The Revolution is for the Children: The Politics of Childhood in Havana and Miami, 1959-1962

Friday, April 17, 2015
2-3:30 PM, Deutz Room in the Copley International Conference Center, Institute of the Americas Complex, UCSD

The Revolution is for the Children examines how morally and emotionally charged understandings, practices and representations of childhood propelled the radicalization of the 1959 Cuban Revolution and the subsequent formation of the south Florida exile community. In it, Casavantes Bradford draws upon archival research conducted in both Havana and Miami to argue that Fidel Castro and senior revolutionary officials made deliberate use of children and images of childhood to steer an originally nationalist and reformist Revolution towards socialism and the USSR. At the same time, she argues that government interventions in the lives of children threatened Cuban middle class values and traditions, provoking deeply felt resistance to the new regime and sparking a massive exodus of former revolutionary supporters to southern Florida by 1961. By the conclusion of the 1962 October Missile Crisis, struggles to define, control and make symbolic use of Cuban childhood had become inextricably intertwined with the collective structures of feeling of the island and exilic Cuban communities. The Revolution is for the Children reveals for the first time the centrality of children to Cuban politics and national identities and to relations between Cuba and the United States since the island nation’s independence.

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