

THE SATURDAY ESSAY

# The Great Mariel Boatlift Debate: Does Immigration Lower Wages?

Decades after a wave of Cuban refugees landed in Florida, a dispute among economists over their economic impact

By [Ben Leubsdorf](#)

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In the spring and summer of 1980, some 125,000 Cuban refugees sailed from the port town of Mariel on fishing boats and pleasure craft toward the U.S. — many destined to settle in Miami

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