1. STUDY AIM, BACKGROUND, AND DESIGN

This thesis research will explore how the unique factors of the Cuban Revolution and subsequent waves of migration from Cuba to Miami have been interrelated with constructions of Cuban and Cuban-American gender and sexuality. Of particular interest to me are queer Cuban women and the experiences through which they have lived that have informed their own personal constructions of gender and sexual identities. My main objective is not to make broad generalizations from individual experiences, but to document the variance and difference in queer Cuban life stories, as well as demonstrate the variety of interrelated factors that work together in the production of multiple identifications.

My specific research question asks: How have the unique factors of Cuban exile experience and community influenced the gender and sexual identities of queer Cuban and Cuban-American women living in Miami? Additionally, how have queer Cuban women embraced or resisted traditional aspects of their cultural/ethnic upbringing, as well as contemporary influence of lesbian and gay communities, in the formation of their gender and sexual identities? I will focus my research on queer Cuban women and their relationships to the Cuban Socialist state, to their families, and to their own identities of gender and sexuality. Particular attention will be paid to the different generations and waves of immigration.

There is truly a lack of academic literature specifically devoted to the description of contemporary Cuban and Cuban-American lesbian experiences. I hope to offer this research to the growing cannon of anthropological discourse on sexuality. Through feminist multi-sited methodology, I will collect life histories from a diverse group of queer Cuban and Cuban-American women, in addition to employing more traditional participant-observation anthropological strategies. By employing this feminist life-history method, I will aim to provide “the space for people to express their thoughts and feelings in their words and on their own terms” (Ruiz 1998:xvi).

2. SUBJECT POPULATION: INCLUSION CRITERIA, USE OF SPECIAL SUBJECT GROUPS, AND METHODS OF ACCESS

Approximately 15 to 20 queer Cuban women will be asked to participate in this research; no one under the age of 18 will be included. Informants will be recruited...
primarily through personal contacts and networking, however additional recruiting could take place through e-mail and/or the telephone (please see attached sample recruiting script).

3. PROCEDURES TO BE DONE FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

The procedures and methods used in this research study will consist of the following:

1. *Archival Sources.* Prior to entering the field, an extensive review of the literature previously published and generally related to my research topic will be conducted. Topics include the history of Cuban gender and sexuality, women in Cuba, Cuban homosexuality, histories of Cuban Miami, and women’s experience during immigration and in exile.

2. *Informal Interviews and Life Histories.* Semi-structured, unstructured, and open-ended interviews will take place with participants in this research study. Interviews and ethnographic conversations will last anywhere from one to four hours depending on the candidness and comfort of the participant. Interviews will take place at a time and place convenient to the subject in order to minimize any inconvenience. Most interviews will be tape-recorded and transcribed, and the resultant data destroyed one year after collection.

3. *Participant-Observation.* After conducting several interviews and building rapport with my informants, I will attend community activities and events, such as social gatherings, parties, festivals, and clubs, geared toward queer Cubana/Latina communities. At times I will request of my informants to come along to these events in order to gain a better understanding of their place within the communities in which they live.

The archival research will primarily take place at San Francisco State University with supplemental research done at the University of Miami's Cuban Heritage Collection. The interview and participant-observation portion of the research will take place in Miami, time and place, again, to be arranged according to the participants’ schedule preferences. It is anticipated that the fieldwork portion in Miami will take no longer than two months.

4. RISKS: POTENTIAL RISKS/DISCOMFORTS AND METHOD OF MINIMIZING THESE RISKS

There are no foreseeable physical risks involved in participating in this research study. Any potential emotional risks will be minimized as much as possible. Due to the personal and potentially emotionally vulnerable position of participants, mitigation will entail their being able to cease the interview in full or elect not to answer certain questions. Participation in this research is entirely voluntary and can be terminated at any time.
Participation in this research study can possibly inconvenience and/or cause a loss of privacy to the individual. In order to mitigate these risks, participants will be guaranteed confidentiality, and all interviews will take place at a time and place convenient to the individual. Neither their names nor their associations/organizations will be included in the final results of this research, and all participant responses during data collection will be carefully coded. All tapes and transcripts will be filed away in a safe and secure location accessible only to myself. Moreover, all tape recorded data will be destroyed one year after its collection.

5. BENEFITS: POTENTIAL DIRECT BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND GENERAL BENEFITS TO A SUBJECT GROUP, MEDICAL SCIENCES AND/OR SOCIETY

There are no direct benefits to the subject for participation in this research study.

6. COMPENSATION

There will be no compensation for participation in this research study.

7. ACADEMIC CREDIT

There will be no academic credit for participation in this research study.

8. COSTS

There will be no costs to the subject for participating.

9. ALTERNATIVES

There will be no alternative treatment, therapy, or courses for any participants in this research study.

10. CONSENT PROCESS AND DOCUMENTATION

All subjects will be oriented to the procedures prior to the onset of testing. They will be encouraged to ask questions. When all of their questions have been answered to their satisfaction, they will be asked to sign a copy of the Human Subjects consent form. A copy of the signed form will be provided to all subjects.

11. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE INVESTIGATORS

I am a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology at San Francisco State University. Under the advisement of Dr. Bernard Wong, through his Ethnographic Field Methods course (ANTH 651), I have undertaken ethnographic research in which I conducted interviews with Latina lesbians in the San Francisco Bay Area.
Additionally, as an undergraduate, I conducted sociological interviews for research on women in the campus policing industry.

Professor Bernard Wong is my faculty supervisor. Dr. Wong is a full professor of anthropology at San Francisco State University, and is well respected in the field of Anthropology. His determination and expert guidance will insure the high quality of my research.

12. BIBLIOGRAPHY


Levine, Robert M. and Moisés Asis

Lumsden, Ian

Marcus, George E.

Maloof, Judy, ed., trans.

Randall, Margaret

Rodríguez, Juana María

Ruiz, Vicki

Smith, Lois M. and Alfred Padula

Torres, María de los Angeles, ed.

Turner, Dwayne
Sample Recruiting Script

Hello, my name is Rebecca Sibrack, and I would like to invite you to participate in a research project that will explore how the unique factors of the Cuban Revolution and subsequent waves of migration from Cuba to Miami have been interrelated with constructions of Cuban and Cuban-American gender and sexuality, particularly identity formation among queer Cuban women.

If you agree to participate in this research, I would like to schedule a time to get together with you and ask you some very informal and open-ended questions about your life experiences. This interview process will respect your privacy, and could range from one to four hours, depending on your candidness and comfort. Pending your consent, interviews and conversations will be tape-recorded and transcribed. The interviews are not for commercial purposes, as they are strictly for my MA thesis in Anthropology through San Francisco State University. At times I might request to come along with you to community activities and/or events in order to gain a better understanding of the communities within which you live.

If you would like to learn more about my research, or have any questions, please feel free to contact me at sibrack@sfsu.edu or speak to my advisor, Dr. Bernard Wong, at bernardw@sfsu.edu.

I thank you in advance for your time and interest in participating in my research.
Sample Interview Questions

How old are you?

Where were you born?

How long have you lived in Miami?

What is your occupation?

Where were your parents born?

Where were grandparents born?

If not born here, when and why did you come to the United States, and Miami in particular?

Have you resisted or embraced assimilation and acculturation? Why?

If you could, would you like to return to Cuba?

If born in Cuba, can you tell me about your experience of immigration and exile?

What is your relationship to the Cuban Revolution?

What is your family’s relationship to the Cuban Revolution?

Can you tell me about your coming out experience? When did you first come out and where were you living at the time?

Who did you first come out to?

Are you out to your family?

If so, how has your family responded?

If not, what prevents you from coming out to your family?

Were there specific people who directly or indirectly influenced/assisted in this process for you?

Was it important for you to seek out a Cubana/Latina queer community when you were coming out?

Is there a distinct Cubana/Latina queer community in Miami?
If so, are you involved/active in the Cubana/Latina queer community?

What sort of activities or events are typical of this community?

Are you involved/active in the greater queer community?

Do you generally feel accepted or rejected by the Cubano/Latino community as a whole because of your queer identity?

Do you generally feel accepted or rejected by the queer community as a whole because of your Cubana identity?

Is there a distinct community/organization that caters to recently immigrated Latina/Cubana lesbians?

In what ways do you feel you express your queer Cubana identity?
A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Under the supervision of Dr. Bernard Wong, Professor of Anthropology at San Francisco State University, Rebecca Sibrack, a graduate student in Anthropology, is conducting research on how the unique factors of the Cuban Revolution and subsequent waves of migration from Cuba to Miami have been interrelated with constructions of Cuban and Cuban-American gender and sexuality. You have been invited to participate in this study because you are a queer Cuban women willing to share your life experiences.

B. PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this research study, you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview, unstructured interview, life history interview, and/or ethnographic conversation. In doing so, please consider the following:

1. Interviews will consist of open ended questions about your life experiences. Particular attention will be paid to your experience of immigration and exile as well as your gender and sexual identities.
2. Interviews and conversations will last from one to four hours depending on your candidness and comfort. With your consent, follow-up interviews will potentially be requested.
3. All interviews will be scheduled at a time and place according to your convenience.
4. Pending your consent, interviews and conversations will be tape-recorded and transcribed.
5. Interviews will take place in convenient and comfortable locations geared toward respecting your rights to privacy and confidentiality.
6. At times I might request to come along with you to community activities and/or events in order to gain a better understanding of the communities within which you live.

C. RISKS

There are no foreseeable physical risks involved in participating in this research study. Any potential emotional risks will be minimized as much as possible. Due to the personal nature of this research, you could potentially feel emotionally vulnerable. To mitigate this risk, you will be able to cease the interview in full or elect not to answer certain questions. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and can be terminated at any time.

Participation in this research can possibly inconvenience and/or cause you to experience a loss of privacy. In order to alleviate these risks, you will be guaranteed confidentiality, and all interviews will take place at a time and place convenient to you. Neither your name nor your associations/organizations will be included in the
Gender and Sexuality in Cuban Miami -- Rebecca Sibrack

final results of this research, and all of your responses during data collection will be carefully coded. All tapes and transcripts will be filed away in a safe and secure location accessible only to myself. Moreover, all tape recorded data will be destroyed one year after its collection.

D. DIRECT BENEFITS

There will be no direct benefit to you for participating in this research.

E. COSTS

There will be no cost to you for participating in this research.

F. COMPENSATION

There will be no compensation for participating in this research.

G. ALTERNATIVES

Not Applicable.

H. QUESTIONS

You have spoken with Rebecca Sibrack about this study and have had your questions answered. If you have any further questions about the study, you may contact the researcher by email at sibrack@sfsu.edu or by phone at 415-338-2046, or Dr. Bernard Wong at 415-338-7518 or bernardw@sfsu.edu.

Questions about your rights as a study participant, or comments or complaints about the study, may also be addressed to the Office for the Protection of Human Subjects at 415-338-1093 or protocol@sfsu.edu.

I. CONSENT

You have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.

PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. You are free to decline to participate in this research study, or to withdraw your participation at any point, without penalty. Your decision whether or not to participate in this research study will have no influence on your present or future status at San Francisco State University.

Signature _____________________________  Date: _________
Research Participant

Signature _____________________________  Date: _________
Interviewer