

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: OPERATION PEDRO PAN OVER THE LIFE COURSE

Allyson Pakstis, Doctor of Philosophy, 2019

Dissertation directed by: Associate Professor and Graduate Director,
Dr. Marian Moser Jones, Department of Family
Science

This dissertation examines the short- and long-term psychosocial effects of unaccompanied childhood migration over the life course of individuals who participated in Operation Pedro Pan. This program, in which over 14,048 unaccompanied Cuban children migrated by plane to the U.S. between 1960 and 1962 to flee the Fidel Castro regime, resulted in the separation of thousands of Cuban families for periods ranging from a few months to permanent separation. Operation Pedro Pan, a singular historical event, serves as a case study for investigating the implications of unaccompanied child migration on families over the life course.

In this study, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with 25 participants in Operation Pedro Pan, and thematic analysis was used to systematically identify meaningful patterns across participant responses. The main research questions, framed by life course perspective and family resilience framework, investigated the influence of this event on the migrants' family roles and expectations, family decision-making, parenting style, family communication, family transition, and integration into the U.S. as unaccompanied immigrant minors. This is the first study to examine Operation Pedro Pan from an outsider perspective. This dissertation is also unique in that it utilized the life course perspective and family resilience framework to investigate the experience of unaccompanied immigrant minors.

The principal finding of this study is that shared Cuban family values were crucial to participants' families' ability to adapt to their new circumstances in the U.S. after separation of several months to several years. These shared family values likely allowed participants, their siblings and parents to be flexible in their roles and successfully adapt to living in a new country after an unexpected migration. Additionally, this research provides further evidence that the local community and the different types of support that it can provide to a newly arrived immigrant or refugee family can be essential to their acculturation process.

Keywords: Operation Pedro Pan, unaccompanied minors, life course, family resilience

OPERATION PEDRO PAN OVER THE LIFE COURSE

by

Allyson Pakstis

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Advisory Committee:

Associate Professor Marian Moser Jones, PhD – Chair

Professor Olivia Carter-Pokras, PhD

Professor Norman B. Epstein, PhD

Associate Professor Kevin Roy, PhD

Assistant Professor Elisabeth Maring, PhD

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Fidel Castro-led revolution in Cuba and the subsequent United States embargo have produced three different Cuban Families. The family in Cuba, the Cuban family in the United States, and the family with members in both countries. The Cuban family cannot be understood properly without examining all three elements. (Skaine, 2004, p. 1)

Cuban Families

Historical Influences

The rich and complex history of Cuba has undoubtedly influenced and shaped Cuban families over the past five centuries. This includes the intersection of multiple cultures and kingdoms that have fought for the rights to and ownership of Cuba and its resources. Of importance are the influences from the earliest indigenous group, the many colonial empires that had a serious economic interest in the island, and the enslaved people brought to the island as laborers. These cultural intersections combined over time and influenced Cuban religion, music, art, culinary practices, and social norms.

The Tainos, an indigenous group to the Caribbean and the region of Florida¹, originally inhabited the island as early as 4,000 B.C. (Rouse, 1992, p. 69). The Spaniards saw Cuba as the “key” to the Americas and subsequently carried out the genocide of the Tainos in the early 16th century. Led by Christopher Columbus, the Spaniards eliminated most of the Tainos within one generation of arriving in Cuba, although there are descendants of the Tainos in Cuba. There are also still influences from their Arawak language, including the words canoe, tobacco, barbecue, hammock, and hurricane (Estrada, 2007, p. 29). Cultural influences from the Tainos have also continued in some Cuban communities, including the use of traditional techniques in architecture, farming, fishing, and healing (Poole, 2011). However, the decimation of this

¹ Spanish explorers landed in Florida in 1513 and officially claimed the region as “La Florida”, a Spanish colony, in 1564. Spain gave the Florida colony to Great Britain in 1763 in return for Havana, which Great Britain had at the time recently captured (Historical Museum of Southern Florida, n.d.).

population helped pave the way for Catholicism, which has had a heavy influence on Cuban family culture and norms (Skaine, 2004).

Over the 16th and 17th centuries the Spanish fought for control over the valuable territory with French corsairs (pirates) and the British Empire (Estrada, 2007). This colonial time period included the triangle slave trade, which brought in a strong Afro-Cuban influence to the island that is still present today (Estrada, 2007). One of the most prevalent African influences is the Santeria religion, which is still highly practiced in Cuba, most especially by the *mestizo* (mixed race) and black working class (Clark, 2007). The religion is a combination of the Orisha worship traditions and Catholicism (Clark, 2007). African slaves who were brought over to Cuba by Spaniards developed this religion, and it is the product of their acculturation to the white dominated society (Clark, 2007). Interestingly Fidel Castro, a man baptized and raised Catholic, openly practiced the Santeria religion (Hearn, 2008).

During the Spanish colonial time period there were some mixed marriages between indigenous people and Spanish settlers. This was one way that contrasting cultural traditions and norms began to merge and become a part of Cuban family heritage (Skaine, 2004). Spanish feudal traditions and ideals such as chivalry, piety, honor, valor, courtesy, chastity, and loyalty, infiltrated “the very fabric of society” (Skaine, 2004, p. 6). The Catholic Church placed a high value on virginity and decency that was further encouraged by *machismo*, which is a strong sense of masculine pride particularly tied to Hispanic culture (Skaine, 2004). When it came to matriarchal traditions, there was a merging of the Spanish tradition of “...placing noble women on a pedestal [with] the experience of the woman and mother in New World slavery” (Skaine, 2004, p. 7). Atypical of the traditional Catholic family in Spain, there were some Spanish men in Cuba who practiced polygamy and/or married indigenous women, and/or formed unions with

African slave women or free African women (Skaine, 2007). Family type, or composition, was determined by the social position of partners. African men were considered to have little to no social status, so some African women chose to form a consensual union with a Spanish man or to live a life of a single mother. These African women were living in a "...hierarchical society [that] determined the sexual marginalization of women of color" and this made it more likely for them to choose a living situation that was mother-centered and often "lacking the presence of a father" (Skaine, 2007, p. 8).

By the mid-19th century inhabitants had developed their own Cuban identity separate from Spain and subsequently fought for their independence in three independent wars. The first was the Ten Years war from 1868 to 1878, and the second was the Little War from 1879 to 1880. The final war for independence began in 1895 and ended in 1898 with the Cubans winning their independence (Estrada, 2007, pp. 97-130). This independence was achieved with the intervention and assistance of the United States (Estrada, 2007). Cuba was then forced to endure a U.S. military occupation until the election of Tomas Estrada, the first Cuban president, in 1902. However, this change in government was still tainted by the previous U.S. involvement: "...the stage was set for the United States to dominate the political and economic processes of the island and to reshape its politics, economics, society, culture, and identity. Spanish hegemony had been replaced with U.S. hegemony" (Staten, 2015, p. 49). This presence is still felt as the U.S. Government controls, or "rents" out, Guantanamo Bay in Cuba (Estrada, 2007) and became heavily but discretely involved in the resistance movements following the Cuban Revolution in 1959 (de los Angeles Torres, 2003).

Cuban Families Pre-Revolution

Cuban family culture includes a highly interconnected system of individuals that is commonly characterized by loyalty, unity, and ritual kinship (Bernal & Shapiro, 2005). It is generally defined as having a collectivist culture that heavily emphasizes family support (Skaine, 2004). The term *familismo* is central to Cuban family life and is described as a cultural attitude and value that prioritizes the family above the individual (Bernal, 1982; Queralt, 1984). There is great expectancy within Cuban families for the individual to be involved with the family (Queralt, 1984). The nuclear family, as well as extended family, is fundamental to Cuban family culture. Ritual kinship, culturally referred to as *compadrazgo*, describes a reciprocal or privileged social relationship such as godparent and godchild (Bernal & Shapiro, 2005).

The children and adolescents who participated in Operation Pedro Pan were mostly from middle- to upper-middle class families, typically with Spanish ancestry that emphasized patriarchal structure and idealizing the role of motherhood (Allahar, 1994). This ancestry heavily influenced the roles and norms within these Cuban families. The family norms included having the father as head of the household and main decision-maker, and the mother staying at home taking care of the children (Allahar, 1994). Additionally, it was expected that children would live with their parents until they were married (Conde, 1999). This meant that parents were expected to take care of their children's needs until they moved out of the house and were customarily highly involved in their children's lives (Queralt, 1984). The level of involvement has been characterized as often leading to overprotection and "a tendency to foster over-dependency" (Queralt, 1984, p. 117). Cuban psychologists have used the collective term "enmeshment" to describe the level of interdependence within typical Cuban families. In a broader context (i.e., across other cultures), family enmeshment has been conceptualized as existing on a cohesion

scale ranging from ‘disengaged’ (very low cohesion) to ‘enmeshed’ (very high cohesion) (Barber & Buehler, 1996), while connoting negative effects of enmeshment on family members (Bloom, 1985; Kinnier, Brigman, & Noble, 1990; Mupinga, Garrison, & Pierce, 2002;). However, the ‘look’ of enmeshment may differ in Cuban families in a way that is more functional in that enmeshment in Cuban families is culturally normative and can be a source of strength under times of high stress (Walsh, 1993). Additionally, in line with Cuban family culture of *familismo* is that the “...love of the mother is stressed above all else” (Queralt, 1984, p. 117) and that it is important to show respect for elders and the deceased (Queralt, 1984).

Cuban American Families

Cuban American families encapsulate many of the common attributes of traditional Cuban families but can also include the experiences of being an immigrant, a refugee, and a child of immigrants. Cuban American families commonly have the expectation for individual members to be involved with the family, much more so than in typical Anglo-American families (Skaine, 2004). Additionally, many Cuban American families still have family members in Cuba that they have likely not seen in many years, even decades. The heavy emphasis on family support and helping family members in need extends to family still living in Cuba (Skaine, 2004).

The politically fueled emigration of first-generation Cubans has contributed to the Cuban American family dynamic. Individuals who arrived in the U.S. because of Operation Pedro Pan typically have strong opinions on Cuba, Cuban-American politics, and how their Cuban American family should think about the island nation (Bernal & Shapiro, 2005). Their separation from Cuba was fast, intense, and resulted in some long lasting effects on their lives. Therefore it is not surprising that this group would have strong opinions on the state of Cuba and on issues

like whether their children should visit Cuba if given the chance, American immigration and economic policies towards Cuba, and the utility of Communism. However, these opinions may differ with second and third generation family members who were born in the U.S. As Bernal and Shapiro (2005) point out, “The older, more emotionally politicized generation is being replaced by a more practical younger generation that has less difficulty in doing business with or even traveling to Cuba.”

Operation Pedro Pan

The Cuban Revolution (Revolución Cubana)

In 1952 Fulgencio Batista commanded a military coup, after he realized that he would not win the 1952 presidential election, which led him to seize power over the democratic government and established his position as a dictator (Conde, 1999). He was previously the President of Cuba from 1940-1944 and had consistently been seeking power since the early 1930s when he was chief of the armed forces (Staten, 2015). Although his reign as dictator from 1952 to 1959 saw impressive economic growth, much of it came at the expense of widespread corruption in the government and further widened the gap between the rich and the poor (Staten, 2015). Batista also revoked many political liberties such as the right to strike. This led to student-led riots and demonstrations, which Batista responded to with media censorship and widespread violence and public executions through the use of secret police (Staten, 2015).

Fidel Castro is the most well known of the three main Cuban revolutionary leaders who emerged during the 1950s. In 1953 Castro’s *26 de Julio* movement occurred, which involved 200 inexperienced students who attacked the Moncada Barracks, a major military installation in the city of Santiago de Cuba, and ultimately failed (Conde, 1999). He served less than two years in prison and went to Mexico to reorganize his rebel army, then went back to Cuba in 1956 where

he and his band of rebels carried out a small attack on Cuban armed forces and retreated to the Sierra Maestro Mountains. Castro and his rebels lived in the mountains conducting his guerilla warfare on the Cuban army until the revolution in 1959 (Conde, 1999). By the end of 1958 revolutionary groups were able to take control of Havana, and subsequently Castro and his rebels came out of the mountains and made their way to Havana. On January 1, 1959 Batista fled the country for Spain, and by January 8, 1959 Castro had taken control and became the leader of the revolution (Conde, 1999). Castro was highly celebrated at first, and the Cuban people cheered him on as he paraded through the streets (Conde, 1999).

Cuban citizens began seeking refuge in Miami, Florida immediately after the revolution. This exodus began on January 1, 1959, less than one day after former President Batista stepped down and fled the country (Walsh, 1971). The first to leave in a hurry were mostly individuals and their families who had taken part in the previous government and those who had strong ties to capitalist ventures that were being confiscated by the new regime (e.g., foreign-owned oil refineries) (Walsh, 1971). Fewer than a quarter of the people who entered the U.S. in the first year were considered unskilled or semi-skilled - evidence of the high level of average education among this sanctuary-seeking group (Oettinger, 1962). The first Cuban refugee child in the U.S., a boy named Pedro who was in need of foster care, came to the attention of U.S. authorities in November 1960 and inspired the Operation Pedro Pan name. By December 26, 1960 the first group of unaccompanied Cuban children arrived in Miami as part of Operation Pedro Pan (Walsh, 1971).

In December 1961, after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, President John F. Kennedy authorized Operation Mongoose, a plan to “use all available assets” to overthrow Castro and replace Communism with a democratic government (Operation Mongoose, 2010). It was led by

the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and, among many strategies, enlisted Cubans who were opposed to Castro's regime and wanted to help overthrow his dictatorship (Operation Mongoose, 2010). Covert activities included acts of sabotage such as attempting to destroy sugar mills, oil refineries, cargo ships, and bridges. There were also many failed attempts to assassinate Castro. Castro's popularity among Cubans and extensive intelligence community throughout Cuba contributed to the overall failure of Operation Mongoose (Absher, 2009; Operation Mongoose, 2010).

What Was Operation Pedro Pan?

Operation Pedro Pan was the largest exodus of children ever to occur between two countries in the Western Hemisphere. It involved the airlift of 14,048 unaccompanied Cuban children from Havana, Cuba to Miami, Florida (Cauce, 2012) beginning in December 1960 and ending with the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962 (Conde, 1999). While the operation was active it went largely unnoticed in the U.S. news (Conde, 1999; Cause, 2012). Additionally, for about the first 30 years after arriving in the U.S. many of the Pedro Pan children, who had since become adults, were not aware that Operation Pedro Pan was an organized effort and that there were other people who experienced it (Cauce, 2012). The operation was not openly talked about, and it was not mentioned to the children who participated in it that they were a part of a large exodus. Many of them came to the U.S. by themselves or with a sibling. They may have flown to the U.S. on the same plane as other Pedro Pan children, but this was never brought to their attention due to the covert nature of the program (Cauce, 2012; Conde, 1999).

Operation Pedro Pan has been defined as a program that "...was developed to help Cuban parents send their children unaccompanied to the U.S. to avoid Communist indoctrination" (Walsh, 1971, p. 379). The Catholic Welfare Bureau (currently Catholic Charities) of Miami set

up the program in 1960 in response to Cuban parents looking for somewhere safe to temporarily send their children. Monsignor Bryan Walsh led this initiative in Miami and did so under a short timeline with few resources (Walsh, 1971). Once the children arrived they were provided foster care services through the Cuban Children's Program specifically set up for Operation Pedro Pan children. The Catholic Welfare Bureau provided services, and contracted with three other organizations to provide care to this group of unaccompanied Cuban children: the Children's Service Bureau of Dade County, the Jewish Family and Children's Service of Miami, and the United HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) (Cauce, 2012).

Why Cuban Parents Sent Their Children Away

Within the first 15 days of the revolution, Castro's regime began putting Batista soldiers, adversaries, and sympathizers on trial in private settings that did not follow judicial procedures and were not open to the public (Conde, 1999). Many of those that were "judged" were executed, which set off a series of international condemnations including those by South American governments that had originally supported Castro's cause (Conde, 1999). The Catholic Church, which had originally supported the revolution, also openly condemned these executions (Conde, 1999). These events were surprising and upsetting for many Cuban families, especially at the rate that they were occurring. These executions set off protests from newly formed anti-Castro groups that were secretly organizing with many active young Cubans. The increasing violence between the anti-Castro protesters and the new regime instilled another level of fear within Cuban families for their children (Conde, 1999).

Additionally, Cuban parents who were either directly working with the CIA and/or working to undermine Castro's militant takeover through the underground anti-Castro movement feared for their children's lives and began looking for ways to get them out of Cuba until it was

safe to return (de los Angeles Torres, 2003). Most parents believed that their children would only be gone for a few weeks and then be reunited with them (Walsh, 1971). Cuban parents were most scared of their children being sent away to Russia for communist indoctrination as punishment for their parents' opposition to the Castro Regime (Oettinger, 1962; Walsh, 1971; de los Angeles Torres, 2003). Parents were afraid that they would not be able to stave off the Revolutionary Government's propaganda (Walsh, 1971; de los Angeles Torres, 2003). Although indoctrination of their children was a main fear, there were also several other events that influenced parents' decisions to send their children to the U.S. unaccompanied. Either one or both parents, depending on the family norms around decision-making, made this decision. In general, who made this decision was not discussed with the children. Rather, the children were just told that they would be leaving, for how long, and why (Goyos, 1996).

Within a year of Castro's regime taking over the government, Cuban families had new serious concerns regarding their children. Although Castro claimed that he did not have any ties to Communism, his immediate actions once taking office were seen by many as radical (Conde, 1999; de los Angeles Torres, 2003). In early January 1960, a week after the revolution, the Ministry of Education announced a new military program for high school students. The purpose of this new program was to support the new People's Militia, and it was declared that all Cuban students would have to learn how to bear arms (Conde, 1999). Castro himself stated in the underground Cuban newspaper *Revolución*, "We will win more battles and the children will help us" (Conde, 1999, p. 16).

The education of Cuba's children was very important to Castro as a means to securing the prosperity of Cuba's future as a socialist country by creating the "New Man" (de los Angeles Torres, 2003, p. 3). The Revolutionary Government had "...pledged itself to a program of rapid

economic and social advance” (O’Connor, 1968, p. 169). Castro believed that it was crucial to gain complete control over education and the dissemination of knowledge “...for these were the vehicles for reconstructing an entire society” (de los Angeles Torres, 2003, p. 40). This included taking over private schools and appropriating Catholic schools. Castro publicly spoke out against the Catholic Church and schools. Castro stated that the church was “carrying out the orders of ‘Yankee Imperialism’” and that the Catholic schools were teaching that the revolution was Communist (Conde, 1999, p. 30). This turned out to be one of Castro’s most unpopular tactics as the Country’s population primarily identified as Catholic. This led to student protests and the subsequent arrests of four young adults, who were then shot by firing squad for alleged terrorist acts (Conde, 1999).

Castro believed in educating peasants to read and write so that they could vote and participate in Cuban society (Conde, 1999; de los Angeles Torres, 2003). One tactic was a nationwide literacy campaign (Conde, 1999; Walsh, 1971). By April of 1961 Castro enacted the “Army of Education”. He ordered all schools from sixth grade through high school to be closed for 8.5 months so that 100,000 uniformed youth could move into peasant family homes throughout the island to teach the illiterate how to read and write (Conde, 1999). This was considered a large and upsetting event for Cuban parents, especially those of the middle and upper middle classes in Havana, and has been cited as one of the reasons for sending their children to the U.S. (Conde, 1999). Having young women stay with peasant families was seen by many to be morally unacceptable and as a violation of traditional Cuban family norm, as it was customary for young women to live with their families until they were married (Conde, 1999).

Lastly, there was the threat of “Patria Potestad”, a circulated rumor that scared many Cuban parents. Patria Potestad was supposedly a Cuban government document that outlined a

plan requiring that children would stay with their parents until the age of three. At the age of three children would then go to Organización de Circulos Infantiles for physical and mental education. The children could visit with their parents no more than two days a month (Walsh, 1971). Patria Potestad has been mostly proven to be just a rumor, but it was a powerful one that scared many Cuban parents into sending their children to the U.S. by themselves.

Timeline of Operation Pedro Pan and Initial Phases of Cuban Exiles

The most commonly cited timeline of Operation Pedro Pan is December 1960 to October 1962 (Cauce, 2012; Conde, 1999). Maria de los Angeles Torres, a political scientist who came to the U.S. through Operation Pedro Pan, offers a more nuanced timeline of the operation that includes three distinct time periods (de los Angeles Torres, 2003). The first time period occurred within the first year after the revolution and was concerned with getting children of anti-Castro organizers out of Cuba. During this phase nearly 500 unaccompanied Cuban children came to the U.S. The first group arrived in Miami on December 26, 1960 (Walsh, 1971).

The second time period began with the Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961 and ended with the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. In this time period, the majority of the total 14,048 children were sent to the U.S. During this time there was a steep increase in repressive tactics and radicalization of the revolution. The government began to quickly take control of private schools and temporarily close public schools (de los Angeles Torres, 2003), while also expelling clergy from the country and nationalizing all industries (Pedraza-Bailey, 1985).

The third time period began when the U.S. Government completely closed immigration from Cuba in October 1962 due to the missile crisis and ended in 1965 when Castro declared that Miami relatives could pick up their family members from the Cuban port of Camarioca (de los Angeles Torres, 2003). With little notice Castro closed down the port on November 3, 1965,

which stranded thousands of Cuban exiles. Within these two months of maritime escape nearly 5,000 Cubans came to the U.S. (Pedraza-Bailey, 1985).

By December 1, 1965 Cuba and the U.S. came to an agreement that led to the “Freedom Flights” arrangement that lasted from December 1965 to early 1973. This arrangement consisted of two flights a day from Varadero Beach in Cuba to Miami, Florida (Pedraza-Bailey, 1985). The “Freedom Flights” transported over 265,000 Cubans, and the wait time was between one to two years (Pedraza-Bailey, 1985). Priority was given to those who had family in the U.S., including parents of unaccompanied Cuban children already in the U.S. (Walsh, 1971). This migration time period was when “...the exodus of the upper and upper-middle classes largely came to an end” (Pedraza-Bailey, 1985, p. 16).

Operation Pedro Pan Children

As previously discussed, children and adolescents who participated in Operation Pedro Pan were mostly from middle- to upper-middle class families and were typically of Spanish ancestry (Allahar, 1994). The majority of the Operation Pedro Pan children were Catholic; however, there were also some Jewish children, about 391 in total (Conde, 1999, Walsh, 1971). More than half of the children were between the ages of thirteen and seventeen, with over two-thirds of them being boys. Most arrived with little more than a name tag and note pinned to their jacket saying that they needed help (Garcia, 1996). Most of them did not speak English and had never been to the U.S. (Conde, 1999).

Operation Pedro Pan children who have been interviewed as adults have stated that they were aware that something was going on in regard to the escalation of violence and expedited change in national policies, but thought that it would be a short-lived experience. Some of them have reported being excited because they were going to the U.S. for the first time, while others

were scared to leave their parents (Goyos, 1996; Rodrigues-Nogues, 1983). This reaction was most likely dependent on their age at the time of departure. Common explanations for the exodus from their parents included: it would be a good opportunity for them to visit the U.S., they could learn English, they could continue their formal education, and that their parents feared that their children would be drafted into the Cuban armed services and be forced to go to another country (Goyos, 1996).

How Operation Pedro Pan Worked

A key player in initially getting Cuban children off of the island was Mr. James Baker. He was headmaster of the Ruston Academy, an American school in Havana. Students at this academy were typically U.S. residents and upper-class Cuban families (Walsh, 1971). Mr. Baker was well acquainted with former U.S. businessmen who fled Cuba and became aware of the growing situation with unaccompanied minors ending up in Miami (Walsh, 1971).

A plan was devised that involved the American Embassy in Havana granting 200 student visas. Mr. Baker of the Ruston Academy would provide proof that the students were actually enrolled and therefore legitimately qualified for this visa (Walsh, 1971; de los Angeles Torres, 2003). However, the visas could not be processed because of the turbulent relations between the U.S. and Cuba (de los Angeles Torres, 2003). In turn, the U.S. Government made an “unprecedented move” by granting Monsignor Bryan Walsh the permission to waive the visas for these children so that they could take commercial flights to Miami (de los Angeles Torres, 2003, p. 20; Walsh, 1971). However, there was still the difficult task of smuggling the blank visa waivers into Havana.

Visa waivers were smuggled into Havana by anti-Castro members of the resistance, five to six hundred per trip, to underground workers who would act as couriers. The couriers would

deliver the visa waivers to mainly British and Dutch embassies (Garcia, 1996). One man, Ramon Grau Alsina, was particularly critical to this process, as he would fill out the visa waivers with the children's names. The Catholic Church sent him the money to purchase the airline tickets. The participating airlines would then reserve a number of seats on each flight with fake names and put Operation Pedro Pan children in those seats (Garcia, 1996). The airline workers provided the Cuban Interior Ministry with the names of all passengers. Before the flights Ramon Grau Alsina would provide the airline with children's names, and the airline would let the ministry know that there had been some last minute cancellations and that the cancelled seats had been filled. The airlines purposefully switched the number of children that could fly on any given flight to prevent arousing suspicion. Typically a flight carried between three to five children (Garcia, 1996).

The flights flew out of Jose Marti airport, and before getting on the flight the children had to be interviewed by Cuban authorities as to why they were going to the U.S. Children were not allowed to bring anything valuable and only a few personal belongings so as not to raise suspicion. Children typically travelled alone or with a sibling (Conde, 1999). They then waited alone in the notorious *la pecera* (fishbowl), a glass encased room where they could see their family members close by while they waited to be boarded (Rodriguez-Nogues, 1983; Conde, 1999). While waiting in *la pecera* the children and their family members, who were most often their parents, could see each other but could not speak to one another. Operation Pedro Pan adults have remembered this experience as a particularly traumatic event (Conde, 1999; Rodriguez-Nogues, 1983).

The Catholic Welfare Bureau agreed to take on the role of providing foster care to unaccompanied children who did not have friends or relatives to take them in when they arrived

in Miami. This was true for about half of the children (Oettinger, 1962). At this time point Operation Pedro Pan program ended for a child and they began receiving foster care services from the Cuban Children's Program. Once they arrived at the airport they were picked up by a volunteer and driven to a temporary foster care location until a longer-range arrangement could be made (Oettinger, 1962; Walsh, 1971).

Operation Pedro Pan Children Living as Refugees

At the time that Operation Pedro Pan services were being developed, the Cuban refugee child was defined as "...a child in the Miami area at the time service is initiated, whose parent or relative cannot provide care and supervision for him, (sic) who is in need of foster care and who meets the definition of refugee as defined by the Federal Government" (Rodriguez-Nogues, 1983). The typical experience of an Operation Pedro Pan child who was not picked up immediately by a relative or family friend at the Miami airport, included being picked up by a man named George volunteering for the program who would then drive them to one of the several 'camps' or group homes set up to temporarily house and feed the children who arrived (Echazábal Pi & Amézaga Wolf, 2015). Children stayed at these temporary housing locations from a few days upwards to a few years; the experiences reported have been highly variable (Conde, 1999; Goyos, 1996;).

The main camps were considered to be 'transient shelters' and included Kendall Camp, Camp Matecumbe, Florida City Camp, and Camp Opa-Locka. Although they were transient, there was a significant number of adolescent boys who lived in these camps for several years. Each of the camps were previously built structures that the Catholic Welfare Bureau leased from either Miami Dade County or the building's landlord, or were on land that was owned by the Diocese of Miami (Echazábal Pi & Amézaga Wolf, 2015). Each camp had different resident

requirements (i.e., age range, gender); therefore, there were many siblings who were separated because boys and girls were separated and/or because one camp only housed boys until the age of 12. These camps also had different opening dates as the overall large scale effort to house thousands of incoming Cuban children was developed very quickly, so it was a patchwork job rather than everything being preplanned to be ready and waiting for the children's arrival. This was inevitable as the Operation Pedro Pan program was also put together rather quickly so there was little forewarning for the Cuban Children's Program staff and volunteers in Miami (Echazábal Pi & Amézaga Wolf, 2015).

Kendall Camp (also called Kendall Children's Home) opened in January 1961 and was a facility that consisted of sixty beds and three separate buildings: a girl's cottage, a boy's cottage (with a kitchen and dining room), and a four-classroom building surrounded by a large recreation area. The girls and boys residing here eventually were moved to the Florida City Camp, while the boys who were between the ages of 13 and 15 stayed at Camp Kendall and the older boys aged 16 to 18 were moved to Camp Matecumbe. *Florida City Camp* opened in October 1961 and was comprised of 80 apartments for 700 children, which housed girls up to age 18 and boys who were under the age of twelve (Echazábal Pi & Amézaga Wolf, 2015). *Camp Matecumbe* opened in August 1961 and had facilities that could house sixty boys, however because of the rapid influx of children and adolescents, tents were used as a temporary fix. At its peak, there were 400 boys being provided shelter at Camp Matecumbe. *Camp Opa-Locka* was made up of six barrack buildings, which included two for sleeping, one mess hall, an administrative building, one chapel, one clergy quarters, and one laundry building. Camp Opa-Locka did not open until January 1963 so that it could take in boys from Kendall Camp and later boys from Camp Matecumbe. Eventually all of the other camps and group homes closed so any remaining boys or

male adolescents moved to Camp Opa-Locka. While living at Opa Locka the boys attended several of the local high schools. Opa Locka closed in June 1966 (Echazábal Pi & Amézaga Wolf, 2015).

There were several group homes with St. Raphael's Hall and the Jesuit Boys Residence serving as permanent shelters (Echazábal Pi & Amézaga Wolf, 2015). Both of the group homes served teenage boys and were located closer to the downtown area of Miami, whereas the camps were located in the south/southwest part of Miami. The Jesuit boys Residence served up to 40 teenage boys at its peak, while St. Raphael's Hall served 70 teenage boys. St. Raphael's Hall was closed in September 1961 and the remaining boys were sent to Camp Opa Locka (Echazábal Pi & Amézaga Wolf, 2015).

Historical Events of Unaccompanied Minors, Humanitarian Assistance, and Resettlement

Operation Pedro Pan is one among several organized, intentional efforts to send large groups of unaccompanied minors to another country during times of armed conflict to ensure their safety and physical wellbeing. However the state of the children's psychological wellbeing after having been separated from their parents was something that was not clearly planned for or attended to. Several large, organized humanitarian efforts have also been organized in response to the sudden movement of unaccompanied immigrant minors. The following discussion covers historical examples of organized exoduses of unaccompanied children and humanitarian response during the twentieth century. These historical examples will serve as a comparison to Operation Pedro Pan migration to help put this historical event in context to similar events and the stressors that families contended with in regard to making sure their children were safe from armed conflict.

Spanish Civil War – Basque Children

The Spanish Civil War began in July of 1936 and ended in 1939. General Francisco Franco led Spanish troops against the elected Republican government. The Republican government was made up of multiple parties, mainly anarchists and socialists, whereas the rebels were defined by conservative values that involved defending a traditional feudal system and fighting for an authoritarian regime (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988). Spain was quickly fractured and divided in provinces all the way down to families, supporting either the rebels or the Republican government. There was outside support for the rebels from Morocco, Hitler in Germany, and Mussolini in Italy. The Spanish Civil War has been referred to as the “dress rehearsal” for World War II and was the first time in history that airplanes were used for massive bombardment (Legarreta, 1984; Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988). It was an intensely violent and brutal war that saw nearly one million people killed.

By the end of 1937 more than one million people had fled this war as refugees, and by 1939 nearly 100,000 children were estimated to be living in “pre-starvation” conditions (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988, p. 14). The chaos of the Spanish Civil War split up families for many reasons, including the fact that many women and men were widowed by the war, individuals became single parents and did not have support from family or their community, multiple internal displacements occurred due to the lack of food in non-agricultural regions, children were placed in special needs programs due to family circumstance, among other reasons (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988). Seven countries helped to take in the 20,000 Basque children, mostly aged from two to fourteen years old, who were quickly evacuated out of Spain. France accepted nearly 15,000 children, and about 6,000 of these children were eventually sent to Belgium, the USSR or Switzerland after a period of quarantine. Great Britain took in 4,000

and the USSR about 2,500, while Denmark and Mexico also took in a small number of children (Legarreta, 1987). Efforts to bring children to the U.S. were blocked internally within the U.S. (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988). With exception to Mexico and the USSR, foster homes and funds for services were provided by private trade unions, political parties, and Catholic sources (Legarreta, 1987).

Many parents, families, and evacuation organizers believed that the separation from their children would be brief. In reality only a small portion returned within a few months, with the majority staying in another country for two years or more. Mexico and the USSR refused to acknowledge the Franco government, so the children who ended up in these two countries were barred from returning for 15 years (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988). Many of the children were away long enough that they were able to establish new lives in their host country and did not return to Spain. There were also the children whose parents died in the war after they were separated from them, so they never saw them again (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988).

World War II - Kindertransport

The Kindertransport (German for “Children’s Transport”) refers to the efforts made to relocate European Jewish children to Great Britain from 1938-1940 (Fast, 2011). This event was brought on by Kristallnacht, a violent pogrom against Jewish businesses, synagogues, and homes in Germany that lasted for two days in November 1938. After this happened the United Kingdom reduced immigration restrictions, which then allowed children, under the age of 17, to enter Great Britain via Germany, Austria, and the Czech regions. The children were allowed in on temporary travel visas and were expected to return after the crisis was over. Their parents were not allowed to come with them. Children whose parents were already in concentration camps or were orphaned were prioritized for the Kindertransport (Fast, 2011; United States Holocaust

Memorial Museum, n.d.). The last transport came from the Netherlands and happened the same day that the Dutch army surrendered to Germany on May 14, 1940. Kindertransport children were sent to live with foster families, in summer camps, in hostels, and/or farms in Great Britain. In total, between 9,000 and 10,000 children took part in the Kindertransport and about 7,500 of them were Jewish. Most of the children never saw their parents again (Fast, 2011; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d.).

Hungarian Revolution of October 1956

The Hungarian Revolution began as a student protest on October 23, 1956 that developed into a nationwide revolt against the Hungarian People's Republic and its Soviet policies. At the time Hungary was a part of the Eastern Bloc, under the influence of the USSR's Communist system. The revolt led to a downfall of the government and militias formed to fight Soviet troops and State Security Police. A new government formed and for a short time there was some peace. Soviet forces began to negotiate their withdrawal from Hungary but then quickly moved in to demolish the revolution. This quick turn of events led to the end of the revolution on November 10, 1956 (Coriden, 1996; Niesen, 2016).

Between October 23, 1956 and February 1957 (when the borders to the West were closed), more than 190,000 Hungarians escaped to Austria, and at least 17,000 went to Yugoslavia (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988). About 6,000 of the total Hungarian refugees were unaccompanied minors who were mostly between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. Reception camps were set up by the Austrian Government while the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United States Escapee Program provided the largest programs. Many of the services provided directly to refugees were delivered by national and

international voluntary agencies that had been established in the aftermath of World War II (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988).

In early November of 1956 the U.S. Government decided that Camp Kilmer, New Jersey would be the processing center for the expected influx of Hungarian refugees. President Eisenhower appointed a civilian Committee for Hungarian Refugee Relief. The committee helped to transport refugees to the camp, and provided processing and resettlement services. By May of 1957 all of the admitted 32,000 refugees were relocated to various parts of the United States. This efficiency of resettlement is mostly credited to the willingness of the U.S. government to aid the anti-Communist movement and to the anti-Communist sympathies of the American people (Coriden, 1996; Niese, 2016).

Of the 32,000 refugees admitted into the U.S. about 1,000 were unaccompanied minors. However because most of the unaccompanied minors arrived in the first influx of refugees, there were very few services for them. Most ended up in some form of foster care, with only one partnering agency that made a policy to inquire about the quality of the care that would be delivered in placements (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988). In response to complaints and requests from Hungarian refugee family members in the U.S., a special program was set up under the Immigration and Naturalization Service that "...was as rigid as the former program had been lax" (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988, p. 50). The intention was to set up a program that had strict standards for entry into the U.S. and legally required home studies of every potential sponsor. Due to the stringent requirements, this program only allowed 136 children into the U.S. between June and December of 1957 (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988).

Vietnam War - Operation Babylift

Still another program for resettlement of unaccompanied minors occurred in the wake of the Vietnam War. This war started in 1955 and ended on April 30, 1975 with the fall of Saigon (now known as Ho Chi Minh City) to the North Vietnamese army. In the beginning of 1975 it was becoming evident that Saigon would be taken soon by this army, and South Vietnamese refugees flocked to the capitol to try and get out through the U.S. Embassy. Most wanted to leave because they were either associated with or supported the U.S. Government and did not want to face retributions from the North Vietnamese, and/or because they did not want to live in a Communist state (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988). Many unaccompanied, orphaned children arrived in this influx, and other children were dropped off at the U.S. embassy by family members (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988). The immediate response from the U.S. Government was to evacuate the children to the U.S. so they could be adopted, in a program named Operation Babylift.

The South Vietnamese prime minister quickly gave approval, and the first authorized lift occurred on April 4, 1975, in a military transport plane, which had 220 children on board. Sadly this trip ended in the death of 78 children and many of the adult escorts. Shortly after takeoff one of the doors blew off, and while trying to return to the Saigon airport, the plane crashed in a rice paddy (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988). However this did not stop the overall mission of Operation Babylift, as many of the surviving children were shipped out again the next day on another flight. In total 2,547 “orphaned”² children were evacuated out of Vietnam through this operation. About 100 children were sent to England, and 250 children went to Australia (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988). Of all the children evacuated during the final months of the

² Lawsuits were brought up in 1975 contesting the veracity of the orphan status of many of the children brought to the U.S.

Vietnam War, 91 percent were under the age of eight and 51 percent were under the age of two (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988).

The U.S. agencies involved to make Operation Babylift work were the Department of State, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and the U.S. Agency for International Development. Approximately \$2.6 million was allotted for this operation. There was massive public support in the U.S. upon the public arrival of these orphans. The adoption agencies flew the children to their destination once the children were processed in the reception centers. Children ended up in 46 states and the District of Columbia (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988).

Although the children were warmly welcomed and supported in the U.S., there were several major critics of the operation. The International Committee of the Red Cross declared that these foreign adoptions violated one of the Geneva Conventions, which states that war orphans are to be educated in their own culture, whenever possible. The Vatican's relief organization stated that the airlift was "...a deplorable and unjustified mistake" (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988, p. 73). The International Union of Child Welfare described the airlift as "...an error of judgment to be avoided" (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988, p. 73). The strongest criticisms stem from the discovery by volunteers at the U.S. reception centers that some of the children were not orphans and that much of the documentation was incomplete or missing. At least one federal class action lawsuit and several custody disputes resulted from this evacuation of children (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988).

Operation Pedro Pan and Unaccompanied Minors Throughout History

Operation Pedro Pan shared several similarities with the reviewed historical examples of unaccompanied minors and humanitarian assistance including: the tough choice of deciding to

send a child away to spare them from experiencing and/or witnessing further violence or indoctrination, sending a child away with the main intention of saving their current and future wellbeing, and the need to make a decision with few resources and parental sacrifice. However Operation Pedro Pan is different from these historical case studies in that most of the minors sent out of Cuba were from well off parents, the political change happened very quickly in Cuba after the revolution so there was less time between the onset of instability and when Pedro Pan children left, and the destination for Pedro Pan children was close by although in a different country. The most important difference is likely that of the level of preparation and U.S. government support that went into the refugee camps and resettlement process, even though there was little time to set up the process of finding organizations in Miami to accept these children and to implement this program. These differences are important to consider, because it is likely the main reason why over 14,000 children were able to covertly get out of Cuba in less than three years and that the program was generally a success.

Refugees in a Socio-Historical Context

In order to understand Operation Pedro Pan it is necessary to examine the idea of refugees and how the term has evolved. The term 'refugee' originated from the French word *réfugié* (i.e., gone in search of refuge), which stems back to when the Huguenot diaspora, mostly French Protestants, fled France after the revocation of the Treaty of Nantes in 1685 (Candlin, 2009). However, the use of the term refugee did not broaden as a definition to include other groups of fleeing populations until the early nineteenth century where it was used to refer to "a series of regional crises" (Candlin, 2009, p. 521). During the early twentieth century, the term refugee came into widespread use due to catastrophic events such as World War I and the Armenian Genocide, both events having displaced millions of people. However it was not until

after the Second World War, when the largest movement of people across Europe in world history occurred, that any significant international agreements or guidelines were developed concerning refugees (United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees, 2000). In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guaranteed the, "...right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution" (United Nations, n.d.). The United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) was created in 1950, which led to the Geneva Convention of Refugees in 1951, which formally defined refugees, granted them specific rights, and prohibited their forcible return from countries of refuge (UNHCR, 2000). Additionally, it was not until the Refugee Act of 1980 that refugees were considered 'categorically distinct' from immigrants (Park, 2008, p. 772). At this time the U.S. federal Office of Refugee Resettlement was founded but at the time the U.S. Government did not have a permanent federal mandate for providing refugee services (Park, 2008).

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century and into current times, refugee status has carried significant political weight and meaning that can vary by region and country, thus affecting the physical, mental, and general wellbeing outcomes of refugees. Park (2008, p. 772) summarizes this dynamic thusly:

Refugee identity is not an inherent characteristic, but a status granted by international and national legal codes and shaped by domestic social policies and practices. As such, it is deeply consequential – an identification that invokes a critical set of material practices, from international protection to domestic social services.

This means that the negative or positive regional attitudes toward refugees will invariably have an effect on the incoming refugees. It is important to note that these attitudes can change over time. For instance, at the time of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 the U.S. Government was highly concerned with the threat of Communism taking hold in Cuba, an island country just over 100 miles away from U.S. coastline (Operation Mongoose, 2010). At this time there was no U.S.

Embassy in Cuba, so the U.S. State Department partnered with Catholic Charities to help get visa waivers to Cuban families living in Cuba (Mandri, 2008; Oettinger, 1962). This attitude of acceptance toward Cuban refugees ensured the safe escape of over 14,000 Cuban children in less than two years (Walsh, 1971). In comparison, the current attitude toward Cuban refugees coming to the U.S. is much different, as the “Wet-Foot, Dry-Foot” policy was ended in December of 2016 by the Obama Administration. This reversed the previous policy’s allowance of Cuban refugees who stepped foot on U.S. land to enter and stay in the U.S. without visas (Gonzales, 2017).

Contemporary Perspectives on Large Scale Migration of Refugees and Unaccompanied Minors

In addition to understanding the history of the refugee, it is also crucial to examine the definitions and effects of armed conflict. The Cuban children who participated in Operation Pedro Pan were sent away because of parents’ fear of communist indoctrination but also because male adolescents were being recruited in a ‘youth army’, and there was an increase in violence in communities instigated by the new government and the underground groups trying to fight Castro’s takeover. These conditions led to the mass exodus of Cuban children, which led them to becoming child refugees in the U.S.

An armed conflict is defined as either 1) an international armed conflict, opposing two or more States, and 2) a non-international armed conflict between government forces and non-governmental armed groups; or only between non-governmental groups (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2008). As of 2014 there were 40 ongoing-armed conflicts in the world, with an increase of 34 to 40 conflicts in just one year (Gates, Nygard, Strand, & Urdal, 2016). Although the number of conflicts is fewer than in the early 1990s or during the Cold War, the severity of the violence associated with armed conflict has escalated (Gates et al., 2016).

Many of the areas experiencing an armed conflict endure cycles of recurring violence, weak governance, and instability. Additionally, 90 percent of the civil wars from the years 2000 to 2010 had followed a previous civil war within 30 years (The World Bank, 2011). It is clear that where there is armed conflict and political instability there is a history of violence and uncertainty that cannot be easily mediated or resolved. These ongoing conflicts have caused millions of civilians to flee to another region or country in hopes of finding a safe place to live.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) current definition of a refugee is “...someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular group” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2018). By the end of 2014, nearly 60 million people worldwide had been displaced³ because of an armed conflict. This is the highest number of forced displacements since World War II (Marc, 2016). The number of displaced persons increased to over 65 million by the end of 2015 (UNHCR, n.d.). The ongoing wars in Syria, Afghanistan, and Somalia have contributed to 53% of refugees worldwide (UNHCR, n.d.). One of the starkest statistics is that over half of the 21.3 million refugees are under the age of 18 (UNHCR, n.d.).

Recent estimates show that more than one in ten children are living in a country or region that is affected by armed conflict. Furthermore, there are approximately 60 million children worldwide at-risk for being affected by an armed conflict (United Nations Children’s Fund USA, 2015). Throughout history there have been children separated from their families in every war and armed conflict (Eide & Hjern, 2013). In 2015, there were almost 90,000 unaccompanied immigrant minors seeking asylum in the European Union (Eurostat, 2016), making up between 20 to 30 percent of the total amount of asylum seekers in Europe (Eide & Hjern, 2013).

³ This includes refugees and internally displaced persons (IDP).

Unaccompanied immigrant minors that go to the European Union (EU) are most commonly trying to escape wars and armed conflict, poverty, natural catastrophes, discrimination, and persecution. They may also be trying to reunite with family members who had left before them. Seeking a better life for economic reasons is also often a reason for going to the EU (EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2010). Unaccompanied immigrant minors in the EU seeking asylum mostly come from Afghanistan, Syria, and Somalia, while other countries include Eritrea, Morocco, Albania, Russia, Pakistan, and Algeria. Sweden leads with the most accepted asylum seeking applications from unaccompanied immigrant minors closely followed by Germany (EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2010). This fact is particularly exceptional considering that Sweden is a country of about 10 million people while Germany’s population is over 80 million people (Official Site of Sweden, 2017; The World Factbook, n.d.).

Classification Types for Unaccompanied Minors

There are several definitions of ‘unaccompanied minor’ depending on the organization or government that is defining it. The following chart clearly lays out definitions from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the European Union, and the U.S. Government.

<i>Table 1 Unaccompanied Minor Terminology</i>		
<i>Organization</i>	<i>Terminology</i>	<i>Definition</i>
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Unaccompanied immigrant minors	“A person who is under the age of eighteen...who is separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so” (UNHCR, 1997)
European Union	Unaccompanied minors	“A non-EU national or stateless person below the age of 18 who arrives on the territory of the EU states unaccompanied by an adult responsible for him/her, and for as long as s/he is not effectively taken into the care of such a person, including a minor who is left unaccompanied after s/he has entered the territory of the EU

		States” (EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2010)
United Kingdom	Unaccompanied migrant children	“Unaccompanied migrant children are those who arrive in the United Kingdom separated from their parents and other relatives, and who are not being cared for by an adult with a legal or customary responsibility for doing so” (Joint Committee on Human Rights, 2013)
U.S. Government	Unaccompanied alien children	“Children who lack lawful immigration status in the U.S., are under the age of 18, and are without a parent or legal guardian in the U.S. or no parent or legal guardian in the U.S. is available to provide care and physical custody” (Ciaccia & John, 2016).

Unaccompanied Immigrant Minors Immigrating to the U.S.

The number of unaccompanied immigrant minors in the U.S., referred to as unaccompanied alien children (UAC) by the U.S. Government, nearly tripled in 2014 with most of the children trying to escape violence in Central America. Although these minors are not seeking to escape from an armed conflict, they are running away from threats of extreme violence, including sexual violence, stemming from gangs and drug cartels (Ciaccia & John, 2016).

Unaccompanied immigrant minors who cross the U.S.-Mexico border are coming from Central America’s Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. In 2011 there were approximately 3,933 unaccompanied immigrant minors from these three countries who crossed over into the U.S. from Mexico. In 2014 the number rose to nearly 50,000 unaccompanied immigrant minors (Ciaccia & John, 2016). Of the unaccompanied immigrant minors from this region who were interviewed (n=151), 77% stated that violence was the main reason why they chose to leave. This is not surprising considering that Central America as a

region has one of the highest homicide rates in the world, where males between the ages of 15 to 29 have a homicide rate that is four times that of the global rate (Ciaccia & John, 2016). The unaccompanied immigrant minors interviewed stated that if they had the chance they would make the journey again to the U.S. This is significant because the route to crossing the U.S.-Mexico border often involves dangerous train rides, being arrested and detained in Mexico, and experiencing violence and abuse from drug cartels that deal in human smuggling (Ciaccia & John, 2016).

According to Roth and Grace (2015) there is very little data on how unaccompanied immigrant minors integrate into communities once they enter the U.S. As previously mentioned, the number of unaccompanied minors crossing over the U.S.-Mexico border has significantly increased in recent years. In total there were 24,000 unaccompanied immigrant minors apprehended in the U.S. By 2014 67,000 had been apprehended (Roth & Grace, 2015). Approximately 85% of these minors were referred by the Department of Homeland Security to the Office of Refugee Resettlement (Roth & Grace, 2015). In accordance with the 2008 Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act, these minors were placed in a 'least restrictive environment' (e.g., in a foster home) while their cases were being processed. Post Release Services are provided for minors who need additional support services. As of 2015, these minors also faced the threat of deportation if they turn 18 and do not yet have legal status (Roth & Grace, 2015).

However, the typical process for unaccompanied immigrant minors coming into the U.S. has been sternly challenged by the new Trump administration. A memorandum issued on January 25, 2017 by Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly, provides guidance on immigration enforcement specifically regarding the U.S. Southwest border. In summary, the

memorandum states that if an unaccompanied immigrant minor is released to a parent in the U.S., the child will be stripped of their right to access social services and adjudication of asylum claims by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, rather than going through court proceedings. Additionally, the memorandum calls for the criminal prosecution and deportation of parents who have paid smugglers to bring their children to the U.S. (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2017). However, the latter provision goes against international refugee law that “prohibits penalizing asylum seekers for improper entry into a country” (Human Rights Watch, 2017). The future of how well the U.S. Government handles unaccompanied immigrant minors’ human rights appears to be threatened but also uncertain.

Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program

The Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URM) program is funded by the U.S. Government and partners with two lead voluntary agencies, Lutheran Immigration Refugee Services and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Office of Refugee Resettlement, an office in the Administration for Children & Families, states that the URM program began in the 1980s. However it is important to note that the event that sparked the initiation of foster care services to unaccompanied minors in the U.S. was Operation Pedro Pan. From 1962 to 1965 the Catholic Welfare Bureau provided services to unaccompanied Cuban minors (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2013).

The URM program establishes a legal authority for eligible children in order to provide services throughout the U.S. The program “...helps refugee minors develop the appropriate skills to enter adulthood and achieve social self-sufficiency” (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2015). Most of the children who have received services were initially considered to be “unaccompanied alien children” who were then eventually given refugee status. In total, the program has served

almost 13,000 minors since the 1980s and as of 2015 was serving about 1,300 children (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2015). However, the future status of this program under the new administration is yet to be determined.

Relevance of Unaccompanied Minors Throughout History

Operation Pedro Pan shares common attributes with these other historical and current episodes of unaccompanied minors being sent to another country to protect them from the effects of armed conflict. First, they involve an escalation of violence in a politically and/or ideologically charged environment. All of the highlighted historical events were prompted by a change in government and forced parents and families to make difficult decisions regarding their children's safety. Parents were stuck between deciding to keep their children with them but also living in a region of armed conflict, or sending their children away unaccompanied to another location where there was stability and no violence but also no family support. Additionally, it was uncertain how long the separation would be and in most events this separation was at least several years long. The parents of Pedro Pan children faced similar difficult decisions with analogous environmental factors – a politically charged environment, an increase in violence and restrictions on individual rights, and feeling uncertain about the future wellbeing of their family in their home country.

Questions Raised by the History of Unaccompanied Minor Migration

The history and current policy on migration and asylum seeking of unaccompanied minors, including Operation Pedro Pan, provoke a number of questions and concerns regarding the wellbeing of unaccompanied minors. For instance, what are the best practices for ensuring children living in areas of armed conflict are safe, most especially if they must be separated from their family? There are also concerns about the effects of separation from family on a refugee

child, short- and long-term. Lastly, what are the effects on the refugee family after being reunited after a period of separation?

Operation Pedro Pan was a unique event in that Pedro Pan children did not typically have a long period of waiting to leave and the flight was just over one hour, so they experienced an immediate transition to another country with a vastly different culture than Cuba. Unlike children in the Kindertransport, the Spanish Civil War, or Operation Babylift, Pedro Pan children typically did not experience much violence before their migration, and most of them came from middle to upper middle class families. These unique attributes raise additional questions about how these background factors may have made the Pedro Pan child's experience with unaccompanied migration different from that of other unaccompanied refugee children and unaccompanied minors from Central America to the U.S. Operation Pedro Pan is a peculiar historical event that, due to its timing and the fact that thousands of participants in this program are still living, provides a unique opportunity to investigate the implications of unaccompanied child migration on families over the life course.

The waves of unaccompanied minors that migrated to another country throughout the twentieth century, including the most recent surges from the Middle East and Central America, have induced national governments and organizations concerned with the human rights of child refugees to more clearly define who is an unaccompanied minor. These migrations have also prompted a great deal of research on these vulnerable populations, including risk and protective factors for refugee child mental health and effects of migration on the refugee family. The following chapter will more fully review this literature and its relationship to Operation Pedro Pan.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter includes a review of the literature on refugee children and unaccompanied immigrant minors. Literature related to the mental health of refugee children and unaccompanied immigrant minors, and research on the impact of migration on refugee families will be discussed. Finally a discussion is provided on why this research is relevant to this study.

A second focus of chapter two is to provide a review of published works related to Operation Pedro Pan. It is a monumental but also not very well-known historical event, so a review of this work is provided to give context on what has been published and by whom. All works published on Operation Pedro Pan have been authored by Pedro Pan children (as adults) or at minimum by individuals who were closely related to Pedro Pan children. The first section focuses on notable publications on Operation Pedro Pan including political science analyses, historical manuscripts, autobiographical works, and artistic performance pieces. The focus of this research was on the perceived experience of Pedro Pan children, so the inclusion of the published works on other Pedro Pan children's perceived experiences provides valuable insight. Finally, a review is provided of the known empirical research that has investigated the experience of Operation Pedro Pan. This is followed by a discussion on how this research will build on this work and further explore the lived experiences of Operation Pedro Pan children over the life course.

The final section of Chapter Two provides the main research questions of this study and the theoretical framework that includes Life Course Theory and Family Resilience Theory. The theoretical framework helps to explain the phenomenon(s) studied in this research.

Refugee Children, Unaccompanied Immigrant Minors, and Immigrant Youth

Immigration has been found to be a social determinant of health with potential short- and long-term effects on an individual's physical and mental health, and economic wellbeing (Castaneda et al., 2015). This is because immigration exposes and/or further bolsters an individual's vulnerability to health disparities that arise from the cause and process of immigrating, including having traumatic experiences, lack of access to health and social services, economic inequality, not speaking the local language, being unacculturated to their new surroundings, and more (Castaneda et al., 2015; Zambrana & Carter-Pokras, 2010). The health disparities can be even more prominent among refugee populations and the most vulnerable members of these populations, including unaccompanied minors (de Bocanegra et al., 2018). The following discussion further explores this literature.

Mental Health of Unaccompanied Immigrant Minors and Resettlement

During the initial years of resettlement, research has consistently found that unaccompanied refugee minors have high rates of mental health issues in comparison to the general population, including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder most especially when having experienced multiple adverse events such as exposure to violence (Bean, Derluyn, Eurelings-Bontekoe, Broekart, & Spinhoven, 2007; Fazel, Reed, Panter-Brick, & Stein, 2012; Eide & Hjern, 2013). They also have a higher risk of developing chronic emotional problems and maladaptive behaviors due to the constant stress of adapting to a new country and having experienced trauma (Bean et al., 2007). Little research has focused on young children who have been separated from their parents (Huemer et al., 2009). What has been found is that psychological distress symptoms and disorders are more likely to be severe for unaccompanied refugee minors under the age of 15 than for those over this age (Sourander, 1998; Spinhoven,

Bean, Eurelings-Bontekoe, 2006). There have been several large epidemiological studies done on unaccompanied adolescent refugees living in Europe (Eide & Hjern, 2013).

Derluyn, Mels, and Broekaert (2009) compared adolescent refugee minors who had resettled in Belgium, and found that the unaccompanied minors reported significantly more depressive symptoms than refugee minors who arrived with at least one parent. Risk factors associated with serious mental health problems included separation from parents, a high number of experienced traumatic events, and gender (females being more at-risk) (Derluyn, Mels, & Broekaert, 2009). Similar results were found in a study that compared newly arrived unaccompanied adolescent refugees (n=920) with adolescent refugees who arrived with at least one parent and an age-matched Dutch group (Bean et al., 2007). The unaccompanied group reported higher levels of depressive symptoms and more experiences of trauma (Bean et al., 2007) and one-year follow up interviews showed that there was no change in depressive symptoms for the unaccompanied group (Bean et al., 2007). Huemer et al. (2009) conducted a systematic review of literature on unaccompanied refugee minors and mental health and found that the existing research “only permits limited conclusions on this very hard to reach population...future research should include the analysis of long-term outcomes, stress management and a more thorough analysis of the whole range of psychopathology”. The spectrum of research on unaccompanied immigrant minors includes few studies focused on young unaccompanied children and lacks a focus on long-term outcomes, most particularly in relation to reuniting with family.

Risk and Protective Factors after Resettlement in High-Income Countries

Although 86% of the world's refugees have been hosted by developing regions (UNHCR, 2015), the focus of the research is on unaccompanied refugee minors who had resettled in the

U.S., a high-income country. Risk factors and protective factors for mental health outcomes in child and adolescent refugees who have resettled in a high-income country have been studied in multiple contexts and combinations of influencing factors (i.e., age at resettlement, educational attainment of father, etc.). Although there are some variations in demographics such as age and gender, there has been some consensus on what is likely to help or harm a refugee child.

Generally agreed upon risk factors for poor mental health include circumstances such as exposure to violence, being female, witnessing a family member's experience with violence (e.g., witnessing a parent being tortured), having relatives that are imprisoned, not speaking the local language in the host country, a refugee child's parent(s) having a hard time with assimilation, and arriving in the host country as an unaccompanied minor (Fazel et al., 2012).

Bean et al. (2007) discuss how there is no way of "truly determining" where psychological distress originates because of how many stressful events are involved in resettling, including: pre-departure difficulties, departure (flight) stress, transitioning stress (e.g., waiting for asylum status), post arrival stress (e.g. adaptation and assimilation to a new culture), and the accumulative effect of all these stressors (p. 289).

Protective factors for poor mental health in the refugee child population include circumstances such as positive maternal mental health, some instances of closed family communication (e.g., not telling a child about an adverse event during times of crisis), open family communication (e.g., speaking often with a mother), fewer changes in family structure, living with both parents, having peers to play with, living with people of the same ethnicity (whether they are family or foster care), receiving visitors at home, rapid resolution of asylum status, a feeling of safety and privacy, and having stable settlement and social support in the host country (Fazel et al., 2012). Additionally, Pieloch, McCullough, and Marks (2016) conducted a

review of the past 20 years of resilience research and found that common protective factors for this population included social support from friends and community, having a sense of belonging, valuing education, having a positive outlook, family connectedness, and having connections to one's home culture. Although there has been a great deal of research on refugee children and mental health, Fazel et al. (2012) note that "Further research is needed to identify the relevant processes, contexts, and interplay between the many predictor variables...identified as affecting mental health vulnerability" (p. 266).

Acculturation Style and Immigrant Youth

Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vedder's (2006) research focused on immigrant youth and how the acculturation style they adopted affected their acculturation outcomes. They identified four acculturation styles that include *assimilation* (full acceptance of host culture), *integration* (participates in ethnic and host culture), *marginalization* (only participates in ethnic culture), and *separation* (does not participate in either culture). Their study found that the immigrant youth who participated in both their ethnic culture as well as the host's culture (i.e., integration) fared best in psychological wellbeing outcomes and school adjustment. These youth also reported the least amount of experienced discrimination. Immigrant youth who did not participate in either culture (i.e., separation) were found to be the least well adjusted (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006).

Berry and Sabatier (2009) further looked at the effects of acculturation styles on immigrant youth while also taking into account the potential effects of immigration policy by looking at youth in Montreal, Canada and Paris, France. The findings were congruent with the previous research in that immigrant youth who participated in both cultures reported higher self-esteem scores than those who did not participate in either culture. This finding was stronger in

Canada than in France, which Berry and Sabatier discussed as likely being a reflection of societal differences in experiences of immigrant discrimination and national policies, specifically that Canada encourages interculturism with their policies and in general is a more culturally diverse country, whereas France encourages assimilation and is less diverse (Berry & Sabatier, 2009).

Adultification of Refugee Youth

Adultification is a process where a child or adolescent is forced to take on adult roles and responsibilities before they reach adulthood (Galan, 1992), due to family changes such as immigration, forced relocation, a caretaker loses a job, the death of a family member (Johnson & Mollborn, 2009), as well as environmental triggers such as poverty and community violence (Roy, Messina, Smith, & Waters, 2014). The particular experience of relocating to a new country as a refugee adolescent has its own set of stressors and reasons for experiencing the phenomenon of adultification.

Puig (2002) looked at the social and emotional adjustment, through the lens of adultification, of Cuban refugee children who came to the U.S. between 1994-1995 during the Guantanamo refugee wave. This study included Cuban refugee families (n = 50 adults; n = 25 children) with the adult sample being predominantly white and female and a mean age of 36.8 years. The sample of children were a majority male (53%), with the same racial make-up as the adults, and a mean age of 11.7 years. The children were all attending school and spoke English. The adults reported experiencing changes in family roles including having to rely on their children "...to help translate, deal with landlords, and manage situations involving school personnel, government officials, and social service providers" (Puig, 2002, p. 90). Fifty-seven percent of the parents communicated that they felt that this use of their child 'felt wrong,' and a majority of the adults reported that this was leading to a "...lack of trust, cooperation, and

respect within the family” (Puig, 2002, p. 90). Additionally, nearly 70% of the parents attributed these changing dynamics to “the constant conflict between the ‘new ways and traditional Cuban values’” (Puig, 2002, pp. 90-91).

The children’s responses in Puig’s (2002) study matched and confirmed the parent responses in regard to the change in family roles and responsibilities. In addition to this, one-third reported that their parents “did not exist”, forty-five percent reported feeling frustrated at having to take on these adult roles, and sixty-six percent stated that they “just wanted to be left alone” (Puig, 2002, p. 91). Most interestingly, Puig found that the age of the child was most significant in modifying their feelings about their wellbeing. The younger children in the sample reported having a harder time with understanding these changes in roles and responsibilities, which cause a significant amount of confusion for them, in comparison to the older children/adolescents in the sample.

Family Risk and Resilience

The family risk and resilience approach focuses on the dynamic processes, within families who face ongoing adversity and crisis, that can help families adapt to these situations in a way that elevates their unique family strengths under stress (Walsh, 2012, Walsh, 2002;). Additionally, the family risk and resilience approach perceives families as having the ability to “self-repair” rather than seeing a family facing crisis as damaged (Walsh, 1996). A basic assumption of family risk and resilience is that experiencing continuous adversity within a family will inevitably affect everyone within that family. Family functioning is something that needs to be assessed in each individual context, particularly looking at a family’s values, structural and relational resources, and specific life challenges (Walsh, 2012). Connecting family processes to challenges creates a more effective way for families to respond to adversity and

crisis situations because it can allow for flexibility in family coping mechanisms that will inevitably change over time.

Family Risk and Resilience Under Ongoing Trauma and Terror

Families who are continuously exposed to adverse experiences while living in areas of armed conflict face a constant heightened level of stress that can threaten emotional and physical harm, and even death (Gelkopf, Berger, Bleich, & Cohen Silver, 2012; Besser, Weinberg, Zeigler-Hill, & Neria, 2014). These civilian families are at high risk for psychological and emotional maladjustments that could become lifelong coping processes and family dysfunction (Finkelstein, 2015). Finkelstein (2015) used case examples of families who live near the border of the Gaza Strip and who experienced ongoing traumatic terrorism (OGT). Each case represented a different family life stage: single young adult, the new couple, family with young children, family with adolescents, families at midlife, family in later life). This was done so that family risk and resilience could be examined at different family life stages to assess for any similarities and differences. Overall, each family life stage reported having shared family beliefs, role allocation, and communication as being affected by the ongoing trauma, which are the three protective factors of family resilience for families who undergo ongoing adversity, as affirmed by Walsh (2013) (Finkelstein, 2015). More specifically, findings from this group of case studies highlighted the increased vulnerability of families with young children and/or adolescents. These families were more likely to report higher levels of stress than other families in different life stages, with organizational patterns being particularly vulnerable to ongoing trauma.

Organizational patterns are important to creating structure, routine, and dependability for young children and adolescents, so if these become unstable in a family then they are less likely to have coping capabilities to manage the ongoing stress (Finkelstein, 2015).

Refugee Families and Family Risk and Resilience

Trauma from experiencing armed conflict can alter dimensions of family life and can be highly disruptive to normal family processes (MacDermid Wadsworth, 2010; Weine et al., 2004). Weine et al. (2004) developed a model regarding the consequences of political violence for refugee families as a means to respond to these disrupted processes. The researchers explored these experiences through a qualitative study that involved Bosnian refugee families in Chicago. What developed from the thematic analysis was the grounded theory model of *Family Consequences of Refugee Trauma*. The model describes four realms of (Bosnian) refugee family life: 1) changes in family roles and obligations, 2) changes in family memories and communications, 3) changes in family relationships with other family members, and 4) changes in family connections with the ethnic community and nation state (Weine et al., 2004).

The Weine et al. (2004) research also identified two prominent dimensions, or themes, in relation to the four identified realms of the Bosnian families. The first dimension was *Displaced Families of War*. This represented the families' perspectives on the adverse changes to the family that was brought on by their experience with war. The second dimension was *Families Rebuilding Lives*. This represented families' thoughts about how family members and resources were helpful in managing the adverse changes brought on by the war (Weine et al., 2004). An example of how these dimensions work within the four realms would be the following. The *Displaced Families of War* dimension included "less family time". Families in the study reported that there was little time to spend with each other since they resettled in Chicago, due to having to work long hours to support the family. The *Families Rebuilding Lives* dimension included "hope provided by children". Bosnian parents reported that children were seen as "...an

exclusive source of hope for a better life” and were reported by families as a reason to keep trying to rebuild their lives (Weine et al., 2004, pp. 151-152).

Bjorn, Gustafsson, Sydsjo, and Bertero (2013) conducted a qualitative study in Sweden with three refugee families from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The focus of the study was to investigate the “complexity of various family members’ experiences and perceptions from their life before the war, during the war and escape, and during their new life in Sweden” (Bjorn, Gustafsson, Sydsjo, & Bertero, 2013). Each family had at least one child between the ages of 5 and 12 years old. The study included family therapy sessions that were recorded and transcribed for thematic analysis. Each family received three sessions, and their children participated in all sessions. Findings included three main categories with ten subcategories, which included: everyday life at home, the influence of war on everyday life, and the new life. The researchers espouse a family systems perspective in their conclusions, stating that, “When analyzing each person’s point of view one must seek an all-embracing picture of a family and its complexity to tie together the family narrative” (Bjorn et al., 2013). The researchers recommend offering refugee families the opportunity to meet with family-oriented professionals upon arrival in a new country to help develop a family narrative “for the health and social welfare sector” (Bjorn et al., 2013).

As previously discussed, there are several family-level factors that may have a significant impact on the wellbeing of refugee children and unaccompanied immigrant minors. These include a family member’s exposure to violence, parental adaptation to a new culture, parent mental health, and communication style within the family (Fazel et al., 2012). The family communication factor is multi-faceted in that some instances of open communication have been found to be helpful (e.g., speaking often with their mother) whereas instances of closed-off

communication was also helpful (e.g., not bringing up adverse news). These findings have brought out the need for more research on family communication in refugee families to help identify what types of communication benefit or harm in varying contexts (Fazel et al., 2012). For instance, are these families communicating in unconstructive patterns, over-sharing, or avoiding communication? These are important questions to answer through research, as most of the trauma transmitted among family members is closely related to social processes (MacDermid Wadsworth, 2010). These social processes within families deserved more attention and therefore were a focus of the present research, which investigated short- and long-term psychosocial effects of unaccompanied migration throughout the life course of Operation Pedro Pan children.

How This Literature Relates to this Dissertation

The issue of how best to accommodate and facilitate the adjustment of unaccompanied minors, whether they are refugees or are trying to escape violence in their home country, is a prevalent problem worldwide. The recurring devastation brought on by armed conflict and unstable governments will ensure that the fate of unaccompanied minors will be of importance in research and international policy for a long time. The fact that large numbers of individuals under the age of 18 continue to seek asylum outside their home country itself warrants the pursuit of more research on their wellbeing, including the fate of their family members and changes in family processes. Future research will need to focus more attention on better understanding the experience of the unaccompanied minor, especially in the context of reuniting with their family. This study of Operation Pedro Pan children provides a life course perspective on the experience of unaccompanied minors coming to the U.S. alongside the influence that this may have had on their family.

Additionally, Bean et al. (2007) bring up the issue of not being able to “truly determine where psychological distress comes from” in refugee children because there are so many stressful events that can occur during pre-flight, flight to a new country, and assimilation into a new country. This study has the unique attribute of being able to better focus on the impact of a few aspects particular to migration as an unaccompanied minor. Pedro Pan children, as a group, likely did not experience much, if any, violence pre-departure, their physical transition to the U.S. was quick, and although the social services that were provided to them were assembled with little forewarning, the children’s basic physical needs were generally met (Goyos, 1996, Rodriguez-Nogués, 1983;). Pedro Pan children were surrounded by their peers during their initial refugee experience and for the most part, Pedro Pan adults have reported having a positive experience with their initial placement post migration (Goyos, 1996, Rodriguez-Nogués, 1983;). The most stressful post-migration events previously reported by Pedro Pan children when they were adults included having to provide for themselves by learning English, getting a job, and/or financially putting themselves through school, and reuniting with their parents. This study looks specifically at the stress of Pedro Pan children reuniting with their parents, alongside the impact of Operation Pedro Pan over the life course in regard to family roles, family decision-making, parenting style, communication, and family transitions.

This research is particularly salient to contemporary issues in U.S. immigration considering that “...there are fundamental contradictions between U.S. immigration policy as it applies to UAC [unaccompanied alien children] and the values undergirding the U.S. child welfare system” (Roth & Grace, 2015). Additionally, with the new administration’s abrupt crackdown on illegal immigration into the U.S. there could be an increase in poorer health and wellbeing outcomes for these minors and their families.

Noteworthy Literature and Performance Art on Operation Pedro Pan

The published literature on Operation Pedro is relatively small considering the number of people who were involved and affected by this historical event. However several notable publications have provided great detail on the event including who was involved, how and when it happened, and political commentary on the motives of key players (Andres Triay, 1998; Conde, 1999; de los Angeles Torres, 1999; de los Angeles Torres, 2003). Additionally, a few significant literary and artistic pieces have focused on this experience from the perspective of the Pedro Pan child. These were written by Cuban American adults who were Pedro Pan children (del Busto Ramírez, 2008; Eire, 2011; Eire, 2003). All of these publications have facilitated the current research study, which incorporates the works' expertise in historical background information and direct quotes collected from Pedro Pan adults.

Victor Andres Triay authored the first book-length piece on Operation Pedro Pan, *Fleeing Castro: Operation Pedro Pan and the Cuban Children's Program* (1998). Andres Triay is a Cuban American whose parents fled Cuba in 1960, and he was born and raised in Miami, Florida. He is a novelist and historian, with his works mostly focusing on the Cuban exile experience. Andres Triay's first book (1998) focused mostly on the exodus of the more than 14,000 unaccompanied Cuban children in Operation Pedro Pan and the federally sponsored Cuban Children's Program. His other prominent work is *Bay of Pigs: An oral history of Brigade 2506* which provides a historical account on the Bay of Pigs invasion through the perspective of the Cuban men who were in the U.S.-sponsored liberation army. Brigade 2506 landed on Cuban beaches to fight Castro's army but did so unsuccessfully as most of the 1,300 men were captured (Fernandez, 2002).

Yvonne Conde authored *Operation Pedro Pan: The untold exodus of 14,048 Cuban children*, (1999) which is one of the most commonly cited references in regard to the history of Operation Pedro Pan. The author was a Pedro Pan child and began to think back on her experience when her children reached the age that she was when she arrived in the U.S. She discovered, simultaneously alongside other Pedro Pan adults having the same realization, that she was a part of a large organized effort known as Operation Pedro Pan (Conde, 1999). She then began her formidable phase of research where she mailed out 800 44-question questionnaires. She received 442 replies and interviewed 173 people (mostly in Spanish) consisting of Pedro Pan children, their parents, journalists, foster parents, psychologists, teachers, and Cuban underground fighters. At the time of her research on Operation Pedro Pan, Conde was pursuing a Masters Degree in Journalism, focusing on the immigrant experience, at New York University. The culminating book included chapters on the Cuban Revolution, the Cuban Children's Program, Operation Pedro Pan, shelters in Miami, orphanages and foster care, abuse and neglect, adapting to life in the U.S., reunion with parents, Pedro Pan children in the 1960s and 1970s, and lastly Pedro Pan children during current times (current to publication of the book in 1999).

Maria de los Angeles Torres is a professor of Latin American and Latino studies at the University of Illinois in Chicago. She was born in Cuba and came to the U.S. in 1961 at the age of six through Operation Pedro Pan (de los Angeles Torres, 2003). She has researched and written two books that extensively cover Cuba from an exile perspective and provide political analysis on key players involved in both the U.S. and Cuba. In *The land of mirrors: Cuban exile politics in the United States* (1999), de los Angeles Torres explores all types of Cuban exiles' experiences since the 1959 Cuban Revolution and the development of Cuban exile politics. *The Lost Apple* (2003) focuses solely on Operation Pedro Pan, including her personal experience as a

Pedro Pan child. The goal of *The Lost Apple* was an attempt at putting together a more comprehensive account of the Operation Pedro Pan experience, questioning U.S. government policies, and attempting to “understand the philosophical framework that government officials, activists, and parents...were able to stage such a dramatic exodus of children” (de los Angeles Torres, 2003, p. 5). The author was concerned with clarifying why this severe family separation was deemed necessary “...in order to protect the innocence of their children and the future of their nation” (de los Angeles Torres, 2003, p. 5)

Carlos Eire is a professor of history and religious studies at Yale University and was a Pedro Pan child (Yale University Department of History, 2017). He was born in Havana, Cuba and came to the United States in 1962 as an 11-year-old (Eire, 1999). He has written two best-selling memoirs about his experience as a Cuban child in the U.S. Eire’s first memoir, *Waiting for Snow in Havana* (1999), details his time in Cuba before the revolution and ends with him on a plane, on his way to the U.S. via Operation Pedro Pan. Eire’s second memoir, *Waiting to Die in Miami: Confessions of a Refugee Boy* (2010), details his exile experience in Miami and his journey to adapting into the U.S. as a young adolescent.

Kimberly del Busto Ramírez, Ph.D. has reviewed the combined works of Pedro Pan performance artists – a group of pieces known as The Lost Apple Plays. Dr. del Busto Ramirez, is a professor of English at LaGuardia-CUNY, “...investigates Latin/o performance and installation art – especially as related to ... Operation Pedro Pan that transported her mother, aunt, and Uncle to the United States” (LaGuardia Community College, 2015). In her review article, she provided a comprehensive look at the ways in which those affected by Operation Pedro Pan have tried to cope with living as a Cuban exile through performance pieces. She described these works as attempts at catharsis through ‘autobiographical stagings of exile’ and it

has been suggested that these acts of catharsis can never be fully achieved because of the artists' exile status (del Busto Ramírez, 2008, p. 13). del Busto Ramírez (2008) describes the artists as having created "...a Cuba that can be neither lost nor recovered for Pedro Pans, but remains an impenetrable illusion" (p. 1). This article also explores the difference between being an immigrant versus an exile through the Pedro Pan child experience. It is argued that an immigrant can go home whereas an exile does not have that free choice and the second situation is exactly what Pedro Pans experienced, "So these kids, even though at one point they thought they would unite with their parents, they would realize later on that they were not able to go back to their country" (del Busto Ramírez, 2008, p. 4). This realization has been depicted through these works as complicated and as a lifelong process of coping.

All of these noteworthy works share the important common theme of having an insider perspective. All of the reviewed authors were either personally involved in Operation Pedro Pan, are closely related to Pedro Pan adults, or are at least related to Cuban exiles. Carlos Eire, a Pedro Pan adult, reviewed Conde's book on Operation Pedro Pan and noted that, "Neither book is dispassionate. This is not to say Andres Triay or Conde are unduly biased, but rather that both "write from within" (Eire, 2001, p. 821). This insider perspective undoubtedly provides passion and a cultural competence to their works. However it is important to note that the perspective of an outsider is lacking and that the addition of research conducted with such a perspective could greatly contribute to the Operation Pedro Pan literature.

Cultural Competence and the Insider/Outsider Perspective in Ethnographic Research

Emic perspectives come from individuals who are a part of the community or group that is being studied, whereas an etic perspective stems from an individual who is an outsider to the group of interest, a non-native (Naaeke, Kurylo, Grabowski, Linton, & Radford, 2011). Both

emic and etic perspectives have strengths that can contribute to the cultural competence of the research - such as being fully aware of cultural norms and the language(s) (emic), or “encourage informants to make explicit and explain the things that are taken for granted within the group” (etic) (Carling, Bivand Ertal, & Ezzati, 2014, p. 38).

However it is also important to address the limitations of both emic and etic perspectives in maintaining objectivity during the research process. For instance, a researcher who is an insider may be told ‘partial truths’ by an interviewee, while an outsider may experience the following, “a culture’s body of knowledge may be revealed bit-by-bit in separate and apparently disconnected events and messages that are not immediately known to the ethnographer” (Naaeke et al., p. 152). These limitations can lead to subjective interpretations and incomplete conclusions about a group of people, making for culturally incompetent findings that could cause the spread of misinformation and unhelpful or harmful recommendations.

Insider/Outsider Perspectives in International Migration Research

Carling, Bivand Ertal, and Ezzati (2014) define the different types of insider/outsider types in international migration research, emphasizing the importance as a researcher of being aware of your *positionality in the field*, which will affect access to and interactions with participants and informants (p. 37). The different types in migration research include: the insider researcher being a part of the migrant group; the outsider researcher from the “majority population in the country of settlement”; the “explicit third party” where the interviewer is not from the country of settlement nor are they from the migrant’s home country; being perceived as a part of the majority population but having a migrant background; being a part of the majority population but being mainly perceived as having a migrant background (Carling, Bivand Ertal, & Ezzati, 2014). For the purposes of this study, I am clearly the outsider who is and looks like a

member of the dominant culture in the country of settlement (i.e., USA). Additionally, although my great grandparents immigrated to the U.S., I do not identify as being from an immigrant family. Therefore I also do not have any personal connection to the immigrant family experience, making me a true outsider in this research.

Empirical Research on Operation Pedro Pan

To date only two empirical research studies have focused on Operation Pedro Pan. Both studies were doctoral dissertations and used mixed methods. Additionally, both researchers focused their qualitative portion on descriptive findings and thematic analysis. To the author's knowledge, neither of the dissertations resulted in publication.

Rodriguez-Nogués Dissertation, (1983)

Rodriguez-Nogués (1983) conducted the first empirical research attempt to describe and analyze the unique refugee experience of Operation Pedro Pan children in her doctoral dissertation in education (Goyos, 1996). This mixed-methods dissertation investigated the process of premature separation in 40 adult Cuban women who came to the U.S. through Operation Pedro Pan. Participants had to be women who were between the ages of 14 to 17 when they were separated from their families, and had to have come to the U.S. as unaccompanied minors (Rodriguez-Nogués, 1983). The quantitative portion of the study included an instrument that the author named the Rodriguez-Nogués Cuban Unaccompanied Minors Questionnaire. This instrument included questions about the women's "cognitive, behavioral and affective reactions ...to their experience of separation" (Rodriguez-Nogués, 1983, p. x). The qualitative portion of the study included in-depth interviews with 11 of the participants, in which the researcher asked about their experiences of separation as unaccompanied minors. The women's stories were

thematically analyzed to help give a description of their separation experience (Rodriguez-Nogués, 1983).

The study identified four stages of separation from the data collected. First was the *anticipation of separation* stage, which is characterized by confusion and a lack of emotional preparation to deal with the separation. Many of the participants were aware of the political situation at the time of their migration and were not surprised by their parents' decision to send them to the U.S. Most were excited for the trip and were told that the separation would be short. However the actual departure brought out substantial sadness and fear as they waited in the *pecera* waiting room (made entirely of glass) that physically separated them from their families, who were in-sight, as they waited for them to board the plane. For some of the participants the wait was long and for most stepping onto the plane was a "poignant moment...a separation from Cuba" (Rodriguez-Nogués, 1983, p. 227).

Second was the *physical separation* stage that involved the actual departure of the girls from their families and being sent to the U.S. Rodriguez-Nogués noted that this study's participants demonstrated resilience during this phase and a "remarkable ability for adaptation, although feelings of loss and anger were repressed or denied" (1982, p. xi). It was found that the girls' grief was delayed because they believed that the separation would be temporary, which prevented them from resolving their loss of family. During this time common feelings included loneliness, abandonment, and 'unprotectedness'. As time passed participants' noted that they became more doubtful of a reunion with their parents. Study participants did not share their feelings with others during the separation time period, although it was helpful to them to know that there were other children going through the same situation.

Third was the *psychological separation* stage, which described the psychological immaturity of the girls because of their young age at the time of the separation. The researcher concluded that this "...delay in the mourning process served to arrest the resolution of the psychological separation which did not begin until the reunion with their parents" (Rodriguez-Nogués, 1983, p. xi). Many Pedro Pan children wrote to their parents during their separation (Conde, 2000) and the Rodriguez-Nogués participants reported that when they wrote to their parents they only shared positive news with them as they did not want to upset them, "I think unconsciously I was trying to protect my parents" (1983, p. 232). The reunion with their parent(s) was exciting but also often accompanied by sadness as many only had one parent return to them. A few of the participants reported that their fathers had died in Cuba so the reunion with their mothers was a turning point where they realized that their families would never be the same again. Rodriguez-Nogués' discussion of her findings briefly addresses the adaptation process that participants experienced after the reunion with a parent. This reunion was difficult because of the parent not knowing English, the participants having to become primary breadwinners, and overall living a different lifestyle than in Cuba (i.e. without material luxuries) that their parents were not accustomed to living. Some participants were already married when they reunited with their parent, which was difficult for some mothers to accept. The unforeseen change in family roles that were brought on from the unaccompanied forced migration caused some tension in role expectations and communication. One participant related about her reunion experience with her mother, "She kept saying that I did not respond in the same way to her as before" (Rodriguez-Nogués, 1983, p. 236).

The fourth and final stage was *integration of separation*, which was the process of integrating their experience of separation later on in life. This was often brought on by triggering

events, such as becoming a parent (Rodriguez-Nogués, 1983). A large portion of the participants tried to process their experience as an unaccompanied minor by talking about it with their parent(s), friends, other family members, and their children. A few of the women used psychotherapy as a means for integrating this experience into their life. There were also a number of participants who had never shared how they felt about the separation before taking part in the study. Although there was a trend within this sample to minimize the effects of their separation experience, Rodriguez-Nogués notes that their participation allowed them to further explore how this separation had affected them up until then (1983). When participants were asked if they would have made the same decision as their parents, to send their children away in the same circumstances, a very small percentage of the participants said that they would, half of the women said they did not know, and one-third reported that they definitely would not have made the same decision.

The Rodriguez-Nogués study concluded with several strong insights into this subpopulation's separation experience and recommendations for future investigations. One strength of this study is that it was the first follow-up investigation of Operation Pedro Pan children, almost exactly two decades after they first arrived in the U.S. This placed the participants in a life stage of being in their thirties and most likely married with children. However due to the timing of this study, it was only able to focus on their time up until the particular life stage that they were in at the time of participation. This research was conducted in 1983, placing the participants in their early to mid-thirties. Therefore Rodriguez Nogués was only able to remark on phenomenon up until this age range. Rodriguez-Nogués (1983) recommended that future research on this separation include follow-up studies of interviewees at different life-stages. Although the present study did not entail conducting a follow-up study of

the same exact interviewees, it does involve asking Operation Pedro Pan adults to review many decades of their life after having experienced their unexpected forced migration to the U.S.

It is important to note that Rodriguez-Nogués was a Pedro Pan child, which gave her an insider position within this research as she is a member of the Cuban American and Operation Pedro Pan community. As the primary researcher of this study, I worked from the outsider perspective and more than 55 years after Operation Pedro Pan. This outsider position is beneficial in that my lack of personal connection to this event minimizes bias in this research, although it also may limit my understanding of some aspects of the Pedro Pan experience. I also have the advantage of investigating this event from half a century later, which allows for an investigation of the impacts of this event on Pedro Pan children over their life course, well into their sixties and early seventies.

Lastly, the Rodriguez-Nogués investigation looked at the cognitive and behavioral implications of Operation Pedro Pan at the individual level and did not fully consider family members. She does however note the importance of family "...this study suggests that because of the disruption in the family unit brought about by this separation true healing might only happen in the context of the family" (Rodriguez-Nogués, 1983, p. 261). This study built on Rodriguez-Nogués' research by asking about the potential impact of this unique experience on the Pedro Pan Childrens' families, including parents, partners, and children.

Goyos Dissertation, (1996)

Goyos (1996) conducted the second empirical research study on the longitudinal effects of Operation Pedro Pan. The researcher was pursuing a Doctorate in Social Work with this dissertation. His mixed-methods dissertation aimed to describe and measure the experience of separation from parents and culture, adjustments to the separation, and to identify resiliency

factors within a group of adults who were once considered severe at-risk children (Goyos, 1996). Goyos collected data from a sample of 170 adult Cuban men and women who came to the U.S. through Operation Pedro Pan and were at the time of the study living in different locations throughout the U.S. The quantitative portion of the study included 160 Cuban men and women who completed the Pedro Pan Questionnaire, the Brief Symptom Inventory, the Trait Anxiety Scale, and the Family Bond Scale. A separate group of ten Cuban men and women participated in individual in-depth interview that was intended to elicit a description of the participants' experience with Operation Pedro Pan (Goyos, 1996).

Goyos concluded from the quantitative portion of the study "...although some pathology is present, it is not the distinguishing feature in the group studied" (Goyos, 1996, second page of abstract). The relevant protective factors that were identified included a participant's personal background and experiences before Operation Pedro Pan (e.g., a positive and supportive family upbringing), personal characteristics (e.g., personality, age), and their perceptions of their experience as a Pedro Pan child. Most of the participants had positive experiences during this migration, which helped to mitigate the stressful experience. Lastly, it was found that many of the participants reported having a "concerned person" who took interest in them and this had a positive impact on participants' transition to living in the U.S. (Goyos, 1996).

Analysis of the qualitative portion of the study revealed several common themes present across participants. The common theme of participants' description of their life in Cuba was referred to as "...warm, loving, peaceful, wholesome, filled with family and close family life, pleasant, being spoiled and a feeling of being important" (Goyos, 1996, p. 147). Those who were not picked up by a family member upon arrival in Miami and who were placed in a refugee camp reported a general reaction of it being a positive experience. Participants reported that during this

placement they were surrounded by their peers who spoke the same language and shared many of the same Cuban customs and reported being cared for in a “competent manner” (Goyos, 1996, p. 147). However, for those who were delivered to a second placement, such as a foster home or a children’s home, the experience was described by some “as a difficult time filled with tension” and for others it was “hell on earth” and/or abusive (Goyos, 1996, p. 148). Overall there was positive feedback on the foster home experience where foster families attempted to be supportive, in comparison with children’s homes and orphanages where the experiences prompted negative comments from participants.

Goyos’ study participants reported that, during the separation from their family, daily life was generally predictable and most adapted to this routine, even if they did not like it. All participants commented on having had a critical moment or period where the reality of their situation hit them. Participants’ confusion, anger, and uncertainty about their future provoked the internal response that they “may as well adjust” to their current living situation (Goyos, 1996, p. 152). The concept of survival was present throughout all interviews involving strategies for adapting to a new culture and utilizing coping mechanisms. A large part of adaptation hinged on focusing on the future and adopting a new attitude of “stop crying and start a new life” (Goyos, 1996, p. 154). Coping mechanisms in this group of participants included suppression of feelings, staying connected to their religion, taking care of a sibling and/or having the companionship of a sibling, and having friends to play with, especially if they were Cuban. A common theme among these answers was having an “emotional connection” that was developed with a significant other whether it was a friend or relative; many of the participants chose a person who was helpful to them, like a foster father (Goyos, 1996, p. 156).

Questions from the in-depth interviews that focused on their family included the topics of preparation for departure, explanations from parents for their departure to the U.S., their reunion with their parents, and a period of adjustment and adaptation with their parents after the reunion. All participants reported having had conversations with their parents prior to their departure on why they were leaving. The main explanations included: it would be a good opportunity for them to visit the U.S., they could learn a new language, they could continue their education, and that their parents feared that "...young men and women would be 'drafted' into the Cuban armed services and be forced to separate from their families and country for unknown destinations" (Goyos, 1996, p.149). Many of the participants sensed that something (i.e., their migration) was going to happen because of the ever-increasing tensions in Cuba following the 1959 revolution. However they also believed that theirs would be a short stay in the U.S. This belief was corroborated by their parents' statements that the migration would be a "short lived separation" and that it would be a positive experience (Goyos, 1996, p. 149). Most of the participants expressed some anger or resentment towards their parents' misleading statements considering the inconsistency between the proposed length of time of their stay and what actually happened (Goyos, 1996).

All participants were reunited with at least one parent, with a couple of them being reunited after one year, most being reunited after more than two years separated, and one taking ten years to be reunited with a parent. All of them expressed positive and negative emotions while some were already on their own once they were reunited. Most participants reported "a climate of anxiety, happiness, ambivalence, excitement, disbelief, and trepidation" (Goyos, 1996, p. 158). There was disappointment in some reunions because they were only being reunited with one parent whereas other participants were too young when they were separated to be sure that it

was really their parents who were being reunited with them. After the initial excitement of the reunion there was a period of adjustment with one participant reporting that there was "...a great deal of adjustment for both of us" (Goyos, 1996, p. 159). Several of the participants had learned to live alone and to "shut it off" (i.e., feelings of sadness, missing their family) and were careful to get close to anyone. Many were forced to mature emotionally beyond their chronological years as a means to survive their unaccompanied migration as a minor. Goyos noted that for some "...the thought of resuming a close relationship again, was frightening and uncomfortable" (p. 160) and that there was a theme throughout responses of "...it's great to have you here but don't try to run my life" (p. 158). This caused tension with their parent(s) who wanted to go back to the way things were in Cuba, where the parent was the uncontested leader of the family and the child obeyed.

At the time of reunion many of the participants had to get jobs as young adolescents as a means to survive. They had to learn English and went to school in the U.S. as an ethnic minority without the support of their family. It was a demanding experience that made them mature beyond their years. This distinctive experience among this group is consistent with other Operation Pedro Pan literature that has detailed the tension that arose from the role reversal in this parent-child relationship (Rodriguez-Nogués, 1983; Conde, 2000). During this adaptation phase after the initial reunion, these Cuban families experienced a shift in roles where the children were taking care of their parents who likely did not speak English and could not find work (Rodriguez-Nogués, 1983; Goyos, 1996 ; Conde, 2000). Goyos (1996) remarked on the "sense of mourning" for the old parent-child relationship and the sense that being a family was dead (Goyos, 1996, p. 161). Additionally, Goyos found that the rebuilding of these relationships took years for some of the families and for others they were only repaired to a certain degree.

This is in line with Rodriguez-Nogués' (1983) findings that participants' lives "were never the same again" (p. 236). The process of post-reunion adaptation after several years of separation, during a time of rapid physical and emotional development, was a time of tension that was difficult for both the Cuban child and parent.

A strength of Goyos' research is that this was the first study that looked into the protective factors particular to Operation Pedro Pan children's adaptation to living in the U.S. on their own. It also helped to provide a more detailed description of this unaccompanied migration experience from the perspective of the Pedro Pan adult. Goyos recommended that future research should focus on a continued investigation of unaccompanied immigrant children and that it would be beneficial to identify changes in the family, if and when there was a reunion of the unaccompanied child with their parents. Findings from the in-depth interviews did elicit some information on participants' reunion with their parents. However, it did not provide thick description of this relationship and how it may have changed over time after the reunion. Thick description is "...a cultural account that emphasizes descriptive detail" and can help provide context to a cultural outsider (Daly, 2007, p. 87). This current study was able to build upon Goyos' work by providing thick description of this parent-child relationship over time and will also look at the next generation of the parent-child relationship, when the Pedro Pan adult became a parent. The fact that twenty additional years have elapsed from the time of Goyos' dissertation makes it possible to investigate the impacts of this event on family relationships over the majority of participants' life course. This would have not been possible to observe within Goyos' research as participants would have been at most in their late forties, placing them in the family stage of having their young to adolescent aged children still living in their home. Lastly, Goyos was a Pedro Pan child, which gave him an insider perspective to this research, as he had

first-hand experience with this historical event and is a member of the Cuban American community. This research was different in that, as the primary researcher I have an outsider perspective that and have less of a personal stake in the contentious U.S.-Cuban relationship or Operation Pedro Pan.

Research Questions

This dissertation examined the short- and long-term psychosocial effects of unaccompanied migration throughout the life course of Operation Pedro Pan children, including adolescence and adulthood. Participant interviews were conducted, and a thematic analysis of these interviews was completed. The main research questions focused on further illuminating the influence of this event on familial roles, family communication and decision-making, parenting style, family reunion, and integration into the U.S. as an unaccompanied immigrant minor. Family resilience and trauma were used as overarching themes across the research questions. The main research questions included:

1. How did participants' unaccompanied migration as a minor to the U.S. influence their perceived role within their family and their relationship with their parents while they were separated and after they reunited?
 - a. What new roles did participants take on within their family when they were separated and when they reunited?
 - b. Did the relationships within the family become stronger, weaker, or stay the same as when they were living together in Cuba?
2. How did participants' unaccompanied migration as a minor from Cuba to the U.S. influence their own and their family's ability to socially, culturally, and economically

adapt to living in the U.S. as a young adult? What individual factors, family factors and community factors contributed to their family's ability to adapt to living in the U.S.?

3. How did participants' family experience with separation and adapting to living in the U.S. as teenagers and young adults, shape their later relationships, parenting practices and philosophies, particularly in relation to perceived cultural norms in Cuban and Cuban-American families?

Theoretical Framework

Life Course Theory

Life course theory provides a set of tools for examining and understanding the impact of life course events and transitions on an individual's life-span development (Alwin, 2012). This theory takes multiple temporal contexts into account such as social and cultural contexts, which can help to elucidate the influence of a unique event on an individual's life course (Bengston & Allen, 1993). Life Course theory as applied to families focuses on "...the importance of time, context, process, and meaning on human development and family life" (Bengston & Allen, 1993, p471). This dynamic approach is ideal for examining the influence of a unique historical event on families over time.

Within the framework of this research study, life course theory helps to explain the consequences of the unexpected transitions – caused by the unaccompanied migration - on participants' lifespan development in family roles. The unaccompanied migration was a response to the violent and unpredictable political changes between 1960 and 1962, which were related to Fidel Castro's government takeover after the Cuban Revolution. The unaccompanied minors who were sent to Miami, Florida during this time experienced unexpected transitions in their individual roles within their families (Goyos, 1996; Rodriguez-Nogués, 1983;). After their

migration these children and adolescents were forced to take on roles that were often incongruent with their parents' expectations of them. According to existing research, this rift in role expectations occurred while they were refugees and they had to look after themselves and siblings, and again when they were reunited with their parents in the United States (if they were reunited) (Goyos, 1996; Rodriguez-Nogués, 1983;).

Specific principles from this theory applicable to this research inquiry are the concepts of historical time, norms and roles, and linked lives (Elder, 1999; White, Klein, & Martin, 2015a). Cumulatively, these concepts help to explain how this historical event of unaccompanied migration influenced the transition in roles and expectations of individuals within Cuban families. Life course theory also helps to explain how this historical event shaped the meaning and expectations of family for Operation Pedro Pan children throughout their life course.

The concept of *historical time* indicates that individuals are formed by events in their life and that these events typically mark the end of a previous state and the beginning of a new state (Elder, 1999; White et al., 2015a). Operation Pedro Pan was a unique historical event that greatly influenced the pathways these children followed. These children and adolescents were split off from their families and sent to a foreign country. They did not know how long they would be there or how long they would be separated from their families. This represented severe change in the direction of their expected life pathways. Without the events of the Cuban Revolution and Operation Pedro Pan they would have most likely continued living in Cuba with their families and pursued life choices typical of their Cuban upbringing, even in the context of Castro's government. For instance, the norms of a middle-to-upper class Cuban family obliged families to support their children well into adulthood until they were married or entered the professional workforce (Queralt, 1984; Allahar, 1994). However, many of the Operation Pedro Pan children

and adolescents started working for money while living in one of the refugee camps or while in foster care, because they no longer had the financial support from their parents (Conde, 1999; Goyos, 1996). These children and adolescents moved from living in a family culture that heavily emphasized parental decision-making to living in a foreign country without their parents and having to make all of their own decisions in order to survive.

Norms are the socially constructed guidelines, or rules, that govern a group and an individual's behavior, while a person's *role* within a family is made up of a collection of norms (White et al., 2015a). Roles are closely linked to a family's life-cycle stage (e.g., families with young children, families with older children leaving the home). Children who came to the U.S. through Operation Pedro Pan ranged in age from toddlers to 16-year-olds. These children arrived during a period of time in a particular family stage (e.g., early childhood) and were often reunited with their parents during a later family stage (e.g., late adolescence) since many were not reunited until a few years after their migration. Additionally, the unexpected transition as an unaccompanied minor to the U.S. forced them to take on new roles to be able to adapt to their new environment. These new roles were often a stark contrast to their previous role as a child within a Cuban family (Bernal & Shapiro, 2005; Goyos, 1996). This transition has been documented as traumatic and isolating (Goyos, 1996; Rodriguez-Nogués, 1983) especially when considering the traditional Cuban family that typically involves very close and interdependent familial relationships (Bernal & Shapiro, 2005).

Linked lives is a concept that describes the social and familial ties that exist between people and how individuals live interdependently, creating a "...network of shared relationships" (Elder, 1999, p. 307). These shared relationships often reflect the social and historical characteristics of the time period. When one family member is affected by a historical event he

or she is likely to share the hardship from this event with the family members with which they are closely linked (Elder, 1998). Operation Pedro Pan was the event that caused an unexpected and immediate separation of Cuban children from their parents. Existing research suggests that the trauma that resulted from this caused great emotional and economic hardship for the Operation Pedro Pan children but it also affected their relationship with their parents. It also potentially affected the relationship with their children when they themselves became parents. The influence of this event on Pedro Pan adults' relationship with their children is not apparent in the prior studies and was a focus of this research.

Family Resilience Theory

Family resilience theory states that adversity, including crisis events, will have an impact on the entire family and that in response to this adversity “key family processes will mediate the adaptation of all members and their relationships” (Walsh, 2012, p. 401). Family resilience theory is useful for looking at families and how they react to challenging times. It focuses on how family strengths react, or operate, under duress including how a family creates meaning out of and adapts to the adverse experience as a means to develop family resilience to the situation (Walsh, 2002). The challenges that can develop over time from a crisis are crucial to understanding a family's response to hardship, rather than just looking at the immediate reaction to the crisis event. Using a longitudinal perspective can help account for “phases of adaptation” and life cycle milestones, such as being newly married, that may influence a family's ability to respond to adversity (Walsh, 1996, p. 264). This corresponds exactly with the scope of this research, which examine the after-effects of the unaccompanied migration of Cuban minors and how the historic event of Operation Pedro Pan has presented challenges in these families, revealed their strengths, and exposed how their family strengths interfaced with these challenges.

An important distinction of this theory is that it is not just about the management of a crisis but the transformations that can develop from these stressful scenarios (Walsh, 2012). Additionally, these transformations will be dependent on the unique qualities of the family facing adversity. In other words, there is not a “single model of healthy functioning that fits all families or situations” (Walsh, 2012, p. 405); there can be multiple pathways to resilience (Walsh, 1996, p. 266). A family under prolonged duress should be assessed within their environment including their family values, physical and familial resources, and their challenges (Walsh, 2012).

Traditionally, families in crisis have been viewed as damaged, whereas family resilience theory looks at these families as challenged, which highlights the key concept of family strengths. An advanced aspect of this theory is that the family strengths in focus are interactional processes rather than individual traits (Walsh, 1996). The key processes behind these family interactions of relevance to the Operation Pedro Pan experience include affirming belief systems, communication, and community resources (Walsh, 2012; Walsh, 1996).

The *affirming belief systems* of a family can help guide a family’s interpretation of a crisis and create meaning, or a family narrative, about the crisis event. This meaningful narrative is considered to be vital to a family’s ability to adapt to new stressful circumstances (Walsh, 1996). This key process can “assist members in making meaning of their crisis experience and builds collaboration, competence, and confidence in surmounting family challenges” (Walsh, 1996, p. 261). To better understand how these families transitioned to living in the U.S. it is important to define the belief systems of the Cuban families of Operation Pedro Pan who came to the U.S. It will also be crucial to understand in detail whether their belief systems changed upon the family reunion and thereafter. These clarifications on their family belief systems helped to

inform why Operation Pedro Pan participants' transition to living in the U.S. as an unaccompanied minor and when reunited with their family was successful or not.

The *communication* behaviors in a family can signify how clearly members speak to one another and their ability to communicate consistent messages within the family. Communication as a key concept in family resilience also includes how well a family in crisis can embrace and/or maintain open expression of emotion among individual members, and how well they can collaboratively problem-solve (Walsh, 2012). The Pedro Pan children who experienced separation and were not immediately reunited with close family in the U.S. did so during a crucial early childhood to adolescent developmental period. It is important to better understand if this family separation, which occurred during a sensitive developmental timeframe, may have affected a family's ability to communicate and be resilient when reuniting and transitioning to living in the U.S.

Community resources is the final key family resilience key concept that is relevant to the Operation Pedro Pan experience. It comprises of the resources, or local assets, available to a family in crisis that help provide security for a family that is in need. These resources feed into a family's ability to be resilient as a unit by connecting them to their local community and social support (Walsh, 1996). These local resources can include financial support, practical support, and social-emotional support such as friendship networks and religious groups (Walsh, 1996). Understanding what forms of support were available in the community to Operation Pedro Pan families helped to better understand the success of their reunion in the U.S. with their parents and siblings who had stayed in Cuba.

Family resilience theory is appropriate to use to help explicate findings from this research. The Operation Pedro Pan families lived through the traumatic experience of fleeing

Cuba after the Cuban revolution, family separation, and family reunion in the U.S. as refugees. Family resilience theory helped to explain the after-effects of any changes in the family including their belief systems and ability to communicate while also taking into account community resources. This theory also helped to explain how these changes affected their adaptation to living in the U.S. by highlighting family strengths that may have continued on from previous family processes or that emerged during this unexpected and challenging transition and reunion with family.

How Life Course Theory and Family Resilience Theory Work Together

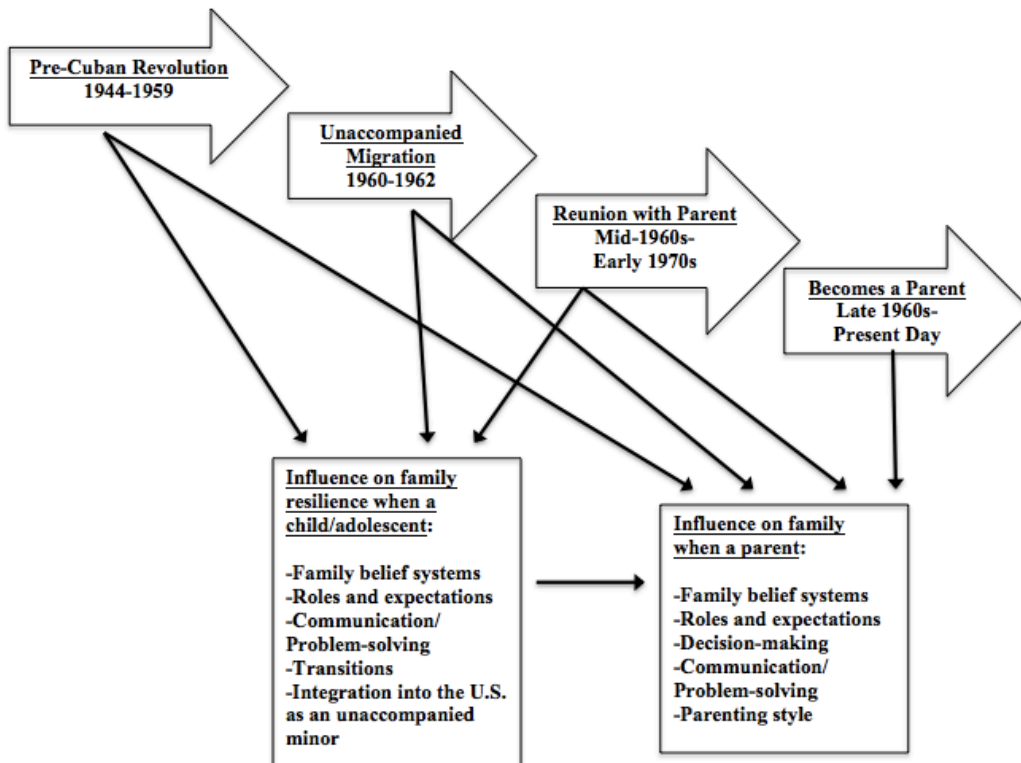
While life course theory helps to explain the change in roles within the family and the influence of this historical event over the life course of the study participants and their families, the family resilience theory helps to identify family strengths and explain how the families' responses to this stressful migration may have affected their ability to adapt to a new life in the U.S. In other words, life course theory helps emphasize the unique effects of the external factor of Operation Pedro Pan on participants and their families over time, while family resilience theory looks at the internal effects of this event within the family.

The *norms and roles* key concept of Life Course Theory easily connects with the Family Resilience Theory key concepts of *affirming belief systems* and *communication*. The belief systems of the Operation Pedro Pan families will likely have been rooted in their Cuban upbringing, which would include their family norms such as *familismo* - prioritizing the family above all else. The family norms of participants will also have likely influenced how they communicated with one another, including problem-solving abilities. Additionally, the family norms of Cuban families at the time adhered to traditional gender norms within the family such as having a stay-at-home mother and a father who made most of the family decisions. These

norms were tested under the duress brought on by immigration and having few resources while resettling into the U.S.

The life course theory key concept of *linked lives* represents the interdependence that exists within a family, corresponds with a defining feature of family resilience theory that a crisis will ultimately affect the entire family including the relationships within the family unit (Elder, 1999; Walsh, 2012). In other words, both theories emphasize the concept of individuals within a group that are interconnected and the reciprocal relationships that come with this phenomenon. The advantages of combining these two theories is that they have related concepts that complement each other which helps to more fully explain the phenomenon of unaccompanied immigrant minors and the effect of their family’s resilience on adapting to living in the U.S., within the context of Operation Pedro Pan. Figure 1 provides a visual of this theoretical framework.

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework



Chapter 3: Methodology

Methodological Approach

This study utilized a qualitative research methodology and was guided by an inductive process of inquiry. Qualitative research methods focus on eliciting descriptive findings on how a social phenomenon of interest has been experienced by study participants. An important aspect to qualitative research is prioritizing the participants' experience from their perspective, rather than the researcher's (Morse, 2012).

This qualitative approach was imperative to this research study because the experience of those who participated in Operation Pedro Pan was the main focus of the research questions. Operation Pedro Pan was a unique historical event and there is currently a limited amount of publications that include the first-hand experience of the children who came to the U.S. through this program. This qualitative study used an in-depth interview to focus solely on the participant's experience as an unaccompanied minor. The two previous dissertations on Operation Pedro Pan were mixed-methods, and the interviews conducted were not as in-depth as the questions included in this research and focused on different topics (Goyos, 1996; Rodriguez-Nogués, 1983).

Additionally, this research inquiry was prompted by the gaps in knowledge about the experience of unaccompanied minors reuniting with family in a foreign country, and the particular experience of Operation Pedro Pan participants. In comparison to the previous dissertations (Goyos, 1996; Rodriguez-Nogués, 1983), this research went deeper into the qualitative approach to gain a wider range of participants' lived experiences with greater detail that has not been done before. This expanded approach also helped to further illuminate the

experience of unaccompanied minors who have transitioned to living in a new country and who eventually reunite with close family members.

Family Science research is an ideal discipline to use for investigating the relationship dynamics and changes in immigrant and refugee families who reunite in a foreign country. Family Science is the “...scientific study of families and close interpersonal relationships” that uses distinct assumptions and methodologies to discover new knowledge about families and how to best use this knowledge to “strengthen and empower families” (National Council on Family Relations, n.d.). The interpersonal relationships within families are integral to Family Science research and were a key focus within this study. The gaps in knowledge that were investigated in this research included how immigrant and refugee families adapted to living in a new country after having been separated for an extended period of time (i.e., several months to many years apart); what were the changes in their family relationships related to family roles, norms, values, and communication; and how unaccompanied migration as a minor may have affected an individual’s meaningful decisions or choices over their life course (e.g., partner selection, parenting style, family values).

There are several limitations associated with using one-on-one interviews. The quality and rigor of the research is highly dependent on the skills of the researcher and their ability to reflect on their own biases in a timely manner. Additionally the presence of the researcher during data collection can present some difficulties in influencing participant responses (Anderson, 2010). Similarly, the lack of anonymity in the one-on-one interview process could influence a participant’s responses (Anderson, 2010). How to best minimize these limitations is addressed in the *Reflexivity* section.

The induction process inherent to the qualitative approach is helpful for understanding, "...a phenomenon through observation and inquiry" (Daly, 2007, p. 45). Utilizing an induction process involved using grounded theory, a research method in which the thematic concepts that emerge during analysis build up to a systematic theory that is customized to the group of oral histories. Using this method entailed using a prescribed set of procedures, such as coding and thematic analysis, that eventually led to the materialization of conceptual themes found throughout the oral histories.

This research was guided by the epistemological paradigm of social constructionism, which is grounded in the assumption that all reality is a socially constructed reality (Daly, 2007, p. 31). In this paradigm, it is assumed that meanings are constructed through social interaction and are "interactively built" through interfacing with other people and interpreting experiences (Daly, 2007, p. 32). This paradigm is primarily concerned, "...with the question of how participants have experienced a particular phenomenon" and the meaning that they construct out of this experience (Daly, 2007, p. 33). This approach highly encourages the use of thick description through interviews to help bring out detail of the participant's experience with an emphasis on how meanings have been constructed in response to a phenomenon (Daly, 2007). This approach aligns with this study's proposed research questions that focus on the changes in participants' perceived changes in the family after their migration and their personal experience with Operation Pedro Pan.

Field Sites

All interviews were conducted in English and were either in-person or done over the phone. Participants who could meet in-person were asked about their preferred meeting place for the interview, including their home or office (as long as it was reasonably accessible to the

interviewer) and public places such as cafes, libraries, and restaurants. Nine interviews were conducted in-person in Miami, Florida and four were conducted in-person in the D.C./Maryland area. Two in-person interviews were conducted in the participant's home, one interview was conducted in a participant's private office in their place of employment, and there were ten in-person interviews conducted in a public setting that was not too loud (five were in a café, four in a bookstore/cafe, and one was in a Cuban restaurant).

In-person interviews were the ideal conditions, but in order to be as flexible as possible for participants and the researcher's resources to travel, the option of doing a phone interview was offered. Ten interviews were conducted over Skype or Face Time, and two interviews were conducted over speakerphone.

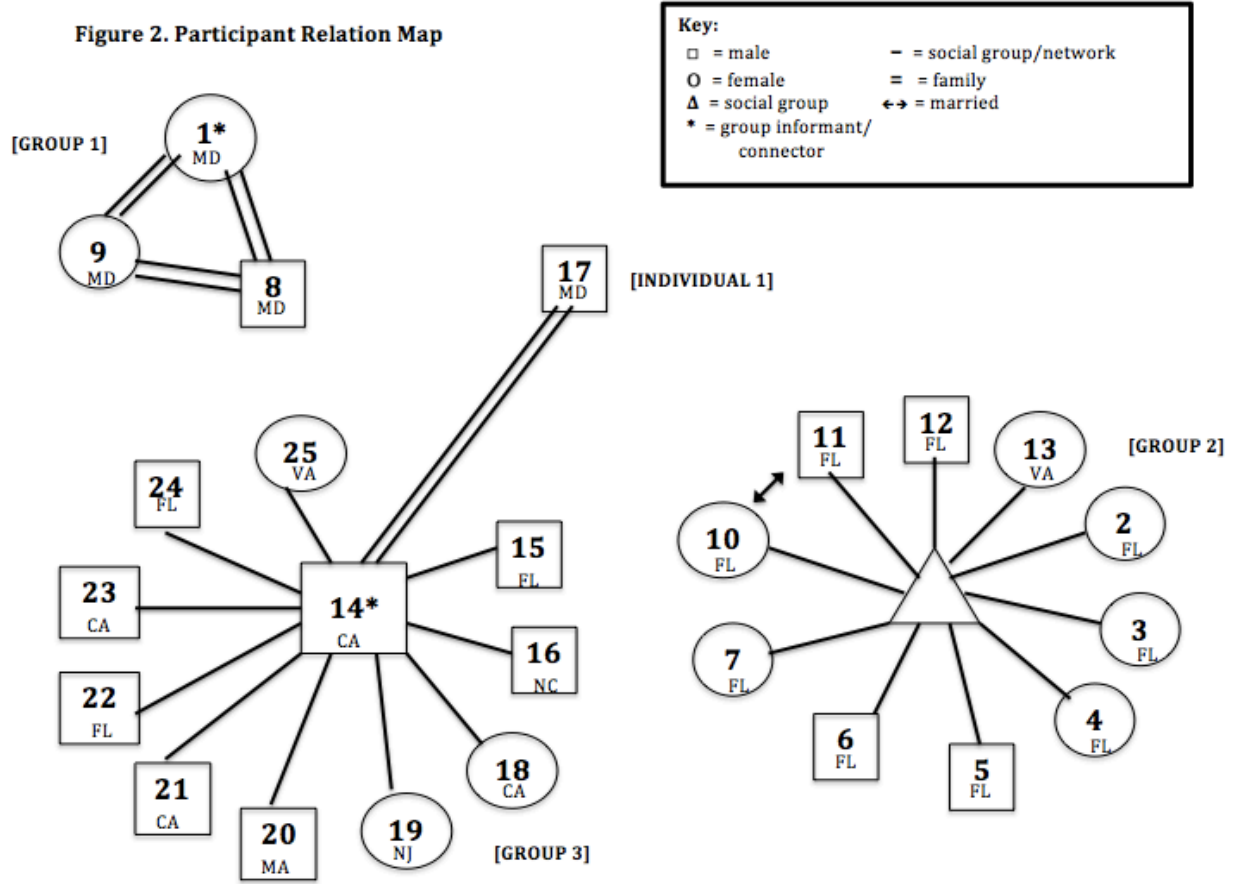
Sample Recruitment

Although there is no magic number for sample size in qualitative research, there have been some guidelines provided including the suggestion of having 15 to 30 participants for a grounded-theory study (Creswell 2002; Creswell 1998). There were 25 participants recruited for this study, which is when theoretical saturation was achieved.

There were four distinct groups of recruitment. Figure 2 depicts the participant relation map and the following further describes each group in this participant map⁴:

⁴ U.S. state abbreviations are provided for each participant in the map.

Figure 2. Participant Relation Map



Individual 1

Individual 1 (participant #17) was identified via Internet research and coincidentally a cousin to participant #14 who was associated with Group 3. This family relationship is identified by the same symbol used for Group 1, which consists of siblings, because it was typical for Cuban families to live in the same neighborhood and be in close proximity to each other, with cousin relationships being similar to siblings. This cousin pairing both confirmed that they lived in the same neighborhood and their families were regularly interconnected.

Group 1

Group 1 was identified through participant #1 who was referred by a neighbor to Dr. Kerry Tripp, of the University of Maryland's Family Science Department. Group 1 consists of

two sisters and one brother from the same family, of whom all came to the U.S. together through Operation Pedro Pan.

Group 2

Group 2 consists of participants who participate in Operation Pedro Pan Group social group. They meet regularly and see one another often. The contact who identified these participants did not participate in this research; therefore this group was centered around the triangle symbol to signify a cohesive social group. The social group informant for Group 2 provided a list of 27 potential participants who are active members within the group. This informant is a trustee and History Committee member of this social group. We had been e-mailing each other about my research since September 2016 (emails in Appendix A). He has acted as a gatekeeper to this community and after having learned more about my research intentions, he gave formal approval for me to work with the members of this social group for my research. The Chairperson of the Historic Committee for this social group, procured the potential participant list. The list contained names of 27 people who were Operation Pedro Pan children and were living in the Miami, Florida area. Ten people participated in the study out of the 27 names provided.

Relationship with Operation Pedro Pan Group, Inc. (Group 2)

Representatives from Operation Pedro Group have stated that they do not collaborate with researchers but they will, after review of intentions and methods, assist researchers who are focused on the Operation Pedro Pan event as they see appropriate (see Appendix A). They do not endorse research and do not want to be formally named in research publications as collaborators. To respect the wishes of Operation Pedro Group and its members, this research will not formally name them in the research as collaborators.

Group 3

Group 3 was headed by a main informant – participant #14 – who was identified via Internet research as the main contact for a California Operation Pedro Pan social group. This group meets less frequently than Group 2 but includes a large listerv of Pedro Pan individuals who live across the U.S. Participant #14 administers this listerv and sent out an announcement about the opportunity to participate in this research.

Sample Recruitment Process

The sample recruitment process included broad outreach (i.e., contacting social group leaders) and one-on-one outreach with each participant. There were several stages of outreach with each participant. The first stage included an introductory email asking if they are interested in participating (template in Appendix B) that was sent out to each of the potential participants listed in the referred email list procured by two leading members of the Operation Pedro Pan Group, Inc.; and it was also sent out as an email blast to the California Operation Pedro Pan social group (Group 3 from participant relation map) listerv – from there potential participants had the choice to email with their interest to participate in the study.⁵ This template was also used for the four individuals who interviewed and who were not associated with either of the two social groups.

Initial responses were tracked for response type (yes/no), if they had any questions, their email address, and any other information they provided (e.g., location, phone number, family history, etc.). Those who did not respond from the original email sent out to the Miami-based social group were contacted at a later date when the first round of interviews were completed (i.e., for those participants who initially responded yes and quickly set up an interview date). The

⁵ Individuals from the California listerv who could not be initially accommodated with an interview because of time and resources were placed on a waiting list.

participants that responded with a “no” were thanked for their time and were not contacted again. For participants that respond with a “yes” a response email was sent that included a statement of appreciation for their interest in participating, and a prompt for setting up an initial phone call conversation. This phone conversation went over my background information and interest in this topic, details on their research participation, an opportunity for them to ask me any questions they may have, and to set up a time for the one-on-one interview. The template for this introductory phone conversation is in Appendix C.

Once the first round of interviews were completed, a second round of introductory emails were sent to those potential participants who did not originally respond to the first round of introductory emails. Their responses were tracked and if they did not respond within two-three weeks they were not contacted again as they likely did not want to participate. For those that respond “yes” to participating a follow-up email was sent to them that included a statement of appreciation for their interest in participating, and a prompt for setting up an initial phone conversation. This phone conversation went over my background information and interest in this topic, details on their research participation, an opportunity for them to ask me any questions they may have, and to set up a time for the one-on-one interview.

Sample recruitment for potential participants who were identified through snowball sampling followed the same process that was previously detailed in this section. The only difference was that the introductory email included the information of the person that recommended them so that they knew how I received their contact information and the rationale for contacting them. Recruitment was stopped when data and theoretical saturation were achieved. This is further addressed in the Data Quality subsection in the Methods section.

Inclusion Criteria

The sample N represented individuals and not family units. The sample included male and female Cuban American adults who participated in Operation Pedro Pan during 1960 to 1962. Through snowball sampling there were additional participants from the DC-Maryland-Virginia region. Participants who were spouses or siblings were included in the sample because neither significantly interfered with the validity of their interviews. Additionally, including spouses and siblings helped triangulate research findings.

Exclusion Criteria

An individual was not eligible to participate in this study if they had significant recall issues due to dementia, and if they did not come to the U.S. through the Operation Pedro Pan program. Additionally, if a participant who previously agreed to participate decided to no longer participate their interview would be excluded from the study. This did not occur, however there was one individual who initially showed interest but decided to not participate after seeing the interview questions (this person did not sign a consent form).

Institutional Review Board

Before data collection began in August 2017 this research study received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Maryland on July 24, 2017. The IRB application included consent forms for participating in this study, which follow the consent form template provided by the IRB and the full research protocol, along with other required documents. The consent form and protocol included adequate provisions designed to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants and their information. The dissertation chair was the Principal Investigator on the IRB proposal and reviewed these documents before submission. This study received the continuing review approval on July 2, 2018.

Data Collection

In-Depth Interviews

Before the one-on-one in-depth interview there was one phone call conducted where the participant and the researcher introduced themselves to one another. It was also an opportunity for the participant to ask questions or raise concerns they had about the main interview and their participation in the research study, including the consent form. This call was not recorded, but the researcher did write notes during and after the call to document background information about the participant and any questions or concerns that were raised. The first couple of participants requested to see the interview questions before the interview, so the questions were sent to them. This was then offered to every proceeding participant introductory phone call to make sure that all participants had a similar experience. Only one participant did not choose to see the interview questions beforehand so it was a beneficial addition to the introductory phone call protocol. Seeing the questions beforehand allowed many participants to be able to jot down notes and recall events that happened 50 plus years ago. Interview questions can be referenced in Appendix D. Most interviews were scheduled at least two to three weeks in advance of the agreed-upon date, time, and place. As much flexibility as possible was employed while scheduling to best accommodate participants' personal and professional schedules.

A total of 25 interviews were conducted between August 2017 and June 2018. The average length of the in-depth interviews was 87.6 minutes, with a range of 58 minutes to 154 minutes long (1 to 2.5 hours long). One-on-one in-depth interviews were conducted at an agreed upon space, which were mostly public spaces like a local café or restaurant, however three in-person interviews were conducted in private spaces such as the participant's home or private office. When necessary, interviews were conducted over the phone using Skype or Face Time so

that the researcher and participant could still see one another and the interview can be recorded. However there were two interviews conducted over speakerphone that did not include visuals but were recorded. There was one interview for each participant. All interviews were conducted so that it was only the participant and the researcher, with the exception of the married couple for whom their interviews were conducted in their home so both were present during each other's interview. Each interview was audio recorded of the interview and did not contain any personally identifiable information because a few of the participants expressed their desire for anonymity, as best as possible. Each participant chose their pseudonym to help ensure anonymity; a few pseudonyms were chosen by the researcher. A semi-structured interview protocol was used for the interview to allow for flexibility during the interviews. This helped participants to speak freely about their experiences without being restricted by rigid interview questions. This also helped to collect thick description of the participants' experiences. During the interviews the researcher took notes that were later be developed into more detailed memos for each participant, within a few hours after the interview was finished to help ensure as much information as possible was captured.

Participants did not receive any form of compensation other than light refreshments if the interview took place at a café and the participant said yes to the offered refreshment. Analytical memos were written throughout the data collection process to indicate any patterns that emerged during interviews, notes about how to modify future participant interviews, and summaries of the interviews.

Focus groups were not used because although many participants may have had similar experiences they will not have been exactly the same and may have distinct differences, such as going into foster care or staying with a relative. Additionally, this event occurred between 55 to

57 years ago for participants. This lapse of time may have made it difficult to accurately remember details of an event if there are other people sharing similar experiences in a focus group. Therefore individual interviews were used to help garner the most accurate memory recollection. Lastly, some of the participant experiences were traumatic or considered very personal, so the individual interviews were more sensitive to these needs by creating a more private experience.

Timeline Interviews

A timeline interview was used with each participant in addition to, and at the same time as, the one-on-one interviews. The timeline interviews were not audio recorded and ranged from 10 to 30 minutes to complete. Timeline interviews helped to document when events happened within a person's life. It can be a powerful tool for making the participant feel like they are a part of the interview and can help give them some ownership of the research experience (Adriansen, 2012). A timeline interview is also useful for helping the participant to remember when events occurred and the details of those events, which is why the timeline interview was completed right before the one-on-one interview. Lastly, a timeline interview can help corroborate or challenge what comes out in the main one-on-one interview (Adriansen, 2012). Therefore the timeline interview strengthened the methodology of this study as it helped to ensure better quality data.

The timeline interview involved a large sheet of unlined paper and a thin marker or pen. The start of the participants' timeline was their birth and the end of the timeline was the event of the interview. The timeline was placed in the middle of the sheet. When necessary multiple timelines were added for family members or other individuals relevant to the participants' lives. One timeline interview was completed by a participant (by request), while the rest were completed by the interviewer. After the timeline interview was complete the interviewer

reviewed every piece of information on the timeline with the participant so that it was accurate and approved by the participant. The timeline interview was popular among a majority of the participants as it gave them a chance to approve the information from their life course that would be used in this study. This feature likely made participants feel like they had some control over their participation.

Sociodemographic Questionnaire

A brief sociodemographic questionnaire was administered to participants some time right before or right after their one-on-one interview. It included questions about their age, gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, education level, current employment status, religion, and if they had served in the armed forces. The religion and socioeconomic status questions were asked about for current status and for when they were still living in Cuba. The brief sociodemographic questionnaire can be referred to in Appendix E.

Data Management

The in-depth interviews were audio recorded. The recording device was securely stored in a locked cabinet and the digital audio recordings were securely (password protected) stored on the researcher's computer. Signed consent forms were also securely stored in a locked cabinet. Transcriptions of the interviews did not contain personally identifiable information. Assigning each participant a unique identification made of a combination of numbers and letters will help ensure their confidential participation in the study. Each participant, with exception to a few, chose their pseudonym that would be used in the findings and discussion chapters.

About two-thirds of the interviews were transcribed professionally by Rev (www.rev.com). About one third of the interviews were transcribed by trained undergraduate research assistants. Before the undergraduate research assistants began transcribing they

completed appropriate IRB CITI training and qualitative research workshops. The main researcher of this study led the workshops to train the undergraduates on historical context of the study, the basics of qualitative research, how to transcribe, and provided materials such as a transcribing template and tip sheet. All recordings were transcribed into Word documents.

The participants were sent the initial transcribed interviews to approve their interview transcript before the transcripts were used in analysis. This gave participants the opportunity to make corrections, include new information that they saw as appropriate to include, or took out information. Participants either approved the transcript or they sent back it back with corrections so the researcher could make the recommended changes. After changes to the transcript were made the corrected transcript was then sent back to the participant for final approval. Most interviews received minimal corrections from participants. The qualitative data management software Dedoose was used for managing and analyzing the data.

Data Analyses

Grounded theory was used to elicit thematic concepts that emerged during analysis and helped build up to a systematic theory customized to the group of oral histories in this sample of participants (Daly, 2007). Analysis was concurrent with data collection and interpretation of findings. Analysis focused on separating, fragmenting, and identifying parts of data, whereas interpretation involved allocating meaning and significance to passages (Daly, 2007). Analytical memos were used throughout the coding and analysis process to indicate any patterns emerging in the data and important questions that came out.

Coding was used to “name segments of data” and involved three stages including open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Daly, 2007, p. 231). The coding process began as soon as an interview was fully transcribed and approved by the participant, so this researched

utilized a rolling admission process of data entry and coding. *Open coding* was the first step and involved a line-by-line review of data and marking off any significant segments of data with a meaningful label. The intent of open coding is to “open up the data and explore what it means” rather than trying to get it perfectly right (Daly, 2007, p. 230). It served as the first step for creating new concepts and breaking down the data into meaningful segments. The next step was *axial coding*, which involved looking at relationships “...within a category and between categories” (Daly, 2007, p. 234). The purpose of axial coding is to develop meaning between the segments that are discovered in open coding and how they may work together. The final step was *selective coding*, which served to help formulate a theory grounded in the initial findings that will reflect the lived reality of the study participants. This step started with identifying the main, or central, category that can tie together other peripheral categories, or themes, that then developed a “central explanation” (Daly, 2007, p. 236). The other major categories that were found were related to this central category and contributed to the grounded theory that was formulated from the collection of main themes extracted from the data (Daly, 2007). The codebook used for this analysis can be found in Appendix F.

Qualitative Integrity of Data

The rigor of the collected data was ensured through meeting the following criteria: closeness of fit, sampling decisions, and saturation. The following discussion describes these criteria in greater depth and how they were incorporated into this study.

Closeness of Fit

The ‘closeness of fit’ refers to how well the unit of observation and the unit of analysis in a study fit together (Roy, Zvonkovic, Goldberg, Sharp, & LaRossa, 2015). These units need to be congruent so that the conclusions made from the data collected have validity (Roy et al., 2015).

The unit of observation in this study, or "...the 'who' for which data are...collected", is the individual participant (rather than a family unit) (Sedgwick, 2014). The unit of analysis, or "...the 'what' for which information is analyzed and conclusions are made", is the meaning that each participant has made out of their experience with Operation Pedro Pan and how this meaning affected their family's resilience while adapting to living in the U.S. and regrouping as a unit, and the participants' later life choices (i.e., after having adapted to living in the U.S.) regarding their family. There is a close fit between the unit of analysis and the unit of observation in this study because the meaning that participants made from their unique experience in Operation Pedro Pan, in coming over to the U.S. by themselves, is best relayed through their perspective. They came to the U.S. unaccompanied therefore they have the sole vantage point and are the best conveyers of information.

Sampling Decisions and Saturation

There are a few key sampling decisions that were made for this study. First, although achieving saturation was a main goal, a small sample was prioritized so that an intricate understanding of the Operation Pedro Pan experience can be gleaned from this sample (Roy et al., 2015). This allowed for asking semi-structured in-depth questions during the interview that gave participants the opportunity to describe their experience at length, as well as to discuss their construction of meaning out of this experience, across their life course. This study used selective sampling because only participants who came to the U.S. through Operation Pedro Pan and who were separated from their families were pursued. This is a very specific group of people that have a "sought-after experience" that was of great interest for this research (Roy et al., 2015, p. 247). These sampling decisions also worked alongside saturation of data through collection and analysis that reaches a point of "...no new data, no new themes, and no new coding..." (Fusch &

Ness, 2015, p. 1409) that shows that a particular depth of data has been reached that achieves data and theoretical saturation (Burmeister & Aiken, 2012).

Data Saturation and Theoretical Saturation

Data saturation is achieved when there is a repetition of details within the data collected that is noticeable "...when researchers sense they have seen or heard something so repeatedly that they can anticipate it" (Sandelowski, 2008, p. 875). Data saturation was one of two criteria for achieving saturation and was relevant during the data design and collection phase (Roy et al., 2015). The second criteria was *theoretical saturation*, which is when a researcher finds that the key concepts of the theory developing from the phenomenon being studied have been fully met and fleshed out through the data collected. The data will show the "complexity and variation" of the theory (Sandelowski, 2008, p. 875). Theoretical saturation occurred during the analysis phase of the study (Roy et al., 2015). When both of these saturation criteria were met, the final sample size of 25 was determined.

Trustworthiness of Data

The reliability of the data was shown through criteria that indicate trustworthiness of a research study, based on Guba's Model of Trustworthiness. This model includes the four criteria and strategies for "assessing these criteria" as a means to increase the rigor of qualitative and quantitative studies (Krefting, 1991, p. 215). This qualitative study included the criteria of truth value, consistency, and neutrality (Krefting, 1991). Multiple strategies were utilized to ensure that these three criteria were present throughout each step of the research process.

Truth Value

Truth value in qualitative research is achieved by implementing a study that is "subject-oriented" rather than having the study's findings prioritized by the researcher(s) (Krefting, 1991,

p. 215). Additionally, findings should reflect the true experiences of the participants (Krefting, 1991). Strategies to ensure truth value is reflected in this research study included reflexivity, interview technique, and triangulation. Reflexivity involves being cognizant of how knowledge is constructed throughout each step of research. A more in-depth discussion of reflexivity is in the following section. Interview technique was used to ensure truth value was present in this research by following an interview protocol that does not ask leading questions, that allows participants to answer what questions that they are comfortable with and with responses that they feel reflect their experience. Lastly, triangulation in theories and methods was used to ensure consistency of truth value throughout the data and help to facilitate deeper understanding that is reflective of the participant experience (Krefting, 1991). Utilizing Life Course Theory and Family Resilience Theory together to help explain any differences in responses helped to satisfy theory triangulation. Using in-depth participant interviews and journaling also helped to satisfy methods triangulation.

Consistency

Consistency in qualitative research is “defined in terms of dependability” in that any variation found in the data can be attributed to “identified sources” (Krefting, 1991, p. 216). Qualitative research focuses on the human experience and variation in human experience is normal. It was not expected that every participant in this study would have had the same exact experience with Operation Pedro Pan and that there would be some small variations between participants. Consistency in this research was ensured through the use of thick description, which is “...a cultural account that emphasizes descriptive detail” and can help provide context to a cultural outsider (Daly, 2007, p. 87). It helped to analyze dense detail provided by the

participants, which was used in ascribing any detected variations in the data. Triangulation of theories and methods was also used to help ensure consistency throughout the research process.

Neutrality

Qualitative research should be as free from bias as possible to ensure the quality of the data collected. Although it has been previously discussed that bias is inherent to this type of research because of the direct involvement of the researcher, it is possible to limit harmful bias from entering into the research procedures and results (Krefting, 1991). The researcher was largely free of research biases that can be associated with being a member of the community under study because she was not a part of the community (in this case, the Cuban American community). Reflexivity was used to help ensure neutrality throughout each step of the research process.

Lastly, triangulation of theories and methods was used to help ensure neutrality throughout the research process. Triangulation is a qualitative research approach that uses multiple methods or data sources to establish a more complete understanding of an experience (Patton, 1999) and to "...test validity through the convergence of information from different sources (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014, p. 545). The types of triangulation that were used in this research included method triangulation and data source triangulation. *Method triangulation* is when multiple methods of data collection are used for the same event or experience to help confirm findings and increase validity and understanding of an event or phenomenon (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012). This will include the in-depth interviews, field notes, and memos written by me after each interview and when reflecting on themes and ideas for a later discussion. *Data source triangulation* was used to unite information from multiple sources, as a means to help support and verify the dependability of the information

derived from the in-depth interviews (Carter et al., 2014). This included collecting and observing family documentation provided by participants such as photos, letters, family history blogs, and official forms from participants' arrival in the U.S.

Reflexivity

Utilizing reflexivity in qualitative research is crucial to preserving the integrity of the research findings. A pillar of subjectivism, from which the social constructionism paradigm stems, states that there is bias in every part of the research process because we, the researchers, are the ones driving the inquiry (Daly, 2007). Therefore it was imperative to employ a reflexive practice to help with, "...examining and monitoring the role that we play in shaping the research outcome" (Daly, 2007, p. 188).

I used reflexivity throughout this research by journaling. This helped with constant reflection before and after an interview, interacting with participants, analyzing data, and discussing findings. I began journaling when I started to develop draft research questions in September 2016 and have continued to reflect on this experience since then through journaling.

As previously stated, reflexivity has been an integral facet in the development and implementation of this study. I am very aware that I have no prior affiliations with these communities: individuals who experienced Operation Pedro Pan, Cuban immigrants, or Cuban-Americans. I have been hyper-aware of my outside status from the very beginning of developing this proposal and have kept this fact in mind while reading relevant literature, developing my research questions and methodology, communicating with the Operation Pedro Pan Group, Inc., reaching out to potential participants and participants, and conducting the interviews.

Reflexivity continued to be present throughout data collection, coding, and analysis. I believe that a strength of my position as the researcher includes my genuine interest in the

subject matter and the lived experiences of these participants. Operation Pedro Pan adults have developed a strong network that celebrates their history and perseverance. They are proud to be Cuban-American and to tell their stories.

I also believe that my outsider status helped throughout the research process. For instance, when I interviewed participants my outsider status likely encouraged participants to freely share their experiences as a means to spread awareness about Operation Pedro Pan. Many participants told me before and after the interview how important it was to them that their story be heard, especially because they are of an aging population. It is important to note that Cuban-American adults who came to the United States through Operation Pedro Pan, and at least one author with close family members who are Pedro Pans, have written all of the major literary (Conde, 2000; Eire, 2003; Eire, 2011) and research publications (de los Angeles Torres, 2003; de los Angeles Torres, 1999; Goyos, 1996; Rodriguez-Nogués, 1983) on Operation Pedro Pan. Additionally, the historical issues surrounding the Cuban Revolution and American relations has inspired strong conflicting opinions within the Cuban-American community and within families (Goyos, 1996) and I am mostly free of biases that can be associated with being a member of the Cuban American community (it is important to note however that having been born in America could have caused some bias regarding communism). Since I am not a part of this community I was able to present myself as an individual who was solely seeking to learn about their life history and their perceptions of their experience with Operation Pedro Pan. Interestingly, several participants commented on how I looked like some of their relatives with one participant even saying, “You look just like my cousin Nancy” while others commented on how their children or grandchildren looked like me. Although I am not Cuban there may still have been a minimal

level of connection that may have helped participants feel comfortable with telling me about their experiences.

Lastly, there was also reflexivity present during the transcription phase through the approach used with the undergraduate research assistants. The choice to work closely with the undergraduate research assistants was deliberate for a few reasons. Firstly, providing consistent feedback about their transcription work provided for a constructive experience that could be meaningful and help the students advance their research skills. This likely made the overall experience more meaningful and this was important to me. Secondly, making this a meaningful experience, rather than being strictly about turning out transcriptions without feedback, the students could feel invested in their work, which would then likely show in the quality and accuracy of their transcriptions. Therefore the extra time spent with the undergraduate research assistants added to the reflexivity of this study and likely created better quality data.

There are some inherent limitations to my outsider status in this research and working with participants who identify with the unique experience of Operation Pedro Pan and being Cuban American. I was born in the U.S., so I have not lived through immigration, I do not come from a Cuban family, and I have not experienced significant family separation. This lack of particular experiences will make it less likely for me to fully understand participants' involvement with Operation Pedro Pan and could have affected how I spoke and interacted with participants during interviews (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). This could in turn affect how participants interacted with me and how they responded to questions.

Researcher's Biography

My pathway into researching the transfer of historical trauma and resilience in families is an accumulation of eclectic experiences and interests that culminated into pursuing a Family Science doctoral degree. After earning a Bachelor's degree in Psychology I served the city of Philadelphia as an AmeriCorps member working with the American Red Cross. During this time I provided emergency services for families and children from diverse backgrounds, in response to house fires and natural disasters. I also taught over 10,000 students about emergency preparedness in impoverished schools and disenfranchised neighborhoods. Providing these services exposed me to a three dimensional perspective on health disparities and trauma in families while also highlighting the remarkable strengths in their communities. This revelatory time highly motivated me to pursue a Masters in Public Health degree in Maternal and Child Health at The George Washington University.

Upon receiving my MPH in 2011 I began to work in the Human and Social Development department of a non-profit social science firm in Washington, D.C. I specialized in technical assistance and program evaluation in the areas of: child and family mental health, systems of care, mentoring, community violence prevention, implementation science, positive youth development, and rural behavioral health. I had several professional opportunities to present at national conferences, coauthor academic publications, and work alongside federal agencies and project officers. Following three years of working at this firm I had a well-honed idea of the research that I wanted to specialize in and began my current PhD program in Family Science at the University of Maryland in the School of Public Health where I am in my fifth year.

Also worth noting are my long time passion for history and my time spent studying abroad in South Africa and the Czech Republic. My historical training has focused on the

civilian experience during humanitarian emergencies in the twentieth century as well as the related humanitarian response. My time in South Africa allowed me the opportunity to learn from individuals who had lived under the oppressive and violent Apartheid segregation laws. While in the Czech Republic I learned from my fellow students and local elders about the challenges and long-term effects of previously living under the despotic Soviet communist rule. These experiences helped to broaden my research interests to include the intergenerational effects of structural violence and the political environment over the life course in individuals and their families. Operation Pedro Pan is a historical event that encapsulates much of my previous training, research interests, and experiences regarding international humanitarian events that separate families and cause intergenerational distress. In addition to this well-fitted match between my background and the details of Operation Pedro Pan, there is little research on the personal experiences of this event and the lifelong impact that it has had on families who were directly affected by it. This gap in knowledge concerning an important topic that is relevant to contemporary immigration and refugee issues is a driving force behind my intentions for this research.

Additionally, I have long had a deep interest in immigration to the U.S. and how different historical time points during the twentieth century may have affected immigrant families' acculturation. The origins of my family history in the United States were cemented right before World War I. My great grandparents were all poor immigrants from Eastern, Northwestern, and Southern Europe who came to the U.S. during an "open borders" time period of immigration that saw one of the largest mass migrations in U.S. immigration history (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2012). Throughout my life I have observed how little of my ancestral European culture was passed down through generations and I have often wondered how well my

great grandparents would have acculturated during a different time period when borders were more “closed”, or if they had not come over with other European immigrants and were considered a minority (almost all of my great grandparents settled into communities that were comprised of people from their native origins). This combination of immigration variables and acculturation outcomes has been an ongoing thought process that has played a part in cultivating my research interests in the immigrant experience.

In conclusion, my academic training and exposure to families dealing with historical trauma has given me a distinctive expertise in child and family mental health from a systems perspective. I aspire to better understand and illuminate the complexities of trauma that families experience while living through humanitarian emergencies and the after-experience of living as a refugee or immigrating to another country. This research could contribute to the enhancement of mental health services and social services that are provided to these families to be more culturally aware and sensitive. This line of work could also influence domestic policy on how to better delegate funding to refugee services and to be more sensitive to the needs of incoming immigrants and refugees – particularly related to how cultural competence can be bettered infused into health, mental health and social services. Lastly, it is a long-term goal that this work will influence international decision-making during times of man-made and natural disasters.

Chapter 4: Operation Pedro Pan – Family Case Study

This family case study analyzes the experiences of the Costa⁶ family's migration to the U.S. and Operation Pedro Pan, based on the interviews of one brother and two sisters who participated in the larger study. This family case study is important to highlight in contrast to the other 22 participants, to show reliability in participant responses regarding Operation Pedro Pan events that happened nearly 60 years ago. One of the main research questions in this study focuses on the family and community factors that likely played a role in families' adaptation to living in the U.S. after having been separated. This family possessed unique attributes in comparison to other participants, especially with regard to their experiences of family resilience during times of family separation and reunification, which can help highlight in greater detail what resilience factors were key to this family's successful reunion and adaptation.

The three siblings in this family case study were able to independently confirm the majority of each other's stories, while also adding significant insight into the varying experiences of each sibling related to their differences in age at the time of migration. Additionally, much of their family history that was shared during their interviews were confirmed through an online family history blog that is written and maintained by the eldest brother who did not participate in this study. This family blog is well researched and contains pictures and additional family stories about their reunification in the U.S., including information about when and where they reunited.

Description of Costa Family and Migration Experience

The members of this case study family who participated in this study included three siblings, consisting of one brother and two sisters. The three participants came to the U.S. through Operation Pedro Pan together on the same flight in September 1961. They have one

⁶ All participants and referenced individuals received pseudonyms that are aliases and are from the same, or at least similar, ethnic/cultural region that the real name or surname is from.

older brother who did not participate in the study, but who came to the U.S. with them on the same flight and was a part of the Operation Pedro Pan program. The oldest of the three participants Violeta was eight years old when she arrived in the U.S., the middle sibling Mateo was seven years old, and the youngest Isabel was six years old. The oldest brother, who was involved in the migration but did not participate in this study, was nine years old at the time that they arrived in the U.S. The members of their immediate family included two parents, and two younger siblings who stayed in Cuba because they were too young to travel, comprising a family of eight (one more sibling was born years later once the family was reunited in the U.S.).

The Costa family lived in the suburbs of a large city in Central Cuba. The participants described their family as having come from the upper middle class of Cuba, being Roman Catholic, and being very religious. Cumulatively, the three siblings described their childhood in Cuba as peaceful, quiet, serious, loving, and having involved relatively open communication with their parents. They also acknowledge that they were all quite young to remember much more detail than this about their childhood years in Cuba. Their father was a physician, and they described their mother as a stay-at-home mother who had paid help in the house, while Mateo remembered her as having provided translation services for a Canadian bank, as she could speak multiple languages.

The three sibling participants were interviewed separately and in different, but nearby, locations in the Mid-Atlantic region of the U.S. All three interviews occurred in-person and in a public place like a café or bakery between August 2017 and November 2017. I was first connected with Isabel, the youngest sibling, through Dr. Kerry Tripp who is a faculty member of the Family Science Department at the University of Maryland – College Park. Dr. Tripp's neighbor was aware of her knowledge of Operation Pedro Pan and told Dr. Tripp about an

acquaintance of hers (i.e., Isabel). After our interview together, Isabel gave me the email addresses of her brother and sister so that I could contact them about participating in this study.

Operation Pedro Pan Experience (Leaving Cuba through Family Reunion in U.S.)

The Costa siblings recollected similar experiences regarding their preparation for leaving Cuba via Operation Pedro Pan, the flight to the U.S., their time in refugee camps and foster care, and what it was like reuniting with their immediate family. The depth of their memories were reflective of their different ages at the time of migration – even though they were only one-to-two years apart in age, there was an apparent difference in the amount of detail they could remember.

Events Leading Up to Flight to U.S.

Isabel and Mateo, who were six and seven years old at the time, do not remember much detail about the days and weeks that led up to their departure. As Isabel described it, “We were just going somewhere...going on a trip with my brothers and sister...” Mateo recalls getting a suit specifically for the trip over to the U.S. and receiving a statue of the Virgin Mary. He recalled that trip as feeling more like a last-minute event and can remember the day of the trip with a bit more detail than weeks prior, particularly the bad parts, “I remember that day more like a blur, more like a bad thing.” Mateo described how a soldier at the Havana airport took his statue and broke it on the ground to check if there were any valuables inside.

Unsurprisingly Violeta, the eldest sibling participant, could recall the most detail about the days leading up to their departure. She also remembered her grandmother making new clothes for her that had her initials sewn into them, but was not told why. Interestingly, Violeta was able to recall driving from their home town in Central Cuba to Havana (a nearly seven hours-long drive) and staying in a hotel, going to the zoo, and in general getting the sense that

their parents purposefully made a family trip out of their inevitable departure to the U.S. However, at this point in their trip Violeta was not aware of what was really happening.

After their short time in Havana they were taken to the airport. Both she and Mateo could recall their parents saying that they would meet up with them in a few months (i.e., three to four months). Similar to those of her brother Mateo her memories at the airport, a notoriously sad memory for many Pedro Pans, are blurry as she remembered a glass enclosure (i.e., la pecera – the “fishbowl”) but not leaving her mother. She does remember having a small purse with her that had a nickel in it, which was taken from her when she was searched by security, as no one was allowed at the time to take anything of value with them. The four siblings left Cuba in September 1961, a few months after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, which had elevated hostilities between the U.S. and Cuban governments and had resulted in increased scrutiny by the Cuban government of Cuban citizens trying to leave the island. This was the peak time period when the most children were leaving Cuba via Operation Pedro Pan. For the final leg of this part of the departure, Violeta can only remember Mateo being given ‘wings’ by an airline stewardess and then arriving in the U.S.

Arriving in U.S. and First Placement – Kendall Camp

Violeta was the only sibling to remember being picked up at the Miami airport by a man and being ‘signed in’ and then taken to Kendall Camp where they were separated into the girls’ and boys’ sections of the camp (Mateo remembered being separated from his sisters). All three siblings remember at least a little bit of detail about their time at Kendall Camp and spending about two weeks there before being sent on another plane ride to an orphanage in Syracuse, New York. The three siblings recall little, if any, emotion-based memories related to this first leg of

their migration, rather their memories of Kendall Camp are event-based. For instance, Violeta could remember taking lessons in English and math in a gazebo in the yard.

Second Placement – Orphanage: Syracuse, New York

The two sisters were at the orphanage in Syracuse, New York for about six months, while the two brothers were there for an undetermined shorter amount of time as they were placed with a foster family more quickly. This orphanage has been corroborated in Yvonne Conde's book, *Operation Pedro Pan: The untold exodus of 14,048 Cuban children* (1999) and through Catholic Charities of Onondaga County (n.d.). The siblings were separated by gender at the orphanage so the sisters were together on one floor while the brothers were likely together on another floor. Nuns mainly ran the orphanage, but there were also some volunteers. There were mixed experiences among the siblings at this placement. Mateo did not recall much detail about his time at the orphanage other than possibly playing out in the snow and visiting his sisters once a month or so at the orphanage after he and his brother were placed in a foster home. Violeta also stated that she did not remember much from the orphanage but she did remember that it was very structured and that they would have to wash dishes, etc. Violeta was also able to confirm the negative experiences that Isabel endured while at the orphanage:

But they were hard on us...the first day when we got there we spoke Spanish and they made us ask for our breakfast in English and until we asked for it in English we couldn't have breakfast. So I recall learning 'toast', 'I would like some toast', and then I got toast and whatever and eggs, we learned quickly. Isabel had a very hard time there. I don't recall having problems with any of the adults there, I don't recall much about it though. I think I unattached myself from bad memories or something. But they were very bad to Isabel...

Isabel, the youngest sibling, recalled her time at the orphanage as being a bad experience that was different from Violeta's time there. Isabel remembers being paddled several times by a nun, where they would take her into a closed closet with a paddle because she did something

'bad' – such as not taking her vitamin that was too big for her to swallow. Isabel also recalls not being allowed to do things until they asked for it in English. These negative experiences appear to have had a somatic impact on Isabel that she was also punished for:

And then I also remember that I had been wetting my bed 'cause I guess ... the trauma and all that.. And, um, they made me wear a diaper all day long, just a diaper, and have all the kids make fun of me...because I wet my bed. That was awful. Yeah that was a terrible place. I did not like it at all.

Eventually the two sisters were placed with a foster family in the vicinity of Syracuse, NY where their circumstances greatly improved.

Third Placement – Foster Home: Syracuse, New York

Their third placement, in two separate foster homes (girls in one, boys in the other), elicited the most detail and positive sentiment during the interviews with all three siblings. Both sets of siblings ended up in foster homes in two suburban towns right outside of Syracuse. They were about a 20-minute drive away from each other and would have visits for holidays so that they could all see one another. They lived in their foster homes for about 3.5 years before being reunited with their parents in a suburb of Washington, D.C. During this time they would frequently write letters to their parents (sometimes reluctantly) and their parents would write back, and once in awhile they would speak on the phone.

Mateo and his older brother went to live with the Weber family. The Weber family consisted of a married couple who had three children of their own, two boys and one girl, who were all younger than Mateo. During their time with this family two more girls were born, making for a total of five children and Mateo and his brother. Mateo remembers a grandmother being present who only spoke Italian, but they could communicate a little because he spoke Spanish and the two languages are similar. This family can be described as having been well structured and disciplined. Mateo remembered the Weber family members having taught them to

“work hard...in school and at home. We would do the chores. And it wasn't like Cuba. Because in Cuba we didn't do chores.” Mateo’s contrasting socioeconomic experience of having wealth in Cuba and much less in the U.S., was a typical phenomenon among Pedro Pan children while they were separated from their parents. Mateo’s introduction to chores in the U.S. could also be an example of contrasting gendered expectations, although middle-class to upper class Cuban children typically did not do chores no matter their gender.

Mateo remembers being verbally disciplined for getting into arguments with his foster brother but that this discipline was similar to what he had experienced with his father in Cuba. Positive memories included braiding rugs together as a family using old thrift clothes that were cut into strips, and growing and picking tomatoes in the backyard garden to help make a pasta dinner. This daily involvement in family life made for a more normal family-life experience that had some similarities to their upbringing in Cuba – mostly related to structure and routine and a focus on family. Mateo remembers his foster mother as having been a “really caring” person and that he “didn't see a lot of negative stuff. I assume there was [negative events]. And then I'm wondering why my [older] brother doesn't want to come out and talk to people [about the family separation].” Furthermore about his experience, Mateo noted:

See, I think I had probably the best time out of all of the four of us. I'm looking back and I'm wondering why it seemed ... Like I have a few [bad] times where there are, in the four years, but most of the time it was good, and I'm wondering why. Sometimes I think maybe my nine-year-old brother protected me, or shielded me from some of the bad stuff.

Isabel and Violeta expressed having a particularly positive experience with their foster family, the Ainsleys. The Ainsley family included a married couple who were a bit older and had children who were teenagers, a boy and a girl, so they were several years older than Isabel and Violeta. Violeta remembers learning a lot from the daughter such as cooking, baking, and even introducing them to contemporary music, “She taught us to dance in the garage to the Beatles.”

The sisters regularly attended church with the Ainsleys and felt that that they "...treated us as their children". Violeta recalled being regularly doted on and made to feel special:

And she was a wonderful mom, she would sew, she was a big sewer, just like my grandmother, and she would sew us twin outfits all the time. Whenever she went shopping, I remember Easter, we always would get a new outfit. Isabel was always pink, and I was blue. So, she would buy us twin outfits in two colors and I would have you know, a blue drinking cup and Isabel would have pink. It was kind of neat to be individualized.

The sisters also experienced verbal discipline with the threat of physical discipline (i.e., "came in the room with a wooden spoon") for misbehaving and clearly had structure in their daily lives that very likely contributed to their feeling of being a part of the family. Just as Mateo experienced several commonalities in his foster home to his family life in Cuba, Violeta and Isabel also had continuity in family life seen in their regular religious participation, being included in daily family life, being treated as the children of their foster parents (including discipline), and being made to feel loved and cared for.

Reunion with Parents

The Costa parents had to jump through several hoops in Cuba before being able to escape to Mexico, where they stayed for a few months with their two youngest children. After finally obtaining a visa to the U.S., they then travelled to a Washington, D.C. suburb where a friend lent them a house to stay in rent-free. After about a month of preparing for their children to arrive, they were finally ready to reunite after four years of separation. It is important to note that during this separation, there were several times when the Costa parents believed that they would be leaving Cuba so they would write to the foster parents to let them know of their situation. The foster parents would then let the children know that their parents would be coming but then something would happen and plans would fall through (this was a common occurrence among

Pedro Pan children). This ambiguity caused stress for at least Violeta, as she was aware of these changes, most likely because she was older.

Mateo and Isabel, the two youngest siblings, remember this transition back to family life together as sad and stressful, whereas Violeta focused her interview responses more on what it was like reintegrating back into a Cuban family culture and learning to speak Spanish again. Mateo and Isabel clearly formed a close bond with their foster families and were likely young enough to not remember as much about their parents as Violeta did. Mateo recalled, “I remember crying a lot. Like at night. Missing my ... foster family... That loss. That was a big loss. I remember when I got to my foster home, the first few months it was hard to ... Especially at night. It was really hard. So maybe it's [the same] ... But a different kind of feeling when I reunited with my parents.” Isabel was ten at the time of family reunification and had not seen her parents since she was six-years-old so she remembers being distraught about leaving her Syracuse family:

...and for me...I had totally forgot kind of...not forgot but pushed aside my parents in Cuba and the Ainsleys were my parents then...That's who I considered my parents...I did not want to go. I did not want another separation. The Ainsleys were my parents and I didn't want to go to these people that were saying they were my parents [laughing]. So that—that was a rough—rough time.

Violeta has the most recollection about living with their parents again and the ‘reorientation’ lessons that they would have with their father:

One of the main things that Mami and Papi wanted us to do was to learn, I mean learn Spanish [again], and so Papi would have these round table discussions about ‘esto es un zapato’ (‘this is a shoe’) and ‘this is this’ and everybody had to repeat it, he taught us Cuban geography I remember, he had a map...I enjoyed it, I mean I think they were very proud of their national roots, you know, their Cuban-ness, and they were teaching that back to us and it continued throughout our, until adulthood, how proud they were of being Cuban but how proud they were of being here and free. And so, it started then, when they started teaching us the culture of Cuba and then they had Cuban friends here, we would go to see them, the community was really important to them.

One of the unique characteristics of the Costa family was that their father, who was a physician, consulted a friend who was a psychologist about the best way to reunite with their children so that they could feel normal and they could, essentially, go back to being a family again. A part of this family reintegration strategy was to keep in touch with the foster families through letters and eventually going up to Syracuse, NY to visit them. Violeta commented on the letters that they used to write to their foster families, “[our foster mom] saved the letters that we wrote to her from Washington...that told [them] how we felt, what was different, the new school, and how we missed them, and Isabel especially, she would draw pictures. So, it was very different when we got here.” Intentionally maintaining this positive connection to their foster families appeared to have been an effective approach to preserving the children’s wellbeing, as they have stayed in touch with these families to this day.

However, the children were not actively encouraged to talk about the separation and in fact, they did not talk about it unless they were to first bring it up with their parents – this was the instruction that their father had received from his psychologist friend. Therefore they never really talked about the separation. Over time Violeta increasingly thought more about the ‘unknown’ during those four years of separation and finally in her twenties she inquired with her parents, “I found out that [our father] wasn't allowed to come for four years because of the professional Visa. I thought that they just didn’t feel like coming for four years. I don't know that I thought that directly, but I didn't know why.” It turns out that because he was a doctor he was not allowed to leave for quite some time but the children never knew this or any other reason why they did not meet up with them again until much later. Another side to this is that the separation may have been too painful to talk about. Isabel stated that her parents did not like to talk about it

and that, “It was hard for my mother to talk about, you know, being separated from her children.”

Family Case Study - Discussion

This discussion section will explore findings from the three participants of the Costa family, in relation to this study’s three main research questions. This will include discussing what worked for the Costa family in their reunion and adapting to living in the U.S., what may have had negative effects on their adaptation, and other interesting facets to this family that relate to family separation and reunion. These findings will be supported by direct quotes from the participants, tied to the research literature on unaccompanied migration and family separation, and the two theories that guided this research – Life Course theory and Family Resilience theory.

Emergent Themes

One emergent theme of this research that applies to the Costa family case study is *common threads*. Common threads are positive factors that were present in participants’ lives in Cuba, while they were separated, and when they reunited. These factors helped provide continuity in their daily lives that supported positive development and acculturating to living in the U.S. The Costa family had several common threads that will be further explored in the following discussions for research questions 1-3.

Research Question #1

How did participants’ unaccompanied migration as a minor to the U.S. influence their perceived role within their family and their relationship with their parents while they were separated and after they reunited?

- *Did the relationships within the family become stronger, weaker, or stay the same as when they were living together in Cuba?*
- *What new roles did participants take on within their family when they were separated and when they reunited?*

It is apparent that the Costa children did not need to adopt new roles while they were separated from their parents because of the loving foster families that they lived with – this familial continuity, or common thread, they experienced in foster care allowed them to behave as children and act their own age. Also, these three siblings did not have to take on extra sibling responsibilities so they did not need to assume a parental role to look after one another. However, this may not have been the experience of the older brother, who was the eldest sibling and who did not participate in this study.

Unlike many other participants who arrived in the U.S. at an older age and who had to “adultify”, the Costa siblings did not have to find employment to help support the family economically while separated or after their reunion. Rather, they were able to learn and practice responsibility that was age-appropriate, within a loving and structured environment. They were taught how to contribute to the family household through performing household chores and cleaning up after themselves. They experienced verbal discipline from a parental figure while also receiving positive individual attention from their foster mothers. Violeta and Isabel experienced particularly individualized attention from their foster mother who Isabel remembers as having said that she “was not done mothering yet”.

This leads to an important finding within this case study regarding why the Costa children had such a positive foster experience – both foster families claimed to have heard a ‘call to help’ while at a church sermon that asked church constituents to take in unaccompanied Cuban children who were coming into the U.S. in unexpectedly high numbers and who needed homes to stay in. Mateo had the additional factor of having an immigrant foster family – his foster mother’s mother came through Ellis Island from Italy, and even though they did not have a lot of money they felt compelled to take in these Cuban children. As he recalled, “And that’s why

they took us in, because they heard the story at the church about these Cubans were coming from ... Departing Miami, and they needed a place to stay because there was 14,000. I mean I don't know how many thousands there were at the time, but there was a lot.” Mateo also believes that the Weber’s immigrant background may have contributed to their willingness to take him and his brother into their home.

Lastly, this family separation and successful reunion appeared to have strengthened the Costa family relationships, of which continued to strengthen over time. The apparent adhesive factors that kept the Costa family together and functional included: sharing and reinforcing the same strong values (i.e., trust, being there for one another, being direct with one another); a strong religious presence in attending services and being active in the local church community; and the Costa parents’ strong and loving marriage and their purposeful, ongoing attempts at making the transition to living together again as easy as possible for their children.

The Costa family participants spoke of having a very good upbringing and solid, positive relationships with their parents while they were still living in Cuba. Although there was a period of adjusting to living with one another again in the U.S. – and at different developmental stages than the last time they were living together in Cuba – the Costa family continued to have positive relationships with one another, which appears to have been guided by their strong family values and religion, their positive experiences in foster care, and that they were separated in pairs and never truly lost contact with one another while they were separated from their parents. This coincides with two of the core tenants of family resilience theory – affirming belief systems and communication behaviors. The Costa family participants also all spoke of their good, solid upbringing in Cuba and an implied trust in their parents’ actions and intentions. All of these factors combined allowed for each family member to continue on in their family role, the

children could continue their social-emotional development at a normal rate, and strengthen the family as a whole.

Research Question #2

How did participants' unaccompanied migration as a minor from Cuba to the U.S. influence their own and their family's ability to socially, culturally, and economically adapt to living in the U.S. as a young adult? What family factors and community factors contributed to their family's adaptation to living in the U.S.?

Individual Factors

As previously discussed, the three Costa siblings were young enough that they did not need to take on any adult roles during or after their family separation. Mateo mentioned that he and his older brother would deliver papers so they could buy bicycles and other non-essential items that their parents could not afford, particularly during the time period when their father was working to get his medical license. Otherwise, the Costa children could be just that – children. Experiencing this age-normalcy was one of the important common threads that likely greatly contributed to their successful adaptation to living in the U.S. This was most likely possible because of having a supportive environment while they were living in Cuba, while they were with their foster families, and when they were back to living with their parents and siblings.

Family Factors

Practical strengths in this family included factors such as their mother being able to speak some English before arriving in the U.S., both parents had experienced previous international travel including in the U.S., and their father was a doctor – a professional. These practical strengths helped to ease their transition by helping secure financial security more easily and to acculturate into American culture.

The three sibling interviews all separately confirmed that a core strength of the Costa family was their *flexibility* in adapting to: living together again in a new country with a

significantly different culture while the participants were already acculturated and the rest of the family was just starting over; living within a lower socioeconomic bracket that caused financial strain while their father worked to get licensed as a doctor; and reuniting after having been separated for four years and living together again with the children being in markedly different developmental periods (i.e., young child in Cuba to young adolescent in the U.S.). Adolescence can be an inherently tumultuous developmental time period for any family, let alone a family reintegrating as a unit under multiple stressors.

All of these situations could easily cause stress and tension in a family trying to adapt to a new country while simultaneously trying to re-form as a cohesive family that now includes two cultures at varying levels of acculturation for each member. Their flexibility was a resilient approach that was made possible by their core beliefs as a family (i.e., family comes first), which included religion, keeping Cuban culture central in their daily lives, continuous open communication between children and parents, and their ongoing relationships with their foster families.

Additionally, education was a must in the Costa family and firmly encouraged by their parents – this included pursuing higher education and all seven siblings achieved college degrees. All of these strengths were purposefully integrated into their daily lives by their parents and the three sibling participants recognized the strength of their parent’s positive influence on the family. As Isabel described it, “I think our upbringing had a lot to do with us being able to withstand what we did. And—I mean—none of us...all seven of us are successful people. I mean we all have college degrees. We've all gotten married. No one has ever divorced. No one has ever been addicted to anything...I think that's a testament to my parents.” Interestingly Violeta

described how the story of their migration, as told to them by their father, was an internal reminder of the strength of their family:

...my father taught us...that for some reason we thought we were very special because we had undergone this separation and we had come back and you know, we were great again. So, I never felt discriminated against, he would always tell us the story of how we got here and how we left, and I would always tell that story. I didn't care what people thought.

Through this family story telling, their father gave importance and meaning to their ability to successfully re-form as a family in the face of adversity. This likely fed into and strengthened their shared family values and loyalty to one another. The importance of family was emphasized regularly by their parents and became woven into several facets of their development throughout their adolescence.

Community Factors

Throughout the three sibling interviews the most prominent community factors that aided the Costa family transitioning to living in the U.S. were having Cuban friends nearby and involved in their lives, and their local Catholic church. Both of these supports provided practical and emotional support while they were settling into a new home in a new country. Their church helped provide second hand clothing and housing items like furniture, and likely provided much needed spiritual guidance. Additionally, all the siblings spoke of how their parents actively volunteered in their local church, which was another way for them to get involved in their new community. Their Cuban friends provided free housing, furniture connections, and employment opportunities for their father that helped him stay in the medical profession, and were a constant connection to their Cuban culture. This cultural bridge likely played a strong role in their acceptance of their new U.S. home.

The combination of their Cuban friends and church helped the Costa family to acculturate into the U.S. in a way that they could acquire basic necessities, find employment, and hold on to their Cuban culture through social events that often involved Cuban food and dancing. This helped reinforce the cultural approach that was happening inside the home as well – such as learning Spanish with their father, and learning about Cuba and their family history. This combination helped this family to have the most balanced acculturation style – integration (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). The integration acculturation style equates to having one foot in the native culture and the other foot in the new culture, which is exactly what the Costa family was embracing.

Research Question #3

How did participants' family experience with separation and adapting to living in the U.S. as teenagers and young adults, shape their later relationships, parenting practices and philosophies, particularly in relation to perceived cultural norms in Cuban and Cuban-American families?

The Costa siblings' family separation and adaptation to living in the U.S. appear to have had lifelong effects on different aspects of their lives, mainly related to family life but also how they acculturated as teenagers, their attitudes towards higher education, and financial habits. The separation itself was traumatic at times but the lasting influence in this family appears to have stemmed from the Costa family's response to this separation, which was met with purpose and a 'family first' attitude.

Within their own families – Violeta, Mateo, and Isabel – all recognized in their interviews how their family beliefs on the importance of family began with their parents and has permeated down to how they raised their now-adult children. Isabel expressed the positive influence of how her family responded to their separation on her own family beliefs stating that, "It definitely strengthened. I truly believe family is very important. Family [are] the only ones

that are going to care about you when things go bad and they'll be there in the bad times and they'll be there in the good times...I definitely instill that into my kids and they're keeping it up.”

An interesting unprovoked occurrence in two of the interviews, with Violeta and Mateo, was the topic of whether they would be able to separate from their children. This was not specifically asked of them but it was clear that it was something that they had thought of while raising their children. Mateo said that he did not like going on long trips and being separated from his kids and he “[was] always talking about that”. Violeta thought about separation a bit differently than Mateo. She had questioned her motivations on why she could not do it, “I do think that if I were my parents, if I were my mother, I wouldn't ever, I wouldn't do it. Just because...but I've never [figured out] whether I wouldn't do it because it happened to me or I wouldn't do it because that's just the way I love my kids and I couldn't separate myself from them.” She did however mention that these thoughts about separation began to emerge at certain age, “...I always have said that, I always have said that since the kids were little. That when they started getting to my age [when I left Cuba], like eight years old, the age that I was, I would look at them and say, 'How could I ever put these kids on a plane?' I could not.”

The last significant piece about the life course influence on family was the importance of passing down their Cuban culture to their children and grandchildren. Each sibling participant mentioned at least once the importance of Cuban culture but to varying degrees, which was commented on as possibly being because one of them married an American, one married a Cuban, and the other married a Colombian – each having varying distances from the Cuban culture. Each sibling did remark on the strongest source of Cuban cultural influence in their family – their parents. Violeta described the lifelong influence of her parents’ ever-present

Cuban identity as something that diminished once they passed away – a testament to the significant weight of their physical presence and influence on the Costa family:

Papi was always the Cuban. He would tell us about Cuba and...didn't fail to interrupt some conversation that we had [laughter], that he was so proud of his heritage. ...And you know, since they passed away...I think I feel less Cuban for some reason. That it was their pull that made what I was, that, how much he emphasized that in the family, that you not forget your roots.

Education was a smaller important finding that came up consistently throughout each interview. All three siblings discussed how their parents emphasized the importance of higher education and that they had to go to college. Mateo recalled how his father would talk with him about how he was doing in life and in school, and when he encountered hard times his father would talk him through it:

My father would talk to me a lot, which was good. I think ... we would sit down and talk. And I think he did that purposely just to make sure we were readjusting... It was good that he did that because we got to talk about a bunch of stuff ...[about] growing up, and other people, and ... One of the problems I talked about having [was a] problem in college, and he talked to me about that. Like I would want to just quit ...and he would talk to me out of it. Stick it out, get your degree.

Their father was a firm believer in his children finishing college, and it was apparent that he would regularly open up communication whenever it seemed like it was necessary to help them through a problem.

Isabel and Violeta both brought up how they were thrifty and mentioned that their other sister was as well (i.e., Isabel said that she and Violeta were both thrifty, and vice versa). They believed that their time growing up as teenagers in the U.S. while their parents were trying to start over, which caused financial strain, instilled a life long habit of being thrifty with their shopping. Isabel commented on how she saved up her finances throughout her career and was able to retire before the age of 60, and before any of her siblings. She thinks that this is at least partly due to her experience of adapting to living in the U.S. while her family experienced

financial strain. Isabel also remarked on the influence of Pedro Pan on her life stating that, “I think that's why I'm organized. Because I don't want any surprises in life. I've had enough of them.” This matches with her continuous savings that allowed her to retire early while working a middle-income job.

Between Group Comparison

Similar family responses across all participants included adapting to living in the U.S., including working under limited financial means and having at least one parent have to work to get licensed as a professional in the U.S. Although the Costa children were separated from their parents for four years, which is a long time, the average length of separation among all participants was 32.5 months (2.5 years), which is also a long time for a child to be separated from their parents, while in a foreign country. Therefore the length of time they were separated was similar to that of other participants' experiences.

Some of the main distinctive differences include the young age at which they came over and that they came over together as a group of four – and were never completely separated. Although there were some other participants who came to the U.S. at a young age, the average age of the participant group was 12 years old, whereas the Costa sibling participants were six, seven, and eight years old. Also, their father's intentional preparation to ensure their wellbeing for their departure and reunion, which was based off of psychological research current at the time, was quite remarkable.

Chapter 5: Findings

Findings Overview

The findings chapter provides the results of the sociodemographic questionnaire, timeline interview, and the in-depth interview across all participants. There is also a summary of participants' experiences before and after their unaccompanied migration to the U.S. The in-depth interview findings are organized by research question. The purpose of this chapter is to show demographic background information on participants alongside a summary of the results from their in-depth interviews to provide a solid understanding of participants' life course experiences as a primer for the discussion in Chapter 6.

Participant Demographics

Table 2a and 2b provide background information on participants that was gathered from the sociodemographic questionnaire and timeline interview. The sociodemographic questionnaire was completed by participants and the timeline interview was completed by the researcher and was approved by each participant. Much of the information in the two tables has been incorporated into the findings discussion.

Table 2a			
<i>Self-Reported Participant Demographics</i>			
	Mean	Median	Range
Age in Years	67.7	68	62-71
Number of Marriages	1.3	1	1-3
Number of Children	2.5	2	0-5
Number of Grandchildren	3.2	3	0-10
Age at Arrival in U.S. (in years)	12	13	6-16
Number of Placements	2.5	2	1-8
Separation from Parents in Months	32.5 (2.7 years)	N/A	8-66 (5.5 years)
Number of Siblings That Accompanied Them to U.S.	1.1	1	0-5

Table 2b <i>Self-Reported Participant Demographics</i>						
Gender		Religion in Childhood		Employment Status		
Male	14		Catholic	17	Part-time	2
Female	11		Roman Catholic	7	Full-time	8
Race/Ethnicity			Jewish	1	Semi-retired	2
Cuban	1	Religion in Adulthood			Retired	13
Hispanic	3		Catholic	10	Employment Field	
White	3		Roman Catholic	7	Education	7
White/Cuban	7		Jewish	1	Sales	3
White/Hispanic	8		Christian	3	Business Owner	3
Spanish	2	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints	1	1	Medical Technology	2
Chinese	1	Non-denominational	1	1	Aerospace	2
Highest Education			Atheist	1	Financial Services	1
High School	4		None	1	Mental Health Services	1
Some College	4	Social Class in Cuba			Non-profit Administration	1
Associates	1		Working	6	Interpreter	1
Bachelors	6		Middle	11	Tourism	1
Masters	8		Upper Middle	7	Homemaker/Volunteer	1
ABD	1		Upper	1	Computers	1
PhD	1	Social Class Present Day			Automotive	1
Marital Status			Middle	16	U.S. Military Service	
Married	22		Upper Middle	9	Army	3
Divorced	2	Children/Grandchildren			Air Force	1
Widowed	1		Participants with Children	24	Marines	1
Multiple Marriages	7		Participants with Grandchildren	22	ROTC	1

Summary of Participants' Pre- and Post-Migration Experiences

The purpose of this summary is to give a brief background on the similarities and diversity in experiences that participants described concerning major events in the Operation Pedro Pan timeline, including daily life in Cuba before the revolution. This is important information to cover because 1) it acts as documentation for the wide range of experiences, and 2) it provides informative participant accounts that will help in better understanding the findings in this chapter, and the discussion in the following chapter that covers the three main research questions.

Daily Life in Cuba Pre- January 1, 1959

Family life in Cuba was most commonly described as being idyllic. Participants felt that they were very loved by their parents and that there was a high level of parent involvement in their daily lives – particularly from their mothers. Most participants described their household as

being strict and that “children were to be seen and not heard”. It was also mentioned by a majority of participants that their fathers did not attend church and that this was a cultural norm of the time. There were many recollections of going to the beach with family, having ‘extended’ family living around the corner and all in the same neighborhood and regularly celebrating holidays together. There were a few participants who lived in central and eastern regions of Cuba but most were born in Havana or the suburbs of Havana, therefore most participants did not see the active fighting that took place during 4.5 years-long Cuban revolution.

Cuban Revolution and Life Afterwards

The Cuban Revolution lasted from July of 1953 – Jan 1, 1959, however when participants were asked about this time point the focus was mainly on the very last days of the revolution. This was when Fidel Castro assumed power and participants discussed what it was like for their family and community in the very beginning of 1959. A few participants witnessed violence, including nearby bombings, during the last days of the revolution however most did not see the ‘start’ of change until Castro paraded with his guerilla army across Cuba towards Havana after the end of the revolution. For participants who were very young this was an exciting experience however many did remember their parents being wary of this change.

There were a mix of responses regarding their families’ reactions to Castro taking over, with most being positive but skeptical, however most of these families quickly turned against the revolution within three to six months. Parents were sensitive to whether or not Castro was describing himself as a communist, and many believed that he was before he publically admitted it in December 1961. There were a couple of participant families who were close to the inner circle of former President Batista and feared for the worst from the beginning. There were also a few participants who remembered having family members such as brothers or cousins who at

first actively supported Castro and then turned against him and participated in the underground anti-Castro movement at the time, with a few participants having had family members imprisoned for several years. There were also reports of dissent within families where some still supported Castro while others turned against it. However most of these families eventually agreed that the social and political atmosphere was quickly getting worse, while a small handful of participants reported having family who chose to stay in Cuba because they either supported the cause or did not want to leave Cuba.

The types of changes that participants reported having seen or heard about after the revolution included a range of small to large developments that were rolled out quickly. This included the start of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, which caused participants' parents to become guarded and warn their children about telling others about what happened inside their household. For instance, some participants remembered their parents listening for news in secret on illegal radios. There were several participants who recollected seeing executions on television and armed men walking the streets; and a few remembered being brought to a stadium with many other children where there were rally-like events being held just for youth and children. Many participants also remembered hearing propaganda in their schools in support of Castro and eventually their schools being closed, especially for those who attended Catholic school, and then being out of school for several months.

The main reasons that were cited for why parents sent their children away included the fear of older sons being conscripted in the newly created youth army of the time, having children – especially daughters – being sent into the country to help support the literacy campaign where there were rumors about young girls getting pregnant, and the most cited fear was communist

indoctrination. Some participants were too young to recall why their parents sent them away but were aware of the increasing sense of fear within their household.

Operation Pedro Pan

Most participants were not able to recollect how their parents were able to obtain visa waivers so that they could book a flight to Miami for their child(ren). There were some who accompanied their mothers in picking up their visa waiver and remember having to stop at multiple locations as the process could be multifaceted. Several participants remembered preparing for their departure and then having their plans fall through for various reasons, and having to start over with the visa waiver process. The older participants were generally more aware of their impending departure and had anywhere from a few months to a few weeks advance notice that they were leaving. Whereas the younger participants were more likely to know less about their journey and were made aware of it with less time in advance.

Many participants only remembered certain parts of their Operation Pedro Pan journey, and only a few remembering all of it (i.e., traveling to the airport, waiting at the airport, boarding the plane, the plane ride, getting picked up at the Miami airport, and arriving at their first placement). For instance some participants did not remember certain events such as waiting in the *pecera*⁷ in the Havana airport until many years later in adulthood, while other participants still cannot remember how they arrived at their camp destination – somehow they “just showed up” and that is all they can remember. Most of these lapses in memory are likely due to how young some of the participants were, but there were also instances of the memories being too painful. The *pecera* experience was discussed by many participants as one of the most excruciating parts of their journey, especially for those who had to wait several hours to board

⁷ The *pecera* was a glass enclosure that acted as a waiting room in the airport where participants would be separated from their parents and wait to be boarded. While waiting in the *pecera* they could see their family members but could not speak to them. Some waited for several hours before being boarded onto the plane.

their plane. During this time they were separated from their family and could not speak with them. They were often instructed by their parents to not show emotion so as not to tip off the security, as they were traveling under the guise that they would only be gone for a few weeks to months visiting relatives in the U.S. Several participants distinctly remember a guard going through their things and destroying items such as a religious statue or coat seams to check for contraband, which would include anything of value, as people were not allowed to take valuables off the island. These restrictions grew more severe over time and all of the participants left Cuba during the second half of the Operation Pedro Pan timeline when restrictions were more severe. Figure 3 depicts where in the timeline of important events that participants came to the U.S. through Operation Pedro Pan, while Figure 4 shows when participants came over and how many at each time point.

Figure 3. Operation Pedro Pan Participants in Cuban Historical Events Timeline

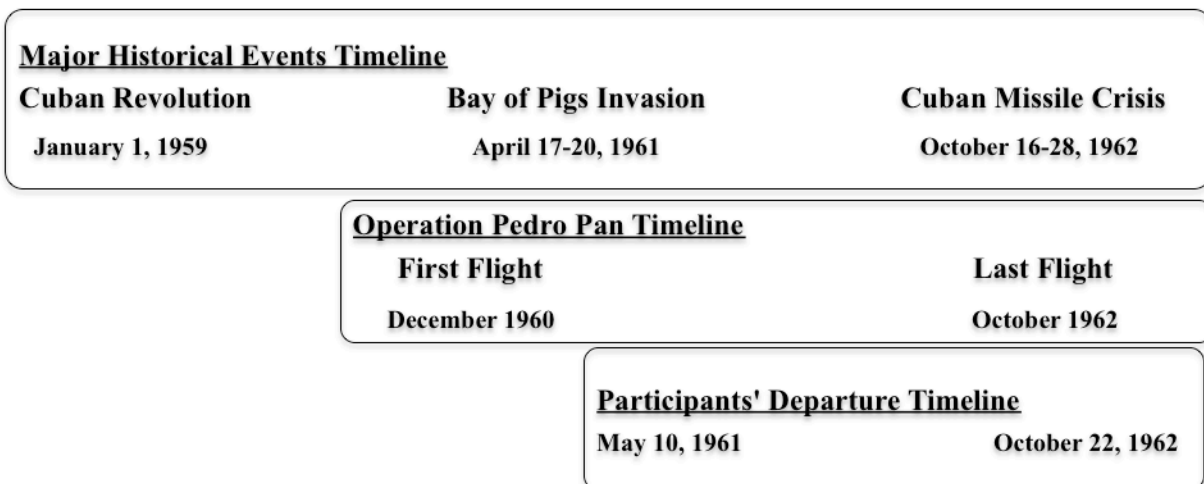
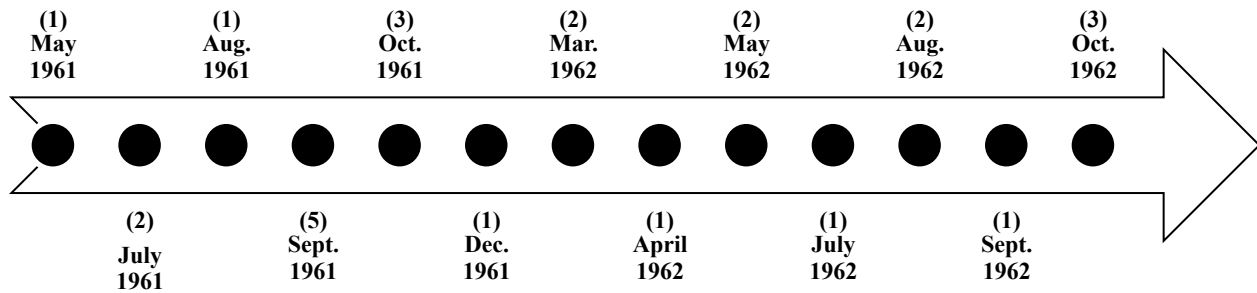


Figure 4. Participant Departure Timeline (number of participants in parentheses)



The flight to Miami appears to be the least memorable event across participants. This is not surprising considering the flight was only about one hour in duration. However there were a handful of participants who could remember this plane ride clearly. This was especially true for two types of participants – those who were younger and saw the airplane ride, for many their first time, as an exciting adventure; and the older participants who had a younger sibling(s) to look after and the airplane ride served as cutoff point between being a child and having to grow up and be responsible for themselves and others. Nine participants came to the U.S. by themselves, ten came over with at least one sibling, and eight participants had at least one sibling left behind in Cuba. Almost all participants remembered being picked up at the Miami airport by a nice man name George who handed out gum. He would drive them to their assigned camps and drop them off. A few participants were picked up by family members or friends of family.

Separation

‘Placements’ during participants’ family separation included Florida refugee camps (i.e., Matecumbe, Florida City, Opa-locka, etc.), orphanages, foster families, and being picked up by family or family friends. Only four participants did not experience a camp placement. Two participants were immediately picked up by family upon their arrival in Miami, one participant after arriving in Miami was sent straight to California where he stayed in an orphanage, and the

other participant went directly to a Jesuit school in Miami. All other participants experienced at least one placement in a Florida camp, ten participants were placed in foster care, eleven participants were placed in an orphanage, and five participants were at some point placed with family or friends of family. Nine participants were separated from a sibling when first placed into a camp. Table 3 depicts which camps participants were placed in.

Table 3 <i>Participant Camp and Home Placements</i> ⁸		
	Males	Females
Kendall	Mateo, Juan, Venerando	Isabel, Violeta, Diana, Laura, Mica, Ileana
Florida City	Jose, Joaquin, Diego, Cubacharlie, El Guti	Rosita, Mica, Maya, Alicia, Elena
Matecumbe	Joaquin, Majason, Cubacharlie, Fred	N/A
Opa-locka	Cande, Jose, Cubacharlie	N/A
St. Raphael's	Jose, Cande	N/A
Jesuit School	Tortuga	N/A

On average, participants experienced 2.5 placements and a range of one to eight placements. There were a number of combinations of camp placements experienced by participants. Most were sent to two camps or were sent to one camp and then onto an orphanage before being reunited with their parents. However there were seven participants who experienced three or more placements. The following list depicts the different combinations of placements.

Variations of Pathways Back to Family Reunion:⁹

1. Pre-migration > Depart Cuba > Picked Up by Family/Friends > Reunion
2. Pre-migration > Depart Cuba > Refugee Camp > Picked Up by Family/Friends > Reunion
3. Pre-migration > Depart Cuba > Refugee Camp > Refugee Camp > Reunion
4. Pre-migration > Depart Cuba > Refugee Camp > Orphanage > Reunion
5. Pre-migration > Depart Cuba > Refugee Camp > Orphanage > Foster Family > Reunion

⁸ Not all participants are represented in this chart because some did not go to these camps in Florida and some participants are represented multiple times.

⁹ There were other variations of these 'pathways' including multiple refugee camp and foster family placements, but in general, these were the typical experiences seen across participants.

Most participants reported having a generally positive experience while living at the camps, although there were some hardships such as feelings of sadness from missing their parents, being separated from siblings, having small personal items stolen, getting into fights, and subpar quality food. Most participants reported not having to learn English until they were sent to their second placement as everyone at the camps spoke Spanish. There were daily lessons and activities to participate in which likely contributed to positive experiences because it provided structure and socialization.

Orphanage experiences were split between being a wonderful experience that was an “adventure” to those who had very negative experiences with nuns at an orphanage. The overwhelming majority of participants who stayed in a foster home had a positive to very positive experience with their foster family. Table 4 gives a summary of this migration and separation experience for each participant.

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Age at Migration	Number of Siblings with Them	Migrated with Younger Sibling(s)	Separated from Sibling(s)	Number of Placements	Length of Separation (in months)
Isabel	Female	62	6	3	No	Yes	3	48
Diana	Female	71	15	2	Yes	No	2	11
Rosita	Female	68	14	0	No	No	2	10
Vivian	Female	69	13	0	No	No	2	36
Jose	Male	66	10	2	No	Yes	4	60
Marcel	Male	71	14	0	No	No	4	18
Laura	Female	69	13	1	Yes	No	2	8
Mateo	Male	63	7	3	Yes	Yes	2	48
Violeta	Female	64	8	3	Yes	Yes	2	48
Mica	Female	71	14	1	Yes	Yes	2	8
Cande	Male	71	16	0	No	No	3	N/A
Joaquin	Male	69	13	1	Yes	Yes	3	60
Maya	Female	68	13	0	No	No	2	54
Juan Reno	Male	66	10	1	No	No	2	10
Diego	Male	64	8	0	No	No	2	8
Majason	Male	71	16	1	No	Yes	5	42

Tortuga	Male	71	15	0	No	No	1	N/A
Alicia	Female	70	15	0	No	No	2	45
Ileana	Female	67	10	1	Yes	Yes	2	14
Venerando	Male	67	11	1	No	Yes	2	8
Cubacharlie	Male	67	11	0	No	No	8	66
Chichi	Male	65	9	1	No	No	2	48
Fred	Male	71	15	1	Yes	Yes	1	36
El Guti	Male	69	13	5	Yes	No	2	24
Eva	Female	64	9	1	Yes	No	2	36

Reunion with Parents

The average amount of time that participants were separated from their parents was 2.7 years with a range of eight months to 5.5 years. Most participants reunited with their parents in Miami. However there were several participants who met up with their parents in states like New York, Maryland, and California. Several participants moved to a second location with their parents after reuniting, to places such as New York, California, Maryland, and Massachusetts.

All participants reported having an emotional and positive experience when they were first reunited with their parents; this is with exception to two participants who had toxic or complicated relationships with their parents and two participants who never reunited with their parents. The following time period of adjustment was complicated for many participants as they navigated role changes, were growing up as an adolescent in a culture different from their parents' home culture, and were acculturating to living in the U.S. as an immigrant family with few resources.

Negative Experiences

There were two participants who clearly had an all around negative experience from the time they arrived in Miami to the time they were reunited with their parents. The first participant with a negative experience was separated for eight months from his parents and was with his brother. He does not remember much from his first placement at Kendall camp and his second

placement was with a family friend who turned out to be a swindler. At this second placement this participant experienced negligence and described it as “hell”. This participant was not able to recall some memories until a few decades later and was eventually diagnosed with “post traumatic stress”. The second participant who had an all around negative experience was separated from his parents for 5.5 years and experienced eight placements, one of which was a reform school and another was a juvenile detention facility for running away. He ran away because of his terrible living experiences but did not go into much detail as to his circumstances. During his time at the juvenile detention facility he did not hear from anyone related to the Cuban Children’s Program. He was eventually able to go to the Pacific Northwest to a foster home where he went to a local high school and worked to save up money for when his parents arrived. This participant had the most prolonged negative experience out of all participants.

One participant reported having experienced abuse and neglect while living in an orphanage. Six participants reported having a Pedro Pan sibling who had a negative experience, which included having experienced abuse (e.g., molestation, negligence) and also for unknown reasons – they just know that their sibling does not like to talk about their time of separation. Three participants reported having seen or heard of other children being abused while at one of the camps, orphanages, and in foster care. One participant reported that a cousin who was a Pedro Pan committed suicide at 40 years old – this cousin had a bad family separation experience and was supposedly “never the same again”.

A few participants discussed some discrimination that they experienced as adolescents and young adults. One participant recalled seeing signs saying ‘No Cubans’ in store windows in their Miami neighborhood, while others remembered directly being called names, and hearing their friends or acquaintances using derogatory language about Hispanics. The participants

would then chime in to say that they were Cuban and would often surprise those who were being prejudiced because they assumed they were Italian or of some other Southern European heritage. Another participant recalled experiencing verbal discrimination from teachers and school administrators.

Participant Experience Summary Conclusion

Almost all participants reported having a positive experience with migrating to the U.S. However when looking at particular time points in the separation and reunion it is apparent that there were some events that were more stressful or impactful than others. These differences appear to mostly be due to age at migration, gender, whether there were siblings and if they were separated from them, and individual experiences during each placement.

Additionally, it is important to note that although there were a significant number of similarities and differences represented across participants' accounts, there are still many more deviations from these experiences that were not accounted for in this sample. There were more than 14,000 children who came over to the U.S. through Operation Pedro Pan and it would be impossible to account for all types of experiences through one qualitative study. However, it is apparent that these participants reported similar conditions and experiences to previous publications on Operation Pedro Pan (Rodriguez-Nogués, 1983; Goyos, 1996; Conde, 1999).

Research Question #1 - Findings

How did participants' unaccompanied migration as a minor to the U.S. influence their perceived role within their family and their relationship with their parents while they were separated and after they reunited?

- *What new roles did participants take on within their family when they were separated and when they reunited?*
- *Did the relationships within the family become stronger, weaker, or stay the same as when they were living together in Cuba?*

Participants' perceived new roles includes any new role that participants identified as intentional or unintentional roles that they had to take on in order to survive their separation and help their family reunite in a new country. The majority of participants who had to adopt new roles were those who were older siblings, or were around 14 years old or older once they reunited with their parents. This was especially true for those who did not have many supports and faced serious financial strain once they reunited. The older participants with younger siblings were either directly instructed by parents to look after siblings or they naturally took on the role of caregiver once they were separated.

New Roles Participants Adopted - During the Separation

Economic Provider

Many participants spoke of picking up odd jobs during their family separation so that they could earn money for a number of reasons. This included being able to provide for themselves while they stayed with relatives or friends, in foster care, while living at a camp, or while living on their own. Some participants sought employment so that they could prepare for their family's arrival in the U.S. They saved for housing (being able to pay rent), transportation, and basic necessities. One participant, Cubacharlie, mentioned getting important financial advice from a trusted adult about this:

I think my old coach that was my foster parent. He's the one that said, "Hey, look man. Your parents are going to come. You don't know when, but they're going to come, and

the more money you save, the easier life is going to be for you and them. You need to work, and you need to save money." He says, "Whatever help you need." In a sense he mentored me to save money. That's why we didn't need any help from any agencies when they came, because I had plenty of money. I wasn't rich, but for those days I had plenty of money.

After five years of separation and saving money for nearly two years Cubacharlie reunited with his parents at the age of 16. He was able to save money working as a busboy at a four-star hotel downtown in the northwest city he was living in at a foster placement. Saving money pre-reunion was particularly important because it was common for their parents to not be able to find a job right away once they reunited in the U.S. This was most often due to language barriers and a lack of job opportunities. For those participants whose parents did find employment, it was often in factories or other types of minimum wage jobs that did not pay enough to cover basic expenses therefore participants also worked one or multiple jobs to help make ends meet.

Another participant who went through a similar situation was Fred. Fred came to the U.S. at the age of 15 with his younger brother. They were separated from their parents for three years. While his brother moved to New York to live with family, Fred ended up with a cousin and his wife and worked two jobs to save up money:

So, I quit high school in the daytime, and then I went to work in an all cargo warehouse in Miami... So, I began loading and unloading trucks. May 25, 1965 I was able to bring them [my parents] into the United States. Throughout that time, I saved all my money, I knew I had to support them for 30 days in Mexico, and then pay for their plane fare from Mexico City to Miami. I was able to do all that with the money that I was making in the warehouse, and then at the same time, on Friday nights, Saturday all day, Sunday all day, I was working in a carnival... In order to make the cash in those days, I had to work from about 12 noon until about midnight when the park closed. The pay was \$5 for all those hours. If I wanted to make an extra \$2.50, which I did, I started to work at 7:30 in the morning, and I had to clean the park before it opened.

Fred was able to save up enough money to pay for his parents to get out of Cuba, stay in Mexico until they could come into the U.S., and their flight into the U.S.

Caregiver Role/Family Leader

Ten participants came to the U.S. with at least one younger sibling, with a range of one to five siblings. Participants who were told by a parent that they were responsible for looking after a sibling(s) could still recall that specific moment and what was said to them. This was a tipping point of adultification – suddenly they were caretakers of their siblings (and in one case this included cousins) and immediately felt the weight of that responsibility. This seems to have been a sobering moment for these specific participants. They were let in on the true reality and gravity of the situation while their younger siblings remained unaware. One participant in particular, El Guti who was 13 years old at the time, was tasked with looking after his younger brother and four younger cousins. He emotionally recalled his father telling him, “Where one of you does not fit, none of you fit. You're all together. You make the decision. You...you make the decision for everybody. You are the man, you are the father. I don't know if I will ever see you again. I don't know ... I don't know if I'll ever see you again.” In this case, the participant was directly told that his role had changed – he was the father now and he had to look after these five younger children. Additionally, he witnessed his father who he described as having been a tall and strong man, have a tear roll down his face. The gravity of his situation was made clear to him and even though he previously had a sense that something was not quite right, his father’s instruction reset the tone for his impending departure.

Participant Eva provided a younger female perspective to this new and unexpected caregiver role. Eva was nine years old when she came to the U.S. with her younger sister – they were separated from their parents for three years before they reunited on the southern West coast.

Eva and her sister were kept together during their family separation and were first in the Florida City camp and eventually moved in with a loving older, Italian couple in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Before they flew to the U.S., which was an unexpected event for the two sisters, Eva was instructed by her father to take care of her little sister while they were separated:

Then when we got these new dresses, I went, 'I wonder what's going on.' I didn't think anything of it. You know, I was nine. I'm thinking, 'Okay. New clothes.' Whatever. I was just a kid. 'She wants me to put this new dress on, I'm going to put this new dress on.' Then before I know it, I'm at the airport. We're at the airport and my dad is pulling me aside. He goes, 'We're not going with you. You're going to get on that plane. You're going to get on an airplane and we can't go with you. You have to take care of your sister.' She hadn't made eight yet because this was in October. She didn't make eight until November. He said, 'She's little. You have to take care of her.'

Both El Guti and Eva were given new roles in which they were tasked with looking after younger sibling(s) and cousins. They were both young children themselves, particularly Eva at nine years old, who were not expecting to have to adopt a new large responsibility while they themselves would be separating from their caregivers. So not only were they given the role of watching over a younger child(ren), they were to take on this new task without any family supervision. They could not turn to their parents to ask for advice on how best to look after these younger children while they were likely experiencing their own elevated levels of stress while acclimating to a new country, and not knowing when they would see their parents again.

Autonomy/ Independence

There were only two participants who became completely independent from their parents once they left Cuba. They are included in this results discussion because their stories are very different from other participants' experiences and represent a complete separation from their family. This extreme separation was unintentional and a result of circumstance. These participants were independent in the sense that they were providing for themselves, making their own decisions, and living on their own. The two participants have different experiences in this

unique family separation situation, with one of the participants never truly having reunited with their family.

Cande was 16 years old when he left Cuba for the U.S. in August of 1962. He came over by himself while his younger brother stayed in Cuba with his parents, a working class family. Cande ended up staying in three separate places while in the Cuban Children's Program starting with Camp Matecumbe, then he moved onto the boy's home St. Raphael's, and his last placement was at Camp Opa-locka. Cande left the camp system in 1965 on his 19th birthday and began working full time for a year before he was drafted into the U.S. Army where he served two years of active duty in San Francisco, CA. In 1967 he married his wife and moved back to Miami in 1968 where he went back to work at his first job – a local business that he eventually bought from the original owner in 1982 and continues to own to this day. He and his wife had their first of four children in 1969 when he was 23-years-old. Cande's family never moved to the U.S. and he did not see them again until 1979 when he visited Cuba for one week. During this long separation he took on many adult roles with little to no guidance, including: acting as primary decision-maker, began working at a young age, served in the army, and started his own family. These monumental life events and transitions were done without the support of his family and in a different country.

Tortuga is the second participant to have had a complete separation from family but who also had a very unique journey getting to the U.S. He left Cuba in 1961 for Venezuela at 13 years old to attend a Minor Seminary with the Jesuits because he had decided to become a Jesuit priest. In the fall of 1962, at the age of 15, he was sent back to Cuba so that he could fly to Miami through Operation Pedro Pan. Tortuga's oldest brother had already left for the U.S. in the fall of 1960 and his younger sister left for the U.S. in the fall of 1961 (the second oldest brother stayed

in Cuba with their parents due to a health condition), so the family was already separated by the time he left for Miami. His brother and sister both went to Miami first and then eventually went to Puerto Rico for school.

Once in Miami, Tortuga was sent to the Jesuit Boys' Residence where he stayed through 1964 when he graduated from high school. He decided to formally join the Jesuits and left for the Dominican Republic to go into novitiate¹⁰ until 1966. During his two years there the Dominican Civil War occurred in 1965. In 1966 he went back to Venezuela for his 'formation'. Sometime during his stay in Venezuela he started to become unsure about his calling so he took a year of leave and went to Baltimore in 1968 to where his oldest brother was living. He eventually decided to leave the Jesuit Society and picked up menial jobs and started going to college. During all of these transitions, his parents eventually resettled in Puerto Rico with his younger sister and second oldest brother. Tortuga never lived with his family again and instead pursued advanced degrees in education on the East Coast of the U.S.

Another perspective on learning or embracing independence as a means for survival while being separated from family comes from Eva, the participant who was nine years old when she came to the U.S. with her younger sister. Although Eva was instructed by her father to look after her younger sister, she also took on an air of independence as a means to assimilate into the U.S. and accomplish what needed to be done. Eva clearly described taking on a practical mindset at a young age. "I [was] so used to doing what I needed to do, because of being a nine year old and training that I was responsible for myself. I just knew that this was where I needed to go and these are the steps that were necessary. I was definitely old for my age...I was like a little old woman." All three of these participants exemplify the concept of adultification and the process

¹⁰ A Jesuit's formation begins in the novitiate, which includes two years of learning how to pray, meditate, live in a community, and learn about the Society of Jesus (IHS Jesuits, n.d.).

of taking on adult-like behaviors and responsibilities as a means to survive, or at least progress towards a long-term goal.

New Roles Participants Adopted - When They Reunited

Most of the roles that were adopted or present after a participant's family had reunited were merely a continuation of roles they had already taken on during their separation. There were however newly adopted facets in these roles that were particular to the addition of their parent(s). Most families appear to have been flexible, although sometimes uncomfortable, with these roles changes. Parents who more graciously embraced these roles changes seemed to have had the least amount of dysfunction in their family, if any at all.

Economic Provider

Similar to when they were separated from their parents, participants who took on adult-level financial responsibilities started working full-time as soon as they turned 18, sometimes sooner. They either put off going to college, worked part- or full-time while going to college, or did not go at all. The difference in this role between before and after family reunion, is that once they were reunited with their family the caregiving role often merged with the financial role – to be more like a parent, such as the case with Cubacharlie and Fred.

There were however other examples of being a financial provider for the family when they reunited, while the participant was still an adolescent and in school. For instance, Maya came to the U.S. at the age of 13 by herself and was separated from her family for 4.5 years. She was in the second half of her senior year of high school when she was reunited with her parents, brother, and half-siblings. Although her stepfather was able to get a job as a janitor right away, Maya still had to get a job to help out her family, which took up a lot of her time outside of school. She further detailed it as follows:

Whether you were a doctor, or a lawyer, or whatever you were, that's how you started [from the bottom]. Then building your way up, right? ...But, that's [why], then I had to go to work. I got a job after school, so that I could help with the finances... And I was going to school, and then I would go to work after school. And then I would work on Saturdays, and sometimes on Sunday, and I wouldn't get home from work until after eleven or eleven thirty at night. I worked in a department store in downtown [mid-size Midwestern city].

Maya had the additional difficulty of living with her emotionally abusive and negligent mother and stepfather. This traumatic relationship began in Cuba, so her time in foster care in the U.S. was a more nurturing and positive experience for her – making her reunion with her family one of the very few reunions among the participants that was traumatic. This toxic home life made her adolescent years and trying to achieve her educational goals more difficult:

Oh, yes, that's why I left there [home], ...the day after I graduated from high school. I enrolled in some summer classes then, and worked. I was the secretary for the Dean of Students. And then, when the regular semester started, I was taking eighteen semester hours, and I was working 40 hours a week. Because I could work...at night, or between classes. So that made it possible for me to do that... It was hard. It was very hard, and no support of any kind, you know. Because they [family] never came to visit me, or invited me over for dinner or anything. Not once.

Maya ended up having to leave school due to an unexpected health issue and never returned. She got married to her first husband in the middle of 1970 and moved to another Midwestern state the following year for her husband's work. She was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder much later in life, which was attributed to her toxic home life growing up.

Juan provided a younger sibling perspective when he described how he and his brother were expected to contribute to the family in any way that they could, "I started shoveling snow in the winter to make extra money. Cutting lawns in the summer to make extra money. Did that all through the teenage times when I was there. We were expected to do whatever was necessary to contribute to the family." Venerando offered a similar account but specified that, "This is what

we have to do. You know, they didn't force it on us, not at all. We just participated. We knew what needed to be done.” Venerando was about 12 years old when he and his older brother reunited with their parents and older sister. As a family, they faced a lot of financial hardships and without being asked, he and his brother contributed to the family in multiple ways:

...did roles change? Well, yeah. I was working, collecting newspapers. I was selling newspapers on the street corner. In those days that was allowed, kids would go on the street corner and walk between cars selling the newspaper, Miami Herald, five cents a newspaper. They kept three cents, I kept two cents...One time my brother and I got together and we collected all kinds of Coke bottles. Two cents a piece to return. We got 98 cents and we went to the store and we bought a very small bag of shrimp...And we took it, we walked to the local bridge... and we started fishing. We got line and hook...and we came back [to the house] with a bucket full of fish that are called grunts and that was dinner... We did it multiple times, but the first time we did it was like, "Wow," you know.

Caregiver Role

The caregiving role that several participants took on after they reunited with their parents became multifaceted and expanded to include looking after their siblings and their parent(s). This role included financial support, giving advice, acting as a cultural broker to help them merge with U.S. culture, as a translator, and connector to necessities such as health care, employment opportunities, and welfare services. Participant Cubacharlie spoke about how once he and his parents reunited, the ‘tables’ had turned. He was now the head of the family helping out wherever he could and his parents embraced this change in roles because of their family trust and because it was how they would survive acculturating into the U.S.:

You know what? Tables changed. Instead of being the parents, because here they go from Cuba to [northwest city in U.S.]. They don't speak English. They have no idea what the United States is like. Instead of them being my parents, I became their leader. I would teach them. After my dad was working for four months or so, right around that time he comes over and he says, ‘Hey, [son], so I work from 7:00 to 3:00 every day. Couldn't I get a job working like from 5:00 to 12:00, or something like that?’ I go, ‘Absolutely, dad. Yeah. You want to do that? It's a long day.’

Participants often helped their parents find a job because they were more familiar with the city they were living in and likely had some connections, and they could speak English. They also understood local transportation so all around it was more efficient and effective for them to connect their parents to their local city. Cubacharlie helped his father find a second job so that he could help bring in more money – and he did find him a job through a friend. His father ended up working at a building downtown as a janitor and worked there for the next 20 years. Cubacharlie also did this for his mother who worked two jobs to help make ends meet and years later they eventually opened up a successful grocery store in another west coast state. When asked about this role change and how his parents felt about it, Cubacharlie had a response that signified gratitude and the practical need for survival:

I think my parents and I were just so happy to be together again that it didn't matter whose role it was. My dad, he couldn't speak English. He never learned. My mom learned a little bit. So, every time we went and did anything, he depended on me. So we did it. I didn't mind it. I thought like a leader I knew I had to do it...My dad needed anything, I was there. Even today, up to right now. My mom lives in Miami, and I take care of her every month. I send her 2,500 bucks a month so she can live.

A few participants spoke of going to the 'welfare office' to get temporary financial assistance for their family but emphasized that it was "only that one time" or that they would repay it back as soon they could. This sentiment of autonomy and independence was important to a few participants who had to act as the head of the family, most especially to Fred. Once his parents arrived in the U.S., after three years of separation, Fred encountered the next set of hurdles:

When my parents got here, we lived with my cousin and his family for about two months, and I realized then that I had to get out of there. So I did, I saved my money, tried to do as much as I could, and then I was able to find a one-bedroom apartment, looked like a matchbox, that's what it looked like. But, we were there. It was my father, my mother, my brother. I was able to bring my brother from New York...He was 15 then, so he helped me work, and a little bit in the pharmacy after school. But the one that was bringing [in]

the money was me, my father couldn't work, he was almost blind. My mother was not working.

In just a few sentences, Fred described taking on at least three different roles: bread winner, situation assessor, and lead decision-maker. When asked about this array of role changes in his family, he described a time when he had to make an important decision for his family about moving to the West Coast (from Miami) where a friend could help them find some work:

So, I remember my father calling me aside he said, 'Son, this friend...he said we could go to his house, hopefully be able to find work over there. What should we do?' And I remember telling my father, I said, 'Dad, I'm not the, the head of the family, you are the head of the family. You make the decision.' Then, I remember my father telling me, 'No, you're bringing in the bacon, so you make the decision.' Now you're asking a 19-year old to make a decision for the family, and I had no idea how to do it.

After already having taken on adult roles at a young age, Fred was faced with even more responsibilities – bestowed upon him by his father. The fact that his father clearly had confidence in his son to be able to do the job well and approached the situation with, what was to Fred, clear logic seemed to be an important aspect to this role transfer:

...his common sense was fantastic. So, he said, 'Let me put it to you this way, son. Let me help you a little bit. What do we have over here in Miami? I said, 'We don't have anything. Everything we had, we lost it in Cuba. We left it there.' He said, 'What do we have in California?' I said, 'We're not even there, Dad. We don't have anything.' So, he said, 'So, what's the difference between California and Miami? Over here we are tied up. You're working like an animal to make ends meet. I cannot help you. Your mother cannot help you.' So, I said, 'You're right, Dad. Let's go to California.'

This agreed upon role change was practical and suggests that his family was flexible enough to accommodate major changes in their living situation in a way that helped them respond to their adverse situation.

Effects on Their Relationship with Parents

Strongly shared family values were mentioned by almost every participant in this study, with the exception of the very few who had had a toxic relationship with their parent(s) while

still living in Cuba. These strong family values were tied to their ability to adapt and be flexible during their time assimilating to living in the U.S. as a family. So, although it was a time of great stress they were able to use this adversity as way to strengthen their family bond, or at least maintain it, and build it into their family legacy.

Cuban family norms and family values were explicitly looked at in the second research question but are central to answering the first research question's sub-query on whether or not these family relationships strengthened, stayed the same, or worsened after participants' family reunion. Overall, across participants the most common scenario was that the family relationships stayed the same, which were already positive, or strengthened. Only a few participants shared examples of conflict or dysfunction that arose after the reunion or were continued from their previous life in Cuba. El Guti provided a good example of how there was an inevitable change in his family after they had reunited. He succinctly described how his relationship with his parents did not change for the worse but it was markedly different:

I don't know, but at least we were with our parents. But something felt like ... it was not like when we were kids. I was not a kid anymore, I'll say that. I was very respectful. Anything they suggested, anything they would say I would go along. But I had my opinion. So the first few days we kinda tried to get acclimated to each other. And I was thankful that at least I was with my parents and us, we were together. But we were different, you know? Not that naïve kid that they put in an airplane, this is ... even though not yet 13, I was grown up. I was never a teenager, never. I was a boy and a man, no in between.

El Guti encapsulated in a few sentences the change in his family dynamics after their reunion. Even though he still respected his parents in the same way as before the separation, there were clear differences present – even if he was only describing it as an intangible feeling. El Guti was describing the changes in his family due to the separation but also because he was reunited with his parents when he was 15 years old, after two years of separation and looking after a little brother and four younger cousins. It is not surprising that he would feel different

living and interacting with his parents again, as his childhood responsibilities were adultified as soon as he was put on the airplane headed to the U.S.

Conflict Between Parent-Child Roles After Family Reunion

The conflict and dysfunction that emerged after some participants reunited with their families was mostly acute and a result of the multiple stressors at the time – reuniting at a different age/developmental stage than from when they last saw their parents, differences between Cuban and U.S. culture, and parents assimilating into a new country under stressful circumstances (i.e., leaving their home country because of conflict).

One type of conflict was a participant needing to let go of their previously adopted independence once they reunited with their parents. Eva, as previously discussed, adopted a sense of self-reliance that allowed her to be able to function while being separated from her parents and having to look after her younger sister. However, once she reunited with her parents after four years of separation, some initial dysfunction emerged:

We had a lot of conflict because I was so used to being able to speak my mind and, ‘I’m doing this because ...’ and then I would state my reason. And then they would be like, ‘But we’re in charge. We’re the parents here. We’re in charge and we’re responsible for your well being.’ That part was a little hard for me to take, because by nature I tend to be a little bossy...But I had to learn that there was a place for everything and a time for everything. It was definitely a learning curve for me, because I was so used to just doing, because I had these marching orders in the back of my mind from being a little kid, ‘You will take care of your sister. You are the oldest one.’ So in a lot of ways, in my mind, that gave me permission to act accordingly. As best as I could, act accordingly, being a kid.

Eva was able to eventually work through this conflict with her parents as an adolescent and has since then had a very close relationship with her parents and three siblings. Eva remarked on how even though she and her family live on opposite coasts, they have open communication and a system for decision-making that works for them, “I’m proud of the fact that

we're all very close... I would say we're very close... So we talk about everything. We have these four-way conversations. It works. It's just awesome.”

On the flip side of Eva’s experience with letting go of freedom, Venerando’s family had to learn to embrace their children’s newfound freedom. As previously discussed, Venerando and his brother would go out into their community in Miami and collect soda bottles, sell newspapers, and go fishing to help provide dinner for their family. Although this freedom helped the family to survive when they first reunited and had little to no resources, it was most likely a large source of stress for at least their mother. When Venerando was asked about whether his mother’s “very controlling” behavior in Cuba persisted through to their family living together in the U.S., he remarked on the drastic differences in her parenting, “Oh, no. That changed dramatic[ally]. I mean, she couldn't control us anymore. The minute that door opened, we were out with everybody else. So you now take a child that's been sheltered and let them go, and you start growing there. You start having experiences with other people, you start growing up, you start doing things that kids do.”

Venerando also remarked on how this freedom was terrifying for him at first but that, “As time goes on you learn and you make mistakes and you do things right, you do things wrong.” Venerando also believes that this change in their parent-child relationship likely caused his mother a great amount of anxiety. Many years later, when he was a parent, she told him about how “if it had not been for her” her brother would have been sexually assaulted when they were both young children. Venerando made the connection between his mother’s childhood traumatic event and her anxiety while first living in the U.S. with her children, and letting them go outside to make money, fish, play with their friends, etc. From this connection he concluded that this was

likely a large part of why she had a hard time coping during those early years together as a family in the U.S.

Another source of conflict that ranged from having small to large effects on family functioning was the experience of high monitoring from parents after being reunited. A source of stress from this type of parenting, especially for participants who were teenagers at the time, was the differences between U.S. culture and Cuban culture particularly related to gender norms and the parent-child relationship. Rosita had a positive relationship with her mother, however she was not immune to the effects of these cultural differences:

I wasn't really allowed to go anywhere, or do anything with friends. In New Jersey [at the foster placement] I had the ice skating rink. But I was really happy, I was just getting readjusted again, to the way I used to live, because my mom never let me out of her sight, you know. Even when I started dating my husband she was my chaperone, for two years. She would not let me out of that door for nothing, every place we went there she was. And the first time that happened, he asked 'where's she going' and I said 'she's going with us' [laughter]. She didn't believe in that, we dated two years and I think he was happy to get married and so he didn't have to have a chaperone.

Isabel also mentioned her parents' serious disapproval of her sister moving in with her boyfriend, "I mean they [my parents] were very...old fashioned...So the teenage years were hard." This was similar to Rosita's experience and reflects the family and gender norms of Cuba at the time. Isabel also spoke of how her mother was chaperoned when she went out on dates with her father and surmised that, "I mean if we had stayed there [Cuba], you know, life would've been very different." It is important to note that although many participants mentioned the teenage years being difficult – they also recognized the inherent stress that comes with adolescent development and transition within a family, and that this was likely exacerbated by the differences in Cuban and American culture at the time.

Research Question #2 – Findings

How did participants' unaccompanied migration as a minor from Cuba to the U.S. influence their own and their family's ability to socially, culturally, and economically adapt to living in the U.S. as a young adult? What family factors and community factors contributed to their family's adaptation to living in the U.S.?

Participants' and their family's ability to integrate into the U.S. was related to individual, family, and community factors. There were varying degrees of success across these factors and they were not evenly distributed across participants – in other words, family factors were more influential than community factors for some participants, while individual factors may not have had little, if any, influence on other participants, etc. However, across almost all participants the influence of their family appears to have been the most prominent, with having a local Cuban community following closely behind in influence.

Individual Factors

The relevant individual factors that emerged from the participant interviews included having long-term goals, birth order, and having a strong sense of discipline. Most of these emergent characteristics were positive attributes that helped in participants' ability to acculturate to living in the U.S., while there are a few examples of having a more difficult time due to an individual factor.

Having Long-Term Goals

During his interview, Tortuga seemed to be well aware of how his experiences stacked up compared to others who were in a situation similar to his. When asked about his life goals at the time of separation and how it may or may not have impacted his experience as an unaccompanied minor, he was clear about this connection:

Oh yeah. It's interesting, one day I was in a house...with a couple, and he had also left Cuba for Venezuela, we sort of had similar experiences in how, when, and where we had left Cuba. But he had a tough time. I said, you know, I didn't, and he said, well, because

you already had set your life in becoming a priest. For you all those were steps...to what you wanted.

Tortuga began living in another country away from his family at the age of 13 so that he could pursue his dream of becoming a priest. At the time he was well aware of the steps it would take to achieve this and he was dedicated to this long-term goal and had the support of his parents. Furthermore, although he was separated from his family while in the U.S., Tortuga was still able to pursue the steps to priesthood in the correct sequence. So, he was already used to living on his own and away from his family, and he was able to continue on with life goals that were directly related to a career and having a purpose. His goals were not derailed because of this unexpected migration – unlike those of many of the other participants and their families, who had to completely start over (e.g., not pursuing a college education so they could work and support the family). Additionally, Tortuga leaving Cuba was not like the other participants' unexpected migration and separation. His perspective was likely more 'normal' in that it was expected he would be leaving and he already had previously left under normal, expected circumstances. These factors were likely the main reasons why Tortuga was able to be so resilient and it seems that he has always been aware of this:

I already had began to detach myself from the family when I was 13 and I asked my parents that I wanted to become a priest, I wanted to go to seminary and all that. By the following year, when I left Cuba, it was also to go to another minor seminary. The period of detaching from the family had begun when I was in Cuba...The fact is that I never again [after I left Cuba at 14] lived with my parents. I don't mean to be flippant, but I always, when people ask about my life, I tell them, well I can give you the "traumatic" version, or the "prose" version. For me leaving Cuba was very normal and I never looked back.

Tortuga expressed a few times that earlier on during the separation there was still hope that they could go back to Cuba, so his quote about never looking back is related to a mindset of being focused on the future and working towards it. It was not until he graduated from high

school that he started to realize that it could be a really long time before they could go back to Cuba, if ever.

Another example of a long-term goal that helped participants in settling into the U.S. was getting an education. Marcel came to the U.S. alone at the age of 14 and once he arrived in Miami he was immediately sent out to California where he stayed in several placements including foster homes and an orphanage. During this time he was advised to ‘get degrees’ because that was the only way that he could ensure that he would be okay. A mentor figure in his life at the time told him, "You know, in this country if you want to progress, you have to have *papelitos*¹¹. You have to study, you have to get degrees." From then on Marcel made it a priority to be able to study so that he could finish school and go to college. This included eventually moving in with his brother who lived in another southern state so that he could have a more conducive environment for focusing on his education, even though that meant that he would be moving away from his parents for a while. This educational goal to attain degrees was a guiding point for many of his important decisions in adolescence and early adulthood.

Vivian was separated from her parents for nearly three years. She came to the U.S. alone as her three brothers left Cuba at different times, while one of them was a Pedro Pan who ended up in an orphanage in the Midwest. Vivian was reunited with her parents in Miami when she was 16 years old. However, at the time she was attending a Catholic school in Texas through a scholarship that was very similar to the school she attended in Cuba. She started attending the school in Texas in the eighth grade and boarded there, and then eventually ended up living with a local American family so that she could keep going to school. Vivian would attend school in Texas and spend her summers in Miami with her parents, even though she was very close with her family. She further explained why it was so important for her to do this:

¹¹ Spanish word for ‘slip of paper’.

It was, because it was the same school I had started in Cuba from not kindergarten but, there was a grade between kindergarten and first grade in Cuba, it's called *preprimario*. from that grade on I had always studied at the Ursulinas and then I was able to continue at Ursuline [Catholic school in Texas] and it was one of the few threads that connected my life, my past and my present. I always was very grateful for it, it was like I, that was the main goal in my life, my education... it was helpful. It doesn't mean I wasn't homesick, I was homesick but I just felt I had to do it... I missed them, I missed them but I loved the school.

Both Tortuga and Vivian spoke of having had “common threads” that helped guide them through their separation and experience as an unaccompanied minor. All three participant examples of individual factors provide insight into how having long-term goals helped them keep moving forward in their lives while waiting to be reunited with family, or in Tortuga’s case becoming an independent young adult.

Birth Order

Birth order emerged as an important factor for many participants but did so in more than one way, which was unexpected. The connection between birth order and individual outcomes has been explored through many diverse avenues of research, such as human development, family science, education, and economics. Researchers have found that the relationship between birth order and individual outcomes (e.g., cognitive development, economic prosperity, educational attainment, personality, etc.) can have many different directional relationships that are related to individual family characteristics, culture, and historical events such as social welfare policy changes or armed conflict (Ernst & Angst, 1983; de Haan, 2010; Heiland, 2011; Barclay, 2018). Participants in this study had a varied mix of these factors that included the very particular historical experiences of Operation Pedro Pan and the Cuban Revolution, Cuban family culture, and their unique family characteristics that were not always similar to other

participants' families. This mixture of historical experience and family attributes appeared to be the most influential in relation to birth order and their ability to adapt to living in the U.S.

As previously discussed in the first research question findings, participants who were older siblings with younger siblings were more likely to encounter more responsibilities and related stressors during separation and after their family reunion. They were more likely to have to take on at least one job to help out with finances and some had to forgo or at least postpone going to college. For instance, Maya was the oldest child in her family with a younger brother and two very young half-siblings. She was finishing her second half of her senior year of high school when they reunited. In this older sibling position Maya had to work late nights after school and on the weekends to help her family financially. This cut into her time to do homework and caused her great stress. Another example of this scenario is Mica, who was the oldest child in her family. She recalled being very good at accounting and wanted to pursue this as a career. However she knew that her main priority was her family and making sure that they would be taken care of. In regards to going to college she recollected that:

I had the grades but I didn't have the money. Things were different back then. No support from my parents...they could not afford to pay for my education. They couldn't because they had barely enough to... So, to me, that is just something that it was so part of my life, their sharing the financial responsibility of the household with me, that what I always wanted to do was work. So, to me, the experience I think it made me a very responsible person.

Another facet of birth order that had an influence on adaptability was a participant's experience growing up in Cuba as the middle child who also had a sibling with a disability. Tortuga was well aware of his position in the family, including extended relatives who all lived very close to his family home:

I think this influenced a lot of my experience outside of Cuba. I wanted to get out of our house, in which the oldest brother was the oldest one on both sides of the family, the youngest one, my sister, was the only girl, and then the second brother was a child with

special needs. So going into the high school/minor seminary and then leaving Cuba was a way to get out of a family matrix in which I was getting lost. When I left Cuba, for me it was an adventure, for my sister it was not. I was cool with it.

For Tortuga, his experience with birth order prior to leaving Cuba made him more likely to embrace an independence from his family, as a means to develop his identity and pursue his long-term goals. In this scenario, Tortuga's birth order was likely a resilience factor that aided his ability to migrate to another country as an unaccompanied minor and acculturate into the local culture.

Having a Strong Sense of Discipline

Having a disciplined childhood was cited by many participants as a reason for why they were likely to have had an easier time being separated from their parents and transitioning to living together again in the U.S. This discipline came from their parents and their strict Cuban upbringing, and from having gone to Catholic schools where the nuns provided a lot of structure and discipline was the norm. Discipline most often meant that there were clear rules in their home and at school that delineated right from wrong, and if they were to deviate from these rules there would be consequences – this appears to have been a way for families to reinforce their family values that focused on ‘doing the right thing’.

As Mica remembered it, “I went to a Catholic school so, that means that I had a lot of discipline growing up. My parents were also very strict so, I definitely, when I came to the United States, I was used to being totally disciplined...” Several participants believed that this discipline was what helped them to be responsible and hold down a job at such a young age. Participants cited this discipline as a family norm that will be touched on later regarding family norms and strengths. Furthermore, Mica commented on the likely effects of having grown up in a disciplined environment:

I was so used to it [nuns]... I honestly think that had something to do with it, the discipline that I was so used to... And the nuns too, so to me it was just [what] I know. I know because my next-door neighbor [in Cuba] came afterwards and she never went to Catholic school and her parents were not [as strict]...as mine. She never adjusted [to living in camp]. She had to be taken out by relatives. She never adjusted whereas I was happy. I made new friends, friends that I still keep in touch with, you know. It was very positive.

Although the individual factors appear to have had the least amount of impact out of the three factors explored in this research question, there were still significant findings that developed from this factor. Of greatest interest were the themes of *having long-term goals* and *having a strong sense of discipline*. Both of these themes provided participants with direction and structure during a time of disorder and unexpected independence from their parents.

Family Factors

The important family factors for this group of participants were tied to intrinsic family beliefs, which allowed their families to make shifts that under normal circumstances would likely have caused dysfunction or conflict within the family. However, participants' families were able to utilize these characteristics as a means to acculturate, while having faced financial strains. The family factors that emerged from participant interviews included role flexibility, Cuban family norms, and religion.

Role Flexibility

There were several unique types of role flexibility seen in participants' interviews. There was the expected role change of mothers moving from being a housewife in Cuba to working full-time in the U.S. However there were also some unexpected examples of parents being flexible in their role or in some cases their cultural identity. While some were more practical than others, all of the following examples served to help their families be able to adapt to living in the U.S.

Parents' ability to adjust to changing roles within the family helped them adapt socially and economically – particularly when wives who typically would not have worked in Cuba, started to work in the U.S. because they had to help out financially. Mica, who came to the U.S. at the age of 14 with her younger brother, having been separated for eight months from their parents, saw this type of role flexibility in her family. She described her father as a 'typical Catalan' meaning that he was a very serious man who was strict and disciplined (Mica described her childhood as also being calm and peaceful). He would not let his wife work while they lived in Cuba, even though she was trained to be a teacher. However, this mindset had to adjust enough to accommodate their financial needs while settling into the U.S. As Mica described it, "...that was one shock for my dad. My mom had to work so he was not very pleased about that but that was the only way to survive in the United States, you know, where it is the norm to have both people [work]." This role flexibility was likely supported by the typical Cuban belief that family comes first and that family should be there for one another, no matter what.

Juan and his siblings witnessed their father take on small but significant roles while he and his wife were both working. He remarked on how when they reunited, they went back to a normal life that had different family routines than from when they were living in Cuba:

It was kind of like back to normal in a different family life. It was different in that, now dad worked in a factory and so did mom. That was a different thing. I guess one of the biggest things was having dad prepare meals for us. Not that he would cook them, mom would cook them, but he would warm it up and serve it before he went to work. I mean that was like, "Wow."

From a contemporary perspective this may not look like a significant role adaptation, but considering the time – the early 1960s – and the Cuban family culture, it is not surprising that Juan took notice of this change.

El Guti was 13 years old when he came to the U.S. with his younger brother and four cousins. He and his brother were separated from their parents for two years. He described an interesting occurrence in his family after they had reunited, where his mother embraced the American culture that was at the time starting to focus on gender equality. El Guti discussed how in Cuba his father had relationships outside of his marriage and implied that this was the norm, therefore a wife would not speak out about this behavior. However, this was less of a marital norm in the U.S. (n.b., not being completely surrounded by Cubans while living in the U.S. also likely played a role in this because Cuban gender norms were not being reinforced as heavily) and El Guti's mother recognized this difference and capitalized on it – which in turn likely helped their family. El Guti explained this phenomenon further:

Where I was born, men were macho type where you have your place, you have nothing to say, where over here she [my mother] had no problem. She told my father, 'hey, this is the way things are'. My father, he was a good-looking guy, and once in a while he would wander, and I guess my mother thought... which is probably true. Over here she knew better. She said, 'no, no, no. You don't act this way. You don't stop going to church' ... Because our father never went to church until he came to this country. 'Things are not going to work out for us.' So, my father kind of got with the program, you know what I'm saying?... It was kind of a change, if you will, a change for the better. My father kind of got...he was a homebody. He would share more with us.

In this scenario, both El Guti's mother and father were flexible in their roles that were previously guided by Cuban norms around gender expectations. It appears that this flexibility around Cuban roles and norms helped their family to be able to adapt to living in the U.S. while maintaining their family unit.

An unexpected example that emerged within the 'role flexibility' factor was parent flexibility around cultural identity. Eva had a very particular example of this type of flexibility related to her parents' previous experience of immigrating to Cuba from China for economic opportunity. She was nine-years-old when she came to the U.S. with her younger sister and they

were separated from their family for three years. Eva described the great amount of flexibility that her parents had and were vocal about in regards to integrating into a new country:

My mom and dad were always ... they never felt that being in a new country was a barrier. They just felt like they needed to learn about their new country. Just like when they went to Cuba, they said, 'Okay, they speak Spanish here. We'll learn how to speak Spanish. We're still Chinese! Nobody can take that away from us.' And that's what I tell my children, too, is that you embrace who you are and you embrace all the backgrounds that make up who you are.

This quote from Eva encapsulates her parents', and therefore her family's, adaptive response to living in a new country – with the main message being that it is important to embrace the new culture and language while also holding onto your home culture. This approach lines up perfectly with the concept of 'one foot in, one foot out' in acculturation styles where an individual participates in both their ethnic culture and the host culture. In the case of Eva's family this would have been the integration approach. Through research this approach has been found to be the most beneficial for wellbeing outcomes in comparison to the three other acculturation styles (assimilation, marginalization, and separation) (Berry et al., 2006) and appears to have been helpful to Eva's family in resettling in the U.S.

Cuban Family Norms

Cuban family norms appeared to have played a large part in participants' ability to adapt to living in the U.S. as an adolescent and also trying to reintegrate with their family. The delayed start of their parents' arrival to the U.S., or in other words participants' head start in culturally acclimating to living in the U.S., created some challenges that were mostly smoothed over by their dominant Cuban family norms. The emergent characteristics in this family factor include a commitment to shared family values and family enmeshment, which are distinct but interrelated norms. Lastly, there were clear examples of cultural conflict in participants' experience with growing up as an adolescent in the U.S. alongside their parents' expected Cuban norms.

Family Enmeshment

A commonality among many of the participants' responses to their experiences with living with their parents again, but with fewer resources, was their family's reliance on interdependency between family members as a means to survive. This interdependency was likely complemented, or reinforced, by the behavioral norms of Cuban families at the time – this is what is referred to as *family enmeshment*. In clinical literature family enmeshment is typically viewed as having too much connection between family members, however in the case of participants' families it was mostly a norm that helped with family cohesion. This enmeshment in Cuban families was mostly functional and would be characterized as family members having very high cohesion with one another (Barber & Buehler, 1996). This likely acted as a family coping mechanism for these families who reunited in the U.S. They were already used to having daily and personal involvement in one another's lives and prioritizing each other's needs.

Commitment to Shared Family Values

When participants were asked about what their family strengths were when they reunited in the U.S., the vast majority referred to shared family values. There were varying definitions of 'family values' but all of the definitions were very similar or in some way interrelated. Participants remarked on how when they were adolescents, they had a strong sense of obligation towards their parents to help out the family, and many expressed gratitude for their parents' sacrifice to send them to the U.S. and 'start over'. These sentiments span participants' life course and support this emerging characteristic of shared family values as having been an important factor in their families' ability to adapt to living in the U.S. together.

Participants most often described family values by at least one, often more than one, of the following phrases: having a strong family unit; being able to depend on one another/always

helping each other out; placing a value on structure in family; always being a close knit family (including extended family); and family being as, or more, important than the individual. The definitions provided by participants match the term *familismo*, a Cuban family norm, which means prioritizing the family over the individual (Bernal, 1982; Queralt, 1984). This inclusive definition of ‘Cuban family values’ is clearly tied to all of the factors and characteristics discussed in this chapter.

An additional side to this strong commitment to family values is the commonality among many participants recollection of how their families addressed their separation once they reunited. Many participants described it as a ‘moving on to the next chapter’ approach where the only thing that mattered was that they were back together and it was not necessary to acknowledge this separation. There were varying experiences with this scenario, ranging from reconciling without much disruption, to straight out denial that they were ever separated. Vivian remembered this reunion as ‘we’re back together, so let’s just move on to the next chapter together’ type of scenario. Whereas Mica had a very different experience:

My mother, when she got older... My dad never, ever talked about this [separation], like it never happened. My mother pretended that it never happened. As if, she would say, ... ‘when we came from Cuba, remember when we came from Cuba’, they said that. And I would say, ‘when you came from Cuba, we did not come together’. As the years passed, she pretended that it didn't happen.

Another participant, Chichi – who came to the U.S. at the age of nine with his older brother who were both separated from their parents for four years – also recalled never talking about the separation with his parents once they were reunited. Chichi recollected that this was a distressing occurrence but that his parents likely avoided this topic because they wanted to move on towards a positive life together as a family:

That is something that I have tried to find out [how his parents arranged their departure] and I've not been able to, because the worst thing is that after they came, and we reunited,

and started our lives again, that that subject [separation] was never brought up... We did not talk about it...I feel that they wanted to get it past them, didn't want to dwell on it, they wanted to catch up on years lost, so we never discussed that at all.

Several participants discussed how their upbringing in Cuba was strict and that their parents were very present in their daily lives with decision-making, etc. Therefore, it is not surprising to think that these high-monitoring parents would not want to talk about this separation – it was likely a very hard decision to make – to send their child(ren) to a foreign country where they would not be able to protect them. Almost all participants explicitly stated that this was, or must have been, an excruciating decision to consider and almost all participants were very aware of this (a few of the participants who were young and recalled having a very positive experience while separated – stated that they did not think of the stress that this decision may have caused their parents until later on in life). This parental decision was often described as a “sacrifice” that participants continue to be very grateful for. Chichi remembered, as did several other participants, how his father was so distressed by his and his brother’s departure that he could not come with them on their several hour bus ride to Havana, where they would depart for the U.S.:

That day when we left from [eastern part of Cuba] to Havana, we left by bus. I remember that my father, he never said goodbye to us...He was so heartbroken, he was so emotionally distraught that he couldn't face saying goodbye to my brother and me, so he stayed with my grandmother actually, and my mother was the one who really had to take charge and take us, get on the bus, go to Havana. Spent a few days in Havana before we left, so I never saw my father that day that I left. My other relatives, yes, but not much of my father.

There were however a few participants that spoke of more open communication with their parents. Venerando was 11 years old when he came to the U.S. with his older brother, who were separated from their parents for eight months – he could recall the closeness of his family at the time and talking to his father about the separation and starting over in the U.S. Looking back

from his current perspective, Venerando thought about how his parents' choices had shaped his life:

We were very close-knit. You know, we bonded even more. As you get older you begin to understand the role that your parents played in your life as a child. So we were pretty close, we were the only ones there [in our new town] from Cuba, obviously...So we were pretty tight. My father was a little more open and I asked him one time, I said, 'How did you ever survive this?' And he said, 'I never looked back.'

Family Reintegration - Contrast of U.S. Culture and Cuban Family Culture

A commonality among many participants, especially for those who were adolescents during their early reunion years, was the experience of cultural differences between them and their parents. At the time of family reunion participants were mostly well acculturated to U.S. norms for adolescent behavior inside and outside of the home, and they could speak English fluently. However, their parents were mostly still operating under Cuban family norms that were stricter and had more parent involvement. Ileana commented on how their family reunion was emotional but also a time of difficult transition:

It was just joy that we all felt, imagine being away from your parents for over a year. Their faces were just ... My mother was crying from the joy, just so wonderful to be with them. But at the same time, it was difficult for me in a way to get back to the same familial kind of setting where I had been, in a way, freer in the orphanage if you can imagine because I was with a lot of other girls. We talked and then I went back to a family, but we were sort of constrained in a way because my parents didn't speak English. ...Little-by-little, you start to get adjusted because it was an adjustment. They were ... My parents were used to a different set of standards in a way, where Americans were freer in the social mores of the time. The United States was starting... Rock N' Roll and you know, my parents just thought that was ... Of course I became a hippie [laughter].

Interestingly, there were a few participants who spoke similarly to Ileana about the freedom they enjoyed while living in an orphanage while separated from their parents. Alicia, came to the U.S. by herself and was separated for nearly four years from her very high-monitoring and controlling parents. While she lived in Cuba she was not allowed to spend time with children her own age outside of school, so she was always around adults as she was an only

child. However, even though the orphanage she stayed in Texas was not ideal, she discussed very fond memories during her interview:

I feel that I didn't get to have enough fun [in Cuba]. I had much more fun with my friends from the convent [in Texas] because they were typical teenagers who liked music and dance, and they liked to be loud. And that was a whole new experience for me, and I just thought, 'Oh, this is wonderful.' And the girls really were very nice. I am so fortunate... So, yeah, I really didn't have any peers that I could associate with or have fun with up until that time.

Alicia made close friends with many girls her age at the orphanage, so much so that they have stayed friends to this day and, "...we now have this wonderful family of 40 women who are such a wonderful support." So, when Alicia reunited with her parents almost four years later, there was a stark contrast between her time with her friends where she went to an American school and at least somewhat integrated into American culture, and going back to living with her Cuban parents as an 18-year-old.

It is important to note that there were likely some power imbalances, or at least some tension, caused by the participants being able to speak English fluently while their parents knew little-to-no English upon arriving in the U.S. This also gave several participants extra responsibilities within the family such as acting as a translator for their parents while they were out running errands or for more demanding tasks like interacting with health care providers or helping them find employment. Several participants commented on how they acted as translators while their parents learned English, with there being a wide range of how much their parents learned – some parents never learned English while others became fluent but with a heavy Cuban accent.

Violeta came to the U.S. at the age of eight years old with three of her siblings. When she reunited with her parents four years later, she was entering adolescence and was old enough to recognize and remember the cultural differences present in her family in comparison to the

American world outside their home. Although there were some cultural clashes with issues such as dating, overall her parents embraced both cultures in way that allowed their children to be American and Cuban at the same time. Violeta further described this upbringing:

...they [our parents] started teaching us the culture of Cuba and then they had Cuban friends here, we would go to see them, the community was really important to them. We would go to see his [Cuban] doctor friend in Virginia and there was a [Cuban] dentist friend that we would see. And all that was teaching us, the Cuban community. And then when we went to school [where] we were learning the American community.

Religion

Many participants mentioned religion as a family strength during this time period of integrating into the U.S. It likely acted as another point of commonality within the family that related to family values and their strong commitment towards their family members. It also served practical needs such as getting a good education. Ileana talked about how thankful she was that her parents were able to get her and her brother into a Catholic school, as the local public school would not have provided a good education.

A more meaningful aspect of religion for many participants during their reintegration with family was that it provided spiritual guidance, comfort, and was another common thread from their family life, and school life for some, in Cuba. Vivian remembers religion playing a very important role in her personal life and in her family, starting at a young age. She can remember her extended family being highly involved with their church and the community, and how her parents influenced her deeply rooted tie to religion, "...my parents, especially my dad, were very religious and that set the tone for the rest of my life." Another participant, Diana, spoke of how her family was very religious in Cuba and continued to practice their religion when they were reunited in Puerto Rico. Her family used their faith as a part of their early stages of resettling with the familial belief that, "With the help of God, we are going to be able to do it."

Violeta recalled religion as being a very important part of her life in her family and her foster family. It was a common thread starting in Cuba that followed them through their foster home and back to their family, which provided comfort and guidance:

I think it was the faith, the Catholic faith was very important. They [our parents] were very big churchgoers...And [our foster parents] were Catholic too, so we went to church. We went to religious education like Sunday school, even though we were in public school, and they were very close to the church... So, I think that was what kept us going, was that they had faith in God and they...one of the things I remember is I always felt very protected because they always said all the bad things happened to you already so from now on, God is going to pay you back. Nothing bad will ever happen.

Strong Work Ethic

Parents' strong work ethic was cited by many participant as being a family strength during this time. Parents' hard work in non-ideal places of employment showed their dedication to their families wellbeing. This was a common response from participants and makes sense because 'work ethic' is related to moral decision making,¹² which in a way relates to the traditional Cuban family values of the time such as putting family first and being highly supportive. Mica recalled how her parents took on their new lower-level jobs, in stride, "They [were] hard working people. They were both...even my mother, for someone who never worked, because when I say that they got a job at Camp Matecumbe, what my mother did was wash and iron the boys' clothing. I mean, for someone who never worked, never complained...She had the best time."

Although a majority of participants came from middle- to upper-middle class families while living in Cuba, many of the participants' parents (mostly fathers) built up their own businesses and became successful over time. Juan was 10 years old when he came to the U.S.

¹² 'Work ethic' as defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (n.d.): "a belief in work as a moral good; a set of values centered on the importance of doing work and reflected especially in a desire or determination to work hard"

with his older brother and they were separated for 10 months from their family. His parents worked together in their own business that his father had started and built up over time. When asked about his family strengths, Juan directed his answer towards his parents' work ethic:

...there was a lot of pride in who you were. My father and my mom, they were both extremely proud people. My dad had accomplished, and my mom, they both had accomplished a lot, even before coming to the states. The work ethic was superb, I mean they would do whatever ... They started at the bottom, and worked their way to make their way up. I think this was instilled in us.

When Juan and his family reunited in the Northeast, the six family members were living together in a small one-bedroom apartment and eventually three cousins came to stay with them (they moved to a three-bedroom apartment shortly after the cousins arrived). During this time his parents worked menial jobs to make ends meet and even started their own side business to help bring in more money for the family:

We used to have a lot of young Cubans that were unmarried, that would come and, because there was plenty of work and everything... Anyway, when my dad figured out a good way that would help us and help them, mom started cooking and what she would do is, it would be like, we'd have say, six or eight of these young people who would come in and eat one big meal a day, Cuban type meal... They would be charged by the week, and then that was a help to our economic situation, money coming in.

This work ethic was shared within Juan's family in that the children quickly stepped in line to help out whenever they were needed, which began during his time at the orphanage:

We were ready for that. We had transitioned into that type of situation where, you were expected to contribute, more actively contribute, besides being good and going to school, and minding your p's and q's. You had to actively contribute something to the family. That was part of what we did. If there was a gap, like when dad and mom when they were working, if there was a gap, like one of them stayed over and worked longer or something, we were expected to watch our siblings.

From a different perspective, Chichi discussed his parents' work ethic and what it was like living together again once they reunited after four years of separation. He realized his

dismissive attitude toward his parents at the time of reintegrating but recognized as an adult how incredible their work ethic was when they first came to the U.S.:

No, it was never normal because we had grown up speaking English, and the mentality that I had was, 'my parents don't speak any English, they don't have much education. I feel like I'm better than they are'... this type of mentality, which is very wrong on my behalf, but that's how I thought at that time... I was very young, but it was an acclimation process of getting to know my parents again and to understand their situation. Yeah, we reunited quickly...and once they started, they both were very eager to work. They started working quickly in the United States and got to know the subway system. They were fearless, they had to go here, they had to go there, and they get on the train, and they asked, and they got lost, and it didn't matter. They wanted to catch up actually.

Chichi's quote touches on another factor that worked in tandem with his parents' work ethic – the family value of putting family first. His parents 'wanted to catch up' economically but also as a family, and to do that a family would need stability in the home by working and bringing in an income.

Family Factors Summary

The most prominent family factors throughout the interviews included role flexibility, Cuban family norms, religion, and work ethic. Not all participants talked about every single characteristic discussed in this section, however all participants mentioned multiple family factors that complemented each other in helping their families adapt to living in the U.S. socially, culturally, and economically. Diana was 15 years old when she migrated with her two younger brothers, who were separated from their parents for 11 months. She provided a compelling quote during her interview about how three of these main family factors (family values, religion, and work ethic) worked together in her family when they reunited in the U.S.:

I think for us, family is more important...than anything else, the family. And I think that's very Hispanic, too. You're important as a person, and you're also very important as a family. So, everyone has to stick together to make it work...You're not trying to be only for yourself. I think faith is very important, and that's something I took from my parents, you know? [Is that] What helped us? Yes. Because you have a hope, 'Okay, now we are

together we are going to make it together, now we can do anything. We are together again.' So, I think that's important. Also, the work ethic. We never expected anybody to give us anything...we were like, 'Okay, where can we find work? Let's do it. With the help of God, we are going to be able to do it.' I think that's a very good way to do this. And the family value is important, to be together is important, to be a family, to us is important, to share is important, to work together toward a goal.

The combination of these family factors likely aided participants' feelings about how active and connected they were to their family. This falls in line with the common thread emergent theme. Although some family structures or roles changed in the U.S. from when they were living in Cuba, the feeling of being connected to their family did not change and proved to be a strong point of family resilience for these participants.

Community Factors

The community factors that were relevant to participants' adaptation to living in the U.S. can be categorized as either practical support or social-emotional support. The two sources that were able to provide both of these types of support were belonging to a church and having a local Cuban community, while social welfare services and mentors were more singularly focused. However all four types of support were helpful in their adaptation to living in the U.S. as a family and many participants benefitted from multiple types of support.

Church

As previously discussed in Family Factors, religion within the family provided a spiritual support and was a connection, or common thread, to their lives in Cuba. Broadening this concept to look at the church as a local institution shows another type of support that was provided to many of the participants' families. The church provided practical needs most often pertaining to basic needs such as food, clothing and accommodating housing needs like furniture. Violeta remembered her family receiving exactly this type of support from their local church (and the

local Cuban community), “ I think they got a lot of donations through the church. I remember people sending us clothes and food and... we would get furniture and things.”

The church also acted as a connection to the local Cuban community for some participants. Mateo was introduced to a local church that had a Spanish mass, when he was a young adult. At this church he was further connected to Cuban culture and people, including his future wife:

...my father and mother had a friend, a couple, that's 10 years younger than they [were]. They used to babysit me in Cuba, and they came here, and they sort of like introduced me to the church. They introduced me to Cuban things, like Cuban dances in the church. I think it was because of them that I met my [Cuban] wife and I finally got married.

Although Eva was not particularly religious while living in Cuba, she did become a part of a church community while living with her foster family and this appears to have had a lifelong impact on her. Going to church while living with her foster family provided a doorway to spiritual support as well as more practical effects such as providing structure:

Structure was important to me. I couldn't verbalize it, but I just knew that I appreciated knowing that, ‘Okay. On Sundays, we go to church. On Saturdays, a lot of times there's family things to do. A lot of times it's on Sunday.’ It was nice knowing that there was a certain routine that I could expect every week. That was really nice... We became practicing Catholics, my sister and I, when we went to Florida because the family that took us in, they were definitely ... They lived their faith. We lived their faith too and that was okay.

Local Cuban Community

Having a local Cuban community proved to be very important for many of the participants and their families, when they were resettling in the U.S. and life thereafter. Local Cubans who arrived in the U.S. before participants' families often provided them with some of the initial basic needs such as food, housing, and employment (e.g., networking to help find jobs, hiring them, etc.). Several participants discussed the community value of ‘paying it forward’ for those who arrived in the U.S. after them. This was an accepted Cuban norm that directly

reflected the Cuban family norms and values of the time, of which included helping others no matter what and prioritizing others' needs.

Another important aspect to the local Cuban community was the social connection it provided to Cuban culture, while resettling into the U.S. and thereafter. This was often done through group get-togethers that would have Cuban food, music, and dancing. These were not just for the adults as the children were often included – this was a popular memory among many participants. Isabel recollected having many Cuban events with her family and local Cuban friends, “Oh we did all sorts of pig roasts in the backyard. We got...we did all the Cuban stuff—we had Cuban parties, we listened to Cuban music, we listened to...yeah, everything...” Ileana could recall the many social events that her family put on or contributed to, as well as the importance of the shared values within the local Cuban community:

...my mother was an amazing cook, we had people over all the time. We met up with different Cuban people who moved into my neighborhood. We had a wonderful social aspect to it, living in exile. We had other people to be with in that tiny apartment. We danced and we played Cuban music, and my mother made espresso and she just was a fabulous cook. So the time really wasn't bad... You know, it's interesting, Cubans are a different breed of cat. They're... no matter what happens, they always find the humor. I tell you that to this day, I live my life like that. I would look for the bright side of things and that's how Cubans are. They're very optimistic and also they gave each other a hand. When one got here first and the other one just got here, like my cousin finding the apartment for us and he bought us a TV. They always helped the next one who came along.

Alicia reminisced about one of the few supportive opportunities that her parents had with other Cuban parents whose daughters were with Alicia in a convent during their family separations:

In fact, some of the girls' parents met each other because they knew that we were together in [the convent]. The parents met each other and they started to go out on outings together, and they became friends. And they took pictures on their outings and sent me many pictures. So it was kind of fun for us to see that, because they needed the support of each other themselves too. So, it was really good for them.

The local Cuban community was likely the most helpful community factor for the most participants, closely followed by being a part of a church community (religion was a neutral topic for several participants, likely making this less impactful than having a Cuban community for some). These different types of communities were present while in Cuba and then when they relocated to the U.S. This community support is a great example of the common thread emergent theme – the community provided positive connections to practical, emotional, and social needs and supported positive development in Cuba and the U.S., while also aiding participants and their families’ acculturation to living in the U.S.

Mentors/Supportive Adults

There were key individuals in the community for many participants, who helped them to integrate, particularly about practical matters such as learning English. Majason came to the U.S. at the age of 16 and very shortly after his arrival he met a Cuban priest who had been in jail in Cuba for “fighting Castro”. The priest offered this succinct advice that likely clued in Majason to the gravity of his predicament, "Son, let me give you a bit of advice. Learn English and get used to eating hamburgers because we're here for a long time."

Supportive adults also helped with social integration with their peers and local community. Most participants did not call out these individuals as ‘mentors’ but did use clear terms to indicate that these supportive adults provided guidance at times when there was little to no presence of a caring adult. As previously discussed in the individual factors section, Marcel had a mentor in a man who was the uncle of two Cuban boys who Marcel had met in a foster home. The uncle would pick up Marcel from his orphanage for the weekends so that he could spend time with the two boys and be in a real home. This man would offer him advice about needing to “get those degrees” and the following guidance:

So, he said, 'You've got to study.' So, we agreed at the time when I would study, we kinda thought I was gonna try to be there then. And that went okay until I took my first chemistry course and I was, with all the issues I was having in my mind, I couldn't quite concentrate. Worrying about my parents and my brother, and all that. So, I knew that was not for me, at the time. And the second thing he tells me was, 'You need to learn Hebrew.' I said, 'Hebrew? I said I got plenty of problems learning English, what do I need Hebrew for?' So, he says, 'Marcel, you are Jewish, and the Jewish people can contribute a lot to the world. And the only way you're gonna learn the history, the language, the culture, and all that is through...the history, through the language.'

Marcel ended up not taking him up on his advice about learning Hebrew at the time, but later on as an adult he would become the head of an Israeli bank and learned to speak Hebrew. Interestingly, this mentor was not Jewish but still recognized the importance of Marcel's faith and tried to provide some insight into how to deal with his issues of being separated from his family, even if it did not always pan out as intended.

Another example of having a mentor provide guidance was Vivian's experience with a nun from her boarding school. Vivian started going to this school in Texas during her separation but she continued to go there even when her parents were able to come to the U.S. She did this because of how important it was to get her education and in a place that she felt comfortable. This nun was able to provide her with some useful advice regarding the importance of making friends:

I shied away from being with people. When I was in high school, one of the nuns kind of became my mentor and she told me 'You have to have friends' and I said 'No, I don't want to have friends. I don't want to have friends because I lost all my friends and I don't want to go through that experience again'. She said 'You have to have friends' [laughter]... And I got some friends [laughter]. But I think I would have just stayed very isolated.

All three examples of mentoring provided some form of advice that either led to an important realization about their circumstance, or to take active steps to improve their situation. Although the advice did not always pan out, it is likely that having a caring adult provide some type of support was meaningful for these participants.

Social Welfare

There were a few main types of social welfare assistance that participants recalled their families receiving. Several participants spoke of getting a box of food for some time once they were reunited with their parent(s). Rosita, a participant who was 14 years old when she came to the U.S. and was separated for 10 months from her mother, was appreciative of these supplements but has unsavory memories of the food they would receive:

It was like powdered milk, powdered eggs and the only thing that was real was the cheese and they would give us like a five-pound block... now I have a fear of eating chicken, because they would give us a can like this and inside that can there was a whole chicken in a gelatin and every time my mom opened the can and the little chicken would come out like this, I would freak out. She would fry it, she would boil it. I couldn't eat chicken to this day, very seldom I will touch a piece of chicken.

Venerando also recalled unsavory memories of having to eat Spam from their government food allowance, however he does have fond memories of one particular food, "I remember the government used to give out, I forget how many pounds of beans. I don't remember and a huge can of peanut butter, government issued. The best peanut butter on the planet." Mica's family received similar food items, as well as additional financial support:

...they gave I think it was something like \$100 a month and some canned meat. I still remember that where we lived, the two families in the one house, it was American, cheese, it was Wisconsin cheese, which now that I realize it was such good cheese but you know, back then, it was something that you didn't like. And the canned meat that they did all kinds of things with it, so that was the help and the powdered milk, which we never, I don't want to sound ungrateful but we just never had powdered milk and that's what they gave you. And \$100 but I still have the letter that my dad wrote to them when he said 'I'm working and I don't need your help anymore.' So they only received the help I would say maybe four months.

Multiple participants reiterated the notion that as a group, Cubans did not want government assistance, or at least as little as possible. Laura, who came over at the age of 13 with her close-in-age younger sister, remembers receiving the same items as Mica and Rosita.

She also provided some insight into what she remembers about Cuban refugees in Miami at the time:

Yes, of course there was the Cuban refugee [services] but Cubans were very peculiar a lot of people did not want government assistance. Some Cubans even returned the money so Cubans had the sense that even if we took the help it would be a temporary thing. So as soon as they can find the job they would want a job because they didn't want to be dependent on the government.

Laura, along with all other participants who talked about receiving this help, was grateful for this assistance and although it was not their usual Cuban cuisine, she noted that “thanks to that [food] we survived.” Rosita recalled there being a relatively local Cuban food store where they would get more traditional food items, but in general there was clearly an American food influence as they were having hamburgers and other types of stereotypical American food. Rosita remembered adapting to living in the U.S. and it mostly being just Rosita and her mother (and eventually her aunts) trying to make it work. She did however remember receiving some additional health services. “Really it was just me and my mom, at the time she would go to the Cuban Refugee Center that was called the Freedom Tower on Biscayne Boulevard and 6th Street, and there we would get the medical, dentist, the doctor and once a month we would go by bus to northwest Miami and she would get a bag of food...”

Although affected participants did not uniformly see welfare-type services as hugely important, they did provide essential services to help ease the transition of living in the U.S. while they worked to find employment. Participants were grateful for this type of service but it is apparent that it was not the most influential across participants – the most impactful factors appeared to have come from family, religion, and their local Cuban community.

Research Question #3 - Findings

How did participants' family experience with separation and adapting to living in the U.S. as teenagers and young adults, shape their later relationships, parenting practices and philosophies, particularly in relation to perceived cultural norms in Cuban and Cuban-American families?

Overall, participants did not assign much meaning to their choices in young adulthood onwards, particularly regarding career and partner choices, which were mainly practical. Whereas parenting choices were more reflective of their experiences growing up in a Cuban family and having experienced family separation. The following discussion parses out the different areas of decision making in adulthood and the potential influence that Operation Pedro Pan had on them.

Career Choices

Interview questions on career choices did not garner much in-depth response from participants, in relation to the potential influences of having come to the U.S. as an unaccompanied minor. The general feedback was centered on practicality – pursuing an education was important so that they could get a steady job and be able to provide for their families. Much of the emphasis on going to college was pushed by participants' parents or at least participants witnessing their family hardships and deciding that they needed security in their jobs. The most popular career area among participants was education, with seven participants reporting that they worked in that field, and six participants reported serving in the U.S. military.

Partner Choices

All participants were married at least once with an average of 1.3 marriages across participants, six participants reported being married multiple times, and eight participants reported having been divorced at least once. Overall, participants' choices for their life partner(s) varied across types of partner, with 15 marrying at least one Cuban, eight married an American,

three married a Hispanic partner, and four married immigrants (two of which who are not Cuban or Hispanic). Therefore out of the 25 participants, 19 participants married a spouse who was not born in the U.S.

The majority of participants did not see themselves as having been looking for anything in particular in a partner while they were a young adult, or later on in life with future partners. However, there were some participants who acknowledged meaningful similarities between them and their spouses, or former spouses, such as having a similar immigrant experience and being born in Cuba. A few participants discussed making a conscious effort about seeking specific qualities or characteristics in a partner, while most did not. Diego succinctly summed up the latter point of view, “I never made a conscious effort to be with someone because of that [where they came from]. I was either attracted or not attracted, or found that person to be compatible or not compatible. But not because of their heritage or where they were from.”

One striking characteristic that was deemed important in a spouse by a few participants was having an immigrant background. Venerando talked about sharing similarities with his wife’s family experience with migration and how this likely made it easier to understand one another, even though they came from two different countries with different cultures, “We had the same kind of background, she came to the States as a seven year old, because her father couldn't find work in [home country]...So we were both immigrant, we both ... Her parents were also of peasant stock, if you will. So the stories matched.” Venerando and his wife both came to the U.S. as young children and resettled with their families during a time of financial insecurity. This shared background likely made it easier to talk about their family histories and understand one another, which would lessen the chance for conflict and strengthen their marital bond.

Tortuga also has an interesting partner choice regarding immigrant background and this was clear to him as having been an intentional choice. While his first marriage was to a Cuban woman, who left Cuba at an early age and identified as Spanish, his second partner also left his home country as an unaccompanied teenager and never lived with his family again. Tortuga clearly detailed the meaning behind these similarities in relation to his choice in partners:

My partner now, he's originally from Morocco, and clearly we share the immigrant experience (as I did with my first wife). One day I was talking with some friends about what we wanted in a partner, and I said I wanted a highly assimilated immigrant. Because the immigrant experience actually is different than having been born here... So, that's very part of my identity. I am very aware that the two relationships were with immigrants. Actually in his case, he also left Morocco, a little bit older than I was when I left Cuba, he left when he was 17... Yeah, that immigrant experience is clear that it influenced me and [my] choice of partner.

From another perspective, Violeta had a particular experience in looking for a partner that separated her from other participants. She spent her teenage years in the mid Atlantic region of the U.S. and was often in environments where there was a significant Hispanic population. At the time she was fully immersing herself in American culture during her formative teenage years. She commented on what she explicitly did not want at the time of being a young adult while dating and finding a partner:

I said, I don't want to meet any Latinos, what I called it I don't want to meet any, 'not-gringos' [laughter]. But, in the end what happened was that [my husband] and I just were so matched. It was like a soul...soul mate thing that I said 'okay, I'll date this one'... Even though he's Spanish... I guess I was just rejecting that culture because I was American.

Alicia on the other hand, had practical concerns regarding who her spouse would be and was looking for specific qualities because of her parents' relationship. She was an only child that saw first hand the dysfunction in her parents' marriage, which was exacerbated by their immigrant experience and related hardships. Alicia detailed during her interview, the kind of man she was looking for to be her husband and why:

Well, as I was growing up, my mom would always complain about my dad. And I could see that my dad was ... he wasn't putting in his share of the work because he couldn't [due to health problems]. And I wanted somebody who was physically strong, who was resourceful, who was not like my dad. Even though my dad had some wonderful qualities about him, he was a very pleasant, generous person, a wonderful conversationalist. He was a likable person. So I was looking pretty much for the opposite. I was looking for somebody resourceful, responsible, hard worker. And that's what I got... And he's a nice person. My husband is a very generous, compassionate person. So, he doesn't speak Spanish, but that's okay, can't have everything [laughter].

While most participants did not cite their separation experience as having had an influence on their partner choice in adulthood, there were clearly some influences across the study sample. This included looking for similar immigrant backgrounds, cultural characteristics that matched their new American experience, and personal characteristics that were opposite of their parents' relationship. It is also likely that there was at least a small influence across most participants considering that 19 out of 25 participants married an immigrant, 15 of whom married a Cuban. Although they may not have sought out a particular person, they were likely living in an ethnic enclave of Cubans or were connected through family.

Raising Children

Parenting Practices

There were 24 participants who reported having at least one child. Among these participants with children, the average number of children was 2.5 and a range of 1-5 children. There were a few main commonalities across each of the subcategories related to differences in parenting practices between generations. Overall though there was a mix of influences on parenting practices – including emulating their parents, evolving their parent's practices, and responding to the hardships they experienced growing up in the U.S. as an unaccompanied child and assimilating as immigrants with their families.

Parenting Style

Most participants described their parenting style as middle-of-the road where they were less strict than their parents and incorporated more modern ways of parenting that reflected American culture – such as having more open communication with their children and allowing them to go out on dates without a chaperone. Mica, the wife of Cande who was another participant in this study, remarked candidly about how both of their migration experiences affected their parenting. When discussing a general summary of how they parented she described it as, “I guess permissive if you want to be positive. It...[was about] giving freedom. Not that I approve anything that's not right but giving them freedom.” Wanting to give their children freedom had a lot of meaning and purpose for Mica and Cande, of which they talked about in further detail, including how much different their approach was from her parents:

...I want say that we let them be,...personally I don't expect, because I see other people expect so much [from their children] I just want them to be people. You know, their character. To me, this is very important...And I believe too that we raised our children differently. Completely different than the way I was raised and we have given them a lot of freedom. And I remember when they were growing up, my parents would never approve of the things that we, the way we brought them up but we have given them a lot of freedom. To be themselves, trust, even curfews, that's when you show that, you know that... Cande used to say 'Yeah. I was here by myself. I had no one, [no one] kept an eye on me as to when I had to be anywhere.' So, I think our experience had a lot to do with it. Trust.

Many participants acknowledged the differences from how their parents raised them and saw these differences as a natural progression of family behaviors across generations. This was especially true regarding gender norms and dating. When asked about a Cuban influence in his parenting, Venerando responded with, “As far as bringing up [our children], no. I had no influence in terms of ways...to bring kids up in a Cuban style, which tends to be a bit restrictive for girls and more open for boys. I didn't believe in that.” Juan also recalled noticing differences in how girls were treated in Cuban families, including with his children and older generations of his family:

Okay, you ask about some of the things about Cuban societal behaviors. I remember when the kids were little, I taught them to ride a bicycle on a boys bicycle, and the grandmothers were like up in arms. 'What happens if they fall off the bike and they hit the bar? What happens to their little ...' It's like, 'What are you talking about?' ... 'Yeah, okay their virginity is gone, okay', I mean listen this was a real deal. Another thing was, I remember one time the woman that was, their grandmother, my ex mother-in-law, came in and they were sitting on the floor, and they were eating plums. You know plums, they have pits in them. It was like, 'Oh my God!' You'd think I was electrocuting the kids or something because I let them eat the plums, and let them work their way around the pits. This type of stuff. I taught them to stand up for themselves, be independent.

Juan commented on his daughters being independent a couple of times, in that it was intentional and likely at least partly because of his experience with migrating to the U.S. and having to start over with this family, "I think possibly the biggest impact that it would have was, I believed in making the kids self-reliant and independent."

Rosita discussed striking a balance between giving her daughter independence while growing up and recalled that she parented similarly to her mother but with a few key differences particularly concerning her daughter and dating:

Well I raised my children the way my mother raised me. Of course I was more open about my daughter going out and dating, no chaperoning involved and if there was something I didn't like I would really raise my voice about it and let the world know I wasn't happy about it. She's very independent, she's an attorney and she's very independent and always been and I've always been supportive, but I didn't go after her like my mother did.

Another response to the migration experience dealt with developing a loving relationship between parent and child. Alicia was an only child who grew up in a very restrictive household in Cuba and was often only in the company of adults. Alicia then witnessed a lot of conflict between her parents when they reunited in the U.S. (and also in Cuba), a combination of a dysfunctional marriage and the stress of starting over in a foreign country with few resources. These experiences while growing up likely had an effect on how she raised her only child, a daughter, of whom she was and is still very close with:

I parented my child like she was my playmate. I was young when I had her. I don't think I was even 20 yet. Yeah, I think I was 20... But like I said, I had been very sheltered. I really didn't have a normal childhood myself because of the stresses between my parents. So that was my chance to be a child. I just loved her and played with her. And as she was growing up, I was absolutely delighted with her. And when she was getting older, as a teenager, oh we had so much fun. We went shopping. She would tell me about the boys she liked.

Alicia had an open and trusting relationship with her daughter that created a very close and loving bond that she did not have with her parents. This loving mother-daughter relationship transferred to the next generation, as Alicia is also very close with her granddaughter. Alicia's experience with her daughter as a teenager is exceptional, as most participants who commented on raising their children during this developmental stage that it was a tumultuous time period – as it is for most families as this is a normal time for family transition and related dysfunction. In a similar vein, El Guti commented on how he raised his children with Cuban culture but with the added feature of developing close emotional bonds with his children, "...I raised them the Cuban way. I raised them the way I was raised, but the difference is that I'm very close to them." El Guti was close with his children while raising them and throughout adulthood to current day.

There were also of course the participants who acknowledged the good parenting practices from when they were raised, and incorporated these approaches into how they brought up their children. Eva discussed how she emulated her parents when raising her children, especially her first born, particularly in regards to being patient and providing her children clear explanations:

In a lot of ways it was similar [to how my parents raised me]. I tried to explain ... I tried to allow them enough so that they could learn. Mistakes were not punished unless they were intentional, you know what I mean?... So ... she understood ... even though sometimes, a lot of times she didn't understand the explanation of why, but okay, she was a kid, so I was the adult and I was in charge, so she had to live with that. But she said eventually as she got older, she started to understand why, so that was ... I was grateful for that feedback, because I really didn't know if I had done a good job of raising her or not. I just, I tried to be patient, I tried to explain, I tried to allow her lots of experiences

that were positive experiences ... you know, I tried to give her experiences that I didn't have. Opportunities that I didn't have.

This group of participants was clearly more flexible and had a greater range of flexibility than their parents were regarding parent and child roles within their family while raising their children. This reflected in their overall parenting style, communication, decision-making, and the emotional closeness between a parent and a child.

Communication and Decision Making

Overall, the majority of participants talked about having an egalitarian approach for communication and decision-making while raising their children. This was in regards to their partner and with their children. Similar to *parenting style*, many participants acknowledged the differences in communication and decision making between how their parents raised them and how they decided to communicate with their children. Additionally, most participants and their spouses used a mixed approach of 'knowing what was best' for their children in some scenarios, while in other situations they would consult with their children about family decisions through family meetings. Venerando discussed whether he and his wife included their children in family decision-making:

Absolutely. We used to have meetings every so often whenever there was something to ... We'd sit down, all four and discuss, but we told them there were certain things that the adults get to decide, whether you like it or not. Because it might be dangerous to you or some of the things they want to do, et cetera. We don't approve of it, or it could be trouble, we can see it coming. We have the experience and so on. They pretty much went with it.

Mica and Cande discussed how they purposefully raised their children in a way that allowed for them to talk about how they felt and to openly express opinions. This parenting choice was a direct result of how Mica's family, particularly her parents, handled the situation. When Mica reunited with her family they never spoke of the separation and eventually her

parents “pretended” that they were never separated. When comparing the two approaches, the latter being intentional, Mica remarked that, “...it [was] exactly the opposite of what we have done with our children. I would say closed, you know, the opposite of what we have done... We believe in talking. We make a lot of emphasis on that.”

Family Separation

There were numerous participants who brought up not wanting to be separated, or not be separated for long, from their children when they were raising them. Mateo spoke of how he did not like going on long trips while his children were growing up, and would often talk about this – likely with his wife and children. Cubacharlie, who likely had the most negative all around separation experience, mentioned how he could not have made the decision to send his children away:

It was, for most, I can't speak for all [Pedro Pans], it was probably the worst times of our life, without a doubt. Not another day after my parents got here could've been worse than that. Even today. That allowed me to have a good day every day after that. It was quite challenging... If I had to do it all over again, would I send my kids? Never, ever, ever, ever... Would you take your most precious thing and send it to a completely different country when you have no idea when you're going to see them again? It was definitely tougher for them [my parents], and just in the last year or so my mom and I have been able to talk a little bit about it, because we couldn't before, because the emotions are so ... Even after 50 years, the emotions are out of this world. It was tough. It was tough. But I think much tougher for them.

It is important to note that although Cubacharlie's 5.5 year separation was so bad that he was adamant that he would not have sent his own children away, he did express gratitude for having the opportunity to live in America. All participants expressed this kind of gratitude but even with this appreciation there were still some complicated emotions around family separation and whether it was the right decision to make. For those who had a positive experience this would likely be a provocative statement as it would be clear to them that the ‘end justified the means’.

Some participants did wonder about the possible association between their parenting approach and their experience of family separation. Violeta discussed how she could not send her children away and could not fully parse out why she felt that way – if it was because of her experience or if that is just her style of parenting:

I do think that if I were my parents, if I were my mother, I wouldn't ever, I wouldn't do it... but I've never separated whether I wouldn't do it because it happened to me or I wouldn't do it because that's just the way I love my kids and I couldn't separate myself from them... But that's something I've come to know... I always have said that, I always have said that since the kids were little. That when they started getting to my age, like eight years old, the age that I was [when I was separated], I would look at them and say, 'How could I ever put these kids on a plane?' I could not.

It is interesting that Violeta mentions looking at her children when they were at the same age as she was when she left Cuba and was separated from her parents. Whether there was a direct connection with her separation experience or maybe it was just that it was the age acting as a trigger – Violeta had strong feelings about being apart from her children. Chichi expressed a similar sentiment when asked about how his experience may affected his later choices in life. He responded, “Primarily, family. Because to me, I would never think of being separated from my kids. So, that to me was paramount. Being with my children, teaching them, being with them so they would never lose out.” There were a few participants who explicitly stated that they would have made the same decision as their parents, and that most participants explicitly mentioned how grateful they were for the opportunity to come to the U.S.

In a similar vein, Eva discussed how safety was a key piece of criteria in decisions that were made about where to raise her children. It was important to Eva, and her husband, to raise their children in an environment that would not make them grow up too fast:

We tried to give them as much opportunity and as broad an exposure to the world, in a safe environment. And that's what we wanted. That's what our hope was, maximum exposure in a safe environment, to allow them to be decent citizens of the planet... My dad always hoped that when [my husband] retired... that we would go west. But by then, I

just could not see raising my children in California, not after knowing the possibilities were for them here [on the East Coast], as far as having an opportunity to just not grow up too fast. I think kids in LA just grow up way too fast. They don't need to grow up that fast. They don't need to be that worldly that fast. We wanted, both of us wanted our children to have the opportunity to just be kids and grow in a decent time ... within a decent timeframe, without having it be too hurried.

It is important to note that Eva's parents continued to live in the same city that they resettled in together as a family – a place where Eva was once again forced to act older than she was so that she could persist and get through high school and move on to college. Her past experience with family separation and adultification likely influenced her decisions on where to bring up her children, so that they would not have to experience a similar childhood.

Interestingly, the concept of family separation diffused out into more broad meanings across the life course of several participants. Some participants thought about whether or not they could make the same decision as their parents, whereas other participants focused on the everyday separations that can occur and not wanting to miss out on their children's lives.

Teaching Children Spanish

Almost all participants talked about incorporating Cuban food into their household and that it was a favorite among their children. However, teaching their children Spanish was not an as widely held practice although still prevalent. Some participants felt that it was very important to teach their children Spanish, as a means to connect with their Cuban family culture, whereas other participants did not feel it necessary to teach their children the language. Violeta had an interesting and practical perspective on why she and her husband did not teach their children Spanish:

I was very much like my parents, we were always a combined, unified front on how we raised the kids and whatever, but... and what was funny is people say 'well why didn't you speak Spanish? Your husband and you both knew Spanish' and I don't know I felt like I was more understood when I [spoke] English and then they couldn't ignore me and say that they didn't understand what I said so... We did speak all English in the family,

but in the end, when my youngest was born, we put her in bilingual school, so she could learn the Spanish so maybe as time went on I wanted to feel that second culture within my own family.

Violeta approached this scenario from the point of wanting to have clear and direct communication with her children. However she and her husband did change this approach with their youngest child and gave her the opportunity to learn the language from a young age.

From an opposite perspective, Juan and his first wife wanted their children to learn Spanish, “About the only Cuban influence that we had, and that was interesting was, we wanted them to learn Spanish, and they did. We did want our children to speak Spanish because they could better communicate with some of the older family members still alive at the time.” Fred and his wife took the approach of integrating Spanish with their Cuban culture within their family, “...my wife and I still keep our culture, our Cuban culture. We speak Spanish. All of our kids are fluent in Spanish, they can speak, read and write, all speak fluently Spanish. Some better than others, but...they're all fluent. My wife and I have taken the best of the two cultures, and that's how we have raised our kids.”

Their Children's Parenting and Grandparenting

Interview questions that focused on how their children are as parents and grandparenting garnered the least amount of depth in participant responses. The most frequent response to how their children are parenting was that their children have incorporated at least a little to a lot of the family values that participants tried to instill in them while growing up. Juan remarked on how his daughters picked up on what he tried to give as a parent while raising them and how he is similarly still involved with this grandchildren:

I think that they [my daughters] appreciate the value of discipline, and warmth, and loving, and being very loving. They're both very loving, but they ... Let me rephrase, more than discipline, structure. I think structure's a better word, to help the kids. We try

to stay very involved with the grandchildren... I think I instilled the value of structure and family, how important family is.

Several participants remarked on how the parenting practices of their children were either mildly different to vastly different from their own. Majason frequently watches his grandchildren and commented, in a neutral tone, on the everyday differences that he has noticed with his grandchildren:

Totally different. But hey, it works for them. In my house we always ate dinner together. There was no this food for this one and this food for the other, no. Whatever was dinner, that was dinner. If you didn't like it you went hungry... It was funny because last week we were taking care of them and the little girl wanted something and the boy wanted something else. So we had to go to a pizza place for the boy and then to McDonald's for the little girl... But that's the way they do it.

The most common responses to questions about being a grandparent was that they helped out with their grandchildren often or from time-to-time. There were a few participants who lived far away from their children and grandchildren so they visit as often as they can. There were of course a few participants who discussed how they would like to be more involved in their grandchildren's lives and emulate what they had with their parents while raising their children.

Another topic that came up with a few participants was the intergenerational sharing of their Cuban culture with their grandchildren. Isabel commented on the passing on of Cuban culture through her family and why this has been important to her:

Yeah, Cubans, from what I know, are very...I don't know the words – not – stuck in their culture. I'm very Cuban, and I wouldn't give it up for anything. And I'm trying, I try to teach my children. Hopefully they, I mean they're American-born, so I think it's like going to be squeezed out through all the generations but, um...I'm trying to make them never forget what happened to us and why they're here because of my parents.

Diego talked about how his daughter is raising his granddaughter in a way where she is being brought up in a multicultural household that is both American and Cuban. He also talked about how it has been a pleasure to see his daughter embrace Spanish at an older age:

Absolutely. Yeah, her [his granddaughter] dad is Cuban. His parents are Cuban. My granddaughter spends a lot of time with her dad. He's a very responsible young man and... She adores him. And his parents are very good with her. So she gets a lot of Cuban from that side of the family, particularly from his parents... And my daughter now is kind of getting more and more in touch. When I see her, she's like, speaking more Spanish. When we go to a restaurant, she feels really good about ... she'll order from the menu in Spanish. So that's kind of neat to see. And then my granddaughter is being raised the same way. She's being raised very bilingual, very bicultural.

Although some of the Cuban culture may be watered down through generations for some participants, most discussed some level of visible bicultural integration with their grandchildren. It is also apparent that most participants are aware of the mostly small differences in parenting between the generations and either tolerate or embrace these differences.

Communication About Operation Pedro Pan Experience with Family

There were a range of responses concerning when and to what depth participants shared their unaccompanied migration stories with their children and grandchildren. There were some who did not feel the need to talk about it with family or did not want to make a big deal out of their experience. There were some participants who did not talk about it until very recently, while other participants were very active in local Operation Pedro Pan social groups with their children and grandchildren know about and some times even participate in their group events.

Violeta mentioned how her children were interested in her history as a story and had less of an emotional connection to it and was likely because of the way she handled it stating that, "I think...because I never made it a big deal because I would always [say] 'I'm over it, okay, I don't want to talk about it.'" A more extreme example of not sharing their migration story comes from Cubacharlie who likely had the most harrowing separation experience, having faced eight placements over his 5.5 years of separation from his parents. When asked about when he brought up his story with his family, including his wife and children, he responded that it was, "Very recently. Probably in the last year. Like I explained to you from the beginning, this is a painful

ordeal.” He elaborated further to explain their reaction to learning this about him for the first time and why he shared this with them not until recently:

When we get to talk, and you can just see their eyes like open and kind of go, ‘You went through that, dad? Oh my God.’ They said, ‘Why didn't you say something before?’ It's just like, ‘It wasn't a necessity. It was the past.’ ... You try to forget the past, learn from the past, but live in the future. Live now. Now is the most important day, today is the most important day of your life. Tomorrow, you've got to get up first. Then, it'll be tomorrow.

From another perspective, Juan provided an example of open communication with his daughters about his experience. Interestingly, he took on the immigrant narrative when telling his story to his children:

Well let's see, we never talked about Operation Pedro Pan in that context, but we always talked about coming over...and going to the orphanage. They were aware of immigrant families. For them it was actually on both sides. Their mother was not a Pedro Pan, but she came with her family in, I don't remember exactly, but it was in the early 60s. Plus, they met some of our other family members that came out. My uncles, cousins, and all that. They were aware of the whole thing, about the immigration, the hardships, sacrifices that were made by the older generation. They were well aware of that, then Operation Pedro Pan just kind of put it in a bigger context of not just a few of us, but very many of us.

While raising her daughter, Alicia did not go into great depth about her experiences with Operation Pedro Pan. However over time, with one event in particular that shed light on her experience, more details emerged as well as the importance of her migration from Cuba:

...my daughter had met some of the girls that I had been with at the convent. So she knew, she knew about it. She didn't know as much about the program because I never thought to talk about it too much. But then we started having reunions, and then email developed, and it just made it much easier to stay in touch with each other. And I would say maybe about 10 or 15 years ago, there was a big Pedro Pan event at USC here in Los Angeles, and both my granddaughter and daughter attended... and there were also many speakers. And that was when they really understood, ‘Oh my God, yeah,’ it gave them a lot more information that I had left out, because it just really didn't seem pertinent. We were just working and going to school and raising her and taking her to dance lessons and all the things that we were always doing. So, it just never seemed that pertinent. She knew that I was from Cuba, and she knew that my parents, that we came because of Communism, and that we had lost a lot of material things.

Additionally, although Alicia lives on the West Coast and is far away from many of her girl friends from her time in the convent – the large group of women are still very close knit. Alicia travels to see them at least once a year for a big group trip and her daughter and granddaughter have been included in some of these events:

In some of the reunions, I had brought my granddaughter, cruises and different things, so many of the girls from the convent knew both my daughter and granddaughter... And we're like family. Everybody's happy for each other to meet their children and grandchildren and whatever. So, many of the girls from the convent lived in Miami. And... a few of them live in Miami still and my granddaughter had an opportunity to go to Miami, probably six or eight months ago. And she met some of the girls that live there, they had dinner together. They went to an event together.

When asked about whether or not her granddaughter liked the trip Alicia replied, “Yeah, oh very much. Those girls are like my sisters, so my granddaughter is like the grandniece to them.” For Alicia, the importance of this lifelong friend group was so great that she wanted to share this part of her history with her daughter and granddaughter.

Mica and Cande spoke of a similar experience where their children and grandchildren have been very integrated with their Pedro Pan history. Their grandchildren attend Operation Pedro Pan social group picnics and other educational events. Mica also spoke of how far back they began to tell their story and it was clear that their story about how they got here and why has always been a part of the family. Mica described it as, “They grew up [with the stories], they just grew up and we used to get together with Monsignor Walsh once a year since they were very small so he used to tell them.”

Findings Conclusion

Research questions #1 and #2 both garnered a great deal of detail from participants. There were clear examples of how participants had to change their roles in the family to be able to adapt to living in the U.S. Furthermore how these roles changes were made possible by family

flexibility was quite clear. The importance of community factors was also made clear by most participants. There was not as much in-depth feedback from participants for the third research question in comparison to the first two research questions. However there were still many rich examples provided and varying perspectives represented concerning how Operation Pedro Pan and family separation may have affected their life choices in adulthood. The following chapter will explore the analysis of these three research question findings and relate them to the literature and life course theory and family resilience theory.

Chapter 6: Discussion

The following discussion explores the main findings from the three research questions that guided this study. The first research question examined the change in roles within participant families, the second research question looked at how participants and their families were able to acculturate to living in the U.S., and the third question examined how participants' experiences with Operation Pedro Pan and unaccompanied migration as a minor may have affected their major life choices in adulthood, most particularly related to their family. Review of the findings has revealed there is also interconnectedness between the three research questions and clear ties to the two theories that guided this research – life course theory and family resilience theory. The following discussion further analyzes these findings and how they relate to the literature and is concluded with a discussion on how the two guiding theories – life course theory and family resilience theory – help to explain these findings.

Research Question #1 - Discussion

How did participants' unaccompanied migration as a minor to the U.S. influence their perceived role within their family and their relationship with their parents while they were separated and after they reunited?

- *What new roles did participants take on within their family when they were separated and when they reunited?*

- *Did the relationships within the family become stronger, weaker, or stay the same as when they were living together in Cuba?*

The changes in family roles during the separation and after family reunion were significant for nearly all participants, ranging from taking on a few extra responsibilities upwards to taking on a parental role in the family. No matter the amount, or weight, of those role changes, there were inevitable effects on every member in participants' families. The following discussion explores the prominent themes that emerged from results of the first research question, while also taking into account relevant research literature.

Adultification

It is very clear in the findings that most participants to some extent experienced the phenomenon of adultification. They took on adult roles and responsibilities before they reached adulthood (Galan, 1992) first because of their unaccompanied migration as a minor, and later because of environmental triggers that developed after their family reunion, such as poverty (Johnson & Mollborn, 2009; Roy, Messina, Smith, & Waters, 2014). The experiences of participants were similar to the adultification of other vulnerable adolescent populations such as immigrants and minorities. However participants' unaccompanied minor and refugee status added on an additional layer of complexity to their adultification experience (Puig, 2002). This complexity in participants' adultification is explored in the following discussion regarding findings from the first research question that focused on role changes within participants' families, during and after their separation.

The most significant differences between participants' adultification experiences can be organized into two categories: age when they arrived and whether or not they had to take care of a younger sibling(s), including cousins. Age at arrival was significant because boys who were over the age of 12 were separated from their younger siblings and put into one of the separate

refugee camps that were specifically meant for older boys. This separated many young adolescent boys from younger brothers and sisters. This specific circumstance affected five of this study's participants. All Pedro Pan girls and boys who were 12 years old or younger were sent to Camp Kendall or Florida City camp where the boys were separated from the girls, but they were in the same place and could see each other from time to time. However, although these younger participants were less likely to take on the amount of responsibility that the older males in this sample took on, they were still likely to experience adultification in the sense that they took on new chores and had to look after themselves (e.g., safekeeping of their personal items, getting to school on time).

The second category – having to take care of a sibling – is significant because in typical Cuban families at the time that were representative of this sample, the parents were by-and-large the primary caregivers of the family. Almost all participants confirmed this in their interviews. For instance, the mother would perform a majority of the caretaking roles, with the likely possibility of having help from housemaids. Fathers were typically very protective and made a lot of the family decisions. Cuban children were often coddled and overprotected, but not in a dysfunctional way (i.e., Cuban family enmeshment). Therefore Pedro Pan children who took on adult caregiving roles for their siblings, which included helping with multiple types of needs such as basic, emotional, financial needs. Therefore, participants were taking on adult roles at a younger age and going against Cuban family norms. Furthermore, they were also likely to have taken on caregiving roles for their parents once they were reunited and trying to assimilate into the U.S.

Thus, participants who were older than 12 years of age and who had to look after a sibling(s) were more likely to face negative experiences and an increased amount of stressors.

This was because the boys who were older than 12, such as Joaquin and Jose, were separated into Camp Matecumbe, Opa-locka, or one of the several boy's homes that were meant for older boys. These locations, specifically Matecumbe and Opa-locka were reported as being more aggressive with instances of fighting, stealing of personal property, and a general sense of freedom – freedom to do anything. As previously stated, participants who had to take on a caregiver role during their separation continued with this role after they reunited with their parents, often playing a caregiver role for their parents. This is exactly what happened with Cubacharlie and Fred who took on leadership roles before and after being reunited with their parents. Although almost all participants saw this as their family duty, it was still likely a source of stress for them in their adolescence and young adulthood.

Role Flexibility

Role flexibility was a clear theme within the results for the first research question. Most participants had to take on new responsibilities that modified their family role. For some participants these were significant changes that helped make up for their parents' inability to fully perform their parental roles due to language barriers, unemployment, working multiple jobs, working jobs at a lower pay grade than what they had in Cuba, and being less acculturated to living in the U.S. than their children. Many of the participants had to take on adult roles such as providing financially for the family and making decisions for the entire family. Therefore, their parents had to modify their family norms to accept these changes and follow the lead of their adolescent children.

This type of experience matches what Puig (2002) found in a group of Cuban immigrant families where the parents reported having to rely on their children to translate and manage personal situations. In Puig's (2002) group of participants it was also found that younger children

had a harder time understanding these role changes. While this study's participants did not show this outcome, it was apparent across all of the participants who were adolescents during the reunion that the change in family roles could be stressful but was practical and necessary.

It is important to take into account that the participants received a refugee status upon arrival in the U.S. and when reunited with their parents they were as a family different from other typical immigrants who migrated for economic reasons. Participants' families were escaping communism in Cuba and were living similarly to Weine et al.'s (2004) refugee family model, which was developed for Bosnian refugee families. The model includes "four realms of refugee family life" and closely aligns with the participants' experiences. In regard to the Weine et al. (2004) model of refugee family life, the first and third realms correspond directly with the role flexibility seen in this study. The first realm recognizes the changes in family roles and obligations, and the second realm recognizes the changes in family relationships with other family members (Weine et al., 2004). These were exemplified by Fred who took on the role of family leader who made the important decisions and was bestowed this role by his father, who saw that Fred was more capable of taking care of the family than he was.

Participants' *familism* – Cuban family values that prioritize loyalty to the family – likely acted as a buffer for these role changes that occurred. Participants' families' placed a high value on 'the family' and making sure that everyone received adequate care. This likely helped to prevent or at least diminish family dysfunction. It also likely promoted family strengths, such as family values and work ethic, which would have helped them to acculturate into living in the U.S. as a family. The theme of role flexibility is further explored throughout the second research question discussion, which focused on participants and their families' ability to acculturate into the U.S.

Research Question #2 - Discussion

How did participants' unaccompanied migration as a minor from Cuba to the U.S. influence their own and their family's ability to socially, culturally, and economically adapt to living in the U.S. as a young adult? What family factors and community factors contributed to their family's adaptation to living in the U.S.?

There were several key aspects and characteristics present throughout the results section regarding the second research question that appear to have been fundamental to participants' and their families' ability to socially, culturally, and economically adapt to living in the U.S. The most prominent themes included continuity of family life and community, risk and protective factors from the literature, risk and protective factors particular to this sample, and acculturation style. The following discussion explores these emergent themes from the results and integrates them with relevant research findings from the literature and the two theories that guided this study, family resilience theory and life course theory.

New Emergent Theme – A Common Thread

An important finding from the first research question is related to participants and their families having continuity of several aspects related to their family life in Cuba, when they were separated, and when they reunited. This is a new emergent theme that complements the other themes from this research that match the key points of this study's literature review. Examples of 'common threads' included discipline, religion, and being an active part of a family – all of which helped with participants feeling normal while resettling in a new country with their family and created a sense of safety. The three Costa children highlighted in the family case study demonstrated all of these examples of continuity that was in large part possible because of their positive foster family experience.

Discipline was something that many participants commented on as being present in their family life in Cuba, with the nuns in the Florida camps and orphanages, in their foster homes (for

those who experienced foster care), and again when they were reunited with their family. The discipline that participants referred to included strict rules regarding behavior, such as “staying in line” and following orders. This likely had very practical, positive effects on participants as it probably kept them out of trouble, and these orders were a norm for them to follow, so it was not a newly introduced process for participants. Mica was a prime example of this as she was so used to discipline at home in Cuba and at school with nuns that she recalled having little trouble with acclimating to camp life as an unaccompanied minor.

Religion was also a common thread mentioned by many participants, with varying levels of importance (i.e., how religious participants’ families were). No matter the level of importance of religion within a family, attending church and having faith in a higher power was a point of continuity for many participants. This provided structure for participants in that many continued to attend church services while separated as they had done in Cuba, which picked up again as a family activity once they were reunited in the U.S. The emotional or spiritual support provided during these difficult transitions was also a helpful aspect of this common thread, that as Diana recalled was a point of hope and guidance during trying times as a family.

Being an active part of a family was an important common thread that had a large impact on at least seven participants who were fortunate enough to experience positive family life while living in Cuba, a positive foster family experience while separated, and then again when they were back to living with their original supportive family after their reunion. The Costa children were the prime example of this beneficial setup but also included Diego, Eva, Chichi, and Laura. The key aspect in this particular thread is that of the supportive and loving experiences that participants reported having in their foster families. Participants were able to partake in daily family life such as completing daily chores. They were also provided structure including going to

bed at a certain time, completing their homework at a certain time, going to church every Sunday, etc. These experiences were very similar to their family life in Cuba but were done in an intimate environment that also provided love and emotional support that likely would not have occurred in the orphanage or camp environments. It is also apparent that participants benefitted from this 'modified' common thread that began in Cuba, such as having a supportive family, and was not resumed until their family reunion (i.e., they did not experience this thread during their separation).

Community support, which includes religion, was highly cited by participants as a mostly continuous factor, with less presence during family separation and that returned to earlier levels with their family reunion. Although community support was not always a completely continuous common thread, it was a strong tie to their culture in Cuba while they were resettling in the U.S. This provided cultural activities, social connections to other Cubans, and provided practical support such as food, clothing, housing needs, and employment opportunities. As Violeta recalled, these social gatherings gave her parents a point of connection to their life in Cuba and also provided her and her siblings a tie to Cuban culture while also experiencing American culture at school.

The continuity of family and community support appears to have been especially important to the success of participants' families being able to reintegrate as a family while assimilating into the U.S. under strained circumstances. However, it is also important to note the importance of the individual factor of *having a long-term goal*. For some participants this was a goal (e.g., getting an education, becoming a priest) that started in Cuba, and they continued to pursue it through their separation, and for some after their family reunion. The best examples of

having a long-term goal were Vivian and Tortuga, who were both aware of how having goal helped them through their separation.

These two groups of factors, family and community support, are closely linked to Cuban family norms, which emphasize lifting up the group by prioritizing the needs of other family members and contributing to this cause in whichever way possible. This family value was likely enhanced by this group's experience in Cuba with the Cuban Revolution and taking on the identity of being an exile, reinforcing the need for unity and loyalty to the family and the Cuban community. Some participants referenced the significance of their Pedro Pan group and Cuban families' ability to be successful in the U.S. despite their circumstances of having to leave everything behind in Cuba and start over, often times from a 'lower rung'. Overall, those participants who experienced common threads that ran throughout each point of their migration timeline had some of the most positive experiences out of the group of participants. However, having had continuity that started in Cuba and did not begin again until there was a family reunion was still very helpful for most of the participants.

Protective Factors for Unaccompanied Minors From the Literature

There were many apparent protective factors present across participants' experiences with unaccompanied migration and family separation that match what has been found in research on unaccompanied minors and mental health and wellbeing outcomes. Most of these factors relate directly to the family and community factors explored in the results section. Some of the most prevalent protective factors seen among participants revolved around close and supportive relationships. For instance, most participants were reunited with both parents and because of this they were able to have a similar family structure to their life in Cuba pre-separation. Maintaining a similar family structure from before the separation has been found to be protective for affected

minors because it can help establish normalcy and assist acculturation (Fazel et al., 2012). This is related to another prominent protective factor in this group, family connectedness (Pieloch, McCullough, & Marks, 2016). Cuban family norms at the time emphasized family involvement, loyalty, and prioritizing family needs, also known as *familismo* (Bernal, 1982; Queralt, 1984). This likely acted as a protective factor and was crucial to their ability to acculturate to living in the U.S. as a newly re-formed family, under stressful circumstances related to immigration such as learning a new language and having few resources.

The other two main social support factors that were protective for this group included having peers to play with (Fazel et al., 2012) and receiving social support from friends and community (Pieloch et al., 2016). Most participants had peers to play with during their separation and after their family reunion. This likely provided normalcy and positive socialization with other Cuban children and with local children, which likely aided participants' acculturation experience. One of the most evident protective factors present for most participants was receiving social support from their local Cuban community, which included extended family and other non-related Cubans who had previously arrived in the U.S. These local Cubans provided practical needs and social connections that reflected their Cuban culture, which likely helped participants and their families have a feeling of acceptance, or belonging, in their new U.S. community.

The final two protective factors relevant to this participant group are having a sense of belonging and valuing education (Pieloch et al., 2016). Having a sense of belonging occurred in at least two ways among this group. First, there were the participants who experienced living in supportive foster families that made them feel like they were a part of a family because they felt loved and cared for, and because they were integrated into the daily life of the family through

doing chores, going to church every Sunday, etc. This sense of belonging ties into the concept of participants having a ‘common thread’, particularly regarding the feeling of being an active part of a family. Second, after being reunited with their families, most participants experienced their families’ inherent *familismo*, which created a feeling of belonging for most participants even after having been separated for an extended period of time. As previously discussed, this was also likely reinforced by their local Cuban community.

Lastly, most participants discussed valuing education either on an individual basis – as a personal goal like Vivian and Marcel did – or because their parents emphasized the importance of getting an education, especially because they were immigrants in a new country and with little resources. Valuing education led many participants down a path of acquiring advanced degrees that helped them secure employment in meaningful careers, or in the least it helped them have stable income and be able to provide for their family.

One protective factor that was minimally present for a few participants was open communication between parent and child (Fazel et al., 2012). A few participants did report talking about their separation with their parents, but most were not in-depth conversations. In fact, the lack of communication among participants with their parents at the time of family reunion was likely a risk factor for mental health outcomes within the family. Several participants stated that they wanted to know more or to at least talk about their circumstances with their parents at the time. Although closed communication during times of family crisis can be beneficial (Fazel et al., 2012), for these participants this was not necessarily the case. This aligns with the second realm, or pillar, of Weine et al.’s (2004) model for refugee family life that recognizes changes in family memories and communication. Communication between family

members after having experienced trauma and separation can be crucial to family re-formation in a new country, and without it there could be the potential for family dysfunction.

Protective Factors for Unaccompanied Minors Particular to This Sample of Participants

This group of participants had a unique set of circumstances pre- and post-migration that were not completely typical for unaccompanied minors. For instance, before their migration a majority of the group came from middle to upper-middle class backgrounds. There were also unique situations present during and after participants' separation that likely had a positive influence on their experience. These unique circumstances had a distinctive set of protective factors that appear to have helped many participants and their families to be able to acculturate into the U.S.

The potential protective factors that emerged from this particular sample of participants included: not being separated from a sibling as an unaccompanied minor, being twelve years old or younger - especially for males (males twelve years old and younger were permitted to stay in the mixed gender camps with siblings), having parents who were professionals in Cuba, having parents who could speak at least a little English upon arrival in the U.S., being placed in foster care, having relatives who had already resettled in the U.S., and role flexibility within the family. All of these prospective protective factors provided participants an advantage over other participants who did not have any or only a few of these factors, in how well they were able to acculturate into the U.S. The main advantage was that these protective factors eased the transition by lessening the burden of being a new immigrant with few resources and some likely trauma experienced from the transition.

Of all the protective factors that emerged from this particular group of participants, role flexibility was the most common across participants and appears to have been the most

impactful. It was a family process that largely emerged after family reunion and was likely an organic process because of participants' families' cultural norm of *familism*. The prioritization of family wellbeing over individual wellbeing allowed participants and their family members to take on new roles that aided in their acculturation experience and ability to integrate into the U.S. socially, economically, and culturally.

Risk Factors for Unaccompanied Minors Described in the Literature

One major risk factor that all participants had was arriving in a new country as an unaccompanied minor (Fazel et al., 2012); however, much of this risk was at least partially mitigated by the protective factors previously discussed. There were a few risk factors that appeared for a small handful of participants that seemed to have had some significant effect on their wellbeing, most especially during their separation.

First, there were several participants who discussed having witnessed violence (Fazel et al., 2012) while still living in Cuba and/or having had at least one family member who was a victim of violence because of their participation in the underground anti-Castro movement. Additionally, two participants had at least one parent imprisoned for many years, ranging from three to seventeen years. Witnessing and/or having knowledge of a family member's experience with violence seems to have given participants a clearer perspective on the true nature of their circumstances, and that they would likely be separated from their families than the generally accepted 'three month' separation. Additionally these participants, especially those who had an imprisoned parent, had the added stress of worrying about the safety of their family member while they were separated and for some even after they were reunited with only one parent. There were also some participants who spoke of the stress of not knowing how their parents were really doing while they were separated, as the letters written by their parents were being

monitored by the Cuban government. So even the ambiguity regarding parents' safety was a source of stress for some participants. Interestingly, there was one participant, Joaquin, who stated that even though his father's long-term imprisonment was a source of stress, he also felt that there was purpose behind his separation, as his family had a history with political activism. He stated that it was like a punishment, "...but I had a mission and I was proud to continue it."

The lesser risk factors included not speaking the local language and having a parent have a hard time with acculturating (Fazel et al., 2012). Participants did not speak English when they arrived in the U.S., and many spoke of how they did not need to start learning the language until they left their camp in Florida for an orphanage or foster home. Even with this delayed start in learning English, almost all participants who discussed this mentioned that this was not difficult and was not a point of stress for them. This is not surprising considering that many of them were children and several spoke of how it was imperative for them to learn the language so that they could go to school, work, communicate with their foster family, etc. However, this was a stressor for many parents of participants as they were much older when they arrived in the U.S. and most spoke little to no English. This added extra difficulty to their ability to find a job and to integrate into their local community, while also posing barriers with their children, who were speaking English as their main language. This is very likely a reason why many parents initially had a hard time acculturating into the U.S. when they first arrived. However, even the participant parents who never learned English mostly did acculturate in a way that embraced both the local culture and their Cuban culture.

Risk Factors for Unaccompanied Minors Particular to This Sample of Participants

This group of participants also had clear risk factors related to their acculturation experience that were not seen in the previous research on unaccompanied minors. These risk factors were unique to participants' circumstances related to their placements while separated, which included their families' assets being repossessed in Cuba, ambiguity around the length of separation, and the transition to adolescence during the separation.

Many immigrant and refugee families had to leave behind their valuables when migrating to another country. In the case of participants, not only did their parents have to leave behind valuables, their assets (homes, businesses, personal belongings) were repossessed by the Cuban government. Additionally, it could be very difficult to send money outside of Cuba if at all. This left participant families reuniting in the U.S. with little to no resources, and their survival was highly dependent on finding employment quickly and relying on local community support.

There was also the risk factor of a participant's number of placements (e.g., camps, orphanage, foster care) while separated from their parents. Those participants who had a higher number of placements were more likely to have experienced or witnessed some type of abuse. This occurred to a small number of participants but was a clear distinction between those who had four or more placements while separated from their parents.

The ambiguity around how long they would be separated from their parents was a point of stress for many participants. Several participants recounted having had a moment where they knew or had a strong sense that they would not be going back to Cuba for a long time or never again. This seemed to be a point of guidance for some participants as it meant that they had to look after themselves. However, this did not resolve the issue of how long they would be separated from their parents. Almost all participants stated that they were told they would reunite

with their parents within three months, but the shortest length of separation among this group of participants was eight months and the longest was 5.5 years (the average across participants was 2.7 years). This ambiguity was in large part due to parents' inability to leave Cuba because of last minute changes in policies or new rules implemented by the Cuban government. For instance, the Costa children's father was a doctor in Cuba, and when Castro implemented a policy that revoked visas from professionals so that they could not leave the country, their parents were yet again prevented from reuniting with their children.

Lastly, there was the particular risk factor of parents reuniting with their children during an advanced developmental maturation period. For instance, a participant who was separated as a young child and reunited with their parents as an adolescent would have acculturated to American norms and would have been experiencing typical adolescent physical, mental, and emotional changes. Parents who missed out on this developmental transition experienced some conflict once when they reunited. This was exacerbated by the differences between Cuban and U.S. culture and the historical changes happening in the U.S. such as the sexual revolution and civil rights movement. Ileana was quite aware of these cultural differences in her family that were accompanied by typical teenage exploration of identity and the activism occurring in the U.S. at the time. This combination created some tension between her and her parents but appeared to have not lasted beyond her adolescent years.

Acculturation Style

Each of the three factors explored in the second research question – individual, family, and community – in some way influenced participants' acculturation style. All of the participants, to varying degrees, used the integration approach as a means for acculturating into

the U.S. as adolescents and adults. This means that all participants embraced the new U.S. culture while also participating in their families' Cuban culture.

It is apparent that all participants eventually used the integration approach. This is consistent with the successful acculturation seen across participants, as it has been shown through research that the integration approach is the most effective for successfully acculturating into a new country, particularly for adolescents and for the outcomes of psychological wellbeing and school adjustment (Berry et al.,2006). While some participants may have had a hard time in high school, it was likely because of the financial hardships that were due to their unexpected migration and parents inability to find employment in their previous, high paying profession. All participants reported being able to learn English fairly quickly, find employment, go to school, and get married and start their own families. Although they faced many difficulties during these milestones, participants openly acknowledged their successes in spite of their circumstances.

Participants had different timelines for when they used the integration approach. Although most revealed information that indicated that they embraced American culture as an adolescent while also participating in their Cuban culture, there were some latent examples of participants reintegrating back into Cuban and Hispanic culture later on in life, as some mostly-to-fully embraced the U.S. culture when they were adolescents (i.e., the assimilation approach). For example, Diego came to the U.S. in the third grade, and although he had a close Cuban community around him at the time, he still ended up becoming Americanized quickly:

In elementary school, my circle of friends were mostly Cubans who had come over at the same time I did. So we were very close in that respect. In high school, it was different. I had become very Americanized. I had lost pretty much my accent. So I blended in really well, 'cause I got tired of being called a spic and all these things. I said oh, I'm gonna learn English well enough to where they don't know where I'm from, and I can't be called a spic and all these things. So that helped me quite a bit as far as that was concerned.

He eventually had to relearn Spanish in his thirties for work purposes, he started to listen and dance to Latin music, and he eventually moved to a Central American country where he lived for 23 years before moving back to the U.S. (he still travels back and forth):

But in my early 30s when...I started traveling to Latin America [for work], I started rediscovering Latin music. And I learned how to dance, and I love to dance to Latin music... having been raised in the States and having been there since I was very young, and not having had a life so to speak in Cuba, 'cause I was very young, so I didn't go through anything there. I always was curious as to what it would be like to live in a Latin American country and have that experience and be involved in the culture and all that. And that's one of the things that attracted me to it, aside from the fact that I found it to be such a pleasurable place at that time when I first visited there 30 years ago.

Diego is a more extreme example of the assimilation approach, but his experience shows a few reasons why an immigrant adolescent may choose to do so. Diego dropped his accent to fit in better with his American peers and to stop being called derogatory terms. This was an effort to protect himself from the negative sentiment common at the time toward the influx of Cubans into Miami. Although he originally began to reintegrate into Latin culture and relearn Spanish because of a business venture, he eventually fully immersed himself into it to gain experience in a country with a Cuban-adjacent culture because he had limited experiences with Cuban culture growing up in Cuba and in the U.S.

The relevant themes that emerged from *individual factors* that tied into acculturation style included having long-term goals and having a strong sense of discipline. Both of these themes promoted independence and participants' ability to make decisions on their own, and gain employment through the attainment of higher education. These actions would have required integrating into the local culture so that participants could go to school, get to work, etc. while also likely still living with their families where Cuban culture was present.

There is important crossover to note between *family factors* and protective factors previously discussed that greatly aided in participants' ability to acculturate into the U.S. Of most importance, these family protective factors include experiencing few changes in family structure, living with both parents, having a sense of belonging, family connectedness, and open communication (Fazel et al.; Pieloch, McCullough, & Marks, 2016). These family factors likely helped to prevent or dampen any negative effects from forced migration and therefore likely helped these families be able to acculturate into the U.S. as best as possible, considering their difficult circumstances (i.e., family separation stress, few resources, living in a new country).

Community factors centered mainly on participants' local Cuban community as well as being a member of a church. Both of these community 'centers' connected participants and their families to Cuban culture through regularly held social events, and helped integrate them into the U.S. through connecting them to employment opportunities, participating in a local church community, and in general showing newly arrived Cubans 'the ropes' (i.e., transportation, important phrases in English, where to go grocery shopping, etc.). Therefore, these community factors were important to participants' ability to acculturate successfully through the integration approach of participating in both the home culture (Cuban) and the host culture (American). These community factors also have crossover with protective factors previously discussed. These factors provided participants' families with connections to their home culture, social support from friends and their community, living with people of the same ethnicity, and for participants – having peers to play with (Fazel et al., 2012; Pieloch et al., 2016).

It is important to note that acculturation was present among participants on the individual level as well as acculturating with their family. This was mainly because of their prolonged family separation and their need to acculturate as best they could while living in the Florida

camps, orphanages, foster families, or for a few participants while living with extended family. This allowed them time to learn English while living in American communities and learning about how to fit into U.S. culture. This placed them at an advantage, or ahead of the acculturation learning curve, when participants reunited with their parents. This caused varying levels of stress for almost all participants as most of the parents of participants in this study did not speak English when they arrived in the U.S.

These parents also had the added stress of reintegrating their Cuban family norms and culture back into their children's everyday lives – children who had been separated for up to three or more years and who had been well integrated into U.S. culture. This caused stress for several participant families as they were trying to acculturate with little to no resources and with family members (mainly parents vs. children who came over unaccompanied) acculturating at different rates. This is an important finding with implications for separated families in the twenty-first century: these families could face similar gaps in acculturation, and this common point would need to be addressed within the family to help prevent or minimize family dysfunction.

These participant experiences with family separation and reunion made an impact on their childhood and adolescence, while also to a lesser extent influencing decisions in their adulthood. Although participants saw less impact in their later years there were clearly some influences that infiltrated their decisions on important life events and choices such as who they married and how they parented. The following discussion of the third research question further investigates these findings.

Research Question #3 - Discussion

How did participants' family experience with separation and adapting to living in the U.S. as teenagers and young adults, shape their later relationships, parenting practices and philosophies, particularly in relation to perceived cultural norms in Cuban and Cuban-American families?

Although there was less volume in participant responses to interview questions regarding the third research question, in comparison to the first two, a few significant findings emerged throughout participant responses. Across the topics reviewed in the findings, there were clear topics related to the immigrant narrative and the influence this has had on participants' choices in adulthood, particularly in relation to partner choice and parenting practices.

Immigrant Narrative

The 'immigrant narrative' refers to the influence of the immigrant experience on participants' life choices and how this migration became a part their families' story. Among this group of participants the importance of their immigrant story was most apparent when they spoke of their partner choices and their parenting practices. Parenting practices in particular garnered the most connections to the importance of their immigrant experience.

Partner Choice

Choosing a partner for many participants was not significantly influenced by their immigrant experience. Although a handful participants cited having no particular preference for marrying a Cuban, participant Chichi commented on the norms of his community at the time concerning partner choice. He married a Cuban woman and claimed that that is not why he married her, however he did elaborate on how he followed the norm of the time, "Not really, even though back then it was very much in line with 'you stick with your own kind'. That has changed dramatically, because for example, my daughter, she's married to a young man born in Puerto Rico, and my son is with a young lady who's half Colombian, half from Peru...so that old mindset has gone away." It is likely that this is at least one reason why so many participants

married a Cuban – proximity and norms of the time. Juan also commented on the fact that his first wife was Cuban but that it was “serendipity” and was not a reason behind the partnership. In his case, Juan had never dated a Cuban before his first marriage and never lived in a Cuban community in the U.S. Either way, of the 15 participants who married at least once to another Cuban, most did not think that there was a significant connection between their immigrant or Cuban background and their partner choice. It is nevertheless likely that there was some level of influence as 19 participants married an immigrant at least once.

However, there were participants who saw some significant influences or connections between their immigration experience and their relationship with their partner. For example, Diana married a Cuban while she was living in Puerto Rico, which was where she spent most of her separation from her family. She commented on how their Cuban connection had some meaning in her partner choice, “I met my husband in Cuba. We were living in the same neighborhood. Probably, that played a part. You know I was in Puerto Rico, you know. Even though they talked Spanish, people [there] were a little bit different, [whereas] I felt familiar with him.”

There were also a few participants who shared a general immigrant commonality, such as Tortuga and Venerando. Both of these participants saw the value in having similar backgrounds with their partner and how it likely helped them to understand one another. In one case, Tortuga explicitly stated his preference for an immigrant background and the other, Venerando, saw this as a helpful connection point. Both participants were aware that their similar immigrant backgrounds included having experienced hardship and what it is like to acculturate into a new country with few resources. In these cases their migration experience to the U.S., particularly as

a young child or adolescent, cemented meaningful positive connections to their partners that likely contributed to the success of their partnerships.

Perhaps most connected to their common heritage and immigration experience were Mica and Cande, who first met at one of the Florida camps while her parents worked there and he had just arrived. They did not start dating until years later, but they had this very unique connection to one another that was related to their migration as unaccompanied minors. Throughout their lives together they attributed great importance to their Operation Pedro Pan journey and how the meaning behind their immigrant story guided their parenting practices, including how they communicated with and provided for their children.

Parenting Practices

The immigrant story for some participants was a leading or at least continuously present narrative in how they talked about raising their children and grandchildren. It was important to several participants that the younger generations in their family understand how and why they had to come to the U.S. For instance, Cande and Mica's children and grandchildren regularly attend educational and social events about Operation Pedro Pan, as does Alicia's daughter and granddaughter and other participants' grandchildren. Juan has told his immigration story to his daughters and grandchildren about his time coming to the U.S. and living in an orphanage – while also focusing on why they had to come here and the past and present situation in Cuba. Their story is not just about leaving one country for another to pursue economic opportunity; they also were leaving behind communism and were forced to give up their livelihood. This kind of family narrative has weight to it and clearly influenced a number of participants' approaches to parenting. Although there were several participants who did not want to talk about their family separation with their children for a number of reasons, there was still the need to pass on the

lessons learned from being a young immigrant with few resources trying to acculturate and thrive in the U.S. These lessons or takeaways included the importance of family, education, and financial independence; having open communication with their children; and providing a loving relationship within a structured home environment.

Participants prioritized the importance of family, education, and financial independence in their families, which is logical considering their experience with family separation and reunion in a new country. These were the main attributes or foci of participants when they reunited with their parents and family in the U.S. As previously examined in the discussion for the second research question, family cohesion and prioritizing the family over the individual was a cultural Cuban norm that mobilized participants' families' ability to start over with limited resources and successfully acculturate to living in the U.S. As many participants stated, their greatest family strength was putting family first. This included deep loyalty to one another and concentrating all efforts towards lifting up the family as a whole economically, socially, and culturally.

One of the ways in which this was done was through pursuing higher education, which was cited by many as a key priority among participants' parents. If higher education was not possible, then participants and their family members pursued entrepreneurial opportunities or worked multiple jobs to help with securing financial independence. For instance, Cubacharlie talked about his parents started their own local food business after years of working multiple low paying jobs and demanding hours. It was a risk that paid off for the family but still required exhaustive hours of work from family members to keep it going. When Cubacharlie was raising his daughters, he emphasized the importance of saving money to the annoyance of his teenage daughters, who later on in adulthood greatly appreciated this tactic. He was accustomed to always having his own "personal bank" at home in case of an emergency. Mica and Cande, and

Fred decided to pay for all of their children's higher education so that they would have financial freedom and not be beholden to paying off loans. It was very important to them to give their children this kind of independence. These approaches make sense because of what they were forced to leave behind in Cuba, which was essentially everything other than the few items that they brought with them. This traumatic experience clearly made an indelible impression on these families – the only thing that can be counted on is family, therefore one must ensure the wellbeing and success of the family.

While participants did discuss carrying on some of their parents' childrearing practices, they also referenced clear modifications and an evolution in parenting practices that emerged when they became parents. Some of this was in response to personal experiences they had growing up while other differences between generations were likely in response to practices current U.S. society at the latter time, such as greater gender equality. Most participants spoke of carrying on some of their parents' childrearing practices while also adapting them to better fit their experiences and goals for their children. One major example of this was adapting to the need for better communication within the family. The several participants who cited prioritizing open communication with their children, such as Mica and Cande, did so as a result of their experience growing up with their parents and family separation. In particular, Mica's experience with closed to semi-closed communication about her separation left a sense of the unknown, which was often a topic too sensitive to broach with their parents. Therefore they explicitly decided to have open communication with their children, which included talking about your emotions and talking through family decisions together. El Guti also had similar stories concerning closed communication.

Lastly, many participants spoke of the importance of having loving relationships with their children within a structured home environment. The experience of family separation and growing up with an emphasis on the importance of family left many participants with the goal of instilling a sense of stability and security for their children, which they achieved mainly through cultivating close relationships with their children that were for some participants more emotionally involved than what they experienced with their parents. For instance, El Guti and Alicia both prioritized being very close with their children from childhood through adulthood, at least partially as a response to the more distant or less loving relationships that they had with their parents. Juan discussed the importance of structure while raising his daughters and sees this in how his grandchildren are being parented, in addition to emphasizing the importance of providing them with a loving family.

It was apparent across many participants that they had developed closer emotional bonds with their children that surpassed the parent-child relationship that they had experienced with their parents. This is not to say that their parents were not loving; it was just a different type of relationship that was likely more hierarchical and emphasized following the direction of the parent. Participants experienced prolonged family separation, and even for those who had an all around positive experience while separated almost all participants experienced the temporary loss of having a close relationship with a parent(s). This particular immigrant experience likely colored their perspective on how best to parent their child and ensure that they always felt loved and secure within their family. Chichi provided the following statement that aptly summarizes this sentiment across many participants:

When my kids were born, I made a determined effort that we would always be together as a family. So, ever since they were very little, we always took them on vacation with us, all the time, we never left the kids behind. Because I always felt that the years that I

lost with my parents was a time that I could never recuperate. And I said I will never let ... I will always have my kids enjoy things so they'll always have it in their hearts. So, they've been all over the world with us when they were small, all over Colorado, skiing, riding horses. So, we grew up very much as a family unit, which to me was very important.

The experience of being an immigrant, including the hardships and lessons learned, clearly influenced most participants' parenting practices on some level. Across many participants' parenting beliefs and practices there was an emphasis on getting an education, being financially independent, having structure in the home, and providing a loving home for their children. This approach appears to have clear ties to their history of family separation and their Cuban immigrant experience.

Unexpected Findings

The following discussion explores unexpected findings that are not covered by the three main research questions but are important to examine and add to the literature on unaccompanied minors and families who have been separated. The emergent findings relate to the reintegration of foster (or foster adjacent) children with their families and the potential effects on child wellbeing, family reintegration, and acculturation outcomes.

Importance of Thoughtfully Re-integrating Family Members After Prolonged Separation

There were four participant examples that demonstrated successful family separation circumstances and the ideal conditions for family reunification. The distinguishing factor that separates these cases from other participants who were in foster care is that when these participants experienced family reunification there was a phase, or crossover, of integration where they transferred from living with their foster family to their biological family. There were deliberate actions made by adults during participants' crossover between these two family formations that proved to be very helpful to their family reunification and acculturation into the

U.S. The Costa family children and Chichi were the participants who were fortunate enough to experience this thoughtful approach to family reintegration.

Costa Family (Violeta, Mateo, and Isabel)

The Costa family case study was thoroughly explored in a previous chapter, but it is important to highlight this family's positive experience with reintegrating the four children (three of whom participated in this study) back with their biological family from their foster family. The Costa children were separated from their parents for four years, and the overwhelming majority of that time was spent with their foster families. Although this was a long separation from their parents, the three children, now adults, who participated in this study recalled having a very loving experience with their foster families, which included close and positive connections to their foster families, particularly with their foster mothers.

Two of the Costa children discussed how the separation from their foster family was a painful or sad experience especially for the youngest child, Isabel. However, the remarkable aspect about the Costa children's reintegration with their biological parents was how their father had preplanned for this integration to safeguard his children's wellbeing. Mr. Costa was a doctor who had a close friend who was psychologist, and he would seek counsel from him on how to best help his children pre-migration and pre-reunion. Mr. Costa was advised to keep communication open between his children and their foster families. In reality, this included writing letters and occasionally making visits to their foster family several states away. The Costa participants stated that they still keep in touch with their foster families.

These actions helped maintain the relationships previously established with the foster families and helped the children reintegrate with their parents and younger siblings, while keeping emotional distress to a minimum. This likely helped the Costa family to reestablish their

previous parent-child relationships and be able to acculturate to living in the U.S., inadvertently using the integration approach of participating in both cultures. The Costa children relearned Spanish through routine lessons taught by their father, participated in Cuban social activities, while also going to an American school and participating in American culture. This high level of family involvement during their acculturation process would have required cooperation and a general sense of family connectedness. Overall, it is apparent that Mr. Costa's intentional actions to keep his children connected to their foster families acknowledged these past positive relationships and likely contributed to their successful acculturation.

Chichi

Although Chichi was not in foster care during his family separation, he experienced a similar situation to participants who were placed with non-relative families for a long period of time, like the Costa children. Chichi came to the U.S. at nine years old with his older brother, and the two were promptly picked up by a cousin upon their arrival in Miami. The cousin was a young married woman in her twenties who had a two-year-old daughter that Chichi remembered playing with during this period. They had never met this cousin before, but nonetheless Chichi remembers this placement as a very positive experience. The cousin had been in the U.S. for three years and could speak English and Spanish, and in general Chichi remembered feeling welcomed in their home and that it was a loving environment. He and his brother stayed there for nine months before moving to New York City to live with an aunt and her husband and two younger children.

They lived with their aunt for about three years and were highly integrated into the daily family life, so much that Chichi spoke very highly of this experience:

It was wonderful, to be honest with you, because they were our second set of parents. I couldn't be happier to have two sets of parents like I had. And a couple of times while we

were with them, they always loved Miami, so they took vacations, and we got in this big station wagon, and we drove from New York to Miami twice. So, we even got to see my cousin again. So, it was a very good relationship. I remember that my aunt told me that my uncle... told her, 'if we don't have enough money for steak, nobody eats steak, we have to eat the same food.' So, he was a very loving man.

When asked about what was most helpful about this living arrangement, Chichi responded, "I think it was the continuity of family life, that we were treated just like another son. We were not isolated, we were not treated differently. Everything that they had, we had, it was like part two of our set of parents basically." Once Chichi and his brother were reunited with his parents in New York City, they still would regularly see their aunt, uncle, and two cousins. Chichi also described how the most difficult part was reuniting with his parents because they had been apart for so long and his parents were under a lot stress finding new jobs, navigating the city, and not being able to speak English. Chichi had a good relationship with his parents but still described this time as, "...an acclimation process of getting to know my parents again and to understand their situation." It is likely that his ability to still visit his aunt and uncle and be a part of their lives was helpful to his family's acculturation process, for practical support reasons but also because it provided stability in his life and the loving environment he had for three years was not suddenly cut off from him and his brother.

Importance of Unexpected Findings

Both of these examples exemplify the positive effects of using a gradual transition between foster and biological families, when the foster family experience was positive. If the Costa children were never able to see or communicate with their foster families after their reunion, there likely would have been negative consequences within the Costa family post-reunion. This could have included problems with family communication and re-establishing trust between parents and children, which likely would have influenced their ability to acculturate

successfully into the U.S. Overall, this approach helped these participants to not feel like they were ‘starting over’ again with a family that they had been estranged from for a long period of time.

Theory Discussion

The following discussion examines the main ways that life course theory and family resilience theory translate to the main findings of this study. Both theories were important to the design of the three research questions and the interview questions. After reviewing the findings of this study it is apparent that these theories were symbiotic, which greatly contributed to the rigor and success of this research.

Life Course Theory

Using life course theory in this research helped set up a useful framework in which to assess participants’ families’ ability to adapt to life in the U.S. Life course theory also integrated well with family resilience theory in being able to assess if and how these participants and their families were able to successfully adapt to living in the U.S. This was possible through looking at the unique attributes of this particular time period in Cuban and U.S. history (i.e., historical time); the linked lives of these families – the stressful events affected everyone in the family; and the norms and roles of Cuban families during this time period (Elder, 1999; White et al., 2015a). These defining characteristics of participants’ lived experiences matched the main tenets of life course theory and helped to explain the consequences of their unexpected migration and transition in family roles. Additionally, the life course perspective looks at the meaning created by an individual or group after an event has occurred (Bengston & Allen, 1993). In this context, it is the meaning that participants have made out of their experience with family separation and reunion in a new country that matters.

The unique *historical time* point for this group of participants included the Cuban Revolution, Castro taking over Cuba, and the consequential family separation and reunion in a new country. The social and political environment in Cuba pre-separation was turbulent and change was fast paced. Many participants' families believed that Castro's rule would not last long. This caused ambiguity and unclear communication between parents in Cuba and their children in the U.S. as to when they would leave, caused stress for the parents, and continued to cause unclear messaging regarding when families would be reunited once children were sent to the U.S. Additionally, a fascinating and distinctive attribute of this historic time point was how close Cuba was to the U.S.: Children could quickly escape via a short plane flight, however they were still separated from their parents for long periods of time.

The *norms and roles* of Cuban families played a large part in their ability to adapt to re-forming as a family in the U.S. with little to no resources. The Cuban family norm of *familism* lent itself to participants' families being able to be flexible in their family roles so that children could take on parental roles and parents, particularly mothers, worked beyond their normal gender roles in the family. The life course theory of *linked lives* was very clear in this group of participants as all of them spoke of how each individual in their family was affected by this historical event and their family reunion in a new country, which relates directly to *norms and roles*.

The accumulation of these core concepts helps to explain the meaning that participants created out of their experiences with Operation Pedro Pan and prolonged family separation, particularly in relation to their meaning and expectations for family life when they got married and had children. These experiences shaped how they approached parenting so that the hardships

they faced would not happen to their children, such as not spending enough time with parents and feelings of insecurity, and giving their children as much opportunity as possible.

Family Resilience Theory

Family resilience theory aligned well with this study, as key features of the theory are present throughout the findings. Additionally, this study provides further validation for family resilience theory. One of the most important points is that these findings indicate the importance of participants' families being able to utilize their family strengths that were present before their separation (i.e., shared family values, strong work ethic) and their ability to embrace new family strengths after their family reunion, such as role flexibility. As Froma Walsh affirmed about families in these crisis situations – it is not just the management of the situation but more importantly the transformations that can emerge from these stressful experiences that help a family adapt to their new circumstances (Walsh, 2012). Role flexibility proved to be crucial to participants' and their families' acculturation experience and fits neatly into how family resilience theory helps to explain participants' adaptations.

Many of these participants' families showed this ability to transform within their family to achieve stability and maintain family functioning while assimilating into the U.S. The process of assimilation for all of these families included a number of stressors such as finding employment without speaking English, finding employment in a profession that was of a lesser professional status than what they were in Cuba, having little to no resources, forced migration from their home country, losing all or most of their possessions in Cuba, etc. – all while reintegrating as a family that had been separated for a significant time period. This combination of stressors required adaptation and can be seen in several different ways across participants' recollected experiences. The most typical role adaptation was parents allowing their child to take

on parental roles such as making family decisions or connecting to community resources, while there were other unexpected role changes such as a mother using American marital norms to tell her Cuban husband that he needed to change his ways and be there for this family.

Participants' families' ability to be flexible in their roles allowed them to participate in both Cuban and American cultures, and integrate into a new country successfully while experiencing the stress of unexpected migration and having few resources available while starting over. This directly relates to their acculturation style of integration, which has been found to be the most effective for successful acculturation (Berry et al., 2006). This acculturation style correlates with participants' and their families' ability to transcend their crisis situation and successfully begin their lives over in the U.S. by participating in the new host culture *and* their Cuban culture.

It is also important to note that each participant's family strengths were used in a unique way that utilized each families' 'toolbox' of family processes, as a means to adapt to their situation. In other words, this group of participants' acculturation experiences exemplifies a main tenet of family resilience theory – that there can be multiple pathways to family resilience (Walsh, 1996). Additionally, family resilience theory posits that to fully assess a family's response to a stressful situation, one must look past the initial event and through to the multiple "phases of adaptation" that can occur afterwards (Walsh, 1996, p. 264). These research findings illustrate the phases that participants experienced starting right after the separation, during their separation (in some cases this lasted several years), when they first reunited with their family, and the stressors brought on during the months and years following their reunion that were related to acculturating into the U.S. This can mainly be seen in the change in roles or adoption of new roles by participants, so that they could endure the process of acculturation as an

unaccompanied minor and then as part of a newly re-formed immigrant family. The main tenets of family resilience theory including affirming belief systems, communication behaviors, and community resources all fit into the framework of this study and are further examined:

Affirming Belief Systems

Affirming belief systems can help guide a family's interpretation of a crisis (Walsh, 1996) and consequently help them adapt to the stressful event. Participants' shared family values appear to have been crucial to their families' ability to adapt and change to their new environment in the U.S. Participants lauded their family values, which centered on a strong commitment to family and the importance of family, as their biggest family strength. This showed in their examples of family commitment, such as working multiple jobs, putting off attending college to contribute financially to the family, and filling in for parents' duties while they worked inconvenient and long hours. This strong commitment to preserving the family unit helped to keep the family together and working towards the same goals, during times of high stress and insufficient resources. These affirming belief systems likely mobilized families to be flexible in their roles and prevent or diminish the potential for family dysfunction during times of high stress.

However, interestingly there were a few examples among participants of how this family strength could have had unintended negative consequences. There were several participants who claimed that their parents either never talked about the separation or talked about it very little with them once they reunited – even though the participant wanted to talk about it and regrets not having had that opportunity. This lack of communication may have been due to the overwhelmingly strong commitment to family, which in Cuban families at the time included high-monitoring parenting practices and a high level of involvement in their children's lives.

This high level of involvement may have made it too unbearable for some parents to broach the topic of their separation – even though many participants were separated for multiple years.

Communication Behaviors

Communication behaviors were not as prevalent or easily seen among participants' recollections. However they recounted some notable memories retold about hearing their parents talk about Cuba, such as remembering when life was good in Cuba to openly talking about the current political situation at the time. This communication was likely helpful in that these types of communication would have acknowledged the fact that there was a family separation and that the situation in Cuba at the time was ambiguous. There were also instances of talking about their separation experience while it was happening through the use of letters, which almost all participants had written to their parents while the parents were still in Cuba.

There appears to have been clear communication within participant families once they were reunited that were more practical about topics such as 'these are our next steps', or having explicit conversations to make a decision together about next steps for the family. As previously discussed in 'affirming belief systems' there were some participants who experienced dysfunctional communication with their parents once they reunited. This is mainly in reference to the participants who were never able to talk about the separation including why it happened, what their parents' experience was like while they were still in Cuba, and how they could move forward together as a family while acknowledging they had been separated.

Community Resources

The local Cuban community was brought up as being important by almost all participants. This local community provided practical resources such as clothing and furniture, to finding employment and housing. There was also the important connection to Cuban culture

through frequent social events that gave these families a connection to their home culture. All of these community resources relate to family resilience theory's emphasis on a family's set of structural and relational resources (Walsh, 1996, 2012). These resources will be unique to each family, and this was the case for each of these participants. Even though they shared many similar resources from their local community, there was not a prescriptive set of resources present for every participant.

How Life Course Theory and Family Resilience Theory Were Complementary

The overlap between family resilience theory and life course theory occurred with the participants' families' ability to transform and be able to adapt to a new environment (i.e., family resilience theory) and a prominent way in which this was done was through role flexibility for different family members (i.e., life course theory). Participants' families' shared family beliefs (i.e., family resilience theory's affirming belief systems) prioritized the family over the individual and strongly appears to have aided their ability to modify Cuban family norms (i.e., life course theory), which helped them to adapt to living in the U.S. in multiple ways. This role flexibility allowed participants and their families to seek unconventional employment opportunities such as participants starting to work at an earlier age, previously stay-at-home mothers taking up full-time work, and fathers working at a low-paying job later in life after having been a professional for many years. Both theories allowed this study to look at family resilience in the context of a unique historical time point, in a more complex way than if only family resilience theory was utilized.

Limitations of the Study

There were a number of limitations to this study that may have limited the potential of the study's findings. These limitations were mainly due to participant self-selection, the passage of time – which could lead to recall bias, lack of input from other family members, and a lack of resources to expand the scope of the study. The following discussion examines these limitations.

A practical limitation of this study was that all of the interviews were conducted in English as I did not speak Spanish. Although all of the participants spoke fluent to mostly fluent English, having the option to converse in Spanish may have allowed for more insight from the participants' responses. Additionally, a wider sample would likely have been more easily recruited if the option to interview in Spanish were available.

This research recruited participants who were self-selecting – this likely attracted individuals who had a more positive experience and who would want to talk about their family separation and their life course history. An overwhelming majority of participants in this study described a positive experience with Operation Pedro Pan. Although the family separation was a trying time for all participants, most of them look back on it as a tough but ultimately positive experience that led them to the United States. Despite the fact that good services were provided, there was clearly an increase in vulnerability for this special population. So it is important to note that all participants were at a stage in psychosocial development that typically involves self-reflection and looking back on one's life to take stock of events and choices (Feldman, 2016). As almost all participants had a long-term positive outcome to their separation, and the fact that the situation in Cuba continued to worsen, it is not surprising that most participants look back on this vulnerable time as a definitive positive occurrence; however, this may have minimized their negative experiences. Additionally, a significant portion of participants belonged to a strong

social group that centered on their Operation Pedro Pan experience. This may have contributed to the overall positive narrative that was heard across many participants, thus potentially leaving out or minimizing negative experiences.

There were a few participants who spoke of having a sibling who did not have a positive experience and who did not like to talk about it. Some participants explicitly cited abuse as part of the reason for the sibling's reticence, whereas others did not know exactly why or did not say out of respect for their sibling. Of course it is imperative to respect the wishes of those who had a negative experience; however, it is important to note that not including negative experiences could skew the findings of this study toward being more positive and miss the opportunity to document more egregious incidents with Operation Pedro Pan, or unaccompanied migration, family separation, and family reunion in general. If there were greater resources to work with during implementation of the study, then ideally more participants would have been recruited to increase the chances of including those who had some negative experiences and who felt comfortable to participate and describe them.

In regard to validity of the study, most of the interview questions asked participants about events and memories that occurred nearly 60 years ago, and the mean age of participants at the time of their migration was 12 years old, with the youngest participant having been six years old. Although many participants could remember a majority of the events that happened, the length of time between current day and these historical events could blur some of the details, and participants could forget key details relevant to the research questions. A barrier to improving this limitation is that many relatives of participants who could confirm these details are deceased. However, with more resources participant family members could be recruited to participate and help verify or at least support participant claims.

Due to time and cost restraints, this study was not able to include interviews or focus groups with participants' parents, children, and grandchildren. These interviews or focus groups would have made the study an intergenerational study, which would have provided more insight into the family and life course effects of this historical event. Without this insight, participant recollection of events could not be confirmed or supported by others who also experienced it (with exception to the family case study). This also means that this study could not explore the effects of Operation Pedro Pan and family separation from the perspective of other family members: instead this study relies on participants' accounts of other family members' experiences.

Suggestions for Future Research and Domestic Policy

The following discussion gives an overview of suggestions for future research on unaccompanied minors and family separation. The areas of for future research include ideas related to research design and family reintegration. Each of the suggestions is rooted in the findings from this study as well as relevant literature and theory. Additionally, a short discussion follows on how these findings relate to domestic policy on refugee services in the U.S.

Improvements in Research Design

Future research on the effects of unaccompanied minors and migration should include input from multiple family members, particularly at varying levels of generations of the family, to better capture the long-term and life course effects of a historical event like Operation Pedro Pan and unaccompanied migration and family separation. Studies that focus on more recent events where parents, children, and possibly grandchildren can be interviewed would be ideal. A closer examination of the change in the parent-child dynamic that also includes firsthand accounts from parents could elicit rich information on the types of stressors the family has

endured and how a crisis like family separation can affect parental decision-making and communication.

Further Exploring the Family Reintegration Timeline

It is important to note that among both risk and protective factors, it is difficult to define exactly when these factors may have had the most effect on participants – most particularly regarding risk factors. This is because there are many time points in which these factors can occur and have overlap, or accumulative effects. The time points most relevant to these participants included pre-departure, departure, and post-arrival (Bean et al., 2007). An additional significant time point that should be added, or further defined, to Bean et al.'s findings is the *family reunion*. This time point should specifically address the importance of family transitioning back to living together as a unit whose formation would likely look different than from before the family separation.

The family reunion time point should include the immediate reunion and the extended time period of resettling and reforming as a family – this could last several months to a couple of years. Many participants spoke of a brief period of elation and joy when they first reunited with their parents. However, there were at least a few months of resettling that included taking on new roles and re-forming around these roles as a means to acculturate into the U.S. as a family. This time period appeared to have held the greatest amount of difficulties for participants and would be an excellent time point to focus on for future research regarding unaccompanied minors, family separation, and family reunion.

The focus of this future research should be on the change in family roles, family negotiations on these new or adapted roles (i.e., communication behaviors), advances in child development during separation (i.e., child before separation vs. adolescent after reunion), current

family strengths, and current family stressors. These points of interest line up with family resilience research that emphasizes the importance of a family's unique traits and challenges, and their structural and relational resources when assessing their ability to function over multiple phases of adaptation (Walsh 1996, 2012).

Family Reintegration After Prolonged Separation

As previously discussed in the unexpected findings section, a foster child's transition from foster care to their biological family can be a positive but also complicated phase of family re-integration. The participants from this study who experienced positive transitions after prolonged separation from their parents had experienced a period of overlap and integration with their foster family and their biological family. Therefore they did not experience a complete 'cutoff' from their foster families with whom they had warm and loving relationships. Rather, they still had contact with their foster families, which very likely eased their transition with living with their biological family again.

This information on reunions for families who have experienced prolonged separation during contemporary times could also help the development of family interventions such as parenting classes for parents who have recently been reunited with children from whom they have been separated from for a long time. As seen in this research, prolonged family separation can mean that families reunite during children's developmental stages that have advanced from the time they were separated from their parents. This was a relevant risk factor in this participant group that was not prevalent in previous research regarding unaccompanied minors and their wellbeing. Additionally, family members could be acculturating to living in the U.S. at different rates as individuals of the family arrived at different time points. This could be another point of stress that would be relevant to the family reintegration phase.

The issue of temporary foster care in current times is highly relevant as an unknown number of children have been separated from their parents at the U.S.-Mexico border and have been sent as unaccompanied minors to states across the U.S. such as New York and Michigan (Robbins, 2018, June 20; Shamus, 2018, July 30). This was a consequence of the ‘zero-tolerance policy’ enacted in April 2018 by Jeff Sessions, the U.S. Attorney General at the time. This policy separated all families who crossed the border as a deterrent. In June of 2018, President Trump signed an executive order that ended this separation policy however there were still children who were separated and headed to temporary foster care throughout the U.S. (Domonoske & Gonzalez, 2018, June 19). This means that they will continue to have needs that will require human service attention, and this research and subsequent research will be necessary to help these unaccompanied minors and their families as best as possible.

Domestic Policy and Refugee Services

A refugee’s health outcomes are closely intertwined with their refugee status, and the traumatic experiences that led them to flee to another country (de Bocanegra et al., 2018). The health needs that refugees arrive with in a host country are likely to be complex and unique to their situation, which calls for unique policies structured around these health and social service needs. The findings from this study support the need for immediate assessment and provision of health and social services that are sensitive and appropriately responsive to the refugees’ culture and past traumas. It is important to note that as political upheaval and violence continues to grow around the world, the complexity of refugees’ needs will also increase – especially when considering the political environment in the U.S. around who can more easily be let into the country over other refugee populations. This means that culturally sensitive health services would be best served by federal and state policies that allow for flexibility in funding so that

future, ongoing research into the special needs of these populations are possible. In other terms, the practices and policies in research and practice-settings that work with refugees cannot be stagnant – a one-time fix, or response, for refugee health services warrants a dynamic and non-linear process of decision-making.

Future Suggestions – Concluding Thoughts

Overall, these suggestions would be relevant and helpful areas for future research considering how many individuals fall into the categories of unaccompanied minor and refugee family, and who have and will cross over into the U.S. In FY2017 there have been over 41,000 unaccompanied minors and over 75,000 ‘family units’ apprehended in the Southwest United States by the U.S. Border Patrol (U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2017). Additionally, although there has been a steep drop in the number of refugees admitted into the U.S. since 2016, there still have been over 22,000 refugees admitted into the U.S. in 2018 (Refugee Processing Center, 2018). Many of these refugees arrive as families and have likely faced multiple traumas, so acculturating into the U.S. as a family is a timely and critical area for research, as is the topic of the critical needs of unaccompanied minors who have been separated from their parents.

Discussion Conclusion

The findings of this study reflect a significant range of participant experiences with Operation Pedro Pan, family separation, and reunion. Undoubtedly this study, which included 25 participants, cannot capture every single type of Operation Pedro Pan experience. However, it does help to further detail the array of lived experiences and expose the facets of family resilience that were particular to this group of people. On one end of the spectrum there are the participants who recall their time being separated from their family as an ‘adventure’ and being very positive considering the circumstances; while the other end includes those who have not




talked about their experience until very recently because of how traumatic and distressing the separation was. In between these polarities exists an innumerable combination of family separation and reunion experiences. However there were many commonalities across participant interviews that helped provide insight into what can help families be resilient during times of acculturation and re-forming as a family under times of duress.

The principal finding of this study is that shared Cuban family values were crucial to participants' families' ability to adapt to their new circumstances in the U.S. after having been separated for several months to several years. These shared family values likely allowed participants, their siblings and parents to be able to be flexible in their roles and successfully adapt to living in a new country after a forced migration. Additionally, this research provides further evidence that the local community and the different types of support that it can provide to a newly arrived immigrant or refugee family can be crucial to their acculturation process.

Considering the current situation with unaccompanied minors in the U.S., there is a great need for human services and a better understanding of the effects of prolonged separation on families. Future research on this topic should focus on the phases of family reintegration; the resources, strengths, and unique stressors of affected families; and taking into account multiple generational perspectives within families. By better understanding the phenomenon of unaccompanied minor migration and family separation, human services can be further refined to better fit the needs of these affected families and ensure their wellbeing.

Appendix

Appendix A: Email Correspondence with Operation Pedro Pan Group, Inc.

Reply to Doctoral Student - Research Collaboration Inquiry  Inbox x   

 **Jose Amaro** <jose_amaro@bellsouth.net> 9/11/16   

to me 

Hello, Allyson.

This is in reference to your letter to OPPG requesting its collaboration in the preparation of your doctoral dissertation. My name is **José Amaro**. I am OPPG trustee and member of its History Committee. I was asked to write to you by OPPG Board of Directors' President Carmen Romanach and Carmen Valdivia, Chairperson of OPPG's History Committee. I gather from your email that you want to interview some of our members for your dissertation and therefore you are requesting OPPG to provide you with their names and ways to reach them. In our estimation, it would be helpful to know exactly what specific aspect of Operation Pedro Pan you intend to address with your research before we commit to approaching our members in order to request their cooperation, because it is not at all clear from your letter what your research problem actually is. Therefore, we would suggest that you get back to us once you have defined and delineated the parameters of your dissertation's research problem statement. We will determine at that time if we are in a position to offer any assistance. Ultimately, the decision to make any of our members available to you will rest with OPPG's Board of Directors. Bear in mind that every year we get a countless number of requests for cooperation in a wide variety of academic, journalistic, museum and library exhibit, and cinematic projects and because of the size of our organization, we can't always address them all.

Thank you for taking an interest in Operation Pedro Pan.

We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience. In the meantime, we wish you the very best in all personal and professional endeavors.

Sincerely,

José.

 **Ally Pakstis** <allypakstis@gmail.com>  9/30/16   

to Jose 

Dear **José**,

Attached you will find my main research question along with the interview questions. As with any qualitative research, the main research question may evolve throughout data collection to better fit the emerging themes. However please know that what is presented here is representative of the research inquiry.

Also attached are my CV and a reference list of the Operation Pedro Pan literature that have informed the research and interview questions. This is a working reference list that will continue to grow.

For your benefit, I also wanted to better clarify my timeline regarding this research. I will realistically be defending my dissertation proposal in early 2017, and complete an in-depth IRB review process shortly thereafter. This would place the earliest starting time for conducting interviews at early Spring 2017.

Of course I am happy to clarify any questions or concerns that may arise, if this is something that is deemed appropriate for moving forward. I sincerely appreciate your time and patience throughout this exchange.

Very best,



 **Jose Amaro** <jose_amaro@bellsouth.net> 10/1/16 ☆ ↩ ▾
to me ▾

Dear Ally: Will you let me know your sample size target? In other words, how many Pedro Pans do you have in mind for your research? I would like to know before I share the information you forwarded with other members of OPPG's History Committee. Bear in mind that to a large degree your sample size will very much determine if we're able to help. Sincerely, **José Amaro**.

From: Ally Pakstis [mailto:allypakstis@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, September 30, 2016 2:10 PM
To: Jose Amaro
Subject: Re: Reply to Doctoral Student - Research Collaboration Inquiry

...

 **Ally Pakstis** <allypakstis@gmail.com> 10/2/16 ☆ ↩ ▾
to Jose ▾

Dear José,

I would welcome as many participants as possible but my ideal sample target size is 25. This is to help ensure that within-group diversity is being represented. If this sample size is unrealistic I believe 20 interviews would still be feasible for the study design.

I do also expect to use some snowball sampling where contacts recommend some potential interviewees. I currently have one solid contact that will give an interview and potentially be able to recommend others that she has kept in contact with.

I hope this information is helpful.

Best,
Ally

 **Ally Pakstis** <allypakstis@gmail.com> 10/11/16 ☆ ↩ ▾
to Jose ▾

Dear José,

Due to possible budget restrictions the most likely form of interview venue is over the phone or internet services such as Skype and private conference lines. However, if there are several Pedro Pans living in the same area then it would be ideal to meet with them in person, especially if that is what they prefer. I would be happy to travel to South Florida to do the interviews in-person.

It may also be possible to apply for dissertation grants over the next several months that would allow for more travel opportunities. Overall, I would want to make sure that whatever the choice, the interviewee is comfortable with the venue.

Please let me know if you have any other questions or concerns regarding this inquiry.

Best,
Ally

...


 **Ally Pakstis** <allypakstis@gmail.com> 11/18/16 ☆ ↩ ▾
to Marian, Jose ▾

Dear José,

I am writing to check-in on my inquiry regarding potential interviews with Operation Pedro Pan adults, via the Operation Pedro Pan Group. At your convenience, please let me know if there is anything I can further provide for the Board of Directors and History Committee members. My academic advisor, Dr. Marian Moser-Jones, is also copied on this email to assist in any questions or concerns that may remain.

I sincerely thank you for all of your time during this exchange. I greatly appreciate your patience and attention to detail.

Very best,

 **Jose Amaro** <jose_amaro@bellsouth.net> 11/21/16 ☆ ↩ ▾
to Carmen, me ▾

Dear Ally:

This is to respond to your most recent email. I hope all's well with you. I am sorry I hadn't kept you abreast of our efforts to assist you in locating the 25 Pedro Pan subjects you need for your research. The months of October and November have been busy ones. We have way too many ongoing projects for our very limited resources. At any rate, I had intended to write to you last month to clarify the issue of OPPG collaboration in your study. Because of some past experiences that went awry, OPPG has adopted a policy of not collaborating or endorsing projects of any kind over which it has no control over content. It is a way of ensuring that the projects it becomes involved with do not compromise its raison d'être and mission. Having said that, it doesn't mean that we are not amenable to helping you find Pedro Pans who may want to participate in your research. It simply means that you cannot use OPPG neither as a formal collaborator or endorser of your project. Now then, Carmen Valdivia, Chair of the History Committee, has joined me in recruiting 25 willing subjects. We will have a list of names with the corresponding email addresses by the beginning of next week. At that point, you will have to contact them, explain the purpose of your dissertation and arrange the interviews.

I hope you have a very happy Thanksgiving Day with your loved ones.

Cordially,
José Amaro.

Appendix B: Introductory Email Template

Dear ,

My name is Ally Pakstis and I am a fourth year Family Science doctoral student at the University of Maryland. I received your email address from José Amaro and Carmen Valdivia, who indicated that you might be willing to participate in my dissertation research that would involve a one-on-one interview with me. Please note that participant names will not be used to help ensure participation is confidential.

I am currently in the process of preparing for my dissertation research, which will examine the short and long-term effects of separating from parents and family on Operation Pedro Pan children. The intention of this study is to investigate the effects of this event-based trauma on adult Cuban Pedro Pan children during their adolescence and adulthood. Focus areas will include family decision-making, familial roles, parenting style, and family transitions.

I believe that Operation Pedro Pan was a unique and important historical event that deserves more research and attention. I would be most appreciative and honored to be able to interview you and learn from your life experiences. I am not Cuban but I have been doing research on immigrant and refugee families in the U.S. and I think that Pedro Pans have been largely ignored. I also believe that their wisdom deserves to be preserved and passed on to future generations.

Currently I am working on my dissertation proposal and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process. I will likely be done with these two requirements by the end of July/beginning of August 2017 so the interviews would not be able to occur until at least late July 2017. If the timeline shifts I would be sure to let you know in a timely manner. At this time I would be very appreciative if you could confirm by replying to this email, about whether or not I can put your name on a list to be considered for participation.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me and I will be happy to answer. I look forward to speaking with you and thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Ally Pakstis, MPH
Doctoral Candidate in Family Science
University of Maryland
allypakstis@gmail.com

Appendix C: Introductory Phone Call Script

[After initial introductions]:

First, I want to thank you for your willingness to participate in my research and for taking the time to have this phone call today. I feel especially privileged to have the opportunity to talk with you and learn about your experience with Operation Pedro Pan as well as learn about your family.

A priority in my research is to be above board and candid about my intentions, so today's call is to give you the chance to ask me any questions you may have about the research, your participation, how I will use this research, and anything else you would like to know, and together we will figure out the interview location. This phone call is also a chance for me to more personally introduce myself, and for us to get to know each other better before the in-depth interview, if you decide to participate, that will take place on another scheduled day, where I will be asking you the main research questions.

I will get this started by telling you a little bit about myself. I mentioned in my introductory email that I am working to get my PhD in Family Science from the University of Maryland. So you may be wondering, what is family science? Essentially, family scientists study how families work, by looking at the types of problems they face and how this can vary across different cultures. We try to use this insight as best as possible to help families succeed and help improve their quality of life.

I have long been concerned about and interested in families that have had to relocate to another country because of armed and political conflict. I think that forced relocation is a very special type of experience that deserves thoughtful study, to better understand how this kind of experience may impact families over the life course. I think that Operation Pedro Pan is an extraordinary historical event that deserves more attention, so that we can better understand how this event has affected families, like yours, over time.

You may also be wondering, what will this research require of me? What will this process look like? These are all great questions to be thinking about and I hope to answer these questions as best as possible for you today, without taking up too much of your time.

Your participation in this study will include this introductory phone call, signing a consent form, and a one-on-one in person interview with me. The consent form can be emailed or mailed to you, whichever you prefer. You can then either send me a scanned version over email, mail it back to me (I will provide you with postage if you would prefer this method), or you can hand it to me on the day of the interview. If you have additional questions or concerns before signing the form, you can email me and I can answer them via email or we can set up a phone call to discuss them.

The in-person interview will include three separate tasks that will occur over one to one and half hours:

1. The first task will include a brief sociodemographic questionnaire that you will fill out. It will ask you questions about such items as your age, ethnicity, income level, education level, etc.
2. The second task we will do together is a timeline interview where we will discuss and you will mark off on a timeline when certain events happened in your life, such as when you were born, when you arrived in the U.S. for the first time, when/if you got married, etc.

3. The third task in this interview will be me asking you the research questions for my study.

Now I would like to go over some important research logistics. The interview will be audio recorded and a transcription will be made of the recording. However please know that there will be no personally identifying information of yours that will be asked about in the interview and you will receive a unique identifier that only I will know that is attached to your name and interview. I will securely store all of this information and research data to protect your participation in this study. I will pay for your parking, if necessary, and will be providing light refreshments and snacks (so please let me know if you have any food allergies I should know about).

There are two items that I would like to clarify from the consent form. First, the P.I., Dr. Marian Moser Jones, who is listed on the consent form is my academic advisor. The IRB process at my university requires all doctoral students to list their advisor as their P.I. even though the student is the one doing the research. I believe they do this so that the student has someone to guide them through the research process (including the IRB which has multiple steps) since it is typically the first time a student is doing research on their own. Dr. Jones will have access to transcripts, so that in cases of extreme circumstances where I would not be able to access them, she would be able to (for instance if a participant had a request, Dr. Jones could respond). However I will be the sole researcher who does thematic analysis of the transcripts and does the writing.

The second item is that this research *is* primarily for my doctoral dissertation. However most people who receive their PhD try to publish a smaller work in an academic journal that comes from their dissertation work (a dissertation can be hundreds of pages whereas an academic article could be 10 to 20 pages).

I also want you to feel like you are a part of the study, because you are, and that your input is valued. Therefore I am offering you the opportunity, if you so choose, to read over your transcript of the interview once it is finished. This would allow you the opportunity to further clarify anything you said during the interview or add anything else you would like me to know.

Now I would like to turn this over to you to see if you have any questions for me about the research or about my work, or if you would like me to repeat anything. I am happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have, and if you think of anything later on you are welcome to call or email me with questions.

[ANSWER THEIR QUESTIONS AND TAKE NOTES]

Decide on:

1. Interview location:

2. Date and Time: [If interview needs to be on the phone then interview date time is much more flexible.]

Closing: Thank you so much for your time, I really look forward to meeting you. I will follow-up with an email that will list the location for the interview, date, and time so that you have it on file.

Appendix D: In-Depth Interview Questions

1. In this first set of questions I will be asking about what your life was like in Cuba, about your experiences of being separated from your parent(s) and family, and about your experiences with family reunion.

a. *Pre-flight/Life in Cuba*

- i. How would you describe your daily life and family in Cuba before the revolution?
 1. Daily life, routine of family:
 - a. Temperament of family and its members (conflict v. peaceful; energetic v. calm; light-hearted v. serious/stoic; adaptable v. inflexible)
 - b. Family roles (e.g. father made the decisions/mom stayed at home/primary caregiver/economic roles)
 - c. Parent employment, social/economic class
 - d. Extended family involvement
 - e. Communication (open, closed off; clear messaging from parents v. ambiguous)
 - i. Problem-solving (parents made all decisions, vs. children problem-solved with their parents)
 2. Family traditions and religion
 3. When the revolution started did any of these family norms and/or traditions change, while you were still living in Cuba? If so, how?
- ii. From what you remember, how would you describe your parents' upbringing?
 1. What was their relationship like with their parents?
 - a. Their family members?
 2. Do you know if there were any impactful or memorable events that they experienced/told you about?
- iii. What do you remember most about Cuba before you left?

b. *Flight/Post-flight/Immediate transition experience (first placement)*

- i. From what you can remember, tell me about your experience leaving Cuba.
 1. When were you sent over to the U.S. through Operation Pedro Pan?
- ii. What was your understanding of why you left Cuba when you did?
 1. What did your parents say would happen when you left?
 - a. Did they say how long the separation would be?
 2. How long did you know about leaving for the U.S. before you actually left? (i.e. was it immediate or did you know for a while before you left?)
- iii. [*If interviewee had siblings*] Did you come over with any of your siblings?
 1. What happened to your siblings who came over with you?

- a. Were you separated from your siblings after you arrived in Miami or later on?
 - b. How do you think this separation may have impacted your experience of being alone in a new country?
 2. *[If applicable]* What happened to your siblings that stayed in Cuba or who were born later in Cuba? What kind of contact did you have with them?
 - iv. What was your first placement after you were received at the airport (i.e. where did you sleep those first few nights)?
 1. Relative's home
 2. Friend of the family's home
 3. Refugee camp
 4. Group home
 5. Other (Please describe)
 6. What do you remember about this first placement/how would you describe your experience with this first placement?
- c. *Second placement (including geographic region and time spent there)*
 - i. If you were initially placed in a refugee camp or group home, what was your second placement?
 1. Adoption or relocation with relatives
 2. Foster family
 3. Orphanage
 4. Group home
 5. Reunited with parent(s)
 - ii. Did you have any siblings or friends with you during this second placement?
 - iii. How long were you living at this second placement?
 - iv. How would you describe your experience with this second placement?
 - v. How would you describe your experience of being separated from your family?
 1. What was the communication like between you and your family in Cuba, or siblings whom you were separated from in the U.S.?
 - a. Did you write to each other? If so what did you write about? Did you receive information about your family from other relatives?
 - vi. During this separation did you ever feel that you were treated differently by others or discriminated against (because maybe you looked different, spoke a different language, etc.)?
- d. *Reunion with parent(s)*
 - i. When were you reunited with a parent?
 1. Both parents?
 - ii. About how long was your separation from your parent(s)?
 - iii. How would you describe your life at the time you were reunited with your parent(s)?

1. How old were you at the time?
 2. Were you working part- or full-time?
 3. Were you attending school?
 4. Who were you living with at the time?
 5. Were you single, married?
- iv. How would you describe the reunion with your parent?
1. How did you find out there would be a reunion?
 2. Did this reunion differ from what you thought would happen?
 - a. If so, how did it differ?
 3. Did the reunion create a change in your daily life, if so what kind of change(s) did you see or feel at the time?
 4. Did you and your parent specifically address/talk about the separation?
 - a. If so, how useful or constructive do you think this was for your relationship with your parent?
 - b. Do you remember what you talked about concerning the separation (how it made you feel, what you experienced, etc.)?
- v. If you were reunited with your parent in the U.S. [*if they were not reunited with a parent then skip to the next section*], were there any changes in family structure including roles and responsibilities of individual members?
1. Did you notice any other significant changes to your family?
 - a. Family roles and/or responsibilities
 - b. Amount of time spent with one another
 - c. Individual relationships with family members and between other family members
 2. When you and your parent(s) were settling into a new life together in the U.S., what kinds of resources did your family have to help with this transition?
 - a. Were there family members nearby who would help out?
 - b. Did your family receive any public assistance? If so, how did the family adapt to this situation?
 - c. Were there community resources that you used? (Such as legal services, job training, academic programs, food banks, programming for kids, etc.)
 - d. Do you think your family, as a group, had any strengths that may have helped you transition to living in the U.S. together (such being close-knit, helpful to one another)?
 - i. How would you describe these strengths?
 3. How would you describe your communication style with your parent(s) after your reunion?
 - a. Do you think it was different from when you were living together in Cuba?
 - i. If yes, how do you think it changed?
 4. When did you notice these changes?

5. Why do you think these changes occurred?
6. Did you ever feel like your relationship with your parent(s) went back to the way it was before you came to the U.S.?
 - a. If it changed, please describe what you remember as different in your relationship when you were reunited.
 - i. Initial reunion; A few months after being reunited;
A few years after being reunited
- vi. What do you remember as being stressful for you during this transitional period of adapting to living in the U.S. together as a family?
 1. For your parent(s)?
 2. For your siblings?

2. The second set of questions will ask about how you think your lived experience of Operation Pedro Pan may have affected your decisions, goals, and family over your life course.

- a. *How do you think your Operation Pedro Pan experience may have affected your life during your teenage years?*
 - i. Did you have role models or mentors during your adolescence?
 1. If so, what kind of support did they provide?
 2. What kind of support did you wish you had had during your relocation experience?
 - ii. How were your Cuban peers and/or siblings influential during your relocation and resettlement experience in the U.S.?
- b. *How do you think your Operation Pedro Pan experience affected your transition to adulthood?*
 - i. How do you think your experience may have influenced your choice in partner(s)?
 - ii. How do you think your experience may have influenced your choices regarding starting a family, how many children to have, etc.?
 - iii. How do you think your experience may have influenced your choice in career path, continuing education, and/or professional goals?
 - iv. How do you think your Operation Pedro Pan experience may have helped shape your values and beliefs about family?
 1. Do you feel that you have a Cuban influence in your family today?
 - a. When you were a young adult/raising your children?
 - v. How do you think your Operation Pedro Pan experience may have affected your sense of need for community, or being involved in community?
 1. How connected have you been with other Cuban-Americans and/or Cuban exiles throughout your life?
 - vi. When did you become aware that you were a part of a large organized exodus of unaccompanied children?
 1. How do you remember your reaction to this discovery?

2. What is the importance of Operation Pedro Pan (for yourself, the Pedro Pan community, etc.)?
 - a. How do you think this understanding has changed over time, if at all?
- c. *How has your Operation Pedro Pan experience affected your parenting style and choices regarding your children, partner/spouse, and extended family?*
 - i. Parenting style: i.e. authoritative, authoritarian, or permissive
 1. How would you describe your relationship with your children?
 - ii. Family decision-making:
 1. To what extent did you share your Pedro Pan experience with your family? How did it come up?
 2. How have decisions been made within your family?
 - a. Is there a set way to make decisions? If so, how?
 - i. When raising your children, did you brainstorm together as a family? Or were decisions made mostly by you and/or your partner?
 - b. Why do you think your family operates this way when it comes to decision-making?
 3. How would you describe communication with immediate family?
 - a. How about communication with your extended family?
 - b. Why do you think you communicate this way?
 - i. Do you wish to communicate differently? If so, how?
 4. How would you describe your family's structure (traditional, hierarchical, egalitarian)?
 - a. To what extent and how do you think your experience with Operation Pedro Pan has influenced your family?
 - b. How would you describe the main roles of the members in your family (past and present)?
 - iii. How do you think your Operation Pedro Pan experience may have affected your children?
 1. Their relationship with you/your partner
 2. Their family beliefs
 3. Their goals for having a family (or not)
 4. Their priorities for their family (whether they already have a family of their own or are planning to have a family some day)

3. This last section is a chance for you to talk about anything else that you would like to discuss about your experience with Operation Pedro Pan and what you think the potential effects have been on you and your family over your life course. If you do not have anything else to add then this will be the end of the interview.

Appendix E: Sociodemographic Questionnaire

Participant ID:

Directions: Please answer each question as accurately as possible by circling or filling in the response that best describes you, in the space provided. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to respond to.

1. What is your age? _____

2. What is your race and/or ethnicity? _____

3. What is your gender? Female Male Other

4. Are you married? Yes No Widowed

5. How many children do you have? _____

6. How many grandchildren do you have? _____

7. What country were you born in? _____

8. What was/is your religion?

Religion in childhood: _____

Religion now: _____

9. Please circle one of the following that best describes your family's social class when you lived in Cuba:

Lower Working Middle Upper Middle Upper

10. Please circle one of the following that best describes your current social class:

Lower Working Middle Upper Middle Upper

11. What is the highest level of education you have completed? _____

12. Please describe your employment status: _____

13. What is/was your field of employment? _____

14. Have you ever served in the U.S. military? Yes No

If yes, what were your rank, branch, and dates of service? _____

Appendix F: Analysis Codebook

CODE NAME	DEFINITION
Daily Life in Cuba	
<i>Temperament</i>	
Peaceful	
Quiet	
Loud	
Energetic/lively	
Serious	
<i>Family Roles</i>	
Paternalistic	Father made all of the decisions, everyone followed his lead. Mother took on traditional roles in family.
Egalitarian	Father and mother took on both types of traditional parental roles (mother and father); more gender equality was present between mother and father.
<i>Parent Employment</i>	
Father worked/Stay-at-home Mother	
Both parents worked	
<i>Extended Family Involvement</i>	
Yes	
No	
<i>Communication/Problem-solving</i>	
Open communication	Parents openly discussed plans and decisions with children
Parents made all of the decisions	"Children are to be seen, not heard"
Mix of open and closed communication	A bit of both; mostly parents let them know what as happening but still strict about parents making decisions
<i>Family Traditions/Religion</i>	
Catholic	
Jewish	
Not religious; attended church infrequently, if at all	
<i>Parents' Upbringing/Family History</i>	
When family arrived in Cuba	
Parents' experience growing up	
Life After Revolution	
<i>Changes in Family</i>	
<i>Changes in Community</i>	
Witnessed violence	

Committees for the Defense of the Revolution	
Operation Pedro Pan	
<i>Visa Waiver Set Up</i>	
Which parent led this effort	Parent who made the final decision they would send them and who took on getting the visa waiver/setting up their travel
Length of wait time before leaving	
Number of tries it took before successfully leaving	
<i>Knowledge of Flight</i>	
How long they knew of flight before going to the airport	
Who told them of flight and how	
How long they were told that they would be gone	How long they would be separated/in the U.S.
Their reaction to the news of leaving	
Sibling's reaction to leaving	
<i>Experience at the Airport</i>	
La Pecera	Separated from family in "fishbowl" for several hours, could see family while waiting but could not speak with them, was instructed to not get emotional
Do not remember	Do not remember their experience at airport
Delayed Memory Onset	Did not remember until later in life
Arrival in U.S.	
<i>Travel to first placement</i>	Experience of who picked them up, when, etc.
<i>First Placement</i>	
Florida City	
Camp Matecumbe	
Camp Opa-locka	
St. Raphaels Boy's Home	
Family/Family Friend	Aunt, Uncle, Cousin
<i>Second Placement</i>	
Orphanage	
Foster Home	
Camp Matecumbe	
Camp Opa-locka	
St. Raphaels Boy's Home	

Juvenile Detention Facility	
Family/Family Friend	Aunt, Uncle, Cousin
<i>Third Placement</i>	
Orphanage	
Foster Home	
Camp Opa-locka	
Family/Family Friend	Aunt, Uncle, Cousin
<i>Experience at 1st Placement</i>	
Positive	
Negative	
<i>Experience at 2nd Placement</i>	
Positive	
Negative	
<i>Experience at 3rd Placement</i>	
Positive	
Negative	
<i>Sibling Experience</i>	
Positive	
Negative	
<i>Experienced Discrimination</i>	
Yes	
No	
<i>Positive Experiences</i>	
Types of support	
Activities	
<i>Negative Experiences</i>	
Witnessed Abuse	Saw it happen to others, heard of it happening to others
Experience Abuse	Experienced abuse, or someone attempted to abuse them
Emotional Response	Sad, angry, alone, depressed, anxious
<i>Communication with Family During Separation</i>	
Letters	
Phone Calls	
Support Relationships	
<i>Peer Support</i>	Friendships/supports with peers in camp, orphanage, school, or any time during their childhood/adolescence after they came to the U.S.
<i>Family Support</i>	Close family relationship with family member that helped participant with modeling good behavior, learned skills, emotional support, financial support
Parent Support	
Sibling Support	

	Aunt/Uncle Support	
	<i>Community Support</i>	
	School Support	Mentors, academic support, athletics, afterschool activities
	Community Activities	
	Types of Support	
	<i>Financial Support</i>	Provision of monetary support through gifts, loans, etc.
	<i>Emotional Support</i>	Provided
	<i>Physical Needs Support</i>	Help with housing, transportation, etc.
	<i>Advice Support</i>	Provided practical knowledge about how something worked such as applying for a job, opening up a bank account, etc.
	Family Reunion	
	<i>Length of Separation</i>	
	<i>Who they were reunited with</i>	
	<i>Where they were reunited</i>	
	<i>Talk of separation with parents</i>	
	Yes	
	No	
	<i>Family Stress/Struggles</i>	
	<i>Family Strengths</i>	
	<i>Change in Family Roles/Responsibilities</i>	
	Yes	
	No	
	<i>Types of Resources Available to Family</i>	
	Social Welfare Money	
	Health Care	
	Food	
	Community Support	
	<i>Communication Style with Parents(s)</i>	Change in communication compared to when in Cuba
	<i>Change in Relationship with Parent(s)</i>	In reference to relationship in Cuba
	OPP and Life Decisions/Experiences	How their OPP experience may have affected their life decisions and experiences
	<i>Teenage Years</i>	
	Role models/mentors	
	<i>Transition to Adulthood</i>	
	Partner Choice	
	Children/# of Children	
	Career path/Continuing Education	

Sense of need for community	
When did you become aware of OPP?	
<i>Parenting Style</i>	
Authoritative	
Authoritarian	
Permissive	
Other	
<i>Extent of OPP Experience Shared with Family</i>	
<i>Family Decision Making</i>	
Open	
Just with partner	Made decisions with partner then told children
Made with children	
<i>Communication with Immediate Family</i>	
Extended Family Communication	
<i>Family Structure</i>	While raising their children
Hierarchical	
Egalitarian	
Traditional	
<i>OPP Effects on Their Children</i>	How their OPP experience may have affected their children or grandchildren
Section Three Open-Ended Response	
Thankful for this experience	
Grateful to their parents for making the decision to send them	

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