“THE GIRL IS BORN TO BE A MOTHER. THE BOY IS BORN TO BE A GENTLEMAN”: GENDER AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN A CUBAN EXILE CULTURAL ORGANIZATION, 1962-1974

by

JAVIER A. FERNÁNDEZ

(Under the Direction of Reinaldo Román)

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines a Miami, Florida Cuban exile cultural organization known as Cruzada Educativa Cubana (Cuban Educational Crusade), between 1962 and 1974. It argues that the group’s educational programs presented a model of Cuban national identity predicated upon “traditional” roles for men and women. Placing the activities of the CEC in the context of the profound social transformations occurring in Cuba and the United States during the 1960s and early 1970s—changes which included the apparent weakening of patriarchal authority brought on by, among other things, vastly increased levels of female employment—this thesis maintains that the organization’s project to “preserve” Cuban culture was a direct response to these transformations. The CEC, it concludes, constituted an attempt by some of the earliest and most conservative Cuban émigrés to enforce a reactionary system of gender codes in the Miami Cuban community in the face of challenges to pre-Castro gender norms.

INDEX WORDS: Women in Cuba, Cuban immigration to the United States (1959-1980), Cuban women in the United States, Cuban American culture, Cubans in South Florida, ethnic cultural organizations, ethnic identity, Cuban national identity.

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DEDICATION

Para mami, que en paz descanse.

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Introduction

"What Castro has done to Cuba is at the center of exile attention. And precisely because it is perceived as having been 'done to' Cuba, because it is thought of as something foreign, unnatural, and anti-Cuban, it can—in the refugee vision of the future—be undone." – Richard R. Fagen, Richard A. Brody, and Thomas J. O'Leary, *Cubans in Exile: Disaffection and the Revolution* (1968).

"Today . . . we shall display our reverence to the heroic and self-sacrificing mother in exile, whose life is consumed by honorable work and who in the face of the temptations and licenses of these tempestuous times . . . maintains her decency and self-respect, and the dignity of her home—irrevocable patrimony of the decorous Cuban family." – María Gómez Carbonell, "La Escuelita Cubana," broadcast on May 7, 1966. Box 4, Folder 55, Cruzada Educativa Collection, Cuban Heritage Collection, Otto J. Richter Library, University of Miami.

"And Cuba, our mother, a thousand times heroic, the Cuba of Céspedes and Martí, Maceo and Agramonte, Sánchez and García, the mother of so many incomparable boys, continues to urge the effort of her sons, the sacrifice of all, an effort of courage and masculinity—in order to achieve her liberty and vindication." – Alfredo Alvarez Solís, "¿Hasta Cuando?" *El Habanero*, December 1970, p. 13

Squat, stout, and grim-faced, the weight of three years in exile almost physically imprinted on her fifty-nine year old body, Dr. María Gómez Carbonell addressed a small audience of educators and activists inside the Alliance for Cuban Liberty Building in Miami's Little Havana. No stranger to the podium, Carbonell's displays of oratorical prowess on the floors of the pre-Castro Congress had earned her the moniker "La Señora de la Tribuna" (The Lady of the Podium) and a lasting reputation as a powerful speechmaker among the Cuban political establishment.[1] Still, her sullen, almost glowering expression and the grave tenor of her

[1] Melissa Marisol Prins, "Volver a Mi Patria: A Biographical Study of María Gómez Carbonell" (B.A. Honor's Thesis, Arizona State University, 1990), 66. See also her "mini-biography" in Cruzada Educativa Cubana, *Dia de la*

(*continued on next page*)

voice afforded this occasion—the first meeting of Cruzada Educativa Cubana[2]—an elevated drama perhaps even exceeding the crowd's expectations.

As beads of sweat no doubt formed on her round face, Carbonell began with prefatory remarks. She praised those "educators of worth and experience" who, acknowledging the sacrifices demanded of them by their homeland, had come to join in this endeavor of "incalculable transcendence" concerning "the future of the nation and the education of its children."[3] Carbonell went on to bemoan the "abundance of sadness and moral depression that this exile imposes on those of us who suffer impotently." She mourned "the destruction of the country [Cuba] and the subjection of its people to the most infamous, grotesque, insolent regime known to history."[4] Pausing for a moment, she then turned to a document entitled "Message to the Cuban People," a programmatic call to arms issued several weeks prior to that night's meeting and distributed to Spanish-language periodicals and radio stations in Miami. As her fingers punctuated her words, Carbonell announced boldly: "Total war will soon reach the doors of Cuba. . . . In a short while, [the island] will be liberated and upon its soil [will be fought] the decisive battle between international communism, 'intrinsically perverse,' and the forces of democracy called to inaugurate a new national era under the banner of faith, law, and culture."[5] "When the tumult of arms and barbarity ceases," she continued, "we will be confronted with a

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cultura cubana: Premio "Juan J. Remos": Mini-biografías de los que recibieron el preciado galardón, de 1971 a 1983 (New York: Senda Nueva de Ediciones, 1984), 10-11.

[2] Cuban Educational Crusade. The Spanish name will be used throughout this paper interchangeably with its abbreviated form (CEC).

[3] August 2, 1962 meeting minutes, Box 3, Folder 39, Cruzada Educativa Collection (CHC 0302), University of Miami Cuban Heritage Collection, Otto J. Richter Library, Coral Gables, Florida; Marifeli Pérez-Stable, "Cuban Women and the Struggle for 'Conciencia'," *Cuban Studies / Estudios Cubanos* 17 (1987). Throughout this thesis, all translations from the Spanish are my own.

[4] Pérez-Stable, "Cuban Women and the Struggle for 'Conciencia'."

[5] Cruzada Educativa Cubana, *Cruzada Educativa Cubana: Doce años de trabajos por Cuba y la rehabilitación de su escuela cristiana y democrática, 1962-1974* (Miami: Cruzada Educativa Cubana, 1974), 14. Carbonell had a (*continued on next page*)

country that is morally and physically ruined, [the institution of the] family sacked by miserable people who profaned its sacredness, seeking to destroy its beautiful spiritual patrimony."[6] In the end, she predicted with confidence, their nascent organization would "bring about the salvation of [Cuba's] cultural and educational institutions, the [renewed] prestige of the democratic school and the historical reinstatement of the mother of the family."[7]

Cruzada Educativa never did manage to incite a war against socialist Cuba, nor did it take part in any republican restoration. But with the same sense of urgency and resolve displayed by Carbonell on the night of that "simple and solemn [inaugural] assembly"[8] in 1962, the founding members of the new organization increasingly turned toward the Miami émigré community, where they prosecuted a vigorous and enduring crusade in support of "Cuban culture." As far as the CEC was concerned, their mission in Florida and their future work in Cuba were indistinguishable. By overturning the social order and tainting the Cuban spirit, the Castro revolution and the forced exile that followed had unraveled the moral fiber of the now-divided nation. Cubans on both sides of the Florida Straits suffered in equal measures. Cruzada Educativa's response to this perceived crisis was to call for a "return to [Cubans'] native traditions, the reserve of [their] national greatness, without whose strengths the morality that anchors [them] to the ground would be uprooted."[9] In order to achieve this, the group proposed to "disseminate Cuban cultural values," including Christianity, civility, "respect," and devotion to "the family"—the "primary cell of the nation" and the ideal realm of the Cuban mother.[10] In

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habit of capitalizing key words for emphasis in her written work. For stylistic reasons I have chosen not to include those capitalizations in this thesis.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., 13.

[9] Ibid., 15.

[10] Ibid.

the end, Carbonell and her colleagues meant to realize no less than the "de-Communization" and the "moral reconstruction of [the Cuban] nation," an undertaking that they felt required as much of an effort in contemporary South Florida as it would in the "Cuba libre" of tomorrow.[11]

Driven by these organizing principles, the CEC funded seminars, essay contests, and cultural pageants; distributed awards and honors; drafted proclamations; and sponsored youth groups. Working closely with Cuban-owned private schools in the city, as well as Cuban-born faculty in area public schools, Cruzada Educativa organized after-school courses in Cuban history, geography and culture, and parades and other events in honor of national heroes such as José Martí. But perhaps its most visible projects were "La Escuelita Cubana" (The Little Cuban School) and *El Habanero*. Begun in 1963, the former was a weekly radio broadcast aimed mainly at children, highlighting aspects of Cuban history or culture in mini-lectures recorded by Carbonell.[12] Transcripts of these radio programs were later printed in the monthly magazine, *El Habanero*, which from 1969 acted as the CEC's unofficial mouthpiece, with regular editorials by Carbonell, its editor, and original articles celebrating Cuba's past.[13] In addition, with financial support from the group's five hundred members—along with such other notable donors as former dictator Fulgencio Batista—the CEC published three books. The first was a collection of "La Escuelita Cubana" broadcasts, the second a self-congratulatory institutional history appearing on its twelfth anniversary, and the third a collection of "mini-biographies" of the CEC's Juan J.

[11] Ibid., 14.
[12] The final broadcast took place at the end of 1970. "Junto al niño y por el niño Cubano," Box 4, Folder 51, Cruzada Educativa (CHC 0302), University of Miami Cuban Heritage Collection.
[13] *El Habanero* was the official publication of the Municipality of Havana in Exile, of which Carbonell was a prominent member. Cruzada Educativa events were covered in almost every issue.

Remos Award recipients.[14] Though in terms of official membership Cruzada Educativa was a small group, its prolificacy and longevity, combined with regular exposure in the city's *Diario las Américas* and the Spanish-language edition of *The Miami Herald*, made it a conspicuous feature of the Miami cultural scene. According to María Cristina García, the CEC was the "best known" of the Cuban cultural groups emerging in the 1960s and 1970s.[15]

In fact, García shows, Cruzada Educativa formed a vital part of a larger enterprise within the community to preserve a sense of Cubanness or *cubanidad*, defined by her as "those customs, values, and traditions . . . associated with being Cuban."[16] From the very start of the exodus, many émigrés feared that increased intimacy with American society might erode the group's hold on the culture of its homeland—as it was imagined to have existed before the island became victim to Castro's radical social policies. In response, numerous individuals and organizations engaged in projects to "maintain" Cubanness in exile. Among them was the Koubek Memorial Center, a division of the University of Miami that offered adult evening courses in "Cuban culture" beginning in 1965. In addition, various Cuban "municipalities in exile"—mutual aid associations formed by Cubans from the same towns and cities—held regular *tertulias* (social gatherings cum lectures) that typically centered around some element of national pride.[17] Dozens of Cuban private and parochial schools in the Miami area also took part in this mission, providing Cuban-born parents with the reassurance that their children would speak Spanish,

[14] Cruzada Educativa Cubana, *Cruzada Educativa Cubana; Dia de la cultura cubana;* María Gómez Carbonell, *La escuelita cubana: Homenaje a los próceres de 1868* (Miami, Fla.: 1968). Batista's name appears in a list of donors, Box 4, Folder 57, Cruzada Educativa (CHC 0302), University of Miami Cuban Heritage Collection.
[15] María Cristina García, *Havana USA: Cuban Exiles and Cuban Americans in South Florida, 1959-1994* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 90.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Thomas D. Boswell and James R. Curtis, *The Cuban-American Experience: Culture, Images, and Perspectives* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Allanheld, 1984), 175-178.

remember their culture, and in every other way "grow up Cuban."[18] And the local Spanish-language press did its part by publishing *periodiquitos* (little newspapers) dedicated to Cuban heritage, some bearing mottoes like "In defense of our traditional values!"[19]

All told, a frenzied interest in things "Cuban" meant that the country's art, literature, music, folklore, and history were in constant circulation in South Florida. At its core, García argues, this was a political project. To keep their culture "alive," Cuban émigrés conveyed from the pre-1959 past the re-imagined essences of a nation now infected by the "foreign" (i.e. un-Cuban) plagues of *comunismo* and *castrismo*. In so doing, they claimed exclusive rights over genuine *cubanidad* and reinforced their status as the legitimate heirs to a free Cuba, unjustly compelled to leave the island but certain to return triumphantly with the help of the U.S., the enemy of "ungodly" communism. As García puts it, this fashioned the Miami Cubans as "symbols of Cuba's political alternatives: symbols of la Cuba de ayer (the Cuba of yesterday) and of the Cuba that could be."[20]

Taking for granted that Cubanness was not preserved intact but rather reconceived to meet the needs of the day, García has added to our understanding of the émigrés' obsession with safeguarding the "Cuban way of life" by linking it in part to the ideological and geopolitical prerogatives of the Cold War. Still more, however, remains to be said about these institutional

[18] Around 12,000 Cuban students were enrolled in area parochial and private schools by 1970. See Lourdes Casal and Rafael J. Prohías, *The Cuban Minority in the U.S.: Preliminary Report on Need Identification and Program Evaluation* (Boca Raton, Fla.: Florida Atlantic University, 1973), 127-139. For a discussion of the role of the Catholic Church, see Micheal J. McNally, *Catholicism in South Florida, 1868-1968* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1982), 127-166.

[19] For a discussion of Cuban American periodicals, see García, *Havana U.S.A.*, 101-105. An extensive list of Cuban American periodicals can be found in Esperanza Bravo de Varona, *Cuban Exile Periodicals at the University of Miami Library: An Annotated Bibliography* (Madison, Wis.: Secretariat Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials, Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1987).

[20] García, *Havana U.S.A.*, 84.

attempts to (re)define *cubanidad*, the "needs" from which they may have sprung, and the kinds of cultural work they were meant to perform.

To date, scholars have offered mostly descriptive treatments of Cuban American identity after 1959 and have stopped short of the sort of scrutiny that is still sorely needed.[21] In particular, no study has seriously employed gender as a useful tool of analysis (to paraphrase Joan Scott).[22] Cruzada Educativa offers fertile ground for scholarship that probes more deeply into assumptions about gender that no doubt made up a powerful strain in discourses of *cubanidad*. Indeed, references to the "profaned" and "sacked" Cuban family and mother in the CEC's "Message to the Cuban People" were a mere prelude to the barrage of gendered language that would follow. CEC-produced works juxtaposed images of manly war heroes with symbols

[21] Aside from García's *Havana U.S.A.*, some exceptions are Max J. Castro, "The Trouble with Collusion: Paradoxes of the Cuban-American Way," in *Cuba, the Elusive Nation: Interpretations of National Identity*, ed. Damián Fernández and Madeleine Cámara Betancourt (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000); Jorge Duany, "Reconstructing Cubanness: Changing Discourses of National Identity on the Island and in the Diaspora during the Twentieth Century," in *Cuba, the Elusive Nation: Interpretations of National Identity*, ed. Damián Fernández and Madeleine Cámara Betancourt (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000); Gustavo Pérez Firmat, *Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban-American Way* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994). A classic, purely descriptive treatment is Boswell and Curtis, *The Cuban-American Experience*. For a (now somewhat dated) bibliography of some of the scholarship, see Silvia Pedraza, "Cubans in Exile, 1959-1989: The State of the Research," in *Cuban Studies Since the Revolution*, ed. Damián Fernández (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1992).

[22] Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986). Gender and nationalist discourses on the island have received some attention, most notably by Vera Kutinski, who has argued that beginning in the 19th century the Cuban nation was inscribed upon the highly eroticized iconic figure of the *mulata* (a woman of mixed racial background). According to Kutzinski, the *mulata* became the center of a "poetics of male bonding," the site on which black and white men came together in a symbol of Cuban racial unity. In the process, Kutzinski notes, the *mulata* herself was imagined as passive, invisible—the symbol of the nation, but not a contributor: Vera M. Kutzinski, *Sugar's Secrets: Race and the Erotics of Cuban Nationalism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993). Kutzinski is one of the few to highlight the intersection of race and gender in Cuban national discourses. Other scholars have focused on the racial overtones of these discourses, as they appeared on the island. See Alejandro de la Fuente, *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-century Cuba* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999). However, little attention has been paid to race and the Cuban *exilio* after 1959, even though Nancy Mirabal has called for more research into this area: Nancy Raquel Mirabal, "'Ser De Aquí': Beyond the Cuban Exile Model," *Latino Studies* 1, no. 3 (2003). In particular, Mirabal believes that the construction of Cuban exile "whiteness" merits further study, something that Max Castro and Orlando Patterson have pointed out as well: Castro, "The Trouble with Collusion."; Enrique Patterson, "Cuba: Discursos sobre la identidad," *Encuentro de la cultura cubana* (1996). A fruitful study would begin to approach this (*continued on next page*)

of domestic femininity, and exhortations to patriotic violence and the reinvigoration of Cuban motherhood appeared in tandem. In its educational programs, Cruzada Educativa focused obsessively on Cuba's "great men," erecting lavish discursive shrines to the martyrs of independence: José Martí, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, Ignacio Agramonte, etc.. Emerging alongside this was an equally masculine vision of the technological progress of pre-Castro Cuba. The CEC regularly broadcast or printed exultant accounts of the feats of Cuban engineers and scientists who—operating under the patronage of the country's male leaders to erect stadiums, bridges, dykes and other emblems of modernity—helped make Cuba the most advanced nation in Latin America. Conversely, whenever women appeared, they were usually icons of domesticity and almost always in some way connected to important men: Carlos Manuel de Céspedes's and Máximo Gómez's wives, for example, or José Martí's and Antonio Maceo's mothers. Consciously tracing a direct line between historical figures and the Cubans of the present, Cruzada Educativa called for exiles to inculcate "genuine" Cuban values in exile children by drawing from the examples of the men and women represented in its work. Essentially, this meant adhering to a model of *cubanidad* defined almost entirely in terms of "traditional" sex roles—assigning the public tasks of building and defending the nation to men, and to women the function of inspiring patriotism and transmitting culture, principally from within their proper station in the home. Highlighting the gendered construction of *cubanidad*, this thesis will analyze Cruzada Educativa's output during its most active phase, between the year it was assembled in 1962, to the mid-1970s, when the CEC published a pseudo-history of its own work.[23] (Emphasis

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issue by engaging such cultural organizations as the CEC, which made little mention of Cuba's African roots at a time when the Castro regime was celebrating them.

[23] Cruzada Educativa Cubana, *Cruzada Educativa Cubana*.

will be placed on the CEC's radio program, "La Escuelita Cubana," and *El Habanero*, its magazine, though other sources will be examined as well.)

It's worth mentioning that the CEC's gendered image of national identity was not a unique historical phenomenon. In the period leading up to Cuban "independence," as Nancy Hewitt has shown, José Martí himself imagined a Cuban nation in terms that were very similar to those of the CEC.[24] Thus Carbonell and her cohort could draw on their own country's nationalist dogma for valuable sources of inspiration. Nor could Cuba claim exclusive domain over gendered nationalist discourses. Much ink has been spilled to describe similar discursive strains in crucial moments of state formation all around the world. Linda Kerber's analysis of "republican motherhood" is a relevant example from early U.S. history.[25] According to Kerber, Americans in the post-revolutionary period developed an ideology that allotted women the sole mission of raising future generations of virtuous citizens. Accompanying this was the complementary notion of the "republican wife," who, according to Jan Lewis, would be a "fit [companion] for republican men and . . . reliable guarantors of masculine virtue."[26] Analogous currents have been found in the nationalisms of nineteenth century Europe, where George Mosse has uncovered a political culture that equated patriotism with sexual "normalcy" and bourgeois gender roles.[27] And in yet another state-building era, the Mexican Revolution, women were imagined by the victors as generally passive participants in the political process, shaping men's

[24] Nancy Hewitt, "Engendering Independence: Las Patriotas of Tampa and The Social Vision of José Martí," in *José Martí in the United States: The Florida Experience*, ed. Louis A. Pérez (Tempe, Arizona: ASU Center for Latin American Studies, 1995).
[25] Linda K. Kerber, "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment--An American Perspective," *American Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (1976); *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980).
[26] Jan Lewis, "The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (1987): 703.

character from within the home.[28] Even those women who flouted convention by fighting alongside men, notes Elizabeth Salas, were quickly stripped of their masculine attributes and depicted as hopeless sexual misfits on the one hand, or ultimately subject to domestication on the other.[29]

The content of Cruzada Educativa's educational programs, then, bore a resemblance to nationalist discourses from other places and times. But though CEC rhetoric was, in a sense, timeless, it is nevertheless imperative to locate the source of the group's reactionary model of *cubanidad* by placing it in its specific socio-historical context. For just as important as the substance of the CEC's work were the people behind that work and the social environment that surely informed it. This last part of the story inevitably begins with the demographic composition of the organization's leadership and the sequential phases of the Cuban exodus. As noted earlier, the CEC was conceived in part by María Gómez Carbonell, a member of a wealthy and privileged family in pre-1959 Cuba who had once been a moderate reformer in the Cuban women's movement of the 1920s and 1930s. Beginning in the 1930s, Carbonell had enjoyed a long career in politics, becoming one of only a handful of women ever elected to the Cuban Congress, where she focused her legislative efforts on issues considered appropriate for her sex: education, protection for mothers and children, prostitution, and juvenile delinquency.[30] By the 1950s, Carbonell had parlayed her renown into a position in Fulgencio Batista's cabinet, to whom she maintained steadfast allegiance in the years following the success of the Cuban

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[27] George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: H. Fertig, 1985).
[28] Sandra McGee Deutsch, "Gender and Sociopolitical Change in Twentieth-Century Latin America," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 71, no. 2 (1991).
[29] Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990).
[30] She had, for instance, denounced her former colleagues in the Club Feminino as "too radical." Prins, "Volver a Mi Patria," 40.

revolution.[31] She wasn't the only *batistiana* among the CEC's organizers. Also figuring prominently was Vicente Cauce, Batista's minister of education in the 1950s and Carbonell's "friend and [brother]" in the CEC movement.[32]

Carbonell and Cauce, like many of Cruzada Educativa's active participants, were "white" middle- and upper- class professionals, members of the first wave of the Cuban emigration. Politically and socially conservative, often with ties to the pre-Castro establishment, they had the most to lose following the revolution.[33] And although subsequent "vintages" of the Cuban exodus brought people from increasingly diverse political and economic backgrounds to the United States[34]—with longer exposure to the policies of the Castro regime and more initial tolerance for the ideals of the revolution—Carbonell, Cauce and other founders of the CEC stayed at the very forefront of the movement until the late 1980s, their approach remaining mostly unchanged.[35]

Of course, the ideological baggage that Carbonell and Cauce bore across the Florida Straits on their journey into exile only begins to explain the group's rhetoric. The CEC's model of *cubanidad* must also be understood in the context of challenges to gender arrangements emerging in both Cuba and the United States. The 1960s and the early 1970s witnessed transformations that impacted the role of women in ways that undermined the social order valued

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[31] Ever the apologist for the former Cuban dictator, Carbonell published an homage to Batista in 1974: María Gómez Carbonell, *Fulgencio Batista: Discurso pronunciado por la Dra. María Gómez Carbonell, en la velada solemne que tuvo efecto el 15 de enero de 1974, organizada por la 'Juventud de la Coalición Progresista Democática'* (Miami: 1974).
[32] Cruzada Educativa Cubana, *Dia de la cultura cubana*, 9.
[33] Silvia Pedraza, "Cuba's Exiles: Portrait of a Refugee Migration," *International Migration Review* 19 (1985); "Cuba's Refugees: Manifold Migrations," in *Origins and Destinies: Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in America*, ed. Silvia Pedraza and Rubén Rumbaut (Belmont, Ca.: Wadsworth, 1996).
[34] Pedraza, "Cuba's Exiles," "Cuba's Refugees."
[35] Cauce was president for about twenty years, while Carbonell remained active as "Organizational Secretary" and the movement's spiritual center until her death in 1989, after which the CEC seems to have faded in significance.

by so many Cubans. Carbonell, Cauce and tens of thousands of others chose to flee rather than endure the changes taking place on the island, only to find that they had, in essence, jumped out of the frying pan and into the fire.

In Cuba, the Castro regime did much to disturb the terrain between the sexes. By facilitating wider female participation in the workforce, political organizations, mass educational campaigns, and even the militia, the revolutionary government offended the sensibilities of Cubans who believed that wife and homemaker were the feminine ideal.[36] For those who fled to the United States, things were only somewhat different, as the downward economic mobility suffered by most exile families induced women to seek employment in large numbers, in defiance of pre-revolutionary middle class concepts of female respectability.[37] Not only were women's roles changing in Miami, but Cuban manliness itself was apparently on the wane. The lack of resolve for military intervention among émigré men in the years following the failed Bay of Pigs invasion would have been interpreted by many as yet another dimension of a grave gender emergency. The "hippie" counterculture, the student anti-war movement and women's liberation added further fuel to the fire by amplifying the fear of "Americanization," a specter that came to embody permissive sexual mores along with the erosion of respect for authority and tradition, and threatened to corrupt in particular the younger immigrant generation.

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[36] See, for example, Louis A. Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, Latin American histories (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 369-374; Margaret Randall and Judy Janda, *Women in Cuba, Twenty Years Later* (New York, N.Y.: Smyrna Press, 1981); Elizabeth Stone, ed., *Women and the Cuban Revolution: Speeches & Documents* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1981).

[37] Uva de Aragón, "La mujer Cubana en los Estados Unidos: Algunas consideraciones sobre su aporte socioeconómico y las modificaciones de su papel," in *Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy* (1997); Myra Marx Ferree, "Employment without Liberation: Cuban Women in the U.S.," *Social Science Quarterly* 60 (1979); María Cristina García, "Adapting to Exile: Cuban Women in the United States, 1959-1973," *Latino Studies Journal* 2 (1991); Yolanda Prieto, *Women, Work, and Change: The Case of Cuban Women in the U.S.*, Latin American Monograph Series (Erie: Northwestern Pennsylvania Institute for Latin American Studies, 1979); "Reinterpreting an Immigration Success Story: Cuban Women, Work and Change in a New Jersey

(*continued on next page*)

The passion with which Carbonell expressed her convictions in the first meeting of the CEC revealed the gravity of the perceived crisis at home and in exile. It presaged the zeal that committed CEC activists would bring to bear on all of the organization's future activities. For Cruzada Educativa, anti-*Castrismo* was a fight not only against a politico-economic system; it was a war against moral turpitude and the collapse of the social order, which threatened among other things to hinder the reproduction of normative gender arrangements. The CEC's project to educate exiles on the nature of Cubanness was more than just the preservation of traditions and customs, more than simple nostalgic reverie: it was an attempt by some of the earliest and most conservative Cuban émigrés to define and police gender lines within the exile community, as part of a larger hegemonic project that strove to uphold the pre-Castro social status quo. In the end, Cruzada Educativa's vision of *cubanidad* served to chastise émigré men for their "unmanliness," and to warn women against expressing their sexuality or transgressing prescribed gender roles.

Community" (PhD Dissertation, Rutgers University, 1984); "Cuban Women in the U.S. Labor Force: Perspectives on the Nature of Change," *Cuban Studies/Estudios Cubanos* 17 (1987).

Chapter 1 – Cuban Women and the Nation Before and After the Revolution

Cuban Women Before the Revolution

Due perhaps to the dearth of scholarship on 1950s Cuba, it is difficult to fully ascertain the state of gender norms in the period immediately leading up to the Castro revolution. Few would deny that 1959 was a watershed year with respect to the amount of attention that women's issues received. What does remain somewhat unclear is whether the Castro revolution was a radical turning point, or if, rather, it signaled a marked intensification of changes in the roles of women that had already begun to take place by the 1950s. Regardless of where one stands in the matter, scholars must all concede the existence of a robust patriarchal culture in Cuban society throughout the "republican" period, a culture that faced its greatest challenge (if not final defeat) during the Castro years.

K. Lynn Stoner's work on the Cuban women's movement for legal reform highlights the extent to which "traditional" notions of femininity and masculinity persisted even in an era of modernization and increasing secularism.[1] In the early twentieth century, Stoner shows, a small cadre of middle- and upper-class feminists, armed with influence beyond their numbers, were able to push for key reforms that ameliorated some of the most egregious gender inequalities while leaving patriarchy and class structures mostly uncontested. This group of elite women, among whom were included María Gómez Carbonell, actively campaigned for more equitable

divorce and adultery statutes, women's suffrage, and an equal rights law, but they did so by arguing for the importance of protecting and valuing the unique contributions that women could make in society, especially as mothers. According to Stoner, they "drew from traditional notions of femininity and a rejection of gender equality to advance a cause that assumed that women's roles were necessary for social progress."[2] In part because their participation in the political upheavals of the 1930s granted them a measure of political legitimacy, many of these women assumed bureaucratic positions in newly established social welfare and education programs. In so doing, they carved out a "feminine domain" in government, writes Stoner, where they could act as the overseers of welfare "without displacing men, who managed business, international relations, and other matters of state."[3]

Stoner sees the Cuban women's movement as having achieved only somewhat moderate gains, primarily benefiting the affluent women who spearheaded the effort. Indeed, most of the reforms passed in the pre-Castro period, she argues, were the result of initiatives by male politicians more interested in promoting modern secular forms of governance than in relinquishing patriarchal privilege. Even the clause in the 1940 constitution mandating equal rights for women was a rather ambiguous victory. Like many of the constitution's other provisions, it required the enactment of complementary laws by the Cuban legislature. But, as Graciella Cruz-Taura has noted, "After 1940, women's rights attracted little public interest; not even the power that women could exercise at the voting booth seems to have elicited the

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[1] K. Lynn Stoner, *From the House to the Streets: The Cuban Woman's Movement for Legal Reform, 1898-1940* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).
[2] Ibid., 1.
[3] Ibid., 10.

corresponding response from the politicians."[4] Consequently, it wasn't until the passing of legislation in 1950 that Cuban women could claim equal protection under the law. Cruz-Taura attributes this to the common practice of legislative procrastination, as well as to a tradition of male social domination and lack of interest by or opportunities for women to demand change. "[T]he noticeable absence of women activists and minor coverage by the press during the 1940s," she writes, "indicate that women's rights were not a top priority, even within the reform agenda."[5]

The existence or nonexistence of an active and effective feminist movement is only one measure of the Cuban gender milieu. Employment statistics are another valuable gauge. And they too offer a glimpse into a pre-1959 Cuban society ruled by powerful gender biases. Marifeli Pérez-Stable has commented on the "notable legal equality" achieved by women prior to the Castro revolution, a feat undercut by the fact that it nevertheless did not "materialize in high rates of labor force participation, equal presence in higher education, and access to the high-status professions."[6] In fact, the 1953 Cuban census, the last to be undertaken before Castro took power, reveals striking discrepancies between both the general rates of male and female employment and representation in different categories of labor. According to the census, about twenty percent of women (362,000 in total) formed part of the Cuban labor force in the early 1950s. Many of them (77,500) worked for a relative without pay, while the number that actually worked for wages was reported at about 256,000, only twelve percent of the female population.[7]

[4] Graciella Cruz-Taura, "Women's Rights and the Cuban Constitution of 1940," *Cuban Studies / Estudios Cubanos* (1994): 134.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Pérez-Stable, "Cuban Women and the Struggle for 'Conciencia'," 54.
[7] Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 305.

What's more, the census showed that about 83 percent of all employed women worked less than ten weeks a year, meaning that the vast majority were only seasonally employed.

The raw rate of female employment was far lower than that for men. But just as significant were the differences in the kinds of jobs women *did* get. Of all the women who were reported to have been working in some capacity in 1953, about 45 percent were engaged in the "service" industry, including 87,000 domestic servants.[8] And though women also made up nearly half of all Cuban professionals, they were most strongly represented in the field of education, making up 90 percent of secondary school instructors and 84 percent of primary school teachers; the higher-status professions were, for the most part, closed to them.[9]

Women from the less affluent classes were far more likely to work than those in higher socio-economic brackets.[10] Female employment, especially of the manual variety, was therefore often stigmatized—even racialized—as something only done by blacks and the most destitute (and indecent) of Cubans. "The notion that good women stayed home and bad women worked," argues Yolanda Prieto, "had polarizing effects in a hierarchical society such as pre-revolutionary Cuba and became central to the conception of social status and social mobility."[11] According to Prieto, then, the pre-revolutionary cultural norm "saw the ideal place for a woman as 'la casa' rather than 'la calle'; the former meaning women at home taking care of their domestic responsibilities and the latter meaning women working outside the home."[12]

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[8] Ibid., 306.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Susan Kaufman Purcell, "Modernizing Women for a Modern Society: The Cuban Case," in *Female and Male in Latin America: Essays*, ed. Ann Pescatello (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973), 261.
[11] Prieto, *Women, Work, and Change*, 10.
[12] Ibid., 2.

Still, some scholars have suggested that more middle-class Cuban women (those who could reasonably expect gender ideals to become a reality) were drawn into the workforce in the 1950s as a result of rising costs of living and the expansion of corporate bureaucratic structures urged on by increased investment in non-sugar industries. Whatever growth in female employment did occur, however, was restricted to forms of labor considered "acceptable" for women and was imagined as supplementary to men's earnings. Lisandro Pérez writes that growing numbers found work as typists, receptionists, and stenographers in the decade before Castro assumed power, adding that this was considered "instrumental employment designed to further the family's economic position."[13] As Yolanda Prieto shows, "the jobs that these women did were labeled as decent because they were not manual, a fact which made working outside the home more acceptable."[14] And, she adds, "the goal was to come back to the home, which was, in fact, the place for the majority of middle class women in pre-revolutionary Cuba."[15] One employed woman from the middle-class—quoted in Louis Pérez's work on American culture and the formation of Cuban national identity—captures the thoughts of perhaps thousands of other Cuban women in the 1950s: "If I had my way, I would be at home, dedicated exclusively to my children, my husband, my home. But the necessities created by modern life, impose on me the obligation to contribute to the support of the house. . . . Imagine a home with children, in which the earnings of the man are not adequate to cover all expenses!"[16]

[13] Lisandro Pérez, "Cuban Women in the U.S. Labor Force: A Comment," *Cuban Studies / Estudios Cubanos* 17 (1987): 162.
[14] Prieto, *Women, Work, and Change*, 14.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Louis A. Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 452.

The Revolution and Cuban Women

Whether or not employment in the 1950s was accompanied by (was a by-product of?) cultural acceptance of wider roles for Cuban women, the fact remains that 1959 ushered in a wave of feminist fervor quite unlike anything the country had ever experienced. The ambitious program of social and economic restructuring developed by the Castro regime in its first few years left no sector of Cuban life untouched. Fagen, Brody and O'Leary were hardly exaggerating when they wrote that all of the old Cuban institutions "were attacked with a thoroughness and at a pace that was unprecedented . . . in the history of the hemisphere."[17] The Cuban revolution, they added, "[stood] alone as the most far-reaching and rapidly paced social transformation in the history of Latin America."[18] For the country's new leaders, a mere changing of the political guard would not suffice: they called instead for a radical re-thinking of Cuban social mores, for a shift in *conciencia* (consciousness)—or as Louis Pérez puts it, "nothing less than a new morality."[19] It was an effort that required the creation not only of a new man (*hombre nuevo*), but of a new woman, too. And the Castro regime seemed more than willing, if needed, to take the first step in that direction. "Cuban women," writes Susana Purcell, were "to be made equal by governmental [action] . . . As with the other goals of the Cuban Revolution, it [was] to be achieved by the political mobilization and resocialization of Cuba's inhabitants, as directed by the regime."[20]

One of the first salvos in Castro's offensive against old Cuba was the founding of the Federación de Mujeres Cubanas (the Federation of Cuban Women or FMC) in 1960. Under the

[17] Richard R. Fagen, Richard A. Brody, and Thomas J. O'Leary, *Cubans in Exile: Disaffection and the Revolution* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1968), 100.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 340.

direction of Vilma Espín, Castro's sister-in-law, the FMC quickly absorbed thousands of women into a mass organization whose purpose was to defend the revolution, raise women's consciousness and promote gender equality. "Our women had endured years of discrimination," Espín once told an audience of FMC activists. "We had to show her her own possibilities, her ability to do all kinds of work. We had to make her feel the urgent needs of our revolution in the construction of a new life."[21] Indeed, many heeded the regime's call for participation in public life. From an initial membership of about 17,000, the FMC grew quickly. By 1985, 2.6 million women, 82 percent of all women over the age of fourteen years, belonged to the organization.

The FMC was only one of many ways that the revolution coaxed Cuban women out of the home and into the streets. In 1961, as part of a massive campaign against illiteracy, over 100,000 volunteers joined the "Conrado Benítez" brigade, setting out for the countryside to live temporarily among rural families and help them learn to read. The fact that over half of these *brigadistas* were girls and young women signaled a radical departure from pre-Castro cultural norms, which called for the strict policing of female sexuality.[22] As Margaret Randall put it, "These were young girls who conventionally did not go out on a date without a chaperone!"[23] There were other controversial measures as well. Elizabeth Stone, for example, describes the "hue and cry" elicited by the inscription of women into the militia. Many Cubans, Stone writes, "questioned the 'morals' of women who dressed like men, wore pants, and carried guns."[24] Even so, women were officially encouraged to do their part to advance and protect the revolution, even

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[20] Purcell, "Modernizing Women for a Modern Society," 258-259.
[21] Stone, ed., *Women and the Cuban Revolution*.
[22] It's important to note that the revolution called for its own brand of puritanical sexuality. Sandra Deutsch concludes from her reading of the literature that Castro endorsed female sexuality only within marriage. Deutsch, "Gender and Sociopolitical Change in Twentieth-Century Latin America."
[23] Randall and Janda, *Women in Cuba*, 25.
[24] Stone, ed., *Women and the Cuban Revolution*, 9.

if it meant transgressing the pre-revolutionary gender codes. By 1963, they also made up 44 percent of the 1.5 million members of the *Comités de defensa de la revolución* (CDRs),[25] charged with guarding public buildings, watching for suspicious activities in neighborhoods, and carrying out other important tasks.

The Castro government also pushed for greater female participation in the Cuban workforce, a move that was motivated as much by practical considerations as by ideology. "Traditional attitudes which stressed that woman's place was in the home, and that work was to be avoided if possible," explains Purcell, "were dysfunctional to the revolution's need to expand the labor force." [26] In order to attain the high-priority developmental goals of the revolution, it became necessary to mobilize and resocialize women into new attitudes more compatible with their becoming productive members of the labor force. It also became necessary to raise their level of education and encourage them to train for and enter fields which, although traditionally male domains, could not be staffed by available male labor. Women were employed as auto mechanics, dentists, doctors, and engineers. They found teaching jobs in schools for the armed forces. Scandalously, they even engaged in rough agricultural work, cutting cane alongside men in the sugar fields—something that had been virtually unheard of (for "white" women, mostly) before 1959.[27] And although women's gains were initially limited, by the end of the 1960s, when the drive for a ten-million ton sugar crop thrust 200,000 new female workers into agricultural production, a total of 600,000 women were employed.[28]

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[25] Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 369.
[26] Purcell, "Modernizing Women for a Modern Society," 262.
[27] Geoffrey E. Fox, *Working-Class Émigrés from Cuba* (Palo Alto, Calif.: R & E Research Associates, 1979); Prieto, *Women, Work, and Change*.
[28] Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 370.

The regime promoted female employment in highly visible, ongoing public relations campaigns designed to encourage all Cubans to accept the island's women in their new roles. Purcell describes billboards and posters displaying women at work, with messages like, "My duty of honor: to fill a vacant position," and "As mother, worker and fighter, the woman plays her part and constructs."[29] *Hoy* detailed the exploits of women working in the fields, calling agriculture the "most important work" of the Federación de Mujeres Cubanas.[30] *Mujeres*, a publication of the FMC, printed monthly stories about women's contributions to production, culture, or education.[31] The Ministry of Education rewrote school textbooks, eliminating images of women in traditional roles and replacing them with images of women in the new Cuba. Mohammed Rauf pointed out that, in these textbooks, "mothers were workers in 'people's' factories or state farms. Children were taught to look after themselves . . . while their mother was away. . . In one book . . . a girl [assures] her mother not to hurry home in the evening from the factory but to stay and work more than the other women." [32] Finally, films sponsored by the state-run Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficos (ICAIC)—including *Lucía* (1969), *De cierta manera* (1974) and *Retrato de Teresa* (1979)—chronicled the lives of women workers and the resistance they faced from unenlightened and unpatriotic men.

The public relations campaign did not stop there, however. The government further widened the chasm between the revolution's rhetoric and the discourses of the *ancien régime* by extolling the virtues of women in armed combat. In magazines, speeches, and posters, women were praised for their heroic role in Castro's 1950s insurgency, in repelling the Bay of Pigs

[29] Purcell, "Modernizing Women for a Modern Society," 263. Translation mine.
[30] "Agricultura: tarea más importante de la FMC," *Hoy*, August 21, 1965, 1.
[31] Purcell, "Modernizing Women for a Modern Society," 263.
[32] Mohammed Rauf, *Cuban Journal*, quoted in Ibid.

invasion, and in their general efforts to defend the revolution. Vilma Espín, in an article written for *Cuba Socialista* in 1961, praised the Cuban woman for occupying "with pride and dignity her post in the Revolutionary Militia."[33] She noted how, in the hours after work, "she is trained to use firearms, learns military discipline, guards industrial centers and is prepared—should the need arise—to die in defense of her Nation."[34] A 1959 piece by Manuel Hernández Vidaurreta describes the women who fought alongside the bearded men in the Sierra Maestra insurgency.[35] Poster art for the 1965 OLAS conference pictured an indigenous woman carrying a rifle and pointing out into the mountainous distance.[36] And Castro himself, in one speech, recalled with deference the Mariana Grajales Platoon, active during the anti-Batista uprising. "Near Holguín," he proclaimed proudly, "a women's platoon engaged in a fierce battle with the army and the platoon leader was wounded. As a general rule, when a platoon leader was wounded the men had the habit of retreating—which is not correct but it had become practically a habit. The women's platoon had attacked a truck loaded with soldiers. When the platoon leader was wounded, they weren't discouraged. They went on fighting, wiped out the truckload and captured all the weapons. Their behavior was truly exceptional."[37]

The revolution's stance toward women profoundly altered the relationship between the sexes in Cuba. The rhetoric represented a huge departure from the past. In the new lexicon, "la casa" (the home) no longer epitomized a woman's place in the world: that was, according to the revolution, a symbol of an old bourgeois order, now displaced by an egalitarian ethos demanding of both women and men a public commitment to a new way of life. Still, as Louis Pérez

[33] Vilma Espín, "La mujer en la revolución cubana," *Cuba Socialista* 1 (1961): 67.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Manuel Hernández Vidaurreta, "La mujer en la revolución," *Humanismo* 7 (1959).
[36] Lincoln Cushing, *¡Revolución!: Cuban Poster Art* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2003), 86.

observes, “Male accommodation to changing sex roles came slowly, when it came at all.”[38] Most scholars, in fact, have argued that the regime fell considerably short of truly eliminating sexual discrimination and patriarchal values. In the late 1960s, for every woman who went to work, three returned to the home.[39] And though by the mid-1970s about 26 percent of women were employed, they were still underrepresented in traditionally “masculine” forms of work and made up less than their rightful share in the political establishment.[40] Just as significantly, many of the old quotidian forms of sexism persisted under communism. In a famous survey conducted in 1974 with the aim of discovering why so few women had run for office in the “Popular Power” elections, 54 percent of female respondents complained that their responsibilities in the home had kept them from making other commitments.[41] When asked in a similar study why they had avoided leadership positions in state run enterprises, over 80 percent of women cited housework and childcare.[42]

Castro’s government paid much attention to this issue, responding on several occasions to pressure from the FMC.[43] In 1975, the state passed the Family Codes (1975), mandating joint responsibility for both domestic chores and child-rearing and, Pérez notes, placing “the full moral and legal force of the revolution behind the long-standing demands of working women.”[44]

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[37] Stone, ed., *Women and the Cuban Revolution*, 8.
[38] Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 372.
[39] Pérez-Stable, "Cuban Women and the Struggle for 'Conciencia'," 60.
[40] For a discussion, see Carollee Bengelsdorf, "On the Problem of Studying Women in Cuba," in *Cuban Political Economy*, ed. Andrew Zimbalist (Boulder: Westview, 1988); "[Re]Considering Women in a Time of Troubles," in *Daughters of Caliban: Caribbean Women in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Consuelo López Springfield (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); Sheryl Lutjens, "Remaking the Public Sphere: Women and Revolution in Cuba," in *Women and Revolution in Africa, Asia and the New World*, ed. Tetrault (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994).
[41] Marifeli Pérez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution: Origins, Course, and Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).
[42] Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 373.
[43] Pérez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution: Origins, Course, and Legacy*.
[44] Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 372.

Moreover, according to Carollee Bengelsdorf, the spirit of the laws were "accepted publicly by the whole population as socially just."[45] However, she claims, even they "did not in fact produce major changes in who did this work."[46] And in an ironic twist, the laws (along with much of what appeared in female-oriented literature) reinforced the notion of the nuclear family as the only legitimate locus of female sexuality.[47]

Clearly, Castro's posture toward women was not universally appealing; on the contrary, many were opposed to his policies. Resistance came in many forms, but none was as drastic as outright flight from the island. To be sure, attempts to generalize about the reasons that Cubans left their homeland have proven to be problematic. Highly charged debates still rage over whether the ongoing exodus has been economically or politically motivated, both sides often burdened with unwieldy ideological baggage. The truth is, as Fagen, Brody and O'Leary have shown, understanding the Cuban exodus requires a certain level of comfort with ambiguity: a changing complex of reasons actually accounts for the migration that has brought hundreds of thousands of Cubans to the United States.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Geoffrey Fox conducted interviews of Cuban refugees as they arrived in Chicago, hoping to acquire a better appreciation of their motives. He was neither the first nor the last to undertake this kind of project, but his work—published in article form in 1973 and as a monograph in 1979—stands out as the only serious examination of Cuban émigrés' responses to transformations in the role of women on the island.[48] Fox comes to the

[45] Bengelsdorf, "[Re]Considering Women in a Time of Troubles," 231.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Deutsch, "Gender and Sociopolitical Change in Twentieth-Century Latin America," 289.
[48] See Fagen, Brody, and O'Leary, *Cubans in Exile;* Pedraza, "Cuba's Exiles"; Pedraza, *Political and Economic Migrants in America: Cubans and Mexicans* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1985); Alejandro Portes and Robert L. Bach, *Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

reasonable conclusion that while the "economic concerns of the émigrés are important and even fundamental . . . they alone do not explain their rage against the revolution."[49] He continues: "Nor would those concerns seem to be sufficient motivation for people to risk their lives by escaping in primitive rafts or crossing the heavily-patrolled territory surrounding the United States naval base."[50] As far as Fox is concerned, the flight from Cuba was in large part a reaction to the revolution's conflict with the pre-Castro social order and its gender norms. "[I]dentity for many of these Cubans," Fox asserts, "was bound up in traditional concepts of race and sex. . . . [and Castro's policies] aroused the hitherto latent resentment of . . . males who are reluctant to surrender the last vestiges of their traditions and authority."[51]

There is abundant evidence for this in Fox's work. His subjects speak passionately and at length about the many ways that Castro invited the transgression of gender codes held sacred by so many. Over and over again, Fox's interviewees demonstrate that their "whole definition of manhood was challenged simply by the fact that women—and not necessarily their 'own' women—were entering the labor force in large numbers and doing heavy, 'masculine' work, and that girls were in schools and youth brigades far from the vigilance of their fathers or brothers."[52] In the words of one émigré, "Why, the woman today isn't governed by her husband or her father—she almost governs herself!"[53] Another interviewee eloquently summed up the feelings of many:

> [T]hey have too much freedom, single women as well as married. They have too much freedom because there the woman does whatever she pleases. So when the man arrives and tells her, 'No, you do such-and-

[49] Fox, *Working-Class Émigrés from Cuba*, 95.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid., 77.
[52] Ibid., 95.
[53] Ibid.

> such. . .' Everything is in her favor, the laws are in her favor. 'So you have no business demanding anything of me, because I govern myself,' she says, and before it wasn't like that. Before the woman there was dependent on her husband, and today she's not. She doesn't depend on her husband due to that there are many jobs in the fields, and nobody wants to work! Then just imagine, women are going to work.[54]

Cuban Women in Miami

One of Fox's more intriguing findings is that his interviewees were not entirely opposed to female employment in every case. "Many find it tolerable," he notes, "for women to work outside the home."[55] This was particularly true if it was construed as a "necessity to maintain an acceptable level of comfort for the home and family and as long as the woman is not in 'immoral' work . . . nor in 'rough' work where she would be competing with unskilled men."[56] In Miami (and in the other major Cuban communities in the United States), these conditions were very often met, and by 1970, Cuban women had become the largest proportionate group of working women in the United States. More than 50 percent of exile women found employment, a number that was only to increase to 55 percent in 1980.[57]

A handful of scholars have sought to explain this phenomenon, opposed as it was to pre-revolutionary gender codes. For not only were more Cuban women working in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s than in the communist island from which they fled, but according to Prieto most—even those educated women from the former middle class—were engaged in

[54] Ibid., 87.
[55] Ibid., 81.
[56] Ibid.
[57] García, "Adapting to Exile," 19.

"exactly what the prevalent ideology disapproved of: manual labor for women."[58] Indeed, the garment industry and textile manufacturing were two of the largest employers of Cuban women, while many also worked as seamstresses, domestics, janitors and waitresses.[59] For many, the answer seems to lie in the downward mobility suffered by most exiles upon arriving in the United States. Female employment, even manual labor, was a justifiable form of sacrifice for the well-being of the family.[60]

After all, in general exile women were engaged in the kind of work considered appropriate for them. If they weren't employed in the garment industry they could often be found in the school system as teachers and teacher trainees. Women, for instance, made up by far the majority of enrollees in Miami's "Cuban Teacher Training Program." And, as Lisandro Pérez has shown, by the end of the 1960s and into the 1970s, a high degree of entrepreneurship among Cuban exiles and the proliferation of small Cuban businesses in Miami "provide[d] women with the culturally acceptable opportunity of working with family and friends."[61]

Pérez writes that "female employment in the Cuban community . . . was not typically the result of transformations in the role of women, but rather a product of high aspirations regarding family income and social mobility."[62] Even in the 1970s and 1980s, according to surveys conducted by Yolanda Prieto, working women expressly rejected "self-realization" as a motive for their employment status, and stressed instead their role in assisting the family financially.[63]

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[58] Prieto, *Women, Work, and Change*, 14-15.
[59] García, "Adapting to Exile."
[60] Prieto, *Women, Work, and Change;* "Cuban Women in the U.S. Labor Force."
[61] Lisandro Pérez, "Cuban Miami," in *Miami Now! Immigration, Ethnicity, and Social Change*, ed. Guillermo Grenier and Alex Stepick (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1992), 90.
[62] Ibid., 92.
[63] Prieto, "Cuban Women in the U.S. Labor Force."

Myra Marx Ferree called this "employment without liberation."[64] It is a finding that is echoed by almost everyone who has written on Cuban women. In studies conducted among Cuban immigrants in New Jersey between 1979 and 1981, for example, 83 percent of respondents said their main reason for seeking employment was "to help the family financially." Only about 12 percent gave other reasons, such as "becoming economically independent" or "self-realization."[65] For Pérez and others, then, it was the downward mobility experienced by Cuban exile families in the first waves of emigration that prompted women who had never sought employment in Cuba to do so in the United States, defying what were traditional middle class concepts of respectability in Cuba.

[64] Ferree, "Employment without Liberation: Cuban Women in the U.S."
[65] Prieto, "Cuban Women in the U.S. Labor Force."

Chapter 2 – Cruzada Educativa Cubana

"Being Cubans in a Land of Strangers"

In an article appearing in *El Habanero*, Bartolomé Padilla expressed his displeasure with the treatment afforded Cuban youths under Castro.[1] Purporting to show "how young people in Cuba think," Padilla wrote about the Communist indoctrination to which they were subjected from an early age. Worse than that, he claimed, was their compulsory inscription in the military and the rural labor force, not only because of the difficult nature of the work, but because it demonstrated the lack of any effort on the part of the Castro regime to maintain a "distinction between the sexes," between work that was considered appropriate for women and work that should be reserved for men. As if responding to this observation, María Elena Saavedra wrote in a similar article, "The girl is born to be a mother. The boy is born to be a gentleman." This implied, she concluded, "that if the world were conscious of what Martí wrote, no woman would ever carry a machine gun, unless it was to defend her children. And no man would ever carry a rifle unless it was to defend the nation."[2]

There is little doubt that the activists of Cruzada Educativa felt threatened by the social transformations taking place on the island. Castro began his attack on the old social order immediately after taking power. By 1962, when the CEC began to operate, tens of thousands of Cuban women had already flouted convention by donning military uniforms and rifles, or leaving

[1] Bartolomé Padilla, "Como Piensa la Juventud Cubana," *El Habanero* 4, no. 38 (June 1973), 20.
[2] María Elena Cuellar Saavedra, "Deberes de Padres y Maestros Cubanos en la Tarea de Consolidación Democrática de Cuba" *El Habanero* 1, no. 3, December 1969, 15.

the homes of their family to volunteer in the countryside, beyond their supervision. The situation would only grow worse in the years that followed: by the time *El Habanero* began publishing in 1969, women in Cuba were being called out to work in the sugar fields in support of the campaign to produce a ten-million-ton sugar crop. Carbonell attacked these and other *fidelista* policies as an affront to the Cuban family. "The family, dear child," she proclaimed in a broadcast of "La Escuelita Cubana," "is, and shall always be, the most beautiful institution of a civilized society."[3] "The most heinous crime perpetrated by the infamous communist regime in Cuba," she went on, "has been upon the family, poisoned by evil doctrine, tortured by terror . . . hungry, naked, dispersed or dead. You, the only hope for resurrection, had better base the decisive force with which you will rehabilitate the new republic upon your love of parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters and diverse family members."

But CEC activists were also palpably uneasy about conditions in the United States. As the years passed and it became clear that the anxiously-awaited return to Cuba would not take place immediately, the pages of *El Habanero* began to fill with exasperated pleas to Cuban families to prevent their children from becoming "Americanized." Dr. José Andreu, for instance, was prompted by several disturbing news stories to write an editorial for the October 1970 issue of *El Habanero*.[4] What troubled Andreu was a maddening American youth culture. In Baltimore, he reported, rock concerts—centers of "repugnant practices . . . rituals, excesses and filth," which he was shocked to learn ended after midnight—had recently been followed by riots involving roving gangs of youths, who looted businesses and injured police officers. At the University of Wisconsin, "so-called students from the jungle of hippie-ism" had dynamited laboratories worth

[3] May 7, 1966 broadcast, Box 4, Folder 53, Cruzada Educativa Collection (CHC 0302), University of Miami Cuban Heritage Collection.

a million dollars, and students from Boston University had been accused that year of participating in a local bank robbery that resulted in the death of a policeman. While granting that not all young people in the United States behaved that way, Andreu nevertheless warned that these stories confirmed "how things are going in the country."

Andreu wasn't the only CEC member alarmed by the environment in which they found themselves. In fact, numerous contributors to *El Habanero* articulated a profound sense of dismay over the prospect of Cuban exiles becoming "victims of [their] environment."[5] Over and over, writers griped that in "this friendly, but strange land" their community was threatened with the loss of that which made it uniquely Cuban, its *cubanidad*.[6]

The specter of "Americanization" was ever-present. Seeing that scores of Cubans had forsaken their native tongue in favor of English, for instance, a contributor to the magazine asked, "What can impel one from among the members of our cast to forget his native land, who though still among his own speaks to them in English? . . . More than annoyance it inspires pity. . . . More than a spiritual dwarf, we must compare him to a miserable buffoon—who when the comedy is over continues to be a foreigner [in the United States]."[7] Linking patriotism and *cubanidad*, María Elena Saavedra cautioned readers that for one to adopt the "American style [English in the original] and to express oneself in English with a Cuban accent is as despicable as betraying the homeland and handing it over to foreign hands."[8] "Today," Saavedra exclaimed in another editorial, our Cuban children are "being raised and educated in an environment that

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[4] Dr. José R. Andreu, "¿Quiénes son más Culpables?" *El Habanero* 2, no. 13 (October 1970), 5.
[5] Concepción Estrada de Haro, "Lo que fue nuestra escuela y lo que volverá a ser," *El Habanero* 1, no. 8 (May 1970), 16.
[6] Rafael Angel Peñalver Jr., "El Pensamiento de Nuestras Juventudes," *El Habanero* 1, no. 1 (October 1969), 14.
[7] *El Habanero* 4, no. 35 (March 1973), 15.
[8] María Elena Saavedra, "Los Advenedizos," *El Habanero* 4, no. 35 (March 1973), 15.

engenders ideas, customs and even principles that are not our own."[9] They are being tainted, added Raul Martínez, by "disruptive and misguided elements, which abound in this country."[10] Margarita Machado pleaded with émigrés not to permit themselves to be "contaminated by their surroundings, which like an octopus with a thousand tentacles attracts them and attempts to win them over with its vile ways."[11]

One of the CEC's functions was to advocate on behalf of Cuban children in the U.S. school system. This activity also betrayed their anxiety over the loss of the younger generation's *cubanidad*. In 1966, President Vicente Cauce sent a letter to the U.S. Secretary of Health, Education and Social Welfare, requesting that funding be provided for "special supplementary courses" in public schools with large populations of Cuban students. Like the cautionary articles appearing in *El Habanero*, Cauce couched his request in the language of national identity and integrity, although for practical reasons his phrasing was more diplomatic and less inflammatory. "In concrete terms," he wrote, "the purpose would be to prepare . . . for the good of all America and as a stimulus for the fulfillment of all its democratic duties, Cuban children, through the teaching of Cuban history, geography, civics and literature."[12] The ultimate goal of the courses would be the "development of Cuban citizens suited to the task of national liberation; citizens who will love and appreciate . . . the United States . . . but who will feel intrinsically Cuban, proud of their history, of their language and of their nation." This way, he concluded, "the United States will not undertake the futile task of winning over thousands of expatriate Cubans to the

[9] María Elena Cuellar Saavedra, "Deberes de Padres y Maestros Cubanos en la Tarea de Consolidación Democrática de Cuba," *El Habanero* 1, no. 3 (December 1969), 15.
[10] Raúl Martínez, "Gente Joven—La Culpa," *El Habanero* 3, no. 29 (August 1972) 22.
[11] María Gómez Carbonell, "Editorial," *El Habanero* 4, no. 40 (August 1973), 3; Margarita Machado, "Nuestras Juventudes," *El Habanero* 1, no. 4 (January 1970), 18.
[12] Cruzada Educativa Cubana, *Cruzada Educativa Cubana*.

ranks of brilliant North Americans, but will rather . . . concentrate its noble efforts on the task of preserving for Cuba a radiant constellation of future citizens."

The fear of "Americanization" was not an entirely new phenomenon in the history of Cuban-U.S. relations. As Louis Pérez argues persuasively, the close relationship between the two countries—in which North America was the dominant partner—meant that Cuban national identity was shaped in part by the U.S. value system. Market capitalism, consumerism, Hollywood, the automobile, all the accoutrements of "Americanness" informed the way Cubans defined themselves as a nation. Indeed, Pérez shows that many Cubans before Castro embraced all things American with open arms. The relationship, however, was more ambiguous: Cubans regularly decried pervasive American cultural modes as harmful to their national integrity. As early as 1900, one Cuban intellectual wrote: "The university is full of students with hair cuts á la Americana and hair styles of the same origins, with a part down the middle and two pig tails on the side. Everyone can comb their hair as they wish, of course, but the youth of today will soon shape our future, and so it is natural that upon seeing them so fond of yanquismo one becomes alarmed."[13] In a 1901 *Diario de la Marina* editorial, another writer grumbled about the effects of American cultural hegemony on the Spanish language: "It is not so trivial as many foolish people believe but, on the contrary, profoundly affects the future of the Cuban people, whose first sign of doom and ruin will surely be first the corruption and later the complete disappearance of their language."[14] Roger de Lauria wrote in 1927, "The Cuban is unfortunately fading into the distant past. Soon . . . there will be nothing remaining except a stylized caricature of the yanki . . . where chewing gum and tortoise shell eye glasses will complete our conversion into puppets 'Made in

[13] Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban*, 141-142.
[14] Ibid., 149.

U.S.’”[15] José de la Campa González, in his *Memorias de un machadista* (1937), remarked, “Another new Cuba had arisen, strange, incoherent, in which all that was discussed was of horse races, of football, of baseball, and non-stop discussions of the United States, with a ridiculous ambition of speaking English. . . [and] a stupid adoration of everything that was from the United States.”[16]

It is natural, therefore, to expect that the migration of hundreds of thousands of Cubans to the United States would alter the historically schizophrenic relationship between them and American culture. Evidently, it was far more difficult to accept American values when contemplating the now very real possibility of utter absorption, in particular for the second generation. But what makes this especially interesting is that, according to Pérez, those who came from Cuba, especially but not exclusively in the first few years following the success of the revolution, were the people who had been “most effectively integrated into North American structures and whose belief system prevented them from fully comprehending the implications of the changes they were experiencing.”[17] Or as Max Castro puts it, “[T]hese Cuban-Americans represent[ed] . . . the whitest, most urban, most middle-class, most capitalist, and most pro-American slice [of Cuba].”[18] Increasing rejection of the American value system among exiles is that much more noteworthy, then, having occurred as it did among those Cubans who had previously been most likely to embrace it.

[15] Ibid., 355.
[16] Ibid., 148.
[17] Ibid., 500.
[18] Castro, "The Trouble with Collusion," 303.

Part of the reason for this may lie in the reinforced association between liberated sexuality and Americanness—not a new phenomenon, to be sure,[19] but understandably intensified in the tumult of the 1960s, when the questioning of sexual conventions and traditional authority in the U.S. was widespread. It is well known that many Cuban parents were mortified by the thought of their children becoming too comfortable with American ways. Even a cursory glance at some of the products of Cuban literary and popular culture reveals that to have been a prominent theme.[20] Social scientists working in Cuban communities eagerly explored this generational conflict or "acculturational gap"[21] and discovered it to be closely linked to fears of female sexuality. Eleanor Rogg, for example, in a study of the Cuban population in West New York, New Jersey, found that almost half of her subjects were unwilling to permit their children the same freedom and liberty enjoyed by American youth.[22] Rogg tells the story of a young girl, María Cristina, whose parents were cautioned against allowing their daughter's friendship to an American girl. "They [were] warned of what an American girl could teach María Cristina," writes Rogg.[23] "[They] were reminded of the Cuban values, how Cubans had to preserve the cultural values of their native land and how parents should mold their children to become more Cuban than

[19] Pérez documents various complaints about the changing demeanor of Cuban women attributable to American culture. One such indictment was served by "El Curioso Parlanchín" in 1941: "The styles imported from the United States and seized with such enthusiasm by the girls . . . has accelerated the change of private customs and provided wider freedom . . . [and] the loss of authority of the father of the family over his female progeny." Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban*, 315.
[20] See works by such authors as Roberto G. Fernández (*La vida es un special* and *Raining Backwards*) and Achy Obejas (*We Came All the Way from Cuba So You Could Dress Like This?*). This was also a major theme in the South Florida-produced television show, *¿Qué Pasa U.S.A.?*
[21] José Szapocznik, Mercedes A. Scopetta, and Wayne Tillman, "What Changes, What Remains the Same, and What Affects Acculturative Change in Cuban Immigrant Families," in *Cuban Americans: Acculturation, Adjustment and the Family*, ed. José Szapocznik and María Cristina Herrera (Washington, D.C.: National Coalition of Hispanic Mental Health and Human Services Organization, 1978).
[22] Eleanor Meyer Rogg, *The Assimilation of Cuban Exiles: The Role of Community and Class* (New York,: Aberdeen Press, 1974), 74.
[23] Ibid., 77.

themselves."[24] "Mr. And Mrs. H." were highly criticized for their lack of patriotism and concern about keeping their Cuban identity, explains Rogg, and in the end María Cristina was isolated form the rest of the Cuban teenagers in the neighborhood; other parents came to think that she was not good company. Szapocznik, Scopetta and Tillman found evidence of a similar conflict between Cuban parents and their children in Miami.[25] "[P]arents," they conclude, "attempt to restrict the process of acculturation in their children, and instead succeed only in further alienating the children from family interactions and the values of the Cuban culture, precipitating in the children an untimely rejection of the parental lifestyle and a fuller adherence to the behaviors characteristic of the host culture."[26]

The fear of parents' inability to monitor the activities of their children (to the extent that they believed was necessary) could be connected to the participation of Cuban women in the U.S. job market. As Rogg explains, "[M]any Cuban mothers must work, and few can afford the servants that cared for their children in Cuba. As a result, Cuban children have suddenly gained a great deal of freedom during the day."[27] Indeed, family conflict was a ubiquitous topic in CEC literature, especially in *El Habanero*. Some writers worried that the family was being disintegrated by the "the rough and excessive work of parents," compelling them to shirk their "sacred [domestic] duties."[28] In an article announcing a federally funded counseling service for exiles suffering from "maladjustment due to the differences between cultures," the writer listed some of the kinds of people whom the clinic hoped to assist.[29] One of these was "the son who

[24] Ibid.
[25] Szapocznik, Scopetta, and Tillman, "What Changes . . ."
[26] Ibid.
[27] Rogg, *The Assimilation of Cuban Exiles*, 73-74.
[28] Concepción Estrada de Haro, "Lo que fue nuestra escuela y lo que volverá a ser," *El Habanero* 1, no. 8 (May 1970), 16.
[29] Anonymous, "Consecuencias del Destierro," *El Habanero* 7, no. 73 (August-September 1976), 18.

becomes a juvenile delinquent" because *both* his parents work long hours. Another was "the father for whom it is difficult to accept that his daughter wants to abandon chaperones." Seething over "the loss of our national brotherhood," Florinda Alzaga believed that the Cuban family was being "undone or debilitated by the influence of American culture," and that exile children were suffocating "under the destructive impact of a different culture, [and] losing a sense of their national identity."[30] How, she asked, could Cuba be "rebuilt by people who go to her with goals foreign to our national consciousness? . . . It is urgent that we avoid this disaster."

All was not lost, however. Despite the fears being expressed, there was also a healthy sense of optimism among CEC activists regarding the ability of the Cuban community to overcome the perils of exile. "Many are saying . . . that our children . . . are a lost cause," Carbonell exclaimed in a broadcast of "La Escuelita Cubana," "that we will not succeed in changing them. A crass falsehood!"[31] But what, exactly, were Cubans in exile to do? The answer was simple, entreated Machado: "Hold up high the standard of [your] *cubanía*; exhibit genuine pride in the fact that [you] are children of Cuba, which from a distance watches [you] and at the right time shall judge [you]." "Today, in our fast-paced lives, we have to stop and wonder what our debt to Cuba is," proclaimed Carbonell, "where we are most useful. Our response will be: building the homeland, being Cubans in a land of strangers."[32] Or as Alzaga put it, it was every Cuban's task "to persevere in the maintenance of our traditions, of our language, of our

[30] Florinda Alzaga, "Meñique," *El Habanero* 2, no. 16 (June 1971), 5.
[31] La Escuelita Cubana, transcript of June 7, 1967 broadcast, Box 4, Folder 56, Cruzada Educativa (CHC 0302), University of Miami Cuban Heritage Collection.
[32] Ibid.

sentiment, of pride in our nation and our history, persevere in the cultivation of genuine Cuban values."[33]

Cubans, especially parents, were therefore implored to take steps to ensure the conservation of *cubanidad*. "The responsibility of Cuban parents is serious and difficult in this exile with respect to the education of their children. Among those responsibilities is . . . the transmission of information regarding the basic as well as outstanding qualities of our Cuba: its geography, its history, and its future."[34] Or as Juan J. Remos put it, equating the CEC's mission in the United States with its future work in Cuba, "It is the duty of educators to ensure . . . that our little ones—who are beginning their educations here in this country—are not Americanized. Similarly, later it will be our task to 'de-Russify' those children on the island, enslaved by Muscovites and Fidel's treasonous minions."[35] "It is well and good," he continued, "for the Cubans in exile to admire and revere the glories of North America, but they shouldn't be ignorant of our own glories, those of their nation, to which they are fundamentally obligated."

The CEC in general, and *El Habanero* in particular, it was understood, would aid in the accomplishment of this educational crusade. In the pages of the magazine, "there isn't any other ambition than that of using history as the basis for the future," wrote Ricardo Eguilior. "Educate the masses and you shall form a nation. That was the wish of our apostle [independence leader José Martí] and that is the project that *El Habanero* has undertaken."[36] Raul Martínez added, "*El Habanero* is a publication inspired by the highest Cuban ideals, and its content is like a class in

[33] Florinda Alzaga, "Meñique—A Nuestros Jóvenes," *El Habanero* 2, no. 14, December 1970, 5.
[34] Dr. Joaquín Añorga, "Responsabilidades Paternas," *El Habanero* 1, no. 3 (December 1969) 13.
[35] Cruzada Educativa Cubana, *Cruzada Educativa Cubana*, 52.
[36] Ricardo Eguilior, "Del Exilio Cubano," *El Habanero* 4, no. 42 (October 1973), 15.

civic-mindedness and democratic ideals, a powerful educative tool for the men of today and the men of tomorrow. It is . . . a permanent homage to the great men of our republic's pantheon . . . so that our young people might know our true history and might learn to love the island that today moans under the opprobrious boot of communism."[37] "La Escuelita Cubana," Carbonell insisted, boasted of a similar mission: "[T]o defend with irreducible vigor the 'Cuban national spirit'. . . love of god, of country, its history, traditions, and native tongue, and the observance of a conduct, both private and public, characterized by respect [and] social discipline."[38] Juan J. Remos, writing for *Diario las Américas* about the publication of "La Escuelita Cubana" broadcasts, wrote that it would be "an effective vehicle . . . to inform Cuban children of the material and spiritual values of a nation of which they should be proud."[39]

"The Founders of the Nation"

Cruzada Educativa was determined to delineate a notion of *cubanidad* that would compete with those constructed by the Castro regime, as well as with any other that might arise from within the exile community.[40] One of the principal elements of this Cuban identity was strictly prescribed roles for men and women, defined along conservative lines. Masculinity according to the CEC was public, political, violent, the force that liberated the nation from the

[37] Raúl Martínez, "Gente Joven—La Culpa" *El Habanero* 3, no. 29 (August 1972), 22
[38] Gómez Carbonell, *La escuelita cubana: Homenaje a los próceres de 1868*, 7.
[39]Quoted in Cruzada Educativa Cubana, *Cruzada Educativa Cubana*, 52.
[40] The existence of alternate conceptions of *cubanidad* could make for an interesting study. Evidence suggests that radical Cuban exile youth movements, such as Grupo Areíto—active beginning in the 1970s—advocated for more liberalized gender norms. See María Cristina García, "Hardliners v. 'Dialogueros': Cuban Exile Political Groups and United States-Cuba Policy," *Journal Of American Ethnic History* 17 (1998); Grupo Areíto, *Contra viento y marea: Jóvenes cubanos hablan desde su exilio en Estados Unidos* (México: Siglo Veintiuno, 1978); Mirtha Natacha Quintanales, "The Political Radicalization of Cuban Youth in Exile: A Study of Identity Change in Bicultural Context" (PhD Dissertation, Ohio State University, 1987).

tyranny of the Spanish, that built the republic's institutions and infrastructure, the defender of the homeland. By contrast, femininity was domestic and supportive: women inspired, women encouraged, women defended the sanctity of the home as well as the purity of *cubanidad*. *El Habanero* and "La Escuelita Cubana" underscored this dichotomous relationship between the sexes time and time again, delving into Cuban history to find archetypes of an imagined national identity that would serve as paradigms for the exile community.

Depictions of the men—statesmen, engineers, even the American occupying forces—whose contributions were said to have lifted Cuba to the heights of modernity, especially in the 20th century, were a prime example of the "Cuban" gender dynamic as represented by the CEC. A fundamental goal of the organization was to defend an image of pre-Castro Cuba as a developed country with a high standard of living relative to the rest of Latin America. "Did you know," asked Rafael Angel Peñalver, "that Cuba was one of the most prosperous countries in Latin America?"[41] "That Republic," wrote Carbonell in one of many responses to criticism of pre-Castro Cuba, "was consecrated in 1958 by praiseworthy statistics: it had the lowest general and infant mortality rates in Latin America; in recognition of its public health, it was one of only six countries in the world that that did not require quarantining; it had the highest public expenditure in education; it occupied . . . first place in the number of radio and television stations, newspapers, and movie theaters."[42] Nearly every installment of *El Habanero* included a section entitled "The Advancements of Havana," shining a spotlight on the city's skyscrapers, hospitals, theaters and libraries, its hotels (a full page spread was devoted to the Havana Hilton

[41] Peñalver, "El Pensamiento de Nuestras Juventudes," *El Habanero* 1, no. 1 (October 1969), 14.
[42] María Gómez Carbonell, "Editorial—Aquella República," *El Habanero* 1, no. 8 (May 1970), 1.

alone), its parks and gardens, anything that would help dispel the myth that Cuba had ever been a third world country.

The process whereby the island became this beacon of modernity was invariably depicted as a masculine effort, the labor of powerful public men—described as civic soldiers in a struggle to build the nation's infrastructure, or selfless paternalists bent on providing their compatriots with the standard of living that they deserved. José Bens, for example, recited the projects pursued by "the men that President McKinley sent us" during the American occupation from 1899 to 1902, including the construction of Havana's famous sea wall, a military hospital, and innumerable streets and bridges, all built by the "strong hand" of the U.S. military with the assistance of Cuban engineers.[43] Another item in *El Habanero* praised José Ramón Villalón, General Leonard Wood's Secretary of Public Works during the occupation and a man who had also "much distinguished himself in the war of independence."[44] Among his accomplishments were the construction of several new university buildings, a new dike in Hormigón, the famed Plaza of the Maine, and improvements to the Port of Havana. The cover of the July 1973 edition of *El Habanero* was graced with a picture of the ultra-modern Municipality of Havana—"the work of Mayor Justo Luis Pozo." Inside, a piece by José Bens detailed a number of public works schemes carried out by the mayor during his tenure in office.[45] In Bens's account of the construction of an aqueduct at Cuenca del Sur, Mayor Pozo—described by the author as a "Man" in capital letters, "a miracle worker"—not willing to let Havana die of thirst, secured the necessary funds for the project by engaging in a "dog fight" with a bank president. A few pages

[43] José M. Bens, "La Transformación de la Habana durante el Gobierno Interventor, 1899-1902," *El Habanero* 2, no. 18 (August 1971), 3-4.
[44] José Bens, "La Habana de José Ramón Villalón," *El Habanero* 4, no. 34 (February 1973), 6-8, 22.
[45] José M. Bens, "Las Obras del Alcalde Justo Luis Pozo," *El Habanero* 4, no. 39 (July 1973), 6-10.

later was a full-page photograph of President Fulgencio Batista, flanked by Mayor Pozo and one of his engineers, poised to turn the wheel that would commence the operation of the aqueduct. "The capital, now with abundant water, would be able to breathe, and would bless the labor of her mayor and his engineers."

Improvements to Cuba's infrastructure were not the only endeavors pursued by the country's statesmen and engineers. Men, according to the CEC, also exhibited an admirable paternalism by advancing the cause of education and public health. Rosa Abella, for example, documented the men who "fought" and "struggled" for the creation of the great national library.[46] In "La Escuelita Cubana," Carbonell credited Batista with the building of "hospitals, public buildings—which existed by the hundreds in our nation," as well as "new classrooms . . . technical centers that were baptized with the name of 'Universities of Life,' and in the countryside . . . the beautiful Rural Schools and housing for peasants."[47] "To protect, shelter, and educate boys and girls whose parents—peasants, workers, professionals and military personnel—perished on the job," she continued, Batista also established the Military Civic Institution in 1936.[48] And in the July 1973 issue of *El Habanero*, there appeared a large photograph of the male "Patrons" of the *Casa de Benificencia y Maternidad de La Habana* (the House of Beneficence and Maternity). It was juxtaposed with a much smaller picture of the *junta* of "pious matrons," apparently of lesser import.[49]

While statesmen, architects and engineers were proudly displayed in CEC projects, the barrage of stories from the Cuban independence wars was probably the most noticeable

[46] Rosa Abella, "La Biblioteca Nacional José Martí," *El Habanero* 3, no. 22 (January 1972), 10-11.
[47] La Escuelita Cubana, transcript of September 10, 1966 broadcast, Box 4, Folder 55, Cruzada Educativa (CHC 0302), University of Miami Cuban Heritage Collection.
[48] Ibid.

component of *El Habanero* and "La Escuelita Cubana." In a radio broadcast that celebrated the centennial of Carlos Manuel de Céspedes's "glorious fall in San Lorenzo," Carbonell set out to describe just two of the innumerable brave exploits attributed to the "clarion of liberty," the "Father of the Nation," who "loved and defended the Cuban cause" until his death.[50] One of these acts was the sacrifice of his son to the altar of freedom. The Spanish had taken his young son prisoner, recounted Carbonell, and a messenger arrived at Céspedes's camp to offer his commander's terms: he would set his son free if Céspedes promised to lay down his arms, as well as those of his regiment. Céspedes needed little time to give his "menacing" reply: "All of them [his soldiers] are my sons, sir, and cowardly would be my heart and my conscience if to save one of them I would compromise the lives of the rest." Carbonell then went on to describe the scene of Céspedes's death. Finding himself in a farmhouse surrounded by Spaniards, the great leader "fought valiantly," firing five shots at his enemy and saving the last of his bullets for himself, that he might die rather than fall prisoner. "One hundred years after his death," Carbonell mused, "history is still shaken [by this event] . . . Men like Céspedes prevent us from dying of desperation. If his example does not inspire us, if his heroic sacrifice does not fill us with shame and we view impassively the many injustices that beat upon our destiny, what good did it do, my lord, to have the father of our nation as a model?"

Honoring the centennial of another "heroic feat with which many of our children are unfamiliar," Florinda Alzaga detailed independence leader Ignacio Agramonte's "Rescue of Sanguily" in an issue of *El Habanero*.[51] In that story, Agramonte—"one of the glories of our

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[49] "Casa de Beneficiencia, y Maternidad de la Habana," *El Habanero* 4, no. 39 (July 1973), 15.
[50] La Escuelita Cubana, transcript of February 2, 1968 broadcast, Box 4, Folder 57, Cruzada Educativa (CHC 0302), University of Miami Cuban Heritage Collection.
[51] Florinda Alzaga, "Meñique—El Rescate de Sanguily," *El Habanero* 2, no. 19 (September 1971), 7.

homeland”—receiving notice that a soldier in his regiment had been captured, called out to his men: “Whoever has horses and is prepared to die, take one step forward!” With his band of thirty five volunteers, those “living examples who risked their lives with uncommon valor,” Agramonte marched to confront the Spanish column, waited for the right moment, and shouted, “Brothers! Among that enemy column goes the imprisoned General Sanguily, and we must rescue him alive or dead!” In a blaze of glory, the soldiers “arrive[d], . . . wound[ed] . . . cut down. . . kill[ed],” and Sanguily was saved. “Due to his love of Cuba,” Alzaga reflected proudly, “Agramonte became one of our most audacious and valuable warriors, achieving, with those men who revered him, admirable victories in the field of battle.” Highlighting the moral of her story the author concluded, “Those who are descended of that valorous stock—like you and like me, oh Cuban child—should study the past, study our history, and in that way feel happy, satisfied, proud of our heroes and of who we are: the dignity, nobility and greatness of being Cuban.”

Stories that featured the role of Cuba’s great men in the construction of the country’s infrastructure and institutions implied that progress and modernity required a gendered division of labor, with men assuming the public roles of statesmen, scientists, and engineers. Representations of the protagonists of Cuba’s independence wars suggested that martyrdom and heroism were also exclusively male. But more than just the rhetorical regulation of gender norms, the endless barrage of tales of wartime heroism appearing in *El Habanero* and “La Escuelita Cubana” served another purpose: for exile men, they were a constant reminder that their patriotic duty was not complete until Cuba was liberated once again.

In the 1960s and 1970s, counterrevolutionary militants received a lot of press in the United States. They were, however, merely a vocal minority. A large number of exiles may have supported their activities, some even financially, but only a handful of people sought to

undermine the Castro regime militarily after the Bay of Pigs.[52] The example of war heroes from the past might change all of that, Carbonell thought. "These feats," she stated hopefully, "inspire . . . the necessity to defend the patrimony of dignity and sacrifice bequeathed to us by the founders of the nation, prostituted and falsified by the indoctrinating communists."[53]

"The Girl is Born to be a Mother"

While in the idiom of the CEC, politics and war were reserved for men, the ideal role of women was equally clear. It began with their creative biological capacity, and emanated outward from there. Because she represented everything that was good and proper about womanhood, the Cuban mother was one of the central images in CEC discourse. In an item appearing in the May 1971 issue of *El Habanero*, Mercedes García Tudurí reflected on "The Cuban Woman and the Family."[54] "Cuba," she wrote, "[was] considered, sociologically, a country with a familial character," and in the history of the island before the Castro revolution, the family had always played a crucial role in the maintenance of social peace. Cuba had not suffered from juvenile delinquency, she insisted: "[C]hildren left their parents' home only when they were ready to establish their own homes." Moreover, the elderly had always been cared for, leaving no need for marginalizing institutions such as nursing homes. But the family, argued Tudurí, had done more than provide for social stability. It had also been an instrument of survival in times of need. Citing a study conducted at the height of the Great Depression in the 1930s, in which researchers attempted to understand how Cubans had managed to persevere despite reduced incomes, Tudurí

[52] García, *Havana U.S.A.*, Chapter 4.
[53] Box 4, Folder 52, Cruzada Educativa (CHC 0302), University of Miami Cuban Heritage Collection.
[54] "La Mujer Cubana y la Familia," *El Habanero* 2, no. 15, May 1971, 13.

proudly reported, “The only thing that could explain the phenomenon was the awe-inspiring solidarity of the family.”

Tudurí went on to propose that the Cuban mother had always been at the very “center of that social microcosm.” “Her adhesive power,” she wrote, as well as “her moral condition and her drive for success . . . made the family a powerful little world.” For Tudurí, women in Cuba had contributed in other ways as well. Women, she explained, had made up forty-five percent of all the students in Cuba before the arrival of communism, as well as eighty percent of the teaching corps. They had also been represented in every sector of the economy: “Industry, commerce, and labor were all marked by the participation of distinguished female personnel.” Tudurí then proudly remarked that in the United States Cuban women continued to distinguish themselves in the workplace. “Every form of employment . . . has borne her mark, and alongside men they have overcome language barriers and confronted the uncertainties of life in exile.” Nevertheless, concluded Tudurí, again pointing to continuity between the immigrant community and the Cuba of yesterday, “The most beautiful thing . . . is that . . . [women] have not forgotten for a single moment their position in the family.” As consummate mothers, Cuban women in the U.S. had forsaken neither the education of their children nor care for the elderly. They even had time, she boasted, to lend a helping hand to the relatives arriving from the island every year. For Tudurí, this constant devotion to the family, even in the throes of exile, was more than a boon to the emigrants. It was vital, she wrote, for the future of a free Cuba. “It is not futile that we insist on the importance of the family, and by extension the woman, in the reconstruction of Cuba . . . She is the most important element in the salvation of the family, and to save the family is to save Cuba.”

Without a doubt, Tudurí overstated the extent to which both pre-revolutionary and immigrant Cuban women could be found in "every form of employment." As mentioned earlier, only about thirteen percent of women on the island worked outside the home before 1959.[55] And though that number increased in exile, where more than fifty percent of immigrant women found jobs in Miami during the 1960s, we have already seen that the majority of them were engaged in what was considered "feminine work." Tudurí's article nevertheless does show that, though limited in the kinds of jobs they could hold, by 1971 the presence of Cuban women in the workplace was a foregone conclusion.

In light of this fact, Tudurí's item in *El Habanero* was an anomaly: discussion of female employment was conspicuously absent from Cruzada Educativa's pronouncements; it certainly was not celebrated with any regularity.[56] What *was* typical of the piece was its portrayal of exile women as exemplars of maternity. Even though several scholars have argued that employment did not transform the role of women in exile, the fact that more Cuban women than ever before had stepped out of the home was a certainty that could not be dismissed by the CEC. Tudurí's work can thus be seen as an admonition, cautioning against the social dangers that might emerge if the employment of women on a mass scale led to its logical conclusion: the weakening of the gender dynamic that, she noted, had maintained social peace on the island prior to Castro.

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[55] That is, according to the 1953 census, which probably understated the figure somewhat.

[56] For a discussion of émigré women in relation to the "Cuban success story," see Lisandro Pérez, "Immigrant Economic Adjustment and Family Organization: The Cuban Success Story Reexamined," *International Migration Review* 20 (1986). As Pérez notes, the contribution of Cuban women to the economic accomplishments of the exile community was mostly overlooked. The popular press, in fact, portrayed the success story as a largely masculine endeavor. See: "They're OK," *Newsweek*, December 4, 1961, 59; "To Miami, Refugees Spell Prosperity," *Business Week*, November 3, 1962, 92; "Cuban Success Story: In the United States," *U.S. News and World Report*, March 20, 1967, 104-106; "Cuban Refugees Write a U.S. Success Story," *Business Week*, January 11, 1969, 84; "How the Immigrants Made it in Miami," *Business Week*, May 1, 1971, 88-89; "Making it in Miami, Cuban Style," *Life*, October 1971, 36-41.

Reminding her readers of the family's important role in times of emergency (and what could be a greater emergency than exile from one's homeland?), the author was clearly concerned with what might happen if in the midst of their new social setting women lost sight of their critical place at the heart of the family. To secure the woman's position in the family was to save the family itself. "[T]o save the family [was] to save Cuba."

Tudurí's glorification of "the mother" as the future of a free Cuba was an oft-repeated trope. It appeared regularly, for instance, in installments of "La Escuelita Cubana." Asserting that exile mothers had a "sacred obligation to remake our nation,"[57] Carbonell often urged her young audience to appreciate "the beloved woman who gave [you] life. . . the escutcheon and hope in this somber and long night of exile."[58] "Having a Mother who is noble and generous," she observed in one Mother's Day broadcast, "is a special way of having nation [sic]. The nation is the mother of All. And upon these foreign shores, in each queen of the home breathes a piece of our distant homeland; her brilliance lights the star of our flag."[59] As portrayed by "La Escuelita Cubana," mothers were not only the vital transmitters of Cuban culture, they also inspired heroism. Children were entreated to "talk about Cuba and its tragedy on your mommy's soft lap. Have her tell you about the great deeds of the mambises [independence war heroes] of the last century and the mambises of the second independence of your country. [Mothers] constitute a great force for the spiritual conservation of Cuba and its eventual liberation. 'With women like them,' said José Martí, 'heroes are possible."[60]

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[57] La Escuelita Cubana, transcript of June 5, 1965 broadcast, Box 4, Folder 54, Cruzada Educativa (CHC 0302), University of Miami Cuban Heritage Collection.
[58] La Escuelita Cubana, transcript of May 8, 1965 broadcast, Box 4, Folder 54, Cruzada Educativa (CHC 0302), University of Miami Cuban Heritage Collection.
[59] Ibid.
[60] La Escuelita Cubana , transcript of June 4, 1966 broadcast, Box 4, Folder 55, Cruzada Educativa (CHC 0302), University of Miami Cuban Heritage Collection.

The theme of the mother as rouser of nationalist valor was taken up as well in the proceedings of the CEC-sponsored youth group, Círculo de Juventud Ignacio Agramonte. The subject of a talk given by María Grethel Martínez, for example, was José Martí's celebrated final note to his mother.[61] Calling it "a letter for all the mothers of the world," Martínez explained that it was "a confession of admiration, a declaration of sacrifice, and a statement of his longing for the liberation of the homeland, a project in which he desired his mother to participate." Martínez then went on to suggest the nature of that participation, pointing out a line in which Martí acknowledged his mother for her instruction on the meaning of sacrifice: "He had [his] convictions thanks to her." Essentially, Martínez proposed a supporting role for women in the mission to liberate Cuba, one that was wholly compatible with "traditional" ideals of femininity. Like Martí's mother—who was once said to have "enter[ed] into history" by virtue of the "celestial body [that] . . . [flew] out of her aching womb"[62]—women appeared in CEC projects most often as mothers, but also as wives and lovers, providing men with encouragement and serving as standards of Cuban womanhood for the émigrés in Miami.

The list of female characters in CEC discourse was a short one. Buried among the stories of valiant heroes and manly statesmen in *El Habanero* and "La Escuelita Cubana" in the 1960s and 1970s, there were only a handful of articles about women. Moreover, most of those figures were in some way associated with a great man. This juxtaposition was loaded with meaning: the women were certainly portrayed as significant, but only inasmuch as they were passive collaborators with the true heroes, in much the same way that contemporary exile wives must play supportive roles for their husbands and sons, focusing their energies in the home.

[61] Reported in *El Habanero*. María Grethel Martínez, "Horas Blancas—Una Carta Para Todas las Madres del Mundo," *El Habanero* 7, no. 69 (April 1976), 5.

One man who was seemingly surrounded by women was José Martí. Aside from his beloved mother, there was, for instance, "The Beautiful Otero," a dancer who, it was said, may have been a muse for Martí's poetry. [63] Accompanying a piece about her was a picture of a young woman in a provocative pose gripping an outstretched fan. There was also María Mantilla, José Martí's "purest love," in whose short biography the author included a letter written by the independence hero suggesting that she helped fuel his patriotic militancy: "I'm laden, María, with my rifle at my shoulder, my machete and a revolver at my waist . . . maps of Cuba, my pack on my back . . . and in my chest your photograph."[64] And then there was the fifteen-year old Guatemalan, María García Granados, once a student of Martí's, who even after her death at a young age remained "in [Martí's] passionate heart, embittered by battles and discontentment."[65]

Women linked to other independence leaders were also fêted. In an article honoring Amalia Simoni de Agramonte, wife of the war hero, María Elena Saavedra paid tribute to her as the "Glory and Exemplar of Womanhood."[66] "She must have been an extraordinary creature—exquisite!—with a profoundly spiritual temperament and unbreakable values," Saavedra remarked, "to have captured the heart and devotion of a man like Ignacio Agramonte." While Simoni's life may not have been characterized by active involvement in the public sphere, Saavedra insisted that she was nevertheless worthy of celebration principally for "the sentiment that [she] inspired [in] her husband." In a demonstration of the (passive) power held by women in their role as spouses, Saavedra explained that the "moral grandeur [of Amalia's husband] was

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[62] "Entrevista a Amelina García Martí," *El Habanero* 7, no. 71 (June 1976), 20-22.
[63] Rafael Estenger, "La Bella Otero, Musa de José Martí," *El Habanero* 4, no. 33 (January 1973), 17.
[64] "María Mantilla en La Habana," *El Habanero* 6, no. 52 (September 1974), 5.
[65] Albertina Gálvez, "Evocando el Pasado," *El Habanero* 7, no. 69 (April 1976), 10.
[66] María Elena Saavedra, "Amalia Simoni de Agramonte—Gloria y Ejemplo de Mujer," *El Habanero* 4, no. 36 (April 1973), 18, 21.

maintained intact by the superiority of his character and his infinite capacity to love a woman who deserved the richness of that love." The magazine reinforced this image of domesticity with a photograph of Simoni's childhood home at the top of the page, juxtaposed with an article recounting Ignacio Agramonte's daring rescue of Manuel Sanguily from the clutches of the Spaniards—appearing a few pages earlier in the issue and complemented with an illustration of the general charging on horseback, sword drawn, a Cuban flag adorning the background.

The dichotomous relationship between Cuban men and women proposed by the CEC was in many ways an old trope, going back at least as far as early Cuban attempts at imagining their nation. Nancy Hewitt has shown that José Martí himself conceived of *cubanidad* in these terms.[67] "Martí," she observes, "frequently posed the martyred mother and the warrior son as the pillars of a free Cuba."[68] But while men were also assigned a range of other roles in Martí's rendition of the national project, women were relegated to one position only: "to serve as the 'repository of inspiration and beauty,' of purity and morality."[69] Much like Carbonell and her colleagues in the CEC seem to have done, Hewitt argues that Martí hardened his position the more he was exposed to what in his estimation were looser North American standards for women. "Thus, though he reacted to North American racial mores by challenging racist beliefs and behaviors, he responded to the sexual mores of his host country by sentimentalizing sexist ideals and attitudes."[70]

Ironically, many Cuban women exiles actively participated in the 19th century revolutionary struggle in Tampa, as members of revolutionary clubs like the *Obreras de la Independencia* and volunteers in Martí's Cuban Revolutionary Party. Hewitt even describes how

[67] Hewitt, "Engendering Independence: Las Patriotas of Tampa and The Social Vision of José Martí."
[68] Ibid., 23-24.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid., 24.

some of them bent the rules by speaking publicly before crowds of men (as in the example of 15-year old María Luisa Sánchez, daughter of General Frederico Sánchez). "Clearly," Hewitt writes, "the call to arms made by Martí in the 1890s helped transform Cuban women's roles on the island and in the émigré communities of Florida."[71] Indeed, a handful of exile women continued to be involved in politics in the years after Cuban independence. But many who remained in public life once the wars had ended wound up diverting their attention to more "feminine" pursuits like beautification projects and charity groups.

"We Must Fight Again!"

One woman who appeared frequently in both Martí's nationalist discourse and in the work of the CEC was Mariana Grajales, the mother of independence leaders Antonio and José Maceo.[72] Her case is particularly interesting, because while Grajales was often represented as passive and matronly, her figure could also illuminate the circumstances under which women were permitted to shed some of their passivity and still remain within the acceptable bounds of femininity. An example of the former was Ramón Corona's treatise on Grajales's feminine virtues.[73] Invoking the memory of valiant women like Joan of Arc and Policarpa Salavarrieta (a Colombian who was executed during the South American independence wars), he was quick to declare that in the Cuban wars of independence, women were not "protagonists." Instead, they supported and stirred men to gallantry. "In Cuba," Corona wrote, "the woman perfumed the

[71] Ibid., 30.
[72] For a useful discussion of representations of Grajales in Cuba, see Jean Stubbs, "Social and Political Motherhood of Cuba: Mariana Grajales Cuello," in *Engendering History: Caribbean Women in Historical Perspective*, ed. Bridget Brereton Verene Shepherd, Barbara Bailey (Kingston, Jamaica and London: Ian Randle Publishers and James Curry Publishers, 1995).

wartime panorama. Her presence would prompt a hundredfold increase in the men's zeal for battle. The most timid man would not be able to retreat if the eyes of a woman guided them to their duty." Cuban women, he stressed, did not prevent their husbands from fighting for the cause; rather, they urged them into battle, even though "later they [might] faint with tears." Returning to Mariana Grajales, he concluded, there was much that could be told. "We might save our breath [however] by saying only that she was the mother of the Maceo brothers."

In Corona's piece Grajales was portrayed mostly as a biological supplier of war heroes. Carbonell at times depicted her in a similar fashion, praising the "heroic mother" for her "prodigious offertory" of eleven boys to the cause of liberty.[74] But the mother of the Maceos could also be more than that. In a 1963 segment of "La Escuelita Cubana," for instance, she was depicted as the "most beautiful legend," who in the present day "repeats, impatiently, to all the Cuban boys and adolescents, what she said in her day of glory, to the last of her children: 'And you, stand up, it is now time to fight for your country!" [75] This was a more powerful incarnation of the independence-era matron, one that went beyond the rendering of moral and spiritual support, to forcefully exhort masculine action. It reflected dismay over the community's lack of will to resume the battle to liberate Cuba. But it also legitimized the very public niche that the women of the CEC had carved out for themselves in Miami.

Grajales was certainly the inspiration for a CEC-sponsored document signed by several dozen women in 1964, which they addressed to "all the leaders of organizations established for the purpose of fighting a new war for Cuban independence. . . [and] to the heroic troops of Playa

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[73] Ramón Corona, "Mariana Grajales," *El Habanero* 3, no. 21 (November-December 1971), 13, 16.
[74] "La Escuelita Cubana," May 8, 1965 broadcast, Box 4, Folder 54, Cruzada Educativa Collection (CHC 0302), University of Miami Cuban Heritage Collection.

Girón [the Bay of Pigs]. . .”[76] The signers described themselves as “Cuban women, prepared to sacrifice, with no authority save that afforded them through their offerings of the blood of sons, husbands, brothers and fathers, spilled in torrents before the altar of the nation enslaved.” The goal of their declaration, they asserted, was “to foster a complete and definitive unity among exiles, with the aim of bringing about total war for the second independence of Cuba.” Numerous calls for unity, they admitted, had been placed over the past five years. But now, “the voices that call at your door, extending bridges of comprehension and harmony over the somber crypts of Cuban desperation, are the voices of mothers, wives, sisters and daughters who watched their most beloved fall before firing squads or on the lead-ridden shores of the enslaved and reviled country. . .” At the end of the document, the women identified themselves by name and their relation to a fallen soldier or one of Castro’s prisoners. The document was also signed, presumably in spirit, by their “precursor,” Mariana Grajales.

Other historical figures who performed a role similar to that of Grajales were honored by the CEC. One “Escuelita” program praised the work of Emilia Casanova, who in 1868 appeared before the U.S. Senate to ask for recognition of the Cuban independence movement. “No country should be denied belligerency,” she is quoted as having told the members of Congress.[77] Carbonell explained: “Belligerency, my child, is what we call the sacred right of war, of battle to the death, that belongs to those nations that reject servitude and deserve their liberty.”

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[75] La Escuelita Cubana, transcript of 1963 broadcast (precise date unknown), Box 4, Folder 52, Cruzada Educativa (CHC 0302), University of Miami Cuban Heritage Collection.
[76] “Demand for Sacred Union for Cuba,” Box 1, Folder 15, Cruzada Educativa (CHC 0302), University of Miami Cuban Heritage Collection.
[77] April 20, 1966 broadcast, Box 4, Folder 44, Cruzada Educativa Collection (CHC 0302), University of Miami Cuban Heritage Collection.

As editorialist for *El Habanero,* Carbonell also assumed the role of Grajales, delivering indignant jeremiads in response to what she saw as the betrayal of the homeland by the exile community. One such editorial, written on the 106th anniversary of Martí's imprisonment, expressed grief over the hoards of political prisoners still languishing in Castro's jails.[78] "Like no one else," she wrote, they were "the symbol of sacrifice for our enslaved homeland." Carbonell considered political prisoners the "whole men of the republic," and contrasted their experience with the "sweet life enjoyed by the good part of our compatriots in exile." Worried that the fire had gone out of the émigrés' patriotic fervor—not to mention their will to fight—Carbonell exclaimed: "We suffer the shame of that indolence. We feel—like hot coals that burn our insides—the shame of that desertion of our belligerent duties. Insolent . . . are those who laugh, and celebrate and defy the verdict of history . . . here, the comfortable one sings, and almost everyone dances. Here our dignity falls to pieces, like a scab that we must wash off." "It's not that we are getting closer," Carbonell lamented in another work, "We are already in the labyrinth."[79] Once again capitalizing on her role as moral arbiter, Carbonell excoriated the men in exile whose determination she felt was flagging. "When an enslaved country waits for the heroic resolution of its sons—who while in exile enjoy the freedom to think, talk, and do—it is not patriotic to undertake anything other than preparation for battle. Carnivals, parades, and parties are for a future joyful morning!" "For our republic, oh Cuban child," Carbonell

[78] María Gómez Carbonell, "Editorial," *El Habanero* 7, no. 70 (May 1976), 3.
[79] Carbonell, "Editorial," *El Habanero* 7, no. 72 (July 1976), 3.

announced in a broadcast of "La Escuelita Cubana," "dozens of men die everyday. We must fight again!"[80]

[80] La Escuelita Cubana, transcript of October 10, 1963 broadcast, Box 4, Folder 52, Cruzada Educativa (CHC 0302), University of Miami Cuban Heritage Collection. Also appeared in 10/10/63 issue of *Patria*, as "Alma Cubana."

Conclusion

Carlos Foment, Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick have examined the rise of the Cuban "ethnic enclave" in Miami, emphasizing the early influence of the *batistianos*, right-wing supporters of Fulgencio Batista who were the first to migrate to the United States following the Castro revolution.[1] Affluent and educated, often with political and economic connections in the U.S., many of these early émigrés drew on their advantages to establish successful businesses and professional careers in Miami. They also helped fund anti-communist publications such as *Patria* and *Defensa*, both of which achieved wide circulation in Cuban-owned businesses. As a result, right-wing politics[2] and the emerging economic enclave were inextricably linked since the beginning of the Cuban migration. When refugees advocating a more moderate stance toward Castro's Cuba began to arrive in the early 1960s, the conservative Miami elite attempted to enforce political consensus by harassing, boycotting, and even terrorizing their compatriots. Soon liberal politics came to be labeled "*fidelismo sin Fidel*" (Castro-ism without Castro), and anyone taking exception to the extremist views appearing regularly in the immigrant press had to contend with the serious consequences of speaking out in the charged atmosphere of Miami's Cuban community. María Cristina García has added color to this time-worn portrait of Cuban

[1] Carlos A. Foment, "Political Practice and the Rise of an Ethnic Enclave," *Theory and Society* 18 (1989); Alejandro Portes, "The Social Origins of the Cuban Enclave Economy of Miami," *Sociological Perspectives* 30 (1987); Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick, *City on the Edge: The Transformation of Miami* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1994); Alex Stepick and Guillermo Grenier, "Cubans in Miami," in *In the Barrios: Latinos and the Underclass Debate*, ed. Joan W. Moore and Raquel Pinderhughes (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1993); Alex Stepick and Carol Dutton Stepick, "Power and Identity: Miami Cubans," in *Latinos: Remaking America*, ed. Marcelo Suárez-Orozco and Mariela Páez (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

exile politics, highlighting the "broad range of political perspectives [that] coexisted within anti-Castroism."[3] Nevertheless, she has also conceded that right-wing elites went to great lengths to impose their will on the city's immigrants, relying on their economic power—and often resorting to violent measures—in order to keep dissidence in check.

It might be that a parallel project to define *cubanidad* in terms of "traditional" gender norms was undertaken by the conservative members of Cruzada Educativa Cubana, several of whom—like Carbonell herself—were staunch *batistianos*. Concerned with the feminist orientation of the Castro regime, the social upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s, the ramifications of widespread female employment in exile, and the apparent lack of manly resolve in the community, *El Habanero* and "La Escuelita Cubana" were intended as corrective didactic implements, deploying gendered language in an attempt to define what it means to be truly Cuban. The power of this discourse may have been great: violators of this proposed gender dynamic could have been pegged as "communist" and "anti-Cuban," alienated in the same way that moderate political voices were.

To be sure, this thesis is exploratory in nature. It is only the beginning of what should be a much broader examination of national identity as debated among the Cuban immigrants. Further analysis would involve widening the scope of this inquiry significantly to incorporate other elements of Cuban immigrant culture: a more representative sampling of the popular press, for instance, including publications by *municipios* and popular books on Cuban history; Cuban immigrant theater; private school curricula; public monuments, parades, and pageants; and, of course, the activities of other cultural organizations. What's more, a larger project must also

[2] That is, advocating staunch anti-communism and a hardline policy toward revolutionary Cuba, including support for an economic embargo and military action against Castro's regime.

consider the effect of the 1980 Mariel boatlift on discourses of *cubanidad*. In the end, delving into this subject will improve our understanding of the power relations reproduced by projects to preserve "Cuban culture."

[3] García, *Havana U.S.A.*, 121.

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