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# Factors Influencing Career Decision-Making And Post-Secondary Career Choices Of A Cohort Group Of Female Cuban Immigrants

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**FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER DECISION-MAKING AND  
POST-SECONDARY CAREER CHOICES OF A COHORT  
GROUP OF FEMALE CUBAN IMMIGRANTS**

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**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Seton Hall University  
2001**

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## ABSTRACT

### FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER DECISION-MAKING AND POST-SECONDARY CAREER CHOICES OF A COHORT GROUP OF FEMALE CUBAN IMMIGRANTS

The purpose of this study is to identify factors influencing career decision-making and post-secondary career choices of a group of Hispanic females. Hispanics are the fastest growing minority population in the United States, and the group with the lowest educational attainment. This research will contribute to fill the void of career development literature, particularly in the area of female ethnic minority gaining access to higher education, and their career choices. Among the Hispanic ethnic groups, Cubans have achieved the highest educational attainment in the United States.

The subjects for this study are part of a cohort group of a total population of 14,038 Cuban immigrant children, now adults, who came without their parents to the United States, during the early 1960's, and were part of a secret operation called "Operation Peter [Pedro] Pan." A cohort group of 57 female Pedro Pan adolescents from this group was sent to San Antonio, Texas. This study showed some unique characteristics and factors that influenced the cohort group's decision-making and career choices.

The research design was a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. The study consisted of an initial pre-interview questionnaire that was sent to all the subjects in the cohort group sent to San Antonio, Texas. Subsequent to the data analysis, a selected group of nine subjects were identified for in-depth interviews for case studies. The selection was based on the following criteria: (a) subjects who chose post-

secondary careers and whose parents had post-secondary educational attainment; (b) subjects who chose post-secondary careers and whose parents did not have post-secondary educational attainment; and (c) subjects who did not choose careers in post-secondary education, regardless of their parents' educational attainment.

This study affirms Super's (1957) theory of career development for some of the factors (role, personal, and situational) which influenced career decision-making and career choices of this cohort group. However, other factors such as level of English proficiency; school climate experience, discrimination; self-esteem were also variables that emerged as having influence. This study suggests that Super's theory needs to be refined for a more comprehensive model of career development for female ethnic minorities.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, and foremost, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Joseph M. Stetar, my mentor, who encouraged me to turn my book-writing project into a scholarly study. I wish to express my gratitude for his time, guidance and support during this trying time. I also wish to thank him for being a strong critic, who challenged me and made me strive for my best. I also wish to thank my Dissertation Committee members, Dr. John W. Collins, Jr., for his support, time, effort, guidance and consideration extended to me during this project. He guided me through the design and statistical analyses of this study, and also made sure that I stayed focused on the task; and Dr. Elaine M. Walker, for her support, assistance and guidance in the formulation of both research instruments, the questionnaire and in-depth interview, and her guidance in the research design, as well as the case studies and statistical analyses.

I am also very grateful to Dr. Richard Ognibene, former Dean of the College of Education and Human Services of Seton Hall University, and Dr. Charles Mitchel, Chairperson of the Department of Educational Administration and Supervision for their guidance, kindness, support and encouragement. To Dr. Martin Finkelstein and Dr. Shouping Hu for agreeing to be readers, and for giving me valuable feedback during the proposal stage.

Additional thanks are extended to the following individuals: Dr. Jose Goyos, for allowing me to use part of his questionnaire. To Ms. Elly Chovel, from the Pedro Pan Organization for being a facilitator and helping me find subjects for the Pilot Study, for her encouragement and support. To all the Pedro Pans who agreed to be in the pilot study and gave me their encouragement. To all the Pedro Pans in the cohort group who

participated in this study and gave me their love, time, encouragement, and kindly shared their personal lives in order to make this study possible, my most sincere thanks.

I further wish to thank my family, especially my brothers, Pedro Felipe Lopez, for helping me research information and for computer technical assistance, and Jose A. Lopez for proof reading, for their support and encouragement through my long journey as a student. To my sister in law, Elena Lopez, for her technical assistance. My deepest gratitude, however, is extended to my son Roberto Lopez, and my daughter Martha M. Lopez for their love, support, patience and understanding throughout the duration of this project, and for giving me a reason to strive and complete this goal.

I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Ana Maria Schuhmann, Dean of the College of Education at Kean University for giving me her support and authorizing my paid leave for one semester, in order to conduct my research. To Dr. Sidney Langer, of the Sociology Department, and Dr. Serafin Aleman, of the Foreign Languages Department, both at Kean University, for agreeing to be readers and giving me their valuable input. I also wish to thank Dr. Pablo Zafra, of the Mathematics Department at Kean University for reviewing statistical analysis. To Ms. Maria C. Perez, of the Institutional Resource Center at Kean University my sincere thanks and appreciation, for the media technical assistance she provided with the presentation.

My sincere thanks to Ms. Lesbia O. Varona, and Dr. Esperanza Bravo de Varona, for the courtesy they extended me, and their assistance in researching information from the Cuban Heritage Collection of the Otto G. Richter Library of the University of Miami.

My most sincerely thanks and appreciation to Michele Seiden Lopez, and Nancy Lopez, for editing parts of the dissertation.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge all the individuals who, directly or indirectly helped me to achieve this goal. Without their support, this would not have been possible.

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late father, Pedro Lopez Sanchez, who instilled in me the desire to study by his example, and who was the first one to set the goal for me to become a doctor. To my mother, Josefa Margarita Bravo Vda. de Lopez, who has been a great source of inspiration throughout my life, and was always in search for the best school, the best educational program for her children, and who taught me by example the importance of being a woman with a professional career. To my late Godmother, Cristina de las Nieves Martinez de Rodriguez, who was also an important role model in my life – a woman with several careers in both traditional and non-traditional fields for women. To all the professional women, who touched my life and challenged me to be one amongst them.

I also wish to dedicate this dissertation to my classmate in Cuba, Amelia Casamayor Finkle, who told me about the opportunity to seek freedom in the U.S.A. through “Operation Peter [Pedro] Pan.” To Monsignor Bryan O. Walsh, who was instrumental in providing shelter and education for the Pedro Pan children through the Catholic Welfare Bureau and the Cuban Refugee Children’s Program. To the late Ramon Grau Alsina and his sister, Polita Grau Agüero, who served 20 and 15 years of prison respectively in Cuba, and paid with their own freedom so that 14,048 children and their relatives could seek refuge in the “Land of the Free.” To all the people that collaborated with “Operation Pedro Pan,” in Cuba, as well as in the United States, to all Americans that opened their doors and their hearts to Cuban refugees seeking freedom, I dedicate this dissertation with my deepest respect, love and gratitude.

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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

#### Background of the Problem

Higher education scholars, concerned with diversity issues in colleges and universities throughout the United States, have been making efforts to diversify their institutions by increasing the representation of women and members of historically underrepresented racial groups in their faculties, staffs, and student bodies. Institutions of higher education are expanding curricular content to include more material from women, ethnic minorities, and non-Western cultures in order to enhance the students' development (Astin, 1993).

Sociologists, psychologists, and educators have been studying the characteristics that influence career decision-making. According to Astin (1993), researchers in all those fields suggest that diversity policies and activities affect cognitive and affective outcomes. Several indicators of the students' direct experience with diversity activities are associated with gains in cognitive and affective development. For instance, there is a link of gains in the students' cognitive and affective development by talking to women of ethnic minorities, participating in racial or cultural awareness workshops, discussing racial or ethnic issues, and socializing with someone from another racial or ethnic group (Astin, 1993).

By the mid-1970s it was evident that the studies conducted on women's career choices did not include career choices of ethnic minority females (Hardy & Cull, 1974).



More than two decades later, Brown and Brooks (1996) indicated the need to expand knowledge on career development about ethnic minorities.

With the movement of women into the labor force in the past decades in record numbers, there is a greater need to understand the characteristics or factors that influence women's career choices. According to the United States Department of Labor report (1999) Futurework: Trends and Challenges for Work in the 21st Century, women, minorities, and immigrants will constitute 80% of the additions to the labor force by the year 2000. According to the United States Bureau of the Census (2000) Hispanics are the fastest growing minority population in the United States. The Hispanic population in the United States for the year 2000 Census is 35,305,818. This constitutes 12.5 % of the total population. There are marked differences in educational attainment within the Hispanic group. For instance, according to the United States Bureau of Census (2000) Cubans are reported as having the highest educational attainment level among Hispanics, with 23% of people 25 years or older with college degrees. Hispanics from Central and South America of same age group have college degrees at the rate of 17.4%, the rate for Puerto Ricans of same age group and same educational level is 13%, while the rate for Mexicans for same age group and education level is 6.9%.

It is important to understand that aspirations for career attainment are affected differently for different racial/ethnic groups in the United States as reported by the United States Census Bureau. The ethnic groups as reported are, White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Pacific Islander. There has been less research completed on the aspirations of Hispanic groups as compared to the total United States population, perhaps as a reflection of the reduced Hispanic participation in the higher education experience. The

educational outcomes of the Hispanic population living in the United States are at a crisis level. Hispanic students have much lower high school graduation rates and consequently, lower college education rates than other ethnic groups. According to the Digest of Education Statistics (U.S. Department of Education, 1999) (Table 1), the college enrollment rate for the national population (all races/groups) of 18-24 years old is 36.5% of the population. Of that, the ethnic breakdown is as follows: (a) White non-Hispanic: 40.6% of 18-24-year-olds in that ethnic group enroll in college; (b) Black non-Hispanic: 29.8% of 18-24-year-olds enroll in college within that ethnic group; and (c) Hispanic origin within the same age group: the college enrollment rate is only 20.4%, clearly, the lowest enrollment rate for what is, according to the United States Bureau of the Census (2000), the fastest growing minority population in the United States. This information alone points to the importance of studies within this area.

Table 1

Percentage of Enrollment of 18-24-Year-Olds as of 1998

	%
Total enrollment as a percentage of 18-24-year-olds	36.5
White non-Hispanic enrollment as a percentage of 18-24-year-olds	40.6
Black non-Hispanic enrollment as a percentage of 18-24-year-olds	29.8
Hispanic origin enrollment as a percentage of 18-24-year-olds	20.4

Source. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, unpublished data. (This table was prepared September 1999).

Traditional theories of development of career decision making are mainly focused on men's career experiences and do not include women in our society (Jennings, 1991). Single sex studies on career choice frequently show results of males rather than females as a basis for generalizing about the whole population. There is a dire need to conduct research of ethnic minority females in order to find solutions to their educational attainment rates. According to Frost (1991), declining enrollment of ethnic minorities are causing higher education scholars to focus on intellectual and career-related issues of ethnic minorities. Under-representation of ethnic minorities among college students in the United States, with the exception of Asian Americans, remains an issue of concern. Research addressing the needs of the ethnic minorities suggests that administrators, faculty, advising coordinators, and student services professionals recognize the different needs of the diverse college population groups in order to provide developmental advising tailored to their needs. Frost (1991) states in her study that often minority students have these characteristics: (a) low self-concept and few positive expectations; (b) achievement appears to be a problem of preparation, not race; and (c) lack of ethnic minorities' role models.

Higher education researchers indicate that there is a great need for understanding educational aspirations for careers, particularly in populations who continue to be underrepresented in higher education institutions (Kao & Tienda, 1998).

The quest of Hispanic female immigrants seeking post-secondary education has not been studied in depth. Immigration scholars and researchers are currently focusing

on the children of immigrants in order to answer key questions about the future of America's culture and economy (Miller, 1999).

This study investigated what factors influenced the career decision making and choice of a sub-cohort group of 54 Cuban immigrant female adolescents who came through "Operation Peter [Pedro] Pan" and were sent to San Antonio, Texas, in the early 1960s. Through the subjects' personal stories, the researcher investigated what specific factors shaped their career decision making, and helped them to arrive at specific career choice.

The process of adaptation or acculturation/ assimilation to the American society and educational system is documented through in-depth interviews. This study sought to identify and relate variables that influenced the process of their career decision making and career choice. This study provides practical information for students who are in the process of career decision making, as well as for educators and other higher education professionals who help students to choose their careers.

#### The Research Question

What characteristics and factors influenced the career decision making and choice within a cohort group of female Cuban immigrants?

#### Subsidiary Questions

1. What is the relationship between the subjects' sociocultural characteristics and career decision-making?
2. What is the relationship between the subjects' academic background and career choice?

3. What is the relationship between the subjects' first language (Spanish) and career choice?
4. What is the relationship between the subjects' English proficiency level and career choice?
5. What is the relationship between the parents' educational attainment and the subjects' career decision-making and career choice?
6. What led subjects of this cohort group to consider attending institutions of higher education?
7. What opportunities were offered to this cohort group to access institutions of higher education?

#### Definition of Terms

Academic background: The level of education attained in Cuba, including number of years completed in school, and whether it was a humanities, commercial, normal school, vocational, or technical program of study.

Acculturation: This term refers to the process by which immigrants move to adaptation to a new culture. This term implies that the immigrant will adopt the language and certain values and customs of the new culture and at the same time maintain the native language and certain values of the native culture (Napoliello, 1994).

Assimilation: In sociological terms, the acceptance of one social group or community of cultural traits normally associated with another (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1997).

Career choice: Selection of post-secondary education leading to a college and/or university degree.

Career decision-making: The process by which the individual decides whether or not to seek post-secondary education.

Characteristics: Distinguishing traits and disposition pertaining to character (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1997).

Children of Peter Pan: Also known among Cuban exiles as "Pedro Pans," these Cuban refugee children came to the United States without their parents in order to avoid being sent to the Soviet Block countries for Communist indoctrination. These children's ages ranged from infants only a few months old to 16 years old. However, the majority of these children were between 6 and 16 years old.

Cohort group: Any group of associates, a companion or follower. A group of people sharing similar characteristics and experiences.

Culture: The enduring behavior, ideas, attitudes, and traditions shared by a large group of people and transmitted from one generation to the next. (Myers, 1992, p. 558).

Decree to abolish "Patria Potestad": This decree takes away parents' rights to decide about their minor children. It gave the Cuban government the right to separate and destroy families in order to benefit the state. Patria Potestad comes from patria potestas, an ancient Roman law referring to the power exercised by a father over his children until they reach legal age (Conde, 1999).

Epiphany: A moment of sudden intuitive understanding; flash of insight; a scene, experience, etc., that occasions such a moment. An intuitive grasp of reality through something (as an event) usually simple and striking. An illuminating discovery, a revealing scene or moment. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (1997).

Ethnographic research: A method designed to describe and analyze practices and beliefs of cultures and communities (Mertens, 1998).

Factors: One of several elements or causes that produce a result (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1997).

Hispanic: Refers to all Spanish-speaking or Spanish-surnamed people who reside in the United States or Puerto Rico. Mexican Americans, Cuban Americans, and Puerto Ricans are the major Hispanic groups (Payton, 1985).

Historical analysis: Refers to reconstructing what was done in the past.

Human capital: Capital of intangible value, such as a treasured possession of educational wealth acquired through exposure to cultural events, travel, and socializing with people with rich educational experience, which is transferred from generation to generation and contribute to upward mobility.

Linguistic factors: This term refers to factors such as level of English proficiency, language used for testing purposes, and level of literacy in native language (Napoliello, 1994).

Socioeconomic status (SES): This term refers to a combination of social and economic factors that places an individual or family at a given level in a society (Napoliello, 1994).

Limited English Proficient (LEP): This is the state and federal terminology used for students who, after being tested in English proficiency tests, are found to be limited in English and in need of bilingual and/or English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction (Napoliello, 1994).

Peer group parent: Adolescents achieve distancing from their parents through peer group. The peer group becomes the new parent for the adolescent, they set the new rules (Bradshaw, 1990).

Self-actualization: According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the ultimate psychological need that arises after basic physical and psychological needs are met and self-esteem is achieved; the motivation to fulfill one's potential. (Myers, 1992, p. 428.)

Self-concept: All our thoughts and feelings about ourselves in answer to the question "Who am I?" (Myers, 1992, p. 429).

Self esteem: One's feelings of high or low self-worth. (Myers, 1992, p. 430.)

Separation from parents: The period that started the day these children left Cuba and ended the day that they were reunited with their parents again in the United States.

Silent loser: Those who fail to voice protest against the policies causing their losses. (Weimer & Vining, 1992, p. 110)

Socialization/acclulturation: Newcomers' experience with others seeking cultural validation in a new culture. This means making sense of the individual's view in three of the worldview categories: self, others, and relationship to others.

Sociocultural factors: This term refers to factors such as socio-economic status (SES), immigration patterns, attitudes towards education, educational background, self-identity, attitudes towards host culture, cultural values, historical experiences and language use patterns (Napoliello, 1994).

### Limitations of the Study

One of the biggest limitations found while reviewing the literature for this study is that there are not enough publications about the historical event known as "Operation



Peter Pan" written in English. Most of the publications found had to be translated into English or are based on interviews conducted in Spanish with key figures in this operation. Recently, two publications emerged in English, and it seems that most of the information presented in these books documents the information that was gathered in many of the Spanish publications previously reviewed and translated. Another limitation is that case studies are based on events that happened in the early 1960s and are based on the memory of the subjects.

### Summary

This study is organized as follows: Chapter I stated the situation regarding the need for research on educational attainment of ethnic and minority females. It also presented background information related to the purpose of the study and its significance. The research question and subsidiary questions were presented. Chapter II provides the literature review, divided in three parts. The first part included literature on educational attainment, career choice, and career decision-making; the second part included literature on historical facts about "Operation Peter [Pedro] Pan; and the third part included literature on sociological, psychological, linguistic and language acquisition that are tangentially related to this study. Chapter III presents the methodology. Chapter IV includes the findings and case studies. Chapter V presents the conclusion and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER II

### Review of Related Literature

#### Introduction

This section presents a literature review helpful in the identification of theories about career choice, educational attainment, and research relevant to the factors that may have influenced the career decision making and career choice. Other significant academic studies relevant to the historical context of this study are included. The first part includes the theoretical framework, presenting the work of several educators, sociologists and psychologists who have studied educational attainment, career choice, and career decision making. The second part includes historical facts about children of Peter (Pedro) Pan. The third part includes literature related to sociocultural, psychological, and linguistic factors that tangentially touched on this research.

#### Educational Attainment/Career Choice/Career Decision Making

Current formulations of major theories of career development and choice are influencing either research or practice. According to Brown and Brooks (1996), there is a need to expand thinking about the career development of women and ethnic minorities.

As a basis for the study, several theories of career decision making were reviewed. Parsons (1909) presented the first conceptual framework for career decision making. He developed a technique to identify the person's interests, abilities, and resources to match them to different industrial demands. Parsons identified the importance of choosing a vocation rather than just working in a job, and tied worker

satisfaction and increased productivity with the vocation of choice. Parsons formulated a three-step formula that consisted of:

- (1) A clear understanding of yourself, your aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations, and their causes;
- (2) a knowledge of the requirements, conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work;
- (3) true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts. (Parsons, 1909, p. 5)

Although Parsons' ideas may be categorized as rather simple, they still constitute the core of most modern theories of career choice and development. Theorists such as Holland (1985) and Lofquist and Dawis (1969) have made these ideas the basis of their theories (Brown & Brooks, 1996). Parsons' model was re-named "trait and factor" after World War I, the Great Depression of the 1930s, and World War II in an effort to classify people in a meaningful way and place them into jobs that they could perform satisfactorily. Parsons' theory was challenged by Carl Rogers, when he published his client-centered counseling and therapy. However, Rogers' challenge had little effect on the trait and factor model of career counseling (Brown & Brooks, 1996).

Ginsberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma (1951) came up with a psychologically based theory of career development that set aside the trait and factor theory. Ginsberg et al. suggested that career development is a lifelong developmental process. They also stated that career choices are characterized by compromise, and once the choice is made, it is for the most part irreversible. In subsequent studies, Ginsberg (1972) reversed both of these propositions.

In 1957, Donald Super published his theory of career choice and development. Super's theory had elements of trait and factor theory, developmental psychology, and personal construct theory (Kelly, 1955) from which Super drew his ideas about self-concept and sociological theory. Super (1990) continued to study and revise his theory throughout his life. Even though Super's model of career development had a tremendous impact on career development research, it had a smaller impact on practice. Super suggested that "a truly comprehensive model of career choice must be left to future theorists" (Brown & Brooks, 1996, p.3).

Holland's (1985) theory of trait oriented explanation of vocational choice was built from the model of the 1930s and 1940s. His theory had a tremendous impact on practice, and it still is the most influential model of vocational choice (Brown & Brooks, 1996, p. 3).

Blau and Duncan (1967) developed the first status attainment model based in the field of sociology of education. This model puts emphasis on the occupational attainment of males from White and African American populations. The model suggests that ascriptive characteristics such as father's education and income determine the son's occupational attainment. The model includes five variables. Father's educational attainment and father's educational status predicts respondents' educational attainment and first-job status. The four other variables predict respondents' occupational attainment. Their original model did not include educational aspirations. However, subsequent status attainment research has taken aspirations into account.

Researchers such as Sewell, Haller, and Portes (1969), Sewell, Haller, and Ohlendorf (1970), have indicated that Blau and Duncan's model does not sufficiently

explain the relationship between the variables. According to Blau and Duncan's (1967) model, the socioeconomic status (SES) of people is determined by the status of the parents and there is little mobility between generations. However, Sewell et al. (1969) expanded on Blau and Duncan's model to include social psychological variables. These researchers state that social-psychological variables were useful to examine as intervening variables with respect to educational and occupational attainment. Variables such as significant others, reference groups, self-concept, aspirations, and experience of school success are part of the factors that affect educational attainment (Sewell et al., 1969).

Several authors examined the change in women's career choices in historical terms. The study conducted by Kay Standley and Bradley Soule (1972) deals with two major questions about women's career choices: What are the roots of their unusual choices? What are the careers and personal lives like for the women who have made such vocational commitments? The authors delineate the personal and career histories of some women physicians, lawyers, and architects. It is mainly focussed on women who have faced extreme contradictions of social roles by seeking non-traditional female careers and choosing male-dominated fields of high status professions. This study was useful for shaping the research design, methods, and the areas to investigate in the pre-interview questionnaire and the protocol for questions for open-ended interview. The authors concluded that women who chose careers in male-dominated fields are under a constant tension both psychic and societal. "These women are not liberated, nor are the professional establishment in which they operate. Change will clearly be required of both as society redefines the sex-typing of vocations" (Standley & Soule, 1972, p. 15).

Subsequent research by Pascarella (1984) on college students' aspirations and educational attainment/career choice suggest that there is a tendency for researchers in this area to use methods of empirical examination of aspirations (i.e., looking for relationships and analytical generalizations), rather than theoretical examination of aspirations (i.e., using competing theories). Pascarella developed a model of affective outcomes, suggesting that individual characteristics and secondary school achievement will have stronger effects on later educational aspirations rather than institutional environmental variables. This model has been useful in understanding the process by which students' aspirations about careers change over time.

Additional studies dealing with factors influencing women's career choice by Carol J. Auster and Donald Auster, (1981) focus on nontraditional career choice. The authors refer to nontraditional career choice as the selection of an occupation for which one's sex is a contradiction because that occupation has been traditionally stereotyped as the proper and exclusive domain of only one sex (e.g., "male-nurse" and the "woman-engineer"). Recently, research has been shifted in the area of nontraditional careers due to women's movements and the dramatic rise in the labor force of women with nontraditional careers. The researchers examined the empirical evidence concerning the role of family, peers, and vocational counselors in the decision of careers through selective survey and analysis of the literature on that topic. Family influence emerged as the first and foremost influence in career choice. The authors conclude that "family influence on occupational choice is the result of a complex interplay of active and passive, formal and informal, sociological, psychological, and economic factors" (Auster & Auster, 1981, p 254).

According to Crites (1981), the typical career development through higher education experience starts with the freshman year, which is characterized by exploration. The student is surveying and identifying those career options that are appropriate or feasible for the individual. This notion links with Super's theory. The exploration period is followed by the crystallization period, which occurs during the sophomore year. In this period, the greater certainty and specificity in career options is achieved. During this time, negative decisions are made, and the range of possibilities is narrowed. During the junior year the period of specification occurs, when the career developmental task of declaring a major is encountered. During this time is when the commitment to career decisions is made. At this time, the college student begins to concentrate academically in a specific area. The last stage is that of implementation when the student acts upon a series of prior career decisions. At this time the student also begins to search for employment (Crites, 1981).

Crites (1981) suggests that the model for comprehensive career counseling of women varies more due to the process (Fitzgerald & Crites, 1980; Osipow, 1976; Super, 1957) and because the socialization of career roles for women and men is different. Some of the issues that may emerge during women's career choices are in conflict with mothering and working, sex stereotyping, "fear of success" (Mathews, 1974; Torrance, 1965), especially for creative and high ability women who feel that their outstanding potential may bring them in conflict with prospective life partners and society in general. According to Crites (1981), adapting the model of comprehensive career counseling to minorities is difficult for two reasons: first, because the model evolved from career counseling with individuals in the majority racial and ethnic backgrounds, and from

avored educational and economic circumstances; and second, because of the diversity of minority group members. He further states: "How can general recommendations about diagnosis, process, and outcomes be made?" (Crites, 1981, p. 209).

According to Super's (1990) theory and model of career development, the individual moves through five stages of career development. These stages are divided by age groups as follows: growth (ages 4-14), exploration (ages 14-25), establishment (ages 25-45), maintenance (ages 45 to 65), and decline (ages 65 on). Super's theory and model builds from several decades of research on career development, which originated from his initial findings in 1957.

Doucet (1995), in her study about women's career choices along their life paths, examines the factors affecting their choices. Her study consisted of data collected through open-ended interviews. This study was particularly helpful in focusing on qualitative research methods, which was appropriate for her study because each woman was able to tell her own individual career choice experience. Factors affecting women's career choices were described under six major categories. These were: (a) self-confidence, (b) feelings of responsibility for others, (c) the influence of others, (d) their own desires, (e) unexpected circumstances that affected their lives, and (f) the effect of education and training. A life theme emerged that identified women's lifelong attempts to find a balance between commitment and control of their lives.

According to Evans (1985), the career paths of women are becoming more similar to men's with more women working during young adulthood. This study was important in the formulation of the conceptual framework. There is a need for studies that focuses on women's experience. In spite of increased rate of participation of women in the



workforce, there is no formal theory of women's career development. A number of researchers have attempted to identify the factors in a woman's background that help shape the orientation toward work. Family relationships have been linked to women's career decisions. Career women tend to come from homes with working mothers. They also had close relationships with their fathers and had more freedom and rewards for assertiveness.

In Hackett, Esposito, and O'Halloran (1989), the importance of various types of role models in the process of career development of women, specifically in the area of nontraditional career aspirations and choices, was explored. The authors conclude that parental influences support the importance of the perceived influence of fathers and working mothers on the nontraditional choices of daughters. Positive female role model influences, particularly that of teachers and mothers, were the strongest predictors of career salience, educational aspiration, and choice of nontraditional choices. Father's positive influence might also help in predicting, to a lesser extent, women's nontraditional choices. In addition, positive female role model influences interaction with high performance self-esteem and instrumentality in the prediction of the career-related variables.

In Rubero's (1996) study of factors related to female traditional career choice among a group of Puerto Rican female university students, the author suggests that there is evidence that the majority of females seeking post-secondary education are still selecting careers that are considered traditional for women. In this qualitative study, the author found that there is a tendency for Puerto Rican women to select more traditional occupations such as nursing, education, secretarial sciences, social welfare, and mental

health. Studies exploring the attitudes and behaviors of Puerto Rican female students, regarding the reasons for not selecting careers considered non-traditional, have not been conclusive. It is not clear whether the theoretical models used, which come from research done in the United States, are applicable to the Puerto Rican female population. Puerto Rican women, like women from the majority of other countries, were generally socialized to become mothers and homemakers. This study provided a broad context of the complexities involving women's career development and career choice processes. The women in this study have made a transition from a full-time job as homemakers to full-time work in different occupations outside the home. This gradual but rapid change has mainly occurred during the last half of the 20th century. It is evident that it is naturally expected that the majority of women tended to develop a self-concept with an orientation toward home and family responsibilities. In their career decision making, women are more preoccupied with selecting a career that may somehow give them the opportunity to meet both work and the responsibilities of mother and homemaker. The factors that have been identified as responsible for influencing women to choose traditional female careers, whether consciously or unconsciously, are situational, social, or psychological variables or a combination of two or more of them (Rubero, 1996).

In a study conducted by Cleves (1999) about the factors influencing the career choices of Colombian women, a study of prospective high school teachers, the focus group interview technique was used to allow the students to formulate through the dynamics of dialogue, the reasons for their dislike of teaching. The interviewees were very clear about the lack of career progression for teachers. However, the interviewees by no means were suggesting that they refused to be employed or that wage labor was not

an important goal. The analysis of the background questionnaire suggests that as university education has become more and more available to working-class females and women of rural origins, the majority of the students are greatly concentrated in teacher training. In terms of social background, the study showed that family resources influenced the students' educational choices. Cleves' (1999) research is based on H. S. Astin's (1984) sociopsychological model, which assumes that the interplay of social and psychological forces shape expectations as well as career choice and work behavior. Astin's model consists of four major elements: (a) work motivation, (b) sex role socialization, (c) structure of opportunity; and (d) Expectations. Cleves (1999) states that:

Psychological theories of career choice seem to ignore the external barriers that might limit people's goals and opportunities. The major strength of these theories is to admit that people actively construct their own reality rather than passively accept a given reality. The sociological perspective seems to offer clues for understanding that people are concerned about the prestige level of the jobs they seek, and it stresses the external barriers they face in climbing their occupational hierarchy. Its major weakness is to treat individuals as identical psychologically.

(p. 33)

In a quantitative study done by Fassinger (1990), the author suggests that the career orientation and choices of college women are determined by a combination of factors, such as ability, agentic personality characteristics, and sex role attitudes. High ability (manifested by achievement), liberal sex role attitudes (in relation to work and family roles), and instrumental personality tendencies (confidence to make decisions and

engage in math tasks) predict high levels of career orientation toward science-related areas, high in prestige and non-traditional for women. The results of this study also strongly indicate that the "new cultural imperative" for women's lives is to combine career and family roles. The author concludes by stating,

in order to generalize from these samples, the final models should be re-tested on new samples from these and other populations to determine whether the results hold, underscoring the importance of continued generation, refinement, and multivariate analysis of models of career achievement in women. (Fassinger, 1990, p. 246).

In an article by Helen S. Farmer (1984), the author explains several of the models of career development theory. In her analysis of Astin's Structure and Opportunity Model, the structure is used to help explain behavior change in the present and in the future. However, the model is meant to be used for career choices for men and women. The model is primarily social-psychological, and it assumes that the interplay of social and psychological forces shapes behavior. Astin's model has elements of Bandura's (1977) social learning theory. However, certain given background variables, such as social status, race, gender, ability, and health, were missing. Farmer (1984) suggests that other life role priorities and their intersection with work priorities should be included in the women's career choice model. The author concludes by saying that it remains to be tested whether the model proposed by Astin fits both sexes.

#### Historical Facts About Children of Peter Pan

A group of 14,048 Cuban refugee children came to the United States without their parents with the status of unaccompanied children during the years 1961 and 1962. This

group of Cuban refugee children was identified as the children of Operation Peter [Pedro] Pan. Until recently, this particular population of children, who are now adults, has received little attention in scholarly studies. One of the emerging studies on this historical event known as "Operation Peter (Pedro) Pan" done by Triay (1998) places this event in a historical context during the Cold War struggle. The focus of his work is on historical events. He also states that "to date, information pertaining to Operation Pedro Pan and the Cuban Children's Program has been scattered, inaccurate, or incomplete, p. ix." According to Triay (1998), Operation Peter Pan was the result of an effort by James Baker, headmaster of an American school in Cuba, who worked closely with the anti-Castro underground movement. Initially this organization sought to protect Cuban children from Communist indoctrination, and to protect the children of Cubans involved in anti-Castro activities. This operation quickly came to involve the Catholic Church in Miami and, in particular, Father Bryan O. Walsh, who was acting as the executive director of the Catholic Welfare Bureau in Miami, and established the Cuban Children's Program. This was a nationwide organization that cared for those children without relatives or friends (almost half the children) in the United States. The latter program, in effect until 1981, was the first to allot federal money to private agencies for children care. This was an action with far-reaching repercussions for United States social policy (Triay, 1998).

The difference between Operation Pedro Pan and the Cuban Children's Program was stated by Walsh (1971) as follows:

The Cuban Children's Program was inaugurated to provide foster care for Cuban refugee children who found themselves in the U.S., without the care and

protection of their parents. Operation Pedro Pan was developed to help Cuban parents send their children, unaccompanied, to the United States to avoid Communist indoctrination. Both programs developed at the same time, but while Operation Pedro Pan terminated with the missile crisis, the Cuban Children's Program was in operation for many years following the 1962 missile crisis. (p. 379).

Cuban refugee children who emigrated to the United States through Operation Pedro Pan were not the first children to endure the pain, fear, confusion, and separation from their family and to experience massive exodus from their homeland. In 1936-1939 during the Spanish Civil War, parents sent away more than 20,000 Basque children. These children came to be known as the "Guernica Generation," named after the town that was destroyed by bombing the year they left. These children were relocated in Mexico and other countries in Europe such as Great Britain, Belgium, Switzerland, Denmark, and the Soviet Union, where as many as 4,000 children were reported to have gone and who never returned to their homeland (Legarreta, 1984, p. 297).

In Operation Pedro Pan: The Untold Exodus of 14,048 Cuban Children (Conde, 1999), many of the historical facts presented in Triay's (1998) book, cited above, are reviewed. In addition to the historical facts, there are case studies and an extensive database of statistical analyses relevant to this population. This book is a chronicle of the author's experience witnessing the takeover of Castro's revolutionary regime. Although the author came without her parents, she stayed with an uncle for 2 months until her parents arrived. Conde did not take part in the Cuban Children's Program.

Some of the Jewish refugee children who fled their country during World War II through a movement called Kindertransport, or Children's Transport, also experienced an exodus from their homeland. A total of 10,000 Jewish children were transported to safety to England from December 1938 to August 1939. These children faced imminent danger in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. They were saved from the Holocaust, but tragically, 9,000 of them did not see their parents again. During World War II, 5,000 British children were evacuated to the United States in an effort organized by the Children's Overseas Reception Board. During the Greek Civil War of 1944-1949, while Communist forces were fighting Monarchist forces, more than 28,000 Greek children were forcibly taken from their parents to live in camps throughout the Communist block countries (Conde, 1999).

Vietnamese "orphans" and the "boat people" of Southeast Asia emigrated to the United States seeking refugee status after the Cuban children of the early 1960s. All these children experienced painful separation, but what made the group of Cuban refugee children who came to the United States through Operation Pedro Pan different from all other exoduses is that this political exodus was the only such event in the Western Hemisphere. This was an organized mass departure of 14,048 children to the United States in less than 21 months. These children's departures from Cuba were done on commercial airplanes on a daily basis (Conde, 1999).

Goyos (1996) states in his study about the resiliency factors in the adult Pedro Pan children that issues related to immigration and adaptation have been studied. However, there is a need for studies about the long-term adjustment of refugee children who have

been separated from their families. More research with immigrant and at-risk populations is essential to continue the process of education and intervention.

There are children's books written with the theme of children who came to the United States through "Operation Pedro Pan." In Children of Flight Pedro Pan, Aciermo (1994) narrates the experiences of her and her younger brother when they arrived in the United States without their parents. The author's style is pure and candid as she recounts the stories told by the children as they described the painful separation from their families. This is not a story to make children cry, but rather to make the readers reflect and recognize the stoic strength of character demonstrated by these young children in exodus from their country. This is a story that sets a good example of love for the family, hard work, and sacrifice, and it is told with great sensitivity.

Another children's book is Pancho Montana: Un Viaje Inesperado [Pancho Montana: An Unexpected Trip] (Rodriguez, 1997). This book describes some of the experiences of the author, who was sent with his older sister to a foster home in Montana until their parents arrived from Cuba. This is a story filled with vivid descriptions seen through the eyes of Pancho (the nickname of the child who is the narrator of the story). Through the description of his experience of feeling homesick and missing his family and familiar places, the author shows his desperate attempt to make connections with what is familiar to him. Montana (Montaña), Pancho reflects, means mountain in Spanish. His grandfather Victor used to say very proudly that he was a "montañez" (a man who lived on mountains) since he was born in the Cantabric Mountains region of Northern Spain. Now he was a "montañez," since he lived in Montana. He also reflected that since the state had a Spanish name, the Spaniards must have been earlier settlers of that region. He



needed to make a connection to something that was familiar to him, since everything else, the culture, the climate, and his foster family, was unfamiliar to him. The author dedicates this book to all Hispanic children who came to the United States. He hopes that all these newcomers would get to love the United States as much he did without forgetting about their native homeland. He also dedicates this book to all mothers and fathers who had to sacrifice everything in order to see their children free. The author wrote an autobiography of his childhood journey through Operation Pedro Pan. It is interesting to note that many years had passed before the author wrote about his childhood experience. The author has been an editor for many years in very prestigious publishing houses in the United States. This suggests that these children needed time to heal the wounds before they could write or talk about this painful period of their lives.

Cuba en Guerra [Cuba at War] (Encinosa, 1994) is a book that presents, in a detailed narrative style, an analysis of the fighting process in Cuba since 1959 to the first half of 1993. This book was important in researching information about the former chief of Castro's Air Force, Mayor Pedro Luis Diaz Lanz, one of the key figures who triggered the exodus of Cuban children known as "Operation Pedro Pan," when he alerted Cuban parents about Castro's plan. On July 1, 1959, only 7 months after Castro's regime was in power, the Chief of Castro's Air Force, Mayor Pedro Luis Diaz Lanz, flew to the United States and requested political asylum. He accused Castro of having given up Cuban sovereignty to the Soviet Union. A few months later, Diaz Lanz returned to Cuba in a heroic clandestine air mission and released flyers over the busy streets of Havana at noon. These alerted Cuban parents to Castro's plan to institute a decree abolishing the law Patria Potestad, which gave parents the power over their children until they reached legal

age. By taking away parental rights, the government had the power to send children away from their parents to the Soviet block countries for Communist indoctrination. Diaz Lanz's plane was shot at by Castro's militia, who wounded several civilians in Havana, but Diaz Lanz managed to fly safely to the United States. Castro's regime blamed Diaz Lanz for the wounded civilians, and disclaimed the information printed in the flyers. Due to this heroic act, the decree was not officially established, although Castro managed to indirectly send children away from their parents to the Soviet block countries. The author also documents in Chapter II the formation of a clandestine movement in Cuba after Castro's regime took over. One key figure in the clandestine operations was Ramon Grau Alsina, another key figure in Operation Pedro Pan.

In a study done by Goyos (1996) about the resiliency factors of the adult Pedro Pan children, the author states that this large exodus of children received little attention in the academic literature. "Researchers have hypothesized that these children were at risk for developmental problems given the stressful life events prior to separation, during the separation phase, and after the reunion with their families" (Goyos, 1996, p. 2). Goyos' study showed that the population of children that he investigated came from well-educated families, and this was a factor that helped in their presenting less pathology as adults. The group was composed of middle or upper middle class people. Also, most of these children came from loving, safe, and tranquil homes and family settings. The author suggests that those were contributing factors that helped ameliorate the effects of risk factors. An important finding in this study is that the children's acceptance of their parents' wishes to migrate contributed to the positive outcomes. The adolescent males

and in some cases, the adolescent females, were the children who were the hardest hit of all the children (Lagarreta, 1984).

Encinosa (1994) talks about "Operation Pedro Pan" as one of the most heroic acts of clandestine operations and an example of personal sacrifice endured by Cuban families. During the early 1960s there were talks in Cuba about the institution of a decree taking away the Patria Potestad. With this law, the state would have the right to destroy the nucleus of the family in order to benefit the state. When the first group of youngsters was sent to study in countries such as Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the Soviet Union, thousands of Cuban parents decided to send their children to the United States to save them from this new law and from the daily Communist indoctrination of Castro's regime.

Duran (1995) refers to the children of Peter Pan as the "Cuban Moses." She documents historical facts and presents some case studies depicting the suffering endured by these children. All the stories were based on interviews with adults who were marked by their experience of being separated from their parents during their childhood years. They all felt that their childhood was stolen from them. Grau Alsina (1993), one of the key figures in Operation Pedro Pan, wrote his Pedro Pan memoirs. He reflects about his participation in this operation and shares his feelings. In spite of having served 20 years as a political prisoner in Cuba for his participation in Operation Pedro Pan, he has no regrets. Given the need and the opportunity to help children gain freedom, he stated that "he would do it again, even if he would have to pay the price of giving up his own freedom" (Lopez, Angela -- unpublished interview with Grau Alsina, Ramon, 1997).

Sociocultural, Psychological, and Linguistic Factors

In Peter Pan: The Story of Lost Childhood, Kelley-Laine (1997), gives relevant information regarding the psychological impact suffered by children who have experienced fleeing from their homeland at an early age. The book is written by a psychoanalyst who was born in Hungary, and has conducted research based on interest in people with the "Peter Pan" syndrome. This syndrome is manifested in a desire not to grow up in children who have endured traumatic experiences and painful suffering. The child resisted total breakdown. These children have had a happy childhood interrupted by a tragic event. They risk becoming sad children who fly around forever looking for a piece of lost childhood. This work connected, in so many ways, with case studies documented in other studies of children of Operation Peter Pan.

In Homecoming: Reclaiming and Championing Your Inner Child, Bradshaw (1990) explores the psychological trauma and the effects of children distancing from parents during adolescence. Although his work may seem tangential to this study, it nevertheless serves to document the stages of the psyche of the adolescents and connects with the experiences narrated in case studies of the children of Peter Pan.

Literature relevant to assimilation/acclturation studies will be tangentially related to some of the subsidiary questions. Alba and Nee (1997) provide a framework based on social sciences concerning the incorporation of immigrants and their descendants, urging immigration scholars to rethink assimilation theory for a new era of immigration. This article was useful in understanding assimilation theory.

In Children of Many Cultures: Theoretical and Practical Study of the Process of Acculturation, Baldasini (1998) focuses on the differences among cultures, and the process of adjustment that takes place upon immigrants' arrival to the host culture. His

work was helpful in understanding the process of acculturation and connects with the experiences of children of Peter Pan.

In studies conducted by Collier (1985), the author identifies the acculturation process as resulting in four different modes of adaptation. During the first stage, which may last up to 6 months, children may suffer from panic episodes. In the next months immigrant children appear to go through a period of despondency during which they feel inferior, inadequate, and suffer from ridicule by peers. Children may compensate for these intense feelings with an increase in physical activity and aggressive behavior. Following this stage there is a one-year adaptation period where children become more adjusted to the new society.

Coburn (1992) suggests that immigrant children who have been separated from their families or have lost their loved ones because they died prior to immigration may mourn their loved ones. The problems associated with immigration may be compounded by war, death of family member(s), family separation, and in some cases, torture and rape. These children may be suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome, which may cause nightmares, withdrawal, poor concentration, insomnia, aggression, and physiological problems.

According to Spradley (1979), ethnographical or anthropological fieldwork is not for understanding the human species, but for serving the needs of humankind. It is this human aspect of a group of people that a qualitative approach to research attempts to discover. An interesting aspect of this qualitative, ethnographic approach to research is the importance of language and the key role it plays in the entire process.

## CHAPTER III

### Methodology

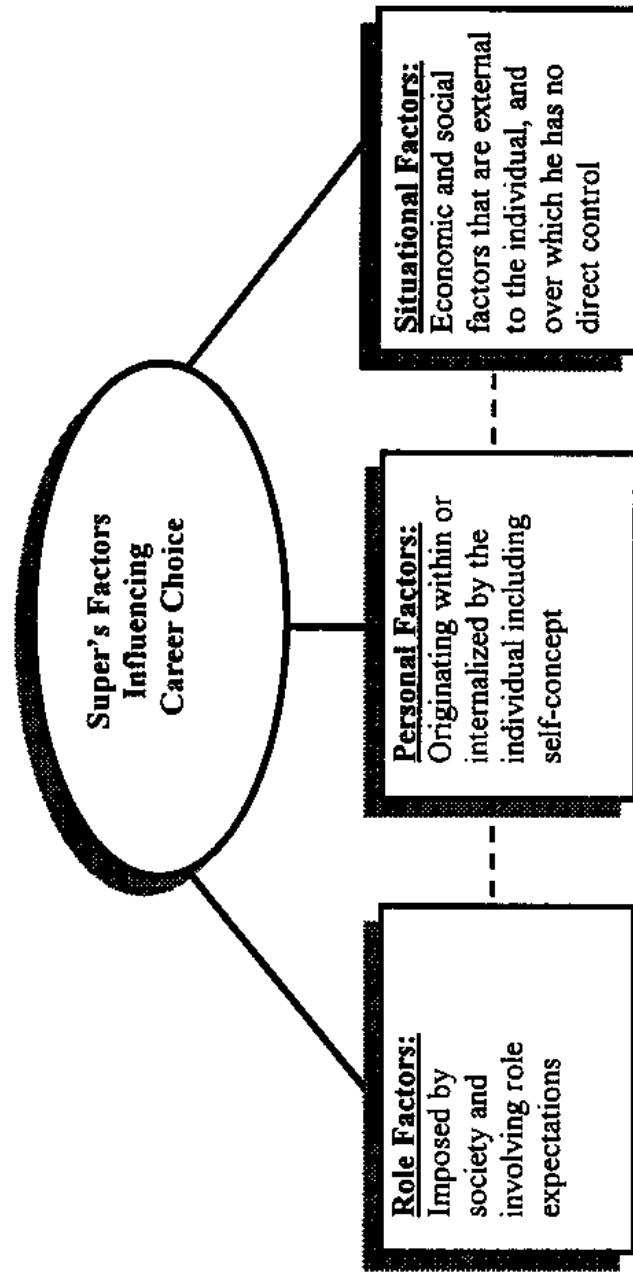
#### Conceptual Framework

This study was based on a wealth of classic theoretical and conceptual frameworks. According to Super (1957), there are three types of factors that influence career choice: (a) role factors--those imposed by society and involving role expectations; (b) personal factors--those originating within or internalized by the individual, including the self-concept; and (c) situational factors--economic and social factors that are external to the individual and over which he has no direct control. (See Figure 1).

The study looked at the three types of factors identified in Super (1957) to influence career choice throughout the questionnaire and in-depth interviews. This study was approached from an ethnographical perspective. Social scientists conducting ethnographical studies focus on the role of culture and how it influences behavior (Krathwohl, 1997).

Historical perspective is reconstruction of the past. Researchers often begin like participant observers, and decide what are the important aspects of the person or event as they proceed. They probably have predetermined notions regarding where to look, which is an inductive or emergent problem approach (Krathwohl, 1997).

This study was based on documented historical facts and case studies of the children (now adults) who experienced the massive exodus from their homeland known as "Operation Peter [Pedro] Pan." These children endured a painful separation from their



**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework (based on Super's factors influencing career choice)

parents and had to adjust to a different culture and educational system. They had different levels of English proficiency, and different levels of academic backgrounds. They were placed in English-speaking classrooms without the help of Bilingual Education instructional methods or formal English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. They experienced the “swim or sink” learning approach. Based on this, some swam to safety and successfully learned English and were assimilated into the American culture within a few years; others sank and failed to learn the host language and to assimilate into the host culture.

According to Patton (1987):

Case studies become particularly useful where one needs to understand some particular problem or situation in great depth, and where one can identify cases rich in information—rich in the sense that a great deal can be learned from a few exemplars of the phenomenon in question. For example, a great deal can often be learned about how to improve a program by studying select drop outs, failures, or successes. (p. 19)

In order to understand what factors contributed to the success or failure of these children, the study will look at several variables such as age at the time of separation and proficiency level in language 1 (Spanish), plus proficiency level in language 2 (English), and level of academic background attained by these children in Cuba. Other sociocultural factors that were explored were parents' educational attainment and socioeconomic status (SES) in Cuba. All these variables were looked at and documented through in-depth interviews for case studies.



Spradley (1979) suggests that whatever approach the researcher employs, whether observation, interviews, collecting life histories, or a combination of these, language enters into every phase of the research process. Ethnographic researchers must always deal with at least two languages--their own and the informants'. In this study, both English and Spanish will play a major role.

There are some salient themes in Nunez' (1995) doctoral dissertation in which she documents case studies of four college Chicano students writing for Sociology. Those themes are home and school experiences, self-actualization experiences, literacy experiences, and implications for entering university (intellectual motivation). In her study, Nunez found that all case study students had to struggle to obtain an education. Nunez's dissertation is an appropriate parallel study to be used as part of the conceptual framework for case studies, using a different kind of ethnic group. Her study is an ethnographical study about the Chicano ethnic group. Ethnic changes in our population are also reflected in student enrollment in higher education and in the labor force. The rate of Hispanic student enrollment keeps increasing as the rate of the Hispanic population keeps growing. However, the rate of educational attainment in Hispanics throughout the United States is an area of concern for educators (Levine, 1989). This is why more ethnographical studies of different Hispanic groups need to be conducted in order to help educators understand the factors that shape career decision making in any specific ethnic group.

Kao and Tienda (1988) suggest that results of studies on Hispanic educational aspiration are mixed. "Previous research done by Centra (1980), leads us to suspect that

influences of family and individual characteristics on educational aspiration may differ by ethnicity and gender" (Kao & Tienda, 1998, p 358).

#### Method of Analysis

The investigation for this study was based mostly on qualitative research. This study documented case studies of a cohort group. The decision-making process and career choices of this cohort group will be documented through narrative accounts collected through life histories interviewing. Life histories, or narrative accounts of individuals, are very useful in formulating questions and inferences about the culture of the people being studied (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Data collected for ethnographic studies include what the investigator observes, what they can induce participants to tell about recollections and reminiscences, written records, diaries, and letters that will form a data bank. Ethnographic research mandates that low-inference descriptions should be phrased as concretely and precisely as possible (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). In order to ensure the precision of the participant's descriptions, the in-depth interviews were tape-recorded.

A questionnaire was designed to establish the first data analysis. This questionnaire helped the investigator to identify and select the subjects for the in-depth interviews for case studies, according to the following criteria: (a) subjects who chose post-secondary careers and whose parents had post-secondary educational attainment; (b) subjects who chose post-secondary careers and whose parents did not have post secondary educational attainment; and (c) subjects who did not chose careers in post-secondary education, regardless of their parents' educational attainment. Nine case studies were analyzed from the in-depth interviews that meet the above stated criteria.

The level of English proficiency and academic background was self-reported in the pre-interview questionnaire, as it was done in Nunez's (1995) ethnographical study about Chicanos. Subjects for interviews for the case studies were identified from the information obtained from this initial pre-interview Career Decision-Making/Choice Questionnaire that was mailed to all the subjects in the cohort group sent to San Antonio, Texas. The researcher documented and analyzed the situation based on factors such as level of English proficiency at the time of arrival in the United States, parent's educational attainment, and sociocultural, socioeconomic, and other relevant factors that may have prevented some of the adolescent females from furthering their education beyond secondary school. In addition, other aspects influencing career decision making that may come to light, such as the relationship of career choices and the first language were explored. After the initial data obtained through the pre-interview Career Decision-Making/Choice Questionnaire were collected and analyzed, the purposive selection of subjects to be interviewed for the case studies was made. The factors that helped shape the process of career decision making were explored for each of the case studies.

#### Source of Evidence

This study was comprised of both qualitative and quantitative data analyses. There are two major sources of evidence used for this study. The primary sources are based on interviews and findings through questionnaires. The secondary sources are the other studies conducted and the literature reviewed on career decision making and choice; sociocultural academic, and linguistic factors; the psychological impact of early separation from parents; culture shock; and other groups of immigrants' experiences that

are tangentially related to this study, discussed in Chapter II. The pre-interview questionnaire supplied both quantitative and qualitative data.

### Participants

The subjects in this study consisted of a sub-cohort group of 54 Cuban immigrant female adolescents who came to the United States during the early 1960s through Operation Peter Pan. All the girls were between 13 and 18 years old when they left their country without their parents. All these girls stayed at a Florida City temporary camp for Cuban refugees until they were relocated to San Antonio, Texas. While at the Florida City camp, they were placed in an "open classroom" environment, where they received instruction in English as a Second Language and Mathematics. Their level of English proficiency varied.

### Instruments

A pre-interview Career Decision-Making/Choice Questionnaire was developed. Some of the survey questions were derived from Goyos (1996) dissertation on Resiliency factors of Pedro Pan children. The Career Decision-Making/Choice questionnaire served as an exploration tool that helped in the selection of the purposive sample of individuals who were interviewed for case studies. The information obtained from the in-depth interview constituted most of the qualitative part of the study. Data obtained from this pre-interview questionnaire served to do parametric statistical analyses, such as  $t$  tests, chi square, and a Spearman rho correlation to test relationships among the variables. The data were summarized by means of descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution tables. This constituted the quantitative part of the study. Only the data that showed statistical significance was shown on tables.

Patton (1987b) states that:

Qualitative methods permit the evaluator to study selected issues, cases, or events in depth and detail; the fact that the data collection is not constrained by predetermined categories of analysis contributes to the depth and detail of qualitative data. . . . Quantitative methods, on the other hand, use standardized measures that fit diverse various options and experiences into predetermined response categories. The advantage of the quantitative approach is that it measures the reactions of a great many people to a limited set of questions, thus facilitating comparison and statistical aggregation of data. This gives a broad, generalizable set of findings. By contrast, qualitative methods typically produce a wealth of detailed data about a much smaller number of people and cases.

Qualitative data provide depth and detail through direct quotation and careful descriptions of program situations, events, people, interactions, and observed behaviors. (p. 9)

An interview guide with unstructured open-ended questions was developed for the in-depth interviews, as suggested by Patton (1990). Both the questionnaire and interview guide were translated into Spanish (if needed) and modified to meet the needs of this study. Two expert translators reviewed the questionnaire and interview guide to increase reliability and clarity of the instruments. An expert on survey research methods examined the instruments to ensure content validity and made a number of helpful suggestions. The questionnaires were pilot tested and revised accordingly to ensure construct validity of data collection. The questionnaire was also reviewed and discussed by a group of students attending a survey research class at Seton Hall University. The

researcher was the principal data collection instrument in the qualitative part of the study, as suggested by Krathwohl (1998).

According to Patton (1990a), using an unstructured open-ended interview approach, salient topics in the research were discussed with the subjects in order to elicit their answers. Follow-up questions were decided according to the interviewee's responses. The open-ended interview allowed the respondents to describe what was meaningful and salient without being pigeonholed into standardized categories. Patton (1990a) refers to the unique case orientation approach, which assumes each case is special and unique. He also suggests that it is possible to some extent to combine an interview guide approach with the standardized open-ended interview. The interview guide provided an outline or framework for the unstructured interview in order to assure that each person interviewed was asked questions covering the same areas of research. This method permitted the interviewer the flexibility in probing when it was appropriate to explore certain topics more in depth as the need may arise during the interview. Patton (1990a) states that:

The desire to evaluate individualized client outcomes is one major reason why case studies may be conducted. There are other reasons case studies may be preferred or needed. Sometime researchers or policymakers are puzzled by particular cases--unusual successes, unusual failure, or dropouts. Detailed case studies of these unusual cases may generate particular useful information. (p. 99)

Patton (1990b) recommends that the interview include the following types of questions:

1. Experience/behavior questions, which will be aimed at eliciting a description of experiences, actions, activities that will be observable;
2. Opinion/value questions, which will focus on what a person thinks about the topic or program and what their goals, intentions, desires, and values might have been;
3. Feeling questions, which will help to understand the emotional responses of people to experiences or thoughts that they may have had;
4. Knowledge questions that will help the interviewer determine what factual information the respondent actually knows or has; and
5. Sensory questions that will allow the interviewer a window into a sensory apparatus of the respondent. ( p. 293).

#### Pilot and Instrument Validation

This study was initially pilot tested during the months of November 2000 and January 2001. A total of 13 female Cuban immigrants, identified as “Pedro Pans” participated in the pilot. These participants were not part of the group sent to San Antonio, Texas, and therefore were not part of the cohort group studied.

Minor revisions were made on the questionnaire as a result of the pilot tests. Two questions had to be clarified and new ones were developed in order to obtain specific responses. The pilot was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the instrument and to ensure clarity and validity.

The in-depth interview questions protocol was the other instrument used to document the case studies for qualitative data. The interview questions protocol was also developed from the research and subsidiary questions, in order to provide a guide for the in-depth interview for the case studies, which constitute the majority of the qualitative part of this study.

Experts in the fields of survey research methods, and social science reviewed the two instruments, the questionnaire, and interview questions protocol to ensure content validity prior to pilot testing. The instruments were revised according to the input obtained from the pilot tests.

The Pedro Pan pre-interview questionnaire – Career decision-making/choice was developed as one of the instruments that provided both quantitative and qualitative data. The main purpose of this instrument was to identify the subjects for the in-depth interviews, which met the specified criteria for case studies. This questionnaire also provided additional information to help examine the evidence from a different perspective than that of the in-depth interviews. It also presented a profile of the cohort group of “Pedro Pans” girls sent to San Antonio Texas. The interviewees met three different criteria that provided variations or contrasts among the case studies. Data collected from the questionnaires complemented the qualitative analysis that answered the research and subsidiary questions of this study. The in-depth interview questions protocol did not need further revisions after pilot testing.

#### Procedure for Collecting Data

The questionnaires were mailed on March 26, 2001 to the list of members of “Muchachitas de Villa Maria Club” [Girls of Villa Maria Club], which is the group of 57



girls that came to the United States through "Operation Pedro Pan" and were sent to San Antonio, Texas during 1962. From the initial group, three are deceased, and seven are listed as no information of their whereabouts available, which left a total of 47 in the pool of subjects for this study. The questionnaires were mailed to the 47 subjects, along with a formal letter requesting their voluntary participation in this study (See Appendixes B and C). Three letters and pre-interview questionnaires were returned to sender by the post office due to unknown addressees, leaving a total of 44 in the final pool of subjects.

In order to ensure the validity and ethics of research design, the questionnaire (Appendix C) was sent with an explanatory letter (Appendix B) stating the purpose of the study and asking the subjects to voluntarily agreeing to participate in this study. All the names of the subjects were withheld in order to protect their confidentiality, as stated in the recruitment letter. The cases were reported using case numbers in lieu of their names. After the questionnaires were received and the data were analyzed, the subjects for interview were selected. All subjects selected for in-depth interview were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix D). In order to ensure validity and reliability of the analysis of the case studies, the cases for in-depth interviews were selected using different criteria based on a variety of characteristics, such as: (a) subjects who chose post-secondary education careers and whose parents' had post-secondary education; (b) subjects who chose post-secondary education careers and whose parents' did not have post-secondary education; and (c) subjects who did not choose careers in post-secondary education, regardless of their parents' educational attainment. The criteria for selection were drawn from extensive review of literature in the fields of sociology, education, and educational psychology, that link parents' educational attainment with their offspring's

educational outcomes (Blau & Duncan, 1967; Sewell, Haller, & Ohlendorf, 1970; Sewell, Haller & Portes, 1969).

Telephone calls were made to contact the subjects who were identified using the above listed criteria, and they were asked if they wanted to participate in the in-depth interviews. A meeting was set up at a mutually agreed time and place. All subjects were asked to sign a consent form for the in-depth interview (Appendix E). All interviews were taped-recorded in English, although some Spanish words were used during the interviews that were translated by the investigator. The average length of the interview was approximately from 30 to 45 minutes each. The investigator transcribed all the interviews. The transcripts were sent to interviewees for further review, as suggested by Yin, (1994) in order to increase the content validity and reliability of the instrument.

Questions for the in-depth interviews were formulated to obtain qualitative data regarding this study. The information obtained from the in-depth interview protocol was combined with the information from the subject's questionnaire and summarized in the Case Studies' Profile section. The questions were grouped in relation to the independent variables such as sociocultural factors, which combine socioeconomic status, and cultural factors. Questions about life and family in Cuba provide a way of assessing in a non-invasive way the subjects' socioeconomic status and also provide a picture of the social and cultural characteristics. Also provide information to link with Super's (1957) factors influencing career choices. Questions about Immigration/Migration seek to find patterns of whether being active versus passive in the decision to leave the country had an effect on the level of adaptation, and assimilation to the host culture. Questions about life in the United States seek to find patterns about adaptation to new life, new educational system,

linguistic factors related to language acquisition, adaptation and assimilation to the host culture. Questions about career aspirations, choices and decisions seek to find patterns about career decision-making and choices made. It also aims to make connections with Super's (1957) factors influencing career choices, and even provide a realistic image in terms of the sources available at the time.

The general questions about the "Pedro Pan" experience, whether it is perceived as negative or positive experience, seek to find a link with assimilation and adaptation to the host culture.

The qualitative analysis looked throughout all the interviewee's narratives seeking to find connections with Super's (1957) factors that may have influenced career choice as follows:

Role factors – imposed by society and involving role expectations; Personal factors – originating within or internalized by the individual, including self-concept; Situational factors – economic and social factors which are external to the individual and over which he has no direct control.

The interview transcripts were indexed into categories. The various categories of research were fragmented and presented in segments of information as they connected to a particular research question. This was done to present the content analysis. Once coding and indexing of categories were completed for all cases, the connection of research to support findings and interpretation of the narrative into meaningful data took place. According to Delamont, (1992) the researcher doing qualitative analysis must look for patterns, themes, regularities, contrasts, paradoxes, and irregularities that emerge from the cases.

The main focus of this research was to emphasize the characteristics and factors that influenced career decision-making and choices of career of the cohort group studied. The data was also organized according to the conceptual framework.

All in-depth interviews were tape-recorded in the language of preference of the participant. The researcher did the translations if necessary. The questions used for the in-depth interview were guided by the interview protocol questions instrument. (See Appendix E). After the in-depth interviews were transcribed, they were given back to the interviewees and they were asked to review them for content validity.

#### Procedure for Treatment of Data

The method of triangulation of data was used. The data collected from the pre-interview questionnaire were statistically analyzed. In-depth interviews with different groups within the sub-cohort group provided the information for the detailed case studies. The researcher looked for consistency across the sources to see if causal relationships were established by inferences based on interviews.

A variety of strategies were used to codify and organize the data collected using qualitative methods of analysis. Data from the pre-interview instrument provided factual information regarding the respondents. Tables 3 to 34 summarized the frequency distribution of the descriptive statistical information. In addition, parametric statistical analyses were conducted, depending on the number of responses received, which constituted the quantitative part of the study.

The interviewing process started with individual descriptions of each subject. There were probing questions regarding how they found out about leaving their parents and their native country in order to seek political asylum, how they felt about it, and if

they were part of the decision-making. There were other questions about the length of time in the United States when they made the decision to pursue post-secondary education, level of English proficiency of subjects when they arrived in the United States, and at the time of career decision-making. English proficiency levels were self-reported by subjects.

Tables were used to compare and contrast subjects' educational level reached in their native country, parents'/guardians' educational level reached in their native country, and their socioeconomic status. The qualitative data provide depth and detail (Patton, 1990a). The analysis of the data included:

1. Each respondent's history, interview data, as it relates to each research question.
2. Patterns, themes, tendencies, and trends that emerged from the data collected.
3. Categories determined by the research.
4. Analysis of unusual case(s).
5. The use of data triangulation, using both qualitative and quantitative methods, questionnaires, and interviews to analyze emerging trends.

## CHAPTER IV

### Analysis of the Data

#### Introduction

This chapter presents the results of research conducted, based on the methodology chapter, on factors influencing career decision-making and post-secondary career choices of a cohort group of female Cuban immigrants. The results of this study were obtained through quantitative and qualitative methods of analyses. The quantitative part of this study presents the profile of the 35 participants that completed the pre-interview questionnaire. It also includes the response rate, frequency data and statistical analyses, summary of questionnaire findings, including also qualitative responses from the questionnaire. The qualitative part of this study presents the summary of the nine case studies' profiles and findings from the in-depth interviews, including the patterns that emerged from the cases.

#### Findings and Analysis of Results

This section analyzes the data collected for this study. The purpose of this study is to determine what characteristics and factors influenced the career decision-making, and choices within a cohort group of female Cuban immigrants. This research also aims to contribute to fill the void on career development literature, particularly in the area of female ethnic minorities gaining access to institutions of higher education and their career choices. This study specifically looked at sociocultural, academic, and linguistic factors

influencing career decision-making and choices of career of a cohort group of Cuban females.

The findings of this study are divided into two parts. The first part presents the quantitative analysis generated from the questionnaire, which includes descriptive and inferential statistical analyses and allows us to see the profile of the cohort group of "Pedro Pans" girls sent to San Antonio, Texas during 1962.

The second part presents the qualitative analyses, which includes the in-depth interviews of subjects selected for the nine case studies, which met the specified criteria, and a summary of qualitative questions from the questionnaire

### Quantitative Analysis

#### Response rate.

There were 44 questionnaires mailed to the final pool of subjects. The statistical analyses include 35 responses, which were received on time. This constitutes 80% return rate, and represent a more than adequate return rate for a small sample size. According to Rea & Parker (1997), for population sizes for which the assumption of normality does not apply; in such cases, the appropriate sample size is 50% of the population size" (p. 121).

#### Frequency data.

Demographic data were obtained to provide the following information: date of birth, place of birth, date of arrival to U.S.A., whether they traveled alone, parents' educational attainment, parents' occupation in Cuba, where they lived in Cuba, type of relationship they had with their parents, subjects' academic and linguistic background, and type of school they attended in Cuba. This information was important in assessing

the subjects' overall socioeconomic status, as well as the characteristics and factors that may have influenced the subject's career decision-making and choice of careers.

#### Summary of Questionnaires' Findings

Tables 2 through 32 summarize the frequency data obtained from the questionnaire. Tables 33 and Table 34 are Paired Sample Statistics and *t*-test done on parents' educational attainment. Table 35 lists all the respondents' career choices and occupations and its relevance to this study.

Table 2 shows that most of the respondents who were part of the cohort group of "Pedro Pan" girls sent to San Antonio Texas, came from Cuba during 1962, with the exception of two that came during 1961. All the girls in this group were teen-agers except for one who was a pre-teen and came with two older sisters. The oldest in the group was 18 years old, and there was only one in this age group. The mean age for the cohort group was 15 years old.



Table 2

Date and Age at Time of Arrival in the United States

<u>Year of Entry</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>
1961	2
1962	33
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<u>Age at Arrival</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>
Pre-teen	1
13	4
14	10
15	10
16	8
17	1
18	1
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>35</b>

Respondents were asked to provide information about their parents' educational attainment. Table 3 presents the mother's educational attainment completed in Cuba. A total of (20) or 57.2 % of the respondents' mothers had at least 12 years of education; (14) or 40. % had post-secondary education.

It is important to understand that 12 years of education in Cuba does not necessarily mean that they just had secondary education, as it would be the case in the American educational system. The educational system in Cuba at the time their parents

attended school allowed for other options, i.e., taking a Summer Preparatory Program and passing the entrance exam in order to skip 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. In addition to that, there were other short-cuts to University based on rigorous secondary vocational programs that allowed people who entered programs such as Chemical Engineering, Certified Public Accountants, Normal Schools, and others lasting also four years, allowing at the end of their program entry at the University after at least 10 years or more of rigorous school. Based on the differences between Cuba's pre-1960's and post-1960's educational reform and the American educational system, it is very difficult to measure the parents' education by American standards. Therefore only years of education were listed.

Table 3

Mother's Educational Attainment Completed in Cuba

Number of Years in School	Frequency	Percent
Up to 6	7	20.0
8	3	8.6
9	2	5.7
10	1	2.9
11	1	2.9
12	6	17.1
14	4	11.4
More than 14	10	28.6
Unanswered	1	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4 presents respondents' fathers educational attainment in Cuba. A total of (29) or 82.8 % of the respondents' fathers had at least 12 years of education; of that number; (23) or 65.7 % had post-secondary education.

Table 4

Father's Educational Attainment Completed in Cuba

Number of Years in School	Frequency	Percent
Up to 6	3	8.6
8	2	5.7
10	1	2.9
12	6	17.1
14	7	20.0
More than 14	16	45.7
Total	35	100.0

Respondents were asked about their mother's occupation in Cuba. A total of (22) or 62.8 % of the mothers were housewives, which mirrors a trend evident in Cuban society during the early 1960s. A total of (8) or 22.85 % were teachers; (5) or 14.3 % had other occupations (see Table 5).

Table 5

Mother's Occupation in Cuba

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Business owner	1	2.9

Table 5 (continued)

Clerk	1	2.9
Housewife	22	62.8
Philosophy Ph.D.	1	2.9
Registered Nurse	2	5.7
Teacher	8	22.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Respondents were also asked to indicate what was their father's occupation in Cuba. This question also aimed for an assessment of the subject's socioeconomic status. The number of responses fallen in each of the occupational categories were similar. For example, most categories had between 1 and 2 responses. However, there were (5) subjects, whose fathers were accountants (see Table 6).

Table 6

Father's Occupation in Cuba

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Accountant	5	14.3
Banker	1	2.9
Businessman	2	5.7
Cattle Owner	1	2.9
Chemist	1	2.9

(Table 6 continued)

Clerk	1	2.9
Commercial. Artist	1	2.9
Construction	1	2.9
Entrepreneur	1	2.9
Farmer	2	5.7
General Postmaster	1	2.9
Journalist	1	2.9
Judge	2	5.7
Lawyer	1	2.9
Medical Doctor	1	2.9
Merchant	1	2.9
Military	1	2.9
Owner of mines	1	2.9
Pharmacist	1	2.9
Pharmacology Ph.D.	1	2.9
Professor	1	2.9
Salesman	1	2.9
Telegraph Technician	1	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 7 shows the respondents' area of residence in Cuba, while most of the respondents lived in cities (28) or 80 %, six respondents indicated that they lived in small

towns, and there was one who lived in a rural area. This information is important to establish the accessibility to a variety of schools, since people who lived in cities and towns during this period had more choices of schools to attend, than those who lived in rural areas.

Table 7

Area of Residence in Cuba

Area	Frequency	Percent
Rural	1	2.9
Town	6	17.1
City	28	80.0
Total	35	100.0

“Pedro [Peter] Pan” subjects’ evaluation of their relationship between their fathers and themselves is depicted in Table 8. This table shows that most of the respondents, (31) or 88.6 % rated this relationship as being good to excellent. Only a miniscule percentage (8.6 %) rated their relationship with their father prior to coming to the U.S.A. as being average to poor. Only one respondent indicated that there was no chance for a relationship.

Table 8

Type of Relationship with Father in Cuba

Type of Relationship	Frequency	Percent
Poor	1	2.9
Average	2	5.7
Good	8	22.9
Excellent	23	65.7
No chance for a relationship	1	2.9
Total	35	100.0

Similarly, Table 9 shows the respondents' rating of their relationship with their mothers prior to their arrival in the U.S.A. Most of the participants, (30) or 85.7 % rated good to excellent relationship with their mothers. Based on research conducted by Standley & Soule (1972); Auster & Auster (1981); Evans (1985); Hacket, Esposito & O'Halloran (1989) this information may help to explain career choices.

Table 9

Type of Relationship with Mother in Cuba

Type of Relationship	Frequency	Percent
Poor	3	8.6
Average	2	5.7
Good	11	31.4

Table 9 (continued)

Excellent	19	54.3
Total	35	100.0

Subjects' educational background.

The subjects' educational background in Cuba was divided into years of school pre-1960's, and post-1960's educational reform. The largest proportion of respondents (27) or 87 % of 31 respondents who answered this question had completed > 6 years of school before the 1960's educational reform; of those (24) had completed Intermediate School; of the ones who completed Intermediate School, (14) were in Secondary School.

Table 10 summarizes information of respondents' total number of school years completed by participants in Cuba (before and after the 1960's educational reform). Not all participants attended Intermediate School. The pre-1960's educational reform system in Cuba allowed students to skip Intermediate School and enter secondary school by taking an intensive Preparatory Summer program and successfully passing the entrance exam. A significant proportion of the respondents, (18) or 51.4 % had completed between 9 -10 years of school in Cuba. This does not necessarily equate to the 9-10 years of school in the United States. Due to the option to skip Intermediate School, some of the participants who came with 9-10 years of school in Cuba may have been to the approximate level of 11-12 years of school in the United States. A total of (9) or 25.7% of the participants had completed between 6-8 years of school; the rest of the participants (8) or 22.9 % had completed between 11 and 14 years of school in Cuba.

This difference in education, suggest the importance of human capital, which placed the participants of this study in an advantageous position when they entered the



American educational system. The strong academic preparation reported by the subjects suggests the value of human capital. The participants of this study were able to overcome language and cultural barriers and succeed academically.

The data in Table 11 shows the number of years completed in Cuba in the Post-1960's educational reform system. Only (13) or 37.1 % of the participants completed 1 – 2 years of school in the post-1960's educational reform. The larger proportion (22) or 62.86 % of the participants stopped attending school after the educational reform system was instituted.

Table 10

Number of School Years Completed in Cuba

Number of Years	Frequency	Percent
Up to 6	1	2.9
7	4	11.4
8	4	11.4
9	8	22.9
10	10	28.6
11	2	5.7
12	3	8.6
13	2	5.7
14	1	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 11

Number of Years Completed in Cuba in the Post-1960's Educational Reform System

Years	Frequency	Percent
1	9	25.7
2	4	11.4
0	22	62.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 12 shows that the larger proportion of the respondents, (20) or 57.1% attended private religious schools. None of the respondents attended public school only. The ones that attended public schools did it for a portion of their school years. A total of 7 respondents attended a combination of either Private (non-sectarian); Private-Religious or Public schools. During 1961, after the 1960's educational reform, all private schools were taken over by the government. The only educational system in effect was public.

A total of (22) or 62.9 % of participants stopped attending school when schools were taken over by the government (see Table 11). Secondary and Post-secondary education became a tool of control by the government. Only people who volunteered to work away from their parents and home, in the countryside, helping with the literacy campaign and during the sugar or coffee crops were entitled to the privilege of education.

Table 12

Type of School Attended in Cuba

School Type	Frequency	Percent
Private (Non-sectarian)	8	22.9
Private Religious	20	57.1
Private (Non-Sectarian) & Religious	2	5.7
Private Religious & Public	2	5.7
Private (Non-Sectarian), Private Religious & Public	3	8.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Respondents' Experience in the United States.

The respondents were asked to self-assess their level of English proficiency when they arrived in the United States. Tables 13 through 16 show their level of English proficiency upon arrival in the United States for listening, reading, writing, and speaking respectively. A total of (17) or 48.6 % of the participants indicated that their level of English proficiency for listening was not proficient. Only (6) or 17.1 % of the participants indicated that their level of English proficiency was in the range of proficient to very proficient (see Table 13).

The respondents' rated their English proficiency for reading as well. Table 14 shows that a total of (15) or 42.9 % of the participants indicated that their level of English proficiency for reading was at the level of not proficient. A larger proportion (20) or

57.1 % of the participants indicated that their level of English proficiency was in the range of fair proficient to very proficient.

Table 15 shows the respondents' level of English proficiency for writing. A total of (22) or 62.9 % of the participants indicated that their level of English proficiency for writing was not proficient. Only (13) or 37.1 % reported their level of English proficiency in the range of fair proficient to very proficient.

On the other hand, Table 16 examines the respondents' level of English proficiency for speaking. A total of (20) or 71.4 % of the participants indicated that their level of English proficiency for speaking was not proficient. Only (10) or 28.6 % reported their level of English proficiency at the range of fair proficiency to very proficient.

Table 13

Level of English Proficiency upon Arrival in the United States (Listening)

Proficiency	Frequency	Percent
Not Proficient	17	48.6
Fair Proficiency	12	34.3
Proficient	4	11.4
Good Proficiency	1	2.9
Very Proficient	1	2.9
Total	35	100.0

Table 14

Level of English Proficiency upon Arrival in the United States (Reading)

Proficiency	Frequency	Percent
Not Proficient	15	42.9
Fair Proficiency	8	22.9
Proficient	6	17.1
Good Proficiency	3	8.6
Very Proficient	3	8.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 15

Level of English Proficiency upon Arrival in the United States (Writing)

Proficiency	Frequency	Percent
Not Proficient	22	62.9
Fair Proficiency	5	14.3
Proficient	4	11.4
Good Proficiency	2	5.7
Very Proficient	2	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 16

Level of English Proficiency upon Arrival in the United States (Speaking)

Proficiency	Frequency	Percent
Not Proficient	25	71.4
Fair Proficiency	5	14.3
Proficient	3	8.6
Good Proficiency	0	0.0
Very Proficient	2	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The respondents were asked to assess their academic preparation (not related to English proficiency) when they were placed in school in the United States. Table 17 shows that a larger proportion of the participants, (25) or 71.4% reported having a strong academic preparation.

Table 17

Experience Regarding Academic Preparation (Not Related to English Proficiency)When Placed in School in the United States

	Frequency	Percent
Strong Academic Preparation	25	71.4
Moderate Academic Preparation	10	28.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The participants were asked how important was it for them to hold onto their first language as an indicator of their readiness to accept acculturation. A total of (31) or 88.6 % of the participants indicated that it was important to extremely important (see Table 18).

Table 18

Importance of Holding onto Your First Language (Spanish) upon Arrival in the United States

	Frequency	Percent
Not Important All	2	5.7
Somewhat Important	2	5.7
Important	12	34.3
Extremely Important	19	54.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The participants were asked how important it was for them to hold onto their culture when they arrived in the United States to assess their readiness for acculturation. A total of (34) or 97.1 % responded that it was important to extremely important (see Table 19).

Table 19

**Importance of Holding onto Spanish Culture upon Arrival in the United States**

	Frequency	Percent
Somewhat Important	1	2.9
Important	13	37.1
Extremely Important	21	60.0
Total	35	100.0

The participants were asked how important was it for them to learn the host language (English) upon arrival in the United States in order to assess their readiness for second language acquisition. Table 20 shows that a total of (30) or 85.7 % reported that learning the host language (English) was extremely important.

Table 20

**Importance of Learning the Host Language (English) upon Arrival in the United States**

	Frequency	Percent
Somewhat Important	1	2.9
Important	4	11.4
Extremely Important	30	85.7
Total	35	100.0



The participants were asked how important it was for them to learn the host culture upon arrival in the United States in order to assess their readiness for acculturation. Table 21 shows that a total of (30) or 85.7 % indicated that learning the host culture was important to extremely important.

Table 21

Importance of Learning the Host Culture upon Arrival in the United States

	Frequency	Percent
Not Important All	1	2.9
Not too Important	3	8.6
Somewhat Important	1	2.9
Important	11	31.4
Extremely Important	19	54.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The participants were asked if they were reunited with their family in the United States after completion of secondary education. Table 22 shows that the number of responses were equally split, (17) which comprise 50% of respondents answered yes, and (17) or 50 % answered no. One respondent left the question unanswered.

Table 22

Reunited with Family in the United States after Completion of Secondary Education

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	17	48.6
No	17	48.6
Unanswered	1	2.9
Total	35	100.0

The participants were asked the type of program of study taken in high school in the United States. Table 23 shows that the larger proportion, (30) or 85.7 % of the participants were enrolled in general or academic programs.

Table 23

Program of Study Taken in High School in the United States

Program	Frequency	Percent
General	16	45.7
Academic	14	40.0
Vocational	2	5.7
Don't Know	2	5.7
Unanswered	1	2.9
Total	35	100.0

The respondents were asked what types of post-secondary career choices were made available to them while they were attending High School in the United States. Table 24 summarizes their responses. A total of (15) or 42.9 % answered other(s); while (4) or 11.4 % indicated beauty school; (2) or 5.7% indicated Practical Nursing. Table 22 shows that (17) of the participants were with their parents when they completed secondary education in the United States, suggesting that those were the participants who were offered "other" choices since they were no longer part of the Cuban Children's Program established for children who came under "Operation Pedro [Peter] Pan." Two of the respondents who were with their parents when they completed High School indicated that going to school was not a choice since they had to enter the workforce and support themselves and their parents.

The Cuban Children's Program provided foster care and education for Cuban refugee children without the care and protection of their parents. As soon as the parents arrived in the United States, the children were returned to the parents and they ceased to receive support for their education. Also, children that arrived to the age of 19 ceased to receive support even though their parents were still in Cuba. Half of the respondents in this cohort group were reunited with their parents at the time they completed secondary education. Some had to support themselves and their parents, and had to postpone or give up educational pursuits; others had partial support from their parents and worked and studied at the same time. The participants with parents still in Cuba at the time that they completed secondary education were prepared to enter the workforce and had to support themselves.

Table 24

Vocational/Career Choices Made Available while Attending High School in the United States

Vocational/ Career Choice	Frequency	Percent
Beauty School	4	11.4
Practical Nursing	2	5.7
Commercial/ Secretarial School	6	17.1
Other(s)	15	42.9
Choice of Two	4	11.4
Choice of Three	3	8.6
Unanswered	1	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The respondents were asked the number of years that took them to start post-secondary education in the United States. Table 25 shows that a total of (8) or 22.9 % that answered "zero" years are the ones that did not complete high school or pursue post-secondary education. These are the participants who entered the workforce to support themselves. A total of (17) or 48.6 % started post-secondary education in less than a year from completion of secondary school. A total of (10) or 28.5 % started post-secondary education in a range of one to two years to more than 10 years.

Table 25

**Number of Years it Took to Start Post-Secondary Education in the United States**

<b>Years</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
0	8	22.9
Less than 1 year	17	48.6
1-2	2	5.7
5-6	3	8.6
7-8	2	5.7
Greater than 10	3	8.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Respondents were asked to self-assess their level of English proficiency for listening when they started post-secondary education in the United States. Tables 26 through 29 show their proficiency for listening, reading, writing and speaking. Table 26 show that a total of (25) or 71.5% of the participants reported that their level of English proficiency for listening when they started post-secondary education was ranked between good proficiency to very proficient. Looking at their level of English proficiency at the time they arrived in the United States (Table 13) shows that only (2) respondents or 5.8 % had this level of proficiency for listening.

Respondents were asked to self-assess their level of English proficiency for reading when they started post-secondary education in the United States. Table 27 shows a total of (27) or 71.5 % of the participants reported their level of English proficiency for reading when they started post-secondary education was ranked between good

proficiency to very proficient. Comparing this with the level of English proficiency for reading at the time they arrived in the United States (Table 14) shows that only (6) or 17.2 % ranked themselves at this level.

Participants also were asked to self-assess their level of English proficiency for writing when they started post-secondary education. Table 28 shows that a total of (25) or 71.5 % of the participants indicated that their level of English proficiency for writing when they started post-secondary education was ranked between good proficiency to very proficient. Looking at their level of English proficiency for writing when the participants arrived in the United States (Table 15) shows that only (4) or 11.4 % of the participants had ranked themselves at this level.

Respondents were asked to self-assess their level of English proficiency for speaking when they started post-secondary education in the United States. Table 29 shows that a total of (22) or 62.9 % of the participants indicated that their level of English proficiency for speaking was ranked as good proficiency to very proficient. Comparing this to their level of English proficiency for speaking when they first arrived in the United States (Table 16) shows that (2) or 5.7 % of the respondents ranked themselves at this level.

Tables 26- 29 show that the majority of the respondents, (27) or 77.1 % indicated that they were most proficient in reading and less proficient in speaking at the time they started post-secondary education. This is also consistent with their ranking of English proficiency at the time they arrived in the United States.

Table 26

Level of English Proficiency When Starting Post-Secondary Education in the United States (Listening)

Proficiency	Frequency	Percent
Not Proficient	1	2.9
Fair Proficiency	1	2.9
Proficient	6	17.1
Good Proficiency	11	31.4
Very Proficient	14	40.0
Unanswered	2	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 27

Level of English Proficiency When Starting Post-Secondary Education in the United States (Reading)

Proficiency	Frequency	Percent
Not Proficient	1	2.9
Fair Proficiency	0	0
Proficient	5	14.3
Good Proficiency	11	31.4
Very Proficient	16	45.7
Unanswered	2	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 28

Level of English Proficiency When Starting Post-Secondary Education in the United States (Writing)

Proficiency	Frequency	Percent
Not Proficient	1	2.9
Fair Proficiency	0	0
Proficient	7	20.0
Good Proficiency	13	37.1
Very Proficient	12	34.3
Unanswered	2	5.7
Total	35	100.0

Table 29

Level of English Proficiency When Starting Post-Secondary Education in the United States (Speaking)

Proficiency	Frequency	Percent
Not Proficient	1	2.9
Fair Proficiency	1	2.9
Proficient	9	25.7
Good Proficiency	12	34.3
Very Proficient	10	28.6



Table 29 (continued)

Unanswered	2	5.7
Total	35	100.0

The respondents were asked the number of years that it took them to complete their first post-secondary education program of study in the United States. Table 30 shows that the participants who answered "zero" years are the ones that did not complete high school or pursue post-secondary education. A total of (19) or 54.2% indicated that it took 2-6 years to complete their first post-secondary program of study.

Table 30

Number of Years it Took to Complete First Post-Secondary Education in the United States

Years	Frequency	Percent
0	12	34.3
2	4	11.4
3	4	11.4
4	4	11.4
5	3	8.6
6	4	11.4
7	1	2.9
10	1	2.9

Table 30 (continued)

15	1	2.9
20	1	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Respondents were asked the number of years completed of post-secondary education in the United States. Table 31 shows that a total of (27) or 77.1% of all the participants had some post-secondary education. Only 8 or 22.9 % indicated that they did not get post-secondary education. Most of the participants who pursued post-secondary education completed four-year degrees (17) or 48.6%, of those, (11) or 31.4 % attained post-graduate degrees.

Table 31

Number of Years Completed of Post Secondary Education in the United States

Years	Frequency	Percent
0	8	22.9
1	2	5.7
2	5	14.3
3	1	2.9
4	6	17.1
6	6	17.1
8	2	5.7
10	2	5.7

Table 31 (continued)

13	1	2.9
Unanswered	2	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

An analysis of the data presented in Table 32 shows the number of years of education completed in Cuba and the relationship with post-secondary educational attainment in the United States. The median of years completed in school in Cuba is 10 years. A total of (10) or 28.57 % of the respondents completed 10 years of school in Cuba. A total of (9) or 25.71 % of the respondents completed 9 years of school in Cuba. A total of (6) or 17.14 % did not pursue post-secondary education. Also (2) or 5.71% completed secondary education in Cuba and did not pursue post-secondary education in the United States.

Table 32

Relation of Years of Education Completed in Cuba and Post-Secondary EducationalAttainment

<u>Years Completed in Cuba</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Years Post-Secondary Education</u>	<u>Percent</u>
4	1	0	2.86
7	2	0	5.71
7	1	1	2.86
7	1	6	2.86
8	2	6	5.71

Table 32 (continued)

8	1	8	2.86
9	3	2	8.57
9	2	4	5.71
9	3	6	8.57
9	1	13	2.86
10	2	0	5.71
10	1	2	2.86
10	3	4	8.57
10	2	6	5.71
10	1	8	2.86
10	1	10	2.86
11	1	0	2.86
11	1	3	2.86
12	2	1	5.71
12	1	5	2.86
13	1	10	2.86
13	1	4	2.86
14	1	1.5	2.86
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>		<b>100.0</b>

Comparison between subjects' and parents' educational attainment.

Table 33 shows the results of the paired sample statistics done for parents' educational attainment and respondents' educational attainment. The result is statistically significant at  $p < .05$  value. All the subjects exceeded their parents' educational attainment. One of the respondents did not answer this question.

Table 33

Paired Sample Statistics

Parents' Educational Attainment Compared to Subjects' Educational Attainment

	Mean	N	Std Deviation	Std.Error Mean
Mothers'	6.32	34	3.56	.61
Fathers'	8.00	34	2.92	.50
Subjects'	9.68	34	.64	.11

Note. The responses were coded with numbers. The mean for mothers' (6.32) represents an average between 11-12 years of school; the mean for fathers' (8.00) represents an average of 12 years of school; the mean for subjects' (9.68) represents an average of 14 or > 14 years of school.

Mothers' educational attainment and fathers' educational attainment were compared to the subjects' educational attainment using paired sample statistics. Table 34 demonstrates that there is a significant difference between mothers' and subjects' educational attainment, and fathers' and subjects' educational attainment. The value of  $p$  is  $< .05$ .

Table 34

t-test for Paired Sample of Parents' Educational Attainment in Cuba

	Paired Differences			<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Mothers' - Subjects'	-3.35	3.48	.60	-5.617	33	.000
Fathers' - Subjects'	-1.68	2.89	.50	-2.68	33	.002

Table 35 shows the career choices and occupations of the participants. A total of (7) or 20% had studied careers in education. A total of (7) or 20% had studied careers related to first language (Spanish). A total of 8 of the respondents did not complete their educational program.; of those (2) are business owners, (4) are clerical workers and (2) are included with the Accounting/Business category.

Table 35

Career Choices and Occupations of Participants

Career	Occupation	Frequency
Advertising Art	artist	1
Accounting/Business	administrators	14
Clinical Psychology Ph.D.	psychologist	1
Education	educators	7
Hospital Administration	health administrator	1
Law	lawyer	1

Table 35 (continued)


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Nursing	nurse	2
Spanish Teacher	teachers	6
Secretary/Data entry clerk	clerical workers	4
Translator Spanish/English	translator	1

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Note. A total of (15) or 42.85 % of the 35 respondents had studied more than one career.

The research question and the seven subsidiary questions were analyzed using SPSS for Windows, version 10.0 for the quantitative part. The statistical analyses consisted of t-tests for paired samples, Chi-Square tests, 2-tailed Pearson's Correlation, Spearman rho correlation, and Crosstabulation. Only the tests that showed statistical significance were reported in tables. Findings and conclusion based upon the analysis of the data are discussed in Chapter V.

The quantitative analyses drawn from the pre-interview questionnaire show a profile of the respondents from the cohort group sample. The data for the qualitative analyses consist of in-depth interviews of the nine case studies, and also include a summary of the qualitative responses of the questionnaire.

#### Qualitative Analysis of In-Depth Interviews

The subjects who participated in the in-depth interviews for case studies were selected after the data from the Pedro Pan Career decision-Making and Choice Questionnaires were received and analyzed. The selection of subjects for case studies was based on the following three criteria: Criterion I – subjects who chose post-secondary careers and whose parents' had post-secondary education. These cases were labeled Case Ia, Case Ib, and Case Ic; Criterion II – subjects who chose post-secondary

careers and whose parents' did not have post-secondary education. These cases were labeled Case IIa, Case IIb, and Case IIc; Criterion III – subjects who did not complete post-secondary education, regardless of their parents' educational attainment. These cases were labeled Case IIIa, Case IIIb, and Case IIIc.

### Role of the Researcher

During the study, the researcher presents the participants' perspectives and experiences. It was a challenge to remain silent and not to express the researcher's opinions and experience. At times, during the interview, the interviewees looked surprised when the researcher asked for information they knew the researcher had knowledge about. The high rate of returned questionnaires and the willingness to be interviewed can be attributed to the general feeling of cohesiveness that is shared by this cohort group. The researcher was part of the cohort group, therefore the questions, analyses, and findings were influenced to a certain extent by the researcher's experience.

### Case Studies' Profiles

#### Case Ia.

Case Ia was selected under the criterion I. In this case the subject had a baccalaureate degree with two majors: Sociology and Psychology, and then went to Law School for a Jurist Doctor Degree. She held the position of Judge, and now practices law in her own Law Office. This case presents the only child of a couple in which the father was a lawyer and Judge, in Cuba, and the mother was a housewife. This subject described a somewhat dysfunctional family in which there was constant fighting between mother and father. This child looked for opportunities to spend time away from home in order to avoid her parents' fighting. She also mentioned the disparity in socioeconomic status



between her father's side of the family, which was wealthy and prominent and her mother's side of the family, which was poor. Apparently, since the mother married above her socioeconomic status, and did not have to work, the father was the only provider. She was born in Havana, and then moved several times throughout her childhood to other towns in two other provinces of Cuba. She also indicated in the questionnaire that she had attended private non-sectarian, private religious and public schools in Cuba. Taking into consideration intrinsic values, such as the prestige and power exerted by the subject's family, on the father's side, her socioeconomic status seems to have been between upper class, or upper-middle class.

#### Case Ib.

In case Ib, also chosen for criterion I, the subject was able to start post-secondary education in 1975, after 13 years of her arrival to the United States. She studied (LPN) Licensed Practical Nursing and received an (A.A.S.) Associate in Applied Sciences Degree, passed the Board Exam, and started working in that capacity. She went back to school, and in 1991, obtained a (B.S.N.) Bachelor in Science Degree and is currently a (RN) Registered Nurse. The subject's father had a degree in Chemistry, and was also a businessman. He owned a factory that manufactured automobile products such as brake-fluid, soap to clean car motors and car wax. He also owned coffee shops in three service stations. The mother was a housewife. The subject was the only child from her parents' marriage, although she did have an older stepbrother from her father's previous marriage. She was originally from a city in one of the provinces of Cuba, and then moved to Havana. The subject reported having had a good relationship with both, her mother and father. The subject attended private Catholic school until 1960. She stopped attending

when Castro's government took over Cuba's private schools, and remained at home until her departure in 1962. She also indicated that she always wanted to be a nurse, and that was her original career choice since she was in Cuba. The subject's socioeconomic status seems to have been of upper-middle class.

Case Ic.

Case Ic was also chosen for Criterion I. The subject came from a family of four; there were two daughters in the family, and she was the oldest, of the two. Both parents were professionals and had doctorate degrees in Cuba. The subject said that both her mother and father were the first generation in their family to obtain post-secondary education. Her father was a journalist and Principal of an evening high school. Her mother was a teacher and all her uncles and aunts had obtained university degrees. Her mother was always pushing the subject and her sister to go to Havana University. She stated that she had changed her mind many times while she was in Cuba about her career choice. Her mother was pushing her to become a medical doctor. She said that had she stayed in Cuba, she would have probably studied medicine and specialized in Psychiatry. They lived in Havana, and both, she and her sister went to a Private non-sectarian school. Their socioeconomic status appears to have been of upper-middle class. The subject came from Cuba with her younger sister and both obtained post-secondary education in the United States. The subject's younger sister completed the last year of high school after her parents arrived from Cuba and moved to California. She earned an undergraduate degree in Spanish and then received her Ph.D. also in Spanish. The subject completed the last year of high school in San Antonio, Texas, and shortly afterwards moved to California with her parents. She was admitted to a Community

College and studied Journalism. Then she went to the university and studied Political Science. Subsequent to that, she went back to the university to earn her translator/interpreter certification.

#### Case IIa.

Case IIa was selected under criterion II. The subject completed a (B.A.) Bachelors in Arts Degree in History/Education, and a (M.A.) Masters in Arts Degree in Spanish. The subject is now a Spanish Professor at a College in San Antonio, Texas. Her parents did not have college education, her father was a businessman and her mother a housewife. The subject was the only child and attended private Catholic school until the 8<sup>th</sup> grade in Cuba. She did not have any specific career aspirations in Cuba. However, she had plans to attend a very prestigious private religious institution called La Progresiva de Cardenas, which specialized in vocational/technical fields such as Chemical and Electrical engineering as well as regular high school. That school was located in a neighboring province, and it seems that she may have been emotionally prepared to live in a boarding school setting, although she had not actually experienced being away from her parents until the time she left Cuba. The subject's socioeconomic status seems to have been of upper-middle class.

#### Case IIb.

Case IIb was chosen under criterion II. The subject completed a bachelor's degree in Accounting and then a Masters Degree in Business Administration. Her parents did not have college education. The father was the owner of a cattle ranch in Camaguey, a rich province in Cuba known at that time for its wealth in land and cattle. The mother was a housewife. The subject had an older brother and they lived in a big

three-family house with the grandparents, aunt, uncle and cousins. She stated that her life in Cuba was very protected and private. She also reported having a very strict upbringing. She was not allowed to play with friends, only with her relatives who lived in the three-family house with them. She went to a private Catholic school in Cuba, and stated that she did not have aspirations for career while living in Cuba. Since she came from a wealthy family and had no financial worries, it never occurred to her that at some point in her life she would have to work. She said she took everything for granted, so she never gave much thought as to what she wanted to be in the future. The subject's socioeconomic status seems to have been clearly upper class, until their land and other property were taken over by the government.

#### Case IIc.

Case IIc was selected under criterion II. She completed an Associate's degree in Business Administration, a Bachelor's degree in Spanish Secondary Education, and a Master's degree in Spanish. The subject's parent did not have college education. Her father was a banker in Cuba, and her mother a housewife. She was the youngest of four daughters in her family. Her oldest sister completed high school; the second one studied Business, got married at age 18 and never worked. The third sister became a Music teacher. She did not go to college to become a Music teacher, but she did go to the Music Conservatory School. The subject went to private Catholic school until the 8<sup>th</sup> grade in Cuba. Then for high school she went to public school for two years. She did not have aspirations for career in Cuba at the time she left. The subject's socioeconomic status seems to have been of upper-middle class.

Case IIIa.

Case IIIa was selected under criterion III. The subject did not study post-secondary education. With the office skills that she learned in Cuba, she started working as a secretary after graduation from high school. Now she is the Office Manager in charge of Public Relations for her husband's architectural firm. The subject's mother was a teacher, and although her mother's side of the family did not have much wealth, they were very highly regarded and enjoyed prestige in their rural town. She referred to intangible class or "rango" [rank]. Her maternal grandfather had been a General in the "Mambi" [patriot army during the Cuban Independence War]. Her grandmother was a teacher and her great-grandmother was the Mayor in the rural town where she lived. All her aunts and uncles from her mother's side had professional careers. Her father did not have post-secondary education. He was the son of a Spaniard "carpetbagger," who traveled from farm to farm. He owned several large farms near the town where she lived. She lived in a big house side-by-side to her paternal grandfather's house in one of his farms. Next to them, lived her aunt, uncle, and cousin. The subject had a younger brother and she said that they were really one big family with the two houses united. The two families used to have lunch and dinner together. The subject went to private non-sectarian school in Cuba. She claimed that her father had a lot of money, but her mother's family did not. The subject said that her mother and father did not get along well, from day one of their marriage, and that the marriage deteriorated with the passing years, until they finally separated. The subject's parents were separated most of the time during her childhood years, and she did not remember her father living in the house for too long. It is hard to ascertain the subject's socioeconomic status. She lived with her

mother in the paternal grandfather's farm, her father was wealthy and her mother was a home economics teacher. Based on this information, it seems that the subject enjoyed a socioeconomic status of upper-middle class until their farms and other property were taken over by the government. The subject never had aspirations for career. She hated to study. Her aunt was the Superintendent of the Schools in the town where she lived, and she went to school in her hometown until the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. She went to the City of Havana to study Commercial high school in a private non-sectarian school, called Edison Institute, where they taught bilingual classes (English-Spanish) for two years.

#### Case IIIb.

Case IIIb was selected under criterion III. The subject started her college education to study Business Administration at a Junior College, but due to economic constrains and starting a family, she was not able to complete post-secondary education. Since the subject was only 6 credits away from completion of an Associate's Degree, she may go back to finish her degree after retirement. The subject's father was a lawyer and held the position of Correctional Judge until shortly after Castro's government took over and eliminated the position. Her mother was a housewife, she also had a brother, who was nine years older than her. She stated that her parents had her late, so she had older parents. She claimed that she had an excellent relationship with both parents. The subject went to private Catholic school in Cuba that offered bilingual classes. The academic content courses taught in Spanish in the mornings were also taught in English in the afternoons. She was fairly fluent in English when she came from Cuba, since she had been taking English since age 6. This subject seems to have enjoyed upper-middle class socioeconomic status until Castro's government removed the judges from their official

posts and her father was left without a job. The subject had focused on career aspirations that had to do with law, international law, diplomacy, and languages. She had hoped to work in an embassy.

### Case IIIc.

Case IIIc was selected under criterion III. The subject's parents did not have post-secondary education. Her father was a commercial artist, and her mother was a housewife. She was not able to obtain post-secondary education, although she had career aspirations to become a journalist since she was in Cuba. During her high school years in the United States, she kept the hope for a career in journalism alive. Her English teacher encouraged her to continue with her career aspiration because she recognized her love for writing. She was the only child of divorced parents, and she lived in downtown Havana. Her mother had re-married and she lived with her mother and stepfather, although she spent a lot of time with her maternal grandparents and she used to play with a cousin at her grandparents' house. The subject went to private non-sectarian school and completed the 8<sup>th</sup> grade in Cuba. She indicated that she had a poor relationship with her father and a good relationship with her mother. The subject seems to have enjoyed middle-class socioeconomic status.

### Patterns that Emerged from Cases

#### Life in Cuba.

The majority of the cases that were selected for case studies, seven out of nine came from two-parent households. In the two other cases, one case the parents were divorced and the mother re-married and the subject lived with the mother and stepfather, and in the other case, the parents were separated. There were four cases in which the

subject was the only child. One case had two sisters and they came together and both are part of this cohort group. One case was the youngest of four sisters, and she came alone leaving behind three siblings. There were three girls that each came with a brother and they were separated from their brothers, due to the housing arrangements since Villa Maria was a female residence.

The breakdown of the socioeconomic status of the nine cases is as follows: One seems to come from upper class, seven seem to have come from upper-middle class and one from middle class.

The nine case studies reported their relationship with their mothers as follows: One had a poor relationship with her mother and went into a traditional field; three had good relationships with their mothers and went into traditional fields; one had an average relationship with her mother and went into nontraditional field; and four had excellent relationships with their mothers. Two out of those four went into traditional fields and two went into nontraditional fields (see Table 36).

The nine cases reported their relationship with their fathers as follows: One had a poor relationship with the father and went into traditional field; two had good relationships with their fathers and one went into traditional and one into nontraditional fields; two had average relationships with their fathers and they went into traditional fields; and four had excellent relationships with their fathers and they all went to nontraditional fields.



Table 36

Subjects' Relationship with their Parents and Career/Occupation Choice (Summary of Cases)

Case #	Mother	Father	Career/Occupation
Ia	poor	excellent	nontraditional
Ib	good	good	traditional
Ic	average	excellent	nontraditional
IIa	good	good	nontraditional
IIb	excellent	average	traditional
IIc	excellent	average	traditional
IIIa	excellent	excellent	nontraditional
IIIb	excellent	excellent	nontraditional
IIIc	good	poor	traditional

Immigration/Migration.

Case Ia was very explicit about the political situation and uncertainties about the drastic changes that were going on in Cuba during the first years of Castro's Revolution. The government started to interfere with children's education and had taken over the private schools. In order to qualify to go to school, students in secondary education had to go (supposedly, as volunteers) during the school year to the countryside and help in the Literacy Campaign; cutting sugar cane for the sugar crops; or picking up coffee beans, or whatever the government decided was necessary. If the students refused to go as volunteers, they were not worthy to benefit from the privilege of education. Many upper

middle class parents took their children away from the schools, when the private schools were taken over by the government. Ia states:

There were threats that they (Castro's government) would have a law that the children were supposed to go to the school designated by the government.

Basically what we call patria potestad or the custody of the children was going to shift from the parents to the State. When that became a known fact, parents became very intent about getting the children out of Cuba. Most of them thinking that they were only going to be away for two or three months, because they could not understand how that (Castro's regime) could last.

It is interesting to note, that both parents and children were under the impression that their trip to the United States was going to be a temporary one. Basically, they did not want their children's education to be jeopardized. They did not want their children to be forced to do laborer's duties, especially if they came from educated and well to do families.

In the case of subject Ia, she was part of the decision. Some of her friends were leaving the country and she was looking at her trip to the United States as a great adventure. She stated, "When I saw the opportunity to come to the United States to study, it seemed like a great adventure to me."

Another pattern that emerged is that the children did not know much about what their lives would be like in the United States. They basically knew that they were going to be under the protection of the Catholic Church, and that they were going to go to school, until their parents arrived from Cuba. Case Ia states:

I think pretty much that what helped too was that first of all I thought that I was only going to be away for three months... It was always a temporary thing. It was not a permanent thing. Therefore, there was no fear as to what was going to happen. It was going to be a trip for me as a great adventure. I was 14 years old, I was going to get a break from their (parents') fighting, and like I said, coming to the United States was a great thing for me.

According to Bradshaw (1990), it is normal for adolescents to long for distancing from their parents. This explains the sense of anticipation and excitement manifested by the subjects about their trip to the United States. Bradshaw (1990) further states, "The peer group is the vehicle by which adolescents achieve distancing. I like to refer to the peer group parent inasmuch as the peer group becomes a new parent. The peer group parent is very rigid and rule bound." (Bradshaw, 1990, p. 160). This also connects with the research done by Goyos (1996) who examined a sample of Cuban adults, who were identified as having lived a situation of high-risk during their childhood years when they were members of "Operation Pedro Pan." Goyos (1996) states that, "...researchers hypothesized that these children were at risk for developmental problems given the stressful life events prior to separation, during the separation phase, and after the reunion with their families,"(Goyos, 1996, p. 2). He looks at both risks and protective factors present in the Pedro Pan population. Each participant in his study experienced different stressful life events and was subject to different protective factors such as peer group support that influenced successful adaptation and integration into society.

It is of particular interest to note that the cohort group of "Pedro Pan" girls sent to San Antonio, Texas formed a very cohesive peer group that fits the description of "peer

group parent” as suggested by Bradshaw, (1990). Goyos, (1996) identified as one of the resiliency factors for the successful adaptation and integration into society of “ Pedro Pan” children, the fact that they felt there was always a caring person. He also pointed out that the “Pedro Pan” children that lived in large numbers in resident groups helped with the acculturation process. This provided a social support network or protective cocoon amongst peers.

According to Kelley-Lainé (1997) the Peter Pan syndrome is caused by a traumatic event during childhood. The effect of a child suffering traumatic events such as fleeing from one’s country, separation from parents, and having to remake one’s life results in a sad child that resists total breakdown, and resists growing up. “The greatest tragedy that can ever happen to a child is to lose his childhood,” (Kelley-Lainé, 1997, p.23). These children were not aware of the seriousness of the event that they were about to experience by leaving their country that changed their lives and destinies in a dramatic way forever.

In the case of Ib, the decision to leave the country was made by her parents. The subject was not involved in the decision process. Also the theme of this journey being something temporary emerged. She stated:

My parents always thought that Castro’s government was not going to last, and with that idea they sent me away just until things got better, because they really thought that it would not last. But when Castro’s people came looking for me to send me away to the farms (for volunteer work) my parents felt that I was going to be in danger, so they decided to send me away.

Although in the Case Ib her parents made the decision, she went along with the plan because she felt that, that was the course of action to be taken. She stated:

I was used to the idea that you have to leave when things get rough because of political reasons. I never felt that I did not want to do it, it was just that my parents wanted me to do it, and I had no negative feelings about it at all. Also because the priest (an authority figure) was involved in this conversation with me and was also involved in getting me the visa.

In the case of Ic, the decision to leave the country was a joint decision, meaning the parents and both her younger sister and the subject were the ones who decided to leave. She stated:

My sister and I were going to private school and the students in our school were very politically involved. A small group of us had been very politically involved during the Batista (last President prior to Castro) regime, but we were just observers. Some of the older ones had been involved in doing a few things against Batista. Then when Castro took over, it took only a few months and we were again involved in anti-Castro activities. The majority of the students in secondary school got involved in anti-Castro activities. Eventually, we did not go to school anymore. Basically what happened is that the Principal of the school before she left the country offered my parents to get my sister and I out of the country with scholarships. She was doing the same for her nephew and a cousin of her nephew. My father refused to have us leave the country, because he was convinced that Castro would not last very long, and he was not about to have his children leave the country. Eventually, the private schools were taken over and we

stopped going to school. I was able to finish the 4<sup>th</sup> year of high school, and my sister finished the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of high school. For a year we were pretty much stuck at home because it was against the law not to go to school, and we could not be seen during regular school hours. Although all of our neighbors, whether they were with the government or not, knew that we were not in school. At any rate, eventually, one day, I overheard my mother commenting to my grandmother that we had been offered the possibility to leave the country and my parents had refused to allow us to leave. I told my sister, and we both were enraged that we were not consulted, because at that time we were old enough to have been consulted... We refused to go back to the old school because it was part of the government, and we were not going to be stuck at home permanently. It was also less clear when Castro was going to leave the country... My sister and I were very lucky that the people in the block committee decided not to stick us in jail. Because there were about six or seven people that were "worms" (the term that Castro's people used for people against Castro) and the committee decided just to watch us closely. I think that is probably after that time, is when pretty much that is what changed my parents' mind and we decided to actively try to get out.

When asked how she felt about leaving her Country Ib stated:

You know what? I had no idea, I guess I was not mature enough to realize the depth of this action, especially because I thought that I was just going away for a little while. It was going to be only two or three months until Castro's government came down. I was a little scared, because I had never been away from my parents, not even as a child sleeping at my grandmother's house, because

I could not even bear the thought when I was small to sleep at my grandmother's house, I would cry. So, this thing about me going away, well I do not know how I did it. I guess when you have to do something you do it.

He stated:

I had no idea; as a matter of fact I was very scared. All I knew about the United States is what I had seen in the movies. I had seen a lot of gangsters' movies so I was very concerned that I might have to be a witness to a Mafia murder and that then the Mafia would try to kill me... I was really scared and I think my sister was too about coming to the United States, but we knew that if we stayed in Cuba we would have ended up in jail. So, as scary as coming here was, going to jail was even scarier.

Regarding the decision to leave the country, Ila, stated that the decision was made because her parents wanted her to continue her education without exposing her to the Communist indoctrination that was prevalent at the time. She was part of the decision. She said that she was happy to leave because some of her friends were already in the United States. She had made plans to come with her mother, so she was not afraid. However, at the airport, they encountered difficulties with her mother's visa and the subject had to leave alone. The subject did not anticipate coming to the United States alone. She was told at the airport that her mother would arrive within a few days, but that did not happen, and she had to join the "Pedro Pan" group. Ila also stated that she did not know very much about how her life would be in the United States, but she was told by her parents, that she would only be in the United States a few months and then they were all going to go back to Cuba.

In the case of IIb when asked about the decision to leave the country she stated:  
I was not part of the decision. My parents made the decision with my aunt. One day, my parents told my brother and I that we were leaving for a short time, and that was it. So we had no part of the decision whatsoever when it came to that.

When IIc was asked about the decision to leave the country she stated:

I think when I was in the second year of high school I decided that I wanted to leave because they [Castro's government] had interrupted classes so many times for political reasons, and a lot of my friends had left. I did not like what was going on, so I asked my parents to let me go, and they did not want to... I was the one who made the decision, and then I asked. It took me quite a while to convince them!

IIb said regarding her feelings about leaving the country that she felt sad because she was leaving behind her mother and father, and since it was going to be for a short time she felt that she was going on a vacation. She also stated that she had no idea about what her life would be like in the United States other than she had to learn a foreign language.

Regarding her feelings about leaving the country IIc stated:

I was not scared, because I did not know what was ahead, but I was 15 years old, and I thought that it was going to be a great adventure. I always wanted to come to the United States. When you are 15 there are a lot of contradictory feelings involved in the decision.

When IIIa was asked about the decision to leave the country she stated:



I had no idea of what was happening in Cuba. I was very well kept from every problem whatsoever. So all of a sudden, I hear this talk that one of my uncles left town and came to the United States. Then I heard we have to go, we have to go, and my grandfather was living at the time, and I knew that they (my relatives) were waiting for my grandfather to die before we could all emigrate. Which was not really emigrating, it was just going away for a few months until we could come back. My brother was very anxious to leave the country and even though he was younger than I was, he knew more about it... Somehow my uncle had learned about the "Operation Pedro Pan," of course we did not know that it was called "Pedro Pan" either, and this is the way we got my brother out. The minute my brother was out, my mother decided that I had to go.

When IIIb was asked about the decision to leave the country she said:

The decision to leave the country was made as soon as my parents found out that Polita Grau (one of the key figures along with her brother, Ramon Grau in getting visas for the children of "Operation Pedro Pan") was taking care of all these children. My father knew a lot of people in Cuba. I mean he was well related with people higher up and influential with power in the government, that is before Castro, of course, and he knew about it. So he immediately got in touch and got me the visa and the money order, and I was in a flight out of Cuba on March 3, 1962.

When asked if she was part of the decision, IIIb said, "Yes, they did [her parents], but even though they discussed the situation with me, I kept looking at the whole thing as a huge adventure. It was not able to matter from the standpoint that I was afraid."

When asked how did she feel about leaving the country IIIb said:

I was sad. Even though at that age, when you are 15 you do not realize the seriousness of the situation, but I was sad, because I knew that something was very, very wrong. I also knew that something had happened to my father, I knew that they had closed my school. I knew that they were going to send me out to the fields, and I did not like it at all. What I did not know is that I was going to be away from Cuba this long. It never even crossed my mind.

When IIIc was asked about the decision to leave the country she stated:

I believe that the decision was made when there were rumors that the government was going to take over the children. My mother decided that if somebody was going to take her child away, she would rather send me to the United States. I believe that she started helping in the Church, and the Pastor, I believe it was at the Church of San Juan Bosco, was the one that gave her the idea, and where to go all about it.

In the case of subject IIIc, she was not part of the decision, she explained that because she was a minor, her mother made the decision and she had no saying on it. Also her mother was motivated by the fear of her daughter being sent to the fields to cut sugar cane. IIIc came to the United States with the hope that her mother would join her in a few weeks, because this separation was supposed to be something very temporary. She said that years went by, she was here and her mother was still in Cuba.

Life in the United States.

The pattern of anticipation and excitement about traveling to the United States seem to have somehow diffused the fear and delayed the realization about the tragic moment that the subjects were experiencing. Case Ia states:

It is interesting that when I was going out and I had already started my journey, everybody in the plane was very uptight, and I was going from window to window to see the sights. Everybody eventually was laughing with me because I was so excited that it was contagious. At first, the first couple of months or the first three months, it really was not that hard. Again, it was a great adventure, even when I traveled to San Antonio (approximately six weeks after her arrival to the United States)... I was always coping, and I was always optimistic and always looked towards the future. I was not dwelling on what I was missing at that time... The first time that it (reality) really hit me was when I got a bunch of pictures that my mother had sent me in a card, and I had not cried once, not once since I left the airport in Cuba... I looked at a picture of our parrot and the way she hung from the car porch of the house. I looked at the parrot and burst out crying... I think the parrot was a catalyst, and I think that it was the realization that the parrot, I was never going to see again. But my parents, I was going to see them again. I do not know if I said, 'I will never see Cuba again.' But perhaps, deep down inside, I knew that was the way it was going to be. That is what made me cry so much after what I believe must have been six months since I had arrived in the United States.

It is of interest to note the dynamics behind this story. The subject belonged to her parents and they were going to join her. Her parrot belonged to her; she nurtured and had invested emotionally in this pet, and then she realized that she was not going to see her pet again. This brought the sense of loss.

Case Ib said about her experience upon arrival in the United States:

First, when I got to the camp in Florida City, it was tough going from the airport to the camp, because of the small children in there. That is when I first realized, oh my God this is so sad, because the kids about four years old were crying and saying, 'I want my mommy, I want my mommy.' And I am thinking, oh my God, don't they know? They don't realize, so from the very beginning, I felt very sad.

It is also interesting to note that throughout the narrative of these events, articulate adult professionals regress to a childish dialogue. Their stories are told as seen through the eyes of a child, not a mature adult.

Another pattern that emerged is that the shorter the time of separation from parents the better the educational outcomes. This fact was especially prevalent in the subjects who were separated from their parents at the time they graduated from high school. These subjects had to earn a living for themselves and could not afford to go to school. Some were never able to go back to school in spite of their aspirations for a post-secondary degree. Others found themselves struggling to obtain post-secondary education after they were married and had started their families. In the case of Ib, she was taken out of high school by the social worker, at age 17, because she needed a trade. She was placed in beauty school and she completed the program, but she could never see herself as a beautician. Even when she was attending beauty school, she tried to

convince the social worker to sign her into a correspondence school to get her high school diploma, to no avail.

According to Super's (1957) personal factors that influence career choice, the decision to take Ib out of high school and place her in beauty school caused an internal conflict within the subject's self-concept. She wanted to be a professional and nursing was her career choice. This subject refused to see herself as a beautician. She wanted to get her high school diploma so that she could go to Nursing School. When asked about her educational experience in the United States Ib stated:

I started high school at the Blessed Sacrament Academy. I was placed as freshman and by then I was 17 years old. I was there for four months, but what happened is that I had to have thyroid surgery, and that was done in December, but I was only a few days out. But I never returned from the hospital after that, the decision was made that I was not to return to my classes, and instead, that I was going to go to beauty school.

When asked if she had been asked whether she wanted to be a beautician she said: No, no, the decision was made, and the social worker told me that because of my age I needed a trade. I was 17 years old. Well, I did not say yes, no, or whatever, I just went. And in one of my trips going back and forth to the beauty school, I saw an advertisement on the bus about home schooling to finish high school with one of those correspondence schools. I wrote down all the information I could and I gave it to the Social Worker the next time she came to see us at Villa Maria. I told her 'I want to finish my high school, how about if I do this at home in Villa Maria?' She said no, no. I said 'give me a reason,' and she said, 'you do not

want to do this, you just continue to go to beauty school.' So, I said 'O.K.' and I finished beauty school, but I could never support myself on that. So really, my feeling was that I was not going to make a living out of that. I did go to work while under the protection of the Catholic Welfare Bureau and living at Villa Maria. I had two different jobs, but I could never see myself doing that (being a beautician).

The subject went along with the social worker's plan to complete beauty school and her career choice at the time was being affected by a situational factor in which she had no control. The subject manifested a trusting relationship towards authority figures as in her past. She had trusted her parents' and her priest's judgment about leaving the country. Now, she trusted the social worker.

When asked about her first educational experience in the United States, Ic stated: In San Antonio, both my sister and I went to St. Theresa's Academy. There was a small group, I think that there were maybe not even 10 of us from Villa Maria that went to St. Theresa's Academy. I think the nuns there were terrific, I truly enjoyed it. The experience as far as the language barrier, I think that the girls that were attending at St. Theresa's were very nice to the Cuban girls, both the Mexican and Anglo girls. I thought that, that was very strange because the Mexican and the Anglo girls did not mix with each other, and these girls had known each other since grade school. They had been going to the same school for years, but they really were not friends. There was like a line, the Anglo girls stayed in one side, and the Mexican girls stayed in the other, and then both sides were friendly to the Cubans, so that was really strange. As far as the English

language, it was my personal experience that I was able to think in English, and my grammar and spelling were excellent. It was better than that of the American girls' who would ask me how to spell things. But my pronunciation was atrocious, and it took me a while... It was more difficult for me to think in English, and it would be slower, and a lot of the times I would be translating in my brain. But scholastically, all of the Cuban girls that went to St. Theresa's did well. All of the Mexican and Anglo girls thought that we were geniuses and I think that the reason was that in our studies in Cuba we were far advanced. We had studied World History and were more advanced in Math, so when we went to classes we already had had the curriculum that they were being taught.

Another pattern that emerged is that the strong academic background that the subjects brought from Cuba was instrumental in the 86 % rate of high school graduates from the pool of participants, which is 82 % of this cohort group. The transition to the American educational system was favorable to Cubans in spite of the language barrier. They were being taught subjects that they had already studied in Cuba. This was also supported by the case of Ib, who was able to get her GED, without any review course with only the education she brought from Cuba 13 years prior to taking this exam. The strong academic background was also evident in the case of Ic, who explains how her classmates in high school thought that all Cuban girls were geniuses because even though they did not know English they knew the subjects that were being taught to them.

It was evident from the interviews that the school placement was arbitrary and inadequate. Students were placed at different levels of school based on age, not on previous grade completed in Cuba. In most cases, there were set backs or the subjects

were made to repeat their last grade attended in Cuba. When the teachers in some of the schools realized the mistakes made in grade placement with the Cuban girls, they tried to remedy the situation, moving subjects during the same academic year sometimes two to three different grades.

When asked about life in the United States, Ila stated that at the beginning, especially the first few days, she cried every day. The way that she missed her parents was terrible. She was supposed to travel with her mother, and did not expect to be completely separated from her parents. Ila said that, "I always felt the support of my friends around me, if it had not been for them, I would have been paranoid. I always had their support."

When I Ib was asked about life in the United States she said:

The first year was very lonely, very frustrating, because I had never been separated from my parents. I was very close to my Mom, and the fact that she was not there for my first birthday, which happened like a month since I left Cuba, and the language, which I had a very rough time learning English. Even though I knew a few words, I did not want to say any words wrong. So I kept to myself and I did not speak too much English. So that made it more difficult for me to learn the language.

When asked about life in the United States I Ic stated, "it was hard because I missed them (her parents) terribly, I had no money, and nobody to ask for money. And of course, at the beginning, there was the language/cultural barrier."

Regarding life in the United States, IIIa said that everything was decided for her, because she came in a flight as a "Pedro Pan" child. She was told what school to go to,



and when she got to school, she was told what courses to take. Since she was not interested in studying, she did not pay too much attention to that. She simply did what she was told as far as school is concerned. The subject also stated that even though she had studied English in Cuba, she did not understand most of it. It was a big impact for her that she had to speak English, and she expected to return back to Cuba shortly, she did not make a point to learn. Later on she reflected, "I am very glad about what happened to me, and I am very glad for the education that I had, and that I can now express myself in this culture."

When asked about life in the United States IIIb stated:

First of all, I did not see the fear that I am sure other people saw because of the language barrier. My parents sent me to this school, Las Ursulinas that had this policy that in the morning, everything was taught to you in Spanish, and in the afternoon in English. So from the time I was six years old I was taking English... The fact that I knew the language, to a certain extent, helped me... When I arrived at the Florida City Camp in the afternoon, and I believe it was on a Saturday, and there were very few kids around. I saw the counselor immediately and they took me to a huge dining room. That is what I remember, and they gave me milk and cookies, and they made me feel warm. I could tell that they were trying to make me feel good, but I already felt bad, because I said, 'Oh my God! Where are my parents? What is this?' .....That particular afternoon they had taken the kids to Bayfront Park in Miami. So, I said, 'well I am going to settle down and then go to sleep because I am tired.' I remember that around eight or nine o'clock that night I heard the commotion and the busses were coming in with the kids and the house

parents. They came to the cot where I was trying to sleep, and I was not asleep, I had my eyes closed and I remember that my face was towards the wall. I remember that I heard the voice of a guy, and it was Rodriguez-Wallington (the house-parent) who said, 'Oops, we have a new daughter.' Then he sat at the edge of the cot and he then kind of touched me on my shoulder and said, 'we have a new daughter.' That is when it hit me, and while he got up, I could feel the tears rolling down my eyes. Because it hit me – the separation, and I knew, I am in a strange country, with a different language... I felt the emptiness of being alone and being with people that were not my parents. So the next morning I was fine. I got up like nothing, but I am a good pretender too.

When IIIc was asked about life in the United States she said:

I cannot say that it was terrible, but at the same time, I felt alone. When you are a teen-ager, no matter how sad things are, there is always a party, there is always a dance, there is always a boyfriend, and you just do not give it a second thought.

Language barrier.

According to case Ia, when asked if she experienced language barrier she states:

Yes, very much so. I did not get comfortable with English until I was out of college. When I finished college and started working that is, when I started to feel comfortable. I was fluent, but I had an accent. There were words that I used that were the wrong words to use in the context that I had intended... What kept me back, where I really thought that the language was the problem and the lack of experience with the educational system, which is common with the culture area, is

when I took the SAT. I was an honor roll student throughout my three years of high school, and I've got 300 combined score in the SAT, which is like a mentally handicapped level, and it was the language barrier.

This experience and difficulty with the language is supported by theories of language acquisition. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students immigrating to the United States before the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 were exposed to the "swim or sink" learning approach. They were placed in English-speaking classrooms, and were expected to pick up a second language while learning content material in various subjects. According to Walter (1996) knowledge transfer between languages. The more one knows in their primary language, the more they will know in a new language. Studies on language acquisition show that while students acquire a second language, they progress through a series of predictable stages similar to first language acquisition (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

Age factor also plays a significant role in language acquisition. Studies conducted by Collier, (1987) and Krashen, Scarcella & Long, (1979) support that students of all ages can and do acquire language. However, current research shows that older children and adults acquire language faster than young children. This is largely due to the fact that cognitive and academic proficiency is more fully developed in the primary language of older students. Younger pre-adolescent students do have an advantage in one aspect of language acquisition. They are more likely to develop native-like pronunciation skills than their older counterparts (Cummings, 1981).

During the process of second language acquisition, the learner goes through different stages. Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) refers to the basic

fluency in the language and is acquired relatively quickly, usually within two years. However, the stage of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), which is the language level needed to accomplish academic tasks, takes much longer to acquire, usually five to seven years. The level one brings of "Common Underlying Proficiency" refers to proficiency in the native language and directly affects one's ability to efficiently acquire both social and academic aspects of a second language. It also explains why we do not have to re-learn cognitive or academic areas that were learned in another language (Cummings, 1981).

In the case of Ib, she did not experience a problem due to the language barrier. She attended a school in Cuba that taught her English since second grade. She had completed the 9<sup>th</sup> grade in Cuba, and if she had been placed at an adequate academic level, she may have been able to graduate from high school within two years due to the strong academic background that she had. Apparently, the nuns at St. Theresa's Academy were more flexible and realized that the academic background that these girls brought allowed them to be placed at higher grades. The nuns at The Blessed Sacrament Academy left the Cuban girls at the original grade placement suggested by the social worker, which was arbitrary and erroneous.

When asked about how the differences in culture have impacted their lives, most of the respondents said that they have adapted well. In the case of Ib she stated:

I have adapted well to the best of both worlds. I love tradition, and I have carried them through with my children. Some tradition that is ours, such as being Catholic, being Cuban, and also because my children have been raised with my mother, they had this influence with her, which is good. I like both worlds

because I think that Americans are more open to other things. Sometimes, it is like anything, people are different in all respects, no matter where you go you will encounter people that are more open. I think that Cubans are more restrictive. I really believe that we are more restrictive with how friendly you become. We are supposed to be more friendly, Cubans and Latin people are friendlier, or maybe it is just me, or the way I was brought up, very strict. I do not think we are as open, I think we are more careful.

When IIa was asked about her experience with language barrier, she said that at the beginning she was reluctant to learn English. She really did not accept the idea that she had to learn English until about two years after she was in the United States. She also stated that at the beginning she used to think in Spanish and translate it to English.

When IIb was asked about language barrier, she said:

It was terrible, because I had a rough time learning the language because I did not speak it as much as I should... I kept to myself, and that is something that even now, I still keep to myself. I have a hard time socializing or mingling with other people.

Regarding her experience with language barrier, IIc explained that it took her about six months to be comfortable with English, and to be able to get around and to get things done. She did not find the language to be a great barrier. She also stated that at the beginning she had to formulate her thoughts in Spanish and then translate them into English, and whatever feedback she got, she translated it into Spanish and then formulated the response in English. She further stated, that the process in which she stopped thinking in her native language maybe took about two years.

Subject IIIa expressed that she has adjusted to the American culture and appreciates it now. However, at that time, it did not matter to her. She said that she did not like to look for friends that spoke English. She just wanted somebody that would speak her language [Spanish] and would understand. She explained that language was not really a barrier, what is a barrier is the idiosyncrasy of the people.

Case IIIb expressed that when she started school at St. Theresa's Academy the nuns placed her at 8<sup>th</sup> grade level to see if she could do the work at that level. She lasted one week and she was switched to the freshman year of high school. Then, she was transferred to Junior and Senior, skipping the sophomore year altogether. In IIIb's case, language was not a barrier. She decided that she was going to watch TV to hear and try to learn the slang. She did not really have a large problem with the language. She felt that every day that went by, her proficiency in English got stronger, and she never felt intimidated by English. The culture was not a barrier at all for case IIIb.

In the case of IIIc, she explained that she was very fortunate because English came to her very fast. Perhaps, it was because she frequently watched TV and loved movies. She said, "I decided that I was going to sit in front of the TV and watch it until I learned, or at least until I would understand what they were saying."

Another patterns that emerged was that the students needed personal intervention in order to be accepted to institutions of higher education due to their low SAT scores. Other students entered four-year colleges after they were diverted to community colleges or entered college through special programs.

Also, Cuban refugees with parolee immigration status did not qualify for Financial Aid and had to pay higher tuition rate for out of state residents, if they went to public institutions. This added to the economic hardship of newly arrived immigrants.

Career aspirations choices and decisions.

Most of the subjects who achieved post-secondary education indicated that they always knew that they wanted to go to college, although they were not sure about their career choice. In the case of Ia she states:

I always knew that I wanted to go to college, and there was no question, it had to be a given in my life that I would graduate from college with some degree...

When I graduated (from college) I just focused in going to work, and I went to work as a probation officer, and because I married an American, my English had improved and I was thoroughly fluent. I was observing what lawyers were doing, and I said to myself 'I can do that.' That is when I went back to my original idea of becoming a lawyer. So I graduated from college in January of 1970, and in 1973, I made the decision to go to Law School.

Again, the level of English proficiency acquired and the time they had lived in the United States affected the decision in choosing a career. It takes a period of five to seven years to achieve the level of proficiency in which scholars of language acquisition describe that the person learning a second language is able to achieve cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Also, in the case of Ia, personal factor of self-concept was very clearly manifested along with the role factor. According to Krashen (1981), there are three affective variables that influence language acquisition: (1) Self-esteem - because students with high self-esteem view themselves as capable and take more risks as

learners; (2) Motivation - because motivated students take greater risks and are more focussed; (3) Level of Anxiety - because high anxiety students tend to concentrate more on form rather than in communication and are afraid to take risks. This inhibits language acquisition. Also personality traits, such as shyness and attitudes towards self, language, and the teacher affect the process of learning a second language, (Walter, 1996).

The pattern that emerged regarding guidance counselors and the information available on career choices was not very helpful at the time. Some of the subjects felt discriminated or were discouraged from pursuing post-secondary education. In the case of Ia, she states:

I would never forget the day I met the lady from Financial Aid at the University, I mentioned the fact that I wanted to get a Ph.D. in Psychology, and she said these words that are still engraved in my mind. 'Well, why don't we focus on finishing undergraduate school first, and then we will see if you want graduate school.' I think at that time, I felt that it was almost that there were issues that went beyond the fact that I was a foreigner. It was not a question of my abilities: I was a Hispanic girl. There were 12,000 students at the university (University of California in Santa Barbara) and only 3 were Hispanic. That was in 1966...At that time also, there were perhaps a handful of Black students at the university. So I think that it was the issue - not only getting into a different issue, which was the discrimination that existed against minorities in the United States at that time. We (Cubans) were a different kind of minority than what had come before. We came, not because we could not make a living at our Country, and our families were uneducated and worked in the fields. We were the professionals, the



businessmen, who already had been taught, before we got here what our expectations were. Getting to those expectations was not as easy, but still we knew it in ourselves, that we still had the potential of doing that.

The obstacles described by Ia, along with the lack of encouragement, lack of information provided and the condescending attitude of people that were supposed to be helpful compounded the hardships encountered by these students. This relates to the extensive studies done on grades, test scores, and educational attainment and the strong correlation with economic class. Despite some efforts to make testing system fair and schooling more accessible, current studies show that the level of inequity is staying at the same level or getting worse. Mantsios, (1995) stated:

When we look at society and try to determine what it is that keeps most people down – what holds them back from realizing their potential as healthy, creative, productive individuals – we find institutionally oppressive forces that are largely beyond their individual control. Class domination is one of these forces. People do not choose to be poor or working class; instead they are limited and confined by the opportunities afforded or denied them by a social system... Regardless of their class standing, women and members of minority races are confronted with oppressive forces because of their gender, color, or both. (p.141)

When asked about career aspirations, choices, and decisions, Ib stated:

I always wanted to be a nurse. One of the girls in Villa Maria was going to nursing school. But she was a little older and she had more schooling background than I had, and they (the Catholic Welfare Bureau) were paying for her schooling. I often talked to her, although she was not really approachable. However, I would

find ways to talk to her and ask her about how was her going to school, and it was very difficult. So that career aspiration (nursing) was always with me until I finally did accomplish that later on. I was 28 years old when I went back to school to be a nurse.

In the case of Ib, her career aspirations had to be put on hold for years. Also when she wanted to go to nursing school she had to take the GED since she was taken out of high school at age 17.

When asked about career aspirations, choices, and decisions, Ic stated:

My aspirations were that I had to go to college, get a college degree no matter what it took. I decided that I could not chose a career that would take years and years to complete such as Medicine. So I discarded the idea that I was going to go to medical school, and of course, part of me was never interested in going to medical school, but I had pretty much been brainwashed that I was going to be medical doctor. So that was something that had my parents had the money to support me through college, I probably would have gone to medical school. But since it was a matter of supporting myself, my parents gave me food and board, but at that point, when we first came to this country, we were very limited financially. So I just decided to choose something that I could do, and I enjoyed that would give me financial security that was very important for me. I did not want to be a student eight or 10 years.

Regarding career aspirations, choices, and decisions, IIa said that she always thought of going to college, that goal was always in the back of her mind, although she did not know what she wanted to become. When she finished high school, the social

worker tried to send her to business school rather than going into a four-year college. The subject tried to go to Our Lady of the Lake College in San Antonio, Texas, but she did not get a good score in the SAT. She decided to go to a community college. After one year and a half, she transferred to a four-year college, The University of the Incarnate Word.

In the case of IIb, she said that she always wanted to better herself, and that is why she decided on a career in Accounting. This choice provided her a quick education and something that was going to help her to make money right away. This subject had taken Bookkeeping in high school and liked it, so this also helped her to make her decision. The guidance counselor at high school did not discuss with her career choices. She commented, "this was very typical, they were not worried about our education."

In the case of IIc she said that she always wanted to be a photographer-journalist for the National Geographic. However, that goal took a great deal of dedication and money, which was not available to her. Her parents were still in Cuba when she graduated from high school, so she took one year of Business School, and then went to New York City to work when she became 19 years old. She started working in a bank, and kept thinking that some day she would like to go to school and become a photographer. It is interesting to note that her father was a banker in Cuba. She did go back to school, but she studied to be a teacher instead. She was married and had children, so she needed a career that would allow her to spend more time with her children. In terms of career decision-making and choice, the influence of the situational factors is seen. She thought that teaching Spanish would be easy, since she already knew the language. In this particular case, the first language influenced her career choice. She

became a Spanish secondary school teacher. Later on, she went for her Masters degree in Spanish.

In the case of IIIa, she had no aspirations for career choice. She knew that she had to earn a living, so the easiest was to become a secretary. In her case, her parents came from Cuba when she was in the last year of high school. She did not receive information from the guidance counselor while she was attending high school regarding career choices. She said, "I did not have money to go to school, and I think it would have been a great imposition on my family, because I was working and I had to bring money to the house, so we could all live."

When IIIb was asked about career aspirations she said:

I wanted to go to school very much, but in my case, my parents were older people, they were not young. Maybe some of the other girls, their parents were younger. My parents came in 1966, I was already working. I had to help in the house. I had to help my brother and I had to help my father to a certain extent, because my mother never worked... Then my father passed away in 1972. Then a big decision had to be made... I am going to work, I am going to move to Miami and settle down there, which is what I did. What I wanted to do is to work and help financially and travel... In my mind, I wanted to study, but it was not a priority... I always liked school, so I enrolled at Miami Dade Community College. My choice of career was Business Administration.

In the case of IIIc, she said that she always liked to write and had aspirations for a career in journalism, but it did not happen. The subject explained that she did not get any kind of guidance regarding career choices while she was in high school. She told her

English teacher that she wanted to be a journalist, and her teacher encouraged her and told her that she wrote well. When she graduated from high school, her mother was in Miami waiting for her. There really was not much of an opportunity for her to continue her education. Both the subject and her mother were living at a friend's house, sleeping in a sofa bed in the living room. She had to work and help support her mother and herself. She said, "basically, I had no choice, I had to work."

When asked how did she pay for her college education, Ib stated:

It was paid by an agency or a program sponsored by the State of New Jersey called Manpower. At the time they (the program) were helping single mothers that wanted to get a career, and just so happened that they were giving preference to people who were choosing nursing careers. I wanted nursing anyway, so it worked out for me.

When asked, how did you pay for your college education, Ic stated:

I was working part-time. When I first came to Santa Monica, California, it was in June, right after I graduated from high school. There was a factory where my mother and other Cubans were working, and my sister and I got a job there for the summer, so that we could save money to go to school. I was admitted to Santa Monica College, and during the school year, I worked part-time. We would work Saturdays in the factory, and also summer jobs. They were very nice that they let us do that, and then during the week, eventually I had a part-time job in a Santa Monica newspaper, because I was studying journalism at the time. So, I worked for the newspaper, and I also worked as a file clerk for a jewelry business and I worked making toys and at another time I worked making little head-bows. So I

just had all these jobs, and my sister, pretty much did the same. We had at least a couple of jobs all the time, so that we could at least make enough money to pay for school and books.

When IIa was asked how did she pay for her college education, she said that the Financial Aid Officer at the University of the Incarnate Word told her about federal funding available for Cubans through loans.

When IIb was asked how did she pay for her college education she said that she paid for school herself. She had a part-time job and paid as she studied.

Subject IIc employer's (a bank) paid for her college education up to Associate's Degree in Business. Then, she started a family and did not go back to school for another five years. After that, her husband paid for the rest of her education.

In the case of IIIa, she did not pay for education beyond high school. She had acquired secretarial skills in Cuba and she was able to function as a secretary after graduating from high school.

In the case of IIIb, she paid for her own education with a little assistance from her employer.

In the case of IIIc, she learned bookkeeping in high school, and has expanded her knowledge through seminars sponsored by her employer. She enjoys her work at an insurance company, in the department of accounting.

When asked about her career choice Ic stated:

My original choice was Journalism. Pretty much maybe because my father was a Journalist and I like to write. So I studied Journalism at Santa Monica College and I got my Associate in Arts Degree in Journalism there... In the University of

California - Los Angeles (UCLA) at that time they did not have an undergraduate division for Journalism. They had a graduate program in Journalism, but you could not get a B.A. in Journalism. So what they suggested I do when I wrote to the graduate department in Journalism is that I study either Political Science or Psychology. I made one of the biggest mistakes of my life, I chose Political Science. When I went to UCLA, at that time and it still is, but at that time, very much it was a left leaning organization in Political Science. I was very out of place in there I hated it totally. I think back, and I think that my life would have been totally different if I had chosen Psychology or even English.

When asked if she had a role model, Ic stated:

I think that my father was very definitely a role model. I admired my father very much when I was growing up. He was a writer, a Journalist, he was a wonderful father, he was the Principal of a night school, and he worked very hard. My mother worked also very hard, but I really had my father more as a role model than my mother.

When asked if she was happy with her career choice Ic stated, "No, I think that having chosen Political Science was a major mistake in my life."

When asked what was her line of work, Ic stated:

I am a translator and interpreter. I am a Certified Translator and Interpreter. I have my own business, and I like doing that very much. It is not something that 40 years ago I would have chosen, nor would it have been enough work here, for my wanting to choose this. But life changes and I am a Certified Translator and Interpreter and I do enjoy it... I went back to UCLA for one year for their

Translator Certificate Program, and UCLA certified me, and then I took the State of California exam, and I became certified by the State.

Impact of educational attainment.

When asked how their educational attainment has impacted their lives, Ia replied, Obviously, what most professional women want, in terms of my life style, it brought me from second-class rate to upper-middle class. I am listed nowadays in Who is Who in America. If you had told me 20 years ago, when I learned about this book, if anybody would have told me that I was going to be listed in that book, I would have said not in your dreams. And yet, today I am listed in there, I think because of my career.

Ib stated, "Financially, it has the monetary benefits, of course. As a nurse you are always needed, and especially now, during this time there is a shortage of nurses that is affecting the patient care in the hospitals." Ib was a divorced mother, and she gained financial stability through a traditional career.

Most of the subjects interviewed reported a high level of satisfaction with their current career or profession. When asked if this was the end of their educational endeavors, their responses varied. Some indicated still having a desire for going into different fields, but realistically they are aware that due to their age, it may be difficult. In the case of Ia, she said, "Of course, at my age, all I want to do is rent a mother and retire." This is supported by Kelley-Laine's (1997) research about the Peter Pan syndrome that these people refuse to grow up. She said, "rent a mother," not a maid. She longs to be taken care of by a nurturing mother, perhaps the one she left behind in Cuba with her childhood. The mother she met when she reunited with her parents was the



mother of a self-sufficient adult. Now that her mother has passed away, she wishes to have the nurturing of a mother even if she has to rent this type of service.

The impact of the educational attainment for the subjects who achieved post-secondary education was seen as a positive thing in terms of prestige and financial security.

Regarding the impact of her educational attainment IIa stated:

It has facilitated making things that I like to do, and in a way I have been a role model for my children. Financially, it has not been very rewarding, because they do not pay well in this profession (college professor).

Regarding the impact of the educational attainment IIb said, "I live a good life. I enjoy doing things, I travel. I have also supported my parents in their old age because of my career."

In the case of IIc she said:

Oh, first of all, you feel this great sense of pride, and when you are proud of yourself, you have accomplished something. I hate to use this word, but it seems to work at this moment, self-esteem, it affects your self-esteem. And of course, it has impacted me financially because I am making pretty good money. It did open a lot of opportunities for me.

When asked about the impact of her educational attainment IIIa said that it has opened her horizons in making good friends and has allowed her to get integrated into the system.

The impact of educational attainment for IIIb has been great, because she enjoys reading a lot and likes the campus atmosphere. She attends concerts and other

educational activities. Education has made her more aware of the world around her. She said, "I think personally that education enriches your life."

In the case of IIIc said, "I would have loved to be a professional, but I never had a chance. I have adjusted. It was adjust or perish, but there were not a lot of choices."

Perceptions of the "Pedro Pan" experience.

Regarding the general question about their overall experience as a "Pedro Pan" child, an emerging theme was that they thought the most positive experience was that they became independent and self-sufficient. In the case of Ia, she states:

I learned to make friends on my own. I made friendships that have lasted 39 years, friendships that are there forever... The other positive experience is being able to enjoy freedom...Being able to live in a society that is orderly. Where you do not have to look over your shoulder when you want to express an opinion. Where life, particularly at that time, was so relaxing compared to the tension that we lived under with the bombs going off, and the fighting and people squealing on you. So much of that we lived with everyday, and did not realize how stressful it was, also living in an environment that is completely different. I think overall it is very positive.

In the case of Ib, she stated:

Well, negative, I cannot find any. Maybe it is there, hidden somewhere and I just haven't been able to bring it out. I always said that I saw it as a positive experience. It helped me to mature at an early age. I think I matured better than if I had been under the wing of my parents. Not that it was a bad thing, because, like I said it was their decision. One of the best things is that it helped me to

reach my own ideas. I was able to think for myself, I developed my own options and ideals. I became very independent, and that was very positive. I really did not see anything negative.

Subject Ic stated:

The most positive is that this experience taught most of us to emancipate and to be independent, to rely on ourselves, not on our parents. From that point of view we were forced to grow up more than we had to, had we stayed in Cuba under normal circumstances, so it made us more self-reliant. That is the positive thing that I could think of. It made us more realistic and we face life in a more pragmatic matter. For me the negative is always going to be the nuns in Villa Maria. I know that there are a lot of negative things that one can say, and there were a lot of good things that we found along the way, I mean, nice people that tried to make the life as good for us as they could. So for me the big negative were the nuns, how controlling they were and how horrible they were. I mean, I have nothing good to say about those nuns in Villa Maria.

Subject Ia stated:

The negative for me was the experience with the nuns in San Antonio, most certainly the Mother in charge of us in Villa Maria. I think the nuns in school at Saint Theresa's Academy were fabulous. I think they were really sweet...But generally, the experience there was tough, but also the loss of identity, the loss of social status, the loss of culture, the loss of language. All these feelings at a very difficult time in your life, when you are dealing as a teen-ager with the identity issues that you going to define your identity according to what you have learned

in the previous years. And now, we had to define our identity in a vacuum devoid of all that we had learned of hand, because the culture is different, the language is different, our parents are not around to help. We were foreigners in a land that was very accepting and loving and caring, but we were still foreigners. That I think was the worse part of all. Was it negative? I think it was part of the growing and learning and becoming better human beings, but it was not a pleasant experience, it was very confusing and troubling for a while.

When subjects were asked about their overall experience as “Pedro Pan “children in terms of positive or negative, most responses were heavily weighed in the positive side. In the case of IIa, she said that she thought that a negative was what they had to go through at the time, but now looking in retrospect, she sees it, as schooling. The experience made her a survivor, more assertive, and more independent. It also made her look at life in a different way. She learned that there is always something in the future that will be better, a positive side of her life. She added that by nature she is a very optimistic person and her overall experience has taught her that she is a survivor and to look for positive aspects in life.

In the case of IIb, she sees the positive in the independence that she has gained and her career, which she would probably not have done, had she stayed in Cuba. She had reasons to believe that had she stayed in Cuba, she probably would not have pursued post-secondary education due to the wealth that her family had had. However, the patrimonial wealth was taken away by the Communist system established in Cuba, and as she stated, “I do not know how my life in Cuba would have been.” She believes that her experience as a “Pedro Pan” child has changed her personality and made her a “very shy,

secluded, or lonely person.” She believes that she would have been more outgoing in Cuba. Although she had lived a very sheltered life in Cuba, it is evident that she also enjoyed the security and social connections that she left behind. Apparently, her early difficulties with language and her initial school experience in the United States at an age when adolescents are establishing their identities had left a mark in her life. As she said:

... When I arrived at the Blessed Sacrament Academy in San Antonio, Texas, I felt totally misunderstood. First of all, people did not understand how come we were not black, because we came from an island in the Caribbean. They also thought that we were in the United States because our parents did not want us. They thought that we were outcasts of society, and they treated us in that way... That has left a very big mark in my life, in the fact that I am a very private person, but at the same time very independent... What I have, I have it because of my own effort. Because I wanted to go to school; I wanted to save money; I wanted to better myself; so whatever I have is because of what I have earned.

Educators and researchers of language acquisition are aware of other factors that influence language acquisition. Among those factors are: (1) Personality traits such as shyness, level of confidence that may inhibit social interactions; (2) Age; and (3) Attitudes toward self, toward language and those who speak it, toward the teacher and the classroom environment. “The overall class climate is one that will either enhance or inhibit language acquisition. The classroom must be one in which students feel respected and valued, able to take risks, and free to experiment with language (Walter, 1996, p.30).”

In the case of Ilc, she summarizes her experience as a Pedro Pan child as follows:

The most positive of being a "Pedro Pan" child is that it actually prepared me for life. Because once you have gone through something like that; you have been poor like a rat; you have been without a family and you have been kind of homeless, depending on the kindness of strangers. You do develop a self-sufficiency that I do not think I would have developed if I had stayed in Cuba. And then the people that I had been with in San Antonio have been my life support throughout all these years. If I had not had this experience, I truly believe my life would have been much poorer in growth and experience...Negative – I think that as an exiled, you always have a big hole in your heart, and in your personality, because you can't go back home again. I mean, some people have gone back, I can't. I think there is a big sadness and even though I've lived here for almost 40 years the sense of not belonging is a sense of loss that is always there. Because you did not leave there voluntarily, it was kind of taken away from you. Even though my life has turned out better than I ever dreamed, there is always the question of what could have happened? I could have had a totally different life, and yet I love my family here... We never thought that it was going to last this long. We thought that like with every other bad government we had before, you wait a couple of years, and everybody would be back. I do not think that any of us expected this to happen. And yet, it was kind of gradually that we became assimilated. In my case, I married an American, we have American children, we have a big network of American friends, and before you realize it you say, 'hey I am an American now!' But you still have that thing, that

whenever I hear Cuban music, or I read a lot of books about Cuba, anything that comes up, you realize that you miss it.

In the case of IIIa, again the positive side of the experience was stated as:

The most positive experience for me it was that we had to come by ourselves. It was a comfort to know that everybody was going through the same traumas that I was going through. Everybody was about the same age that I was, so I was able to make good friends with the people that I was living at the time, and I did not feel so outcast. I felt that I had a home, I felt that I had 40 girls (there were 40 in the initial group sent to San Antonio, and then they added more) that were going through the same things I was. If they were able to do it, why would not I. If they can go through this experience, so can I. They gave me encouragement. I never felt alone, even though I missed my parents a lot, and I felt alone in my own way... It was like being in a enclave. Outside was a very strange world, but inside within these walls, I had girls that were going through the same things I was, that they were thinking the same way that I was thinking, that they were crying and laughing the same way that I would cry and laugh... Negative – I would have wanted to come out with my entire family instead of coming by myself. So the same thing becomes the most positive and the most negative... So, the family separated and we were very close, and we are now very close. However, at the time we needed ourselves the most, we had to go our separate ways because we had to find our lives.

In the case of IIIb she summarized her Pedro Pan experience as follows:

My experience as a "Pedro Pan" child, is that I was alone at a time that I feel is very vulnerable for any person. Fifteen years old is a very vulnerable period, even if you have your parents, you are learning about yourself and I think the most positive thing that I had, it was that I had a choice. I think it was the right choice. I could have chosen, instead of going to school in Villa Maria, not going to school or getting very bad grades. I really tried so hard to do well in school, because I knew that it was up to me to open the doors to my future. And it was only me that was going to accomplish whatever I wanted to accomplish. It also helped me because they gave us \$10.00 a month to buy everything. We had to become financially proficient in handling a budget. It gave us character, and it made me a stronger person. It helped me see what the meaning of being there for a friend meant. I just had to make choices at a very early age. So that is very positive to me, it has helped in my life. Negative, I think the only negativity I saw a few people that did not do so well. That is only less than more that did not do too good. I saw a few people that got sick. I remember this girl in particular that used to throw up a lot, and that really got to me. I really do not have too many negative things to say. I think that the experience, overall to me, was very positive. And if the question came if I had to live through this again, I would do as my parents did. Because you have to think that if you give your kids a good moral base [foundation] at home, you can leave them alone and they are going to be O.K.

In the case of IIIc she stated:



The most positive would be that I am a very independent person. In Cuba I probably would have been a Mama's child. I had to learn how to survive, and I was able to relate to people on my own. In Cuba I didn't have to fend for myself, so I probably would not have been so independent. I was also able to meet a lot of people during my time as a "Pedro Pan" child that influenced me always in a very positive way... The most negative experience, [were] the nuns, because I never had a religious education in Cuba [the subject was not familiar with religious schools]. In Balmaña High School in Cuba there was no religious instruction whatsoever. Yes, I was baptized, I had the First Communion, and like most Cubans we were not churchgoers. So to me the nuns were a cultural shock. Let's put it that way. I never encountered any of them in Cuba... The ones in Villa Maria [residence home with nuns] were bad, but there was one specifically at the Blessed Sacrament Academy [Catholic high school] that she was the pit. Sister (name withheld), that woman was very insane... She was a very racist person. She literally hated our guts, and that hurt you very much so... At that time I did not know how to deal with racism, discrimination and hate, since I had never had any experience with it in Cuba. This was my first encounter with discrimination and hate. She hated our guts and did not like us, period. She made it known that we were not liked. On the other hand, there were some other Sisters, like Sister (name withheld), who was a sweetheart, she still writes me around Christmas time, but those were the exceptions. Also, Sister (name withheld), my English teacher, she knew about my interest in Journalism and gave me her encouragement. She really liked to bring out my love for writing.

The theme of being survivors and becoming very independent, strong human beings emerged as a positive overall experience of "Pedro Pan" for all the nine case studies within this cohort group. It is of interest to note that other studies done with refugee children and even other "Pedro Pan" children that were placed at different housing environments such as orphanage, foster homes, group home or other residence facilities did not have such positive outcomes. According to Goyos' (1996) study about resiliency factors of "Pedro Pan" children:

Females reported a different experience... they reported a less negative experience than males ( $r = .25, p < .002$ ). As a result, females viewed the total experience as positive more often than males ( $r = .30, p < .000$ ). In addition, the women tended to have been separated from their parents for a shorter period of time ( $r = -.19, p < .019$ ), and they were in the Pedro Pan program for a shorter period of time ( $r = .18, p < .02$ ). Time in the program was an important correlate. The longer the person was in the program the more negative they perceived the experience ( $r = -.18, p < .029$ )." (p. 96)

The negative experiences of the nine study cases were mostly reported as the acculturation/assimilation, misunderstanding and discrimination felt by some of the interviewees. The pain of exiles, for the loss of their country, and identity crises was also reported by some of the interviewees, although others saw it as a learning experience, separate from the "Pedro Pan" experience altogether.

#### Summary of Qualitative Responses from Questionnaire

Two questionnaires were received three months after the statistical analyses were completed. The data from the two additional questionnaires were only used for the

qualitative analysis. The questionnaire data was used to synthesize information and describe the characteristics of the group studied. The importance and relevance of this data is to complement the design of a mostly qualitative study and add quantitative analysis through descriptive statistics in order to present triangulation of data. According to Yin (1994):

The cross-survey is an approach to cross-case analysis and is not the same as the quantitative analysis that might be conducted of an embedded unit within the same case. Second and more important, as in a cross-case technique, the case survey has severe limitations in relation to the multiple-case analysis previously described....This is because the case survey is unlikely to achieve either theoretical or statistical generalization....The survey may simply have been undertaken to synthesize the existing case studies on a topic, and in this situation, neither theoretical or statistical generalizations would be of concern. (p. 122-123)

#### Patterns that Emerged from Questionnaire's Qualitative Responses

##### Career choices.

Of the 37 participants, 18 or 49 % went into nontraditional fields of employment, either through formal education, partial education and/or job experience. A total of 15 or 40.5 % went into traditional fields of employment, either through formal education, partial education and/or job experience. A total of 2 or 5.40 % are entrepreneurs or business owners in non-traditional fields (manufacturing and distributing products, and renting hospital equipment). Also a total of 2 or 5.40 % have combinations of careers that went from traditional to non-traditional, (nursing to hospital administration) and from non-traditional to traditional (accounting to education) fields for women.

### Educational Attainment.

In terms of educational attainment, a total of 11 or 30 % achieved post-graduate education. A total of 7 or 19 % completed bachelor's degree with double majors or certificates and had more than 4 years of post-secondary education. A total of 11 or 30 % had some college education. The total percent rate of post-secondary education is 79 % . The graduation rate of post-secondary education is 49 percent, and 30 percent had some college but were not able to complete their programs of education. A total of 8 or 21 % of the respondents did not go to college.

### Career Decision-Making.

Economic constraints, inadequate English proficiency, and family responsibilities emerged as factors that prevented some of the subjects from pursuing post-secondary career immediately after completion of secondary education.

Respondent number 1 stated, "In the 1960's I quit school because of inadequate English proficiency, economic constraints and family responsibilities. In the 1980's I went back and got a B.A. and a Masters Degree in Education."

Respondent number 4 stated, "Economic constraints prevented me from studying. I am a business owner now."

Respondent number 5 stated, "I have acquired sufficient work related experience to achieve Vice President position. Family plans made me postpone my education, lack of time due to business travel and long working hours. I have studied 4 years of post secondary education in International Banking."

Respondent 14 stated:

I was taken out of high school and placed in beauty school. I had economic constraints that prevented me from going to college, and I did not have enough English proficiency at the time. I started a family, and later on I took Bookkeeping course, and that is what I do now. I would have studied Pharmacy had I had the opportunity.

Respondent 36 stated,

I was not able to study post-secondary education. I did not complete high school. I started a family too young, and I had to support my child, my mother and myself. I have taken courses in computers and other work-related seminars.

The summary of findings, conclusions and recommendation for further research will be discussed in Chapter V.

## CHAPTER V

### Conclusions and Recommendations for Further Research

#### Introduction

This chapter presents conclusion and recommendations of the research conducted on factors influencing career decision-making and post-secondary career choices of a cohort group of female Cuban immigrants. Finding a model of career development for female minorities is very difficult for two reasons: First, the existing career development models have evolved from theories studying individuals in the majority social and ethnic backgrounds and also individuals coming from favored educational and economic circumstances; second, because of the existing complexities of diverse minority groups within our society. Even within the Hispanic ethnic group, there is a significant difference between various groups of immigrants. For instance, the Hispanic immigrants that came to the United States seeking a better life due to poverty, and the Cuban refugee population of the early 1960's, shared language and similarities in the culture, however, they do not have the same educational expectations and goals. The importance of this study lies in understanding and recognizing these differences in order to prevent other female minorities from becoming silent losers due to policies and decisions that are part of the educational system infra-structure, which deny equal opportunity to minorities.

### Research Question

What characteristics and factors influenced the career decision-making/choices within a cohort group of female Cuban immigrants?

This study showed some unique characteristics and factors that influenced the career decision-making/choices of the cohort group of female Cuban immigrants that came through "Operation Peter Pan" and were sent to San Antonio Texas. Sociocultural characteristics, such as (a) being exposed to socioeconomic levels ranging from upper to middle class in the early years of their lives, (b) being exposed to a culture that valued post-secondary educational attainment (c) being exposed to professional role models, either parents' or other family members, gave the subjects in this cohort group intangible wealth known as human capital.

Certain characteristics, such as the academic background and number of years being exposed to a strong educational school system before they came to the United States, played an important role in the high school graduation rate (87%) for a group of immigrants who experienced the "swim or sink" learning approach. Assimilation/Acculturation issues, which were discussed in detail in the case studies, showed that the assimilation/acculturation process happened gradually. The fact that the group remained cohesive also helped to ameliorate the culture shock and eased the acculturation process. The school climate and the way in which the Cuban immigrants were perceived either helped or hindered the self-esteem and self-concept of the individuals. The school climate experience was different, depending on the school placement.

Linguistic factors, such as the level of English proficiency that each subject brought were different. Some had been exposed to bilingual education in Cuba and had had a higher level of confidence with English and experienced less of a language barrier. It is important to note, however, that in the in-depth interviews for case studies, some of the subjects that started their post-secondary education immediately upon completion of high school indicated that they did not feel comfortable with English until they were in their last year of college. The average number of years that the subjects had been exposed to a second language was between six to seven years, which is consistent with the time that scholars of language acquisition explain is required for a learner of a second language to achieve cognitive language proficiency level.

#### Career decision-making/choices.

Only two of the nine subjects interviewed for case studies indicated that they had no plans for post-secondary education in Cuba. One stated that she never anticipated that she had to work because her family was very wealthy and saw no need to further her education. The other stated that because she hated school, she had no plans to study a career. All the remaining subjects stated that they knew they were going to go seek post-secondary education. Some were not sure about their career choice however, they were sure that university education was part of the plan. An important sociocultural factor that influenced career decision-making is, that the subjects had been exposed, prior to leaving Cuba, to a culture and a socioeconomic status that valued post-secondary educational attainment.



### Situational factors.

Some of the factors that influenced their decision of whether or not to pursue postsecondary education in the United States had to do with economic constraints. This is an external factor, which according to Super (1957), the subjects had no control of external factors such as lack of economic resources needed to pursue their education. The subjects that chose not to study were supporting themselves when they completed high school and could not count on their parents' for financial support. When the parents arrived, those same subjects had to help to support their parents. This caused this group to put their educational goals on hold for several years. The ones that were more fortunate and had reunited with their parents before they completed high school and were exposed to some guidance from high school counselors; received information about student loans and were treated as traditional students seeking college education. Starting a family of their own was another situational factor that influenced the decision of whether to study or not.

### Personal factors.

Regarding career choice, Super's (1957) factors influencing career choice appear to be inter-related. Personal factors, such as self-concept, play an important role. Some of the individuals had an idea of what they wanted to be even when they were in Cuba, such as the case of Ib. She aspired to be a nurse but was taken out of high school at age 17, to be placed in beauty school. She had an inner conflict with her self-concept and could not see herself as a beautician. The situational factor of not being able to control external forces, such as somebody making choices for her, influenced her career choice.

She was diverted from her original plan for 13 years. She finally found a way to go to nursing school and was able to achieve her initial educational goal.

While the case of Ilc, who chose a career in education, and more specifically as a Spanish secondary teacher, shows the influence of a situational factor. She decided to become a teacher based on her desire to have more time with her children. The combination of a convenient working schedule, and having knowledge of Spanish helped her make her career choice. In this case, her decision was based more on situational factors, such as her lack of time to be with her children, and her language skills, led her to teaching Spanish. She saw using her language ability, as a matter of convenience, which influenced her career choice.

#### Role factors.

Imposed by society and involving role expectations. For instance, the case of Ia, who spoke about being initially, interested in drama, but she knew that an acting career was not well accepted by the Cuban society, and she knew that her parents would not like it. So she said that she knew that she would not have pursued it. She found interest in Psychology, seeking to understand the dysfunctional dynamics in her home environment. This may be interpreted as both a personal factor internalized by the individual and also a situational factor, in this case a social factor over which the individual had no control. Her ultimate career choice was based on her father being her role model, and other situational factors that she explained such as self-concept and level of English proficiency. When the subject Ia was asked if she had a role model, she replied:

My father, my father was always my role model. My mother was a housewife

[note housewife does not imply homemaker, the subject explained that there were

servants taking care of household chores], my aunt was a Music teacher in Kindergarten; and my grandmother never worked. I had a family where women usually did not work.

The subject was also asked if there was any woman-lawyer in her family, and she replied, "No, so I had always felt that I would be the first." The career choice of Ia is a non-traditional career for women. It is of interest to note the following characteristics in Ia's case: The subject indicated in the questionnaire that she had an excellent relationship with her father and a poor relationship with her mother. There were no strong influences of female role models in Ia's family. She chose her father as her role model as she stated above. Researchers such as Auster and Auster, (1981) that have followed the empirical evidence concerning women choosing non-traditional careers and the role of family, peers and vocational counselors, conclude that family influence emerged as the first and foremost influential factor in career choice. Furthermore, Evans (1985) suggests that career paths for women are becoming more similar to men's due to more women working during young adulthood. Family relationships have been linked to women's career decision. Non-traditional career women tend to have had close relationship with their fathers and had more freedom and rewards for assertiveness.

The case of Ila, is another example of role factors, or the influence of role model in career choice. She chose a career as Spanish College Professor, but she initially thought of becoming a History secondary teacher. However, upon meeting one role model, her Spanish professor, she changed her career path. Both her language ability and her role model influenced her career choice.

There are other cases where role models played an important factor in career choice, such as the case of Ia, who chose a career in law. She indicated that her father was a lawyer and he was her role model. In her case, she had thought about being a lawyer when she was in Cuba, but then decided on a career as Clinical Psychology. When she graduated from college with a degree in Sociology / Psychology, she started working as a Probation Officer, which provided a situational, external factor. She observed what lawyers were doing and said, "I can do that." This is an example of the inter-relatedness of personal factors (self-concept) and role factors (father's role model) that influenced her career choice.

The case of Ic, who wanted to be a journalist because her father was a journalist in Cuba, was also following her father as role model. Again, the inter-relatedness of Super's (1957) factors influencing career choice was manifested. Her initial career choice was influenced by a role factor. However, due to a situational external factor, such as not having access to the appropriate four-year institution, which offered a Journalism program nearby, she had to settle for another major, this situation ultimately affected her career choice. She was diverted into the wrong major, and she gave up her dream of becoming a journalist. She ultimately studied to be a translator and interpreter, and at the present time she has a translation agency. Her fluency in both English and Spanish played a significant role her career choice.

In the case of IIb, who had no plans for a university career in Cuba, yet studied Accounting and obtained a Master's in Business Administration in the United States is an example of situation factors. She chose this major because she took Bookkeeping in high school and liked it. She admitted that English was a big barrier for her, and continues to

be. She stated that perhaps she subconsciously chose a career with numbers to make it easy on herself. She also was self-supporting her education, thus making money was a priority in her life. In her case, situational factors influenced career choice.

Of the three that did not complete college education, two had aspirations for career. IIIb wanted to study international law, diplomacy, or languages in order to work in an embassy. Her father was a lawyer in Cuba, and probably would have studied one of the careers she had chosen, had she stayed in Cuba. Due to situational factors in the United States, such as economic constraints, she had to work right after completion of high school. She had to move to another state after her father passed away, and then, she decided to further her education by enrolling in a community college. She started Business Administration, but she was not able to complete her education because of her decision to start a family.

The case of IIIc, who also wanted to be a journalist, made the decision not to study, said, "she had no choice but to work." Situational factors such as economic constraints influenced her career decision-making and choice. Another situational factor that prevented her from pursuing an education was starting a family.

In the case of IIIa, she did not like to study since she was in Cuba. She did not have plans to further her education. Her mother was a professional and worked outside of the household as a Home Economics teacher in Cuba. This subject had been exposed to a positive female role model, however, she stated that she did not like to study, and continuing her education would have been an imposition on her parents. Situational factors, such as lack of economic resources, the need to help support herself and her

parents, and personal factors such as self-concept influenced her career decision-making. She has kept her original plan and has only taken some college courses for fun.

#### Subsidiary Question 1

What is the relationship between the subjects' socio-cultural characteristics and career decision-making?

#### Sociocultural characteristics and factors.

All subjects interviewed for case studies had socioeconomic status ranging from upper, upper-middle and middle class. The majority of subjects, seven out of nine, were in the upper-middle class; one was from upper class, and one from middle class. This is consistent with immigration profiles of the Cuban immigration wave of the 1960's, where a larger population came from the upper and middle class. All the cases had attended private schools in Cuba and two indicated a combination of both types of schools, private and public at some time during their school years.

All the cases reported coming from over-protective parents, who feared losing control of their children's education and safety when the government started to interfere with their education. Situational factors became evident, when the parents feared losing control of their children when the government took the high school students out of the classrooms during school year, relocating them to sugar fields and farms to cut sugar cane and participate in other agricultural tasks.

The purposive sample included three cases of subjects that completed post secondary education and whose parents had post-secondary educational attainment; three cases that the subjects completed post-secondary education and whose parents did not have post-secondary educational attainment; and the last three cases were selected

because the subjects did not complete post-secondary education, regardless of their parents' educational attainment. In two out of the three last cases the parents had post-secondary educational attainment. In one case it was the mother, who was a teacher, and in the other, it was the father, who was a lawyer and held the position of judge. The overall group of nine cases consisted of five or 56 % with parents with post-secondary educational attainment, and four or 44 % with parents with no post-secondary educational attainment.

### Subsidiary Question 2

What is the relationship between the subjects' academic background and career choice?

In terms of academic background, all nine subjects interviewed for case studies indicated that they had a strong academic background from their education in Cuba. This was an important characteristic in adjusting to school in the United States in spite of language barriers. Even those who had a higher English proficiency felt that the main difficulty was the language barrier, because they felt strong in all other academic content areas.

### Subsidiary Question 3

What is the relationship between the subjects' first language (Spanish) and career choice?

In the case of subjects who chose to be Spanish teachers or translators, their first language proficiency led them to feel a level of confidence in their career choice. Three of the nine subjects interviewed for case studies chose careers related to their first language. Two out of three started their post-secondary careers immediately after high

school because their parents had arrived from Cuba at the time they completed high school. Apparently, their English level proficiency was deficient at that time, and this became a deciding factor that led them to choose a career related to their ability in their first language.

#### Subsidiary Question 4

What is the relationship between the subjects' English proficiency level and career choice?

Little if any correlation was found between English proficiency and career choice. A total of seven, out of nine participants interviewed for case studies knew, since they were in Cuba that they were going to pursue postsecondary education. One that did not anticipate in Cuba that she was going to pursue postsecondary education changed her plan and obtained Bachelor's, and Master's degrees. Two of the ones that had anticipated they were going to pursue postsecondary education were not able to do it due to economic constraints or because they started a family.

#### Subsidiary Question 5

What is the relationship between the parents' educational attainment and the subjects' career decision-making and career choice?

Table 33 shows the results for paired sample statistics comparing parents' and respondents' educational attainment. The result is statistically significant at  $p < .05$ . The mean for mothers (6.32) represents an average between 11-12 years of school; the mean for fathers (8.00) represents an average of 12 years of school; the mean for subjects (9.68) represents an average of 14 or more years of education. The group of respondents' educational attainment exceeded the parents' educational attainment.



Table 34 demonstrates that there is a significant difference between mothers' and subjects' educational attainment, and fathers' and subjects' educational attainment. t-tests were done to measure parents' educational attainment and the subjects' number of years completed of postsecondary education for all respondents. The results are: Mothers'  $t = -5.617$ , significant at the  $<.05$  level; Fathers'  $t = -2.68$ , significant at the  $<.05$  level. The value of  $p$  is  $<.05$ . The significance level for mothers' is  $.000$ , and for fathers' is  $.002$ . There is a strong correlation between parents' educational attainment and the education level attained by their children (see Table 34).

Two of the nine individuals interviewed for case studies chose careers following the father as a role model.

#### Subsidiary Question 6

What led subjects of this cohort group to consider attending institutions of higher education?

A total of seven, out of nine participants interviewed for case studies knew, since they were in Cuba, that they were going to pursue post-secondary education. One that did not anticipate in Cuba that she was going to pursue post-secondary education changed her plan and obtained Bachelor's, and Master's degrees. Two of the ones that had anticipated that they were going to pursue post-secondary education were not able to do it due to economic constraints or because they started a family.

#### Subsidiary Question 7

What opportunities were offered to this cohort group to access institutions of higher education?

The opportunities varied according to the following variables: age, the school they attended, time separated from their parents, and whether they were in the Cuban Children's Program, at the time they completed high school or with their parents. One individual that went to Our Lady of the Lake High School was given the opportunity to continue in Our Lady of the Lake College for one year of Business Administration, until her parents arrived. Other individuals that went to both St. Theresa's Academy and the Blessed Sacrament Academy were not oriented towards college education. The Social worker made the decisions for them, and pushed most of them into trade schools. The choices available were beauty school, secretarial school, or practical nursing.

For the individuals that were with their parents when they graduated from high school, the guidance counselors and their parents were the vehicles to access institutions of higher education. Parents contributed with food and shelter and encouraged their daughters to continue their education. The subjects who found their way to college several years after graduation from high school and who did not have their parents in the United States at the time they graduated from high school, were able to continue their education through partial support from their employers. One of the cases that was taken out of high school, had to take the GED before she could start college. She found federal support through an agency called Manpower.

#### Summary of Conclusions

This study showed that there are several important factors that affected the career decision-making and choices of a cohort group of female Cuban immigrants. Those factors are: (1) socio-economic, which include culture, parents' educational attainment,

and economic status, (2) academic, (3) linguistic, (4) a supportive educational infrastructure necessary to implement educational programs.

The in-depth interviews documented life history case studies and presented a unique experience. The cases were analyzed using the technique suggested by Denzin, (1989). He suggests that there is great value in identifying what he calls "epiphanies" or "existentially problematic moments in the lives of individuals." He states:

It is possible to identify four major structures, or types of existentially problematic moments or epiphanies in the lives of individuals. First there are those moments that are major and touch every fabric of a person's life. Their effects are immediate and long term. Second, there are those epiphanies that represent eruptions, or reactions, to events that have been going on for a long period of time. Third are those events that are minor yet symbolically representative of major problematic moments in a relationship. Fourth and finally, are those episodes whose effects are immediate, but their meanings are only given later, in retrospection, and in the reliving of the event. I give the following names to these four structures of problematic experiences: (1) the major epiphany, (2) the cumulative epiphany, (3) the illuminative, minor epiphany, and (4) the relived epiphany. (Of course any epiphany can be relived and given new retrospective meaning.) These four types may, of course, build upon one another. A given event may, at different phases in a person's or relationship's life, be first, major, then minor, and then later relived. A cumulative epiphany will, of course, erupt into a major event in a person's life. (Denzin, 1989, p. 129).

During the case analysis phase, some patterns or themes emerged and become clear and evident in all the experiences recorded. The thematic analyses of the interviews are summarized as follows:

#### Family Life in Cuba.

It is interesting to note that all the cases described a sheltered secure life in Cuba, up to the point that their parents felt they were going to lose control of their children. The majority of the interviewees were part of the decision to leave the country. The ones that did not take part in the decision accepted it in a positive way, stating they were minors, and they had "no saying," and basically trusted their parents and obeyed, knowing that their parents wanted the best for them.

It is of interest to note that the issue of struggling with control emerged at an early time in the lives of these subjects. During the time in Cuba, their parents feared for loss of control of the future and education of their children. This fear of loss of control triggered the decision to send their children away.

#### Perception of the Journey.

Most of the interviewees, whether actively or passively that were involved in the decision to leave their country, perceived the journey as "a great adventure" and others as a vacation. Others viewed their trip as a escape from a dangerous impending situation such as being sent away from their parents' control, to the fields, to the Soviet block countries, or to jail for their anti-Castro activities. All viewed their trip to the United States as an opportunity to pursue an education without government interference. All interviewees reported that they, as well as their parents expected it to be a short period of separation. They expected to stay in the United States for a temporary period, until they

could go back to Cuba. It is safe to hypothesize that at that time all interviewees were not aware of permanent immigrant and citizenship issues that were forthcoming in their lives. None of the interviewees reported resentment or negative feelings towards their parents for having made such an important decision about their future lives. They accepted the painful loss of their country and separation from their family and friends as a necessary high price to pay, in order to gain freedom. The theme of having no control over this loss was evident.

#### Moment of Reality.

All the interviewees expressed the instance of reality that "hit" them at one point upon arrival in the United States. For some it happened immediately upon arrival to the Florida City Camp. For others, it was a delayed reaction. They were so wrapped up in the "vacation or great adventure mentality," that they did not see the seriousness of the situation.

This realization of the situation is what Denzin (1989) describes as a major epiphany in their lives. It is a major moment that touches every fabric of a person's life. It is interesting to note that most of them reported having suffered this painful realization alone and internalized their pain in a very stoic manner. Most of them did not cry openly, one stated, "I am a good pretender." Other was shocked after a delayed reaction, and by then her peers understood what she was going through, and gave her support. The theme of loss of control of time of separation emerged throughout the lives of the interviewees during their participation in the Cuban Children's Program. This can be classified as a cumulative epiphany since it represented eruptions, or reactions, to events that had been going on for a long period of time.

### School Placement.

The feeling of not being in "control" of their lives emerged time and again. "Somebody made the decision for me." It is evident that this cohort group, which shared a similar experience, did not have the same school experience. The group was split into three different schools: Our Lady of the Lake High School; St. Theresa's Academy, and The Blessed Sacrament Academy. Each school had a different climate and consequently, the outcomes were different too. The school placement was inadequate and arbitrary. The school placement was decided by the social worker, without educators input, evaluation of credentials or testing. The students that went to Our Lady of the Lake appear to have had a more favorable environment for educational attainment, since Our Lady of the Lake also had a College annexed to the High School. The students that finished high school at Our Lady of the Lake were able to make the transition into Our Lady of the Lake College easily. Some of them went into their Business School program. Others were offered opportunities to go into teaching programs, and even one was the recipient of a four-year scholarship. It seems that these students received some kind of guidance counseling to help them focus into college.

The students that went to St. Theresa's Academy reported having a good educational experience. The nuns were understanding and flexible and did not go along with the original school placement. They switched the students to different levels in order to accommodate them, and evaluated educational credentials supplied by the subjects. They did this based on level of English proficiency, number of years completed in school in Cuba and whether or not they had religious education in Cuba. The students at St. Theresa's Academy were well-liked by Anglos and Mexican students. Their self-

concept and self-esteem were positively reinforced with the school climate. However, none of the students that went to St. Theresa's Academy reported being informed of options to go to college. This was handled by the social worker in charge of the Cuban refugees. It is evident that the social worker was more interested in getting the subjects ready for the workforce than to care about their aspirations for career and their education beyond high school. As some interviewees stated, they were taken out of high school in order to get a "trade." There were not too many choices available. Perhaps the social worker, who happened to be Mexican-American, judged the group's needs by Mexican immigrants' standards. She did not take into consideration that most of the subjects had professional parents and had professional aspirations. She did not ask the subjects, who found trade schools not acceptable to their career aspirations, standards and self-concepts. The lack of "control" of their future and career choices was a pattern that emerged especially for the ones whose parents had not arrived when they completed high school. The ones whose parents had arrived when they completed high school were able to make decisions leading to their careers aspirations and goals more readily. Others had to make a decision to work and support their parents and their educational plans were put on hold.

#### Survivors.

This is a strong concept that emerged. They all considered themselves as survivors of this experience. It made them strong, self-sufficient, independent and conscious of the difference it made in their lives. Some acknowledge that they would not have focussed on a career in Cuba, since they had not anticipated that they had to work. Others feel that they would have achieved their career aspirations without the economic hardships that they encountered that prevented some of them from achieving their

educational goals. This can be classified as a relived epiphany. The effects of these events were immediate, but their meanings are only given later, in retrospection, and in the reliving of the event.

In order to survive the dynamics of separation, and to adjust or adapt to a new environment, some blocked or suppressed the negative feelings. Some expressed, "I never dwelled in what I was missing." Other expressed their self-concept as "by nature I am a very optimistic person," and hoped for a bright future. Others expressed that what helped in this situation was the thought that "this [the separation] was a temporary thing." An important factor in helping them survive that was stressed by all the interviewees was, the fact that they were a large group of Cubans. They shared the same language and culture and they were going through the same assimilation/acculturation experiences at the same time. The assimilation /acculturation process, the experiences accepting their permanent immigrant status, the changing their identities to Cuban-Americans and changing to American citizens can be identified as illuminative, minor epiphany moments. Those are events that are minor yet symbolically representative of major problematic moments in the lives of individuals.

#### Making connections.

An important element to survival, which was expressed by this cohort group, was the fact that they became a very cohesive group. They had to make connections to their language and their culture. At the time of separation, it was very important to know that although they were feeling lonely and missed their family, they were not alone. They had their peers that cared about them and understood them. They felt some kind of protection; "they felt safe within the walls." Most of them became great friends – they



studies with women from other countries, and from different racial and ethnic groups.

The following list a number of recommendations for further research concerning the need for theory formulation of female ethnic minorities and their career choices.

1. Conduct similar studies about career development of women living in the U.S.A. that were foreign born to see if there is a tendency to go into traditionally or non-traditionally female careers.
2. Conduct similar studies with career decision-making and choices of other cohort groups of male "Pedro Pan" children. Even though the "Pedro Pan" migration was a large population of immigrants that became permanent residents of the United States for approximately four decades, there is very little literature of this group. This would address one limitation of the present study that only studied a sample of the female population.
3. Conduct a comparative study on the effect of matriarchal vs. patriarchal societies on women's career choices.
4. Replicate the study with a different ethnic group population to add to findings. Studies done about African-American and Puerto Rican women showed that both groups tended towards traditional female careers.
5. Conduct further studies to address obstacles for occupational equality for women.
6. Conduct a comprehensive study dealing with researchers from different academic backgrounds, such as psychologists, sociologists, and educators, to explore the different social and economic forces that influence women's career decisions.

made "friendships that last a lifetime." They supported each other and encouraged them at difficult times. This was a protective factor.

In a study done by Legaretta (1984) about Basque refugee children that fled their country, and went to Belgium, France, and Great Britain, they had to learn the host culture and language. She reported that they remained a very cohesive group and held on to their language and culture even after 40 years after their emigration.

#### Reflections about life in the United States.

It is a different life than life Cuba. The process of acculturation/assimilation has happened gradually. A common theme was that they "have the best of both worlds." They have embraced the American culture and valued and kept the good values of their Cuban culture. All the interviewees felt as much American as Cuban, but at some times they still feel foreigners in a strange land. One expressed this feeling as "having a hole in your heart," referring to the experience of being an exiled and not being able to return to your homeland.

In spite of the difficulties experienced by this cohort group, all participants in this study are productive members of the American society and have integrated and adjusted well into the system. However, they remain a cohesive group with strong ties to their homeland.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

Given the results of this investigation and the conclusions suggest that counselors and educators play an important role in helping students decide their careers. It is important to add to the body of knowledge in areas that address female minorities. A comprehensive understanding of women's career development requires cross-cultural

7. Conduct other studies examining gender differences and career choice using different racial and ethnic groups.
8. Conduct further studies analyzing the impact and consequences of major disruptions in the lives of adolescents and its effect on career decision-making and choice.
9. Conduct studies on the effect of attitudes towards education among different ethnic groups in the United States and their career choices to contribute to theory formulation for women of different ethnic backgrounds.
10. Conduct studies on mother's successful integration of family and work roles and the effect on daughter's career choices.
11. Conduct studies on educational policies that affect ethnic minorities, in order to promote educational opportunities that will allow them to become productive members of society.

It is interesting that when I was going out and I had already started my journey, everybody in the plane was very uptight, and I was going from window to window to see the sight. Everybody eventually was laughing with me because I was so excited, that it was contagious. At first, the first couple of months or the first three months, it really was not that hard. Again, it was a great adventure. Even when I traveled to San Antonio, on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1962. I arrived in Miami on what I thought April 10, and then I saw in my passport a stamp that said April 9, 1962. I always thought that I had been two months and a day after my birthday, which was February 9. But again, in any event, the first time that it really hit me hard because I always was coping, and I was always very optimistic and always looked towards the future. That for me I was not dwelling on what I was missing at that time. The first time that it really hit me was when I get a bunch of pictures that my mother had sent in a card, and I had not cried once, not once since I left the airport in Cuba. I never cried because I was so excited. I start looking at the pictures in the envelope, and when I took one of the pictures, it was a small picture, it was very small picture, because the quality and what they could do with it was not that good. I looked at a picture of our parrot and the way she hung up from the car porch of the house, and I looked at the parrot. I burst out crying. I do not know if you remember that, because I think I was getting ready to go to school or we had just arrived from school and were at the little lunch room. I never forget that someone, I think it was Mercy who said, "you never cried for your parents and you are crying for the parrot." I think the parrot was a catalyst, and I think that it was the realization that the parrot, I was never going to see it again. But my parents I was going to see them again. I do not know if I said I would never see Cuba again. But perhaps, deep down inside I knew that was the way it was going to be. That is what made me cry so much after what I believe must have been six months since I had arrived in the United States.

***How long were you separated from your parents?***

I left Cuba in April, and they arrived in Miami February 13 of the following year. So they were already here, but I did not meet up with them until June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1963. I was in San Antonio Texas a year and a month to the day. I left for San Antonio May 23<sup>rd</sup> of 1962, and I left San Antonio for Miami on June 23<sup>rd</sup> of the next year.

**Career Aspirations Choices and Decisions:**

***Tell me about your education?***

I was always considered to be a very gifted student. I had a very intelligent great memory, very retentive, I had a flair for drama, and I love saying poetry since I was a little girl. I was always dancing on stage. I really should have been an actress. I think this is why I chose to be a litigation attorney. In Cuba, in 1960, another thing that Castro changed was the educational system. It used to be that from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade you could take an exam, and if you passed it you could go to

high school or pre-university or college prep courses or you could go to the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade and go to the School of Teachers, the School of Commerce, among the other things. He took that away and said everybody had to go through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and then from there they could go to the college prep school or the other school. So, I am in my 5<sup>th</sup> grade, I finished my 5<sup>th</sup> grade, I was always on top of my class. I never had to study. I picked whatever I read once in class was enough for me. Actually I was pretty lazy. Somebody was studying to take an exam that was going to be given in September for entry into the high school. I was told, why don't you take it, because they are going to let people who pass the exam go into high school without doing 6<sup>th</sup> grade. I took the exam and I ranked I believe 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> of all the people that took the exam. Of course I got in, and I was much younger than the other kids when I came in, and I had two years of high school or college prep when my parents pulled me out of high school. So when I arrived in the United States, I really was at the level of having completed 10<sup>th</sup> grade at age 14.

***Where you placed in 10<sup>th</sup> grade?***

I was not placed in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. And I was very upset about the fact that I had lost a year of education in Cuba, because leaving in April I did not begin in September. This was another reason why they sent me out, because knowing that they could not send me to the Institute because of the problems there, and they did not want to interfere with my education, and it was better for me to study outside. So, when we went to San Antonio, and they start making a decision and they split us into three different groups, and started to decide what grade to send people to. Since I was the youngest in the group, I was placed on 7<sup>th</sup> grade. The man who was the social worker, Mr. Biller, was calling us into the room where I had celebrated my 15<sup>th</sup> birthday, calls my name and said you are going to go to St. Theresa's Academy to the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. I looked at that man and I started crying, I was crying my eyes out, I went bunkers. This poor man was in shock; he could not understand why I was like that. I kept arguing, how could you do this to me, I should be in 11<sup>th</sup> grade. I was devastated. I had lost 4 years of education at that point. So I started the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and the 7<sup>th</sup> grade teacher realized that I was way ahead, and the end of the first semester, she talked to the School Principal and said this girl is being devastated, this is too damaging. I knew some English. So the following semester, they compromise and they put me on the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, so I came into the 9<sup>th</sup> grade that semester I ended up with A's and B's that year and finished the 9<sup>th</sup> grade in San Antonio. When I went back to Miami I went to the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. The problem was that I did the four years of high school in four different states. The 9<sup>th</sup> grade I did in San Antonio, the 10<sup>th</sup> grade I did in Miami. Then they sent us to Oregon, we were relocated, my parents and so, I ended doing the 11<sup>th</sup> grade in Oregon. Then my dad got a job in California, and I did my senior year in high School in California. By the time that I was in Miami High, my teachers were telling everybody that I needed to be in Honor classes. So, had I stayed in Miami, I would have gone into honors classes in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. I actually was entered into the Science Fair. I had no idea what I was doing. They

had me extract DNA from some bacteria. I was going to Jackson Memorial Hospital to the Labs over there to do that and I ended up getting an Honorable mention for my work on DNA. I wish I'd done that because it was great. Anyway, that's the education.

***Did you experience any language barrier?***

Yes, very much so. I did not get comfortable in English until I was already out of college. When I finished college and started working that is when I started to get comfortable. I was fluent, but I had an accent. There were words that I used that were the wrong words to use in the context that I had intended.

***What adjustments you had to make because of the language?***

I think the language was a problem. I think had I had more fluency in the language I would have been a straight A student. What kept me back, where I really thought the language was the problem and the lack of experience with the educational system, which is common with the culture area, was when I took the SATs. I was an honor roll student throughout my three years of high school, and I've got 300 combined score in the SATs, which is like a mentally handicapped level, and it was the language barrier. So my counselor took it upon himself to go to the UCSB. This was the college in Santa Barbara where I wanted to go to, and convinced them to let me in on special admission, on the basis that they should not look at my SATs. Everybody was convinced that I was a gifted student, and that I would succeed in college and they had to recognize the language barrier. Based on that, I was accepted. Now whether the cultural issue is more than a legal issue because, at that time, in 1966, when I graduated from high school, we were trying to become residents of the United States. We were parolees; we had an exemption to come to the United States as exiles. In order to become residents at that time you had to go either to Canada or Mexico and then come back to the United States. Canada and Mexico, being friends of Castro would not allow Cubans to come in. Then in 1967 there was the first Cuban Adjustment Act that allowed us to become residents without leaving the United States. So we could apply in California. We could apply for residency and then they would give you retroactive credit for time resided in the United States two years back. So in other words, the Adjustment Act was in 1967, and they gave us back to 1965 or 1964. I think it was three years credit, because I know that in December of 1969 I became an American citizen. So that was another issue. When I went to the University of Santa Barbara, even though I had been a resident of the state of California for more than a year, I had to pay out of state tuition. So it cost me instead of \$89.00 a credit, I had a \$2,000. In tuition. Which of course, I got scholarship and loans, and things like that. So this was also an economic barrier. I was paying this college loan probably until five years after I became a lawyer. Because once I went back to Law School, then I had a deferment, and then when Law School was over, I had to start paying back the Law School loan.

### **Career Aspirations Choices and Decisions:**

***Tell me, what were your aspirations about careers in the United States?***

I always knew that I wanted to go to college, and there was no question, it had to be a given in my life that I would graduate from college with some degree. My real vocation or my real natural talent was drama. This is something that I stayed away because of the language barrier. Perhaps also because it was a cultural issue that it was not a socially acceptable career in Cuba. So even if it would have been my talent, I think that it would not have been something I would have done. Then the next thing in Cuba would have been Law like my father or a college professor. I like Law, but I also like Chemistry. I had about three or four different things, but of course then at 14 you do not really have it clear. When I went to college because of all the family stress, which continued here in the United States, Psychology was really very appealing to me. So when I went to the University of California at Santa Barbara, I knew from day one, that my major was going to be Psychology. As I began to take courses, I wanted [to study] Clinical Psychology, and so instead of going to a school that specialized in Clinical Psychology, [she went to Santa Barbara, which specialized in Experimental Psychology.] because, in Santa Maria, where my father taught was only 68 miles from Santa Barbara. I went to Santa Barbara, which was an Experimental Psychology program, completely different. Nowadays, I think that I know I would have enjoyed it more, but at that time because my focus was therapy and that kind of area, so I took a lot of Sociology courses, and I ended up with a double major Psychology/Sociology. But at that time my focus was Clinical Psychology. I met somebody the first week in School, and he wanted to know what I wanted to study. So, the chances of going into a Ph.D. changed, because I got married in my third year in college, that summer before my Senior year, and what I did is when I graduated I just focused in going to work, and I went to work as a probation officer. Within a year of being a probation officer, and because I married to an American, my English had improved and I was thoroughly fluent. I was observing what lawyers were doing, and I said to myself, "I can do that." That is when I went back to my original idea of becoming a lawyer. So I graduated from college in January of 1970, and in 1973, I made the decision to go to Law School. But that required that I move to Los Angeles because we had no Law School in Santa Barbara. I ended up doing that, and I went to Law School in 1974.

***What information did you have about career choices when you were completing your high school? Did you get a guidance counselor helping you to choose a career or a college?***

In the school that I was in, there really was not much of a career or guidance counselor, and that was interesting, because I think that came up pretty much in our Senior year in college. And it was not the way that it was set up at that time. I

think in my case, it was the way it was pretty much set up in my mind that I was going to study Psychology. So I do not know that I was one of those people that needed any kind of help as to what the major was going to be. But I always knew that I was going to go to graduate school, and I would never forget the day I met the lady from Financial Aid at the University. I mentioned the fact that I wanted to get a Ph.D. in Psychology, and she said these words that are still engraved in my mind. "Well, (she was so nice, she was a sweet lady) why don't we focus on finishing undergraduate school first, and then we will see if you want graduate school." I think at that time I felt that it was almost, - there were issues that went beyond the fact that I was a foreigner. It was not a question of my abilities; I was a Hispanic girl. There were 12,000 students at the university and only 3 Hispanic students at the time. That was in 1966. After that, two years later the school had Chicano Studies. They were bringing Mexican-American students to the university. At the time I started there were only 3 Hispanic students out of 12,000 students in the university. At that time also, there were perhaps a handful of Black students at the university. So I think that it was the issue - not only getting into a different issue, which was the discrimination that existed against minorities in the United States at that time. We were also a different kind of minority than what had come before. We came, not because we could not make a living at our Country, and our families were uneducated and worked in the fields. We were the professionals, the businessmen, who already had been taught, before we got here what our expectations were. Getting to those expectations was not as easy, but still we knew it in ourselves, that we still had the potential of doing that.

*Are you happy with your career choice?*

Ah - what a question. Probably three years after becoming a lawyer no, because the legal profession has changed significantly from what it was, because here in Dade County it is very stoning. Professionalism and ethics do not exist anymore. People are just like the study of the vastly and densely populated areas that they cannibalize you. I think that this is pretty much what is happening to lawyers now days. That aspect of the profession is what I do not like, but you throw me in a courtroom to do a trial, and I am in high heaven. If I could just do that, and not having to worry about administering the office, and all the other things that go with it, I am the happiest human being on the face of the Earth.

*Is this the end of your educational endeavors?*

I do not know. Sometimes I think I would like to learn more about Genetics. I think that it is an incredible career. The only thing that I think I would have trouble with the abstract concepts such as Physics and Math. Things that are not concrete the language barrier really made it virtually impossible for me to learn. I just had such a hard time understanding things. Of course, at my age, all I want to do is rent a mother and retire.



***In the pre-interview questionnaire you indicated that you were at level 3 in a scale of 5-1 of English proficiency in the areas of reading, writing and speaking. By the time you graduated from high school, you indicated that you were at level 4 in the same areas by the time you started college. Was this a problem for you?***

Exactly, in college I still had a problem with the language barrier, because I still did not have the complete level of proficiency to express specific ideas. Now by the time I was in Law School and just before Law school the comprehension level was pretty good. I think that my fluency in English today, far surpasses that of the educated American. If you were to give me a test about the knowledge of the nuances of the language - this is what makes me very good in trials - I know just the kind of words to give an image to the jury that makes them come persuasive to see the case the way that I want them to look at it. And, thus knowing the very subtle nuances of the language, I would say that I am an expert in that now. I would say that I went from a relative proficiency enough to get by to the point where I can teach English now if I have to. I have gained absolute control of the English language.

***According to research studies done in language acquisition, it takes 5-7 years to achieve the cognitive academic level of proficiency in a second language, so you were right on target when you started Law School, you were right on that level.***

Yes, and many people ask me in what language do you think. I lost the capacity to think and do the translation that you originally do in your language. You have the concept that comes out in a word, and then in your mind you go back and look for the word in English. That disappeared many years ago. So that I just think in concepts and then translate into language, to the point that sometimes, I do not know in which language I am talking, and people have to remind me, when they cannot understand one or the other, because I just have switched, and did not even notice it.

***How has your educational attainment impacted your life?***

What most professional women, obviously, in terms of my life style, it brought me from second-hand rate to upper-middle class. I am listed now days in Who's is Who in America. If you had told me 20 years ago, when I learned about this book, if anybody would have told me that I was going to be listed in that book, I would have said not in your dreams. And yet, today, I am listed in that, I think because of my career. These are things that I have achieved because of my career.

***Well, you made it to Judge like your father, and you also made it to Judge in the United States, and you are a Hispanic woman, so I think you did pretty good. I am very proud of you.***

And that was very difficult.

**General:**

***Please tell me what do you see as the most positive and negative experience as a Pedro Pan child?***

The most positive, in terms of what I experienced, I think was the friendships. My mother was very absorbing she was also the one force in my life that made me achieve a lot, because I was always seeking to have her approval. She hated my going into Psychology. But I had never really been able to form real good friendships, because she interfered with them. She is the one that liked to talk to my friends. When I was separated from my parents an important part of that is that I learned to make friends on my own. I made friendships that have lasted 39 years, friendships that are there forever. Then that is my emotional, psychological personal growth point of view. The other positive experience is being able to enjoy freedom – even thought that first year in the United States, that I was still in the Pedro Pan project, we went through the October Missile Crises. Probably the most frightening experience that anybody who was alive at the time and had an understanding about what was going on. But pretty much living in the United States, being able to be free. Being able to live in a society that is orderly. Where you do not have to look over your shoulder when you want to express an opinion. Where life particularly at that time was so relaxing compared to the tension that we lived under with the bombs going off, and the fighting and people squealing on you, so much of that we lived with everyday and did not realize how stressful it is. And living in an environment that is completely different, I think overall it is very positive.

The negative for me was the experience with the nuns in San Antonio, most certainly the Mother in charge of us in that group. I think the nuns in the school were fabulous, at Saint Theresa's Academy. I think they were really sweet. I remember one nun in particular, she was from Mexico. She was one of the sweetest and kindest human beings I ever met. But generally the experience there was tough, but also the loss of identity, the loss of social status, the loss of culture, the loss of language. All these feeling at a very difficult time in your life, when you are dealing as a teen-ager, with the identify issues that you are going to define your identity, according to what you have learned in the previous 14 years. And now, we had to define our identity in a vacuum devoid of all that we had learned off hand, because the culture is different, the language is different, our parents are not around to help. We were foreigners in a land that was very accepting and loving and caring, but we were still foreigners. That I think was the worse part of all. Was it negative? I think it was part of the growing and learning and becoming better human beings, but it was not a pleasant experience, it was very confusing and very troubling for a while. That is how I would see it.

05/25/01

## Transcription of Case Ib

### **Life in Cuba:**

*Please, tell me about your life and family in Cuba?*

I am the only child of my mother and father's union. I have a stepbrother older from my father's first marriage. He is about seven years older than I am. I was born in Victoria de las Tunas, in Oriente. I lived there until I was about 10 years old. I always went to Catholic school in Oriente until we moved to Havana. I lived in Havana until I was sixteen and a half years old, that is when I left to the United States. In Havana it was just my father, my mother and another aunt that lived with us. My father had a brake-fluid factory and a small cafeteria. I always put in my mind that I was going to go to school, and go to Havana University and have a career. All those dreams had to be let go because I had to leave Cuba. I was not involved in anything in Cuba politically with any government. I was 16 and I was really not very disruptive, but at one time Castro's government people came to my house looking for me because they wanted to send me to work in the farms far away from home. That is when the whole thing started, that my mother decided to send me out.

### **Immigration/Migration:**

*Please tell me at what point was the decision to leave the country made?*

It was made at that time when my parents feared that I was going to be sent to work in the farms. My parents always thought that Castro's government was not going to last, and with that idea they sent me away just until things got better, because they really thought that it would not last. But when Castro's people came looking for me to send me away to the farms, my parents felt that I was going to be in danger, so they decided to send me away.

*Where you part of the decision?*

No, I mean, they talked to me about it, but by this time I had known friends of mine that had already left the country. Families that had left, I had already encountered saying good bye to very close girls friends that had gone to South America with their families. So I was used to the idea that you have to leave when things get rough because of political reasons. I never felt that I did not want to do it, it was just that my parents wanted me to do it, and I had no negative feelings about it at all. And also because the priest of the church where we attended, San Juan Bosco in La Vibora, in Havana, he was involved in this conversation with me, and he was also involved in getting me the visa, which was called visa waiver. I had an older cousin who was married and she lived in New York at that time, and she sent me the \$25.00 money order for the ticket from Cuba to Miami. I remember that it had to be two-way ticket. I also remember that I had to ask for permission to leave Cuba, and I had to go to the Swiss

Embassy in Havana, to get some kind of legal paper to authorize me to travel alone. It was something about parental rights. I do not know exactly, because at that time I was not paying attention to legal things like that.

***The next two questions that I was going to ask you, you already answered them, they were, why did you leave your country, and how you felt about it?***

You know what? I had no idea, I guess I was not mature enough to realize the depth of this action, especially because I thought that I was just going away for a little while. It was going to be only for two or three months until Castro's government came down. I was a little scared, because I had never been away from my parents, not even as a child sleeping at my grandmother's house, because I could not even bear the thought when I was small to sleep at my grandmother's house I would cry. So, this thing about me going away, well I do not know how I did it. I guess when you have to do something you do it. I was not a little child, I was 16, but I did not think whether it was a bad thing or a good thing. I probably thought that it was a good thing because my parents wanted me to do it, and I just obeyed.

***What did you know about what life would be like in the United States?***

What I knew was that even though I had family in Miami, one of my aunts, my mother's sister, had just arrived in Miami with her husband and two children, I was not to go and live with them, because they could not afford to keep me. So I knew that I was to go to a camp where Cuban children had been going and this was explained to me really by my priest in Cuba.

**Life in the United States:**

***Please tell me how was life in the United States without your parents?***

First, when I got to the camp in Florida City, it was tough going from the airport to the camp, because of the small children in there. That was when I first realized, oh my God this is so sad, because the kids about four years old were crying and saying, "I want my mommy, I want my mommy." And I am thinking, oh my God, don't they know? They don't realize, so from the very beginning, I felt very sad. But then, I went to the convent, where they assigned you to house-parents that were in charge of the different houses, and they came to pick us up and I went to this house with another girl. So about life in the camp, I have no complaints. I never felt bad about it. The only time that I started to feel afraid is when I heard stories about children who had been sent to orphanages with people who had emotional problems and they were using knives and things like that. I was scared, that was the first time I cried, because I was scared. I was afraid, what if I had the same bad luck, and if something happened to me? I used to pray, you have no idea how much I used to pray. I used to say the rosary I don't know how many times a day. I used to say, oh God you have to help me, I even wrote

to one of the nuns who used to be my teacher in Cuba and I used to be in touch with her. She was in New Jersey, and I asked her to please send for me, because I am so afraid. She wrote back saying that they were unable to take anymore children because they already had taken some Cuban children, and blah, blah, blah. So I said, oh my goodness, what am I going to do? The week ends were fine, my aunt and uncle came to pick me up on Friday nights or Saturday mornings and return me on Sunday nights, and I used to spend time with my cousins. So I really did not have a bad time while I was at the camp. Then it came time to send me away to San Antonio, Texas. Also I was the first group of 10 girls that they sent. I went with another girl from my house. So we get to San Antonio, and the nuns were there picking us up at the airport, and there was a stormy night. And we go to Villa Maria (name of the Nun's residence where we lived) and it looked like an old castle, and we were thinking, what is this? I wonder if it has a torture chamber or something, and we were making fun of the whole thing. I guess to make life light, and you do not realize that you are really going to be away from your parents longer than what you thought you were going to be. So we were in San Antonio the entire summer, and during the fall, I started going to school at The Blessed Sacrament Academy. I was a freshman and by then I was 17 years old.

***You just answered my next two questions, one was tell me about your education, and what school did you go to? So you started your freshman year of high school at the Blessed Sacrament Academy, and how long were you there for?***

I was there for four months, but what happened is that I had to have thyroid surgery, and that was done in December, but I was only a few days out. But I never returned to school after that. The decision was made that I was not to return to my classes, and instead, that I was going to go to Beauty School.

***Did anybody ask you if you wanted to be a beautician?***

No, no, the decision was made, and the social worker told me that because of my age I needed a trade.

***How old were you then, and what happened?***

I was 17 years old. Well I did not say yes, no or whatever, I just went. And in one of my trips going back and forth to the Beauty School, I saw an advertisement on the bus about home schooling to finish high school with one of those American Correspondence Schools. I wrote down all the information I could and I gave it to the Social Worker the next time she came to see us at Villa Maria. I told her, "I want to finish my high school, how about if I do this at home in Villa Maria." She said no, no. I said give me a reason and she said, "you do not want to do this, you just continue to go to Beauty School." So, I said O.K. and I finished Beauty School, but I could never support myself on that. So really, my mentality was that I was not going to make a living out of that. I did go to work while under the

protection of the Catholic Welfare Bureau and living at Villa Maria. I had two different jobs, but I could never put myself doing that.

***What was your experience with the language barrier?***

Well, let me tell you. I really did not have a problem, even for the first time, at the camp. There was a fence around the camp, and the American children from the neighborhood used to come to the fence and talk to us. I was there almost every night. And I do not know if I was saying the right thing, or whether they understood us, but there I was talking, and talking away what English I knew from Cuba, because since I was in second grade in Cuba (talking about normal time) you start taking English. So I had it in me that I had a heavy accent, and I still do, especially when I am tired, so I really did not mind it, and I did not think that people did not know what I was saying.

***What adjustment did you have to make because of the language, when you first came in?***

Well, I remembered that I was trained in my English classes in Cuba not to think in Spanish, but I did it. I do not know when I did it, how soon it was that I was just talking, I do not know, maybe I was just a good talker.

***In what ways was the culture a barrier for you?***

The culture between Cuban and American culture? First of all, being alone without your parents at Villa Maria. We were really not that restricted. However, they did put some restrictions on us about the time to get back when you went out on dates and things like that. I think that I matured faster because I learned to make decisions by myself without my parents. And I must have had a good moral foundation because, thank God, I never made the wrong decision while I was alone there. Because even though we were under the care of the nuns, but still it was your own decision of doing whatever you were going to do. There were different things, and because I knew that I had more freedom for my age here than if had been with my parents, for instance, I would not have gone out so much and so late till 10:00 o'clock at night. I knew that if my mother were there I would not be out, but that was the only thing. We did not have dances in school in Cuba, and we had dances in school here, but nothing shocked me.

***How have these differences in culture impacted your life?***

Well, I think that I have adapted well to the best of both worlds. I love tradition, and I have carried them through with my children. Some tradition that is ours such as being Catholic, being Cuban, and also because my children have been raised with my mother, they had this influence with her, which is good. It is very good. I think that I have adapted the best of both worlds. I like both worlds because I think that Americans are more open to other things. Sometimes, it is

like anything, people are different in all respects, no matter where you go you will encounter people that are more open. I think that Cubans are more restrictive. I really believe that we are more restrictive, with how friendly you become. We are supposed to be more friendly, Cubans and Latin people are more friendly, or maybe is just me, or the way I was brought up more strict, I do not think we are as open, I think we are more careful.

### **Career Aspirations Choices and Decisions:**

#### ***Please tell me what were your aspirations about careers in the United States?***

Well, I always wanted to be a nurse. One of the girls in Villa Maria was going to Nursing School. But she was a little older and she had more schooling background than I had, and they (the Catholic Welfare Bureau) were paying for her schooling. I often talked to her, although she was not really approachable, but I would find ways to talk to her and ask her about how was her going to school, and it was very difficult. So that career aspiration was always with me until I finally did accomplish that later on. I was 28 years old when I went back to school to be a nurse.

#### ***What information did you have about career choices? Did anybody discuss with you career choices when you were in San Antonio?***

No, the choice was made for me; I was told, "you are going to go to Beauty School because you need a trade."

#### ***When did you decide whether or not to go for post-secondary education?***

Well, I was divorced, I knew that my children depended only on me. I knew that nursing was difficult, but if I had a chance I wanted to do it. So through friends that told me that they were paying for people who wanted to chose a career in (LPN) Licensed Practical Nurse, and it would take about a year to a year and a half. They would pay for me to go to school, and they would give me some extra money. At that time I lived with my parents and it was good, because the children were small and went to school, and I needed my parents to care for them so I could go to school. So I went and inquired about all that information, and since I had not been to high school, that was another obstacle.

#### ***How did you gain admission to an institution of higher education?***

I had to take the GED test without going to any review courses of any kind. I tell you, my basic education was so good when I left Cuba that it carried me on through. I was 28 years old when I passed the GED test, and then I could begin Nursing School.

#### ***How did you pay for your college education?***

It was paid by an agency or a program sponsored by the State of New Jersey called Manpower. At the time they were helping single mothers that wanted to get a career, and so it happened that they were giving preference to people who were choosing Nursing careers. And I wanted Nursing anyway, so it worked for me.

***The next question I have is what was your career choice? And you told me it was LPN, did you continue to get a (RN) Registered Nurse degree?***

Later on, and much, much later on, about 1993, I went back to school to get my RN degree.

***Did your level of English proficiency affect your career choice?***

I am sure it did. I was able to do it, and I was able to understand everything and do all the work that was needed at the time I went to school. I had to take many courses in English, in Speech Communication, Psychology and all kinds of things that I needed to do, and I passed them. I never failed or had to repeat anything; I did well in school.

***Did you have a role model?***

No, it is just that I always wanted to be a nurse. When I left Cuba, I just knew one person who was a nurse, and it was a distant cousin of my father. I do not why; I just wanted to be a nurse.

***Are you happy with your career choice?***

Very much, very much, you cannot do this if you do not love what you are doing.

***Is this the end of your educational endeavors?***

Right now, it is.

***How has your educational endeavors impacted your life?***

Well, financially it has the monetary income of course. As a nurse you are always needed, and especially now, during this time there is a shortage of nurses that is affecting the patient care in the hospitals. It does not matter where you go, for instance, I live in this small town in Morehead City, in South Carolina, and where ever you go there is a Hospital or a Nursing Home, or a Doctor's Office, Home Health, there is always going to be a need for nurses. But of course, you have to enjoy what you are doing.



**General:**

***Please tell me in your opinion, what do you see as the most positive experience and the most negative experience as a Pedro Pan child?***

Well negative, I cannot find any. Maybe there are there, hidden somewhere and I just haven't been able to bring them out. I always said that I saw it as a positive experience, it helped me to mature at an early age. I think I matured better than if I had been under the wing of my parents, not that it was a bad thing, because, like I said it was their decision. One of the best things is that, it helped me to reach my own ideas. I was able to think for myself, I developed my own opinions and ideals, I became very independent, and that was very positive. I really did not see anything negative.

***No, not even when you left your Country and your family behind?***

No, they finally came.

***How long did it take them to come?***

It took them two years. Just in time when I had to be on my own. That was in 1964.

***So you were fortunate enough to have them arrive before your scholarship with the Catholic Welfare ended at age 19?***

Yes, but what was to become of me if they had not arrived? I was not ready, in my mind to support myself and be on my own. I would have run to my aunt and uncle in Miami. I would not have known what to do. But the thing is that as soon as they arrived, and I was with them I saw what was needed. I knew that I had to go out and work. I went to the Employment Office, and I started working in a factory pressing shirts. Two weeks after that I was working in the office, because they saw my background. They saw that I was a good prospect to train and they took me out of the Pressing Department, and they put me in the office. I was working with the old IBM punch cards, and typing and doing different things, and it was good.

***This concludes our interview. Thank you.***

### Transcription of Case Ic

#### **Life in Cuba:**

*Please, tell me about your life and family in Cuba?  
(About your education and aspirations for career)*

We were four my parents, mother, father, my sister, and I was the oldest child. My mother comes from a very large family; she is one of six children. Neither one of my grandparents from my mother's side nor my grandparents from my father's side had university education. But all of my mother's brothers and sisters went to the university. When we grew up it was taken for granted that we were going to go to Havana University and my mother pushed us, she was very pushy. She always brainwashed, my younger sister and I that we were going to go to Havana University. That was never questioned, it was just a matter of fact. And of course, one of the great disappointments of my life is that as far as I was concerned, I was a teen-ager and it was taken for granted that I was going to go to Havana University. Someone told me once that I should not be making plans with my life that way, because life was full of surprises. My answer to that was what in the world could possibly happen? I always get excellent grades, and of course I am going to graduate in such and such a year, and I am going to enter the university in such and such a year. Well, of course, I never entered Havana University. On my father's family side there were five children, but my father was the only one who entered the university. But both my parents went to the university, and both obtained doctorate degrees. They were both lucky enough to have gone to Havana University, which I think would have been a wonderful place to attend. So, whenever I was growing up, I remembered that whatever career I wanted to have, and I remember that I changed my mind many times, it was always a university driven career. My mother wanted me to be a medical doctor. I think if I had stayed in Cuba, there was a 99 percent chance that I would have studied medicine, not because I particularly enjoyed that career, but because throughout the years that became the favorite career that my mother had in mind for me. So, I had two classmates who were also going to go to medical school at Havana University, and we were at the same grade. I thought that I would be a psychiatrist and one of my dear friends would be a heart-surgeon. So anyway, when we came to this country we were extremely poor and we still expected to go to the university and get an education, but we had to study and work. Both of us, my sister and I we had part-time jobs during the school year. I remember that at one point I had three different part-time jobs because there was not enough money, and it was not like if we were in Cuba, that all we had to do was study. Here we had to work, both my sister and I in order to get a university education. So anyway, it was only a matter of how we were going to do it; it was not ever a question of whether or not we were going to go to the university. Which was a matter of how we would have the money for the books and whatever else was necessary. So I went to Junior College for three years. I loved Santa Monica College very much, and it was a wonderful time. I was a member of the student government, and it was interesting because when I went there, I was the only one

of about four or five Cubans in the entire college. When I went to Santa Monica College, which was in 1963 Latin American students did not become involved in student government. There were a few Hispanic students most of them from South America. They were the children of fairly well to do families that had been sent to the United States to study, and they were going to Santa Monica College. They all associated with each other, they all spoke Spanish, and I do not think that anyone of them was particularly interested in getting an education, but anyway, that was my perception.

*You are getting ahead of me, because eventually I will ask you about your education in the United States, but we have to step back to my next group of questions – while you were still in Cuba.*

#### **Immigration/Migration:**

*Please tell me at what point was the decision to leave the country made? (If you were part of the decision, why did you leave the country, how did you feel about leaving your country?)*

The decision to leave the country was very much a joint decision. My sister and I were going to private school and the students in our school were very politically involved. A small group of us had been very politically involved during the Batista regime, but we were just observers. Some of the older ones had been involved in doing a few things against Batista. Then when Castro took over, it took only a few months and we were again involved in anti-Castro activities. The majority of the students in secondary school (because there were primary and secondary school divisions) got involved in anti-Castro activities. Eventually, we did not go to school anymore. Basically what happened is that the Principal of the school before she left the country offered my parents to get my sister and I out of the country with scholarships. She was doing the same for her nephew and a cousin of her nephew. My father refused to have us leave the country because he was convinced that Castro would not last very long, and he was not about to have his children leave the country. Eventually the private schools were taken over and we stopped going to school. I was able to finish the 4<sup>th</sup> year of high school and my sister finished the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of high school. Once the government took over our school, we refused to back to school. For a year we were pretty much stuck at home because it was against the law not to go to school, and we could not be seen during regular school hours. Although all of our neighbors whether they were with the government or not, knew that we were not going to school. At any rate, eventually one day, I overheard my mother commenting to my grandmother that we had been offered the possibility to leave the country and my parents had refused to allow us to leave. I told my sister, and we were both enraged that we were not consulted, because at that time we were old enough to have been consulted. I believe that I was 14 and a half years old or maybe 15 and they made a decision that had been taken without our being involved. So we made it very clear that we were very unhappy. We also made it very clear to my parents

that we were not going to participate in any activities that had anything to do with the government. Meaning we would not go back to school. We refused to go back to the old school, because it was part of the government, and we were not going to be stuck at home permanently. It also became less clear when Castro was going to leave the country. Even one lady from the neighborhood that was with the government, but my mother had been a teacher for her two daughters; this lady told my mother that she should really think about getting us out of the country. So anyway, at that point it was very difficult, anybody that we knew who could help had pretty much left the country. But we were able to go through an old teacher of my sister who had been teaching Religion after school hours, through a family member of hers, who was a good friend of Polita Grau (a key person in obtaining visas for children to leave through Operation Peter Pan) my mother was able to call this lady. My mother called this lady and told her "we are trying to get my two girls out, and I do not know if you could help us, and if you know anybody, but we are desperate." This lady called her family member, and this lady put us in touch with Polita Grau, and we went to Polita Grau's home and I am not even going to go into that, because it is a long story, but anyway, we got the visas. We left the country with the help of Polita Grau. And yes, definitely my sister and I were part of the decision making. We wanted to leave the country, because we figured out that after the Invasion of Bay of Pigs (1961) we pretty much lost our beliefs that things were going to change, that Castro was going to be deposed as quickly as we thought. I think that personally, I was really disappointed in the way that the Cuban people acted and all those people that were rounded up and put in jails and in theaters (due to lack of prison space, theaters were used to keep prisoners). My sister and I were very lucky that the people in the block committee decided not to stick us in jail, because there were about six or seven people that were "worms" (the term Castro's people used for people against Castro) and the committee decided just to watch us closely. I think after that time, is when my parents changed their minds and we decided to actively try to get out.

***What did you know about what your life would be like in the United States?***

I had no idea; as a matter of fact I was very scared. All I knew about the United States is what I had seen in the movies. I had seen a lot of gangsters' movies so I was very concerned that I might be a witness to a Mafia murder and that then the Mafia would try to kill me. I was more scared than anything else, but the reality was that we were very lucky, because we were very involved in anti-Castro activities at school. We were very lucky that we had not ended up in jail. I have a classmate and a teacher, one of the teachers died in jail to the best of my knowledge, and another classmate of mine was in jail for about 20 years, and they were part of our same group. My sister and I both knew that we were going to end up in jail. I was really scared and I think that my sister was also scared about coming to the United States, but we knew that if we stayed in Cuba we would have ended up in jail, so as scary as coming to the United States was, going to jail was more scary.

## **Life in the United States:**

### ***Please tell me, how was life in the United States without your parents?***

Life in the United States without our parents was very crummy. I hated Florida City, so did my sister. We totally thought that Miami sucked, and when we went to Villa Maria in San Antonio, we thought that it was a horrible experience. I personally disliked most of the nuns in Villa Maria. I loved the nuns at the school I went to, at St. Theresa's Academy. Living at Villa Maria was the pits. The experience of being separated from our parents was a very difficult one. There were a lot of people who did a lot of nice things for us. In San Antonio, there were a lot of really sweet people who were very good to the "muchachitas" (girls). But I see the nuns at Villa Maria, the Mother Superior, and others as obstacles for us, rather than people who were being helpful to us, and also as people who were exploiting us. So I do not have particularly good memories of life in San Antonio, and I am very happy that I was able to get out of there after one year.

### ***Tell me about your education?***

***You were telling me earlier about your education in California, but first tell me about your education in San Antonio, what school did you go to? What was your first experience with language barrier and so on?***

In San Antonio, both my sister and I went to St. Theresa's Academy. There was a small group, I think that there were maybe not even 10 of us from Villa Maria that went to St. Theresa's. I think the nuns there were terrific, I truly enjoyed it. The experience as far as the language barrier, I think that the girls that were attending at St. Theresa's were very nice to the Cuban girls, both the Mexican and the Anglo girls. I thought that, that was very strange because the Mexican and the Anglo girls did not mix with each other, and these girls had known each other since grade school. They had been going to the same school for years, but they really were not friends. There was like a line, the Anglo girls stayed in one side, and the Mexican girls stayed in the other, and then both sides were friendly to the Cubans, so that was really strange. As far as the English language, it was my personal experience that I was able to think in English, and my grammar and spelling were excellent. It was better than that of the American girls', who would ask me how to spell things. But my pronunciation was atrocious, and it took me a while. I was able to think in English, but not really the way I do now. It was more difficult for me to think in English, and it would be slower, and a lot of the times I would be translating in my brain. But scholastically, all of the Cuban girls that went to St. Theresa's did well. All the Mexican and Anglo girls thought that we were geniuses and I think that was due to our studies in Cuba which were far advanced. We had studied World History and were more advanced in Math, so when we went to classes we already had had the curriculum that it was being taught. For instance, I was being taught World History, when I already knew it. So even if our English was deficient, and we did not know how to pronounce

things correctly, we knew the content of what we were being taught. So I personally did not have any difficulty with English, and I think that pretty much sums up our group at St. Theresa's.

***In what ways was the culture a barrier for you?***

I do not think that I had a culture shock. What was difficult for me was to live in Villa Maria. Once I got out of there, I have adapted to the American culture very easily, because one of the things that I believe in is that wherever you go you try to do what the natives do. I do not think that anybody taught me along the way, but it just seems logical to me, that if I were in China, I would not be trying to cook Cuban food in China. So when I travel I try to learn to do what the local people do and I try to blend in, and that is just something that I have always done. I think that the people that I have met in this country from the beginning have been 99.9 percent nice. I think when I came, first of all, Florida City was a shock to me, because we were like cattle there. We were all together, and there were a lot of people that were trying to make it nice for us, but we missed our parents. In San Antonio, well, that was a crappy city as far as I am concerned. But the people were nice. My big thing were the nuns, that is what made life difficult for me.

***How long did you stay in San Antonio?***

One year.

***You were lucky that your parents came soon.***

***My next group of questions is about Career Aspirations Choices and Decisions: Please tell me, what were your aspirations about careers in the United States?***

My aspirations were that I had to go to college, get a college degree no matter what it took. I decided that I could not chose a career that would take years and years to complete such as Medicine. So I discarded the idea that I was going to go to Medical School, and of course part of me was never interested in going to medical school, but I had pretty much been brain-washed that I was going to be a medical doctor. So that was something that had my parents had the money to support me through college, I probably would have gone to Medical School. But since it was a matter of supporting myself, my parents gave me food and board, but at that point when we first came to this country we were very limited financially. So I just decided to choose something that I could do, and I enjoyed that would give me financial security that was very important for me. I did not want to be a student eight or 10 years.

***What information did you have about career choices and what was your choice?***

I do not think that I had enough information about career choices. I think that at that time, that was about 40 years ago, I do not think that the information was as readily available as it was now. Not just for foreigners, but for everybody. I

think that the system has become more sophisticated, and that there is more financial aid for students. Right now people are able to get more information and get more financial aid and scholarship or whatever, there are more resources now. Forty years ago I think it was different. Even though there were counselors, for instance I did not know which career to chose, and I took a bunch of tests and I expected to be told what I should study. I expected that somehow to have it narrowed down. So when the counselor told me that I could basically study whatever I wanted because I had high scores in this and in that. I mean, he did not really narrow it down for me, I was very disappointed.

***Was that in your last year of high school or was it in College?***

No, that was in College.

***Did you do your senior year of high school in San Antonio?***

Yes.

***So, in your last year of high school they did not gear you into college at all?***

No.

***So you found out on you own, right?***

In Santa Monica College, they had resources, and they had a class where you took a whole bunch of tests to help you find the right career.

***How did you gain admission to an institution of higher education? Did you have to take the SAT or any other entrance exam?***

No, what happened is that when we went to St. Theresa's Academy they put us in grades based on our ages. In about a month and a half later, they moved us to different grades after they evaluated us. They found out that some of us were falling asleep in class because we already knew what they were teaching us. So they had first put me in 11<sup>th</sup> grade based on my age, and then they put me on 12<sup>th</sup> grade. My sister Yolanda was put in 7<sup>th</sup> grade or something like that, and then she was put in 11<sup>th</sup> grade. All of the Cuban girls were moved around, and I graduated from St. Theresa's with excellent grades. I had brought all of my grades from Cuba. I had them sent by mail, because at that time it was possible to do that. I had my best friend living in Florida, so I had been sending her by mail in small envelopes all the things that I thought were important. I sent her my family pictures, my grades and things like that. So I had my grades. Then I went to UCLA, and they told me that in spite of my excellent grades, I did not have enough of a track record in this country to be admitted to UCLA. They suggested that I first go to a Junior College, and they specifically suggested that I go to Santa Monica College. They said first establish a track record there, and then you

will be admitted. That is how come I went to Santa Monica College, because I had no SAT, all I had were my grades from Cuba and my grades for the one year I studied at St. Theresa's Academy.

***How did you pay for your college education?***

I was working part-time. When I first came here it was in June, right after I graduated from high school. There was a factory where my mother and other Cubans were working, and my sister and I got a job there for the summer, so that we could save money to go to school. I was admitted to Santa Monica College and during the school year, I worked part-time. We would work Saturdays in the factory, and also summer jobs. They were very nice that they let us do that, and then during the week, eventually I had a part-time job in a Santa Monica Newspaper, because I was studying Journalism at the time. So, I worked for the newspaper, and I also worked as a file clerk for a jewelry business and I worked making toys and at another time I worked making little head-bows. So I just had all these jobs, and Yolanda pretty much did the same. We had at least a couple of jobs all the time, so that we could at least make enough money to pay for school and books.

***What was your career choice?***

My original career choice was Journalism. Pretty much maybe because my father was a Journalist and I like to write. So I studied Journalism at Santa Monica College and I got my A.A. in Journalism there. I was pretty much involved in politics and student government politics. In UCLA at that time they did not have an undergraduate division for Journalism. They had a graduate program in Journalism, but you could not get a B.A. in Journalism. So what they suggested I do when I wrote to the graduate department in Journalism is that I study either Political Science or Psychology. I made one of the biggest mistakes of my life, I chose Political Science. When I went to UCLA, at that time it was a left leaning organization in Political Science. I was very out of place in there I hated it totally. I think back, and I think that my life would have been totally different if I had chosen Psychology or even English. It never occurred to me that I could have majored in English. By the time I was into my second year in UCLA, I hated it passionately. I was working pretty much at that time, full-time. I eventually graduated with my B.A. and I decided there is no way that I am going to go to UCLA anymore. Really at that time, convenience wise I guess UCLA was the closest school to me, but I was really fed up with going to school. Yolanda had a different experience at UCLA. She studied Spanish, and it was a different department and a different atmosphere. She loved UCLA as much as I hated UCLA. She eventually got her Masters and then her Ph.D. So it was very different. Every time that I have to go back to UCLA, and I have taken extension courses for script writing, and things like that, I do it because it is the closest university. So I am trapped, if I want to do something like that, I have to go to UCLA, but I really hate going there.



***Did your level of English proficiency affect your career choice?***

No, by the time I went to Santa Monica College, I had figured out that I had met girls in San Antonio who had been born in the United States, and their level of English proficiency was atrocious. I figured out that the Mexican girls were always among themselves, that they did not speak English a lot, and they were watching Mexican television and listening to Mexican radio. So one thing I did when I came to California, I decided that I would only associate with English speaking people. Even though in Santa Monica College there was quite a big group of Hispanics, who were South American students I would only say hello to them. I was a member of the Foreign Student Club. I would just say hello to the ones that spoke Spanish, but I would not become too friendly with them. I would choose friends from Turkey, or from Hungary. So I was part of a group that none of us spoke in Spanish.

***Did you have a role model?***

I think that my father was very definitely a role model. I admired my father very much when I was growing up. He was a writer, a Journalist, he was a wonderful father, he was the Principal of a night school, he worked very hard. My mother worked also very hard, but I really had my father more as a role model than my mother.

***Are you happy with your career choice?***

No, I think that having chosen Political Science was a major mistake in my life.

***What do you do for living?***

I am a translator and interpreter. I am a Certified Translator and Interpreter. I have my own business, and I like doing that very much. It is not something that 40 years ago I would have chosen, nor would it have been enough work here, for my wanting to choose this. But life changes and I am a Certified Translator and Interpreter and I do enjoy it.

***So you went back to school to pursue this certificate, right?***

Yes, I went to UCLA for one year for their Translator Certificate Program, and UCLA certified me, and then I took the State of California exam, and I became certified by the State.

***Is this the end of your educational endeavors?***

I do not know. I have no idea. Since I have gone to school several times throughout my life, I do not know what I will be doing in the future, who knows?

***How has your educational attainment impacted your life?***

I think the only thing that I have thought about is the other career choice that I would have made. Forty years ago, there were not the choices that there are now. I did not want to be a teacher. Both my parents were teachers, and when I grew up, people would come to me and say, "Oh, are you going to be a teacher like your parents?" And I would immediately say, no, I am not interested in kids, I do not like kids, and that was not a choice for me ever to be a teacher. I do not know if I had been able to go to another school to study Journalism. Actually there was an excellent college, which was far away for Journalism, I thought that I would have been a Journalist, but the way things worked out, I was not.

***Now my last group of questions is under the general category:***

***Please, tell me in your opinion, what do you see as the most positive and the most negative experience as a Pedro Pan child?***

The most positive is that this experience taught most of us to emancipate and to be independent, to rely on ourselves, not on our parents. From that point of view we were forced to grow up more than we had to, had we stayed in Cuba, under normal circumstances. It made us more self-reliant. It made us be more realistic and we face life in a more pragmatic matter. For me the negative is always going to be the nuns in Villa Maria. I know that there are a lot of negative things that one can say, and there were a lot of good things that we found along the way, I mean, nice people that tried to make the life as good for us as they could. So for me the big negative were the nuns, how controlling they were and how horrible they were. I mean, I have nothing good to say about those nuns in Villa Maria.

***What about loosing your country?***

I do not feel that I have lost my country. I am a political exile, but that is not related to my experience as a Pedro Pan child. Being a political exile is aside of being a Pedro Pan. I think Pedro Pan was a protection for us, it gave us the ability to leave the country promptly. It enabled the parents to get the kids out before the government got a hold of them. So I never associated the Pedro Pan experience with loosing my country. I lost my country because of Fidel Castro, and I made a very conscious decision of getting out of there. If I had not been a part of Pedro Pan, I would not have been able to get out and I would have been locked up in jail. I am very thankful to Pedro Pan, I just wish that I had not had to live in San Antonio with those damned nuns.

***This concludes our interview. Thank you very much.***

## Transcription of Case IIa

### **Life in Cuba:**

*Please, tell me about your life and family in Cuba?*

My parents did not have college education. My father was a businessman; my mother was a housewife. I attended school in Cuba until the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I was the only child, and about my aspirations, I guess I did not have any at the time, such as being college-bound or anything of that nature until I finished secondary education. When I was in Cuba I had plans to attend the School La Progresiva de Cardenas, and I was going to be a boarder there, but I did not get to go there because I came to the United States.

### **Immigration/Migration:**

*Please tell me at what point was the decision to leave the country made?*

It was made because my parents wanted me to continue my education without the Communist indoctrination that was going on at that time. That was the main reason for us to leave Cuba.

*Where you part of the decision? Did they ask you if you wanted to go?*

Yes, they asked me.

*Why did you leave your country?*

Because of political reasons, because my father did not want me to grow up in a Communist society.

*How did you feel about leaving your Country?*

I was kind of happy because most of my friends were here already. You have to remember that my mother was coming with me. I do not know if you know that, do you?

*No, I did not know, or maybe I do not remember it.*

My mother was coming with me, but at the time when we were leaving at the Airport, she was told that her visa was a fake visa. She was left behind, and I had to come because they told us that if I did not come at that time, I was not going to be able to leave afterwards.

***So that must have been pretty scary, because you were not prepared to leave alone, right?***

Exactly, but I was told that she would come in a few days. But when she did not come, then I had to join the Pedro Pan group.

***What did you know about what life would be like in the United States?***

I did not know very much about it, I knew that there was going to be a lot of work, especially for my parents. Although at the time, I am sure you are familiar with the idea that they all thought that we were going back, and that we were just coming for a few months, and then we were going to go back. I did not have any negative perceptions of my life here in the United States.

**Life in the United States:**

***Please tell me how was life in the United States without your parents?***

At the beginning, especially the first few days, I would cry every day. It was terrible, the way I was missing my parents. I was terrified; I did not expect it to be this way.

***Was that at the Florida City Camp?***

Yes, and there we had all the turmoil of the place, getting adjusted to the place, and then moving on to another place in San Antonio, it was very scary. Although I always felt the support of my friends around me, if it had not been for them, I would have been paranoid, I always had their support.

***Tell me about your education?***

My first encounter with school in the United States is that had to repeat 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I had finished 8<sup>th</sup> grade in Cuba, and since I was one of the youngest in Villa Maria, (I was 13 years old) they sent me to St. Henry's with another young girl that was there. I felt kind of alone, because most of the girls were in high school. But there I found a couple of girls that helped me very much, especially with the language. I kind of sailed through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and I was moved to another school, The Blessed Sacrament Academy. I did not want to learn English though for the first couple of years. I was kind of reluctant to learn English. I do not know why maybe because I knew that I would go back. Maybe deep inside if I kind of succumb to the idea of learning English it was kind of maybe going away from the idea of going back to Cuba, so I was a little reluctant at the beginning.

***What was your experience with the English barrier?***

I was reluctant to learn, I really did not accept learning English until about two years after I was here.

***What adjustments did you have to make because of the language?***

At the beginning I used to think in Spanish and translate, like everybody does, they think in their native language and then switch to the foreign language.

***In what ways was the culture a barrier for you?***

Well, when I came to San Antonio there were a lot of girls from Mexican-American descent, and I figured that these people who knew English would help me. But as it turned out, it did not happen that way. It seems that a lot of these girls in school that spoke Spanish did not get close to us. I do not know maybe because they were embarrassed of their Spanish or something to that effect, but most of the support did not come from them, as a matter of fact, it came from a lot of the Anglo girls.

***How have the differences in culture impacted your life?***

To be honest with you, the American culture came to me in a kind of gradual way. It was not something that happened all of a sudden. In my case, it was kind of a gradual change and gradual adjustment that I was making. Since I was surrounded mostly by Spanish speaking people in school especially at The Blessed Sacrament Academy, where most of the girls that I associated with were either from Cuba or from Mexico. It was not a radical change in the culture.

**Career Aspirations Choices and Decisions:**

***Please tell me what were your aspirations about careers in the United States?***

I always thought of going to college, because at home there was not a question of me not going to college. It was not if, it was always when. Going to college was always in the back of my mind.

***Had you decided on a specific career at that time?***

Not really, at that time I did know what I wanted to be.

***What information did you have about career choices?***

Not very many. When I finished high school, the social worker tried to railroad me into Business School and things of that nature, rather than going into a four year college.

***So, how did you find your way to college?***

I was going to go to Our Lady of the Lake College, which is a four-year university in San Antonio, but when I took the SAT I did not do well. At the University they told me that it would be better for me to go to a Business School

or something of that nature and I said no way, I am going to college. So I decided to go to a community college. I went to San Antonio College for a year and a half, and then after that, I transferred to a four-year college, The University of the Incarnate Word.

***So, that is how you arrived to that decision. How did you gain admission to an institution of higher education, did you have to take an entrance exam in addition to the SAT?***

I had to take an entrance exam to be admitted to The University of the Incarnate Word, and I did very well. I also did very well for the one-year and a half that I went to San Antonio College; I had very good grades.

***How did you pay for your college education?***

I took a loan, a Cuban loan.

***Did you have a Cuban loan? Was this something specific for Cubans?***

Yes.

***Was this only available in San Antonio, Texas or was it also available throughout the United States?***

No, it was a Federal loan.

***At what year was that?***

It was during 1968 through 1970.

***How did you find out about the Cuban loan?***

Through the Financial Aid Officer at The Incarnate Word.

***That was interesting, I never heard about that. What was your career choice, ultimately?***

I decided to go into teaching. Because I love literature and the Spanish language, and I did a major in Spanish and Fine Arts, and I had a minor in History, and I loved the humanities, so I decided to go into teaching.

***Did your level of English proficiency affect your career choice?***

I do not think so. As a matter of fact, I thought that I was going to major in History.

***I see, so you were confident about your English, but it just happened that you liked Spanish, right? Did you have a role model or role models?***

Actually, my first major choice was going to be History, but I had a professor from Mexico City. She was a Professor of Spanish Literature, and she became basically my role model. That is the reason that I wanted to go into Spanish.

***Are you happy with your career choice?***

Very happy.

***Is this the end of your educational endeavors?***

I think so. I have a Masters Degree. I have a few hours of work towards the Ph.D., but I never completed it.

***So, right now you work as a Spanish Professor in a university, right?***

Yes.

***How has your educational attainment impacted your life?***

It has facilitated making things that I like to do, and in a way I have been a role model for my children. Financially it has not been very rewarding, because they do not pay well in this profession.

***This is a general kind of question. Please tell me in your opinion, what was the most positive experience and the most negative experience as a Pedro Pan child?***

As a matter of fact, I think that negative, I guess is what we had to go through at the time that we were living it. But as I look back, I think it was schooling for me. It has made me a survivor; it has made me very assertive. It made me independent; also it has made me look at life in a different way. There is always something in the future that will be better, a positive part of my life.

***What about the negative side?***

Negative side, to be honest, I cannot see this as being any negative, except at the time when I was living it. I cannot say that I had a negative effect from that experience per se. I get along very well with my parents. I know that many people from Pedro Pan had had problems with that. But in my case, I haven't. By nature, I am a very optimistic person; so maybe that is one of the reasons I do not dwell on the negative and see it as a positive. I do see that experience - for me as being one that has taught me to be a survivor and look for the positive aspects in life.

***This concludes our interview. Thank you very much.***

7/31/01

### Transcription of Cse IIb

#### **Life in Cuba:**

##### ***Please, tell me about your life and family in Cuba?***

My life in Cuba was very private. I was not allowed to play with other friends, only my relatives. I went to school and my friends from school were able to come for birthday parties and things like that. But as far as having friends, my parents did not let us play with other girls. Everything had to be at home, they were very strict.

##### ***Where you the only child?***

No, I had a brother, but my brother was allowed to mingle and play more with his friends, but when it came to the girls, they were very strict with us.

##### ***You were just your brother and yourself, right?***

Exactly, and in the same house my grandparents had a big house in Camaguey, they lived downstairs, and on top of that house there were two houses, one where we lived and another one where my cousins used to live.

##### ***So, you could play with your cousins?***

Yes, I could play with my cousins, but that was it.

##### ***Tell me about your education?***

I went to Colegio Teresiano, in Camaguey, Cuba, a private Catholic school with nuns. That was my only school in Cuba, and I did have a religious education, and again, the nuns were very strict.

##### ***Tell me about your aspirations for career?***

In Cuba I never thought what I wanted to be in the future. I come from a well to do family, I had no problem money wise. It never occurred to me that at some point I had to work. I took everything for granted that was the way it was going to be, so I never thought what I wanted to be in the future.

#### **Immigration/Migration:**

##### ***At what point was the decision to leave the Country made?***

I was not part of the decision. My parents made the decision with my aunt. One day, my parents told my brother and me that we were leaving for a short time, and that was it. So we had no part of the decision whatsoever when it came to that.



***How did you feel about leaving your Country?***

I felt sad, because I was leaving behind my mother and my father, but at the same time I felt that it was going to be for a short time, so it was like going on vacation.

***What did you know about how life would be like in the United States?***

I had no idea, other than I knew I had to learn a foreign language.

**Life in the United States:*****Please tell how was life in the United States without your parents?***

The first year was very lonely, very frustrating, because I had never been separated from my parents. I was very close to my Mom, and the fact that she was not there for my first birthday, which took place a month after I left Cuba, and the language, which I had a very rough time learning English. Even though I knew a few words, I did not want to say any words wrong, so I kept to myself and I did not speak too much English, so that made it more difficult for me to learn the language.

***Tell me about your education?***

In the United States I went to The Blessed Sacrament Academy, and I finished high school in 1965. My parents came from Cuba in 1966. So I had to come to Miami and started Miami Dade Junior College right away. I worked part-time in order to go to the College, and then I went to the University of Miami for another two years. I got my B.A. in Business Administration with a minor in Taxes, and I also went to Barry University to get my Master in Pastoral Ministries.

***What was your experience with the language barrier?***

It was terrible, because of the fact that I had a very rough time learning the language because I did not speak it as much as I should.

***What adjustments did you have to make because of the language?***

I kept to myself, and that is something that even now, I still keep to myself. I have a hard time socializing or mingling with other people.

***So the language barrier kept you from communicating with other people?***

Exactly, it kept me from communicating.

***In what ways was the culture a barrier for you?***

First of all, in Cuba you are not allowed to take a bath for three hours after you eat. When I was in school, right after we had lunch, they took us to the pool, and that was a shock. Also the fact that we slept in a big dormitory with a lot of beds, and I was used to have my own room, so this was another shock in addition to the language and life that was different. Also when we arrived at the Blessed Sacrament Academy in San Antonio Texas, I felt totally misunderstood. First of all, people did not understand how come we were not black, because we came from an island in the Caribbean. They also thought that we were in the United States because our parents did not want us. They thought that we were outcasts of society, and they treated us in that way.

***So, did you think that you were going to die for going in the pool after eating lunch?***

Right, that was scary.

***How have these differences in culture impacted your life?***

That has left a very big mark in my life, in the fact that I am a very private person, but at the same time very independent. But at the same time, what I have I had it because of my own efforts. Because I wanted to go to school, I wanted to save money, I wanted to better myself, so whatever I have is because of what I have earned, but at the same time, I am a very private and independent person.

**Career aspirations, choices and decisions:**

***You mentioned something earlier about how you decided to go to college. What were your aspirations regarding a career in the United States and how did you arrive to that decision?***

I always wanted to better myself, and I think that was the main reason I decided on a career on Accounting, because I knew that was going to be a quick education and something that was going to help me make money right away.

***What information did you have about career choices? Did anybody give you choices?***

In school I took Bookkeeping, and I liked it, and I knew that I was good at it, so that helped decide on it.

***Did you have a Guidance Counselor that discussed what you wanted to be?***

In Miami Dade Junior College, at the beginning, yes you go to Counselor and they advice you.

***What about in high school, did anybody guide you?***

No. This was very typical, they were not worried about our education.

***When did you decide weather or not to go for post-secondary education?***

I was very involved in the church, and they offered me a part-time job being a Religious Education instructor, and at the same parish, they talked to me about getting my Masters, because that would help in being a Religious Education instructor.

***Well that was about your Masters, how did you get admitted to an institution of higher education?***

For the 4-year University or for the Graduate University? For the University you take a test and they place you. But for Barry University (for Masters) I had to take an entrance exam in order to get into that school, and I passed it without problems.

***How did you pay for your education?***

I paid for it myself. I was working part-time and I paid everything as I went along.

***You told me your career choice is Accounting, right?***

Exactly.

***Did your level of English proficiency affect your career choice?***

No, because it had to do with numbers.

***Did you choose that career on purpose, or you just happened to like that?***

Maybe, unconsciously I picked that.

***Did you have a role model?***

No.

***Are you happy with your career choice?***

Yes, I am very happy, I have done very well, it has provided me with a good life, and I am very happy with what I do.

***Is this the end of your educational endeavors?***

For now, yes.

***How has your educational attainment impacted your life?***

I live a good life, I enjoy doing things, I travel. I have also supported my parents in their old age because of my career.

***When they arrived from Cuba, were they very happy with what you were doing?***

When they arrived from Cuba I was going to college. Yes they helped me, because I did not have to give them money, but yes, they did help me.

**General:**

***What do you see as the most positive and most negative experience as a Pedro Pan child?***

Positive, my independence, my career. Negative, sometimes, I feel very very lonely. I have a hard time socializing with other people that I do not know. If I had stayed in Cuba my life would have been a lot different, but then again, I do not know how my life in Cuba would have been. I do not know if it would have been better, I have no idea. The fact that I came through operation Pedro Pan has made me very shy, secluded or lonely person.

***So you believe that it has affected your personality. Do you think that you would have been more outgoing if you had stayed in Cuba?***

Yes, definitively.

***This concludes our interview, Thank you very much.***

## Transcriptions of Case IIc

### **Life in Cuba:**

#### ***Please, tell me about your life and family in Cuba?***

I lived in Matanzas, which is a small city at that time of about 80,000 people located about an hour East from Havana, and it was a port and a beach town. I was one of four sisters in the family. We also had a very large extended family. My father was a banker and my mother a housewife. I had three older sisters. The oldest finished high school. The second went to Business School, but got married at 18 and never worked. The third became a Music teacher, for which you did not need to go to college but to Music School.

#### ***Tell me about your education?***

I went to private Catholic school until secondary, and then I changed to public secondary school.

#### ***Did you like school in Cuba?***

Well, so-so. Just that at that age, I don't think I really liked school, but I liked to socialize and read a lot.

#### ***What about your aspirations for career? Did you have aspirations for career in Cuba?***

Not at the time.

### **Immigration/Migration:**

#### ***Please tell me at what time was the decision to leave the Country made?***

I think when I was in the second year of high school, I decided that I wanted to leave because they had interrupted classes so many times for political reasons, and a lot of my friends had left. I did not like what was going on, so I asked my parents to let me go, and they did not want to.

#### ***So, you were part of the decision?***

I was the one who made the decision, and then I asked them. It took me quite a while to convince them!

#### ***How did you feel about leaving your Country?***

I was not scared, because I did not know what was ahead, but I was 15 years old, and I thought that it was going to be a great adventure. I always wanted to come

to the United States. When you are 15 there are a lot of contradictory feelings involved in that decision.

***What did you know about how your life would be in the United States?***

I had no idea. I just thought that I was not going to stay here this long.

***Life in the United States:***

***How was life for you in the United States without your parents?***

It was hard because I missed them terribly, I had no money, and nobody to help me financially. And of course, at the beginning there was the language/cultural barrier.

***Tell me about your education in the United States?***

I went to a Catholic private high school, in San Antonio, Texas, called Our Lady of the Lake High School, for the last two years of high school. Then after that, Our Lady of the Lake also had college, so I took one year of a college Business Program, which made me a secretary. Then I came to New York to work.

***What was your experience with the language barrier?***

It took me about six months to actually be comfortable speaking in English, and getting around and getting things done. I did not find it to be a great barrier.

***What adjustments did you have to make because of the language?***

At the beginning you have to formulate your thoughts in Spanish and then translate them into English, and whatever feedback you get, you translate it into Spanish and then formulate the response in English. So it took a little longer. I believe that the process in which you stop thinking in your native language maybe takes about two years.

***In what ways, was the culture a barrier for you?***

It was not a barrier because I loved it. I loved being here and really liked the fact that I was becoming part of this culture.

***So you have adjusted well?***

Oh yes, absolutely.

***How have the differences in cultures impacted your life?***

Well, it impacted my life because I feel that I have two cultures. So the differences in the culture, first of all I think that I focus on, according to the basis of Cuban culture in the very same things that I focus on the basis of American culture. I think that it is great that you have two different cultures to draw from when you have to make decisions, when you need to go on with your life about what you want to do. I think we have the best of both worlds. I think that I've said that I have been here almost 40 years, and lived there only 15 years, so I am not Cuban anymore. It is very difficult to decide where you belong. Because I think you tend to in your mind, belong to both places. I think people would understand that, for instance, can you love two men at the same time? Maybe you can.

**Career Aspirations Choices and Decisions:**

***Please tell me, what were your aspirations for career in the United States?***

Ok. I really wanted to be a photo-journalist for the National Geographic, but that took a lot of dedication and drive, and I really did not have money to pay for my education, and I needed money, because the program in which I was in ended at nineteen. My parents were still in Cuba. I really did not have anyone to depend on, so I did have to start working. So with the one year of Business school that I had, I had to go and work in a bank. I always thought that I would like to go back to school one day, and I could become a photographer. I did go back to school, but I did not become a photographer. I became a teacher instead.

***How did that happen?***

Because it was easy. I got married, I had children, I needed a career that allowed me to spend time with them. I thought teaching would be easy, because basically I already knew Spanish, I did not have to study too hard for that. I finished first my Bachelor's degree in Secondary Education in Spanish, and then I also went for my Master's in Secondary Education in Spanish. Of course, later I found out how tough teaching can be, although I am not at all sorry about my career choice.

***What information did you have about career choices?***

A lot.

***When you were in high school did anybody talk to you about going to college? I guess they did, they let you go to Our Lady of the Lake College, right?***

Yes, you know, at the time, my opportunity for college was so limited. They decided to steer me into the Secretary Business Program. There was also an offer

to become a teacher, and I don't know what government agency sponsored this. But they did say that they would pay for my education if I stayed for the four years and became a teacher. Then, I would be obligated to teach wherever they sent me for two more years. I was interested in pursuing my education, but at that time, when you are eighteen the idea of thinking of a commitment of six years more seemed like eternity, so I did not go for it. I also wanted to make money.

***When did you decide whether or not to go for post-secondary education? Did you decide immediately after high school?***

No. This is after I've got my Secretary Certificate and started to work in a bank in New York.

***How many years had passed?***

About nine years after I was working, I got married and my husband was going to night school, while the bank was paying for education. So, he said, if I am not going to be home, why don't you go back to school too? I went to Pace University. At the time, I was thinking of taking Business courses, since I was working in a bank. I was doing pretty well, I had now become a Bank Officer. I had left the secretarial work behind, and I was more of a managerial type of work.

***How did you pay for your education?***

The Bank paid for my college education up to my Associate's Degree. Then I got pregnant, and I did not go back to school for another five years, and then my husband and I paid for the rest of my education, but it was a State school, so it was not that expensive.

***Did your level of English proficiency affect your career choice?***

No, not at all, but I can say that my level of Spanish proficiency affected my career choice.

***Did you have a role model?***

I can't think of anybody.

***Not even photographer in the National Geographic?***

Yes, yes, that never happened, but I did think of it.

***Are you happy with your career choice?***

Yes, very happy, it has been very rewarding, really great.



***And you are also enriching your language and culture, right?***

Oh definitely, when I came back to teach Spanish, I really learned more, since I do teach a lot of Hispanic students from all over Latin America, so I have enriched my language.

***Is this the end of your educational endeavors?***

No. I still take several courses in teaching strategies and learning styles, because you have to keep up with new theories, and it affects your salary and eventually your retirement.

***How has your educational attainment impacted your life?***

Oh, first of all, you feel this great sense of pride, and when you are proud of yourself, you've accomplished something. I hate to use this word, but it seems to work at this moment, self-esteem, it affects your self-esteem. And of course, it has impacted me financially because I am making pretty good money. It did open a lot of opportunities for me.

**General:**

***Please tell me in your opinion, what was the most positive and most negative experience as a Pedro pan child?***

The most positive of being a Pedro Pan is that it actually prepared me for life. Because once you've gone through something like that, you have been poor like a rat; you have been without a family and you have been kind of homeless; depending on the kindness of strangers; you do develop a self-sufficiency that I do not think I would have developed if I had stayed in Cuba. And then the people that I had been with in San Antonio have been my life support throughout all these years. If I had not had this experience, I truly believe my life would have been much poorer in growth and experience.

***What about negative?***

I think that as an exile, you always have a big hole in your heart, and your personality. Because you can't go back home again. I mean, some people have gone back, I can't. I think there is a big sadness and even though I've lived here for almost 40 years the sense of not belonging is a sense of loss that is always there. Because you did not leave there voluntarily, it was kind of taken away from you. Even though my life has turned out better than I ever dreamed, there is always the question of what could have happened, and I could have had a totally different life, and yet I love my family here. But I have lost most of my family. Because half of us are here, some of us are in New York, some of us are in

Miami, some of us are in California, in Spain, whatever. We had a very large family that was lost.

*So, it was a big tragedy, but at that time you did not see it, right?*

We never thought that it was going to last this long. We thought that like with every other bad government we had before, you wait a couple of years, and everybody would be back. I do not think that any of us expected this to happen. And yet, it was kind of gradually that we became assimilated. In my case, I married an American, we have American children, we have a big network of American friends, and before you realize it you say, hey I am an American now. But you still have that thing, that whenever I hear Cuban music, or I read a lot of books about Cuba, anything that comes up, you realize that you miss it.

*This concludes our interview. Thank you.*

### Transcription of Case IIIa

#### **Life in Cuba:**

#### ***Please, tell me about your life and family in Cuba?***

I was born in a rural town, very close to Havana, and I lived there until I left to the United States, when I was 16 years old. My parents were separated most of the time, so I do not remember my father living in the house for too long. He would come and visit. We lived right next to my grandfather, my aunt, my uncle and my cousin. We were two children, my brother and I. We were one big family with the two houses united. We would have lunch and diner together, and everything. This happened when I was eighteen years old. Before that, I had a very good life with my father and my mother. We lived in a farm my grandparents from my father's side had a farm. In fact, my father had a lot of money in Cuba, but my mother's family didn't. However, my mother's family was very well regarded family in Cuba. They were honest people my grandfather, on my mother's side was a Captain for the "Mambi" forces during the Cuban Independence War. My grandmother was a teacher. My grandfather's mother was the mayor for the town where I lived, so my family was very well regarded. My mother and all her brothers and sisters had professional careers. One was a lawyer, another one an architect and the others were teachers, so they had class or "rango" (prestige) and my father was the son of a Spaniard carpet-bagger. He had large farms close to the town where we lived. My grandmother was also a Spaniard, but her family had a lot of money. But my mother's family had more "rango" (prestige) than they did. My father was five years younger than my mother was, so he decided when people asked him - when are you going to get married? Because he was a very good catch, and he said that he wanted the most beautiful girl in town, which happened to be my mother. They got married, but they did not get along at all from day one. So, the marriage deteriorated with the years, and they separated.

#### ***Tell me about your education, and if you ever thought about your aspirations for career in Cuba?***

I never had an aspiration for a career in Cuba, because I hate to study. But that was not a question. I had to do what I was supposed to do. I went to grammar school because my mother was a Home Economics teacher there in my hometown. My aunt was the Superintendent of Schools, so we were not to say anything. We were going to have an education, and period. My mother did not believe in not doing anything in the afternoon. So when I came home from school, I had to study English, Typing and Sawing classes. So I was always studying something. I went to "Escuela Superior," which 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades (Junior High School), and then I went to the City of Havana, to Instituto Edison,

so I did two years of High School. I had two more years to graduate when I came to the United States.

**Immigration/Migration:**

***At what point was the decision to leave the Country made?***

I had no idea of what was happening in Cuba. I was very well kept from every problem whatsoever. So all of a sudden I hear this talk that one of my uncles left town and came to the United States. Then I heard we have to go, we have to go, and my grandfather was living at the time, and I knew that they were waiting for my grandfather to die before we all could emigrate. Which was not really emigrating, it was just going away for a few months until we could come back. My brother was very anxious to leave the country, even though he was younger than I was, he knew more about it. He was working in the Counter-Revolution movement, so he got in touch with a friend of his who was already in Miami and asked him for the money orders. When he got it, somehow, my uncle had learned about the Pedro Pan operation, of course we did not know that it was called Pedro Pan either, and this is the way that we'd got my brother was out. And the minute my brother out, my mother decided that I had to go.

***Did they discuss this with you or gave you a choice?***

Not at all, they just came and said, "Guess what? You are going to the United States. Let's pack your bags. This is what you are wearing." They did not even let me choose what I wanted to take out. They said you are going to go just for a few months, we think you are going to like it, and that's it.

***What did you know about what life would be in the United State?***

Well, no. I had been invited to come to Miami in the mid 50's with my aunt and uncle, but I did not make it. Most of my cousins, when they finished school they would come here after the university. So it was a trend in my family that we would eventually come here to school and then go back. So I did know about life here, and I was learning English all the time, and there was always a story about here, but to me, I really could not tell you that I really knew.

***Tell me about your education in the United States?***

Actually everything was decided for me, because I came in a flight as a Pedro Pan. They told me what school to go to. When I got to the school, they told me what courses to study, what subjects I had to take. Since I was not interested, because I really did not like to study I was not really paying attention to that. I just did what I was told, as far as the school is concerned. Even though I had studied English a lot, I did not understand most of it. So to me it was an impact that I had to speak English, and since I was coming back to my country as soon as

possible, I did not make it a point to learn or anything. Since I am very glad to what happened to me, and I am very glad for the education that I had, and that I can now express myself in this culture.

***Have you adjusted well and feel acculturated with the American culture?***

I did later on in life, but at that time it did not matter to me. I did not like to second look for friends that spoke that language, I just wanted somebody that would speak my language and would understand. Now in later years, I understand better. In languages there is not really a barrier, the barrier is really idiosyncrasy. Even now that I can speak English in this heavy accent that I have, I have to explain myself before I come into a one-year old baby. So for people to know who I am, I act in such a way. So to me, language is not really a barrier, it is the idiosyncrasy.

**Career Aspirations Choices and Decisions:**

***Tell me what were your aspirations about careers in the United States?***

Nothing at all, at that time, when I finished high school, I knew that I had to go out and earn a living. So what was easiest for me was to become a secretary And that is what I have been doing.

***Did anybody give you information about career choices in high school?***

No, I think my parents came when I was still in high school, and I think they were also adjusting to go back to Cuba. So they did not really care much about what we did here, at the beginning. Then, I did not have the money to go. It would have been a great imposition on my family, because I was working and I had to bring money to the house, so we could all live. But at the same time, my brother did want a career, so if I had really wanted it, they would have made the sacrifice, but I did not want to.

***How did you become a secretary?***

Because I was studying Commerce in Cuba, and I had typing, and I was going to an American school that would teach me in English and in Spanish. So, I knew typing as well as stenography and I was bilingual.

***Did you attend Trade School or Business School in the United States?***

No, I already knew the skills.

***Did you have a role model, somebody you admired and wanted to be like that person?***

Never, I have always been very dependent and I love the way I am.

***Are you happy with your career choice?***

I really do not have a career. What I do is Public Relations and I am the Office Manager for my husband's firm. I love to do Public Relations.

***Is this the end of your educational endeavors?***

Yes.

***How has your educational attainment impacted your life?***

Well, it has opened my horizons to make good friends and it has allowed me to integrate into the system.

***How about your children, what did you want for your children in terms of education?***

My husband is mostly pro education. I think that he is the motive behind my children's education. They both have wonderful education. One is an architect, and the other one is a teacher, and they are both seeking more education. I do not think that it comes from my side of the family, it comes from their father.

**General:*****Please tell me your opinion as to what was the most positive or most negative experience as a Pedro Pan child?***

The most positive experience for me it was that we had to come by ourselves. It was a comfort to know that everybody was going through the same traumas that I was going through. Everybody was about the same age that I was, so I was able to make good friends with the people that I was living at the time, and I did not feel so outcast. I felt that I had a home, I felt that I had 40 girls that were going through the same things that I was. If they were there, why would not I. If they can go through this experience, so can I. They gave me encouragement. I never felt alone, even though I missed my parents a lot, and I felt alone in my own way. But I think that it would have been terrible if I had gone by myself and gone to a foster home, for example, instead of going to a home where we were that there were 40 of us together. It was like being in an enclave. Outside was a very strange world, but inside within these walls I had girls that were going through the same things I was, that were thinking the same way that I was thinking, that were crying and laughing the same way that I would cry and laugh.

***What was the most negative experience as a Pedro Pan?***

I would have wanted to come out with my entire family instead of coming by myself. So the same thing becomes the most positive and the most negative. I

had cousins that lived in Miami and I loved very much and I could not stay with them because they did not have the money to house me. So, the family separated, and to me we are very close, and we are now very close. However, at that time when we needed each other the most, we had to go our separate ways because we had to find our own lives.

*Do you think that your career choice changed because you came to the United States?*

My career choice changed in a very-very big way. I think in Cuba I would have just been a housewife, I would have married immediately, and I would have had kids immediately. I do not think that I would have had a career in Cuba. I did it here because I needed the money. In Cuba I did not need the money for survival. So I would have stayed at home and been a housewife and done household chores.

*This concludes our interview. Thank you.*

*05/24/01*

### Transcription of Case IIIb

#### **Life in Cuba:**

*Please, tell me about your life and family in Cuba?*

I was in 1946, August 31st, in El Vedado, Clinica La Purisima Concepcion, in Havana, Cuba. I was the second child that came out of nowhere, because my brother was nine years older than I was and my mother was an older woman when she had me. I had a very, very happy childhood. I used to have a Kindergarten across the street from my house, so from the time that I could remember, I was going to school. Because the Kindergarten was across the street, and my parents thought that it was wonderful that they could just cross over and I knew everybody, the neighbors, and everything. So until about five, I was in Kindergarten, and I enjoyed that very much. I enjoyed bicycle riding, playing games, hide and seek, and I had a lot of friends in the neighborhood. When I was about five, I went to first grade in the school Las Ursulinas (a private Catholic school for girls) and I stayed in Las Ursulinas until I left Cuba, actually until they (Castro's government) closed the school, and shortly after that, I left Cuba. When I was five years old, my grandmother, the only grandmother I knew, because I never met my grandparents, except my mother's mother, she died when I was five. This was a big impact on my life, because she lived almost across the street and I used to visit her every day. She used to sit me down on her lap, she did not have any teeth, and she used to eat Cuban bread. I used to have a grand time just looking at this beautiful old lady with her hair combed in a bun, and she was the sweetest thing. One night, I remember that there was big commotion in my house around one or two in the morning. Everybody was running around, and my mother woke me up, and what is going on is that it just happened that my grandmother died in her sleep. She had a heart attack, and died in her early eighties or maybe late seventies, I don't know exactly her age. But that was a loss for me, because I was very attached to her. She lived with my mother's sister, my aunt, and I was very attached to them too. I was also very attached to my aunt on my father's side too. We had a good time, and I had a great childhood in Cuba. That's about it, what I remember.

*Tell me something about your education in Cuba and about your aspirations for career in Cuba.*

My mother wanted me to be a pharmacist (Doctor in Pharmacy) because she used to work at a big Pharmaceutical company in Havana until she met my father. So her dream for her was, your dad and I have a son and he is going to be a lawyer, and my daughter is going to be a pharmacist. But I was never good at Math, so I figured, if I am going to study Pharmacy, I have to study a lot of Physics, Biology, Chemistry, and that was not for me. I am a "letters" [Humanities] person. My father was a lawyer, and I guess I got that from him. I loved Law actually. So I told my parents, when I was asked what would I like to be. This



was around the age of 10 or 11, so I told them that I would like to go to the University of Havana and study something related to Languages or something related to working in an Embassy, such as Diplomacy or International Law. I liked Politics and I had an interest in the thinking of the world, what is going on in the world, and what makes things go on, so that was my dream. But of course, that never came true because the school was closed and I came to the United States.

*So maybe you would have gone for a Political Sciences or Diplomacy, right?*

Political Sciences or something related to Languages, maybe even Law, International Law, but my dream was to work in an embassy.

**Immigration/Migration:**

*Please tell me at what point was the decision to leave the Country made?*

The decision to leave the country was made as soon as my parents found out that Polita Grau (one of the key figures along with her brother, Ramon Grau in getting visas for the children of Operation Peter Pan) was taking care of all these children. My father knew a lot of people in Cuba. I mean he was well related with people higher up and influential with power in the government, that is before Castro, of course, and he knew about it. So, he immediately got in touch and got me the visa and the money order, and I was in a flight out of Cuba on March 3, 1962.

*Were you part of the decision – did they discuss it with you?*

Yes, they did, but even though they discussed the situation with me, I kept looking at the whole thing as a huge adventure. It was not able to matter from the standpoint that I was afraid. I had an aunt in Miami and my father always told me "if worse comes to worse, if something goes wrong, you call your aunt, and she will take care of you." I was aware of the situation in Cuba because my father was a person who was always the nervous type. He could never drive; in fact, my father was never able to drive a car. He was very afraid when Castro came into power he was a Judge in Guines, which is a small town in the province of Havana. He used to ride, and take the bus every day back and forth. One of the first things that Castro did was to take the Judges out of the picture. My father was without a job. My father immediately realized, well because my aunt left the Country in 1960, and when Castro was fighting in the mountains, she was one of the few people that I heard say that Castro was a Communist. Usually people in Cuba, like my brother was an idealist, and he was nine years older than me, and he was studying at the university and he said, "Oh these guys are not so bad, he is going to be good, bla, bla, bla." My aunt, who lives in Spain, she is 95 years old, mind you, she kept telling my father and the rest of the family: "This guy is a Communist, you will see he is no good for Cuba, bla, bla, bla." So when Castro came and did every thing he did, he started closing the Catholic schools and my

father was left without a job, he was living in constant fear. I experienced in my house, my father kept telling my mother, "Conchita, do not talk in a loud voice, talk very soft so that people around us do not hear us." He knew that the neighbors were the spies for the Committee of Revolution's Defense for the neighborhood, and he was beside himself. Also what made them decide to take me out of Cuba was because they were going to take away the *Patria Potestad* (parents' rights to custody of their minor children) from the parents. They thought that the government was going to send me away to the sugar fields to cut sugar cane. So, they decided we do not want that for our daughter, and we are going to send her to the United States. Of course their idea was to as soon as they could leave after me, but they could not make it until 1966, but they did make it. My brother left about two years after me through Mexico.

***How did you feel about leaving your Country?***

I was sad. Even though at that age, when you are 15 you do not realize the seriousness of the situation, but I was sad, because I knew that something was very, very wrong. I also knew that something had happened to my father, I knew that they had closed my school; I knew that they were going to send me out to the fields, and did not like it at all. What I did not know is that I was going to be away from Cuba for this long. It never even crossed my mind.

***What did you about how life would be like in the United States?***

I thought of it as an adventure. I really and truly did. I have always been a very positive person. At my age, at that time I was not afraid. I mean the education they gave, the way they brought me up I was sure of myself. I was afraid too the first night when I arrived, because I saw myself alone for the first time.

***Suddenly something hit you, that this is not just a 45 minutes flight, it is a much longer journey, right?***

Exactly, that happened that night, I would be more than happy to explain it to you.

**Life in the United States:**

***Please tell me what did happen that first night?***

First of all, I did not see the fear that I am sure other people saw because of the language barrier. My parents sent me to this school Las Ursulinas that had this policy that in the morning, everything was taught to you in Spanish, and in the afternoon in English. So from the time I was six years old I was taking English. I did not practice the language on a daily basis at home, but I did practice it on a daily basis in the afternoons at school, to the point that I knew American History, I knew who George Washington was, etc. So that part help me in a way psychologically, because I think that in a way, the fact that I knew the language to

a certain extent helped me. When I arrived they put me in a little bus [a van] I remember that, I came with another kid, who happened to be Marilyn's [one of the Pedro Pan's girls sent to San Antonio, Texas] brother. He was sitting next to me in the plane. I did not know him then, but I knew that he was traveling alone, and he was more or less in the same boat with me. When I arrived in the Florida City Camp, in the afternoon, and I believe it was on a Saturday, and there were very few kids around. I saw the counselor immediately and they took me to a huge dining room, that's what I remember, and they gave me milk and cookies, and they made me feel warm. I could tell you that they were trying to make me feel good, but I already felt bad, because I said, oh my God, where are my parents, what is this? Then they sent me to the Rodriguez' home. The Rodriguez were my house parents. I think he was a lawyer in Cuba too. When I arrived in the house I saw this cot. The first thing I thought was in the Army, because I remembered that I had seen pictures in Cuba with cots like this in the Army. But it was empty, and I think that it hit me, hey where is the rest of the people? What happened, why is this empty? Then they said, no today is Saturday, and usually at least once a month or twice a month we take the kids to Miami. That particular afternoon they had taken the kids to Bayfront Park.

So, I said, well I am going to settle down and then go to sleep because I am tired. I remember that around eight or nine o'clock that night I hear the commotion and the busses were coming in with the kids and the house parents. They came to the cot where I was trying to sleep, and I was not asleep, I had my eyes closed and I remember that my face was towards the wall. I remember that I heard the voice of a guy, and it was Rodriguez-Wallington said, 'Oops, we have a new daughter,' and then he sat at the edge of the cot and he then kind of touched me on my shoulder and he said we have a new daughter. That is when it hit me, and while he got up, I could feel the tears rolling down my eyes. Because it hit me - the separation, and I knew, I am in a strange country, with a different language. They gave me chewing gum that afternoon, they gave me candy, they gave me cookies and milk, but I felt the emptiness of being alone and being with people that were not my parents. So, the next morning I was fine. I got up like nothing, but I am a good pretender too.

***How was like in the United States without your parents?***

I missed them a lot, but I got along fine. I really got along fine. I used to write to them and call them at least once a month. I also used to call my aunt in Miami while I was at the Camp. Even though I felt alone I knew that they were going to come. My only hope is that I would see them again. I did not experience, I was not in constant pain or crying every day. I was worried about what would happen to me in the camp. And I remember that while in the camp, I think it was close to the beginning of the third month, the social worker came to me and asked me: where do you want to go? She gave me like a choice. I remember distinctly telling her I do not want to be in a foster home. I told her right off the bat. I want to be with a group of people of my same age in school. I do not want to be part of

a foster home. Because I have heard in camp people talking about other girls that had left and they were having a hard time. Because the foster homes where they had gone to, the other children that were there, the daughters of the parents that were going to take care of us were resenting these new kids that came in. I did not want that, I wanted to be in a situation where I could be in control.

***What school did you go to?***

I went to St. Theresa's Academy in San Antonio, Texas. Somebody made the choice for me.

***What was your experience with the language barrier?***

When I started at St. Theresa's I think it was the first week, the nuns they put me in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, because they wanted to see if I could understand and write, at that level. I lasted a week in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and then immediately they switched me to freshman year. I did freshman, I did Junior, and I did Senior. I skipped the sophomore year completely, they skipped me. And as far as school is concerned in St. Theresa's that was an eye opener. My first day at my freshman class, and that is another thing that I will never forget. There used to be a girl in my class called Dianne. She had dirty blonde hair, and she was the star of the class. She was the number one student. And the nun, of course, there were three of us that arrived at the class together, said "we have this group of girls from Cuba. Does anybody know where Cuba is?" And this girl, I felt so bad for her, because she jumped, but she did not even know, she put Cuba somewhere in the Pacific, completely off track from the Caribbean. Then I said to myself don't they teach geography? That was the first thing that hit me, I am going to breeze school, because if this kid is the number one student, and she does not even know where Cuba is, my God.

***Do you remember Connie Hunter?***

No.

***This was a girl that volunteered to teach us Special English or English as a Second Language to the Cuban girls during study Hall period.***

No. I don't recall her at all.

***Well, I remember, because there was an article in the Newspaper at the time, and also because I thought that it was very nice of her to try to teach us English. I also went to St. Theresa's Academy.***

***What adjustments did you have to make because of the language barrier?***

To me the language was not a barrier. I think what happened to me is that I decided that I was going to watch a lot of TV to hear and to try to get the slang, because you hear a lot of them. I liked to read too, and reading helped me. I really did not have a big problem with the language. As a matter of fact, I felt that every day that went by, my language proficiency got stronger, I never felt intimidated by English.

***In what ways was the culture a barrier for you?***

It was not. Because my father, when he graduated Law School, my grandfather, whom I never met, because he died before I was born, sent him to Philadelphia to study some courses, and he fell in love with the United States. My father used to watch the World Series, he used to buy the records for The Sound of Music and the King and I. I used to have these records at home, because my father bought them. He was very pro American, my father and he liked English in my house to the point that I do not think you are going to hear this from any of the people you will interview, but at my house we celebrated Christmas, "Los Reyes Magos" (January 6<sup>th</sup> or Little Christmas) and we celebrated Santa Claus too. At my house in Cuba we had Santa.

***My father had also lived in the United States too, and we were more aware of the American culture than most people, so I understand that. What adjustments did you have to make because of the American culture?***

Yes, I became very much involved with the American way of life, but deep down I did not want to lose my Cuban identity. It was funny, the music, even though I had never been one of those screaming girls that were part of the culture and stuff like that. I remember when the movie The West Side Story came out and I wanted to go and see it. You know, I got involved with the American culture, I embraced and I loved the American music. And again, going back to Cuba, I remember that my father used to listen a lot, to a radio station that played a lot of American music from the Hit Parade. I was aware of Nat King Cole, The Platters, and all that so I played into it with ease. I always knew deep down that this was not my country. Even though I blended very well, I still, as time went by and my parents were in Cuba, and I in the United States, I kept thinking, most seriously, hey what is going on in Cuba, and so on.

***How have these differences in culture impacted your life? How do you feel right now? Do you feel as much an American as much as a Cuban?***

I think there is a balance, because I have never, ever gotten to the point where I have lost my Cuban identity. And sometimes, sometimes, not every day, but sometimes, I feel that I am a stranger in a Country. You know, maybe because I am an exiled, even though I am an American citizen, I am here not by choice, but due to political reasons. That has always been clear in my mind. I did not come here because I wanted to improve my economic status. I came here because of

the political circumstances in my Country. I blended very well, but I would love before I die to be able to go and see a free Cuba and show my children.

**Career Aspirations Choices and Decisions:**

*Please tell me what were your aspirations about careers in the United States?*

I wanted to go to school very much, but in my case, my parents were older people, they were not young. Maybe some of the other girls, their parents were younger. My parents came in 1966, I was already working, and I had to help in the house. I had to help my brother and I had to help my father to a certain extent, because my mother came, but never worked. Then my father passed away in 1972. Then a big decision had to be made, my brother wanted to move to Miami, and I did not want to leave New York, but then I thought what am I going to do here alone. She has the grandchildren that are going to be in Miami, and she is going to be alone all this time. So I thought if I am going to start school, I am going to work I am going to move to Miami and settle down there, which is what I did. What I wanted to do when I was very young was to work to help financially and travel. I had this urge to travel. In my mind I wanted to study but it was not a priority.

*What information did you have about career choices?*

A lot of information I knew that I could go into many different fields. I knew that here in the United States if you wanted to get a loan, you could get a loan. I mean, school was available.

*When you were in high school did a guidance counselor or a professional ever discuss career choices with you?*

No, because again I go back to the financial position in which my family was in. My brother had two kids.

*When you graduated from high school were your parents here?*

No. I graduated from high school in 1965, in May. My parents arrived in January of 1966, and I immediately left for New York.

*So you knew your choice was work.*

Exactly, my choice was to support myself and help my family financially. That was my choice.

*When did you decide whether or not to go for post-secondary education?*

Once I arrived in Miami, and reason was mainly because a) I was getting older; b) my father had passed away, and I wanted to get an apartment for my mother and

I; c) I knew that to get a better job I needed a better education, and I liked school. I always liked school. So I enrolled at Miami Dade Community College. My choice of career was Business Administration.

***How did you gain admission to an institution of higher education?***

I took an entrance test, and I presented my high school diploma, they asked me all kinds of questions about my education in Cuba and so on, and I was admitted.

***How did you pay for your education?***

I paid for my education from my own pocket in part, and the Company where I worked paid for the other part.

***What was your career choice? I believe you told me Business Administration right?***

Business Administration.

***Did you get your Associate's Degree?***

I had six credits left to graduate, but I got married and had two children in the meantime.

***Did your level of English proficiency affect your career choice?***

Absolutely not.

***Did you have a role model?***

I liked business, I don't know. When I lived in New York, I started working for a big company, and I have always worked for big companies. I think the main reason that I wanted to go into Business Administration was that when I arrived in Miami and got a job with Pitney Bowes, which by the way, I worked for Pitney Bowes for 21 years. It is because even without a career education without my degree, I started going up, and up with the company. I enjoy Business Administration, I enjoy Marketing, I enjoy talking to people, and so if I had not done something with Business Administration I would have done marketing. My major would have been Marketing.

***Are you happy with your career choice? I think you answered that, right?***

Yes.

***Is this the end of your educational endeavors?***

No.

***What else would you like to do?***

I would like to finish the two years that I have, and get my Associate's Degree, someday. I will do it; maybe I'll do it when I am retired. I can do it there is no problem with it. Other than that, other than to get my Associate, I would like to study things like French for leisure, no credit type courses. I like French, Sociology or Psychology, even though I studied Psychology at Miami Dade already, but Psychology and Sociology I like. I might go and take courses in Business finances because I like that as hobby.

***How has your educational attainment impacted your life?***

It has, because I read a lot, and I like the campus atmosphere, I like going to concerts and things like that. I think that it has made me more aware of the world around me. I think personally, that education enriches your life.

**General:*****Please tell me in your opinion what do you think was the most positive experience and the most negative experience as a Pedro Pan child?***

My experience as a Pedro Pan child is that I was alone at a time that I feel is very vulnerable for any person. Fifteen years old is a very vulnerable period, even if you have your parents, you are learning about yourself and I think the most positive thing that I had, it was a choice. I think it was the right choice. I could have chosen, instead of going to school in Villa Maria, not going to school or getting very bad grades. I really tried so hard to do well in school, because I knew that it was up to me to open the doors to my future. And it was only me that was going to accomplish whatever I wanted to accomplish. It also helped me because they gave us \$10.00 a month to buy everything. We had to become financially proficient in handling a budget. It gave us character; it made me a stronger person. It helped me see what the meaning of being there for a friend meant. I just had to make choices at a very early age. So that is very positive to me, it has helped in my life. Negative, I think the only negativity I saw a few people that did not do so well. That is only a few that did not do too good. I saw a few people that got sick. I remember this girl in particular that used to throw up a lot, and that really got to me. I really don't have too many negative things to say. I think that the experience, overall to me, was very positive. And if the question came that if I had to live through this again, I would do as my parents did. Because you have to think that if you give your kids a good moral base (foundation) at home, you can leave them alone and they are going to be O.K.

***This concludes our interview. Thank you.***  
**05/25/01**



### Transcription of Case IIIc

#### **Life in Cuba:**

*Please, tell me about your life and family in Cuba?*

I was an only child. My family lived in what was called the Center of Downtown, in Havana. My mother was divorced, and I had a stepfather. Most of my time I spent at my grandparents' house. Since I did not have anybody to play with, and there I had my cousin, and of course my grandma. I came to the United States when I was 14 years old. I used to go to Balmaña School (a private school) and I had a pretty sheltered and good life.

*Tell me about your education. Did you like school in Cuba?*

I loved it.

*Did you have aspirations for career when you were in Cuba?*

I always had aspirations for career.

*What did you want to be?*

I wanted to be a journalist.

#### **Immigration/Migration:**

*At what point was the decision to leave the country made?*

I believe that the decision was made when there were rumors that the government was going to take over the children. My mother decided that if somebody was going to take her child away, she would rather send me to the United States. I believe that she started helping in the Church, and the Pastor, I believe it was the Church of San Juan Bosco was the one that gave her the idea, and where to go all about it.

*Were you part of the decision?*

No.

*Why did you leave the Country?*

First of all, I was a minor and I had no saying in it. Secondly, my mother decided on having me here in the United States alone rather than going to the fields and cutting sugar cane in Cuba.

***How did you feel about leaving the Country?***

At first, I did not know, I was told that I was coming to the United States and that I was going to go to school. Then she would join me in a few weeks maybe a month, because this was is was something very temporary. But then, years went by and I was still here, and she was over there.

***What information did you have about what life would be like in the United States?***

None whatsoever. I did not even know what school I was going to go to or where I was going to live.

***Life in the United States:***

***Please tell how was life in the United States without your parents?***

I cannot say that it was terrible, but at the same time, I felt alone. When you are a teen-ager, no matter how sad things are, there is always a party, there is always a dance, there is always a boyfriend, and you just do not give it a second thought.

***Tell me about your education in the United States?***

I went to high school, and that was the end of it.

***Did you like it?***

I loved it.

***What school did you go to?***

I went to the Blessed Sacrament Academy in San Antonio, Texas.

***What was your experience with the language barrier?***

I was very fortunate. English came to me very fast. Maybe because I loved TV and I loved movies, I decided that I was going to sit in front of the TV and watch it until I learned, or at least until I would understand what they were saying. So it came to me in a matter of a month or two months.

***What adjustments you had to make because of the language?***

I don't think I had any problems whatsoever.

***In what ways was the culture a barrier for you?***

It is different. Now I live among Cubans, because Miami is mostly Latin people, and that is when I see the difference. But in San Antonio, it was not that bad. First of all, we had Mexican friends, so you were able to speak your language, even though it was not exactly like ours, but you related, and you could communicate.

***What adjustments did you have to make because of differences in the culture?***

I had to adjust to the fact that we were not able to go home at lunchtime and we had school from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. In Cuba, you were able to go home, eat your lunch and then go back to school, so to me that was very weird.

***How have these differences in culture impacted your life?***

They did not really make much of an impact I just adjusted.

**Career Aspirations Choices and Decisions:*****Please tell, what were your aspirations about careers in the United States?***

I always liked to write and I thought that I would study journalism, but it didn't happen.

***Did anybody give you information about career choices?***

No.

***When did you decide whether or not to go for post-secondary education?***

Well, right after high school I came to Miami. My mother was already waiting for me for a year in Miami. So there was not really a choice or a decision to be made. My mother and I were living with some friends. We were sleeping in a sofa bed, so there was no way, I had no choice, there was no career for me. I just had to go to work and the little money we had was for my mother and I to live.

***How did you arrive to that decision?***

Basically, I did not have a choice I had to work.

***How did you feel about your level of English proficiency? (That is by the time you finished high school.)***

I had no problems with the language.

***Did you have a role model? (Someone you admired and wished to be like this person.)***

No, I would not say that I had a specific role model. I just wanted to be a journalist because I liked writing.

***Are you happy with what you do now?***

Yes.

***Is this the end of your educational endeavors?***

At this late in life I would not start anything. But every so often they send me for seminars since I am working in the Accounting Department of an insurance company. I think that I am very good at what I do.

***How did you learn accounting?***

In high school, they gave us Bookkeeping courses, and with that plus many years of experience.

***How has your educational attainment impacted your life?***

I would have loved to be a professional, but I never had a chance. I have adjusted - it was adjust or perish, but there were not a lot of choices.

**General:**

***Please tell me in your opinion, what was the most positive and most negative experience as a Pedro Pan child?***

The most positive would be that I am a very independent person. In Cuba I probably would have been a Mama's child. I had to learn how to survive, and I was able to relate to people on my own. In Cuba I didn't have to fend for myself, so I probably would not have been so independent. I was also able to meet a lot of people during my time as a Pedro Pan child that have influenced me always in a very positive way.

***Do you think that if you had stayed in Cuba you would have become a journalist?***

It is very possible.

***What was the most negative experience as a Pedro Pan child?***

The nuns, because I had no experience with religious education in Cuba. In Balmaña High School in Cuba there was no religious instruction whatsoever. Yes, I was baptized, I had the First Communion, and like most Cubans we were not churchgoers. So to me the nuns were a cultural shock. Let's put it that way. I never encountered any of them in Cuba.

***Which nuns were you referring to, the ones at Villa Maria (residence home) or the ones at Blessed Sacrament Academy (the school)?***

The ones in Villa Maria were bad, but there was one specifically at the Blessed Sacrament Academy that she was the pit. Sister (name withheld), that woman was very insane.

***Why, she did not understand you?***

She did not understand me? It was not just me it was anybody. She was a very racist person. She literally hated our guts, and that hurt you very much so.

***How did you learn to deal with that situation?***

At that time I did not know how to deal with racism, discrimination and hate, since I had never had any experience with it in Cuba. This was my first encounter with discrimination and hate. She hated our guts and did not like us, period. She made it known that we were not liked. On the other hand, there were some other Sisters, like Sister (name withheld), who was a sweetheart, she still writes me around Christmas time, but those were the exceptions. Also Sister (name withheld), my English teacher, she knew about my interest in Journalism and gave me her encouragement. She really liked to bring out my love for writing.

***This concludes our interview. Thank you.***  
***05/26/01***

**Appendix G**  
**Summary of Questionnaire's Qualitative Responses**

This section summarizes the qualitative information obtained from the 37 respondents of the questionnaire. Each paragraph is the summary of answers to questions # 32, 33, 37 & 39 combined for each subject:

Respondent  
Number

1. In the 1960's I quit school because of inadequate English proficiency, economic constraints and family responsibilities. In the 1980's I went back and got a B.A., and a Masters in Education.
2. I got married and decided that raising a family was more important. I had a good job and an excellent salary, but it did not make me as happy as taking care of my family. I have done extensive reading on those subjects that I enjoy, namely, History and Religion. I completed 4 years of Post-Secondary education in Secretarial Sciences/Accounting.
3. I completed 4 years of post-secondary education: Business Administration, Secretarial Professional Studies, and Paralegal.
4. Economic constraints prevented me from studying. I am a business owner now.
5. I have acquired sufficient work related experience to achieve Vice President position. Family plans made me postpone my education, lack of time due to business travel and long working hours. I have studied 4 years of post-secondary education in International Banking.
6. I completed two years of Junior College in Business Administration. I started a family and had no interest in pursuing further studies.
7. I completed 4 years of post-secondary education and 2 years of graduate school. I have a B.A. and a M.S. Degree in Arts Education. The decision to study is because it was ingrained in my childhood, plus I had a scholarship.
8. I have completed 10 years of post-secondary education. I hold a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. I value education highly and already had the "map" on how to get educated from my family (before I left Cuba).
9. I completed 5 and ½ years of post-secondary education. I studied Accounting/education.

10. Economic constraints prevented me from finishing my post-secondary education. I completed 3 ½ years of Teacher Education later on, because I worked full-time to put my husband through school.
11. I studied 1 ½ years of Business College. What I studied led me to a good job and started a family.
12. I studied 8 years of post-secondary education. I studied Chemistry, Education and a Masters in Business Administration.
13. I studied 6 years of post-secondary education. I studied Nursing and received a Masters in Health Administration.
14. I was taken out of high school and placed in beauty school. I had economic constraints that prevented me from going to college, and I did not have enough English proficiency at the time. I started a family, and later on I took Bookkeeping courses, and that is what I do now. I would have studied Pharmacy had I had the opportunity.
15. I was taken out of high school and went to beauty school. I got married and started a family, and never thought about going to college. Right now I own my business of Beauty Industry Products Manufacturer.
16. Economic constraints prevented me from going to college. I am a business owner.
17. I have completed more than 9 years of post-secondary education. It took me a long time to complete my B.A. degree due to family responsibilities and financial constraints. I had to work full-time while I attended classes part-time. Some semesters I was not able to attend at all. I finished with a G.P.A. of 4.0 and I am very proud of it. I have studied Business, Education and Masters in Spanish and Guidance Counseling.
18. I got married and started a family immediately after graduating from high school. Later on, I studied courses in computers and data entry to be financially independent. I work in the Accounts Payable department of a Law firm.
19. I studied 3 years of post-secondary education in the field of Advertising Art. I've got a good job in the field of advertising.
20. I studied 6 years (Bachelors/Masters and Specialist Degree) in Education. I am looking forward to retirement.
21. I studied one year of post-secondary education in Business. I had economic constraints that prevented me from finishing college. I am too old now.



22. I completed 1 year of post-secondary education. I had to start a job due to economic constraints and did not have time to pursue further education. If I had a chance I would have studied Nursing.
23. I had 1 year of post-secondary education. I studied Secretarial Certificate.
24. I wanted to continue my education right after high school, but my family was still in Cuba, and was given the opportunity to go to Business College for Secretarial studies for one year, in order to support myself. I had financial constraints, and was not too proficient in English. Later on, after I started a family I went back to college in 1973 part-time and completed B.S., B.A., Masters degree and Ph.D. degrees.
25. I studied 8 years of post-secondary education. I have a B.A. in Psychology/Sociology and Jurist Doctor/Mediator Certificate Degree. It was always a given that I would go to college.
26. I studied 4 years of post-secondary education. I have a 2-year degree and got my Associate Degree in Nursing (LPN) and then I went to a 4-year school for 2 more years for the Bachelors in Science in Nursing (RN) Degree.
27. I studied 4 years of post-secondary education. I got a B.A. degree in Political Science and then I went back to school for a Translator/Interpreter's Certificate, and Real Estate. I own my business now. I did not go to earn a Master's degree because I preferred to hold a full-time job.
28. I have a B.A. Degree in Spanish Teacher Certification and a M.A. Degree in Spanish.
29. I have a Bachelors Degree in Accounting and a Masters Degree in Business Administration.
30. I had a Secretarial Certificate (1 year). After many years as a secretary and then bank officer, I wanted a career that would allow me more time with my children. I went back to school and completed an Associates Degree in Business; a Bachelors Degree in Spanish Education and a Masters Degree in Spanish.
31. I have taken some college courses, but I really do not like to study. I work as Public Relations/Office Manager for my husband's Architectural Company.
32. I almost completed 2 years of post-secondary education in Business Administration. I only need to take six more credits for the Associate's Degree. I was not able to complete my education due to long working hours

and family responsibilities. Had I had the chance, I would have liked to study Diplomacy and Foreign Languages.

33. My decision not to go to college was based on economic constraints. I had to support myself when I completed high school and had to help my mother. We had very little money left for anything else. I would have liked to study Journalism, since I like to write.
34. I completed 2 years of post-secondary education in Computer Programming. I had economic constraints that prevented me from furthering my education. I also had the fear of not being able to support myself without my husband. I have worked non-stop since 1964, when I graduated from high school and got married. I still fear not having a job. My education has continued during the last 14 years, through my employer. This is due to the continuous change in technology and job requirements.
35. I studied for close to 2 years of post-secondary education in Business. I did not complete my program of study because my parents came from Cuba, and I had to help them get settled. Economic constraints prevented me from furthering my education. Right now I work as an accountant, but if I had the opportunity, I would have liked to become a Certified Public Accountant.
36. Of the 37 participants, 18 or 49 % went into nontraditional fields of employment, either through formal education, partial education I was not able to study post-secondary education. I did not complete high school. I started a family too young, and I had to support my child, my mother and myself. I have taken courses in computers and other work-related seminars.
37. I worked very hard until I learned enough English by going to night school and working days and weekends. I found a college that was willing to accept me. I completed more than six years of post-secondary education. I first completed an Associate Degree (LPN) Licensed Practical Nursing; then the Professional Nursing (B.S.N.); then a Masters of Science in Nursing (MSN) and MS in Education; Nurse Practitioner Certification (ARNP) and too many others to list.