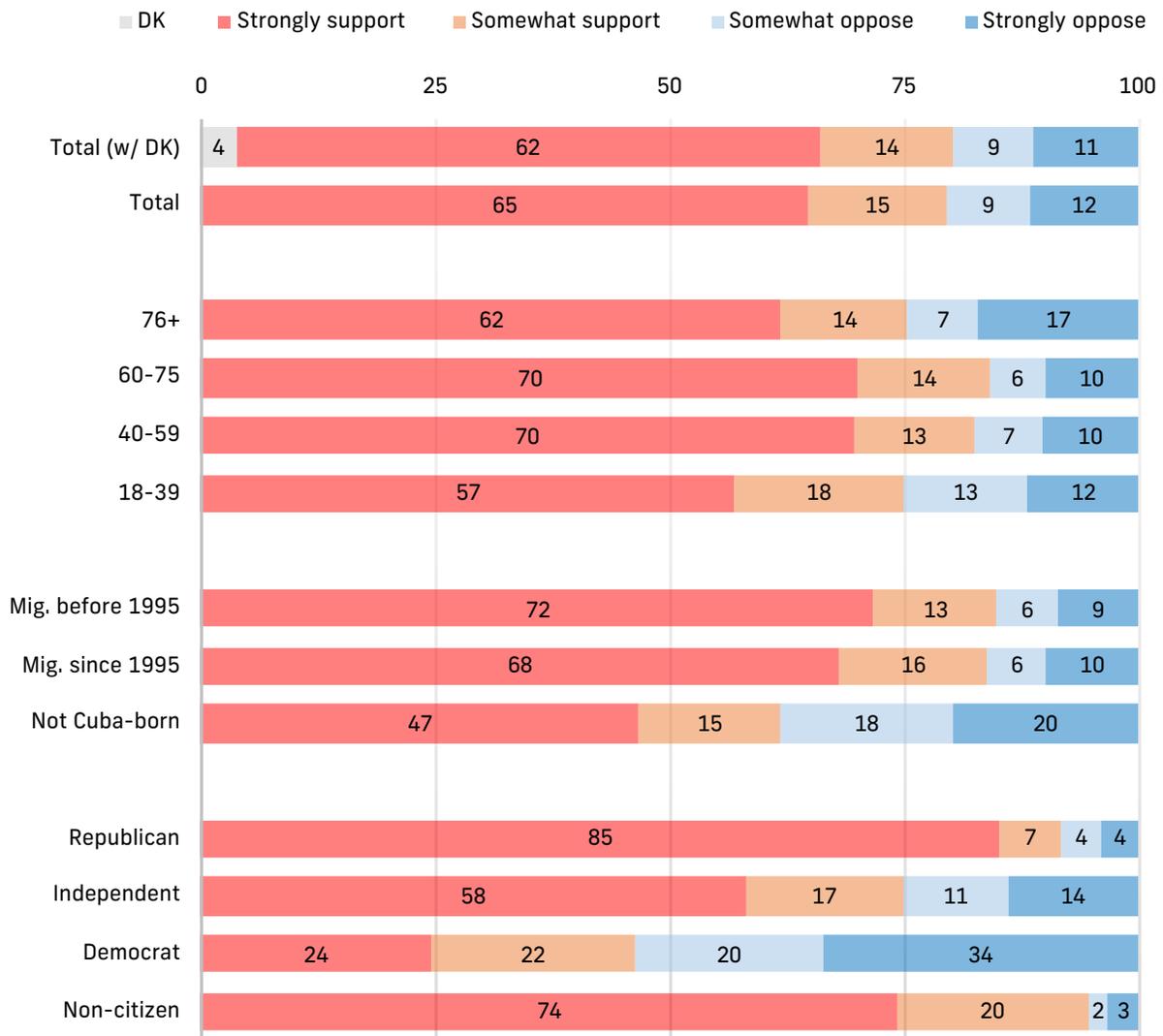
Figure 32



## Trump gets high marks for handling the economy.

Registered Democrats are the only category of respondents that express a muted if majority opposition to the President's handling of the economy (54%). All other respondent groups overwhelmingly endorse the President's work on the economy. Although the question did not guide respondents' evaluation, it is clear that the present condition of the economy is not having an impact on the overall view of the President as doing a good job in steering economic policy.

Figure 33

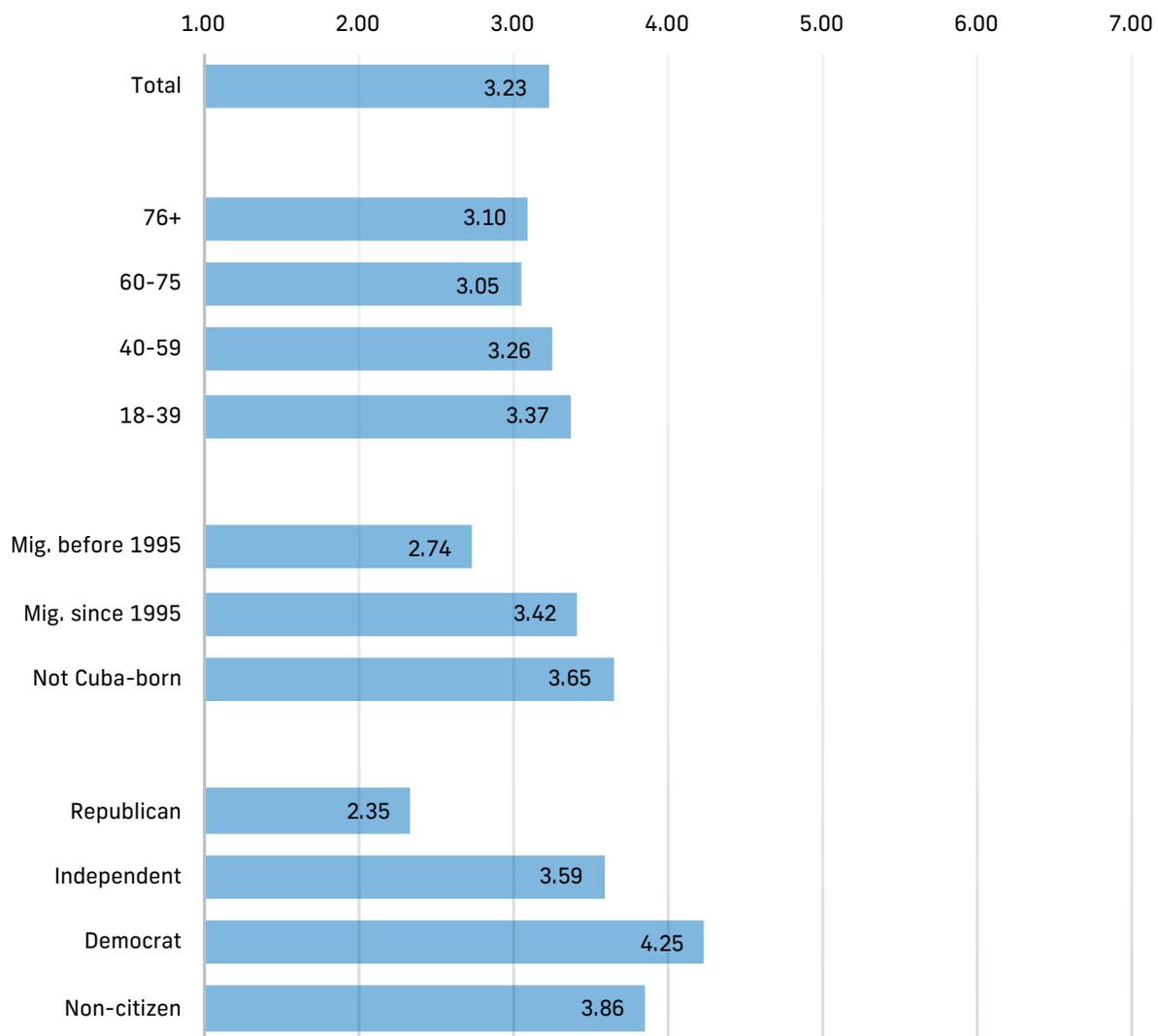


## Politics Writ Large

### Yes, Virginia, Cubans are still conservative.

Most Cuban Americans consider themselves to be on the conservative side of political ideology. When asked to place their political views on scale where 1 is extremely conservative and 7 is extremely liberal, only Democrats cross into what might be called the “moderate” dimension of the ideological scale.

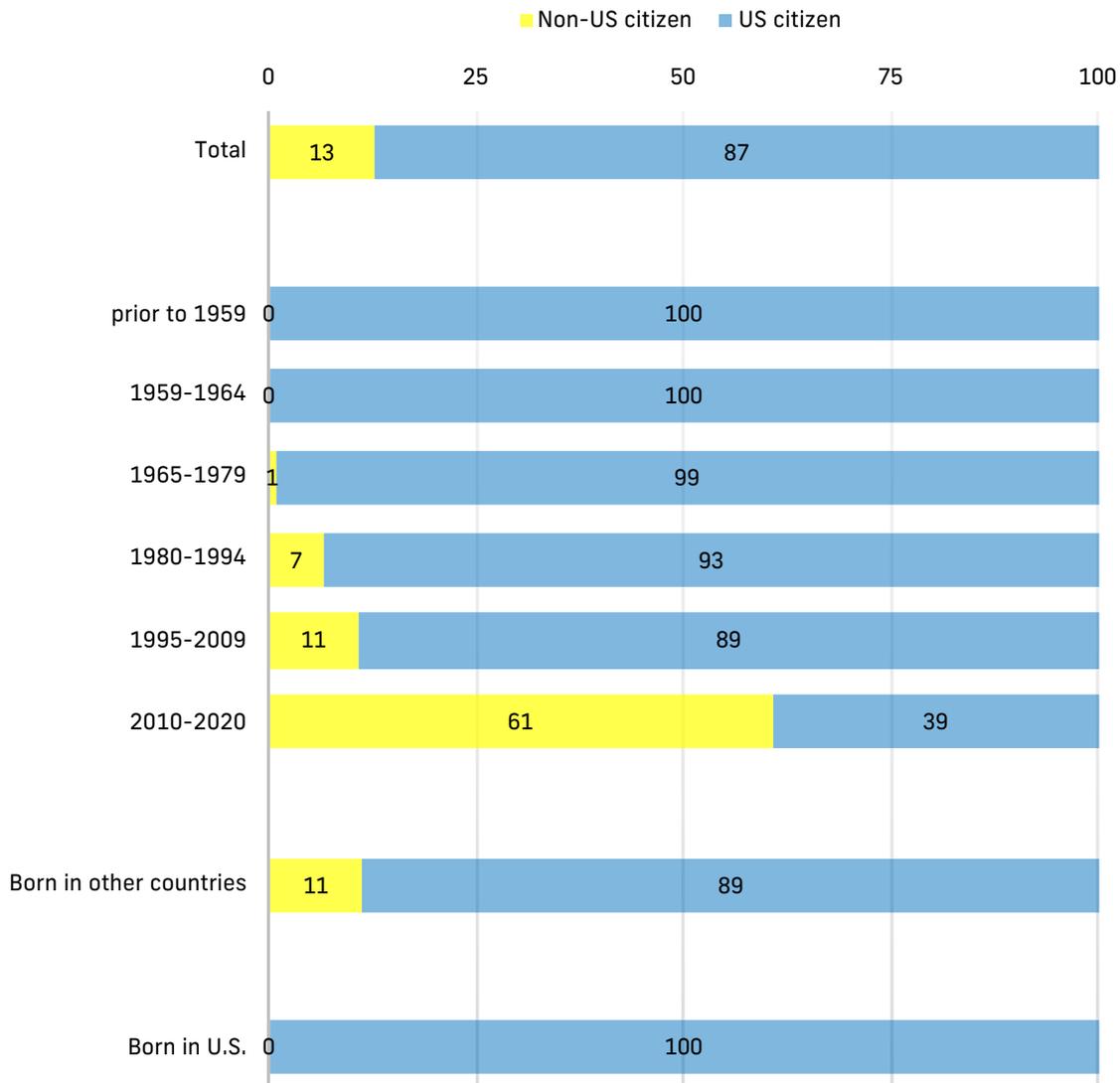
Figure 34



## High citizenship participation is a characteristic of the Cuban-American population.

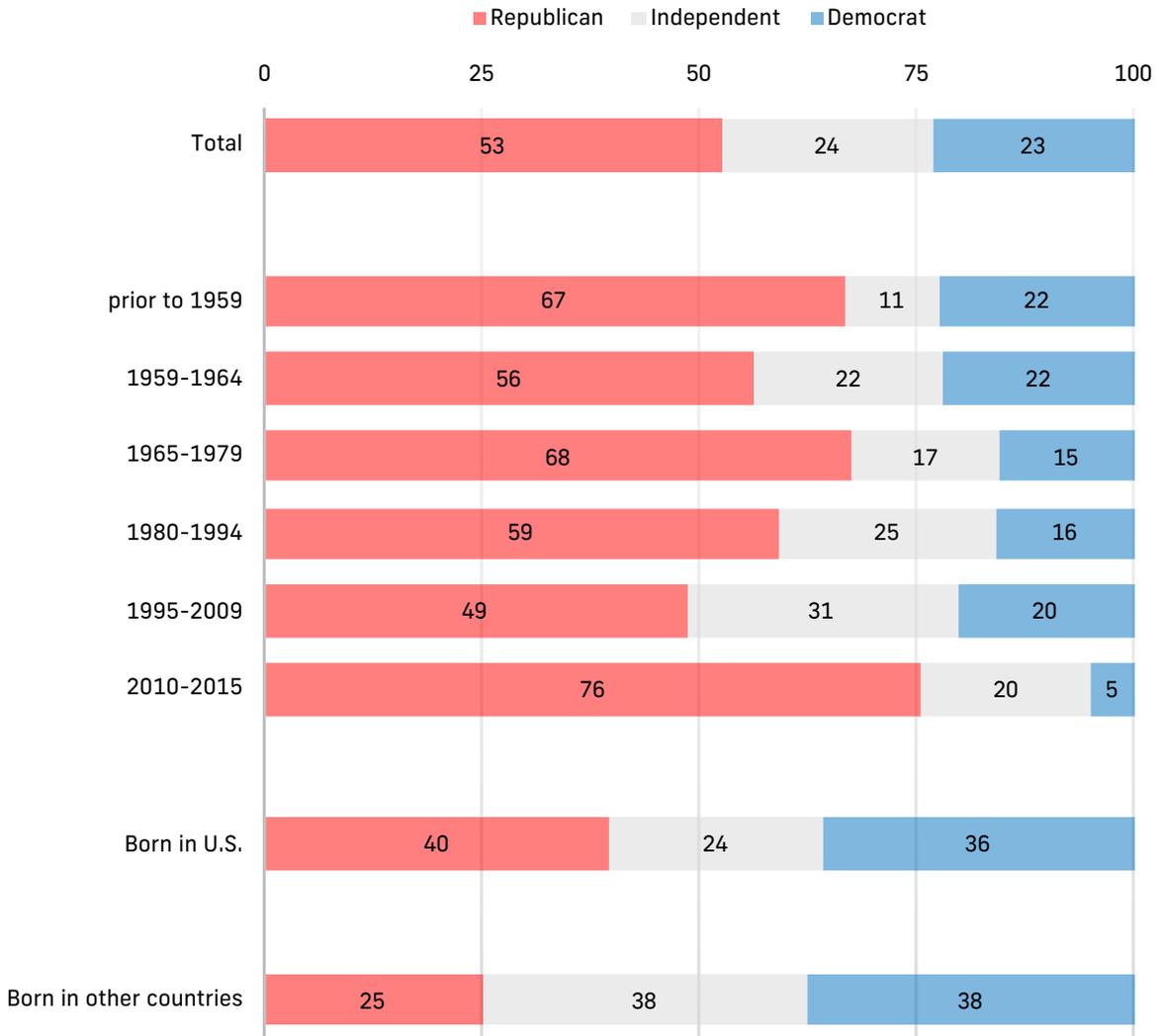
The literature on Cuban Americans highlights their political engagement. Our sample lives up to expectations. Only the wave of migrants who arrived during the past decade, many of whom have not been in the country the necessary time to become citizens, lags behind in naturalization activity. All questions asking about voting preferences exclude respondents who are non-citizens and are not registered (or have no intention of registering) to vote.

Figure 35



The Republican Party maintains a slight majority of registered voters and is replenishing itself with the energy of new arrivals.

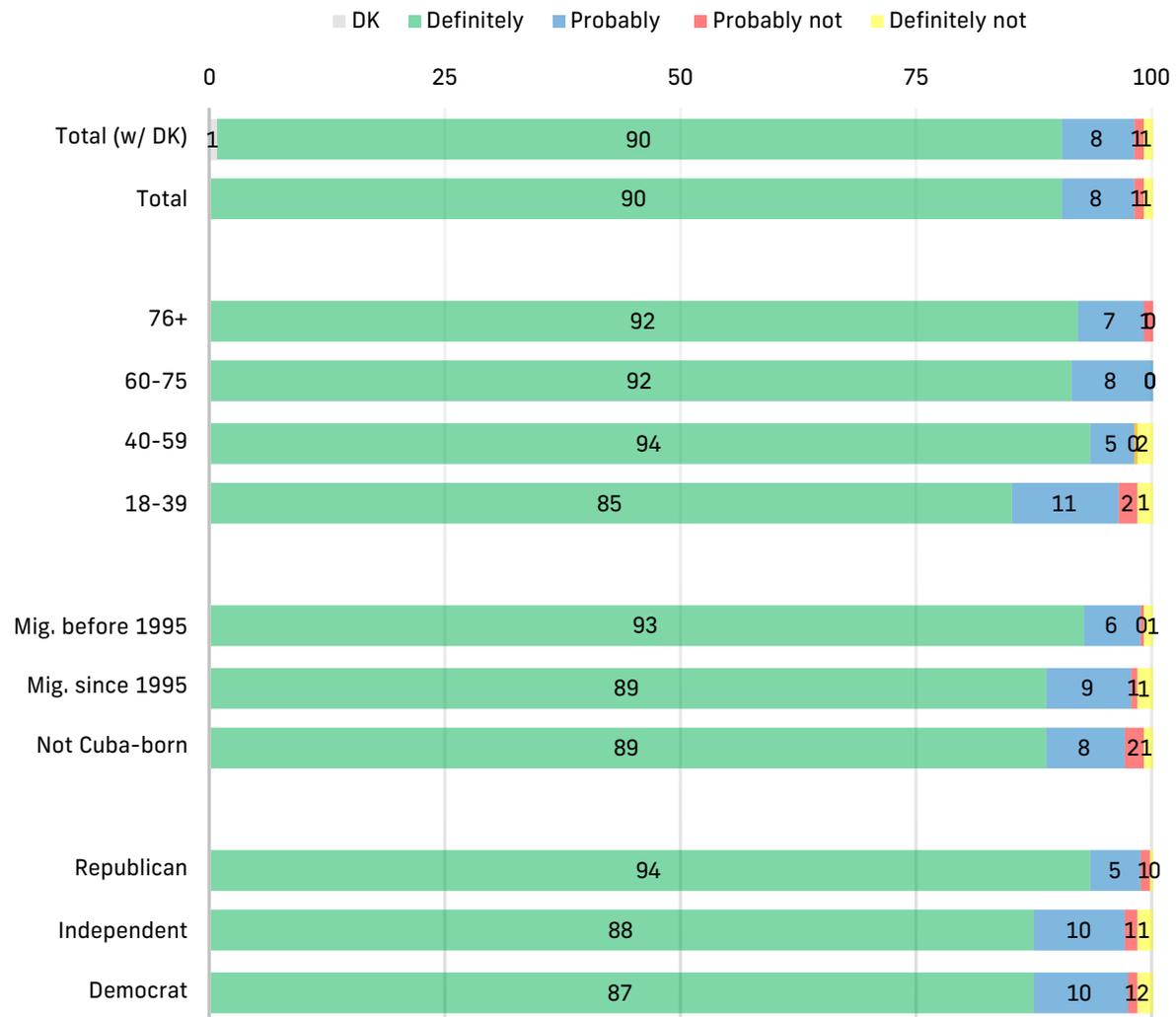
Figure 36



## Cuban Americans are politically engaged and politically motivated to vote in upcoming elections.

Another measure of political engagement is the likelihood of registered voters to actually vote in the upcoming elections. Ninety percent of registered voters are committed to casting a ballot in November. Republicans are somewhat more motivated than Democrats or independents. The young voters are, as usual, the most ambivalent. Only 85 percent express certainty about casting their ballot.

Figure 37

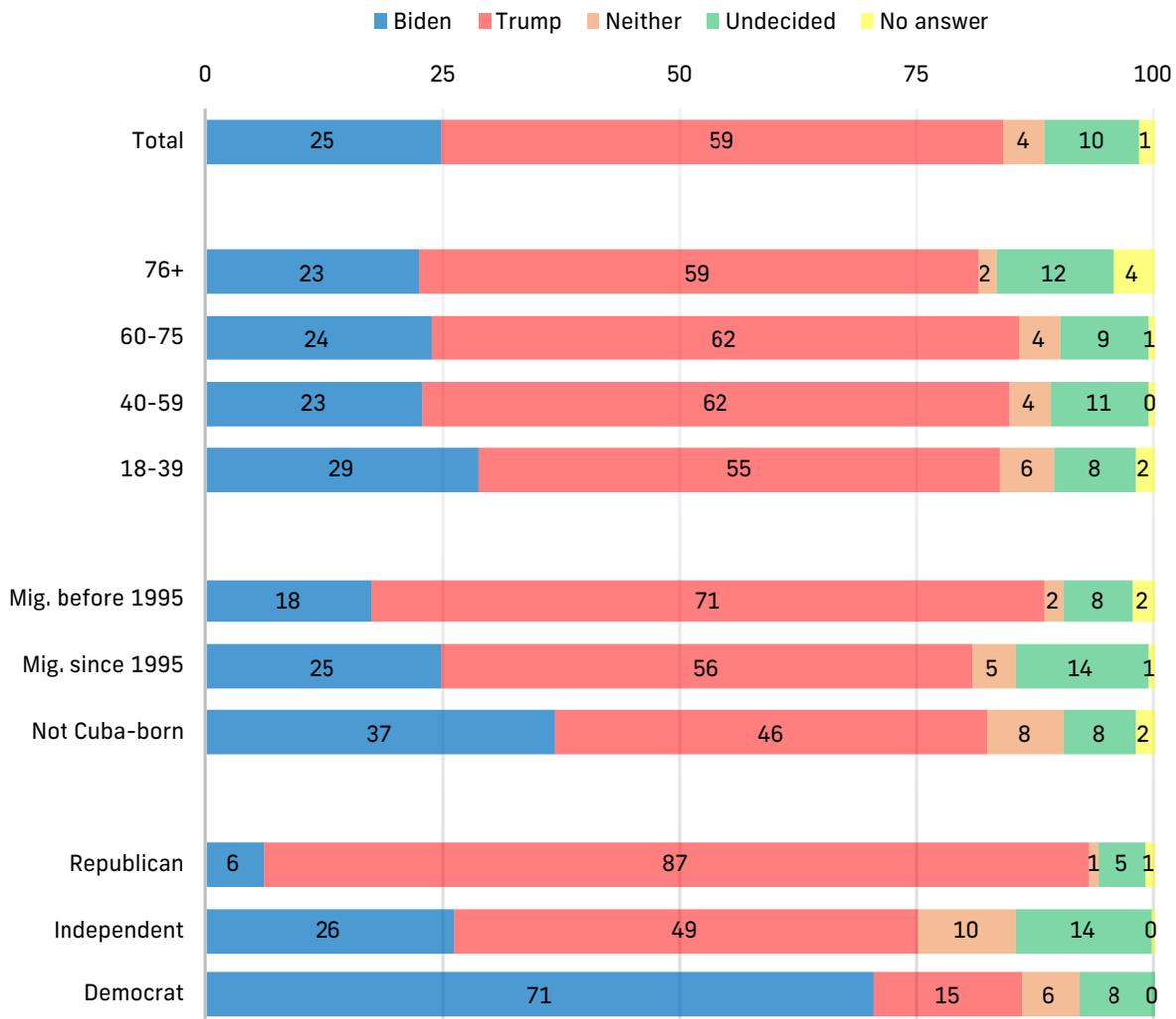


# The Horserace

## If the election for President were held today with Joe Biden and Donald Trump as candidates, whom would you vote for?

Cuban-American voters since the 1980s have expressed overwhelming support for Republican candidates. This year will be no exception. Approximately 59% of all registered voters intend to cast their vote for President Trump. Among registered Democrats, 71% intend to vote for Biden. Cuban-American independent voters usually vote like Republicans and they intend to do so in November. The support for Trump among non-Cuba-born respondents is a bit under 50%. Swaying the undecided might have an impact for the Biden campaign in a race where receiving the majority of the Cuban vote is not a reasonable expectation. Ten percent of all registered voters remain undecided and most of these are distributed among independent voters, post-1995 migrants and a couple of age cohorts.

Figure 38

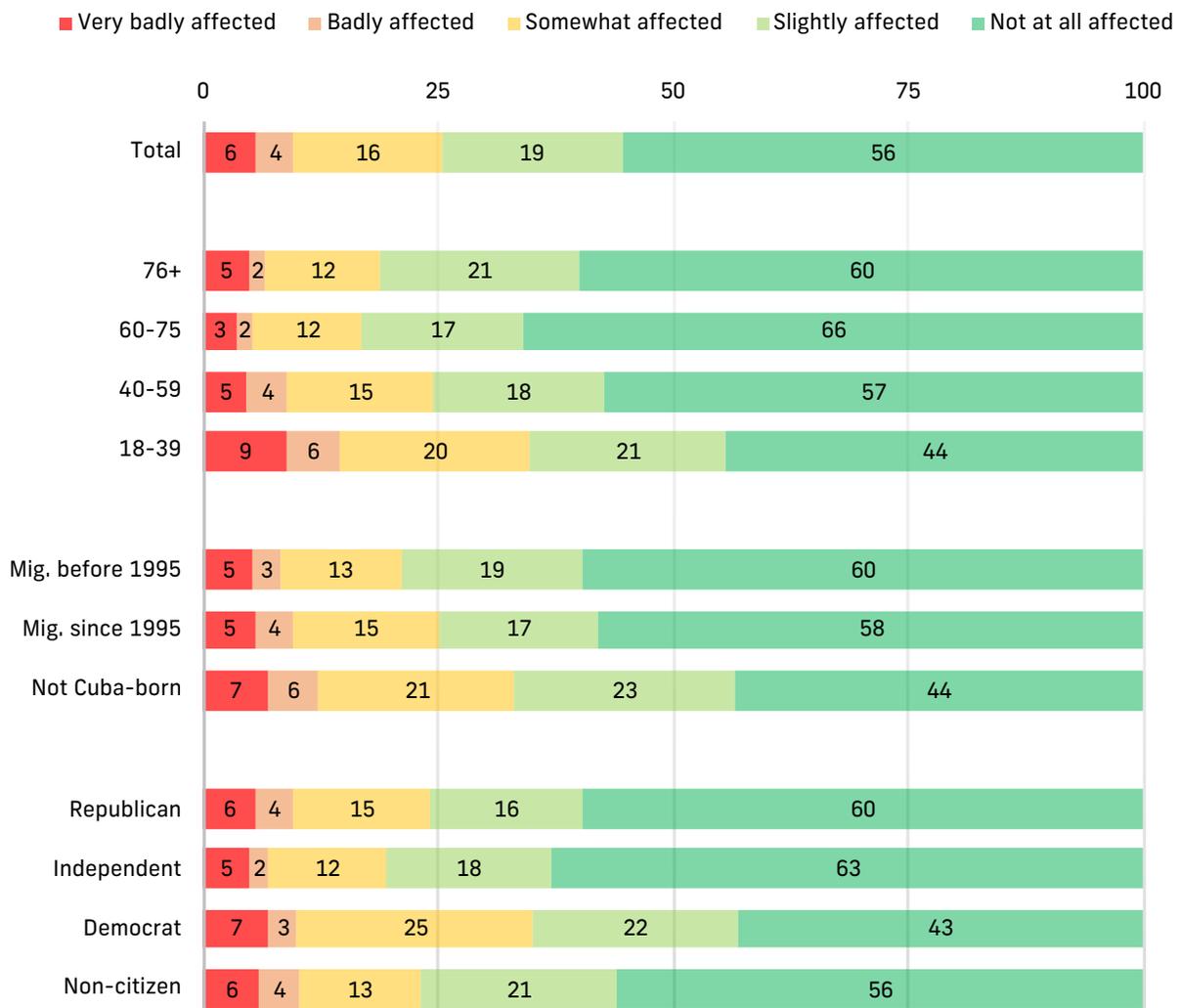


# Lastly: On the Health and Economic Impact of Covid-19 on our Community

## The impact of Covid-19 on the health of the community: muted but significant.

The COVID-19 crisis has had an impact on the physical health of the Cuban-American population in South Florida. Although the questionnaire does not explore the full impact of the virus in the community, nearly half (44%) of respondents report having been affected (slightly, somewhat, badly or very badly) by the pandemic. Approximately 56% of the younger respondents (18-39) report having been affected to some degree. This is roughly the same impact suffered by the non-Cuba-born and Democrat categories of respondents.

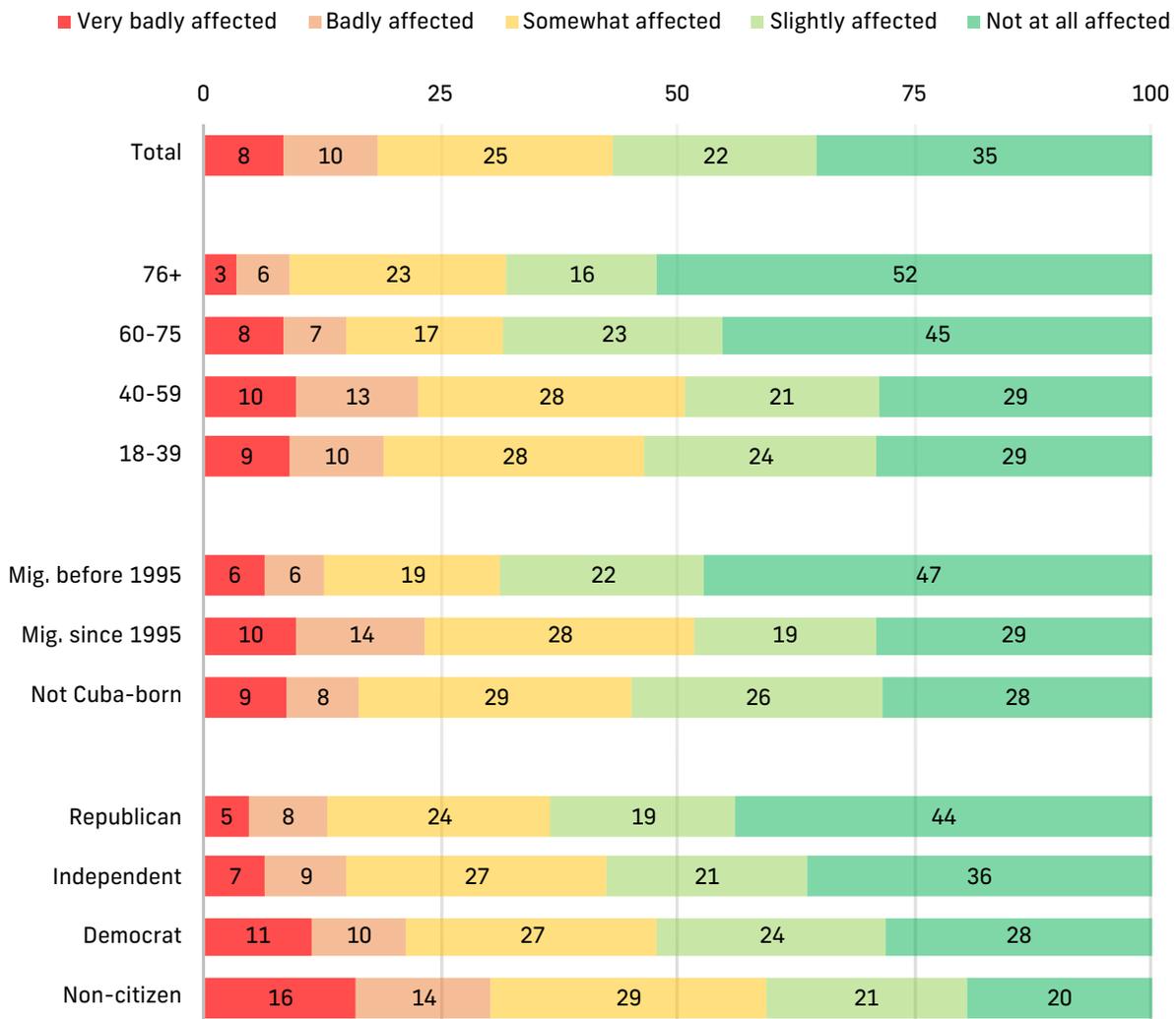
Figure 39



## Economic impact due to COVID-19: broad and deep.

The financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is more widespread than its health impact. Sixty-five percent of all respondents report being financially affected by the pandemic. The most vulnerable population seems to be the noncitizens, who, presumably, are also the most recent arrivals. Democrats report being more affected than Republicans or independents. The personal finances of post-1995 arrivals and non-Cuba-born have been similarly jeopardized. The population most protected from financial calamity, ironically, seems to be the elderly, although 50% of that age cohort reports some financial impact from the consequences of the pandemic.

Figure 40



# DISCUSSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The major conclusion drawn from this poll is that many Cuban Americans in Miami-Dade County are reevaluating the engagement attitudes that they supported during the brief period of glasnost under the Obama administration. It is likely that the reevaluation is influenced by the dramatic change in the narrative toward Cuba adopted by the Trump administration. If this is the case, Cuban Americans are not so much shaping as reflecting U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba.

Another social force potentially shaping the general shift in attitudes is the high expectations established by the Obama engagement policies and the unsteady handling by the Cuban government of economic reforms. Cubans here and on the island expected great changes and they never came. The revival of antagonism initiated by the Trump administration is building on the frustrations accumulated by the modest and unsustainable changes brought about by engagement, and the result is a passionate response to the unambiguous policy initiatives emanating from Washington. Cubans in South Florida follow the lead of strong leadership from Washington, in engagement or in isolation. A strong status quo bias seems to govern the attitudes of the community, and the status quo is established by Washington policies. At least that is a hypothesis worth testing.

The Cuban-American population is not immune to the national narratives. It is part of this society and, as much as Cuba remains a source of identity and pride, the members of the community are embedded in the sociopolitical structure of the United States and South Florida, where all Cuba news is magnified, and its importance often overblown in service of broader political agendas. The negative national narrative, plus the slow pace of changes taking place on the island, combine to create a less than hopeful view of the future and a more ambivalent attitude about the way forward. These are possible explanations for the shifting attitudes. More analysis is required to make more definitive statements.

The tendencies evident in the results of the 2020 FIU Cuba poll can be categorized into two broad camps: support for

the Politics of the Stick and support for the Politics of the Carrot. These cryptic categories are associated with policies of isolation and policies of engagement, respectively. It is not surprising that the poll measures a certain amount of ambivalence in the population. Most Cubans desire change, in Cuba and in U.S. Cuba policy. They are unclear, even after 60 years of experience, whether isolation or engagement will bring about change so they are leaving the door open to more engagement while signaling that, perhaps due to the leadership provided by Trump and his administration, they are willing to give isolation policies their support. Still, both tendencies are evident in the community.

## Policies of the Carrot

1. There is strong support for suspending the sanctions codified in the embargo to allow for humanitarian assistance during the COVID-19 crisis. There is broad support across all respondent categories for this hypothetical, temporary interruption of the embargo.
2. The support for some policies promoting engagement remains high, such as the selling of food and medicines.
3. While support for a policy of unrestricted travel for all Americans has diminished, the support for airlines to establish routes to all regions of Cuba is strong.
4. Policies designed specifically to improve the economic well-being of Cubans on the island are strongly supported (as the counterbalance to the stick policies mentioned below).
5. Approximately half of Cuban Americans in South Florida send remittances to family members on the island. Seventy percent have close relatives or significant others living in Cuba. The Cuban family remains a bond that transcends geography and ideology.

### The Policies of the Stick

1. Support for isolationist policies has increased. Support has increased most dramatically for the economic embargo. Younger Cuban Americans are more likely to oppose the embargo (46%). Cuban Americans not born in Cuba also support lifting the embargo (50%) as do registered Democrats (72%).
2. There is a lack of support for resuming cruise ship operations to the island from U.S. ports. Younger respondents, the non-Cuba-born and registered Democrats are the most supportive of the resumption of cruise traffic to the island.
3. While a majority of Cuban Americans do not believe that Cuba is a threat to American vital interests, there is significant support for policies that exert maximum pressure on the government to promote regime change.

### Views toward other existing policies

1. Cuban Americans support the resumption of the issuing of visas at the U.S. Embassy in Havana. All respondent categories are in support of this change in current U.S. policy.
2. Cuban Americans support the resumption of the Family Reunification Parole Program. Only the oldest respondents and those migrating before 1995 oppose this policy by as much as 50 percent.
3. The community is almost evenly split on the issue of reinstating the “wet foot/dry foot” policy. This split is evident along all respondent categories.

### Pro-Trump Hispanics

1. The traditional support that Cubans have consistently expressed toward the Republican Party (since the 1980s) has transformed itself into support for the presidency of Donald Trump. He receives high marks on handling all of the measured key national issues as well as his handling of Cuba policy and will receive a majority of the Cuban-American vote on November 3.

# APPENDIX

## Appendix 1: Methodology

Following the methodology used in previous polls, the 2020 FIU Cuba Poll is the latest telephone survey of Cuban-American residents in South Florida. The intended population includes all self-identified Cuban adults (aged 18 or older) who currently live in Miami-Dade County (MDC). The sampling frame consists of all Telephone Consumer Protection Act compliant LAN and cell numbers operating in the area. A probability sample was constructed using Random Digit Dialing (RDD) procedure. FIU contracted the NORS Surveys, Inc. to conduct the interviews. The respondents who self-identified as Cuban were interviewed with our bilingual (English and Spanish) questionnaire and the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system.

Data collection took place from July 7 to August 17, 2020. We successfully reached a total of 4,355 telephone users (757 LAN and 3,598 cell phone users), among whom 1,117 (25.6%) identified themselves as Cuban. Most (89.7%) completed the interview, yielding a final sample of 1,002 respondents. A majority (81.1%) of those who completed interviews did so via cell phone. Approximately half (45.4%) of the interviews were conducted in Spanish.

All results presented in this report are weighted to better represent the intended population. A three-way weight is constructed based on gender, age and nativity/migration cohort. Our population benchmark is the person-weighted American Community Survey (ACS) 2014-2018 5-year sample, which represents the 2018 U.S. population. Our weight variable adjusts our sample composition toward all MDC Cuban residents aged 16 or older in 2018.

All figures in this report are graphed using precise values. However, in some figures the percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding error.

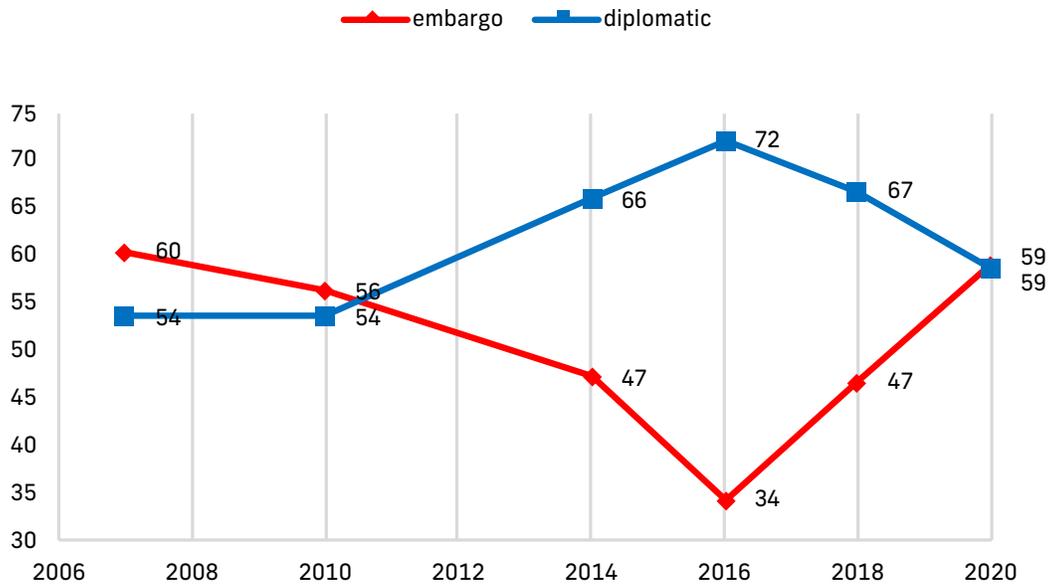
In Table 2 we estimated the number of Cuban-American registered voters by party. Two assumptions were made. First, the registration rate is assumed to be the same (84.1%) for all Hispanic communities. Second, the state-level party distribution of Cuban-American registered voters is assumed to be the same as that in Miami-Dade County. Figures 2 and 3 are also built upon these assumptions.

Figures 38 and 39 summarize the health and financial impacts of COVID-19. The results might involve a survival bias. For instance, Figure 38 shows that those aged 60 or older are less affected by the pandemic in terms of health. This needs to be interpreted with caution. It is known that COVID-19-induced mortality is highly age-dependent, which means that many elderly Cubans did not survive to our window of observation. Nonetheless, it is safe to say that our results reflect the perceptions of the surviving Cuban adult population in MDC.

## Appendix 2: Selected Trends

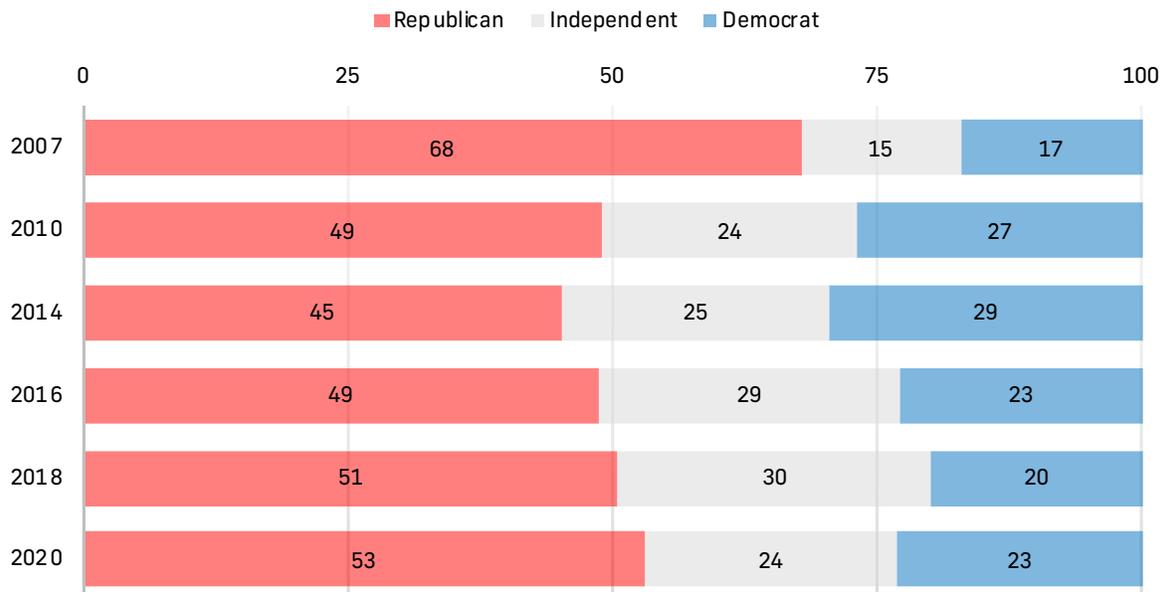
### Support for the Embargo and Diplomatic Relations Over Time (2007-2020)

Figure 41



### Party Affiliation Over time (2007-2020)

Figure 42



## Appendix 3: How Were The Questions Asked?

Over the years, the United States government has often supported different policies toward Cuba. I am going to read you some of the policies that have been proposed and I would like you to tell me whether you favor or oppose these policies.

1. **First, allow companies to sell medicine in an unrestricted way to Cuba, do you strongly favor, mostly favor, mostly oppose, or strongly oppose this?**  
*[Esta es una pregunta sobre Cuba actualmente.] Durante años el gobierno de los Estados Unidos ha apoyado a menudo diversas políticas hacia Cuba. Voy a leerle algunas de las políticas que se han propuesto, y me gustaría que usted me dijera si está a favor o en contra de ellas. Permitir que las compañías vendan medicinas a Cuba, ¿está decididamente a favor, principalmente a favor, principalmente en contra, o fuertemente en contra?*
2. **Allowing U.S. companies to sell food to Cuba in an unrestricted way. [..Do you Strongly Favor, Mostly Favor, Mostly Oppose, or Strongly Oppose this?]**  
*Permitir que las compañías norteamericanas vendan alimentos a Cuba... ¿Está decididamente a favor, principalmente a favor, principalmente en contra, o fuertemente en contra?*
3. **Allowing unrestricted travel by all Americans to Cuba Do you Strongly Favor, Mostly Favor, Mostly Oppose, or Strongly Oppose?**  
*Los viajes sin restricciones de todos los americanos a Cuba ¿deberían ser permitidos o no?*
4. **Overall, do you think the U.S. embargo of Cuba has worked very well, well, not very well, or not at all?**  
*En términos generales, ¿cree usted que el embargo norteamericano a Cuba ha dado muy buen resultado, buen resultado, no muy buen resultado, o ningún resultado?*
5. **On the issue of the embargo, Do you Strongly Favor, Mostly Favor, Mostly Oppose, or Strongly Oppose continuing the U.S. embargo of Cuba?**  
*¿Está usted a favor o en contra de que continúe el embargo a Cuba?*
6. **On the issue of maintaining diplomatic relations with Cuba, do you Strongly Favor, Mostly Favor, Mostly Oppose, or Strongly Oppose maintaining diplomatic relations with Cuba?**  
*¿Está usted a favor o en contra del restablecimiento de las relaciones diplomáticas de los Estados Unidos con Cuba?*
7. **The United States has stopped issuing visas to Cubans from the Havana embassy. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this policy?**  
*Estados Unidos ha dejado de emitir visas a los cubanos desde la embajada de La Habana. ¿Está totalmente de acuerdo, algo de acuerdo, algo en desacuerdo o muy en desacuerdo con esta política?*
8. **Some people say that the U.S. should temporarily suspend the trade sanctions on Cuba to allow for humanitarian responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this policy suggestion?**  
*Algunas personas dicen que Estados Unidos debería suspender temporalmente las sanciones comerciales a Cuba para permitir respuestas humanitarias a la pandemia de Covid. ¿Estás totalmente de acuerdo, algo de acuerdo, algo en desacuerdo o muy en desacuerdo?*
9. **The U.S. government has suspended airline services to all cities in Cuba except Havana. Some say that U.S. airline companies should be able to establish services to any region of the island, not just Havana. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this policy?**  
*El gobierno de EE. UU. ha suspendido los servicios aéreos a todas las ciudades de Cuba, excepto La Habana.*
10. **Allowing cruise ships to continue regular operations to Cuba. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this policy?**  
*Permitir que los cruceros continúen las operaciones regulares a Cuba. ¿Está totalmente de acuerdo, algo de acuerdo, algo en desacuerdo o muy en desacuerdo con esta recomendación?*
11. **Do you or your family in Miami send money to relatives in Cuba?**  
*¿Me podría decir si usted o algún miembro de su familia envía dinero a Cuba?*
12. **Some people say that the U.S. government should emphasize policies that put maximum pressure on the Cuban government to promote regime change. Other people say that the U.S. government should emphasize policies that directly help the Cuban people improve their economic well being. Thinking now about the policies that put maximum pressure on the Cuban Government, do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this policy approach?**  
*Algunas personas dicen que el gobierno de los EE. UU. debe enfatizar las políticas que ejercen la máxima presión sobre el gobierno cubano para promover el cambio de régimen. Otras personas dicen que el gobierno de los Estados Unidos debe enfatizar las políticas que ayudan directamente al pueblo cubano a mejorar su bienestar económico. Pensando ahora en las políticas que ejercen la máxima presión sobre el gobierno cubano, ¿está totalmente de acuerdo, algo de acuerdo, algo en desacuerdo o muy en desacuerdo con este enfoque de política?*

- 13. Now thinking now about the policies that are directed specifically at improving the economic well being of the Cuban people, do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this policy approach?**  
*Pensando ahora en las políticas que se dirigen específicamente a mejorar el bienestar económico del pueblo cubano, ¿está totalmente de acuerdo, algo de acuerdo, algo en desacuerdo o muy en desacuerdo con este enfoque de política?*
- 14. President Trump has suspended the Cuban Family Reunification Parole Program, which allows Cuban Americans to sponsor their close family members in Cuba for immigration to the United States. Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose President Trump's suspension of the Family Reunification Parole Program?**  
*El presidente Trump ha suspendido el Programa de Parole para la Reunificación Familiar Cubana, que permite a los cubanoamericanos patrocinar a sus familiares cercanos en Cuba para que puedan migrar a los Estados Unidos. ¿Apoya firmemente, apoya un poco, se opone algo o se opone firmemente a la suspensión del Presidente Trump del Programa de Parole de Reunificación Familiar de los cubanos?*
- 15. Some people say that the U.S. should reinstate the "wet foot/dry foot" policy that allowed Cubans without a visa a guaranteed path to legal entry into the United States when they reached U.S. soil. Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the reinstatement of this policy?**  
*Algunas personas dicen que Estados Unidos debería restablecer la "política de pies secos/pies mojados" que permitió a los cubanos sin visa un camino garantizado para ingresar legalmente a los Estados Unidos cuando llegaron a territorio estadounidense. ¿Apoya firmemente, apoya un poco, se opone algo o se opone firmemente a la reinstauración de esta política?*
- 16. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly agree that Cuba poses a threat to the vital interests of the United States.**  
*¿Está totalmente de acuerdo, algo de acuerdo, algo en desacuerdo o muy en desacuerdo con que Cuba representa una amenaza para los intereses vitales de los Estados Unidos?*
- 17. Have you ever traveled to Cuba [ADD IF BORN IN CUBA:] since you left?**  
*¿Ha viajado a Cuba alguna vez IF BORN IN CUBA: desde que salió?*
- 18. Do you have close relatives or significant others living in Cuba now?**  
*¿Tiene parientes cercanos u otras personas significativas que están viviendo en Cuba ahora?*
- 19. How likely are you to vote in the general election in November? Are you definitely going to vote, probably will vote, probably will not vote or are definitely not going to vote?**  
*¿Qué tan probable es que usted vote en las elecciones generales de noviembre? ¿Definitivamente va a votar, probablemente votará, probablemente no votará o definitivamente no votará?*
- 20. If the election for President were held today with Joe Biden and Donald Trump as candidates, whom would you vote for?**  
*Si las elecciones para presidente se celebraran hoy con Joe Biden y Donald Trump como candidatos, ¿por quién votaría?*
- 21. Now let me list some important issues for the general election in November. Regardless of your eligibility or intention to vote, please tell me how important the following issues are to you.**  
*Ahora permítame enumerar cuestiones que pueden ser importantes en noviembre. Independientemente de su elegibilidad o intención de votar, dígame cuán importantes son los siguientes asuntos para usted.*
- 22. Regardless of your eligibility or intention to vote in November, I would like to know whether you**
- support or not support the way that President Trump has handled some important issues: Overall, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the way that he has handled ...**  
*Independientemente de su elegibilidad o intención de votar en noviembre, me gustaría saber si apoya o no la forma en que el presidente Trump ha manejado algunos asuntos importantes: En general, ¿apoya firmemente, apoya un poco, se opone algo o se opone firmemente a la forma en que ha manejado la Política de ...*
- 23. Finally, we would like to get an idea of COVID-19's impact on you and your family. First, in terms of health, would you say you or your family have been very badly, badly, somewhat, slightly, or not at all affected by the pandemic?**  
*Finalmente, nos gustaría tener una idea del impacto de COVID-19 en usted y su familia. Primero, en términos de salud, ¿diría que usted o su familia han sido gravemente, mucho, algo, un poco o nada afectados por la pandemia?*
- 24. In terms of financial situation, would you say you or your family have been very badly, badly, somewhat, slightly, or not at all affected by the pandemic?**  
*En términos de su situación financiera ¿diría que usted o su familia han sido gravemente, mucho, algo, un poco o nada afectados por la pandemia?*





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